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THIS ISSUE

EDITORIAL	4
The new Doyen of the Corps Diplomatique in Oslo	22
Czech Republic holding the EU Presidency by Ambassador, HE Mr Lubos Novy	23
Bilateral relation Brazil-Norway by Ambassador, HE Mr Sergio E Moreira Lima	25
Israeli-Palestinian Conflict by Mr Omar S Kitmitto	26
WINE WORLD – Ladies choosing food and wine	30
KALEIDOSCOPE	34
ARTIST'S CORNER	54
Diplomat – expert in law – with a passion for art	58
Collecting bond and share certificates	62
DINING OUT	64
The health centre at Finnskogen	67
Essayistic dialogue no. 3	70
German Riesling	77
South African wines	79
Fondberg – a place to taste wine in Oslo	80
HAPPY TASTINGS	81
Polish Days	87
STATE AND OFFICIAL VISITS	88
Nobel Peace Prize	91
CORDIAL RECEPTIONS	92
Books of Condolences	105
THE EDITORS	106

NORWEGIAN DEPENDENCE ON THE USA: NORWAY TO BUY NEW COMBAT JET – STRAIGHT OFF THE DRAWING BOARD!



*Idar Aarheim,
Editor-in-chief
(Photo: The Magazine)*

When the Norwegian government announced which combat jet Norway had decided to utilise for the next thirty years, the decision was very much as expected: Norway is to buy the American F-35 Lightning II (Joint Strike Fighter). Any result other than that proclaimed on 20th November would have been a diplomatic bombshell!

In questions of defence, Norway has never been fully independent of the USA since NATO was formed some sixty years ago. The only notable exception was the “Bondevik II” government’s reluctance to send Norwegian troops to support the USA’s illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003. The clutched straw that rescued Norwegian independence on that occasion was the UN’s sensible decision not to legalise the invasion plans, despite all the lies and aggressive pressure from the hawkish Bush administration.

The only surprising thing in connection with Norway’s purchase of future combat aircraft, has been the Establishment’s (political and military) many-years’ PR campaign pretending that there really were serious European challengers to the American military project. Of course there were not. The first to realise that Norway only wanted a pro-forma alternative to the F-35 were the representatives from the European strike fighter Eurofighter (European Fighter Aircraft). The prototype of the German assembled strike fighter DA 1 first took to the skies on 27th March 1994 and ten days later the British version DA 2 was ready for test flights. In the meantime Eurofighter has developed into a modern, reliable and versatile strike fighter. On this point all the experts are in agreement, but the Norwegian political and military establishment lacks independent competence. Norwegian fighter pilots have been training on American aircraft in the USA throughout two generations. The same applies to aircraft mechanics and air-traffic controllers.

The F-35 has never (only recently?) been airborne. It is an airy, exorbitantly expensive drawing-board project that has already cost Norwegian taxpayers billions of kroner. Many independent experts and aviation specialists in the USA also doubt whether the F-35 programme will ever “get off the ground.” In terms of technology, the planned aircraft confers little that is new to the US Air Force (?). With the US economy and financial-services sector halfway towards collapse, it is far from certain there is enough money to realise the NATO-leaderships’ dream project.

Independent aircraft experts in many countries also consider the Swedish JAS-39 Gripen NG to be a far more flex-

ible aircraft than the F-35 will ever possibly be. That opinion is also shared by many independent professionals here in Norway. One of these is Bjørn Kjos, the chairman and for many years managing director of the airline Norwegian. Mr Kjos is not just anybody when it comes to evaluating new combat aircraft. He was himself for many years a fighter pilot in the Norwegian Air Force and has also test-flown the Swedish Gripen. His unambiguous conclusion, published in *Aftenposten* (and other publications), is that the JAS-39 Gripen NG is a far more suitable aircraft for Norwegian national defence than the F-35 could ever be.

Nevertheless, despite such expert evaluations, Norway’s Minister of Defence Anne-Grethe Strøm-Erichsen could state at a press conference in Oslo (November 2008) that the Swedish combat aircraft was “useless” in defending Norway! Like most of the Norwegian cabinet members, Mrs Strøm-Erichsen has no professional authority to lead her department. The most embarrassing thing about her statement was her having just returned from a joint meeting of Nordic defence ministers on Bornholm (Denmark) that was held on 11th November. There she had participated in the signing of a formal declaration stressing how important Nordic co-operation was in matters of defence, as military conflicts could affect all the Nordic countries. That was why military-technological co-operation was of such vital importance.

The defence minister then returns to Norway and maintains that the epitome of Swedish weapons technology is “useless!” Why didn’t Mrs Strøm-Erichsen share this astounding information with her Nordic colleagues on Bornholm? Small wonder that contempt for politicians is also on the increase in all the Nordic countries!

Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg also ensured that further scorn was heaped on politicians at the 20th November press conference by claiming that the Norwegian Government had been completely free when it came to deciding which aircraft should replace the ageing American F-16s. The prime minister added that no one in his government had registered any examples of Americans exerting pressure to obtain preference for the F-35. Indeed, why should the USA have any fears in connection with the choice of combat aircraft when co-operation between the Pentagon and Norway has been so close throughout several decades? It is strange, however, that no one in the PM’s office reads the newspapers! The US Ambassador to Norway, HE Mr Benson K Whitney, has made it abundantly clear that there would be a much poorer relationship between the USA and Norway, should we Norwegian choose a European combat aircraft instead of the American F-35.

Worst of all is the government’s lie that the F-35 project costs less than the Norwegian-Swedish co-operation covering further development of the Gripen aircraft, as well as the purchase of a requisite quantity, which would have led



JAS Gripen. (Photo: Per Kustvik)

to technological and industrial development at several Norwegian companies. As regards the “castle in the air” F-35 there are no firm agreements, as far as we know, between manufacturers Lockheed Martin Corporation and Norwegian technology suppliers. In this case, however, one should never say never. The American industrial conglomerate in the State of Maryland, is renowned the world over for its special sales agreements. And “for reasons of security” we are not told which firm contracts Norway has entered into with the USA or Lockheed Martin Corporation.

The only thing we know is that the Norwegian government has not pointed out the unfortunate fact that the company is also a major producer of cluster bombs where Norway is leading the field in trying to obtain an international ban. På den store internasjonale konferansen i begynnelsen av desember 2008 i Oslo, undertegnet mer enn 100 nasjoner et forbud mot produksjon og bruk av klasevåpen.

Humanitarian organisations have pointed out the embarrassment of Norway buying aircraft from a partner that is manufacturing cluster bombs. No matter, claims Norway’s red-green government. Combat fighters and cluster bombs have nothing to do with each other in the Norwegian government’s notional world of ethics. The combination combat aircraft / cluster bombs is especially embarrassing for SV (Socialist Party of the Left) which is opposed to both NATO and the purchase of new combat aircraft as a matter of principle. As coalition partners, SV

has instructed its members to remain silent while emitting airy rhetoric that nobody but themselves understands. This of course is the intention.

The most implausible of the government’s claims, in connection with the choice of aircraft, is that Lockheed Martin is the cheaper alternative. No wonder Aftenposten’s commentator asked if the prime minister was trying to get the Norwegian people “to believe in Santa Claus!” As the plane is not finished, no one (not even the government) knows what aircraft procurement, operation and technological updating over a 30-year period will cost our country.

Everything is following the usual pattern – with Norway as best boy in the NATO class when it comes to buying American weaponry. When the military decided to buy several transport aircraft a couple of years ago, Norway chose the slow and cumbersome C-130 Hercules – planes that cannot even reach Afghanistan without landing for re-fuelling. The procurement was effected despite European aircraft being far superior, more modern, more technically advanced and having sufficient range.

Under the conditions determining Norway’s choice of combat aircraft, our country’s technological, political and commercial interests were to be taken into consideration. Our exports to the USA do not exceed ten per cent of gross foreign trade. On the other hand, almost 70 per cent of Norway’s exports go to EU countries – and those statistics do not include shipping or oil. Sweden alone is a more important trade-political co-operation partner for

Norway than the USA.

The reason why Norway always chooses weaponry from the USA – irrespective of quality – is to be found in the following highly-significant sentence in the lengthy explanation for choosing the F-35 project: “In a more heterogeneous NATO, a good bilateral relationship with the USA is just as important as before.”

Alas, yes!

Norway’s security-political independence on America did not disappear with the lifting of the Iron Curtain on the collapse of the Soviet Union when NATO ought to have been dissolved. Not being a EU member Norway, in security-political terms, has been left in a vacuum. That it shy there is sense in my amusing professor’s suggestion that it is high time Norway applied for admission as a worthy member-state of the USA. Then we could propose Jens Stoltenberg as a presidential candidate! It is said that

we must be grateful because the Americans helped to liberate us from German occupation in 1945. Unfortunately we have never managed to free ourselves from the liberators.

This is dangerous because there are forces at work in the USA that would like to see Norway play the same geo-political role on Europe’s north-western flank as Georgia did south of Russia. Even more dangerous is having Saakashvili enthusiasts here in Norway who, with American backing, could consider giving the Russian Bear a “bloody nose” in connection with the unsolved problems concerning the natural resources around Svalbard (Spitsbergen) and the Barents Sea.

That is why, when it come to matters of national security, the USA today is a more dangerous ally for Norway than our neighbour Russia, with whom we ought to be co-operating on an independent European basis.

American JFS combat jet project (F35)

“It was a pity for Norway that you decided to buy the American JFS project (F-35), where the prototype has scarcely left the ground,” says Robert Hewson, editor-in-chief of the renowned independent military periodical Jane. He visited Norway just before Christmas to find out what was really behind the Norwegian government’s decision to go in for NATO’s and Lockheed Martin’s pipe dream instead of the Swedish JAS 39 Gripen. “You will not find a better or more tested combat aircraft,” according to Editor Hewson.

He also considers that further refinement of this aircraft would have led to an important high-tech development both in Norway and Sweden. On the other hand, however, he maintains that Lockheed Martin and the Americans will

probably keep the high-tech aspects to themselves – as usual – and not share them with their NATO partners who will thus still be dependent on the Americans.

Robert Hewson had a good laugh when he read the lengthy explanation from the Norwegian government about how the F-35 (JFS) will be so much cheaper for the country than co-operation with the Swedes on the JAS 39 Gripen. He is convinced that political considerations have weighed more than technical weaponry aspects.

Mr Hewson cannot see that the costs for weapons, spares, maintenance, logistics or training have been taken into account when the Norwegian government calculated the price of the JFS project.

Farewell to “Mamma Africa”

Zenzile Miriam Makeba, also called “Mamma Africa”, died last autumn after giving a concert in Italy. She was 76 years old. She fled from the apartheid regime in South Africa and with her unique voice and sensual lyrics she won the hearts of people in many countries. Hers was the voice of a dark, repressed Africa. Last summer she held one of her last

concerts in front of the City Hall in Oslo.

A memorial concert for Miriam Makeba here in Oslo was held in the South-African Embassy Residence on 28th November. Hosts were the country’s Ambassador to Norway HE Mr Ismail Coovadia and Mrs Suraya Bhoola-Coovadia. In his personal and poignant speech, the ambassa-

dor struck the same note of deep-felt sympathy as that of the concert.

Several speakers gave expression for what “Mamma Africa” had meant for them personally, for South Africa and for an entire continent. Even though the concert was arranged as a Memorial Service, it was Miriam Makeba’s own songs that created the intensely moving atmosphere.



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He again took my arm and we proceeded.
"These vaults, he said, are extensive"
"The Montresors, I replied,
were a great numerous family."
"I forget your arms...."
"And the motto?"
"Nemo me impune lacessit."
"Good!" he said.
The wine sparkled in his eyes.

(Edgard A. Poe)



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A CRY OF ANGUISH THAT SHOCKED ALL NORWAY

One summer day in 2007 a cry of anguish from a mistreated child shook the whole of Norway. It came during a documentary radio programme produced by NRK journalist Tormod Strand. He had accompanied the women in a Somalian family who were escorting seven-year-old Anisa to Somalia for circumcision in the traditional manner. Using a razor blade (and of course without any anaesthetic) the clitoris and labia minora were removed. Tormod Strand sat with a microphone in an adjoining room and recorded Anisa's shrieks of agony, gasps of pain and desperate prayers begging the female torturers to put an end to her suffering. Tormod Strand told the Norwegian people that he was overcome with nausea while the maltreatment was being administered. Nevertheless he was powerless to intervene against the criminal abuse – in which case he would probably have been liquidated by the male Somalian's who were there to ensure that the barbaric act was carried out without interruption.

The reporter, however, had meticulously documented a crime against a defenceless little girl, perpetrated by a family resident in Norway. It is now more than ten years since female genital mutilation (FGM) was banned in Norway. Yet were any of these Somalian women, on their return to Norway, punished for their criminal behaviour towards little Anisa? No, of course not, knowing the timidity of the Norwegian authorities when it comes to enforcing own laws. Documented evidence shows that thousands of young women living in Norway have been circumcised. No one, however, has ever been punished for these atrocities!

Anisa's terrible cries – which were broadcast on radio and television – nevertheless disturbed so many Norwegians that politicians and authorities had to break their long and embarrassing silence over the issue of FGM. As the summer is the busy season for this barbarous activity (eg. in Somalia during the Norwegian school summer holidays) these “high-risk groups” ought to be carefully screened at the airport before departure on international flights. Institutions such as child welfare and the social services ought to be “especially vigilant.” Health authorities have been instructed to carry out more careful supervision – but are prevented from carrying out physical examinations to determine whether girls have been subjected to FGM when returning from their original home country.

What have been the legal consequences for families inflicting FGM on their own daughters following a tightening of the rules in 2007?

None whatsoever!

Even after Anisa's heart-rending cries and appeals for mercy, the sole response from the government, the politicians, the health service, the immigration authorities and the social services has been mutual cowardice and a deafening silence. Even the child welfare services, which have a supervisory responsibility for guarding against physical and psychological abuse being inflicted on infants, fail to notify the police – even when confronted with multiple cases of FGM in certain immigrant circles, especially amongst Somalians. The child welfare services would, in all probability, not have

failed in their moral and legal duty to the same degree if members of the same family had deliberately broken the arms of all the young girls. It is incredible that most authorities and institutions have a greater respect for these immigrants' barbaric traditions than for their daughters' legal protection under Norwegian law.

The fundamental cause of this unwillingness to confront the barbary is an antiquated socio-anthropological dogma that “all cultures are equal”! This is a dogma that has been embraced by Marxists and sociologists with a deep-rooted belief that all disparities in the Third World are due solely to colonialism and Western imperialism! However, as we shall soon reveal, here in Norway there are also some leading right-wing politicians who are blocking the introduction of effective measures against FGM. This applies first and foremost to the leader of the Conservative party (Høyre) Erna Solberg.

But first a short historical review. Our facts are based on the work of journalist, author and information leader in Human Rights Service (HRS), Hege Storhaug, as given in her prize-winning book “Men størst av alt er friheten” from 2005. Here she relates how the French authorities stopped FGM among a group of African immigrants in Paris. Whereas there was irrefutable proof in 1987 that all the girls under six in the group of 500 young girls had been mutilated, none in a corresponding group in the same district were maltreated in 2000.

What had happened in the meantime?

It was all very simple. In order to obtain child allowance, the family had to present a valid health certificate showing that the daughters had not been maltreated! Money talks! Furthermore, a mother in a well-integrated immigrant family in Paris was found guilty of maltreating her daughter and had to pay EUR 15,000 (NOK 120,000) in compensation.

On the initiative of Hege Storhaug in Human Rights Service, the two women who had brought FGM to an end in Paris, the lawyer Linda Weil-Curiel and the doctor Emmanuelle Piet, were invited to Norway to tell the political parties in the Norwegian parliament of their experience. This was important because the minority government of the day (K M Bondevik's second administration) was totally dependent on a parliamentary majority to implement its policies. On 29th May the two ladies gave an impressive lecture in the Norwegian parliament. But nobody had reckoned with the Conservative Party (H) leader Erna Solberg who at the time had ministerial responsibility for integration. The minister and her undersecretary, Cathrin Bretzeg, opposed the informations in emotionally-charged articles in all the media. They claimed that it was “a violation of privacy” for young girls to be examined in this manner. These two Conservative ladies showed by their reactionary behaviour that they held antiquated notions that young girls and young women's intimate parts were a taboo area for them. At the same time these two ladies, as guardians of Victorian morality, had no objections to the examination of young boys' private parts to ensure that they were healthy!

This goes to show the prejudices held by these ladies towards equality of the sexes – at any rate three years ago. Nevertheless, as a consequence of their stubborn attitude towards sexual morality, the work involving medical inspection of young girls did not come into force. Girls that have been subjected to FGM can, in principle, claim compensation not only from their relatives but from the political leaders in the government for the fact their sex life has been permanently damaged. The Norwegian Government can also be liable to damages with regard to female mutilation of young girls and young women that is a crime here in Norway.

Even the present government has no way of knowing the extent of this crime. *The Magazine* is aware, however, of several instances where members of the current Norwegian government, politicians and authorities boast to foreign colleagues and organisations that Norway has for a long time had a law against FGM. What they do not say is that up to now nobody has been prosecuted under the terms of this

paragraph. I am afraid this is yet another example of Norway trying to appear as “world champion of moralism and humanism.”

Following incriminating evidence and pressure from HRS (Human Rights Service), the head of an African family living in Norway, and father of many children, was imprisoned. The reason: The parents had sent all their daughters back to Africa for traditional FGM. The father was released after three months – and it is uncertain whether he will face further charges. The mother could not be arrested – because she was pregnant with the couple's 8th child. Norwegian child benefit is very popular in immigrant circles – even though many children live with their family in the country of origin, where they are kept away from Norway's compulsory schooling.

Here too violations of the law have not resulted in any juridical or financial consequences for parents who continue receiving welfare benefits – even when the children are living in another country!

COURAGEOUS WHISTLE-BLOWER KADRA YUSSUF (28)

Norwegian authorities cannot try to invoke the excuse that they “didn't know what was going on” in Somali circles in Norway; over the years there have been many disclosures. It is worth noting, however, that the majority of these exposés have come from young Somali women who have acquired Norwegian citizenship on reaching adulthood. We have been presented with the most horrific stories of female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, imprisonment and violence in the home, as well as cases of constant surveillance and brutal punishment by male members of the family.

Already in 2000 the then 20-year-old Kadra Yussuf revealed in a TV programme that imams here in Norway are advising young Somali girls to break Norwegian law – and voluntarily submit to FGM. Ms Yussuf had concealed a secret microphone on her person when enquiring if she ought to allow herself to be circumcised. The whole of Norway could now hear the voice of the imam declaring that she had to follow tradition and become circumcised. In the ensuing public debate, however, the imams still maintained that they were opposed to female mutilation. Kadra Yussuf's exposure of the imam also contradicted a claim made by the Muslim Council of Norway. The council invariably maintain that FGM has nothing to do with the Islam religion, but is due to “culture (!) and tradition!”

Following this disclosure Kadra Yussuf, a roving reporter by profession, was generously rewarded for her courageous efforts – but also received a number of death threats. After her critical remarks about the Koran's views on women, Kadra Yussuf was viciously attacked in broad daylight by an irate gang of Muslim yobs in the centre of Oslo (April 2007). Lying helpless on the

ground, she was punched, kicked, spat upon and pulled by the hair while her attackers spewed out insults and accused her of disgracing Islam. Some young women clad in the religious headscarf hijab also took part in the cowardly attack. This was only one example among many, both from Norway and abroad, of Islamists reverting to brutal violence for want of logical arguments.

In January 2008 the Norwegian state started criminal proceedings against the five most active assailants. The legal wording of the charge was “assault under extremely aggravating circumstances.” Public Prosecutor Kåre Solvoll was not in the slightest doubt that the assault was caused by Ms Yussuf's candid remarks about “the Koran's view of women.” And he continued: “The assailants have tried to stifle a Norwegian woman's personal opinion. Kadra stood firm and demanded liberation of women in an environment that could not tolerate hearing about it.” Furthermore, the public prosecutor claimed that the act of violence was also meant as a warning to other oppositional women in Muslim circles not to follow in Kadra's footsteps.

As usual, the Muslim Council of Norway has behaved in a cowardly manner. They reiterate that this has to do with “culture and tradition” and not with religion. The council makes this claim even though proof has been presented in court that the assailants prior to the assault had cried: “Here she comes – the one that desecrated the Koran.” As if that was not enough, the gang quoted verses from the Koran while they kicked and punched her!

The Magazine is in agreement with Public Prosecutor Solvoll who during the initial arraignment claimed that

the attack was a provocation and threat to freedom of expression here in Norway. Acts of violence are part of a campaign intended to intimidate anyone brave enough to criticise religion. Nevertheless this fanatical environment is also subject to Norwegian law. That is why it is so important for Norwegian police and prosecution authorities to use all available means to ensure freedom of

expression, which is so central in Norwegian legislation. Religion is subject to the law and not superior to it.

Unfortunately, we have seen in this case, as in a number of similar cases where crime has its roots in religion and barbaric traditions of violence, that Norwegian defence lawyers have developed bullying techniques that so exceed their mandate they have become a threat to national security in Norway.

SOMALI WHISTLE-BLOWER AMAL ADEN

In autumn 2008 a book was published (in Norwegian only) with the equivocal title *Se oss (...)*, [which can be translated as the command “See us ...”, the caution “Watch us” or the appeal “Look at us...”]. A young ethnic Somali woman in her twenties, who does not dare reveal her real name for reasons of personal safety, wrote it under a pseudonym. This alone is an uncomfortable reminder that freedom of expression, which is firmly rooted in Norwegian legislation, cannot be practised by everyone because there are some segregated, criminal circles in our country that have no respect for Norwegian law. They believe their religion and barbaric customs are superior to the Norwegian judicial system. Many of them are convinced that their standing is at a higher cultural level than “the infidel and immoral Norwegians” – even though Norway has granted them residence permits “on humanitarian grounds,” and provides them with child allowances, housing, health and welfare assistance.

Amal Aden tells us about a 14-year-old Somali Oslo lass who in the book is called Yasmin. She was not sent to Somalia in order to be circumcised there, as is so often the case. Her book starts with the crime being perpetrated here in Oslo!

Strong forces in Somali circles, within politics and the media as well as in the health and welfare services that have failed in their duty, are trying to trivialise this bombshell of a book, and are trying at the same time to hush up the contents. The childcare authorities are as usual concealing their cowardice behind the need for confidentiality! This institution evidently thinks withholding information takes precedence over solving crimes committed against children. However, the childcare commissioner in Norway, the experienced champion of children’s rights Reidar Hjermand, expresses on the front book cover:

“If only a part of this book turns out to be true, we still have an important job to do.”

Unfortunately, most of the contents are based on facts. Otherwise such an active and well-established freedom of expression champion as Fritt Ord would not have supported its publication – neither would such a respected publishing house as Aschehoug have dared to publish it.

Sources contacted by *The Magazine* within the police, the health authorities and world of politics, all confirm that female genital mutilation (FGM), the maltreatment of women and children in the home, forced marriages among young girls of sixteen, and welfare fraud is regrettably rife among

Somali immigrants in Norway. Yet the book also shows that among young women there is a genuine willingness to integrate.

Norwegian integration policy has failed dismally under changing governments, and there is a lack of political will to confront and challenge members of a strongly segregated group that do not shun violence or intimidation so that they can continue twiddling their thumbs at the expense of a generous and uncritical Norwegian social and welfare system. That which makes Norwegian home-affairs policy so dramatic, this year in particular, is the lack of control over our entire immigration policy. Thus the Labour government – only one year before the next general election – has introduced (only slightly) tougher rules for asylum seekers this autumn. Knowing that coalition partner Socialist Party of the Left (SV) would be obliged to disagree, the decision smacked of panic. As we shall see later, immigration policy can be the decisive issue in next year’s general election (provided the international finance crisis caused by the USA does not overshadow every other issue).

This bombshell of a book by Amal Aden can be a political minefield for all parties other than the Progress Party (FrP), which has always had an unequivocal and restrictive immigration policy. It opens with the crime of schoolgirl Yasmin undergoing FGM here in Oslo. The tale of Yasmin concludes with another offence when the now 14-year-old is forced to marry an older Somali male. Before the “wedding night” can take place, poor mutilated Yasmin has to submit to be “opened with a knife” without anaesthetic by “wise” Somali women. The first part of the book is Yasmin’s unrelenting tale of suffering between her mutilation and the forced marriage. We gain an insight into a segregated, brutal milieu summed up in a commentary section by the young authoress with the following words:

“I was born into an environment where one had to show consideration towards one’s father and mother, sister and brother, aunt and uncle, the clan and other Somalis living in Oslo” (page 149).

She knows from personal experience that the pecking order is maintained by brute force: Father strikes mother, mother hits child, older children bully the smaller ones – on top of which all the female family members are watched and spied upon by the menfolk and their friends. The women too are active informants and help to promote suspicion



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and mistrust. One 14-year-old Somali girl was beaten up and rebuked as being a “prostitute” when she came home from school. The reason: The woman next door had seen the girl talking to a Norwegian boy who was in the same class! Amal Aden relates that the expression “I’ll kill you” is often used by men against women, as well as by mothers against their daughters, if they think they are becoming “too Norwegian” – and thus “prostitutes!” Maltreated women do not dare go to the crisis centres, which the menfolk refer to as “brothels.” According to Amal Aden, one of the worst swearwords among Somalis in Oslo is:

“Do you want to become Norsk – do you want to get like the infidel Norwegians?”

We instantly recognise in such expressions an underlying fundamentalist, archaic and literal interpretation of Islam and a corresponding contempt for the West and the modern global society. Medieval disparagement of women and compliance with tribal rules are to be the order of the day – even here in Norway. “Hatred of the West is deeply entrenched among us. This hatred is so intense, it can lead to acts of terror” (page 164).

Much of what Amal Aden relates about Somali girls’ tragic upbringing here in Oslo is reminiscent of Ayan Hirsi Ali’s famous autobiography:

“The absence of love and sympathy from the womenfolk during childhood, kicks and punches as punishment during adolescence when no one told us anything about menstruation or reproduction, and the constant indoctrination about “Islam being a superior culture” and that all Western women are “whores” and fair game for menfolk’s lusts.”

And another thing: Young women should not be given too much schooling. No, they should accept their subordinate position as slaves in the home from an early age, where they must work as unpaid skivvies not only for the menfolk but also for older female family members and their friends.

What is it that has made resourceful young women with a Somali background into such self-assured, courageous whistle-blowers – despite being brought up to respect submission and dependence? I find the answer when reading between the lines of Amal Aden’s book. Because Somali girls are subjected to such a workload and responsibility for the family’s physical well being, there are only two alternatives. The girls either become physically (and not least mentally) damaged or the strongest and most intelligent acquire an inflexible will and exceptional determination – in glaring contrast to their mothers and aunts.

With regard to the situation in Oslo, many Somali women of parent generation have lived exclusively at home, and can hardly speak a word of Norwegian. Some indeed are proud of their illiteracy. Because few educational requirements are demanded of the boys (they mustn’t become too Norwegian!), the most intelligent of the girls realise that precisely education is the key to freedom, progress and integration. Then, however, the precondition is that, even though they may have undergone FGM, they must avoid forced marriage at all costs! In order to achieve their dream of freedom, independence and progress, several Somali girls have fled

from their families and are living under cover elsewhere in this country. Some have even acquired a new identity.

Amal Aden explains that many Somali women living in Norway are under tremendous pressure to have as many children as possible. The coercion is exercised by the family and the clan. The reason: Family allowances, social assistance and children’s cash benefit – the cause closest to the Christian people’s Party (KrF)’s heart! Amal Aden writes laconically that for many Somali families, family allowance and children’s cash benefit are far more important than children being left to fend for themselves!

One question being put more and more often to the Norwegian authorities these days is: How can Somalis gain permanent residence in Norway when their travelling between Norway and Somalia virtually amounts to a shuttle service? Amal Aden relates that many Somalis occupying council houses and flats in Oslo are building their own houses in Somalia. What kind of checks are Norwegian authorities making on these Somalis? This question is being posed by the Progress Party (FrP) – and the same question is being raised by Amal Aden from inside Somali circles.

It is quite obvious that Amal Aden’s revelations, forming part of the political debate prior to the general election, are sheer dynamite. Her undisguised support for the Progress Party (FrP) when it comes to immigration policy is made crystal clear by the following quote:

“The deputy leader of the Immigration Council in Drammen has stated that ‘women are being corrupted by Norwegian culture and many are abusing the crisis centres.’ I read this in *Aftenposten* 11th March 2008... It made painful reading. In my opinion such remarks must have repercussions. I am in total agreement with the comments made by Per Willy Amundsen from FrP in the same newspaper: ‘When he is integrated to such a small degree in Norwegian society that he can complain about equal opportunities, clothing styles and women’s rights, I cannot understand why he chooses to live here. He might just as well leave Norway and move to a country where his attitude and views are the norm’ (pages 163 -164).

The Labour Party’s (Ap) break with its alliance partner (SV) regarding asylum policy has the following political background:

- 1) The Progress Party’s success in the opinion polls with a restrictive immigration policy such as Denmark’s – and which is supported by the majority of Norwegians.
- 2) The massive resistance among county councils to the extending and building of new reception centres for asylum seekers. This is due to a number of episodes of violence among asylum applicants and incidents of minor criminality in the local environment, as well as general apprehension among the local population.

Because the majority of asylum seekers that the government allows into the country do not qualify for admission, the authorities’ naïve immigration policy also unfortunately affects genuine refugees who really need a safe escape route to Norway. Thus the entire populace tends to view all immigrants from non-Western countries with scepticism. In such a situation the Somalis are the most conspicuous because so many of them obviously prefer to remain segregated; despis-

ing equality, performing FGM with impunity, importing and chewing the illegal narcotic substance *khat*, regularly visiting Somalia – where their lives are supposed to be in danger – besides which they have a high ranking on the violent-crime statistics.

Politically speaking, therefore, Amal Aden's revelations about the crimes and disparities within Somali circles in Oslo are highly flammable. Her information strikes not only at the government's lack of will or ability to assist the very weakest group among the immigrants, ie. the helpless and rightless young Somali girls. Amal Aden's book throws a merciless spotlight onto the failed immigration policies of every Norwegian administration in the past decades. *The Magazine* hereby challenges the Norwegian legal profession to take up on their own initiative the case of female genital mutilation (FGM) among young Somali girls. In conclusion we will let authoress Amal Aden speak for herself:

“After mutilation, the woman loses the capability of sexual enjoyment... Many women feel they are being raped whenever they have sexual intercourse. No Somali woman can ever refuse to have sex with her own husband. It then ends in force/rape.”

The young authoress then goes on to describe a number of health complaints brought about by FGM.

It is high time the Norwegian government was indicted for its failure to abide by the law prohibiting FGM – an act that the government itself introduced. No amount of money can compensate for a ruined sex life. Nevertheless we will not be talking about petty cash if the Norwegian state has to pay for what women have lost in being deprived of the vital ability to live a worthy life. It is patently obvious that mutilated women are entitled to claim compensation from family members and others who were responsible for the criminal act. Civil action can also be brought against politicians and persons in authority (among them Conservative (H) leader Erna Solberg) who have actively prevented evidence being brought to light.

After Erna Solberg's performance as minister responsible for the FGM issue in 2005, it is a disgrace for the Conservative Party (H) that she is still party leader. While we wait for the responsible parties to be brought to justice in Norwegian courts of law, we hope that the case will be raised in international law courts. The hope is that Human Rights Service, together with the German humanitarian organisation Task Force, will bring Norway before the European Court for Human Rights in Strasbourg, due to the Norwegian authorities' failure to follow the country's own laws and thus prevent FGM.

This heart-breaking, barbaric practice, which is still being perpetrated, is Norway's most grotesque and unforgivable sin of omission.

MICHEIL “LITTLE STALIN” SAAKASHVILI: GEORGIA'S ACT OF AGGRESSION IN THE CAUCASUS

In the early morning of 8th August 2008, Georgia's impetuous President Micheil Saakashvili rashly started a war of aggression that could have had untold consequences. The president's American advisers, together with his US-based PR-bureau, had hit on the date. With the usual superficiality prevalent in the international advertising and PR business, the media specialists had advised the Georgian President to start the pre-planned attack that particular night. The reason shows how inadequate and incompetent advertising people are at assessing major foreign political realities: The PR-bureau thought the night of 8th August provided the perfect opportunity for launching the attack because “next day the attention of the whole world would be focused on the opening of the Summer Olympics in Beijing!”

During the night and early hours of the morning the Georgian army, with its American and Israeli weapons, struck at South Ossetia's impoverished and defenceless capital Tskhinvali. Entire apartment blocks were reduced to smoking ruins and the shell-shocked inhabitants had to seek cover either by hiding in cellars or by fleeing northwards. The roads, however, were unsafe and were soon attacked by aircraft and motorised armoured Georgian army units that quickly had Tskhinvali, with its (originally) 25,000 inhabitants in a grip of iron.

An entire staff of American and Israeli military advisers with overall command of the attack manned the defence ministry in Tbilisi. There was a great atmosphere among the

gun-slinging advisers beforehand; Americans and Israelis alike had incited the Georgians weeks in advance to “give the Russian bear a hefty punch on the nose.” Observers have later confirmed that such was indeed the mood and badinage in the Georgian Ministry of Defence.

Already in July 2008, a force of one-thousand American soldiers arrived in Georgia to train with Georgian units in a military exercise with the optimistic title “Immediate Response”. In retrospect it is evident that these joint Georgian-American manoeuvres were a kind of dress rehearsal for the Georgian attack of 8th August.

Apart from the approx. 160 permanent American military advisers, there is a strong Israeli contingent at the Georgian MOD. Furthermore, two ministers in President Saakashvili's government are from Israel. Even more sensational was the US-friendly president fetching one of them, Israeli citizen David Keserashvili, as defence minister! And he did not come alone - he was accompanied by a number of Israeli weapons experts. At one point, arms deals with Israel had become so numerous that representatives of the US weapons industry began complaining about the Israeli's successes when it came to rearming Georgia. This rearmament has accelerated during the past three years, and some ministers have resigned from the government in protest. Parallel with the country's comprehensive war preparations (firmly supported and financed by the USA), the Bush administration started putting pressure on its NATO partners

to recruit Georgia to the organisation as soon as possible. This admission was scheduled to take place at the Bucharest summit meeting in May 2008. Together with the rocket umbrella in Poland and Czechia, the US military facility Camp Bondsteel in the gangster-state Kosovo, as well as bases in Romania and Bulgaria, Georgia formed part of the USA's strategic plans to "contain Russia." This has been the USA's overriding objective with the country's NATO policy in Europe, but only the Cold-War devotee Vice President Dick Cheney was stupid enough to say it straight out. Another "Cold Warrior," presidential candidate John McCain, also demonstrated his foreign-political ignorance by declaring after the night attack of 8th August: "Today we are all Georgians."

Fortunately the "old" NATO countries Germany, France and Italy managed to prevent the politically immature Georgia from becoming a member of the military organisation. If not, we would have been in the delicate situation when a NATO country had attacked Russian spheres of influence

with anti-Georgian inhabitants. The question is: Would NATO have survived such a political strain?

After the Bucharest meeting, Prime Minister Putin warned President George W Bush that the illegal recognition of Kosovo had provided the precedence for allowing Abcasia and South-Ossetia to break away from Georgian sovereignty. There are strong indications that the US president neither knew the whereabouts of these territories nor had any inclination to examine the case further!

The aggressive warmonger President Saakashvili did not give two hoots about NATO because he was sure of gaining US support for his military adventure. This was hardly surprising; the mutual, personal flirtation between Saakashvili and Bush had been so intense, and the American media's tribute to Georgia's authoritarian president as the champion of democracy in Caucasia so vociferous, the choleric head of state was sure the USA would come to his rescue militarily. To make quite sure, the Georgian president had re-named the country's main road after George W Bush!

To their immense disappointment, the warmongers in Tbilisi saw this selfsame president embrace his former counterpart Vladimir Putin on the VIP tribune at the Summer Olympics opening in Beijing. This occurred during the second day of the campaign – at which point the Georgian war machine had broken down. It was one thing terrorising and killing civilians fleeing from Tskhinvali. Confronting well-

trained Russian armoured divisions from the 58th Army, who had been on stand-by for several months, was another matter all together. Supported by various types of aircraft from the Russian air force, as well as solid artillery backing, the Russians launched a massive counter attack with all guns blazing. The Georgians soon learned that their military adventure was over. They had to face the fact that they were better at sword dancing than at proper warfare. Rarely have we seen an army, equipped with the most modern weapons from the USA and Israel, disintegrate in such a pathetic manner. Motor vehicles, launching pads, rockets, tanks, ammunition and communications equipment, all fell into Russian

hands, while panic-stricken Georgians quickly changed from uniform into civilian clothing. Many even tried to flee from the front line in stolen civilian cars!

The depths to which the Georgian morale sank is best illustrated by events at the re-equipped naval harbour Poti on the Black Sea – and the situation at the strategic military supply depot Senaki with its own

air strip a few kilometres further inland. The Georgian navy did not even manage to remove their warships from Poti and rescue them by sailing to the southern seaport Batumi. The old garrison town Senaki was not only the home of a Georgian infantry division. With new runways, hangars, bunkers and advanced communications systems, Senaki had already (2006) been inaugurated with much pomp and circumstance as "Georgia's future NATO base." The USA participated actively in this junket.

When a lightly-armed Russian contingent, followed by motorised infantry, captured Poti without a fight, the crews had already left their naval vessels which were promptly sunk by the Russians. Senaki too fell without offering any military resistance. One Georgian officer explained it thus to a foreign journalist: "We didn't want to shoot at the Russians as we were afraid of endangering the lives of civilians." That is one way of camouflaging cowardice!

The Georgian army did not show so such consideration for civilians when they opened fire against Ossetian refugees on the roads around Tskhinvali. Thus ended the life of teenager Albina Sharanasova after her family's house had been fired upon with shells and automatic weapons on the night of 8th August. The next morning she took the family car and tried to escape northwards from her village outside Tskhinvali. A Georgian soldier first shot her tyres to pieces; he then murdered her with a shot to the heart.

The border town of Gori, south of Tskhinvali, is the birthplace of Joseph Stalin. Ironically enough the Soviet Dic-





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tator's mausoleum was reported as having been hit during Russian air raids against military positions in the town. Just like Joseph "Great Stalin" Dsjugasvili, Micheil "Little Stalin" Saakashvili put his trust in the USA – even in the hour of defeat. In a patriotic speech of exceptional long-windedness, President Saakashvili managed to portray Georgia as the victim of "Russian aggression." Despite NATO's own intelligence showing that the opposite was the case, President Saakashvili received wide media coverage for his version about the "imperialist Russia attacking the little peace-loving and democratic Georgia." The powerful media in the USA in particular were totally biased in favour of the mendacious Georgian propaganda during the first weeks. The Georgian president had told his people that help (ie. military assistance) was on the way from the US navy and air force. The American aid was well directed: It looked terribly impressive when the warship *716 Dallas* from the US Coast Guard came alongside the quay at the seaport of Batumi. The cargo that was unloaded was however far from warlike: Blankets, tents and other first-aid material for refugees. At the same time American aircraft landed with similar supplies in the capital Tbilisi. The Russians did not place any obstacles in the path of these consignments of humanitarian aid!

Yet the anti-Russian propaganda from the American government was just as belligerent as it had been for a long time. Both EU and NATO were drawn into the war of words against Russia. Pathetic delegations from Eastern Europe, led by Poland's nationalistic and Europe-hating President Kaczynski came to Tbilisi to add verbal fuel to the flames.

The really significant and future-oriented idea behind the EU establishment was old enemies France, Belgium, Netherlands, Italy and Germany vowing: No more wars between us! The EU has given us the longest period of peace on the European continent in history, and has brought political stability and economic progress that has acted as a magnet to a number of other countries. It is a sign of political immaturity when some states, which had been incorporated in the former Soviet dictatorship, now want to punish Russia for the crimes of the Soviet Union. Certain national leaders and politicians seem to have forgotten that, together with the Balts and the Ukraines, no people have suffered more under communist tyranny than the Russians themselves.

New EU states and NATO countries seem determined to use these organisations in order to wreak revenge on the Soviet Union (which was dissolved in December 1991). By walking backwards into the future they are trying to draw the old EU and NATO countries along with them as guarantors for their distorted political views. One of the most pathetic aspects, and one that reveals a total ignorance of history, is that so many of these countries in Eastern Europe are illogically placing their trust in the USA. They are forgetting that the USA, through treaties with the Soviet Union at Yalta and Potsdam in 1945, was responsible for handing them over to Stalin's dictatorship! Despite strong assurances to the Hungarians in 1956, and similar promises to the Czechoslovaks in 1968, the Americans made no real commitments – their hands were tied through these scurrilous treaties with Stalin.

The real victor following the Georgian's unsuccessful adventure is man called Vladimir Putin, who indeed soon turned up at the front and assured the Ossetians of Russian protection. The inhabitants of Abcasia and South Ossetia know they can trust the well-trained man with the steadfast steel-blue eyes. Russia's prime minister is simply confirming his country's 200-year tradition of keeping order among the Caucasian tribes who glare at each other in mutual distrust. The defeat of Georgia as well as American and Israeli weaponry and ambitions, marked the commencement of a trivial political comic-opera.

The political conjuror President Sarkozy turned up with a "peace plan." Also from Paris came the well-known intellectual circus artists and Israel enthusiasts André Glucksmann and Bernhard Levy. With a large media entourage they installed themselves in Tbilisi's best and most luxurious hotel. Their message was just as awe-inspiring as it was hysterical. The modern-day prophets of Jewish extraction could now tell us that Russia under Vladimir Putin was just as dangerous as Germany under Adolf Hitler. Could they be angling for the Nobel Peace Prize?

Germany's Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel also visited Tbilisi and completed an obligatory political exercise on behalf of her own country, the EU and NATO. Plainly uncomfortable, she assured President Saakashvili that the door to NATO was still open. It most certainly is not! In Germany alone the majority of the population are vehemently opposed to this unreserved embracing of Caucasian-state Georgia, fearing that it will jeopardise the substantial and constructive co-operation between Germany and Russia.

The most sensible words that have been written and spoken regarding the relationship between Europe and Russia following this summer's war in the Caucasus come from Germany's former federal chancellor, Gerhard Schröder. Here are a few of Mr Schröder's main points: In a transitional period after the Second World War and during the Cold War, the USA played a pivotal role in Europe. This period is now drawing to a close and the leading countries in Europe must now take an independent stance in foreign policy, trade policy, in defence co-operation and when it comes to Europe's strategic position between North America and Asia. Russia is a European state with a long history as super power. Russia and the rest of Europe have bonds of vital common interest which will be further reinforced in the future. With USA in the driving seat, the West has made serious mistakes in relation to Russia. Words of wisdom from Gerhard Schröder, who was the first German head of state after the end of the war to challenge the USA's role as Europe's Public Guardian, and refused to allow Germany participate the USA's illegal invasion of Iraq.

Even though a speculative, uncontrolled capitalism has brought America to the brink of economic ruin, the government in Washington is maintaining the same belligerent tone it used during the Cold War. That is why the war-based organisation from the same period – NATO – that has always been led by the USA, has become a serious threat to European security.

GEORGE W BUSH'S EIGHT YEARS IN THE WHITE HOUSE: A DISASTER FOR THE USA — A TRAGEDY FOR THE WORLD

Of the many people who have evaluated President George W Bush's eight years in the White House, we have chosen to quote two prominent US commentators. The first is Republican Peggy Noonan who wrote former president Ronald Reagan's most important speeches. She uses a dramatic metaphor from the world of nuclear physics to characterise the catastrophic loss of credibility that the US presidency has suffered as a result George W Bush's misrule of the country: "There has never been a comparable meltdown of a presidential office's power and dignity. The whole world is witnessing an appalling and dangerous loss of political prestige."

The renowned contemporary historian Douglas Brinkley is of the opinion that George W Bush has totally squandered America's political and economical capital:

"In retrospect his balance sheet is completely destructive. Bush is a natural-born gambler who has placed all his bets on Iraq – and lost."

From the moment he took office as president, George W Bush became a puppet dangling from the strings held by power-hungry, so-called "neo-conservative" theoreticians and politicians. Of course, none of them were conservative in the European sense of the word, with a solid knowledgeable upbringing and a broad understanding of historical and cultural values. They were cynical manipulative power politicians who fully lived up to the motto "the ends justify the means."

The oil lobby's superman, Vice-president Dick Cheney, and former friend and advisor of Saddam Hussein, ex-defence minister Ronald Rumsfeld, sometimes managed to convince the god-fearing president that their will was God's Will. Messrs Cheney and Rumsfeld, who were (and still are) close friends in private, also had a strong wish to extend US influence by means of an aggressive war. Together with the Israel lobbies in the USA, they had been agitating for an invasion of Iraq since the administration changeover in 2000. The terrorist attack of 11th September 2001 gave the Pentagon and the White House a welcome opportunity to start an attack against Afghanistan as a military overture to the Crusade against "the Axis of Evil" (Bush) – even though everyone knew that Saddam Hussein's secular dictatorship had nothing whatever to do with Taliban or Osama bin Laden's jihad. The blueprint for the attack on Iraq had already been prepared by Cheney /Rumsfeld in 2000.

We will not take up column space and the reader's time listing the mistakes and crimes (illegal aggressive warfare among them) committed under George W Bush's two periods as president – the list would be too long. We can state categorically, however, that instead of reducing the risk of terrorism (especially the Islamist brand) this danger has increased dramatically due to misguided military adventures in Afghanistan and Iraq, added to which is America's unwillingness and inability to curb Israel's expansive aggression policy in Palestine. Even worse than the USA's lack of

military success as World Sheriff, is the superpower's loss of moral and political credibility. Everyone knows that the fancy slogans about the USA having carried out aggressive wars in order to introduce civil values such as democracy and human rights is so much empty rhetoric.

When did we hear the USA criticising dictator states such as Saudi Arabia or Azerbaijan for their lack of human rights and democracy?

Never!

However, these states have something that is more important to the USA than beautiful phrases:

Oil!

Unfortunately the total and complete lack of political and moral credibility during George W Bush's presidency is affecting not only the USA but also the entire Western world – especially those NATO countries that fielded auxiliary troops to help the USA with particular reference to Afghanistan.

We must also look at the disastrous international events that occurred after George W Bush came to power in a totally undemocratic manner (he had received fewer popular votes than his Democrat opponent Al Gore). The Muslim terrorist attacks against New York and Washington DC on 11th September 2001 helped convince the deeply-religious president that God had chosen him to lead a "Crusade" against the "Axis of Evil." Unfortunately George W Bush is too ignorant of history, as well as being inadequately educated in political psychology, to realise the potency of the word "crusade" and the negative feelings it arouses in many parts of the world. Once the fatal words had been spoken (and everyone knew that the president really meant what he said) it was impossible to recant.

The neo-conservative, trigger-happy romanticists in Bush's inner circle knew how to exploit the "born-again" former alcoholic's Messianic urges and inclinations. Furthermore, two other devoutly Christian national leaders supported him in his belief in a divine calling: Great Britain's and Spain's prime ministers Tony Blair and José Maria Aznar. Italy's prime minister and financial acrobat, Silvio Berlusconi, also wanted to appear in the guise of a good Christian and joined the ranks of the American president's Crusade – which in the meantime had been renamed "preventive war" against terrorism.

The USA then instigated a massive programme of lies about the dictator Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction being a threat to the whole world. This reached its peak with former Secretary of State Colin Powell's Herostratic performance in the United Nations Assembly with his "children's drawings" that supposedly showed Iraq's mobile weapons of mass destruction. The former general deserves all respect for later referring to this piece of blatant propaganda as "the most degrading episode of my entire life!"

Many honest and decent folk have often wondered how religious people, who claim to love the truth and abhor lies, can be so mendacious as in the run-up to the war in Iraq? History of religion shows us, however, that religious leaders have little difficulty in employing mendacity when "it is all in a good cause." Another slogan much used in the service of clerics is "the end justifying the means." The Bush administration also decreed from top level that not only lies but "humanitarian" and "friendly bombing" as well as the maltreatment and torture of prisoners should be employed in the "war against terror."

The attitude among allied Muslim countries such as Pakistan and Egypt shows how catastrophically George W Bush has tarnished America's reputation. Opinion polls indicate that the population of these countries have more sympathy for the Taliban and the terrorist organisation al Qaida than for the USA!

On his departure, how is the image of the USA's 43rd president among neighbouring countries on the South American continent? The major power to the north has never been so unpopular in the Latin-American countries, with outright anti-USA hostility being shown by several governments.

The president has financed his ill-conceived wars and his mishandled internal affairs with the help of foreign loans and an irresponsible domestic monetary policy. With his unique gift for making verbal blunders, President George W Bush could assure his country's citizens that "America's economy is rock solid." This was just two weeks before the finance bubble in Wall Street burst! With the departure of America's 43rd president from his misruled country, the national debt has risen to an incredible 10 trillion (ten-thousand billion) dollars! The tragic-comical aspect is that a large portion of the USA's warfare against Islamist terrorism and "the Axis of Evil" is in reality financed by Arab oil money and credits from America's competitors China and Russia.

US domestic finances are in a steep decline that is affecting the less wealthy and middle-income earners hardest. Millions of Americans have lost their dwellings while others are being prevented from establishing their own homes. The number of people unable to afford any form of health or welfare insurance has risen from 8 to 47 million in recent years. At the same time, upper-echelon leaders in banks and insurance companies, as well as other acrobats in the world of finance, have been able to creep out the back door with billion-dollar bonuses that have been withheld from the public. Much of this wealth has been salted

away in tax havens, the existence of which is a disgrace to the civilised world. President George W Bush, commenting on the government's huge rescue package for the economy, underlined that it was aimed primarily to save "the finance system." The president showed no interest in the fact that the collapse of the capitalistic system was first and foremost affecting the man in the street. This clearly demonstrates his irrational and quasi-religious faith in the system's infallibility.

For those of us who have the energy to view the credit crunch from the lofty position of a comedy arena, it is amusing to see ultra-liberalists in Washington DC having to

rescue "the capitalist system" with an enormous socialistic rescue package!

There is also something deeply tragi-comic about George W Bush's rash war mongering that caused the Pentagon to stumble into the military-strategic pitfall that Osama bin Laden had prepared for the Americans. Compared with his American counterparts, the

powerful Islamist terrorist and Holy Warrior is a very astute psychologist. From the time when they were allies in the battle against the Soviet Union, he has quickly learned to understand the Americans' lack of perspective and trigger-happy cowboy mentality. Large portions of the weaponry borne by al-Qaida and Taliban fighters originate from that alliance period with the USA when dollar millions were easy to come by for "the USA's friends of religion and democracy." The main point in Osama bin Laden's 25-years strategy to conquer "the Great Satan" (USA), formulated already at the end of the 1990s, is that non-military victory can be accomplished by perpetrating acts of terrorism in the USA and Europe. That is why he has concentrated on luring the Americans into lengthy military operations in Muslim countries. The Americans cannot win such wars in the long run. So far Osama bin Laden has proved to be right. The invasion of Iraq has not resulted in any lasting victory.

Thousands of Americans have lost their lives or been wounded, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have been killed and millions of them are refugees in their own country or abroad. One paradoxical tragedy is that George W Bush, a born-again Christian, has pursued a policy whereby Iraq's Christians have been killed, persecuted in their own country or been forced to flee abroad. No one has contributed more to the strengthening of Islam's military and political self-confidence and status than the Christian US president. The heavily biased co-operation with Israel has also contributed to this unhappy result. "The problem in Iraq is the presi-



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dent himself,” proclaimed General George Casey. As he was the supreme commander of the American forces in Iraq, he ought to know what he is talking about.

Several of George W Bush’s closest colleagues have left the White House in recent years. By means of books, articles and interviews, they all emphasise a couple of common traits: The president’s inability to think through lengthy reasonings and arrive at a conclusion that can be converted into predictable, political actions. The other psychological phenomenon that is apparent with the president is his propensity to see all questions in terms of black and white without any diplomatic shading; people and nations are either good or bad – friends or enemies. His quick intuition is typical; not so his intellect! Unfortunately it is only in Western films that such problems can be solved so easily; in reality’s complicated world, politics need intelligent and varied responses.

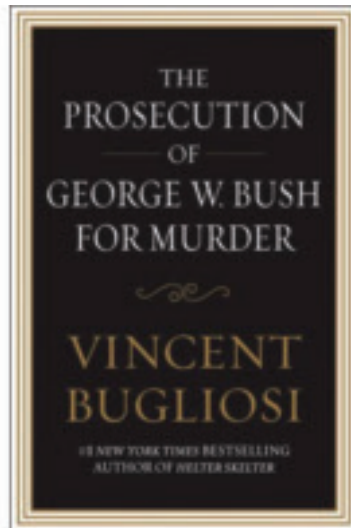
It ought to have been apparent for all American voters – at least on re-election in 2004 – that the USA’s 43rd president had neither the knowledge nor the ability to tackle complex issues. Electing him for a second term makes one seriously question the American electorates’ mental powers!

Opinion polls show that George W Bush at best had an approval rating among Americans of approx. 80% - at its lowest this had sunk under 20%. It is now high time for the survey institutions to evaluate the US citizens’ own political common sense.

Once George W Bush is no longer shielded by the juridical immunity granted by his office, US lawyer Vincent Bugliosi will be arraigning America’s 43rd president for a court of law. The charge sheet will cover the murder of thousands of American citizens, for which the president is responsible due to his illegal war of invasion against Iraq. As legal exaggerations often occur in the USA, this may well sound over dramatic. Nevertheless star advocate Vincent Bugliosi is not

just any run-of-the-mill lawyer. He needs neither money nor fame because he has plenty of both.

With his sharply-defined Mephistopheles countenance and elegant bespoke suits, 74-year-old *Vincent Bugliosi* is a living legend in the American judicial system. He gained world fame when, against all odds, he managed to have Charles Manson charged and convicted for the murder of Sharon Tate (the beautiful actress married to film director Roman Polanski) on circumstantial evidence. As prosecutor he has 21 difficult court cases to his credit and has brought down homicide convictions on all 21 perpetrators. None of the America’s first-rate lawyers have ever dared risk their reputation by confronting Bugliosi in a court of law. His recently published book *The Prosecution of George W. Bush for Murder* was sold out in record time and made the best-seller list in the New York Times. The initial print of 120,000 was only the start of a sales boom showing that many Americans yearn for a showdown with George W Bush.



With his supreme mastery of words, Mr Bugliosi has risen above the dirty party-political tricks that have dominated the US elections in recent months.

The elderly courtroom titan has launched a project that appeals to the best and most righteous in the American mentality. Vincent Bugliosi aspires to nothing less than the restoration of USA’s dignity as a nation in the eyes of the world.

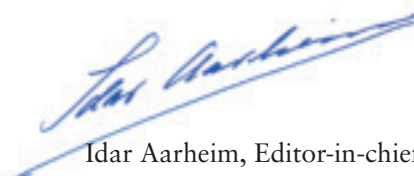
It is sorely needed.

George W Bush – and those who elected him to high office – have managed to destroy any dignity that the USA might possibly have had in a manner that will require a lengthy rebuilding process. That is why *The Magazine* wholeheartedly backing Vincent Bugliosi’s magnificent project!

Only time will show how President Barack Obama handles the burdensome legacy that he has inherited.

POLITICAL CORRECTNESS

Political correctness starts with cowardice and ends up in apathy.
That’s why *The Magazine* isn’t always politically correct.



Idar Aarheim, Editor-in-chief

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Ambassador HE Mr Roberto Alonso-Budge is the new Doyen of the Corps Diplomatique in Oslo.

HE Mr Roberto Alonso-Budge, Chile's popular Ambassador to Norway since February 2004, has taken over as Doyen of the Diplomatic Corps in Oslo. The Magazine wishes Mr Roberto Alonso-Budge every success in his responsible post of honour. The ambassador's CV is reproduced below.



(Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME: Roberto Alonso Budge
PLACE OF BIRTH: Valparaíso, Chile
MARITAL STATUS: Married to Alejandra Vergara, two children
ACADEMIC BACKGROUND: San Ignacio High School – Santiago, Chile
Law School, Catholic University of Chile
Diplomatic Academy “Andrés Bello”, Santiago – Chile
Institute for International Affairs, Universidad de Chile
Universidad de Brasilia, Brazil. (Latin American Integration process.)

CURRENT POST:
2004 (February -) Ambassador of Chile in Norway and to Iceland

PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND:

2002 - 2003 Minister Counsellor, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Chile to the USA
2000 - 2002 Consul General of Chile in Philadelphia
1998 - 1999 Deputy Chief of Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Santiago, Chile
1996 - 1997 Minister Counsellor, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Chile to the United States
1993 - 1995 Minister Counsellor, Embassy of Chile to Mexico; Alternate Delegate of Chile to OPANAL
1991 - 1992 Counsellor, Assistant Director of Bilateral Policy for the Americas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Santiago, Chile
1986 - 1990 Counsellor, Embassy of Chile to Argentina
1984 - 1985 Counsellor, Chief of the Americas Department, Bureau of Bilateral Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Santiago, Chile
1981 - 1983 First Secretary, Embassy of Chile to Brazil
1979 - 1980 Second Secretary and Consul, Esquel, Argentina
1978 - 1979 Bureau of Bilateral Policy, Europe Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs – Santiago, Chile
1976 - 1977 Second Secretary, Embassy of Chile to the Netherlands
1973 - 1975 Third Secretary, Embassy of Chile to Canada
1970 - 1972 Third Secretary, Department of Technical Assistance and Foreign Finance in the Economic Bureau

LANGUAGES: Spanish
English
Portuguese

The Czech Republic is holding the EU Presidency in the first half of 2009

*By the Czech Republic's
Ambassador to Norway,
HE Mr Lubos Novy*

The presidency is one of the most important and most challenging tasks of EU membership. The country holding the presidency plays a specific role that is not only organisational, but also liaisonal, political and representational. The manner in which the Czech Republic copes with this task will have a major impact on its reputation and standing in Europe. Accordingly, the Czech Republic's prime objective will be to ensure a competent Presidency.

The Czech Republic assumed the EU Presidency on 1st January 2009, having taken over this role from France. It will pass on the baton to Sweden on 1st July 2009.

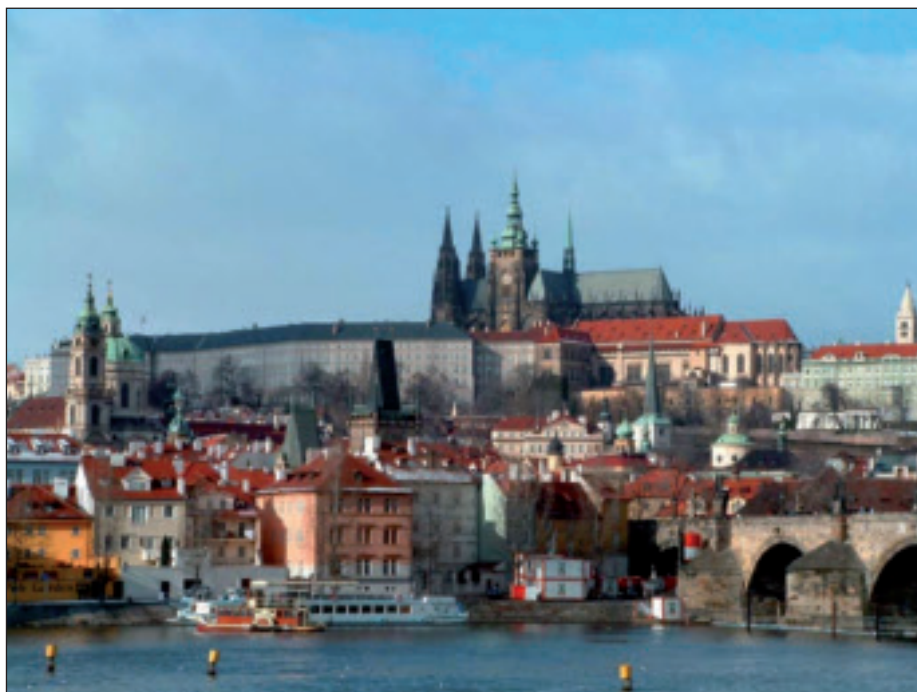
Although we have joined the EU fairly recently, the Czechs were involved in the idea of a common Europe many years ago: as early as the middle of the 15th century George of Podebrady, a Czech king, proposed a draft of an European alliance to the King of France Louis XI and other European sovereigns. Although unsuccessful, this plan undoubtedly represents one of the very first ideas of a united, peaceful Europe.

Later, the Czechs had the opportunity of practising co-operation (and very often of settling disputes) with the other thirteen national groups within the Austro-Hungarian Empire and, after its dissolution, of building a new nation together with two other nationalities, the Slovaks and Rusyns (Ruthenia is now part of Ukraine).

Czech Presidency Priorities

The 'competitive and open Europe' priority is currently the flagship of the Czech Presidency. It aims mainly at enhancing the internal market and liberalising trade policy.

All priorities will reflect the general theme of the Czech Presidency as sum-



St Vitus Cathedral, Prague Castle and Charles Bridge

marised by the motto *Europe without Barriers*. By this motto the Czech Republic expresses its will to remove barriers that still exist among EU Member States, notably in the field of the internal market and free movement of goods, services, persons and capital, including the complex legal regulations of the EU and Member States. These barriers do not allow the potential of individual countries, and the European Union as a whole, to be fully utilised. The motto also stands for the external openness of Europe towards the entire world.

In 2009 Europe will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain, and the fifth anniversary of the biggest ever enlargement of the European Union. In the light of these historical lessons, the Czech Republic is particularly sensitive to the persisting obstacles hampering the European integration process, especially in relation to the internal market. The Czech Republic plans to discuss the effects of enlargement on the functioning of the EU economy at informal EU

Council meetings, and will arrange a conference for the professional public. The continued existence of obstacles makes it impossible to fully exploit the potential of individual Member States and the Union as a whole. At the same time, the Czech Republic is conscious of the fact that the EU is sometimes viewed from the outside as a closed community.

Internally, the Czech Republic wishes to draw attention to the transitional periods for the free movement of workers, obstructions hindering the free movement of goods, services, persons and capital, the problematic functioning of the internal market in energy, the excessive financing of traditional policies (especially the Common Agricultural Policy) the withholding of extra funding for pro-growth policies, the need to improve and streamline the regulatory environment of the EU, and the need to deepen mutual co-operation between EU Member States in the fields of justice and home affairs.

As for the external dimension, the Czech Republic considers the main

barriers to be the low level of liberalisation in trade with third countries, the Union's inadequate energy policy, the pace of EU enlargement, and the obstacles existing to transatlantic economic co-operation. It is necessary to press ahead with the creation of a common EU migration and asylum policy following the dismantling of barriers that hindered the mobility of people between the Union's Member States, and in the same vein to achieve greater external openness.

Further to the motto 'Europe Without Barriers', the Czech Republic has set five priority areas for its Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Czech Republic expects the promotion of EU reform efforts to drive forward the reform impulse on a national scale. The principal priority area, A Competitive and Open Europe, is joined by other priority areas planned for the Czech Presidency:

- Sustainable and Secure Energy
- A Budget for Europe's Future
- Europe as a Global Partner
- A Secure and Free Europe

During its Presidency the Czech Republic will arrange twelve informal meetings of the EU Ministers and over 300 meetings at various levels, ranging from visits by top representatives of EU institutions to meetings of officials and experts. More than 30,000 participants in meetings will visit the Czech Republic during the course of the Presidency. The agenda and organisation of all meetings will be provided by the Czech Republic in conjunction with the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU.

The most important events – the informal ministerial meetings – will be accompanied by concerts, exhibitions, etc. Besides Prague, the meetings will be held in six Czech and Moravian towns and cities, namely Brno, Hluboká nad Vltavou, Litomice, Luhačovice, Mariánské Lázně and Olomouc. A number of minor meetings will be held in numerous other towns. Informal ministerial meetings represent a fine opportunity to enhance the prestige and attractiveness of individual regions and present their cultural richness and traditions to foreign guests.



Hluboká Castle in Southern Bohemia



Olomouc with its UNESCO-listed Holy Trinity Column

As the presidency must also deal with urgent problems, the Czech programme is constantly developing and its priorities are being constantly reassessed.

“Flexibility is of the utmost importance,” emphasises Czech Deputy Prime Minister for EU Affairs, Alexandr Vondra.

Detailed information about the priority areas of the Czech Republic's EU Presidency can be found on the following web page:

www.businessinfo.cz/files/2008/080812_czech_pres_priorities_oct_07.pdf

Brazil and Norway: forming a closer partnership

By HE Mr Sergio Eduardo Moreira Lima, Ambassador of the Federative Republic of Brazil in Norway

Following the State Visit of President Lula to Norway in 2007, Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg visited Brazil from 14th to 17th September. Brazil and Norway are building a partnership based on the dynamism of their economic and commercial relations, as well as their joint determination to achieve environmental sustainability, energy and food security, and fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Prime Minister's visit represented not only the renewal of political contacts at the highest level between Brazil and Norway with a frequency never seen before, but also the commitment of the two leaders to making the world a better place.

According to President Lula's welcoming speech in Brasilia:

"My visit to Scandinavia has strengthened my conviction that our ambitious partnership can be projected beyond our frontiers. Together we can face truly global challenges such as climate change, the protection of the environment and the fight against hunger and poverty. Only in this way can we ensure higher levels of well-being and prosperity without excluding anyone or sacrificing future generations."

As a major result of Mr Stoltenberg's visit, a *Memorandum of Understanding* was signed with the object of fostering a partnership between Brazil and Norway on issues of climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development. A comprehensive political dialogue and co-operation regarding reduced greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and



From left: HE President Lula and Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg. (Photo: Embassy of the Federative Republic of Brazil in Oslo)

forest degradation was then initiated. The Prime Minister also announced Norway's contribution to the *Amazon Fund* aimed at combating these problems, which are affecting the biodiversity of the Amazon, the way of life of its inhabitants and increasing global greenhouse gas emissions. Established by the Brazilian Development Bank, the Fund can also finance the implementation of monitoring systems and deforestation control in other tropical countries.

On the energy front, the Prime Minister's meetings in Brazil were encouraging for the future of bilateral co-operation regarding oil and natural gas. The Norwegian model of oil and gas exploration was a point of interest as Brazilian authorities examine the regulatory and institutional framework of oil and gas exploration in Brazil in the context of the so-called offshore pre-

salt discoveries. Offshore supporting vessels, equipment for deep-sea drilling and possible CO₂ capture and storage technologies show how broad our co-operation is and how much it can grow. The Prime Minister visited the Aker Promar Shipyards in Niteroi, Rio de Janeiro, where the Norwegian company is building the most intelligent and sophisticated offshore platform-supporting vessel in Brazil. In fact, encouraged by the size of the co-operation of his State with Norway and the willingness to further expand it in areas of high technology, the Governor of Rio de Janeiro announced plans to visit Norway in 2009.

In line with the MOU signed in Oslo in 2007 between Statoil and Petrobras, Brazil remains interested in promoting the use of bio-ethanol on a sustainable basis as a commodity, which would diversify the energy matrix, making it more environmentally friendly and further reducing CO₂ emissions. Norwegian businessmen are investing in this sector in Brazil. Norway was invited to participate in the Sao Paulo Bio-fuels Conference in November 2008.

Brazil and Norway are partners in ensuring the supply of chemicals and fertilizers for increasing foodstuff production on a sustainable basis and with higher productivity. Yara has been expanding its presence in Brazil and has become the second largest fertilizer producer in the Brazilian market.

Norsk Hydro and Vale have strengthened their co-operation in the production of aluminium and manganese alloys for use in modern metallurgic industries. The Norwegian company, which has a minority share in Brazil's Alunorte, is participating in the construction of the first unit of what will become the largest aluminium plant in the world. On the other hand, Vale has

significantly increased investments in its manganese plant in Mo i Rana.

To prepare for the future of our partnership, important agreements have been signed in the last two years in energy, environment, higher education and development co-operation for capacity building in Africa. These agreements have been reached not only between the governments of the two countries, but also between enterprises, business federations and research institutions.

For the first time, the relationship between Brazil and Norway is being based upon areas of strategic importance, with prospects still to be fully evaluated. Norway has already become the main destination for Brazilian exports to the Nordic countries and is also responsible for the largest flow of investments these countries make in Brazil.

In his contacts with the business community in Rio, and in his conversations in Brasilia and with local communities in his exploratory trip through

the Tapajos River in the Amazon, Mr. Stoltenberg was given a sample of the challenges and opportunities facing a country that is so large and diverse.

Although different in many respects, Norway and Brazil share important goals and values which were highlighted during the Prime Minister's visit. Thus the complementary aspects of our two nations will be a tool to help realise President Lula's vision of "well-being and prosperity without excluding anyone or sacrificing future generations."

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict - Some questions that need answering

*By Omar S Kitmitto
Former Head of PLO
Delegation In Norway*

As a member of the human race, I never stop asking myself the following questions:

Why did Europe persecute the Jews, discriminate against them and eventually annihilate them? I cannot find any specific answer or reason for such behaviour towards a small ethnic group, living within civilized societies, praying to the same God, actively contributing to the economic, cultural and political life of those societies. I find no answer – there is neither rhyme nor reason.

Why do we still come across people inside and outside Europe who deny the holocaust? It is illogical, untruthful and a falsification of history to deny this fact which took the lives of millions of Jews, Gypsies, former Soviet citizens in addition to Poles, Czechoslovaks and others. How can mankind's memory be that short?

Why was, and still is, the Jewish Question so difficult to resolve even after the establishment of the state of Israel? Is it because the solution was forced upon the native citizens of Palestine at that time?

Why did a solution to the Jewish Question create the Palestinian Question? Is it because Great Britain and

France as occupying powers distributed amongst themselves the heritage from the Ottoman powers over the Arab countries, including Palestine?

Is this the justice that Israel was built upon?

Why was there no Jewish Question in the history of the Arabs before 1917? Could it be because they managed to live and coexist all these years in peace and harmony?

Why did Europe initiate, legalize and vote for the partition of Palestine in the United Nations by giving the Jews 54% of Palestine and the Palestinians 46% of the land, while the percentage of the Jews in Palestine at the time was only 17% of the entire population? The rest were Moslem and Christian Palestinians. Approval of Resolution No. 181 was also given by the communist block as well as the United States of America.

How could Europe remain silent when the Israeli Deputy Minister, Mr Matan Vilani, in March 2008, promised the Palestinians a bigger holocaust while Europe at the same time could take anyone who denied the holocaust to court? What a paradox!

Did Europe or the United States of America adopt for once a really neutral

attitude towards the conflict between the Palestinians and Israelis? Weren't they biased in favour of Israel all the time? Why?

To be more precise, I can find only one single neutral position; it was taken by Norway throughout the secret negotiations that took place in Oslo 1992–1993 which led to the Oslo Declaration of principles.

Why do Europe and all the USA call the Israeli assassination of Palestinians and the killing of Palestinian children self defence, while the killing or kidnapping of Israeli soldiers is called an act of terror? Is not the occupation in itself an act of terror?

The massive Israeli attack on Gaza early 2008 ended with the assassination of 130 Palestinians, half of them were civilians including children between the age of 10 months and 16 years old.

What would have been the reaction if the victims were Israeli Jews?

There are about 11,000 Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails. Can European or American politicians remember the name of one of those prisoners? Yet those same politicians worked hard to release the captured Israeli soldier Gel'ad Shalit – a soldier who was trained to kill and occupy! He be-

came the most renowned prisoner, not only for the US and Israel, but also for many of the Arab leaders who are using all their connections and power to find him and release him.

On the 4th of March 2008, the Israeli army succeeded in assassinating one Palestinian militant and a two-months old baby.

What would the reaction in Europe and the USA have been if the baby were a Jewish one?

Of course, it would have been equally painful if the baby were a Palestinian Arab or an Israeli Jew.

Europe and the US did boycott the Hamas ministers in the National Unity Palestinian Government. They said it was because Hamas refused to approve the signed peace agreement between the PLO and Israel. But they did not boycott the Israeli Minister Avigdor Libermann who was a member of Olmert Government. Minister Libermann did neither recognize the signed Peace Agreements nor the PLO or even the Palestinian people. Minister Libermann suggested that all the Arab members of the Knesset *should be shot if they have a telephone conversation with Palestinians in Gaza or the West Bank!*

In a European poll where the ques-



Mr. Shimon Peres and Mr. Omar S Kitmitto after the Nobel Peace Ceremony in Oslo 1994. (Photo: PLO Delegation in Norway)

tion was which country in the entire world represents a threat to global peace, 61% of *European public opinion* answered that it was the State of Israel. This shows that there is a gap between the policies of the European Governments and their citizens when it comes to the Palestinian question. Why?

Can anyone really believe that the vision of President George W Bush of a two-state solution can be realized under the present circumstances, while Israel continues to confiscate Palestinian land and build settlements?

All these questions need logical, objective and realistic answers.

Gaza - the new Sabra and Shatila

Mr Omar S. Kitmitto's article was written before Israel initiated a massive military offensive on the Gaza Strip at the Christmas Eve 2008.

At the time of writing, early January 2009, Israeli attacks have cost over five hundred Palestinian lives and left some two thousand wounded. At the same time three or four Israelis have fallen victim to the less than accurate missiles which the Palestinians have fired at Israel.

How would the world have reacted if the Palestinians had killed five hundred Israelis and wounded a further two thousand?

The loss of human life and human suffering is a great tragedy in a conflict such as this. However, one would have to turn more than one blind eye in or-

der not to notice how small the Israeli losses are compared with the losses of the Palestinians.

It is typical of the Israelis and Americans to create a commotion about a missing Israeli soldier while thousands of Palestinians are being held captive in miserable conditions in Israeli prisons.

Israel made a major propaganda issue out of their retreat from the Gaza Strip a few years ago. They claim to have given the 1.5 million Palestinians squashed together in the Gaza region political freedom. In reality Gaza is the world's largest concentration camp, a camp the Israelis have full control over thanks to the separation wall illegally erected on occupied Palestinian soil, and border checkpoints which are the only openings in the barbed wire bar-

rier behind which the Palestinians are confined.

A grotesque element in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is that the occupants complain that the occupied are rebelling against the occupation! It is hardly surprising that the democratic majority in a concentration camp elects the party that hates the occupants the most: Hamas.

The Magazine is opposed to any ideology which promote violence, whether the reason be religion, political opportunism or extreme nationalism (such as in the USA and Israel). Therefore we do not sympathize with Hamas. But as long as this Islamic organization continues to assume social and military responsibility for the occupied people, they will have the support of the Pales-

tinians to a degree proportional to the aggression and terror inflicted by the Israelis.

This new display of Israeli terrorism against Hamas and the civilian population of Gaza brings to mind an earlier Israeli-led military offensive against Palestinian refugee camps, namely the massacres in the Lebanese camps of Sabra and Shatila in 1982. The mass killings were organized by the then Minister of Defence Ariel Sharon, who later became Prime Minister.

It is common knowledge that the Israeli occupation, the building of settlements for hundreds of thousand Israelis on Palestinian soil, and military aggression against the Palestinians, can only continue because the USA supports this policy.

Those who believe that the situation will change under President Barack Obama are living under a dangerous misconception. Obama has already ensured the political leaders in Jerusalem and the powerful Israeli lobbies in the USA that he will support Israel through thick and thin. Obama's choice of min-

isters and staff indicates that he intends to keep his word.

The USA does not lead Israeli politics in the Middle East as some claim; the situation is, unfortunately the opposite! Europe tags along behind the USA, passes worthless resolutions with admonitions to "both parties" – and pays most of the cost of the enormous material damage caused by Israel.

The only way to lasting peace is to force Israel to respect the approved pre-1967 boundary. This is something which the global community can decide – the one prerequisite being that the administration in Washington has the guts to put an end to the Israeli policy of aggression.

In the real world, however, this is but wishful thinking. Israel, with its imperialist apartheid policy, sets the agenda as well as passing international resolutions.

The dangerous question is this: Can an artificial nation founded on prophetic myth and ethnic cleansing secure world peace?

At the time of writing (7th January) Israel has been attacking the Gaza Strip with armoured columns and regular infantry for the past four days. The civilian losses on the Palestinian side have increased dramatically. The present status indicates nearly one-thousand killed and about 3,500 injured. Israeli attacks on schools (including a UN-run school) and a kindergarten alone have resulted in approx. sixty deaths. The large majority of casualties are children, women and elderly people. Following this massacre the former bishop of Oslo in the Church of Norway, Gunnar Stålsett, characterised Israel's military intervention as a "crime against humanity." The remark was made in an NRK TV interview on the evening of 6th January.

Bishop Stålsett has for many years played a central international role in the ecumenical co-operation organisations linking the various religions and different Christian churches and faiths. *The Magazine* entirely concurs with Bishop Stålsett's remarks.

The Magazine

Knut Hamsun Anniversary - 2009!

In connection with the 150th anniversary of Knut Hamsun's birth (1859-1952) we will be bringing further details about this great Norwegian author and the

actual anniversary celebration in the summer edition of *The Magazine*.

Siena in Tuscany

The commercial department of the Italian Embassy in Oslo (ICE) has been very active under its new director Mrs. Gabriela Lombardi. One of the arrangements was a wine-trade seminar at Oslo Militære Samfund on 5th November dealing with wines from the southern part of Tuscany, with the town of Siena as the natural main point of focus.

As far back as the Middle Ages Siena has been renowned as one of Italy's most vital and creative cities. Both the cathedral and city hall are part of the world's architectural cultural heritage. They are also the vis-

ual proof of the tension that reigned in the town between the papal church and the prosperous citizenry. Later in the Middle Ages Siena also became an important finance centre in Italy where the country's oldest bank was established. Much of the economic foundation was based on the high standard Tuscan wine had achieved by that time. Hence it is only natural that Italy's foremost enoteca (wine collection) has found its place in the town's castle.

This day we had an opportunity of sampling approx. fifty wines from fourteen different producers.

The Magazine's editors consider the white wines made from the Vernaccia grape of St. Gimignano (the town with the many towers and steeples) to be among the best of their kind. From the Brolio castle, which belongs to Italy's (and indeed the world's) oldest wine family Ricasoli, we have a beautiful view across to Siena.

After the seminar Italy's Ambassador to Norway, HE Mrs Rosa Anna Coniglio Papalia, invited participants to a buffet dinner at the Italian Embassy Residence in Inkognitogaten, Oslo.

Mauds

I KVADRATUREN

Charming and comfortable restaurant with a personal atmosphere, traditional Norwegian food and good service. Mauds is the perfect choice whether dining alone or in larger groups.

The informal atmosphere and excellent food attracts customers from Oslo and visitors from all over the world. With a wide selection of seasonal, traditional and classic dishes and with fine wines, we wish you welcome for a pleasant meal at Mauds.



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Very Italian – yet with champagne

We have been inviting women holding leading positions in Norwegian wine importing companies to choose a favourite menu, and then match the courses with wines from their own collection. The last lady to take part in this “gourmet relay race” is Prisca Boffa Hjorth, Director of PR and Media in the renowned family-owned firm Ekjord. Few people have such an inter-European background as Mrs Hjorth. With an Italian father and German mother, she grew up in the beautiful scenic surroundings of Lake Lugano – on the Swiss-Italian border. From childhood she had the good fortune of speaking three languages – Italian, German and French. A considerable advantage when embarking on a career in the wine business! Prisca B Hjorth studied design and then worked for many years in a fashion house. However, she could not have attracted more attention at a fashion show than she now does from her position behind the merchandise at a wine function!

Mrs Hjorth’s energy and enthusiasm are infectious! Her indestructible good humour rubs off on everyone she contacts. In relation to food and drink, she explains it thus: “I love my Italian background; the chosen dishes are typical of the part of northern Italy where I come from. But my choice of aperitif comes from the talented, small family producer Alfred Gratien of Epernay (Champagne). Nothing in the world stimulates the taste buds like an elegant, dry champagne: Alfred Gratien Brut 1997 (Nkr.549).

As antipasto (starter) I would serve fois gras (goose liver) accompanied by a robust Riesling from Hochheim (Rheingau): Domdechant Werner Kirchenstück Auslese 1997 (Nkr. 385). Sublime sweetness with refreshing acidity!

As primo piatto (intermediate course) I would prepare panserotti ricotta a spinaci (newly baked pasta filled with fresh cheese and spinach). With this dish I would serve melted



Prisca Boffa Hjorth. (Photo: The Magazine)

and browned butter with salvia added. The wine for this course should be a red Valpolicella Ripasso 2005 from Capitel della Corsara. This wine with second fermentation on Amarone residue provides the light yet complex flavour that so suits this dish.

Secondo piatto (main course) would be rack of lamb with roast chestnuts. Together with this succulent, rare meat I (together with many others) would choose the prize-winning red San Leonardo 2001 (Nkr. 385) from Alto Adige, north of Lake Garda. The wine, in typical Bordeaux style and made from Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc, nevertheless has the classic terroir characteristics of the Adige valley’s complex soil and the variable climate from close proximity to the Alps.

As dessert I would serve mille-feuille (puff pastry) with frutta di bosco (woodland berries). Veneto’s red dessert wine Recioto from renowned producer Montresor would suit the berries admirably. This wine will soon feature in Vinmonopolet’s

full selection catalogue but has yet to be allocated a number.

We asked Mrs Hjorth for whom would she serve such an exclusive menu? She answered immediately: “It would have to be for very close friends who appreciate the matching of fine wines to-gether with good food.”

Like her female colleagues in the wine trade who have also been presented in this issue, Prisca Boffa Hjorth keeps very fit and healthy. She has practised classic ballet dancing, been an Alpine skiing instructor and taught aerobics for many years. In recent years she has run a football school for boys and girls, in co-operation with the major football club AC Milan, here in Norway.

Besides a high degree of physical activity, we detect another common feature among these three ladies from the Norwegian wine trade that we have presented in this gourmet relay: Their shared enthusiasm for the world’s most noble party drink - champagne!

Importers Ekjord can provide further information regarding duty-free prices.

Champagne - for every occasion



Kristin Tveitan Fredriksen. (Photo: The Magazine)

“I have asked myself many times if there could be any occasion when champagne would be inappropriate, but have arrived at the conclusion that I can always drink champagne – at any hour of the day!”

This light-hearted and highly non-Norwegian remark was uttered by Kristin Tveitan Fredriksen, one of the most prominent ladies in the Norwegian wine importing business. She is managing director of Norwegian Primewine, a subsidiary of the Swedish importers of the same name. In the course of only a few years Swedish Primewine, under the leadership of young wine enthusiasts, has become Sweden’s third largest wine importer. The Norwegian subsidiary is also doing well under Kristin’s skilful management. She is a Master of Business Administration, mother of three, wine expert - and is one of those people who seem to have time for everything. She is also fond of cooking and delights in serving fine food for family and friends. That is why we give her the following assignment: Compose a three-course meal

while using three of your own wines.

Quick as a flash (Kristin is also a mountaineer) she chooses the following menu: “We start with scampi, fresh or shock-frozen in non-processed form. I would treat them to a light marinade of garlic and oil before putting them in a frying pan to watch them change colour from grey to pink. I prefer scampi without bread – but good quality bread is not to be sneezed at.

Muscadet from Loire is among the world’s best shellfish wines. The one we start with is Ch. la Cariziere 2007 priced at Nkr. 124. The wine is readily obtainable because, like the other two I am recommending, it features in Vinmonopolet’s full-range catalogue. The wine is organic, fresh and clean tasting, and it has acquired a rich infusion because, after fermentation, it has lain sur lie for a few months – on a bed of stalks and grape remnants.

For the main course I would select a lively young red wine: Frey Organic Merlot 2006, costing Nkr. 149. The family business Frey Vineyards in Mendocino Valley, to the north of Sonoma in California, has been among the pioneers in the development of organic wines

without additives of any description. My husband and I often choose the wine first and let the wine choice determine what we shall eat with it. We do this both at home and at restaurants.

To go with this vigorous, clean Merlot wine I would make a juicy hamburger of first-class minced beef, containing gherkins, onion, salt and pepper. As trimming I would serve a large bowl of green salad. The dressing would comprise good-quality olive oil and a little balsamic vinegar; too much acid in the dressing is detrimental to the wine. I love sweet desserts; that is why I would finish the meal with two bowls of fresh berries - one with strawberries the other with raspberries. The guests can decide whether they will use cream and sugar with the berries.”

The Magazine: Did we hear you say “the guests”?

“Yes, this could be a weekday dinner when some friends come to call. The food is easy to prepare and takes little time.”

The Magazine: Now we are looking forward to hearing what you would offer your guests as a concluding wine to this weekday dinner.

“I try to follow the ancient Romans’ words of wisdom about every day being treated as a festive occasion. That is why we finish with a reasonable but fine champagne from family producer Alexandre Bonnet, which is renowned for its magnificent Pinot Noir grapes that give a fresh, yet full-bodied character to the house’s festive wines. And make a note of Alexandre Bonnet Grand Cuvée Brut’s sympathetic price; it only costs Nkr. 209 at Vinmonopolet.”

We must supplement Kristin Tveitan Fredriksen’s vinous CV by adding that she started up Vinnordia (a subsidiary of Arcus) in 2002. She then disappeared for a few years to New York. Nowadays, her name is one to be reckoned with among the ranks of Norwegian wine importers.

Importers Norwegian Primewine can also provide all necessary information regarding duty-free prices .

Dry sherry with gazpacho



Line Enerhaugen. (Photo: The Magazine)

Some twelve years ago there were only a couple of women holding leading positions among Norwegian wine importers. Nowadays there are quite a few. It also seems that these young women, in a tough business environment, often show more interest than their male colleagues in combining food and wine in a harmonious manner. In a separate article Managing Director Kristin Tveitan Fredriksen tells readers of her favourite food and wine combinations. Here, Marketing Director Line Enerhaugen in Maxxium Norge follows up by choosing three courses which she matches to three wines from her own collection.

Ms Enerhaugen has spent ten years in the wine business and knows more journalists and reporters than most people in the wine trade. This is because she was a member of the Oslo Press Club staff at tradition-steeped Tostrupkjelleren for a number of years. Line Enerhaugen sums up her gastronomic combinations as follows:

“I fell in love with gazpacho the first time I tasted this Andalusian speciality - a cool bowl of soup in the sun, one

could say. Yet gazpacho is a refreshing opener to a meal at any time of the year. I have been visiting Jerez de la Frontera frequently in recent years and have become acquainted with a couple of the foremost sherry producers. In my opinion no other wine matches gazpacho so perfectly as dry sherry. That is why I choose Harveys Fino priced at Nkr. 144. It is readily available (full-range selection) at Vinmonopolet. Incidentally, with modern kitchen mixers/food blenders it is easy to make this Andalusian soup.”

This is where Line comes with a surprise for some:

“I am one of those who can drink a fine champagne with just about anything. As I particularly like fruits of the sea in various forms, this time I would recommend a generous casserole of mussels as the basis of a proper shellfish stock to which fresh garlic has been added. Then we can add some dill and possibly other ingredients, according to your fancy. Flavour the casserole with a dry white wine,”

Then comes a heartfelt appeal from Line:

“It is so important that the shell-

fish and fish are completely fresh. When you think about all the marvelous raw materials we have around us and our long coastline, most of what is offered by the supermarkets is an absolute disgrace.

But I have departed from the main theme. To accompany the casserole of mussels I would choose the dry champagne Piper Heidsieck Brut. It features in the ordering catalogue both in magnum size (Nkr 647) and ordinary bottles (Nkr. 315).”

The Magazine: We can't wait to hear the finish!

Enerhaugen: “This would be my favourite dessert: Crème Brûlée, or Crème Catalan if we are in Spain, as the sweet originates from Catalonia and Barcelona. We must ensure however that it has a thin, light-brown and crispy crust.

I have experienced many times that the best accompaniment for such a wonderful dessert is another sherry: Bristol Cream (Nkr.150). This golden-brown wine, glittering beautifully in the glass, compliments the colour of the dessert.”

Bristol Cream, incidentally, is the world's most-sold sherry brand – and is far from being as sweet as many people think. Generally speaking I would say that sherry is an underrated wine type – especially as a pre-prandial appetizer and together with a meal.

Line Enerhaugen is a very efficient manager. Based on personal experience, both from wine tastings at home and trips abroad, I know she can handle most situations. And she is a lady who keeps herself fighting fit! Jogging every morning as well as weight-lifting, sailing and horse riding. Furthermore, her many friends say it is always a pleasure to be invited home to Line for a meal or a drink.

To day Line Enerhaugen has changed company. She is marketing director in Christiania Vin og Brennevin.

By I. Aa.

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KALEIDOSCOPE

BY AASE MELBY BLOCK

Nelson R. Mandela – duly celebrated on his 90th birthday!



*South Africa's ambassador in Norway, HE Mr Ismail Coovadia, welcomes all and sundry to pay official tribute to Nelson R Mandela on his 90th birthday outside The Nobel Peace Centre in Oslo on 18th July 2008
(Photo: The Magazine)*

The same day, the Nobel Peace Centre organised frequent tours of the Centre with additional focus on Nelson R. Mandela.

In South Africa he is affectionately referred to as Madiba, an honorary title adopted by elders of Mandel's clan, and meaning "father of the country". Not without reason when we consider that he, the lawyer, was the symbol and leader of the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. After being convicted of armed resistance and spending 27 years in prison, he was released in 1990 following enormous pressure from the international community. In 1993, together with State President Frederik W. de Klerk, he received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo. During both his time in prison and after his release, Mandela received many international accolades.

When Mandela together with the ANC and anti-apartheid movement came to power following the first free democratic elections in the country in 1994, he was involved in establishing the new constitution that included a comprehensive human rights declaration to prevent further discrimination, tyranny and oppression. After stepping down as the President of South Africa in 1999, he dedicated his life to fighting poverty, HIV and AIDS.

The constantly smiling statesman, who has always worked for reconciliation and cooperation, has a special place in the hearts and minds of Norwegians.

18th July was a special day in the 2008 calendar. On that day, one of the greatest statesmen of our time, South African Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, was celebrated with acclaim and great admiration throughout the world. Newspapers and television covered the event, concerts were held, speeches made, and special celebrations were organised all over the planet. In Oslo, too, where the South African Embassy, the Nobel Peace Centre and the South African Society in Norway celebrated the day outside the Nobel Peace Centre in Oslo.

South Africa's ambassador, HE Mr Ismail Coovadia, opened the proceedings before the public, and together with Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, wrote a personal eulogy to the charismatic statesman in a Book of Congratulations that was later sent to the man himself! A huge birthday cake was cut up, juice and tea handed out, and the atmosphere took off when the South African band Sabela Production and the Norwegian Nkululeko Choir played and sang for the celebrating crowd.

IN IBSEN'S FOOTSTEPS



Henrik Ibsen in 1894



Paving stones along Karl Johans gate in Oslo inlaid with the quotation *Eviggt ejes kun det tabte* (Eternally owned is but what's lost.)
(Photo: The Magazine)

Have you noticed all the stainless steel letters laid into the granite paving stones from the Ibsen Museum in Henrik Ibsensgate 26 to the Grand Hotel in Karl Johansgate? Almost 70 quotations from the dramatist Henrik Ibsen's (1828-1906) life's work are brought to life in the footpaths, and offer a marvellous challenge to members of the public to test their knowledge about where they belong in his authorship.

The street art project was officially inaugurated on 11 September, with all those responsible and members of the press gathering at Henrik Ibsen's regular haunt, the Grand Café, after which Oslo Mayor Fabian Stang cut a ribbon outside the entrance to the Grand Hotel on Karl Johan.

Information signs will be gradually installed along the route. Let's hope the authorities provide an English translation for all the tourists who visit Oslo and the Ibsen Museum at Henrik Ibsensgt 26 adjacent to Slottsparken (The Royal Park). It was here in this large (300 square metres)

corner apartment on the third floor that Ibsen lived with his wife Suzanna from 1895.

www.norskfolkemuseum.no

Henrik Ibsen became a tourist attraction at the Grand Café where he had a regular table and appeared at the same time every day. It was said that you could set your watch by him. At precisely 11.30 a.m. he would put down his pen, put on his frockcoat and stroll down to the University, where he would check that he was on schedule by the University clock. At exactly 11.45 a.m. he would enter the Grand Café, order a glass of beer from his favourite waiter, take up position at his regular table and pass away a peaceful hour or so reading the newspapers.

Here are some examples of the quotations in the paving stones along the route that Ibsen walked every day – once in the morning and once in the afternoon:

What you are, be it to the full and not by halves.

- *Det som du er, vær fuldt og helt, og ikke stykkevis og delt. (Brand)*

Take the life-lie away from the average man and you take away his happiness, too.

- *Tar de livsløgnen fra et gjennomsnittsmenneske, så tar De lykken fra ham med det samme. (Vildanden/ The Wild Duck)*

Eternally owned is but what's lost.

- *Eviggt ejes kun det tabte. (Brand)*

I CAMERISTI TRIESTINI

With two Alfa Romeos parked outside the Oslo Concert House and a dynamic stage performance with music and song inside, it was clear that the occasion was about Italy. The ensemble I Cameristi Triestini gave the audience an uplifting experience on 16 September with songs and music from the world of operetta.

The ensemble's repertoire included many well-known pieces from composers such as Kalman, Lehar and Gilbert, to name but a few. Tenor Andrea Binetti had real stage presence, and connected easily with the audience in a humorous fashion. His powerful voice was a credible cavalier for soprano Gisella Sanvitale. Her virtuosity and finesse were perhaps best displayed in her solo performances and when she



sang pianissimo. The chamber orchestra was vitally present, as it should be, especially within the classical Viennese operetta genre.

The orchestra and performers were appearing in Norway for the first time as part of a broader Scandinavian tour.

VIVA CUBA!



The Cuban ambassador, HE Mr Rogerio Santana and director, Mrs Tamara G. Hernández, at the presentation of Cuba as a tourist destination. (Photo: The Magazine)

With its great biodiversity, powder white clean beaches, crystal clear water and year round sunshine, Cuba is making a name for itself as an attractive destination for tourists

wanting to explore the fabulous nature. Particular focus is on the seabed of Cuba's insular shelf, described by world-famous diver Jacques-Yves Cousteau as "some of the most spectacular and varied on earth" at the 4th World Underwater Photography Championship in Cuba in 1992.

Other types of nature-based tourism are also attracting the public to this sun-drenched island in the Caribbean: Cycling, horseback riding, hiking, nature observation and photography, and scuba diving in caves.

But Cuba is also the capital Havana and international conference centres such as the Capitol Center, an architectural and historic gem, and the centre in Santiago de Cuba with all its facilities. On the outskirts of the capital are excellent locations for arranging trade fairs and exhibitions such as EXPOCUBA and PABEXPO.

In mid-September a seminar was held on Cuba as a tourist destination in the new Cuban residence in Meltz-

ergate. Here, the director of the Cuban Tourist Board for the Nordic and Baltic countries, Mrs Tamara Gigato Hernández, gave a slide show for the numerous tour operators present.

Particular focus was given to safety in connection with the annual hurricanes that sweep across the island. The director could assure us that after years of experiencing such events, the country now had good emergency measures in place as well as well-rehearsed plans to evacuate people to safety.

Before enjoying the delicious buffet, Juliet and Pedro entertained us with some fine Latin dancing. You would have thought they were professional dancers but we learned that they had only practised together that morning. Clearly, such skills combined with joyous energy is inherent in the Cuban blood!

To visit Cuba: www.vivacuba.se
www.cubatransel.com



MARQUES de MONISTROL
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A Culture of Celebration

SLOVAK-NORWEGIAN INVESTMENT AND COOPERATION SEMINAR



From left: Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Jan Kubis, Prime Minister Mr. Robert Fico, the host of the seminar HE Mr. Dusan Rozbora, Norwegian Minister of Trade and Industry Mrs. Sylvia Brustad, and Minister of Economy Mr. L'ubomir Jahnatek. Norway's ambassador in Slovakia, Mrs. Brit Løvseth, was also a member of the panel. (Photo: The Magazine)

On Friday 12 September representatives from trade and commerce in Slovakia and Norway met for mutual talks following a seminar and presentation of Slovakian companies at Oslo Militære Samfunn. The Slovakian delegation was headed by the country's Prime Minister, Mr. Robert Fico, who was on an official visit to Norway.

The delegation included the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Jan Kubis and the Minister of economy Mr. L'ubomir Jahnatek.

On the agenda was the presentation of a number of companies in Slovakian industry offering a wide range of products and services. These are just a few of companies that were represented:

Nova-S (a leading company in the EU market producing coiling machines and equipment for wire manufacturers), Techservis Ltd. (machine production, cutting company), and VIPO (machinery and electronics), in addition to the building company Inziner-ske stavby which offers construction activities such as roads, motorways, airports and railways, gas lines, water mains, heat lines and water processing plants.

Tour operators were also represented. Spa arrangements have a long tradition in this central European country famed for its mineral springs and water therapy. Whether seeking medical treatment for arthritis, heart disease, neurological disorders or stress, you will find a variety of possibilities for treatment.

Conventional tours of historical Slovakia and the Czech Republic are very popular. The website of the Slovak Tourist Board offers many useful ideas on places to visit.

The Slovak Republic, being the Central European Hub, "has political and economic stability and a constantly improving infrastructure. The country has the highest economic growth in the region," we are informed by The Slovak Investment & Trade Development Agency (SARIO). More information is available at www.sario.sk

Exotic Costa Rica

In the previous issue of *The Magazine* we presented incorrect information about the Republic of Costa Rica's primary industry, and did not give the right percentage of how much surface the national parks and other protected areas make up.

The primary industry is not coffee and bananas as was stated in the article, but micro chips and other integrated computers and mobile phones circuits, which together with surgical

instruments represent more than 30% of the export value. Tourism is the second industry. Coffee and bananas together represent about 10% of Costa Rica's actual exports, taking the third place in the production rank.

Another inaccuracy was the percentage of the surface of national parks and other protected areas being not 12% as reported, but about 26% of Costa Rica's territory.

The Central American Republic is

focusing on tourism and has much to offer: Besides visiting the busy cities and towns, you have the rain forests, national parks with biological reserves, sandy beaches and crystal clear water! The Costa Ricans are proud of their colourful flora and fauna that has been spared from commercial exploitation. Here is one quick way of exploring exotic Costa Rica:

www.visitcostarica.com

Norwegian-German Youth Forum in Stavanger

There are excellent links between Norway and Germany in many areas today, and to further strengthen these, the foreign offices of the two countries have initiated a four-year project which the German-Norwegian Network will administer. Each year a youth meeting is to be arranged between fifty German and fifty Norwegian youths from the ages of 16 to 20. The idea is to stimulate young Germans and to encourage them to learn more about Norway, and likewise to inspire

young Norwegians to choose German as a foreign language and to become better acquainted with Germany.

“Germany is Norway’s most important partner in Europe and our co-operation is very much characterized by mutual values and goals,” said the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jonas Gahr Støre, during a speech he held in Stavanger. “In my work as Foreign Minister I meet a great variety of people. Naturally, many come from other countries, speak a different lan-

guage or belong to a different religion. Therefore I encounter precisely the same thing that you are involved with in the course of these days in Stavanger – namely cultural diversity and identity”. This conference took place on 18 – 21 September. The first youth forum took place last year in Essen during the Norwegian royal couple’s visit to Germany. The forum was formally opened by HM Queen Sonja.

Serbian artist Perica Donkov in Oslo

Serbian artist Perica Donkov (1956) has always chosen abstract painting as his form of expression. Donkov, from Mazgos in Serbia (formerly Dimitrovgrad in Yugoslavia), visited Oslo in September and exhibited his work at the Serbian embassy in Drammensveien. Many specially invited guests attended the opening of the exhibition which was hosted by the ambassador, HE Mr. Vladislav Mladenovic.

Perica Donkov has been hailed as one of Serbia’s foremost abstract artists. The recipient of a number of awards for artistic excellence, Donkov has been represented at numerous exhibitions since having completed his studies at the Academy of Art in Belgrade. His work can be seen at the National Museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, as well as at a number of institutions and in private collections around the world.

One Serbian professor of art history has said that Perica Donkov is an advocate of lyrical abstraction who achieves plastic expression in his art. The paintings exhibited in Oslo, however, were more expressionistic with powerful brushstrokes and a dark palette of primary colours. As



From the exhibition at the Serbian embassy on 23 September: HE Mr. Vladislav Mladenovic (left) and Mr. Perica Donkov, MA from the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Belgrade. (Photo: The Magazine)

in all abstract art it is up to each of us to individually interpret what we see. Perhaps Donkov’s own words can bring us closer to ‘seeing’ what his works expresses: “My works

are icons to those who believe in the existence, endurance and domination of the spiritual element over the material”.

“cape2cape”

This year's major charity event for victims of HIV/AIDS was initiated by extreme sports specialist Joachim Franz from Germany. He organized an expedition in which he and fifteen others made their way from Norway's North Cape through Europe and Africa to the Cape of Good Hope. The expedition set out on 5 October and their estimated arrival date was 1 December.

In every country along their route, with the exception of Sudan, the highest peak was to be climbed and a flag planted showing the number of

HIV infected people in that particular country: “We have reached the summit – the number of newly infected must be reduced!”

Money has been collected for the organization Hope Cape Town for AIDS-infected children. This marked the launch of the “world aids awareness expedition” during which the climbers will take photographs to be reproduced in a book.

At www.waae.de it has been possible to “participate”, following conditions en route and the strenuous ascents.

The international expedition, with participants from Germany, Austria, England, the Czech Republic and South Africa, is the seventh successive aids awareness expedition. Previous expeditions have taken Joachim Franz to the Sahara on a bicycle, to South Africa, and along the entire Panamericana and the American double continent. Mr Franz has conquered the highest peaks in the Andes and in Kyrgyzstan. Patrons of the expedition include Nelson Mandela and Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Lutefisk premiere



*Restaurant keeper Kay Johnsen (left) who took over Café Engebret at the beginning of 2007, and internationally renowned chef Knut Solberg welcomed a packed restaurant to the evening's indulgence.
(Photo: The Magazine)*

The restaurant Café Engebret in Oslo has a long-standing tradition of inviting its guests to the first lutefisk meal of the season. This year the event took place mid-week

on Wednesday 8 October. Our host Kay Johnsen and chef Knut Solberg welcomed the expectant guests to a lavish evening of food and drink.

We shall not speculate as to how

the many guests coped with the morning after – the mood became increasingly hearty with each piece of lutefisk consumed and accompanied by toasting in aquavit and beer at the many round tables in the banquet hall on the upper floor of the restaurant.

It is customary to eat a second helping of lutefisk, no matter how satisfied you might be, for the dried cod, treated with lye and soaked in water, is for many the peak of gastronomic enjoyment in the winter season. The distinctive-smelling fish, nearly transparent and trembling on your plate, is always served with diced pork and/or bacon, potatoes and mashed peas. And not to forget the “spiritual” part of the precious meal, beer and aquavit!

What in previous times was simply a practical way of preparing the dried fish for everyday consumption is today considered a delicacy reserved for special occasions. And this particular delicacy is served in homes and in restaurants throughout the chilly autumn and freezing winter months. Try it!

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”That’s not all”



*At the opening of the exhibition we see gallery owner Anna Roza Gurowska, the internationally renowned photographer Tadeusz Rolke, and to the right the Polish Ambassador, HE Mr Wojciech Kolanczyk.
(Photo: The Magazine)*

The Polish photographer Tadeusz Rolke (b. 1929) is as well known in his home country Poland as he is internationally. A photographer with a background in arts history, he has worked for the prestigious magazine POLSKA, where in 1960 he joined the permanent staff of photographers. In 1970 he went to Germany where he worked for Stern, Der Spiegel, Die Zeit, and others.

He also worked for international theatre festivals in France, Holland, Germany and Italy. The German art magazine ART has published series of his articles and photographs concerning Polish contemporary art. Today Tadeusz Rolke is a lecturer at the Department of Journalism of Warsaw University and Warsaw School of Photography.

In recent years he has held exhibitions in Poland, Germany, Lithuania, Slovakia, Japan, France, and on 9 October it was the turn of Norway. At the Anna Roza Art Gallery at Drammensveien 70 in Oslo an exhibition opened featuring a selection of his most well-known pictures. These black and white photographs give a glimpse of people in transit – on the street, in the park, at the railway station or in front of a notice-board on the wall. The pictures are the result of visits to countries including Poland, Russia, France and Germany.

There are people dressed for festivity, singing, playing the trumpet – or perhaps the juggler raising his hat to attract the attention of the on-lookers who watch with scepticism. In short, Mr Rolke has captured situations and moods in the moment, recording them as a documentation of life, or, as it said in the exhibition brochure: “He always focuses his attention on the human being and its environment, both in public and in private spheres.”

But why the title “That’s not all”? we asked Tadeusz Rolke. He answered: “In this particular gallery, so attractive and charming, there was unfortunately not enough wall space to exhibit any more of my pictures.”

The Lindeman Prize 2008

Norway’s largest music prize, the Lindeman Prize, went this year to the composer Asbjørn Schaathun (47) for his significant contribution to Norwegian music. In justifying their decision the jury said inter alia: “With great intellectual force and musical aptitude, Asbjørn Schaathun

has created works that today are included in the repertoires of numerous musicians and ensembles, both in Norway and internationally.” The jury also underscored the great influence that Schaathun has had on Norwegian music through his pedagogic and organisational efforts. Since

2006, Schaathun has been head of the Norwegian Composers’ Association.

The Lindeman Prize of NOK 150,000 is presented by the Board of the Lindeman Legate in connection with a ceremony at Norges Musikkhøgskole (Norwegian Academy of Music) at the end of October.

Maritime environments in Lofoten and Venice

What does Lofoten in northern Norway have in common with Venice? A great deal, for the common denominator is the Rumanian artist Doina Remond who at the end of October held an exhibition of new works and works we have seen before, including her picturesque impressions of Paris.

The colour-loving artist also exhibited a number of maritime paintings of fishing vessels and sailing boats from the area around Lofoten, and naïve glimpses of the city of Venice with its numerous palaces surrounded by water. These and several more paintings of the Norwegian winter provided a wonderful experience for all who attended the private exhibition at the home of Mrs Olimpia Stanciu, who herself is an able icon painter. She is well known in diplomatic circles as the wife of the Rumanian military attaché.

Doina Remond, originally from Transylvania, one time Director of the French Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Rumania, lives currently in Oslo with her French diplomat



Two artists who share similar interests: Doina Remond (left) and Olimpia Stanciu. (Photo: The Magazine)

husband.

A delight indication of the Rumanian lifestyle in which hospitality, good food and good drink go without say-

ing, was the invitation to partake of an abundant array of homemade, Rumanian delicacies which Mrs Olimpia herself had prepared.

Ancient and early music at Gamle Aker Church

A musical event out of the ordinary took place in Oslo's oldest existing building, Gamle Aker Church, on 4 December. Renaissance-dressed musicians from Italy took the stage with musical rarities from the renaissance and before. After a welcome by the Italian ambassador HE Mrs Rosa Anna Coniglio Papalia, the audience of specially invited guests were introduced to a musical repertoire, played on origi-

nal instruments, with which few of us were familiar.

The five members of the *Compagnia La Rossignol* created such a realistic atmosphere with their professional performance that we were at once transported back to ancient times and the early renaissance. Messrs. Baronio, Pagliari, Testi and Zuvadelli played several different instruments each while Mr Quintarelli

played flutes and gave us a demonstration of the most common type of singing voice of the age, counter-tenor.

La Rossignol is a company of artists and researchers whose aim is to promote, produce and spread ancient and early music and dance. With their extensive repertoire they have gained wide international recognition.

NORWAY SEEN THROUGH ROMANIAN EYES



The Norwegian National Opera and Ballet.



The art photographer Dragos Florin Nastasa



Beautiful motifs from the Norwegian countryside, the sculptures in Oslo's Vigeland park, glimpses of maritime environments, and the magnificent new opera house in Norway's capital were just a few of the many wonderful photographs exhibited by Dragos Florin Nastasa at the Romanian embassy in Oslo on 21 October. We were particularly taken with the photographs of the opera house; one was taken at night beneath a full moon, while the other was taken in full daylight. The

angle is interesting, looking through blue glass from the foyer to the space outside beyond which we can make out more buildings. The photographs reveal an artistic passion; they would enlarge well, making wonderful posters for your office wall or in the home – as would many more of Dragos Florin Nastasa's photographs.

A graduate of the Faculty of Computer Science at the University of Iasi in Romania, Nastasa worked for a number

of years in the IT business in Romania before arriving in Oslo, where he now works for the firm CDDU Grafisk Kommunikasjon (all the photos were printed by this firm). When asked by *The Magazine* whether he had any professional advice to offer us amateurs about taking good photographs, he answered:

"It is important to be in the right place at the right time. For example, this summer I took several pictures of the fountain near the City Hall. I was there at 1am and took just one picture – which turned out really well! A month later I returned to make more pictures at the same spot with the same setting, yet not one of the 25 photographs I took was better than, or as good as, the very first one."

Another piece of advice is to avoid using the Automatic Mode to take photographs. "I never do! Use the P (programmed) mode to take pictures, since the camera automatically selects aperture and shutter speed based on the current metered exposure value, exposure compensation and selected ISO sensitivity," is Dragos Florin Nastasa's advice to our readers.

Dragos Florin Nastasa can be reached at this email address: nafus20@yahoo.com. His homepage is www.dragos.no

TANGO SAXOPHONE QUARTET

A tango concert out of the ordinary took place at the Argentine residence on Bygdøy Allé in Oslo in mid-November. Instead of using the traditional bandoneon to create “a music of longing, hope, love and tragedy”, the music had been arranged for four saxophones. The *Barrio Tango Saxophone Quartet* entertained the guests with melodies old and new. Who can claim not to have heard *La Cumparsita* or *Adios Nonino*? The latter must surely be one of the most beautiful and wistful tunes in the tango repertoire. It was written by Astor Piazzolla as a dedication to the memory of his father, Vicente Piazzolla (known as Nonino).

Tango has for some years enjoyed a revival in Norway, with many opportunities to learn its moves on the dance floor. The quartet which entertained us at the Argentine residence concluded their programme with *A fuego lento* by Horacio Salgan/Fabio Zurita. In this piece in particular, full of yearning, the players demonstrated



From left: Jorge Feingold (from Argentina), Vegard Landaas, Øistein Isachsen and Hedvig Holst. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)

excellent ensemble.

As always with our hosts the Argentine ambassador HE Mr. Juan Manuel Ortiz de Rozas and Mrs. Florencia Gambier de Ortiz de Rozas, the hospitality was impeccable. Fine,

Argentine wines and home-made empanadas straight from the kitchen formed a popular conclusion to an enjoyable evening.

The Importance of Communication

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Per-Arne Carlsen
Photographer
Editor

SONY



BRATISLAVA – AUGUST 1968



The son of the famous photographer, Peter Bielik (left), was also present at the exhibition, here seen together with the Slovakian ambassador, HE Mr. Dusan Rozbora (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)

17 November 2008 marked the nineteenth anniversary of the velvet revolution in Czechoslovakia, a revolution which during November and December of 1989 led to the downfall of the communist regime without any use of violence on the part of the protestors.

The day was commemorated with a photographic exhibition at the Nobel Peace Centre in Oslo featuring

pictures from 21 August 1968 when Soviet tanks invaded Bratislava. Scientist and photographer Ladislav Bielik's documentation comprising 169 photographs from the event are an important part of Europe's historical memory. In this series of images of a city under occupation there is one image in particular which leaves its mark: a young man positions himself in brave defiance right in front of the mouth of the gun of a Soviet

tank which is making its way slowly across the cobbled Safarik Square in Bratislava. The name of the young man is Emil Gallo.

Present at the opening of the exhibition were many representatives from the Corps Diplomatique, the Slovak Society in Norway, Norwegian politicians, the media, trade and industry, and from culture and the arts. The Slovakian ambassador, HE Mr. Dusan Rozbora, and the President of the Storting, Mr. Thorbjørn Jagland, were among those who welcomed the guests to the historic exhibition.

Informative material provided at the exhibition included a brochure of the pictures at the exhibition and a pamphlet entitled "Czechoslovakia – 40 years on" published by The Norwegian Atlantic Committee. The author of the pamphlet is the well-known Norwegian foreign correspondent Jahn Otto Johansen, who provides a broad account of the political situation in Czechoslovakia both before and after the Soviet invasion of 1968. He draws our attention to, among other things, the fact that the prelude to the so called Prague Spring, which reached such dramatic heights in the Czech Republic, actually originated in Bratislava – a fact that is little known outside Slovakia.

Oltre – Beyond the Edge

From December 2008 to March 2009, the Italian polar expedition Oltre – Beyond the Edge is en route from the North Cape to the Bering Strait. After 90 years, the expedition is following in Roald Amundsen's tracks through the Northeast Passage. But whereas the Norwegian expedition of so long ago used the purpose built vessel Maud, the Italian expedition with 45 men is using land vehicles. Most of the 14,000 km long route passes through Russian territory.

Maud froze onto the ice on several occasions and the expedition lasted several years. The Italian researchers, on the other hand, face major challenges in a particularly hostile region with temperatures fluctuating between minus 25 – 50 degrees Celsius.

At a press conference held at the Italian Culture Institute in Oscarsgt. 56, Oslo on 16 December, the leader of the expedition, Dr. Petter Johannesen (a distant relative of Roald Amundsen), explained that the all-

terrain vehicles were specially tuned to withstand extremely low temperatures. The expedition members sleep in heated tents erected on top of the vehicles, which also acts as protection against polar bears.

The expedition represents a great test in terms of both human endurance and technical resistance and is characterised by a high level in research and experimentation of materials.

Follow the expedition's progress at www.oltre.mobi

Zabu Nero d'Avola 2007

En av de beste på billigvinmarkedet i Norge Myk, bløt og tiltrekkende

Suksessen fra Sambuca



Michel Villa en dedikert vinelsker og Vinhandler fra Roma



Vinmaker og medeier Filippo Baccalaro er sjefsvinmaker hos Farnese i Abruzzo, Feudi di San Marzano i Puglia samt Vesuvo i Campania. I tillegg er han rådgiver for et dussintall andre vingårder.

Når Michel Villa bestemte seg for og investere i en vingård, falt det ham helt naturlig og spørre hans gamle venn Filippo om han ville være med på hans prosjekt. Filippo var med på direkten. De ble fort enige om at Sicilia var det området som hadde størst potensial.

Etter en stunds leting fant de en gammel vingård i byen Sambuca nær Arancio-sjøen, som ligger på den sørvestre siden av Sicilia ca 400 meter over havet. Dette området er etter deres begges mening det beste vinområdet på Sicilia. Vingården var nokså slitt, men beplantet med mye gamle druestokker av Nero d'Avola og Nerello Mascalese. Samt en del Syrah og Merlot som var litt yngre.

Begge to så potensialet i denne vingården og kjøpte den 2001. Navnet på vingården ble bestemt til Vigneti Zabu (det gamle navnet på Sambuca) Etter en del renovering samt leie av vintanker på det lokale kooperativet var de klare med sin første årgang i 2004.

Den ble fort en suksess med topp score i flere italienske vin guider, hvilket har gjort at de har kunnet investere mer i både nyplanting og renovering.



Zabu Nero d'Avola 2007

Ueiket 100 % Nero d'Avola fra Sambuca på Sicilia. Druene er håndplukkede og er forsiktig presset før temperaturkontrollert maserasjon i 10 - 12 dager, noe som bidrar til den intense rubinrøde fargen. Vinen er elegant, fyldig, stram og kompleks, men samtidig elegant. Frisk, balansert syrlighet tilfører vinen en aromatisk, lang ettersmak. Passer til modne sterke oster og er et utmerket følge til oksekjøtt med urter, tapas- retter og ikke minst stekt lam med urter

Pris: Kr. 99,90,- - Varenr. 55117

"Frisk og tiltalende siciliansk nero d'avola. Rund og saftig vin med fin syre, frukt hele veien og fast finish." ★ Vinforum



Zabu Rosato

Nerello Mascalese har i de senere årene blitt fjernet fra vinmarkene på Sicilia, da den er en vanskelig drue å dyrke og vinifisere. Den krever lavt utbytte, og veldig nøysom pleie i vinmarken for å gi det elegante preg som denne Rosato er en eksponent for. Vinstokkene er minimum 30 år gamle, og vinmarkene ligger 4-500 m. o. h. Nerello mascalese er den mest fornemme av Nerello typene, og gir vanligvis en vin med høy alkohol og lite farge. Zabu har her laget en vin med kun 12% alkohol og stor friskhet (6gr. syre /l).

Pris: Kr. 99,90,- - Varenr. 56076

"Frisk, ren og bærpreget med fin syrestruktur, stor lengde og tørr finish." ★ Vinforum

Druene blir plukket forsiktig for hånd
De to viktigste druene i Sambuca er Nero d'Avola og Nerello Mascalese. Nero for rød vin og Nerello for rosè vin



BOOKS



The Silver Spoon (Sølvskjeen)
An Italian cookery book translated into Norwegian

Published by Hr. Ferdinand AS,
 Postboks 2841 Tøyen, 0608 Oslo

E-mail: kjersti@hrferdinand.com

1261 pages, NOK 449

Il *cucchiaio d'argento* from 1950 is one of the cornerstones of Italian cuisine and remains one of the most popular cookery books in Italy. In 2008 it was published in Norwegian.

The book contains over 2,000 recipes. Some are traditional and regional Italian dishes, while others are modern additions. In the most recent edition some of the ingredients and preparation times have been adapted to suit our modern lifestyle. Other recipes, meanwhile, have been left unaltered and are presented just as they were originally.

The book is conveniently divided into differently colour-coded sections in each chapter. The book's exciting, gastronomic conclusion offers suggested menus put together by some of the most renowned chefs in the world. This is a task which demands equal amounts of expertise and imagination. Most of the menus have been composed by Italian chefs who over the past fifty years have created some of the most exquisite menus. Famed chefs from countries in-

cluding Australia, the UK, the USA and Norway are also represented. Common to both the professionals and to the rest of us, the amateurs, is that we all appreciate Italian cuisine. So make room for this wonderful cookery book on your kitchen shelf!



The Urban Phenomenon in Italy

(Italias urbane fenomen)
Byrom og mennesker
 By Tore Brantenberg

Published by Abstrakt Forlag AS,
 2008

Karl Johans gate 13
 Postbox 6952 St Olaus plass, 0130
 Oslo

www.abstrakt.no

E-mail: abstrakt@abstrakt.no

Norwegian edition only
 303 pages, NOK 385

The author of this book, architect Tore Brantenberg, is professor emeritus of the University of Trondheim. Possessing a thorough knowledge of Italian architecture and culture, we can rest assured that Brantenberg's book offers us first-hand information about urban spaces in Italy and their influence on the urban environment.

European cities do have many interesting and beautiful spaces, but

the Italian *piazza* is unique being the combination of a *bazaar* (the Orient), an *agora* (Greek) and the Roman *forum*.

We learn about different approaches to planning a city, where the importance of a central square (*piazza* or *forum*), in its function of creating a social environment and a meeting place for the citizens, is clearly emphasized. One example of such a meeting place is the Piazza Navona in Rome, known as the queen among the city's many piazzas. It is harmonious in its dimensions and, despite its length, has an intimate and homely feel.

In the course of the book we are introduced to many different squares in a variety of Italian towns and cities, and thanks to the many excellent photographs, we feel that we are actually present.

In the book's postscript the author presents two interesting and different perspectives on the importance of the *piazza* in the communal space. The first perspective asserts the attractive space of a central *piazza* (meeting place) modelled on classical architecture. The closely interlocking urban functions of streets and squares are a historic expression of our existing European culture.

The other perspective offers a post-modernist view. It claims that cities are multi-cultural, a maelstrom of various different economic, cultural and political forces competing to assert themselves in the urban environment. In our age it is only absence of meaning or emptiness of space and surface that can offer freedom of interpretation and constitute a structural element in the modern city. Cities of the future must therefore be shaped according to how the urban environment appears from a car window. (Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas)

Tore Brantenberg has written an insightful book. It is up to each of us individually to explore the field further by reading the literature in his bibliography, or simply by visiting the places ourselves.

We offer Tore Brantenberg's following rhetorical question as food for thought: "If architects like Rem Koolhaas are

right, why, then, are the historical urban spaces in Italy more popular than ever?"



Weavers of Peace
Guatemala Women's Testimonies
Guatemala October 2008

Produced by Magna Terra editors
5a avenida 4-75 zona 2, Guatemala, C.A.

E-mail:
magnaterraeditores@yahoo.com

299 pages, English edition

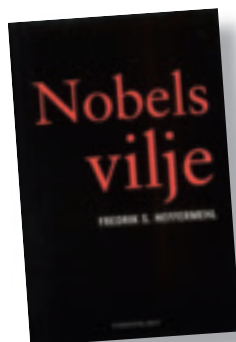
“To make a journey through the pages of this book is to search into the recent history of Guatemala, and in particular the struggles of women. Their evolving social and political participation has led them to occupy new spaces in the sphere of daily life and assume decision-making responsibilities in a variety of organizational spaces.”

With these words Nobel prize winner Rigoberta Manchu Tum begins the book *Weavers of Peace* and brings us to the heart of the matter: women's struggle for peace in a country which for over thirty years was ravaged by civil war, and whose first peace negotiations, between the guerrilla organization URNG and the Guatemalan government, took place in Oslo in 1990. When the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Rigoberta Manchu in 1992, it helped boost international awareness of the situation in Guatemala and the protracted civil war.

We are introduced in the book to many women from many different backgrounds, whose testimonies bring us close to their lives full of violence, torture and fear, but also full of courage

and strength.

Weavers of Peace is the result of the work of a group of women from Norway and Guatemala who were inspired by Resolution S1325 of the United Nations organization which acknowledges women's efforts in the struggle for peace.



Nobels vilje
(Nobel's Wish)

By Fredrik S. Heffermehl
Norwegian edition only

Published by Vidarforlaget
www.vidarforlaget.no

185 pages, NOK 249

Nobel's intention with his Peace Prize has been forgotten; party politics have taken over and turned the prize into a political award, writes jurist and author Fredrik S. Heffermehl. He calls attention to the fact that since the Second World War over half of the peace prize awards have been contrary to elementary principles for interpreting Nobel's will.

Fredrik S. Heffermehl's allegation is that the peace prize is departing further and further from Nobel's intentions as they appear in his last, handwritten will of 27 November 1895: *One part (the interest was to be divided into five equal parts) to go to one who has contributed to the fraternization of the peoples and abolished or reduced existing armies and initiated and promoted peace congresses.*

The new arrangement introduced by the Storting in 1984 is illegal, he claims. Seats on the committee are now allotted according to the political parties who

are more concerned with rewarding their own veterans than with Nobel's intention behind the peace prize.

The Nobel Committee's secretaries have been historians and philologists, and so the committees cannot have been given adequate juridical guidance, claims Heffermehl, who has examined the principles by which the committee is bound. He has also looked at each individual prize and examined to what extent the committee has given valid grounds for the award.



Al Qaida og veien til 11. september
(The Looming Tower: Al-Queda and the Road to 9/11)

By Lawrence Wright

Translated to Norwegian by
Gunnar Nyquist
Gyldendal Norsk Forlag AS 2008

466 pages, NOK 399

This textbook in understanding fundamentalist Islam was first published in 2006 under the title *The Looming Tower: Al-Queda and the Road to 9/11*. The author, journalist Lawrence Wright, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for the book in 2007.

A considerable amount of works lies behind this documentation which, via many sources, gives the reader an introduction to the various fundamentalist schools in Islam. We are introduced to the Egyptian Hassan al-Banna who founded the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 with the purpose of converting Egypt into a Muslim state. He was killed in an assassination in 1949. Around that time another intellectual writer ap-

peared on the scene, Sayid Qutb (1906-66). He wrote the works *Ma'alim fi al-Tariq* (a manifest published in 1964, immediately forbidden), *Social Justice in Islam* and *In the shadow of the Koran* (eight volumes), which brought him fame and earned him the place as one of the most influential modern Islamic ideologists.

Lawrence Wright's documentation provides us not only with insightful information about the fundamentalist schools which were the prerequisite of the religious and political terrorism exercised by Osama bin Laden and Al-Qaeda; not only does this book include documentation of events which led to the attacks on the USA on 11 Septem-

ber 2001; the information and insight provided by the author demonstrates the relation between the Islamic, fundamentalistic strategies behind all the subsequent terror attacks. The recent massacre in Mumbai is unlikely to be the final fact in this frightful drama.

Edvard Munch's collected paintings I-IV

At long last there is now a complete catalogue of Munch's collected paintings in a four-volume work showing his 1789 paintings and 82 unfinished works. This excellent documentation took many years to complete and was led by the curator of the Munch Museum, Gerd Woll.

The English edition was launched in New York in November 2008, and a German version is under preparation.

Publishers *Cappelen Damm* are responsible for the publication.

A taste of Korea



Here we see Mrs Sook-Ja Yoon (centre) in action at Oslo's Grand Hotel on 1 December. (Photo: Embassy of the Republic of Korea)

Korean cooking is widely renowned for its inventiveness and utilization of domestic produce from the land and sea, based on the principle that, with the correct choice of ingredients, food has preventive and curing qualities from a health point

of view. In other words, food has medicinal properties. This traditional science builds on two doctrines: The first is the five natural elements of the positive and the negative forces in yin and yang and the other is the five elements of nature. These five

elements represent the five different colours and tastes of food and symbolize the five organs of our body: the liver, heart, stomach, lungs and kidneys.

By balancing the five colours of the food in season our body organs become healthy.

This was the theme of a talk on the medicinal properties of food at the grand Hotel in Oslo on 1 December. Mrs Sook-Ja Yoon, professor and Director of the Institute of Traditional Korean Food, held the attention of the couple of hundred enraptured guests during her fascinating presentation. So professional was the presence of Mrs Sook-Ja Yoon of the Republic of Korea, that we barely noticed with what ease she prepared food during the course of her talk. She was rewarded with a generous round of applause from the fascinated audience.

Our host for the evening, HE Mr Byung-koo Choi, the ambassador, invited us after the presentation to a hot buffet of Korean delicacies.



TRY SOMETHING OLD

St. Lucia's Day celebrations



St Lucia's Day celebrations at the Swedish Embassy's residence on 12 December.

As has become the tradition, St Lucia's Day was celebrated at the Swedish Embassy's residence in Inognito gate. Our excellent hosts, the Swedish ambassador HE Mr Michael Sahlin and his wife Laila, welcomed many guests to their beautiful residence for the year's celebration of an age-old tradition. There were many

other ambassadors present, as well as familiar faces from Norwegian social circles, and many Swedes resident in Oslo.

Towards the end of the middle ages, winter solstice was celebrated on 13 December and the eve of St Lucia's Day was considered to be the longest night of the year. Celebrations

were particularly common in western Sweden, although the more recent tradition of a procession of young girls led by one dressed as St Lucia has its roots in German Christmas pageants from after the Reformation. The tradition was introduced by the Swedish upper classes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At the initiative of Stockholm's daily paper the tradition was taken up again in 1927, and is today popular all over Sweden.

The Lucia on this particular evening and her handmaids who bore lighted candles, made a very atmospheric appearance at this dark time of the year. The girls were members of the youth choir at the Swedish church of St Margaret in Oslo, and they sang Swedish and international Christmas songs. The Swedish ambassador himself made a popular appearance as a soloist.

In this relaxed atmosphere the food of the abundant St Lucia's day buffet tasted especially delicious. We were also offered tastings of the first, genuine Swedish malt whisky (Mackmyra), in the production of which it is only the barrels that are imported (barrels from Jerez de la Frontera and Bourbon barrels from the USA).

EXHIBITIONS

Anna Roza Art Gallery
Drammensvn. 70
Oslo
www.annaroza.com

Polish artist Anna Roza Gurowska took over the gallery in Skillebekk in 2006, and has already made her mark in Oslo's art world. She brings us in close contact with many foreign artists, such as the internationally renowned Polish photographer Tadeusz Rolke (see page 42), and now, just before Christmas, a group of Argentinean

Anna Roza Gurowska in her gallery in Skillebekk, Drammensvn. 70, Oslo (Photo: The Magazine)



artists showing their works under the title *Grandes Maestros Argentinos*.

Anna Roza has 5 years of art studies behind her from Warsaw. Her passion is portrait painting, which she composes (as she puts it) in oils and

words. She also writes articles about international art in the Polish magazine *Twoja Norwegia*, which is available from Narvesen.

She also runs art courses for children and youth. Lessons are often held

outdoors in the Norwegian nature. Courses start immediately after the New Year, so why not sign up now?!

Visit Anna Roza's website to see what's happening in 2009.

Other galleries in Oslo and Bærum

Here are some suggestions for visits to galleries in and around Oslo:

Galleri Arctandria

in Frognerveien 4, close to the city centre. The gallery is noted for holding exhibitions by noted Norwegian and foreign artists. For information about the gallery's programme for 2009 go to: www.galleriartandria.no

Galleri Haaken

Lille Frogner Allé 6, is one of Oslo's leading galleries with works by artists who are representative and topical: www.gallerihaaken.com

Galleri Brandstrup

Madserud Allé 34, is housed in Madserud Gård, a large mansion close to Frogner Park. The gallery has a strong emphasis on contemporary art by both Norwegian and foreign artists: www.brandstrup.no

Galleri Elenor

Kirkevn.50. Elenor Martinsen, herself an artist, runs both this gallery and Hole Artcenter near Tyrifjorden (the latter with her husband). Both venues arrange a variety of exciting exhibitions throughout the year. Visit the following websites for more information: www.gallerielenor.com and www.holeartcenter.com

Henie Onstad Art Centre

Høvikodden, Bærum, is always well worth a visit, with many interesting exhibitions throughout the year.

Beautifully situated by the Oslo fjord, the Henie Onstad Art Centre offers a full-day excursion taking in a guided tour of the gallery, the surrounding sculpture park, and perhaps a walk along the foreshore followed by a well-deserved meal at the splendid restaurant. Details at: www.hok.no

And while in the area, why not visit **Bærum Kunstforening** at Engervannsvn. 31 in Sandvika? Bærum's Art Soci-

ety is located in an old villa just over the bridge from the railway station. The venue arranges numerous exhibitions throughout the year by a variety of artists. For more information go to: www.baerum.kunstforening.no

Bergen International Festival

The great cultural event of the spring is the Bergen International Festival, which in 2009 will run from 20 May to 4 June. The arrangement is the largest music and theatre festival in the Nordic region, and offers the highest level of artistic integrity. The event is the most important meeting place for artists in the Nordic countries and Baltic States.

You can find the festival programme by Googling Bergen International Festival, but we can reveal that the world-famous singer from Wales, Bryn Terfel, will be among those performing in Bergen this summer.

SOME USEFUL ADDRESSES!

www.visitoslo.com gives you full information about what's hot and what's not in Oslo.

www.listen.no The most comprehensive guide to art museums and galleries in Norway.

www.finno.no Finsk-Norsk Kulturinstitutt, Rådhusgata 21, 0158 Oslo

www.france.no Det Franske Kultursenter, Holtegaten 29, 0355 Oslo

www.iicoslo.com Det Italienske Kultur Institutt, Oscarsgate 56, 0258 Oslo

FREDRIK K.B.

– I AM THE ARISTOTELIAN POWER WITHIN THE STONE

By Aase Melby Block

When creative people follow their urge – to create – the moment of realization often arrives at an early age. Many artists have given accounts of such visionary glimpses, but who can beat Salvador Dali's personal memories from when he was yet in his mother's womb, or 'paradise' as he called it? He recounted in detail the colours, for example, which were the same as those in hell; red, orange yellow and a shimmering blue. And if we credit him with a magical talent, he would have known even then that his way would be that of art.

*In a different field, yet one equally challenging – climbing mountains – we encounter the alpine skier and mountaineer Hans Kammerlander from south Tyrol. He has made more than 2500 ascents, including K2 at over 8,600 metres. How does one come to the decision to become a mountaineer, risking one's life on every ascent? He recounted the following in *Der Spiegel* in the summer of 2008: At the age of eight he used to take tourists up the 3,059 metre high Moosstock from his home village of Sand in Taufers. The view from up there – his 'home mountain' which towered above the village and the farm – was his inspiration: "I was overcome with the desire to become a mountain climber."*

A similar story can be told of the Norwegian sculptor Fredrik K. B. who is presented in this article. At the age of five he was asked the obligatory question: What do you want to become when you grow up? The child Fredrik answered "I don't want to become, I am a sculptor!"



Female 2003 (marble) ca. 40 cm

Galleri Kjeldaas

Fredrik K.B. has long since added his name to the list of leading international sculptors. He currently lives and works in Haarlem just outside Amsterdam, in an old military fortification which has been converted into an 'art fort' for a great number of artists. The fort, built in the nineteenth century, is on the UNESCO world heritage list.

Fredrik's story of his path to recognition as a sculptor contains all the ingredients – the dream of chiselling out figures in stone, making one's own way without the advantage of an academy education or access to grants and scholarships. All this meant that he had to fend for himself, trust his own ability to work, and not least his talent! For a period he identified with the main character in Knut Hamsun's *Hunger*, before things became considerably easier when a gallery owner in Oslo, Harald Kjeldaas, discovered

the beauty, power and elegant lines of his sculptures.

Fredrik K.B. visited Oslo and we met him at Galleri Kjeldaas, close to Grand Hotel in the heart of Oslo. The gallery is one of Norway's foremost galleries for sculptures and exhibits the work of leading Scandinavian sculptors (as well as that of painters and graphic artists) indoors and outdoors – such as outside the main entrance to Hotel Continental where Fredrik K.B. has two works on exhibition for three months from December 2008.

Here is Fredrik's story about how he was 'discovered': "I was visiting friends and family in Oslo together with my Dutch girlfriend Reina. Somebody suggested that we should get in touch with the five best galleries in the capital, and so Reina contacted one gallery after another. All of them were interested, but when she met Harald Kjeldaas, all he asked was 'How soon can the sculptures be delivered?' That evening some

pieces were delivered, and the very next day, after just a few hours' exhibiting, I received a message from Harald that one sculpture had already been sold and that he needed more.

And since then I have sold sculptures steadily. I work a lot and very intensively, and have a high rate of production. To me, a sculpture is finished when it is finished; I don't think in terms of hours when I am working. And I am often working on several sculptures at the same time."

Your story of the way forward from your archaic dream at the age of five, and onwards to realizing that dream, is very special. The dream is clearly an introduction to your artist's life in which you travel along a valley between two tall mountains. In your little rucksack is a hammer and chisel. On the first rise lies an enormous stone which you began to chisel at, carving your very first sculpture. When you have finished walking from peak to peak you leave behind twenty sculptures which you yourself can see from above, due to the phenomenon of levitation. Without making invidious comparisons, a similar experience is described by Jack London in his novel The Star Rover.

This significant dream in which you tread on holy ground between the mountains is the entrance to a Greek/Roman temple. It is interesting that you, as a modern human being, take the mythological history of antiquity seriously. It becomes a part of you and your way forward.

Then - you are eighteen, attending the Rudolf Steiner School at Hovseter, and you have made a name for yourself writing poetry and other things.

Øystein Parmann, a past director of the Dreyer publishing house, has come across your poems. He speaks to you over the phone, invites you to his home and in a sense he helps lead you in the right direction. You decide completing a one-year creative writing course at the Nansen School at Lillehammer. Is it perhaps after this conversation and



Fredrik K.B. and Miss Fortuna (Larvikitt) 2007. (Photo: The Magazine)

several subsequent meetings with Parmann out at Nesodden that you decide on how you want to proceed?

Fredrik K.B.: "Yes, those fantastic encounters with Parmann, when we sat in his library and talked about literature, art and life, have influenced my life. It was in the wake of those meetings that I decided to travel to Italy to become a sculptor. Besides, my archaic

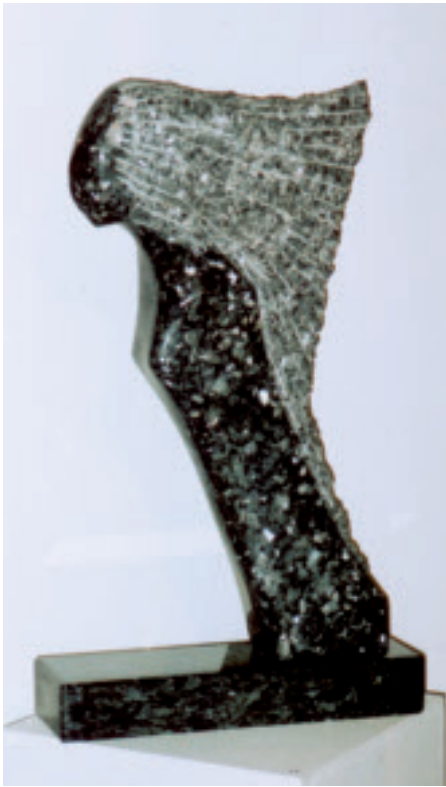
dream as a child, returned to me in a glimpse of the utmost truth. But first I had to find my own lines, find my style in which every line was perfect and entirely my own. That is essentially the way I work today with stone, whether it be marble or Norwegian granite. I have also cast a number of sculptures in bronze, but I am first and foremost a sculptor. It was actually when first carving sculptures in stone, such as marble, that I felt I had no choice; it was in marble or granite that I could fully express myself. That became the answer to the question of what it means to create, what the motivation is, why I do it. I couldn't do anything else!"

The first sculpture

In the year 2000 Fredrik K.B. travelled to the town of Carrara, famed for its marble quarries where marble has been extracted since Roman times. The town is situated in the Apuanian Alps, some four miles from the Ligurian Sea. It was popular to teach tourists how to sculpt in marble. But it was expensive to rent a room, a place to work, and to pay for teaching, so the young Fredrik, who had no means to pay for such expenses, took his hammer and chisel and climbed the marble mountain in search of the best marble, just as Michelangelo Buonarroti had done five hundred years previously.

Fredrik K.B.: "When Michelangelo found the stone he wanted to use, he would carve an 'M' in the rock so that his assistants could take out a block. I don't know how many hours I spent searching for the grand master's initial, but I decided that if I found it, I would carve my first sculpture from that very stone and never tell a soul!"

I spent the first seven weeks alone in the mountains around the village of Seravezza where I made my first sculpture. When I showed it, I was allowed to work in a marble studio in Pietrasanta and learn from the artists and marble sculptors.



Gallionsfigur 2007 (Larvikitt blue pearl) ca. 70 cm

It was at that time I became acquainted with a famous, elderly sculptor who lived in the same village that I was staying in Italy. He said to me "Making the sculptures isn't difficult – it's knowing what to make." I understood then how fortunate I was, because that had never been a problem for me. The sculptures come into being right before my eyes; I am delighted with every new shape, every new line I find in the stone. And at the same time I feel that



Nature in me 2006 (Asian green marble) ca. 60 cm

an artist's great sorrow is that he or she may never see and experience their own work to the full."

The art collector

But perhaps we, the public, can? Fredrik Kjensli Bråten, known as the artist Fredrik K.B., might comfort himself with the following story: An art collector in Amsterdam had invited Fredrik to his home to show him his newly acquired sculpture of a female in its



Albert 2000, the very first sculpture made of marble from the mountain in Seravezza where Michelangelo would carve his 'M' in the rock

new surroundings. The art collector had adorned the sculpture's belly with a piece of gold jewellery. Fredrik K.B. did not really like it, but, as he said, "I loved the feeling, the passion and the love which made him do it!"

It is obvious that Fredrik K.B.'s sculptures live their own lives and radiate a force which attracts those who see his art. Perhaps it is simply that they see the artist and his inherent powers in the stone – for it would then be true that Fredrik K.B. could express it in Aristotelian terms: "I am the power within the stone"!

E-mail: fredrik@fredrik-kb.com

www.fredrik-kb.com

www.billedhogger.no

The New International Ibsen Award

On 31 August 2008, theatre and film director Peter Brook (1925) received the new, international Ibsen Award of NOK 2.5 million. The official ceremony was held at the National Theatre in Oslo, where Liv Ullmann and Tancred Ibsen (great-grandchild of the great dramatist and social critic) handed over the recently created prize.

Brook has a Russian-Jewish background, was born in London and since 1970 has lived and worked in

Paris. He is regarded as one of the world's leading theatrical instructors, with a background inter alia in the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal Opera House in London. He has also directed numerous plays, films and television productions.

In the jury's reasoning it states: Peter Brook is winner of the International Ibsen Award for 2008 because he has so convincingly demonstrated that all significant theatre has a unique ability to bring people together,

that culture is something everyone can appreciate, and that no group or nation can claim ownership of a work of literature, either in the form of words or as performed on stage.

The International Ibsen Award was established by the Norwegian government to honour a person, organisation or institution in art and culture that has made an extraordinary effort in the spirit of Henrik Ibsen.



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Diplomat – expert in law – with a passion for art

By Aase Melby Block

The Czech ambassador to Norway, HE Dr. jur. Lubos Novy, holds a degree as a doctor of law from the Charles University in Prague. He has held several positions in his home country in the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He has served as ambassador in Ireland, Vietnam, and now most recently in Norway and Iceland since August 2007.



Ambassador to Norway, HE Mr Lubos Novy. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)

Those who have had the fortune to meet him cannot have avoided noticing his exceptional *joie de vivre*, which in the right setting can be highly infectious. Laughter, understatements and shrewd remarks mixed with a good portion of humour are part and parcel of the ambassador's armament. It is therefore no surprise that these qualities are also apparent in his art, his paintings and his miniatures, and in his book *The Pipes* which he pub-



Unforeseeable Skyline - 2001 (Tribute to E. A. Poe)
Oil on wood. 80 x 50 cm

lished a few years ago in his home-country Czechia.

Stalin's tobacco

The *Pipes* is a collection of stories, some of them true, based on historical fact; others are pure fiction of the crime and thriller genre. And some are burlesque. Other stories are inspired by diplomatic life, domestic affairs, espionage and the world of trade and commerce in the Czech Republic, the UK, Ireland, Germany, Austria and Africa.

The book begins with a self-experienced episode from 1993 when the author, Dr. Lubos Novy, newly appointed to a post at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague, received a visitor from abroad. The emissary, who came from an Eastern block country, gave Dr. Novy a box of exclusive tobacco which he told, in all confidence, came from Moscow. The visitor's story goes back twenty years, to 1973, when he himself received a delegation from the capital of the Soviet Union. Being a renowned pipe smoker, he was presented with a large box of expensive, first-grade tobacco, enough for several

years' consumption. It was part of that gift the ambassador Dr. Novy, now was enjoying!

But where exactly did the large tin of tobacco come from? To find the answer we must travel back another twenty years, to 1953. On the 5th of March that year Josef Stalin died. To prevent the looting of his *datsja* just outside Moscow, a military unit was sent to keep guard. One of Stalin's secrets thus became known; below ground there was an enormous, bunker filled with all sorts of goods and articles, including whole train trucks full of, among other things, the said tobacco.

In the maelstrom of reality there are some who have the gift of turning it into a fascinating story, just as Dr. Lubos Novy has done.

The wonderful illustrations in the book, which so far has only been published in Czech, were made by a close friend of Dr. Novy, Jan Kristofori (1931 – 2004). This well-known and prolific Czech graphic artist, painter and writer, who after the Soviet occupation in 1968 became a Norwegian citizen, illustrated many books.



*Loneliness of the Green Knight – 1997. Oil and acrylic on wood.
31.5 x 25.5 cm*



*Good Afternoon Mr. Nguyen – Good
Afternoon Mr. Nguyen - 2002.
Oil on wood. 30 x 50 cm*

Loneliness of the Green Knight

It all began with poems published in various Czech magazines, the ambassador explains, telling us that this is ground since covered. Our conversation takes place at the embassy at Fritzners gate 14, a typical west-end house which with its annexed office wing giving ample space for business and representation.

In the course of his diplomatic career he has absorbed many impressions of people and countries which have inspired him to visualize these experiences on canvas, on wooden boards and in miniatures.

“Classical music, fiction, books about art, and visits to art exhibitions when time allows, have been very important to me,” says Dr. Novy, who has recently completed a painting inspired by his Norwegian environment.

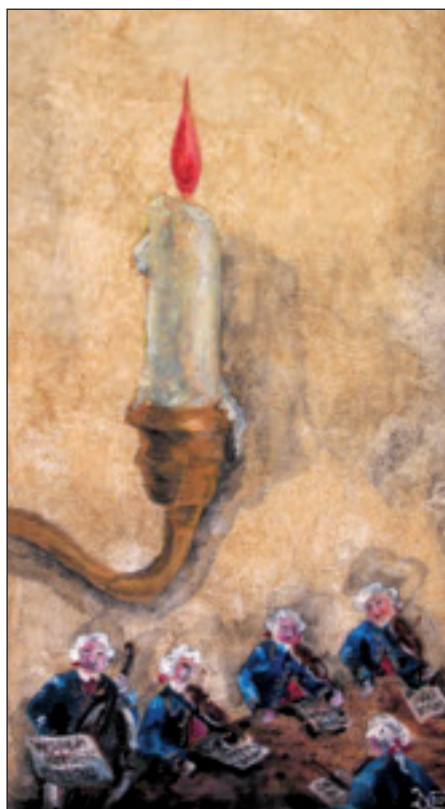
Your paintings from Vietnam show Vietnamese landscapes, pagodas and people at work as well as the traditional Vietnamese puppets which everyone is familiar with. In conjunction with an exhibition in Hanoi in November 2002 the press were very interested in the fact that you were sharing the event with a well-known Vietnamese artist, Nguyen Q. Hoi. One critic, in

reference to your paintings, wrote that you draw your subjects from everyday life, such as in “Good Afternoon Mr. Nguyen – Good Afternoon Mr. Nguyen” (see illustration). There are two traditional Vietnamese puppet

figures in the foreground standing in the water as if in a theatrical performance. In fact they embody the hard working farmers as does the stream of labourers on the bridge. And this, perhaps, is the core of your work: a



*Between Scylla and Charybdis – 1996.
Oil and acrylic on wood. 31.5 x 25.5 cm*



Lauter Kleine Nachtmusik – 2000
Acrylic on wood. 9 x 16 cm

unification of symbolism and realism. The hard working farmers, walking in a long procession, symbolize a continuous flux of labour; and the pagoda as a symbol of religious life as part of the soul from ancient times.

A recurring feature in your pictures is that nature nearly always frames the subject, which might be the ruins of a temple or a cathedral, or impressions of the sea in various light conditions. Can you tell us more about this?

“I see myself as a romantic belonging to the romantic period in European art. It is in the spirit of the romantic era, with its cultivation of nature where nature is animated and secretive, that I find my subjects. The boundless imagination of that era, directed towards history, myth and legend, ruins and chivalry, are vital symbols which appear in my work. It is through these old landscapes, ships in stormy seas, buildings and cathedrals in ruins, or a knight, such as in my “Loneliness of the Green Knight”, that I want to express a philosophy of today’s life.”

The last picture you mention can be interpreted in many ways. The knight is a warrior, alone on a mission, fighting for his faith or for his sworn allegiance to his feudal lord. In the background we see the remains of a castle or a monastery, and through the gate we see nature itself. Also in the top right-hand corner nature is in evidence, a landscape in perspective which leads one to think of renaissance artists. And if one looks closely, one can see a red heart with a knight at the centre, which in turn has a red heart with a knight at the centre. Thus you create an ingenious expression which it is up to each of us to interpret – if one notices it in the first place, that is. This is another typical feature of your pictorial universe – there is more hidden than one at first is aware of. In “Unforeseeable Skyline”, for example, a ship makes its way across a rough sea. In the crest of the wave in the foreground, however, one might make out a sinister figure.

Even in your miniature paintings we can find unexpected signs and characters.

Regarding your miniatures, they would make excellent illustrations for books. But one needs a microscope to view them properly since they measure 10,5cm x 6,5cm. It must be something of a challenge to work on such a small scale?

“Yes, it is difficult to work on these, for such a small space is not easy. I have to use a magnifying glass and a powerful lamp to apply all the tiny detail. But I consider it quite a challenge and find it fascinating to be able to express my ideas in these small, delicate pieces of work,” says HE Dr. Lubos Novy, who invites *The Magazine’s* readers to get to know some of the pictures he has painted; the inspiration for these paintings is taken from a variety of sources including the works of Jules Verne, Edgar Allan Poe, Tolkien, Goethe, Schiller, and Homer, as can be seen in the picture “Between Scylla and Charybdis” reproduced here.

The Czech ambassador, HE Dr. jur. Lubos Novy, who chose the law and a diplomatic career instead of many years’ study at art academy, has nevertheless manifested himself as an artist. He is a gifted, imaginative artist whose minutely detailed work is presented in a unified expression, held together by its form and structure. This natural way of expressing oneself is not given to all artists. Some, however, have a natural aptitude for form, such as ambassador Lubos Novy.

Successful English Church Bazaar

The traditional English Church Bazaar was arranged as usual in the assembly hall of the Swedish Margareta kyrkan at Hammersborg Torg, Oslo. This successful event took place in beautiful autumn weather on Saturday 15th November. The fine weather added to the convivial atmosphere among the many parishioners of St. Edmund’s Church and other friends of the English Chaplaincy, who had come to help create the right pre-Christmas spirit.

The global credit crunch did not dampen the enthusiasm or eagerness to buy among those present. People had come to the bazaar to buy Christmas presents and obtain genuine English treats such as homemade marmalade, jam, chutney, mint jelly – and, of course, English Christmas cakes, Christmas cards, calendars and pocket books. The editor of *The Magazine* made sure that he secured a couple of jars of homemade chutney, sold by the

Chaplain in person, the Rev. Janet Heil, who was responsible for the stand with homemade delicacies. Incidentally this English clergywoman speaks excellent Norwegian.

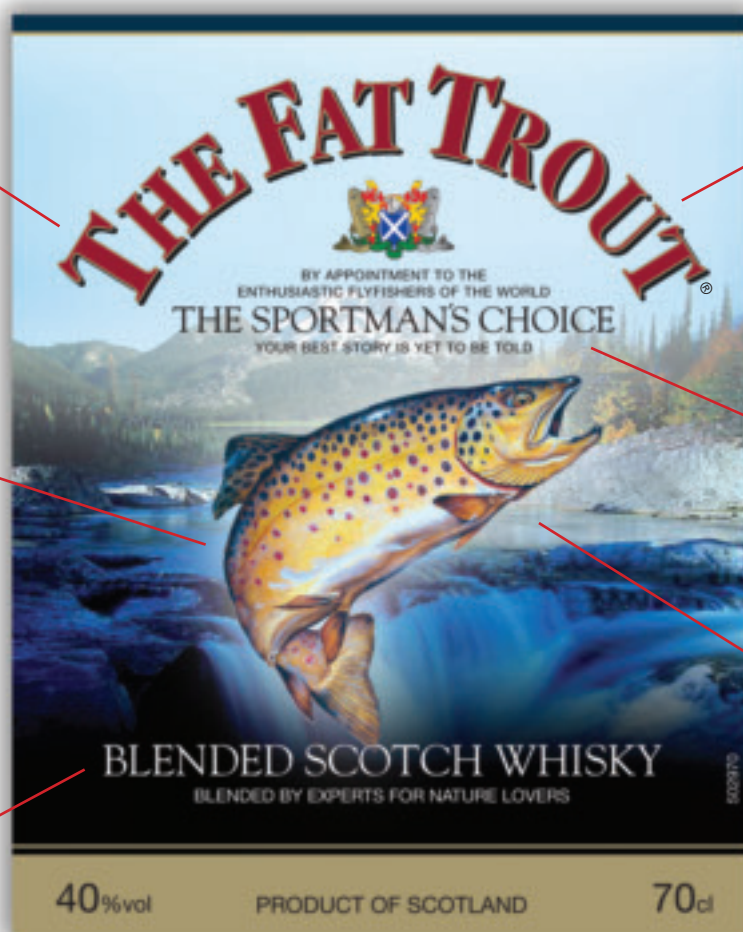
Judging by the hum of conversation in the cafeteria it was evident that this Christmas Bazaar is not only a fund-raising activity for St Edmund’s Church, but also a very important social event.

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Collecting bond and share certificates as a hobby!



Special adviser Tryggve G. Øglænd in Innovation Norway has been a keen collector for years. (Photo: The Magazine)

The periodical also reports on the mammoth auction at Historisches Wertpapierhaus AG in Würzburg, Germany, where the turnover exceeded EUR 388,000. Editor Leif Bjornes writes that at this auction, the “hottest property” appeared to be old Russian stocks and bonds. Scrip-Nytt and Norsk Selskap for Scripofili are based in Kristiansand.

Visit www.aksjebrev.com for more information!

The magazine's columns inspire many to become members of “the club”, contributing with historic insight to encouraging an ever growing interest for the specialist areas of collecting that scripophily represents.

The collection of nominally worthless stocks and bonds is called scripophily, a specialised field of numismatics. Hobbyists around the world collect old, cancelled stocks, bonds and invoices for their inherent decorative beauty as well as their interesting historical context. Some stock certificates are excellent examples of the intricate art of engraving. There are thousands of collectors worldwide searching for rare and popular stocks and bonds.

In its May 2008 edition, the Norwegian magazine Scrip-Nytt, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, points out that “profits in the international auction market of old securities are currently showing a phenomenal upswing, with many auction houses reporting record turnovers. Boone’s in Antwerp, for example, has created perhaps one of the most interesting scripophile events in the world”.

A good example of a decorative document in Mr. Øglænd’s possession is this bond from 1898. The motif depicts the equestrian Ethiopian Emperor admiring a new railway – an industrial wonder at the time.



Popular branches

So which branches are among the most popular for collecting old stocks and bonds? Listed among the most popular categories in Norway right now are Mining- Mines, Ships-Shipping lines and Newspapers-Publishing houses. Another popular category includes Whaling-Fisheries. The latter is a certain winner at Norwegian auctions, with collectors clambering over each other to get hold of these rare shipping shares that have been collecting dust in cellars and lofts over the years!

At an auction in Larvik in November 2008, a decorative “whaling” share certificate from A/S Spitzbergen, issued in Tønsberg in 1904, fetched NOK 7,600 (starting price NOK 4,000) and a certificate from the well known whaling company Kosmos in Sandefjord from 1910 went from NOK 6,000 to NOK 14,100 – not bad for a worthless piece of paper!

A Røraas Kobberværk (Mining) security from 1821 sold for NOK 57,200 some years ago and the world record is, of course, American – a Standard Oil Company share from 1871 with J.D. Rockefeller’s signature, which changed owner in 2000 at an auction in New York for NOK 1.2 million.

Decorative attraction

Innovation Norway special adviser Tryggve G. Øglænd has for years been responsible for organising trade delegations in connection with official visits or State Visits to foreign countries by members of The Royal Family or Government dignitaries. He is also a keen scrippophile and has been collecting stocks and bonds since the mid-1970s. For Øglænd it all began in Frankfurt (where he was working) when by chance he saw an advertisement in the International Herald Tribune for the purchase of a bond. He realised there was more to the hobby when a business associate saw the said bond framed in glass on his office wall and offered a considerably higher sum than he himself had given for it.

Øglænd: “Afterwards I became a member of a collectors’ club in Frankfurt. At that time, Swedish stocks and bonds were much sought after, so coming from Scandinavia I had the advantage of knowing the language. Other high-



Another example of the art of engraving is this Yin and Yang symbol on a document from the Bank of China.

value objects where telephone company stock bearing the signatures of Marcus Wallenberg and Ivar Kreuger. You can say that any securities bearing the signature of a famous person trade for substantial sums.”

But which area does Øglænd specialise in?

“I originally concentrated on banking and the finance industry, but now I like collecting decorative motifs from Norway. Another area of great interest is securities and documents from former monarchies. But the most important aspect of all these items is that they must be decorative. Inherent beauty is paramount,” says Mr. Tryggve G Øglænd.

By Aa.M.B.



Café Hemma Hos – Holberg Restaurant Frognerseieren Restaurant

In each issue of The Magazine we present a restaurant in Oslo that we consider worth recommending to our international readership. This time we have visited three excellent restaurants in Oslo: Café Hemma Hos at Bygdøy, Holberg Restaurant, and Frognerseieren Restaurant.



*Ulrika Aarnseth is owner and manager of Café Hemma Hos at Bygdøy.
(Photo: The Magazine)*

Café Hemma Hos

“Did you prepare this exquisite, sumptuous buffet in the kitchens here?” was the highly approving question put to Iceland’s ambassador to Norway Mr. Stefán Skjaldarson one sunny day in June last year.

The ambassador had arranged a generous reception at his residence at Bygdøy to mark the end of almost five years’ service in Norway. Many of his fellow ambassadors who were present expressed their pleasure in the high standard of the gastronomical delights served at the farewell lunch.

In answer to *The Magazine’s* question Mr. Skjaldarson replied that he would have loved to have been able to tell us that the food had indeed been prepared in the kitchen at the residence, but that it in fact came from the establishment

across the road, Café Hemma Hos, which is Swedish and means “at the home of” – chez.

The atmosphere and the service live up to the restaurant’s intimate name. Café Hemma Hos is owned and run by Ulrika Aarnseth from Sweden; she does all she can to make her guests feel at home in the amiable environment.

One Saturday in October 2008 *The Magazine* was invited to attend the launch of a new addition to the café’s menu: the “Bygdøy Breakfast” – an opportunity to enjoy breakfast out on Saturday and Sunday mornings when most other restaurants in the Oslo region are closed.

Bygdøy does not boast many places to eat out – and hardly any that maintain a high gastronomic standard – Café Hemma Hos being the exception. The lack of places to eat is rather strange

given the fact that it is a wealthy residential area and a popular goal for excursions both in summer and in winter. We therefore anticipate that Hemma Hos will have plenty of guests in the mornings at weekends. The breakfast that is served there is top, home-made Scandinavian quality. An unusual feature of the breakfast menu is that adult guests are served a champagne cocktail as an aperitif! In addition to the regular lunch menu served during the rest of the week the café is also open on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. In addition to selling take-away food Hemma Hos offers private arrangements for parties of up to fifty people.

By I. Aa.

Holberg Restaurant

Holberg Restaurant is located on the premises of the Radisson SAS Scandinavia Hotel at Holbergs Plass in the centre of Oslo. Catering for a broad, international range of guests the renowned restaurant now offers a new speciality something out of the ordinary: Brazilian and Norwegian cuisine side by side on the plate. Chef Carlos Fernandes from Rio de Janeiro and the Norwegian singer Jørn Hoel have concocted an exciting and delicious menu based on culinary delicacies from north Norway and Brazil. The background to this unusual collaboration began when Jørn Hoel had a singing engagement at the hotel. Hoel met the chef and they agreed that it was time to introduce the culinary traditions of Tromsø and Rio de Janeiro to each other, a decision which has brought great pleasure to many guests, including us from *The Magazine*, who met Carlos Fernandes



*Chef Carlos Fernandes
Photo: The Magazine)*

with this particular variant of cod. After an excellent course of *foie gras au Tourchon* with a sweet and sour mango compote and herb foam, another delicious dish was placed on the table: pickled boknafisk (sweet and sour) together with a dried cod “salad” and bolinhos, cut and dried salted cod. The trimmings consisted of homemade aioli and quail egg yolks. This course, so elegantly served on a large, green-tinted glass plate, tasted as sumptuous as it looked. Our compliments to the chef and his staff – we shall return on the basis of this one course alone!

After the next course, which consisted of excellently prepared, tender oxtail, we were served the main course of the meal: matured, pan-fried boknafisk on a bed of chanterelle mushrooms and the Brazilian vegetable chayote (full of minerals). The dessert course consisted of cachaca- marinated cloudberries with mascarpone and home-

made ice cream. Cachaca is a form of rum brandy made from sugar beet, we were informed by the chef.

The chef Carlos Fernandes, a paratrooper in the Brazilian army, moved to Norway with his Norwegian girlfriend and her family when they left Rio de Janeiro. In the course of a few years Fernandes gained his chef's diploma and has worked at a number of Oslo's top restaurants including Theatercaféen, Le Canard, and Mauds. In 2003 he was invited to accompany the Norwegian royal couple to represent Norwegian cuisine on a state visit to Brazil. And now he has shown us a Brazilian-Norwegian culinary alliance at the Holberg Restaurant in Oslo.

By Aa.M.B.

Frognerseieren Restaurant – 435 metres above sea level

Boasting a fabulous view of Oslo, the fjord and its surrounding mountains, Frognerseieren is a popular goal for tourists and recreation-hungry Norwegians. The place is full summer and winter, young and old stopping to quench their thirst or enjoying a

one day before Christmas for a meal of Brazilian-Norwegian cuisine and Brazilian wines at the Holberg.

Norwegians are fond of traditional Norwegian Christmas fare such as lutefisk or salted, steamed mutton; the Holberg is renowned for such dishes, which were indeed on the menu. We, however, had come to try the chef's appetizing culinary delicacies of boknafisk and dried cod with Brazilian trimmings. The old origins of the traditional northern Norwegian boknafisk are curious: Aboard the fishing vessels, fish that had been caught was cleaned and hung out on the boat's rigging, exposed to the elements, until the fisherman returned ashore, which could take many days. Once at home, the fish prepared and served. Surprisingly the partly dried fish tasted delicious! What began as a pure coincidence became a tradition: boknafisk.

Our chef Carlos had fallen in love



Restaurant keeper Walter Kieliger (Photo: The Magazine)

delicious meal in the domain of Walter Kieliger after hiking or skiing in the countryside. Kieliger, originally from Switzerland, has many years' experience in the restaurant business (he managed the famous artists' restaurant Blom on Karl Johan's gate for ten years) and has consistently distinguished himself with excellent cuisine and good wines – some of which are imported from his home country. Since taking over Frognerseteren Restaurant a few years ago Kieliger has applied his culinary expertise to traditional, Norwegian fare.

The menu

Walter Kieliger is particular about choosing the best seasonal produce. The winter 2009 menu includes fillet of lavaret, freshwater trout, scallops, poached hellebarn and loin of cod fried on the skin side. The meat courses include pepper steak of elk filet and reindeer as well as entrecote of veal and breast of duck. All served with deli-

cious trimmings! For those who eat neither meat nor fish there are vegetarian dishes available. The dessert menu offers a choice of apple cake, pecan nut cake as well as mousse of chocolate and port wine baked figs served warm with a brandy ice cream. A feast for those with a sweet tooth!

The kitchen is highly adaptable. It can just as easily serve gourmet food on tables decked with damask tablecloths in the exclusive restaurant as cater for the plainer self-service café section. The charming log buildings with their 1891 character of rustic romanticism have open fires in several of the rooms. The chambres séparées can take from eight to one hundred guests and are very suitable business meetings as well as weddings, anniversaries and other private celebrations.

Historical site

In 1865 consul Thomas Heftye bought an area of land surrounding Frogner-

seteren and turned it into an open-air museum which included five buildings from different parts of Norway. In 1889 the City of Kristiania bought the place from Heftye's widow and built part of what today is Frognerseteren as we know it. The old log building with its characteristic dragon heads is today one of the most popular restaurants in the Oslo area and is included in De Historiske Hotel & Spisesteder – an exclusive list of historical hotels and places to eat in Norway.

If you set aside time to make the journey 435 metres above sea level, travelling either by car or by underground (which in fact runs over ground for most of the journey), you will doubtless be enchanted by the view, the excellent food and the amiable atmosphere of Walter Kieliger's establishment.

By Aa.M.B.



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Finnskogtoppen Helsehotell – the health centre at Finnskogen

*Text and photos: Aase Melby Block
Finnskogtoppen in September 2008*

One of Scandinavia's finest health centres, Finnskogtoppen, is situated only 150 km from Oslo in the direction of Kongsvinger towards the

Swedish border. On a rise looking out over lake Røgden lies the health centre, whose unique architecture provides a wonderful frame for your stay. Finnskogtoppen offers a variety of treatments as well as good food and recreation to help revitalize the mind and body.

This is where Finnskogtoppen is to be built!

General manager Monica Essè, who trained as an aroma therapist, tells us the story of how the health centre arose: "A well-known businessman



from Kongsvinger was suffering from poor health and therefore he visited health centres in nearby Sweden. One day on his way home – the Swedish border is literally only a few hundred metres away – he stopped on the road and leaving his car he climbed up to this hill. At the top where the complex is situated, 405 metres above sea level, he exclaimed: “This is where Finnskogtoppen is to be built”! And so it was.

Finnskogen

The area was named after seventeenth-century Finnish forest workers. They settled in all the major coniferous forest areas in mid Sweden and southwest Norway, shaping the culture and history of those regions. They gave the places in their environment Finnish names. This immigration has given the surrounding culture a distinctive character which has been maintained to this day (it is obviously the case that the prize-winning architect who designed the health centre was inspired by this). Guided tours to nearby museums and farms provide excellent opportunity to become familiar with this unique part of the Finnish heritage.

Many courses of treatment

The list of treatments offered includes

various facial treatments, oil and algae packs, chiropractic/kinesthology in which joints and muscles are examined, classic massage, aroma therapy and Finnish peat pack – and much, much more.

Treatments are carried out by professional experts in appropriate surroundings. A modern annex with an auditorium for lectures and conferences also houses several comfortable treatment rooms. The swimming pool and bubble baths are frequently in use.

Culinary delights

The guests at Finnskogtoppen include people from all walks of life: professional workers seeking relief from the daily stress, groups of friends challenging themselves and each other to make long and often very tiring walks, or pensioners content to wander around, like 85-year-old Mrs K from Oslo who is a regular guest several times a year. In the winter she treads out a path in the snow around the buildings and stays fit by walking round and round.

Something which is common for all is the pleasure that is to be derived from the excellent cooking. The kitchen maintains an exceptionally high standard – not only

do they serve vegetables of every possible shape, as is the case at many similar institutions, they serve fish and white meat as well as beer and wine. A glass counter in the main dining hall contains drinks which can be retrieved simply by signing for them. If you are longing for a cup of coffee there is hot coffee on tap twenty-four hours a day (coffee is often frowned upon at health centres).

All four seasons in one

Mrs Monica reminds us that the Torsby ski tunnel is the longest in the world. It is located only 40 minutes drive from Finnskogen. “You can ski all year there. You can do everything at once, experience all the seasons at the same time, picking cranberries, skiing, and enjoying your packed lunch,” explains our hostess who has been general manager of the establishment since 1994 – indeed she is a manager who ensures quality at every level.

Finnskogtoppen Helsesenter
N-2256 Grue Finnskog
Norway
Tel.: (+47) 62 94 63 00
E-mail: f-toppen@online.no

The Rafto Prize 2008 to Congolese pastor

The Professor Thorolf Rafto Memorial Prize was awarded this year to Pastor Bulambo Lembelembe Josué for his dedication to end the plight of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The Rafto Foundation for Human Rights’ press release read: “The Board of the Rafto Foundation for Human Rights awards the 2008 Rafto Prize to Pastor Bulambo Lembelembe Josué for his dedication to end the plight of the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). His work brings hope for peace, reconciliation and human dignity to a people that have suffered from the deadliest conflict since World War II. The most frequent targets of this hidden war are women. In the last ten years in Congo, hundreds of thousands of women have been raped, many in excessively brutal gang rapes.”

The International Rescue Commit-

tee estimates that more than 5 million have died as a result of war, famine and disease since 1998. Many African countries and militias have been involved in the conflicts, which are linked to the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. It is particularly the eastern part of the country that is in a state of near-lawlessness and where the population is suffering the most. In this context, Pastor Bulambo Lembelembe Josué, who also serves as Vice President of the Protestant Council of Churches, the Eglise du Christ au Congo (ECC), in the DRC’s South Kivu province, showed his strategic skills and ability to act by helping the victims to help themselves. He has taken the initiative for a rehabilitation centre for child soldiers and victims of rape. Bulambo Lembelembe Josué is also the Vice President of Héritiers de la Justice, a human rights organisation he helped to establish in 1991. The or-

ganisation works to raise awareness of human rights, assists victims of human rights abuses and stop impunity from sexual violence. Bulambo stresses that no amnesty should be given to perpetrators of sexual violence.

The Rafto Prize is in memory of the peace activist, Professor Thorolf Rafto (1922-86), and is awarded to individuals, groups or organisations who are relatively unknown in a global context, but who via the prize can achieve greater attention and thus further their human rights efforts. Several Rafto laureates have later won the Nobel Peace Prize, including Aung San Suu Kyi and Shirin Ebadi.

The Rafto Prize ceremony is held every year on the first Sunday of November at the National Venue of Theatre (Den Nationale Scene) in Bergen.

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Capitalism's mythological roots

Essayistic dialogue no 3

By Idar Aarheim

We have now reached the third essayistic dialogue between the professor and the editor. The first two dialogues had as their themes Islamism and Marxist-Leninism. The third "ism" has been highly topical subject for discussion in the last months: Capitalism.

Once again, the venue for the discussion is the editor's favourite table, to the right of the entrance, in Theatercaféen; Oslo's venerable art-nouveau restaurant that first opened its doors in 1899. Among the many drawings on the restaurant walls is a portrait of the lyricist and essayist André Bjerke (1918 - 1985) who once made the following pithy remark: "One hasn't made any impact on Norway's post-1900 cultural life unless one has contributed constructively to an intellectual conversation at Theatercaféen".

Editor: As we are meeting to mark a kind of funeral, I think we should "celebrate" the event with champagne. However, as the patient could merely be in a state of suspended animation, I have selected a cheaper festive wine: The restaurant's house champagne: H. Blin Brut Tradition is eminently suitable at lunchtime.

Professor: If you are referring to capitalism, I am afraid it has only fallen into a coma of limited duration. We have certainly not seen the last of capitalism's greedy and predatory countenance. I am equally certain that it will take a long time before capitalism can perform with such enormous yet lethal audacity as in the years subsequent to communism being deposited on history's gehenna (rubbish dump), because capitalism is lying prostrate with its back broken. Yet this allegory is inaccurate, because the fictional, speculative economy has no spine – it is more reminiscent of an amoeba suffering from a serious attack of lethargy.

Editor: You are probably right. But because capitalism, like communism,

is a form of quasi-religion, we ought to take the predominant ideologies of our day very seriously. That is why we should celebrate the global events of last autumn in a rather more ritualistic manner. A toast then to capitalism's temporary demise (the editor raises his glass).

Professor: (who also lifts his glass): Cheers! I am responding to your toast out of sheer joy – the joy of being granted a respite from the utterances of vociferous prophets and priests declaiming their trivial theology: the misplaced faith in the market's divine infallibility and thus self-regulating power. As you are the one who has studied history of religion, perhaps you can tell me which god the capitalists believe in?

Editor: Capitalism's Divinity has many names, but in this context we can call him "Mammon." Mammon is an Aramaic word meaning money, property or all forms of earthly riches. In terms of history of religion it is interesting to note that the Jews in Palestine in Jesus of Nazareth's time, spoke Aramaic (not Hebraic as today).

Not only was Aramaic the spoken Jewish language in the centuries before our calendar was introduced, the written language of the Persian kingdom was also Aramaic. When the Persian king, Cyrus the Great, allowed the Jews to return to Palestine (538 BC), they took the Aramaic language with them. That is why it is not surprising that the original text to the Book of Daniel is written in Aramaic – and there are two versions of Talmud that were originally composed in Aramaic (one from Babylon and one from Jerusalem).

Professor: (somewhat impatiently): Don't let us get bogged down in history-of-religion hairsplitting! How did Mammon wield his divine influence over the Jews?

Editor: I don't think there are many people who can give you a precise answer, but it would seem logical that if

a people as small as the Jewish adopted the language of an entire empire, then many of the conceptions in that language would have followed in its wake. There are many indications that the Mammon-Worship had a strong following among the Jews two-thousand years ago.

Professor: Was that the reason why early Christianity preached a poverty ideal, and why the gospels virtually assert that earthly riches are a stumbling block for entry into salvation's kingdom after death?

Editor: Probably. It is very easy to forget that for two or three generations Christianity was first and foremost a reform movement among the Jews.

In St. Matthew's Gospel, the polemics against the worship of Mammon are more explicit: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon" (Matt. 6 – 24). According to the New Testament the temple in Jerusalem during the celebration of Passover had developed into a financial exchange causing Jesus of Nazareth, before his sacrificial death on the cross, to clear the temple in righteous anger by overturning the tables of the moneychangers.

Professor: I cannot understand this in either psychological or theological terms. The Jews were devout monotheists who initially worshipped their respective tribal gods until these merged into the Israelites common god Jehovah. How then could there be room for the enemy's alien-god Mammon?

Editor: I think we have to understand it in terms of a symbiosis when Mammon merged with the Jews' Jehovah notion, after which Mammon became an integral part of Jehova-Worship.

It is at this point, after Babylonian captivity, that the Jewish elite hit upon an ingenious, theological ruse that had historical consequences throughout two and a half thousand years. The scribes decided that their god Jehova had elevated the Israelites to be his chosen people. In order to justify such a drastic notion, it was necessary to



From Theatercaféen: The portrait in the middle is of the author Andre Bjerke. (Photo: The Magazine)

create a mythological fiction about the Jewish people's glorious past. It is at this time the Jews' holy books Torah acquired their final textual form.

Then began the massive backdating. This applies first and foremost to the first five books of the Old Testament but in a broader sense to the whole collection of the Jewish people's mythological history: The tales about the founding-father Abraham, the accounts of the Jews' alleged captivity in Egypt, Jehovah's blood-thirsty settling of accounts with Pharaoh, the years of wandering in the desert culminating in Jehovah's handing down of the stone tablets to Moses, the ruthless slaughtering of the other Palestinian peoples with Divine blessing, the myths about the mighty kings David and Solomon – and their magnificent capital Jerusalem.

Thereafter come the prophets with their many admonitions as Jehovah's spokesmen. Following the unsuccessful dialogue with Job, Jehova retired to the heavenly heights. Most of the Jews' prehistory (prior to the Jewish elite's forced removal to Babylon) is mythological fiction and theology. There is no historical evidence to sup-

port either the Jews' alleged captivity in Egypt or the existence of Moses, the mighty kings or "Jerusalem the Golden." Archaeological excavations have shown that at the time of David and Solomon, Jerusalem was nothing more than a large village.

Professor: The poverty ideal continues as one of the main pillars of Christianity because God's Kingdom – paradise – was "not of this world." The orthodox Jews hoped nevertheless that God would send them a mighty king "descended from David" who was to re-establish a mighty Greater Israel, i.e. power-political aspirations. The dream of the State of Israel runs as a leitmotif throughout Jewish history.

Incidentally, there is a wonderful legend about "how gold entered the Jews' bloodstream!"

Editor: That is hardly strange. If we are to believe the mythological tales in Exodus it was Moses himself who arranged, literally, for the Jews to get "gold dust in their veins." As Moses was absent so long in receiving the two tablets with the Ten Commandments, the children of Israel asked the leader

Aaron if he could cast for them a golden calf (the Egyptian god Apis) that they could worship and dance around. When Jehova informed Moses of what was about to happen, the warning came too late. With the Commandments under his arm he could see "the dance around the golden calf."

The following describes how Moses' anger "waxed hot" when he caught sight of "the calf and the dancing" (Exodus, Ch. 32, vs. 20): "And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strewed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it." In order that the "baptism of gold" should not be forgotten in the Jewish peoples' history, Jehova commanded Moses to carry out a gruesome massacre among the Israelites; "and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men (Exodus Ch. 32, vs. 28). After that, God was satisfied, promising in the next chapter to lead the Israelites into "a land flowing with milk and honey!"

Professor: After such a bloodletting by Moses and Jehova, had I been an Israelite at that time, I think I would have

preferred the “fleshpots” and polytheism of Egypt rather than chosen by such a sadistic and bloodthirsty mono-deity as Jehova!

However, lunchtime is passing rapidly. Can we take a quick overview of how Christianity, despite the original poverty ideal, also came to be embroiled in Mammon-Worship?

Editor: After Emperor Constantine had made Christianity the state religion in the 4th century, a particularly violent mixture of strict religious commandments and profane, earthly power and wealth came into being.

Even though the poverty ideal and caritas (care of others) still adhered to the monastery tradition, a remarkable dualism arose within the church. With the Church as a huge property capitalist, and with all its clerical mitres and magnificent robes, it was easy for all to see that Christ's Kingdom was very much “of this world.”

Professor: The Church's materialism and greed also became a target for the Protestant reformers of the 16th century, as exemplified not least by Martin Luther and his violent confrontation with the Catholic Church's wealth and splendour.

Martin Luther, however, undoubtedly underestimated the materialism and self-indulgence of the kings and princes who became the Reformation's patrons. The vast majority of them did not support the Reformation for theological reasons, but rather because they could acquire the Church's property and other riches at no expense to themselves. Furthermore, the kings reserved the right to appoint bishops and priests – and thus the monarch in principle also became the theological head (Defender of the Faith) of the State Church.

The one who was to open my eyes to the obvious connection between Christian Protestantism and modern capitalism was the German sociologist Max Weber (1864 - 1920). I felt myself to be a great deal more knowledgeable after having read his main work *Die protestantische Ethik und der Geist des Kapitalismus* (The Protestant ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism).

Editor: I can say the same. However, I think it is important to emphasise that among the Protestant denominations, Calvinism in particular provides the best basis for a fruitful and successful capitalism. We see this most clearly in the United States of America. We must also remember that the strict reformator of the Scottish Church, John Knox, had stayed with Calvin for a time in Geneva in the 1550s.

The Pilgrim Fathers on board The Mayflower who stepped ashore in Massachusetts in 1620 to form the first colony in New England, were in the throes of an extreme form of Puritanism that descended from Calvin and Knox. With their families they had set out on their hazardous journey across the Atlantic to escape from “the old, sinful world” (Europe) to realise the dream of God's own country in America. It was their “Exodus from Egypt”.

The Reformed Church's conception of predestination is of fundamental importance in this connection. According to this notion, God has already decided in advance who will be blessed with everlasting life in the hereafter – and who have been condemned to eternal damnation (hell). As an austere lifestyle comprising work and prayer was the ideal, the conviction arose that those whom God had chosen for a life in paradise had already been blessed with material advancement here on earth! In the same way as the Jews were indoctrinated by the scribes about being God's chosen people, the Pilgrim Fathers felt that they too were chosen by God to create God's kingdom here on earth. That is why some of their preachers compared the Atlantic crossing with the old Israelites' liberation from Pharaoh's Egypt. In this manner, the Puritans became God's chosen people in America!

Professor: Most people underestimate the fundamental influence that Puritan New England has had on the formation of the United States of America and the state in which the political life still finds itself. All politicians must still beseech God to bless the USA as a country (not the whole world) and be regular churchgoers. Religious humbug and double standards of morality regarding sex, are still bulwarks of the

political establishment in the USA.

It is impossible to understand the power of capitalism if we overlook the religious dimension of this Mammon-Worship. Any intelligent and well-informed person ought to be capable of realising that the over-inflated, speculative finance world was a ticking time bomb that was bound to explode sooner or later. Every normally developed child knows that if you keep on blowing up a balloon it will eventually burst! Yet this banal and simple insight has been totally lacking in the case of economic experts from trillionaires within the “financial services industry” (notice the name that indicates that speculators produce real wealth), bank directors, Nobel laureates in economics, to their many willing errand boys in the press and media. They maintain with dismay (like President George W Bush) that the financial crisis came as a complete surprise! Just like the president of the USA, they claim in all seriousness that it was impossible to predict the disaster!

Impossible?

How then could a number of intellectuals have given warnings for several years about the international capital's game of chance where enormous fortunes ended up in post-box tax havens such as the alluring Alpine hideaway Lichtenstein and the exotic Caribbean Cayman Islands? In etymological terms “haven” is not far removed from the religiously-charged word “heaven,” showing how important these “heavenly islands” are for Mammon-Worship.

Soon after the collapse of communism, Scandinavia's leading philosopher, the Finnish academic Georg Henrik von Wright, predicted at the end of the 1990s that capitalism would be the next quasi-religion to collapse. The Finnish nobleman was not just anybody – he took over the professorate at Cambridge University (1948) after the famous Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. At that time, when enthusiastic dyslexics held centre stage as “responsible” entrepreneurs, the media-fixated entertainment industry was not the least interested in erudite and critical philosophers who were looked upon as spoilsports and killjoys.



Editor: Neither was any notice taken of perceptive politicians in high positions such as Germany's Federal President Horst Köhler and Chancellor Angela Merkel, who gave warnings about the global speculative economy during the G8 meeting in Heiligendamm in 2007, during which USA's president and Great Britain's prime minister declared their quasi-religious faith in "the market's self-regulating power."

Professor: One of the USA's most critical intellectuals, the philosopher and sociologist Noam Chomsky never tires of stressing the fact that we Europeans never seem to realise how closely religion, economy and politics are interwoven in *Gods Own Country*. Intermixed with an inability to perceive historical co-relationships, US foreign policy is often reduced to a series of ad hoc decisions devoid of any long-term perspective.

Mr Chomsky cites the choice of Sarah Palin to be the Republicans' vice-presidential candidate as a frightening example of over-correct political religiosity in the USA. According to Noam Chomsky, anyone who had proposed such an uninformed and superstitious person for a similarly high office in a European country such as France or Germany would have been regarded as being "mentally retarded!"

Incidentally, how would you characterise the USA's official national god, celebrated on the country's dollar notes with the words: "In God we trust"?

Editor: In history-of-religion terms this god is a symbiose of the Torah's and The Old Testament's bloodthirsty and jealous divinity Jehovah and the

Aramaic god of material prosperity Mammon.

In the USA, and as manifested in present-day political and religious dreams of a Greater Israel, the god on the dollar note has acquired acute nationalistic features. Vice-president Dick Cheney is the incarnation in persona of the cultivation of the USA's national god. When we hear this multi-billionaire and arms profiteer preaching that "what is good for the USA (and Israel) is good for the whole world," we have arrived at the core of this materialistic theology.

Professor: It must have been a crushing defeat for God-Mammon worship in temples such as the White House and Wall Street when the *divine market forces* led to disaster. If we have a sense of history, it is tragic-comic that the secular state, the entire population of the USA, has had to foot the bill for a quasi-religious ideology that brought the country to the verge of ruin.

Editor: Whether the year is 1929 or 2008, untrammelled market forces will always lead to catastrophe. It should be noted that the vast amounts of government funds are being injected into private finance institutions which, in true casino style, have gambled and ended up in ruin. Former President George W Bush pointed out that the government bail out was aimed at saving the private capitalistic system, ie. the ideology. Only secondarily did the president hope that the golden hand-out to bankers and finance institutions would also benefit the average man in the street.

UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown's

wise strategy – ensuring that the government helps by acquiring a majority stake in the finance institutions – conflicts strongly with the US private-capitalistic government ideology.

Professor: Karl Marx was the first to examine capitalism's mental health, and no one has yet surpassed his diagnosis. He was the one to point out that permanent expansion – global and bursting all bounds – is capitalism's *raison d'être*. That is why capitalism (neo-liberalism) is always fighting against all forms of government regulation, workers rights, international agreements, environmental protection, taxes and duties. Karl Marx's alternative, however, was an ideological blunder that has cost tens of millions of lives as well as immense human suffering.

Editor: The one ray of hope in today's situation is that it can pave the way for a new conservatism – in the European sense of the word. Conservatism has always seen the necessity of having a strong state that can wield effective control over the power of money and safeguard the citizen's material benefits and personal liberty within boundaries that do not hurt others.

Modern conservatism has to be the essence of the Enlightenment era's ideas, with a clear and unequivocal division between religion and state, as well as civil liberties within the constitutional state's framework.

Professor: We are living in an amazing period in history. In the course of less than twenty years we have witnessed the period's two ruling ideologies, both

of them quasi-religions, being thrown onto the scrap heap of history.

Communism and state-capitalism are stone dead, but humankind ought also to be making sure that private-capitalism does not again develop into a mighty volcano that can erupt once again.

Editor: That which is instructive about our current time is our ability to abolish ideologies – because they are man made and not laws of nature. History of religion shows us that all gods, even the monotheistic, are created by us human beings – and not vice versa!

Professor: Perhaps our descendents one day will sit here and raise a toast cel-

ebrating that all tyrannical gods have lost their credibility so that priests and theologians end up in the same category as ideologists. That is a vision of the future worth a toast!

Editor: Yes, let us raise a toast celebrating that mankind's cognitive ability and determination will outlive religion's dangerous absurdities!

HOLBERG PRIZE TO AMERICAN PROFESSOR

The Holberg International Memorial Prize for 2008 went to Professor Fredric R. Jameson. Jameson (74) is the William A. Lane Jr. Professor of Comparative Literature and Professor of Romance Studies at Duke University. Jameson received the award at a formal ceremony arranged in Håkon-

shallen, Bergen on 26 November.

Jameson, a humanist and one of the most influential cultural theorists of our time, was awarded the Holberg Prize for his “outstanding contributions to the understanding of the relation between social formations and cultural forms in a project he himself describes

as the ‘poetics of social forms’”.

The Holberg International Memorial Prize is awarded annually for outstanding scholarly work in the fields of the arts and humanities, social sciences, law and theology. The prize for 2008 was NOK 4.5 million.

The Kavli Prizes

The Kavli Prizes are new this year (2008) and were dealt out at the Oslo Concert House on 9 September. HRH Crown Prince Haakon Magnus led the presentation of the international research prizes to seven scientists in nanoscience, neuroscience and astrophysics. The prize award in each of the scientific areas carries a cash award of 1 million US dollars.

The prize for nanoscience went to Louis E Brus (USA) and Sumio Iijima (Japan), while Sten Grillner (Sweden), and Pasco Raki and Thomas Jessel from the USA won the prize for neuroscience. The astrophysics prize was shared by Maarten Schmidt (USA)

and Donald Lynden-Bell (UK).

The Kavli Prize was established as a joint venture between the Kavli Foundation, the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters and the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research.

Fred Kavli, institutor of the California-based foundation, is a Norwegian-born naturalised US citizen who in 1956, after graduating as an engineer from the Norwegian Institute of Technology (NTH), now part of the Norwegian University of Science and Terchnology (NTNU) in Trondheim, migrated to the USA. After a couple of years in the sensor industry

he formed his own company, Kavlico Corporation, where he continued to develop and patent hi-tech sensors used in the aeronautical and automotive industries. He sold the company in 2000.

Philanthropist Fred Kavli is engaged in supporting research and education which in the long-term can benefit mankind. The Kavli Foundation has therefore granted funds for the establishment of Kavli institutes at various universities – three in Europe, two in China and ten in the USA. The Foundation has also donated funds to six professorships.

The National Ibsen Award 2008

Dramatist and author Edvard Hoem (1949 -) was the proud winner of the National Ibsen Award 2008. The NOK 150,000 prize was presented during the Ibsen Conference in Skien at the beginning of September. Hoem,

who was first published in 1969 with a collection of poems, has published a series of novels, plays and opera librettos. He won the award for the play *Mikal Hetles siste ord*, a narrative taken from real life.

The National Ibsen Award has been awarded by Skien Municipality since 1986 and is Norway's only award for playwrights.

Save money – buy wine by the carton!

By Idar Aarheim

We hear many people complain that over a half of Norwegian wine sales are cartons or bag-in-box. You won't find me participating in this chorus of complaint. The reason being that even though bag-in box wine is subject to exorbitant taxation, there is a great deal of money to be saved by buying wine in cartons rather than in bottles. Thanks to modern technology the difference in quality between the same wine supplied in a bottle or carton is virtually non-existent. This applies first and foremost to young wines for daily consumption.

Here are just a few examples of what you can save when buying good three-litre cartons:

Item No. 45884 Petit Chablis BIB (France) Nkr. 479.90

This represents a bottle price of Nkr.120 whereas you have to pay twenty kroner more if you buy it by the bottle. The wine is produced by the renowned quality co-operative La Chablisienne, who also have responsibility for the next example.

Item No. 46387 Burgundy Chardonnay BIB (France) Nkr.419.90

Here the calculated "bottle price" has come down to Nkr.105 while the wine in a bottle from 1st September is Nkr. 129.90. Thus you save 25 kroner. The wine is refreshing and originates from Chablis and environs.

Item No. Tariquet BIB (France) Nkr. 304.90

This is one of the most popular white wines in Norway, which has established its position over 7-8 years. Here the carton "bottle price" is Nkr. 76, while the same

wine bought by the bottle costs Nkr 17 more. A versatile wine from Gascony that can be used as an aperitif and with starters, as well as together with fish dishes and to chicken and other light meats.

Zaccagnini Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, the red wine with a vine twig bound to the neck, has established itself as a classic at Vinmonopolet. However, the Zaccagnini family has launched a red wine in a carton that has advanced to third place in the Vinmonopolet sales ranking in recent months:

Item No. 48973 Cantina Rossa (Italy) Nkr. 339.90

This wine comes exclusively from the family's own vineyards. The vines are grafted so that the Montepulciano grapes give a low yield, but heavy concentration. The "bottle price" Nkr 85 and you would have to pay considerably more to obtain such a good Montepulciano wine in bottle from d'Abruzzo.

Perhaps an even better wine buy, when comparing price and quality, is Zaccagnini's white wine in a carton:

Item No. 76406 Cantina Bianca (Italy) Nkr. 309.90

The "bottle price" here is Nkr.77.50. This makes it one of the most reasonable wines on the Vinmonopolet shelves – because it is so versatile. In addition to the usual Trebbiano grape, the wine has been given an additional amount of Piccorino grape which helps with the aroma and the richness of flavours. Suitable with most fruits of the sea.

Item No. 32668 Campuget Cuvée Jean Lin Dalle (France) Nkr. 332.90

A concentrated wine from old red-wine vines (Syrah, Grenache,

Mourvedre) from the renowned quality producer in the Costières de Nîmes region, which was separated from Southern Rhône. Converted bottle price is Nkr. 83, whereas bottled wines of comparable quality cost at least Nkr. 117.

Item No. 44100 Arne Brimi's Hytte, Grill & Turvin (France) Nkr. 339.90

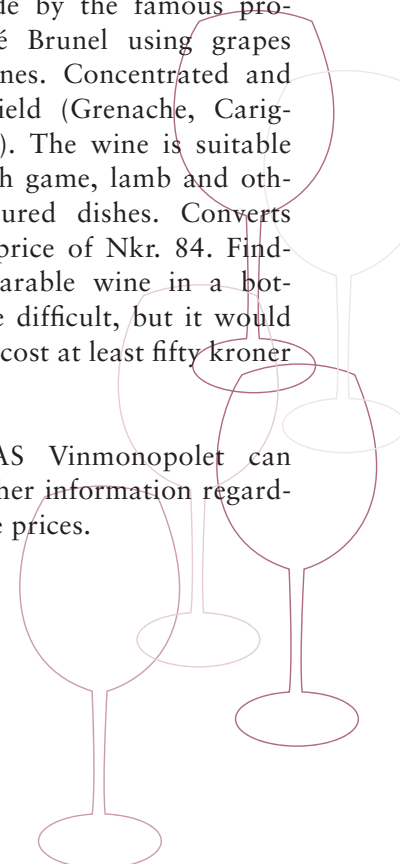
An organic red wine from Côtes du Rhône that Norway's most "Norwegian of chefs" helps to blend each year, corresponds to a bottle price of Nkr. 85. All-round, dark and concentrated wine. For a similar bottle you would have to pay Nkr.117.

And so to a red wine in a carton that I would term a sensation:

Item No. 77806 Les Rives d'Alcion (France) Nkr. 334.90

This quite sensational, blue-black wine is made by the famous producer André Brunel using grapes from old vines. Concentrated and with low yield (Grenache, Carignan, Merlot). The wine is suitable together with game, lamb and other full-flavoured dishes. Converts to a bottle price of Nkr. 84. Finding a comparable wine in a bottle would be difficult, but it would be bound to cost at least fifty kroner more!

Importers AS Vinmonopolet can provide further information regarding duty-free prices.



Dessert wines from the South of France

By Idar Aarheim

This autumn AS Vinmonopolet is placing special emphasis on South-west France. We would remind readers that this is the part of France between Bordeaux in the west and the Pyrenees in the south. Eastwards the boundary is the mountain plateau Masif Central and the Mediterranean region Roussillon.

In addition to traditional red, white and rosé table wines, these inland regions also produce two of the best dessert wines that are made in France: AOC Pacherenc du Vic Bilh and AOC Juracon. Pacherenc is located near the red-wine region Madiran in the Hautes-Pyrénées département, while Juracon starts already at the outskirts of the famous city of Pau – birthplace of the Swedish-Norwegian King Karl Johan. You have a magnificent view towards the snow-capped peaks of the Pyrenees from anywhere in this rolling landscape on a fine sunny day.

A few years ago I was present at the autumn auction in Pacherenc, an event that attracts considerable attention outside of France. I have also visited Juracon on a previous occasion. The grapes used in both these sweet wines are Petit Manseng and Gro Manseng. No supplementary alcohol is added to these wines which have a natural strength of between 12.5 and 14.5 per cent. Personally, I am not very fond of dry white wines made from the two Manseng grape varieties, as they tend to be rather “vegetal,” or aromatic, in a distracting manner. However, this richness of flavour often integrates well in the selected grapes used in the sweet wines which have approx. 100gram (pr. litre) residual sugar and a high level

of acidity (approx. 8 gram pr. litre in Juracon).

In presenting the newcomers, take heed of one important factor: Juracon wines are bottled in standard half bottles (0.37 litre), whereas Pacherenc wines are sold in half-litre bottles.

Item No. 80102, Domaine Cauhapé Noblesse du Temps 2005 (Juracon) Nkr.152.10

Well-integrated tones of tropical aroma, honey, mango, minerals and oaky sweetness from the cask. Lively acidity. Fine now, but will probably benefit from some storage – then the finish will have developed even further.

Item No.10276, La Quintessence 2005 (Juracon) Nkr.142

Seems milder and more rounded than the first wine. Very harmonious, with many of the same mineral characteristics as the previous wine. Fine minerals in the finish. Should improve with keeping.

Item No.10382, Domaine du Crampilh 2006 (Pacherenc du Vic Bilh) Nkr.151.80

Highly concentrated wine that has lain for a time on the lees before bottling. Fermented and matured in the same cask for about one year. More peach and apple nuances than in the Juracon wines. In this instance there is an element of pleasing smoke. Fresh, long finish. Will still benefit from keeping.

Item No. 80055, Vendemiaire 2005 (Pacherenc du Vic Bilh) Nkr.152.90

Matured for one year in new oak casks. Extracted nuances from lees after fermentation. Slight marzipan flavour besides apple, citrus and peach. Concentrated finish that will

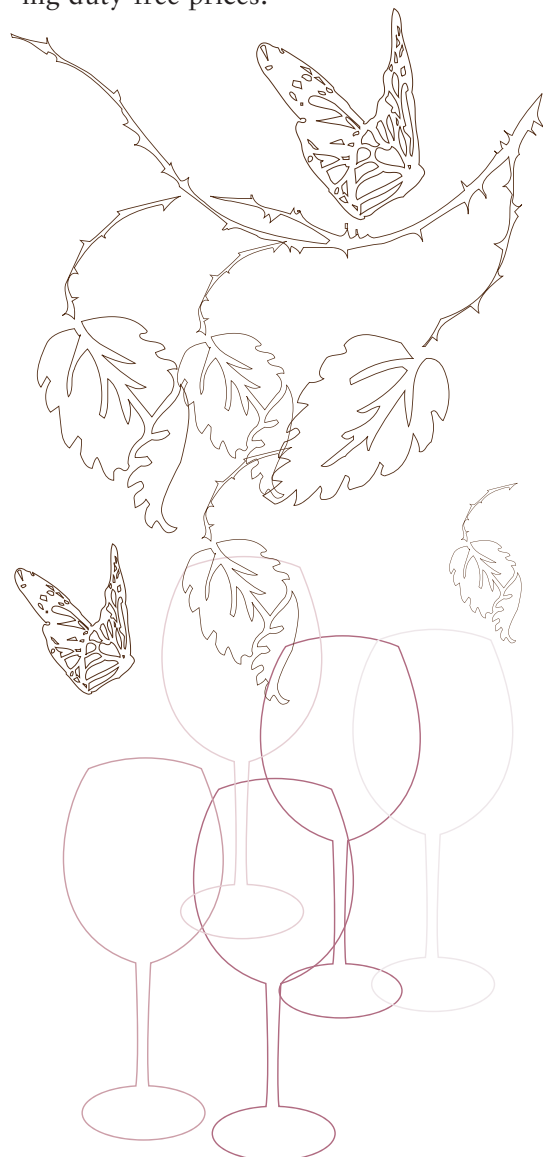
probably develop even further with keeping.

How then should we use these wines?

My scepticism with regard to sweet wines to sugary desserts has not changed in any way. Far better to take a glass of one of these wine as dessert – “as a sweet” in other words.

Furthermore, the wines make excellent accompaniments to full-flavoured patés and blue cheeses.

Importers AS Vinmonopolet can provide further information regarding duty-free prices.



Riesling - among the very best

By Idar Aarheim

No other grape in the world provides a better foundation for the making of great white wines than Riesling. What about Chardonnay, one might ask? This question posed by the enthusiastic supporters of white Burgundies must be answered first.

My answer is as follows: I have yet to taste any white Burgundy that is more complex or fascinating than the best Riesling wines. I make this claim knowing full well that I sometimes dream of white Burgundies whose names are sheer poetry – Chablis Grand Cru, Mersault and Chassagne-Montrachet!

This July I was invited by Deutsche Weininstitut (The German Wine Institute) in Mainz to be the Norwegian representative at this year's "Best of Riesling" competition. The panel of judges, comprising wine writers and sommeliers from a number of countries, were seated alongside German experts. At a blind tasting we were given the task of selecting the best among nearly two-thousand Riesling wines from all over the world. A tough, challenging yet intriguing assignment in which personal impressions and ratings must be based on twenty items of the specialist international evaluation form for professional wine tasting.

As Germany represents more than seventy percent of the world's entire Riesling production, it was only natural that most of the entrants were German. However, I heartily concur with the renowned German professor in oenology Monika Christmann: several hundred mediocre but only average wines should have been eliminated prior to the competition. Having said that, The German Wine Institute deserves praise for a very well-organised arrangement, held at a renowned congress hotel in Bingen where the other foreign participants were also housed during the tastings.

Bingen is the natural centre for wine



The Germania monument in the vineyards of Rheingau. (Photo: The Magazine)

tasting in Germany, because it is the actual point of convergence of four German wine regions: Rheinhessen, Nahe, Mittelrhein – and from the windows of the congress hotel we look over towards the most famous vine-clad hills of Rudesheim in Rheingau on the opposite side of the River Rhine.

As none of the winning wines in the various categories are available in Norway, I have chosen to present one of the leading Riesling producers who is also well represented in Vinmonopolet's catalogues: Markus Molitor (Bernkastel - Mosel). During my trip to Germany, I was given the opportunity of visiting this wine family which in recent years has helped to set a high standard for dry Riesling from Mosel. Those of us who remember the acidity and leanness of the first dry wines from Mosel, cannot but admire the development that has

taken place up to today's harmonious wines that can be consumed while still fairly young.

A splendid example of such a wine features in Vinmonopolet's ordering catalogue, Item No. 44706: Markus Molitor Alte Reben 2006 (Nkr.177). The basis of this wine is a steeply-sloping vineyard with old vines that only produce a few grapes and thus give a small yield. Furthermore, the hill has a very special slate structure that imparts its own distinctive yet elegant character to the wine. I venture to suggest that this is one of the best wine buys you can make at Vinmonopolet with regard to high-quality white wines. A white Burgundy at a "comparable level" could scarcely be bought in this country for less than Nkr. 280.

This Markus Molitor Alte Reben 2006 vintage, a year that gave rich wines in Mosel, is marvellous together with cold-smoked wild salmon where juniper and dried leaves have been used during the lengthy smoking process. However, the wine is

so harmonious and full-flavoured, it is still a great experience when drunk on its own.

The full-selection list also features a Markus Molitor; a steely, dry Mosel wine of 2006 vintage priced at Nkr.129.90. This is very suitable before a meal or together with starters comprising fruits of the sea. Citrus, apple and minerals characterise this particular wine.

The ordering catalogue features several wines from this producer; all are good buys when comparing price and quality.

From the USA in the West to Japan in the East, modern Rieslings are currently all the rage. Riesling has acquired a solid position within European gastronomy in recent years.

Importers Record Wine can provide further information regarding duty-free prices.

Anders Jahre's Culture Prize

Lawyer Anders Jahre (1891-1982) was one of the most creative and diverse entrepreneurs in Norway. As one of the nation's great institutors in shipping, whaling and the chemical industry, he was both an internationalist and patriot, and driven by a desire to create something for his home town of Sandefjord, and for Norway. The Anders Jahre Fund for the Promotion of Science, was founded in 1953, and the Anders Jahre Humanitarian Foundation in 1966.

The Anders Jahre Culture Prize, Norway's most prestigious honorary award for cultural achievement, has been awarded annually since 1990. In 2008, the million kroner prize was shared by glass artist Ulla-Mari Brantenberg and designer Peter Opsvik. They were also presented with a statue by sculptor Nils Aas and a diploma at the prize-giving ceremony in Gamle Logen on 4 September.

Brantenberg and Opsvik have played key roles in Norwegian art

and design. The former established glass art as an independent artistic expression, while designer Opsvik has created items of furniture that are internationally renowned for both form and functionality.

The junior prizes this year went to glass artist Tuva Gonsholt (selected by Ulla-Mari Brantenberg) and designer Daniel Rybakken (selected by Peter Opsvik). Each received NOK 100,000 in prize money.

Anders Jahre's Awards for Medical Research

The awards for 2008 recognise research into signal molecules and water channels in the brain, as well as research into the control of cellular growth.

The medical prize of NOK 1 mill. went to Professor Ole Petter Ottersen from the Centre for Molecular Biology and Neuroscience at the University of Oslo (UiO) for his pioneering work on signal molecules and water channels in the brain. He has applied unique electromicroscopic techniques to isolate specific molecules in the

brain and how they participate in communication between nerve cells. He has also been able to show that the brains' cells contain channels that regulate the brain's water content. These channels are also the reason why damaged brains swell and develop high pressure than can lead to brain death. This fundamental research has given us a new insight into the function of the brain and an important knowledge base for new methods of treatment for brain diseases.

Anders Jahre's prize for young scientists was this year shared by Mahmood Amiry-Moghaddam (UiO) and Professor Jussi Taipale at the University in Helsinki. The prize includes a grant of NOK 400,000. The prizes are the most prestigious of their kind in biomedical science in the Nordic countries and are awarded by the University in Oslo. The official ceremony was held at the University's Aula on 10 October.

Croatia

Croatia's travel-industry seminar has become a major annual event in Oslo. This took place last autumn in Den Gamle Logen under the pro-

fessional leadership of the Croatian Tourist Office in Stockholm (Sweden) on 6th November.

That evening Croatia's Ambas-

sador to Norway, HE Mr Droboslav Silobrcic, hosted a dinner in the main hall of Den Gamle Logen.

South Africa is progressing well!

By Idar Aarheim

Never before has so much fine wine been produced in the world as in recent years. There are many explanations for this growth, but here we will be looking at two of the main reasons.

Scientific research and university courses have turned oenology into a respected and popular academic subject that offers many challenges. All bona fide wine producers understand the basic elements of wine making, and know that the basis of all good wine lies in well-tended vineyards adapted to suit the appropriate grape variety. We have witnessed the development of a sophisticated technology ensuring that the grape's qualities can be effectively and carefully transferred to the wine. At the same time, major players such as EU wine countries are investing large amounts of money in converting from quantity to quality.

The country's Nordic export drive this autumn clearly demonstrates that South Africa is one of the overseas wine countries that has wholeheartedly followed this international trend in recent decades. Thirty wine producers with more than a couple of hundred wines had arranged wine days in Stockholm, Helsinki and Oslo. Here we shall concentrate on good wine buys from South Africa obtainable from Vinmonopolet sales outlets.

Even though it is autumn, we will start with three whites. "F" indicates wines in the full selection list and "O" indicates wines in the ordering catalogue. The Chenin Blanc grape is very popular in South Africa where it is traditionally referred to as Steen. Fine wine in relation to price is provided by Ariston Bay

Chenin Blanc Chardonnay 2006, Nkr. 99.90 (F). The wine has been supplemented by Chardonnay thus providing additional body. Versatile.

Dimersdal Sauvignon Blanc 2007, Nkr. 109.90 (F). Blackcurrant aroma and gooseberry flavour shows that here we are dealing with a fine wine with marked grape characteristics.

Thandi Chardonnay Fairtrade 2006, Nkr. 139.90 (O). A full-bodied and lightly-oaked wine that is both harmonious and versatile together with chicken as well as other white meat. The producer belongs to the international organisations Fairtrade that has a social conscience in that some of the proceeds go to the employees in the company.

Among the reds we will start with a 3-litre BiB: Oude Kap Cinsault Ruby Cabernet, Nkr. 315 (F), representing a bottle price of Nkr 79. Mature element of red berries, mint and blackcurrant are the impressions given by this versatile wine. Goats do Roam, another 3-litre BiB, is priced at Nkr. 349.90 (O). A full-flavoured wine primarily with the characteristics of the main grape Shiraz. An excellent buy as it represents a bottle price of Nkr. 87.50.

Nederburg Foundation Merlot Cabernet Sauvignon 2006, Nkr. 99.90 (F). Young red-violet wine that nevertheless has a well-developed flavour spectrum. The wine is produced by the Nederburg Foundation, the venue for South Africa's premier wine trade fair.

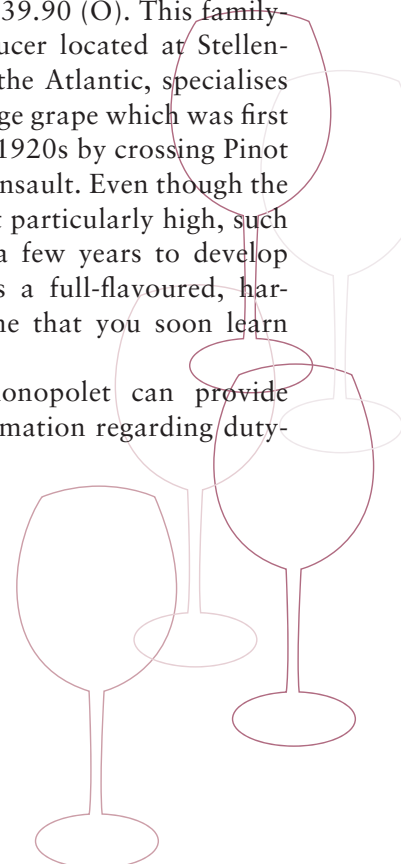
Of all the overseas wine countries, South Africa is undoubtedly the one that has the most terroir conditions that are reminiscent of Europe. The influence from ocean and mountain leads to considerable temperature

differences between night and day. This provides fine aromas – while still allowing acidity to develop in the grapes. However, the bouquet is rarely as exotic as it can be in Australia, California or parts of Latin America. At blind tastings I have mistaken South-African wines for European on more than one occasion.

A port-wine grape such as Tinta Barocca makes a good basis for successful red wine in South Africa, as I discovered when I visited the renowned vineyard Allesverloren in Swartland a few years ago. At Vinmonopolet you can try this full-bodied and lightly-spiced wine with well-balanced oak that is made there: Allesverloren Tinta Barocca 2006, Nkr. 126.90 (F).

We will finish with a fine wine made from South Africa's own red-wine grape: Jacobsdal Pinotage 2004, Nkr. 139.90 (O). This family-owned producer located at Stellenbosch, near the Atlantic, specialises in the Pinotage grape which was first made in the 1920s by crossing Pinot Noir with Cinsault. Even though the acidity is not particularly high, such wines need a few years to develop fully. This is a full-flavoured, harmonious wine that you soon learn to love.

AS Vinmonopolet can provide further information regarding duty-free prices.



Wine tastings in the centre of Oslo



Product Manager Chiara Strobant and Managing Director Pål Atle Skjervengen
(Photo: The Magazine)

“We take pleasure in inviting members of Corps Diplomatique in Norway to sample our range of wines in our recently restored premises, Grensen 16, in the centre of Oslo. Diplomats do not need to order their duty-free wares from AS Vinmonopolet or from foreign suppliers such as Justesen of Danmark; this can be done directly through us. Sampling products before buying, as you can here, isn’t such a bad idea either.”

The above invitation comes from the managing director of Fondberg Norge, Pål Atle Skjervengen. Despite his still young age, Mr Skjervengen has already played an active part in Norwegian politics – as a member of parliament for the Progress Party

(FrP) he was once regarded as being former party leader Carl I Hagen’s “crown prince.”

From his prominent position in the wine trade, Mr Skjervengen has contributed to the formation of a more consumer-friendly alcohol policy in Norway, and is still battling against exorbitant Norwegian alcohol duties and championing consumer rights.

The Magazine likes the idea of a major Norwegian importer with wide-ranging international contacts introducing an arrangement whereby diplomats in our capital are given an opportunity of tasting wines. We know from personal experience that the wines are served in a professional manner and at the correct temperature. Guests can also see the wines

in question through a glass panel, and even visit the temperature controlled wine room.

Several of the company’s employees have a professional education and training as cooks – and Fondberg serves hot lunches for its employees as well as guests who can enjoy wine with their food.

Appointments for wine tastings can be made by calling Mr Pål Atle Skjervengen on the telephone: (+47) 23 10 65 85 or by e-mail: pas@fondberg.no

By Castor

Happy Tastings Diary

January – November 2008

Due to technical problems, the text of some important wine tastings during the first six months of the year were omitted from our summer edition.

During 2008 The Magazine has sampled nearly seven-thousand different products. If we had reported on all these tasting sessions – as well as those we attended when travelling abroad – this periodical would merely have become a trade catalogue covering the tasting of a variety of wines and various brands of beer and spirits. That is why we are only including some of the most important - and pleasant tastings in 2008.

January

7. Importers Vinarius and Vinum arranged a tasting in Oslo for members of the press of new wines from Amphora Vinoteque. We are including three exceptionally good wines that Vinarius presented on this occasion. The first is from Südsteiermark in Austria: Sattlerhof TBA 2006 – a young, heavily concentrated and full-flavoured white wine. The next wine comes from Swartland in South Africa: Columella 2005 The Sadie Family. This luxuriant and full-flavoured red wine, with Syrah as the main grape variety, is already well developed. Furthermore, we tasted a couple of very rich port wines from Quinta do Noval 2004 – still young, but highly promising. Vinarius can provide further information regarding duty free prices.

February

11. Reh Kendermann, one of the major German wine exporters, has a product range extending from reasonably-priced commercial products to wines of distinction that reflect the terroir where the grapes have been cultivated. Norwegian importers Ekjord had invited *The Magazine* to a tasting of a number of wines from this producer who was represented by the two export directors Daniela Wendling and Roman Barvulsky. I would especially recommend the white Riesling where the various soils types (terroir) are clearly defined by the producer. Importers Ekjord can provide further information regarding duty free prices.

March

5. Large Spanish wine exposition at Den Gamle Logen in Oslo. Thirty-four different producers from a number of wine districts had found their way to Oslo in order to present several hundred wines for members of the press, Norway's

world of gastronomy and Vinmonopolet. Here are some of the best wines at this tasting when comparing price and quality: The rosé wine Ochoa Rosado (Navarra – importers Haugen Group), the red Enate Crianza 2005 (Somontano – importers Ekjord), Faustino Gran Reserva 1996 (Rioja – importers Bibendum), the white Louro do Bolo 2006 (Valdeorras – importers Podium Wines) and the fine, dry sherry Harveys Fino (Harvey – importers Maxxium).

The catalogue was clear and concise, but it ought to have been mandatory for all exhibitors to advise the vintage of their wines.

6. An interesting exposition of wines from the south-western part of France was arranged in the French Cultural Centre, Oslo, for representatives of the press and gastronomy. The exhibitors came from the districts to the south of Bordeaux - from Des Landes and Bearn to the west and Gaillac and Cotes de Millau to the east. I would particularly emphasise the red wines made from the Tannat grape. The best editions need prolonged storage/maturation before reaching their peak. But then the Madiran wines are some of the most distinctive and steadfast reds to be found anywhere.

Furthermore I would draw attention to the dessert wines from Madiran called Pacherenc du Vic-Bilh. They were granted DOC status in 1975 and, together with the better known dessert wines from Juracon, are fine and reasonably-priced alternatives to Sauternes.

11. Importers Vinetum invited members of the press to a tasting, followed by a dinner, at the Vitis Vinifera restaurant in Oslo. The wines came from the Argentine quality producer Luigi Bosca – represented by the 4th generation: Alberto Arizu. Unfortunately the editors of *The Magazine* were prevented from attending in this arrangement. However, our “spies” have reported that both the tasting and the dinner afterwards were highly successful.

12. Historical tasting of Brazilian wines at Hotel Norum in Oslo. For the first time Brazilian producers had come to Norway to present their wines to the Norwegian public. The arrangement was organised by the Brazilian Embassy in Oslo and the project “Wines from Brazil,” that was started in 2003 and which now comprises some 28 different wine producers.

Brazil produces far more wine than most people realise – and exports have doubled and redoubled over the past five years. This only goes to show that the producers have achieved a high international quality level. This fact was underlined at the tasting. *The Magazine* was particularly impressed by the renowned producer Vinicola Milo which presented sparkling wine as well as reds of a very high quality. Their white Chardonnay too was of fine international quality.

It is now up to AS Vinmonopolet to turn the spotlight on Brazilian wine so that Norwegian consumers can become better acquainted with Brazil, which is also a wine country together with its Latin-American neighbours Uruguay, Argentina and Chile.

May

7. The Ambassador of the United States of America, HE Mr Benson K Whitney, together with The Wine Institute of California, invited wine writers and wine importers to a seminar on the subject of wines from California. The seminar and wine tasting took place at the American Embassy Residence in Oslo and was a joint arrangement with the institution "Tutored Tasting of California Wines" conducted by Mr Paul Molleman.

At the lunch immediately afterwards we were served first-class wines from the family producer Seghesio Vineyards. The family was represented by Mrs Camille Seghesio who introduced each wine at the luncheon. Ambassador Whitney, an enthusiastic wine lover, was a witty and entertaining host at this arrangement.

In the warm spring weather, coffee and liqueurs were served outside on the terrace overlooking the garden.

8. Trade and Industry Attaché, Mr Eugen Ruzicky, welcomed a number of guests to a wine tasting of Slovakian wines at the country's Embassy Residence in Oslo. Slovakian wine history can be traced back to the Celtic tribes that inhabited the country some 500 years before the commencement of our calendar. We know that the Roman Emperor Probius around 280 AD ordered vineyards to be planted in areas that are today within Slovakia's borders.

Wine cultivation reached its zenith between (approx.) 1550 and the end of the 18th century. This was associated with the Turkish invasion and occupation of Hungary, which resulted in the Habsburg monarchy having to plant vines further north in the huge empire. Like all the wine countries in Central and Eastern Europe, wine production in Slovakia suffered heavily during the post-war communist dictatorship up until 1990. Efforts are now afoot, however, to exploit the country's natural resources to make good wines – not least white wines. Moreover, Slovakia produces one of the best sparkling wines outside of Champagne: the classic edition of Graf Pfalfy.

The best wine at the tasting was undoubtedly a Chardonnay 2006 from family producers VINO Mrva & Stanko (established 1997). A clean, modern wine with a distinctive grape character.

September

1. The 2008 autumn season in Oslo could not have had a better start than the tasting of a number of well-made wines from the Spanish producer Roda (Rioja Alta). The event, which took place at Restaurant Bagatelle, was organised by the importers Primewine.

Bodegas Roda is renowned for putting great efforts into cultivating the very best grapes in their vineyards – an essential precondition for making quality wines. Roda is not only famous for its high-quality wines; it also produces ex-

clusive olive oil sold under the brand name Dauro. The oil comes from various olive groves in Spain, with all brands having exceptional quality as their common denominator. General Manager Augustin Santolaya and Export Manager Sara Fernandez Bengoa were present and informed us about the products.

Afterwards we were served a gourmet lunch where we could enjoy Roda wines together with oven-baked oysters and the autumn's first, succulent Norwegian lamb. Best of the wines was a Roda 2003 with a magnificent concentration and prolonged finish. The assembled guests also appreciated the gift of a bottle of Dauro olive oil. The wines from Roda and their olive oil are all available in Norway. Managing Director Kristin T Fredriksen in Primewine Norway can provide further information regarding duty free prices.

8. One of Chile's foremost quality producers is the family firm of De Martino. The company carries out extensive research into finding the areas that are best suited for the various grape varieties in that elongated country west of the Andes Mountains. The family firm also has several wines that have been certified as being organic. De Martino was also a pioneer in the re-discovery of the forgotten red-wine grape variety Carmènere.

Arcus, the Norwegian importers, invited the trade press to a tasting with lunch at Restaurant Hogarth (Grand Hotel) in Oslo, in connection with the re-launching of De Martino wines in Norway. Winemaker Eduardo Jordan told us about the company and the wines that he presented.

Importers Arcus can provide further information regarding duty-free prices of the various wines.

21. The semi-final in the Norwegian division of "Linje Award" – the international cooking competition focusing on Norwegian aquavit, was held at Haga Restaurant in Bærum just outside Oslo. The winner was Petter Beyer, the young chef de cuisine at Jacobs Apartments restaurant in Bergen. He thereby becomes the Norwegian contender at the inter-Scandinavian competition "Linje Award 2009."

23. This day importers Vinovinvinho invited members of the press to a gastronomic lunch with fine wines at Kulinærisk Institutt in Oslo. The wines presented, that were partially a vertical tasting going back to Imperial Reserva 1966, all came from the well-known producer C.V.N.E. in Rioja (Spain) who were also represented during the tasting. Together with several of the culinary institute's excellent game dishes, this was an exceptionally tasty – but extremely demanding – luncheon. Among the many very fine wines *The Magazine* would like to particularly emphasise Imperial Gran Reserva 1973 and Imperial Gran Reserva 2001. The latter wine could easily be kept for another twenty years! Managing Director Harald Giske i Vinivinvinho can provide further information regarding duty-free prices.

25. The internationally famous wine producers Catena from Argentina have been successfully established in Norway for nearly ten years. One of the reasons for their success is that Norwegian importers Vinarius have made enormous strides in popularising the wines in this country. *The Magazine* visited Bodegas Catena Zapata in Mendoza and wrote about



Panorama and bottles of the Roda Bodegas in Rioja. (Photo: Roda Bodegas)



*Wine Maker's Dinner at Vitis Vinifera 25.9.2008
Wine importer Anders Christiansen and
Countess Giovanna Stianti from Castello Volpaia
in Tuscany. (Photo: The Magazine)*



*16.9.2008 Eurowine's Wine Dinner at Restaurant Ylajali.
Ms Tove Syversen and Mr Petter Wulff.
(Photo: The Magazine)*



*23.9.2008 Managing Director Harald Giske (left) and
Export Director Oscar Urrutia from CVNE.
(Photo: The Magazine)*



*From left: Managing Director Trine Skorpen (Vinatum),
Export Manager Marta Gaspari (Donnafugata) and Ms.
Hanna Christine Thoen (Vinatum). (Photo: Jan Dieset).*

the meeting with economics professor and wine pioneer Dr Nicolas Catena in 2006.

That day Vinarius arranged a wide-ranging tasting of Catena wines at Le Canard restaurant in Oslo. Vinarius can also provide information regarding duty-free prices.

25. Importers Viva Vino, under the leadership of architect and wine expert Anders Christiansen, have specialised in Italian wines of high quality. That day they invited friends and customers to a wine tasting followed by dinner at the Vitis Vinifera restaurant where Countess Giovanna Stianti, the owner of Castello Volpaia in Toscana, was a special guest. The countess personally presented the wines that were served at dinner. The two best wines in the opinion of *The Magazine* were Chianti Classico DOCG 2004 and the dessert wine Vin Santo 2001. Importers Viva Vino gave information concerning duty-free prices.

October

1. The national sales organisations Pro Chile presented a wide range of the country's wines at a trade fair for the press and importers in Gamle Logen in Oslo. Even though Norwegian sales of Chilean wines peaked ten years ago, there is no doubt that the quality of Chilean wines in general has improved considerably.

Nevertheless, we must hope that the demand for Chilean wine will once again increase in Norway. Quality in relation to price means that we can appreciate some Chilean wine bargains at AS Vinmonopolet these days.

16. The traditional autumn wine tasting with following dinner that importers Eurowine have arranged for many years was moved this year to Restaurant Ylajali in the centre of Oslo. Many of the producers that the importer represents had also found their way to our capital that day. As usual there was a convivial atmosphere among wine writers and other guests at the table during dinner. The evening's best wine was Santa Sofia Amarone 2004 from Veneto in Italy. Eurowine can provide further information concerning duty-free prices.

20. Importers Vinetum invited members of the trade press to a tasting followed by dinner at Baltazar Ristorante & Enoteca in Oslo. One of the guests was Marta Gaspari from the renowned family producer Donnafugata, Sicily, that *The Magazine* has visited earlier. Among the excellent wines served that evening we would emphasise the white wine Donnafugata Vigni di Gabri 2006 made from the regional grape variety Ansonica, the red wine Donnafugata Sedara 2005 produced on the basis of Sicily's own grape variety Nero d'Avola, and not least the dessert wine that has made Donnafugata especially famous: Ben Rye 2007. This is made on the island of Pantelleria, half way between Sicily and North Africa (Tunisia). The grape is Moscato d'Alessandria (referred to locally as Zibibbo). Ben Rye is the name of the wine maker who came originally from Tunisia.

Managing Director Trine Skorpen can provide information regarding duty-free prices.

30. Importers Vinarius invited wine writers to a special tasting followed by dinner at Brasserie Hansken in Oslo. Among the guests was Count Francesco Ricasoli, the owner of Italy's and the world's oldest wine company Ricasoli. The ancient titled family has had its seat at the Brolio castle in Tuscany since the 12th century.

The exclusive wines tasted that evening are not the only wines that characterise Ricasoli. The family firm has gained substantial market shares of Italian wine in Norway with reasonably priced and very clean wines such as the red wine Formulae. Under its current owner Ricasoli has helped ensure that the Chianti Classico wines have obtained a fruity and more modern character that emphasise more than ever the Sangiovese grape's unique and distinctive features. Importers Vinarius can provide information regarding duty-free prices.

30. Wine importer Strøm invited the press and customers to a pre-dinner tasting at Restaurant Julius Fritzner (Grand Hotel), where noted vintner and producer Michel Chapotier (Rhône - France) gave a seminar on his own wines. He is also involved in cultivating vines in Australia.

In addition to being interested in finding the right terroir for different types of grapes, Michel Chapotier is regarded as a pioneer in biodynamic cultivation methods. He is inspired by the concepts of biodynamic agriculture established by German philosopher Rudolf Steiner (founder of anthroposophy) almost a century ago.

It goes without saying, therefore, that Michel Chapotier produces a range of wines of above-average quality. And as a rule, the prices are moderate in relation to the quality.

Proof that Michel Chapotier's portfolio includes wines that complement the most exclusive dishes was clearly evident at a sumptuous Winemaker's Dinner at the gourmet restaurant Statholdergaarden the same evening.

Contact Strøm for information about duty-free prices of Michel Chapotier's wines.

30. Wine importer Anders Christiansen in Viva Vino specialises in cultivating ties with exclusive Italian and French suppliers (preferably small, family-run vine houses) whose objective is to produce wines of the highest quality. This means wines with character, where unique soil types, climate and topography of the individual wine regions are clearly reflected in every bottle.

At a very successful arrangement held over two days at the Vitis Vinifera restaurant and bar at Sjølyst, we tasted a broad range of wines from a variety of Italian and French producers. Tuscany, in particular, was well represented, as were wine producers from Venetia (Véneto) and Piemonte. Champagne was represented, as were wines from Bourgogne.

November

4. Arcus and the cognac producer Braastad presented their new and most exclusive cognac to date. This took place at Bar 1 at Aker Brygge in Oslo.

The name is Braastad Extra and is a blend of the house's most exquisite vintage cognacs, matured for several decades



30.10.2008 From left: Wine Importer Jørn Abrahamsen and Count Francesco Ricasoli. Wine Maker's Dinner at Brasserie Hansken. ((Photo: The Magazine)



Hungarian Wine Tasting 13.11.2008. From left: HE Ambassador Mr Lajos Bozi, Wine Producer Ripszky István (Eger Crown Wine House) and Managing Director Peter Batta. (Photo: The Magazine)



Media & PR-Manager Prisca Boffa Hjorth and Export Manager Patrick Spanti. The picture is from a tasting of several Champagne Jacquart autumn 2008 in the headquarters of Ekjord wine importers. (Photo: The Magazine)



Tasting of Clos du Val 10. November 2008. From left: Media and PR Manager Prisca Boffa Hjorth (Ekjord), Ms Sabrina Kimps (Clos du Val), Chairman Bernhard Portet (Clos du Val) and President Nils Ekjord (Ekjord) (Photo: The Magazine)

through three generations of the Braastad family. Arcus can provide duty-free prices for all the cognacs from Braastad.

4. An interesting wine tasting and workshop, organised by The Italian State's Export Council (ICE), took place at Oslo Militære Samfund. The theme was "Tuscan wines" and fourteen producers from the Siena area were in attendance and presented more than one hundred wines.

5. Deutsch-Norwegische Handelskammer (Norwegian-German Chamber of Commerce) invited wine writers and importers to a luncheon at Restaurant Bagatelle in Oslo. The theme was "German Wines to accompany Norwegian Yuletide Fare." This was a follow up to AS Vinmonopolet's unsuccessful efforts to promote white wines as accompaniment to traditional Norwegian dishes forming part of Norway's Yuletide celebrations.

This was a humorous and happy lunchtime event and several of the German white wines were of a high quality; just a shame that, like all white wines, they do not go well with traditional Norwegian Christmas fare. Incidentally, the gourmet restaurant Bagatelle's small portions were "refined" gastronomic editions of traditional Norwegian fare – so that the wines, at a pinch, could almost be called suitable.

10. *The Magazine* was invited to an exclusive tasting of wines from the renowned producer Clos du Val in Napa Valley, California (USA). The tasting took place at the importers Ekjord Wines. It was conducted by the producer's Vice-Chairman Bernhard Portet, ably assisted by Ms Sabrina Kimps from the company's marketing department. The best wines were Clos du Val Zinfandel 2005 and Clos du Val Cabernet Sauvignon 2004 – the latter needs a couple or so years' storage before opening fully.

Clos du Val also own the Goelet Wine Estates in Australia. Information regarding duty-free prices available from Ekjord Wines.

12. Producer Arcus presented its new series of mild schnapps (32% alcohol). After the presentation that took place in Grand Hotel's roof-level restaurant Etoile, we could sample these schnapps at a Yuletide lunch where we could freely choose dishes from a buffet. For many of us the mild schnapps tasted more like herb liqueurs than lively schnapps that are well-suited to strong-tasting Norwegian traditional fare.

We would, however, congratulate Arcus for trying and hope that they have found a niche in the market for these new products.

13. *The Magazine* was invited to a presentation of Hungarian wines and agricultural products at the Hungarian Embassy in Oslo (the chancery). Besides wines from the various producers attending the event, we were also invited to taste a variety of Hungarian liquors, goose liver pates, cheeses and sausages. Everything was of the highest quality. We also noted a tremendous improvement in the way the products were packaged and presented – something which clearly shows that Hungary has emerged from the sad, grey communist era with its head held high as a fully-fledged democratic European nation!

The best wines stem from Eger Crown Wine House – and superior among these was surprisingly enough a red Merlot 2005. We were also served a sumptuous buffet.

Ambassador Lajos Bozi can be very proud of this event. He was aided and abetted by an efficient and experienced Hungarian-born naturalised Norwegian by the name of Peter Batta. Peter is president of the Norwegian House Owners' Association - a strong organisation he helped to build up.

19. Wine importer Sommelier arranged a successful lunch at Cru, a new restaurant near Majorstuen in Oslo. The lunch was organised in collaboration with Sicilian wine producer Vigneti Zabú, represented inter alia by wine maker Filippo Baccalaro. Attending the lunch were wine writers and customers of Sommelier.

Vigneti Zabú wines have made good progress in the Norwegian market in the past couple of years. The wines served with lunch also showed that the company produces a number of high quality wines in relation to price.

The head chef at Cru is Ms Merete Bø, who won the Nordic Sommelier Master Award for 2008.

20. Wine writers and customers of importer Ekjord were invited to a dinner at Brasserie Hansken, at which wines were served from the Spanish wine district of Priorat just inland from the ancient Mediterranean port of Tarragona. All the wines were produced by Casa Gran del Siurana, which is owned by the famous wine estate Castillo Perelada in the northern part of Catalonia.

The cooler region of Priorat, with its thin, mineral-rich soil, is noted for producing low yield but high quality grapes. These red wines, therefore, require several years of maturing before they reach their best. This also proved to be the case with the wines presented on this occasion by Castillo Perelada marketing director Eugeni Los Norenberg. The wines came from two different estates, La Casa Gran and La Fredat. Both produce wines with considerable maturing potential. Collectors of maturing wines should note the labels Gran Cruor and Cims de Porrera.

Contact Ekjord for information about duty-free prices.

28. *The Magazine* was invited to a Winemaker's Dinner at Gamle Logen in Oslo by wine importer Strøm. The arrangement began with a tasting of wines produced by noted vintner Francois Lurton. These were from different countries and regions. Francois Lurton is a member of the famous Lurton winemaking family in Bordeaux. We tasted wines from France, Portugal, Spain, Argentine and Chile.

Francois Lurton places great emphasis on finding the right combination of grapes and terroir (climate and soil type). A good example of this is the Portuguese red Pilheiros, produced from classical grape types from the port wine region of Douro.

Dinner was excellent and guests were in good form!

Contact Strøm for information about duty-free prices of Pilheiros and other wines produced by Francois Lurton.

Polish Days in Trondheim



*From left: Poland's Honorary Consul in Trondheim, Mr Harald J Lydersen, Deputy Mayor of Krakow, Mr Kazimierz Dujakowski and Poland's Ambassador in Norway, HE Mr Wojciech Kolanczyk
(Photo: Copyright Harald J Lydersen)*

“Polish Days in Trondheim”, arranged during the period 14th to 16th October, was a comprehensive programme of events compris-

ing subject-related seminars, contact meetings and presentations by representatives from the world of research, business, the travel industry and culture. The arrangement was a follow-up to the major Polish exhibition organised in Trondheim by the Norwegian University of Science and technology (NTNU) in 2006.

NTNU plays an ever-increasing role in Norway's contacts with various countries and foreign players, due to the university's high academic standard in a number of subjects – and not solely those in the high-tech sphere. Poland's Honorary Consul in Trondheim, Harald J Lydersen, is an enthusiastic and effective co-ordinator of this bilateral co-operation between Poland and Norway.

Last autumn's “Polish Days in Trondheim” was inaugurated by Poland's Ambassador to Norway, HE Mr Wojciech Kolanczyk.

Polish Innovation Technologies

Several events arranged last autumn demonstrated the wide-ranging bilateral co-operation that has blossomed in recent years between Poland and Norway. A technological workshop focusing on climate research, re-

newable energy and ecology was held at Oslo Militære Samfund on 22nd October.

Poland's Ambassador to Norway, HE Mr Wojciech Kolanczyk, held a

brief introductory speech in which he painted an optimistic picture of the future outlook regarding research and scientific co-operation between Poland and Norway.

Romania

With its rich cultural heritage and beautiful varied scenery, Romania is gradually becoming an attractive country for Norwegian tourists. This was demonstrated during a travel-industry seminar held at the Romanian Embassy in Oslo on 6th November 2008. Leading the arrangement was Director Nercida Elena Negut who heads the Roma-

nian National Tourist Office for the Scandinavian countries. Her office is located in Stockholm (Sweden).

The seminar was concluded with a tasting of the country's wines. Romania is well endowed from nature's side with all the elements needed for making quality wines. The problem, however, has been the task of bring-

ing Romanian wine up to a high international level after the fall of communism.

Nevertheless, there are signs indicating that the country is on the right course. But enormous investments will be needed to renovate the vineyards, acquire modern production facilities – as well as ensure efficient international marketing.

STATE AND OFFICIAL VISITS

The Slovak Republic

On 12th September Prime Minister, Mr Robert Fico and his delegation, came to Norway on an official visit. The delegation included the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Jan Kubis and the Minister of Economy Mr. L'ubomir

Jahnatek. Representatives from trade and commerce in Slovakia and Norway met for mutual talks. (Please turn to page 38 for more information.)

Federative Republic of Brazil

The climate and commercial cooperation were central themes during Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg's visit to Brazil on 15 – 17 September. In Rio de Janeiro he attended the opening of the seminar "Brazil-Norway – strategic Partnership" (Deep Water High Recovery), at which the group managing director of Statoil Hydro, Helge Lund, participated.

Then followed a visit to Aker Yards Promar with a guided tour of the shipyard and the opportunity to inspect a Norwegian vessel under construction. At the networking lunch for Norwegian businesses in Brazil and their Brazilian partners, the theme was "Norway – Brazil, tradition, trade and technology cooperation". At the supermarket in Barra there was a special event to promote Norwegian dried cod, followed by a visit to Rio Oil and Gas.

On 16 September in Brasilia there was a celebration to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of Norwegian aid

to Brazil's indigenous population. Later that morning the delegation met with President HE Mr. Lula da Silva and Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg announced that Norway would be giving financial aid to rainforest preservation in the Amazon. The afternoon and evening offered the opportunity for a boat trip on the Tapajos River (part of the Amazon) with dinner on the river bank and then spending the night in hammocks on the boat. The following day there was a guided walk into the rainforest and a meeting with the indigenous people.

This visit by the Prime Minister was the last leg of an extensive 'climate tour' which also included Chile. Preservation of the rainforests and the prevention of illegal felling are important items on Stoltenberg's agenda. The first country in the world to do so, Norway has put money into the recently established Amazon fund, which is promised a billion dollars by 2015.

Republic of Chile

18 and 19 September marked the final stage of the Norwegian official visit to Latin America. Early in the morning there was a solemn welcome ceremony in front of the presidential palace La Moneda and a meeting with Chile's popular politician HE Mrs. Michelle Bachelet who visited Norway in May 2007. The president has focused her attention on the fight against poverty and has already achieved sustainable economic growth in her home country.

September 18 is Chile's National Day (a celebration of its independence in 1810) at which Norway's Prime Min-

ister Jens Stoltenberg was a guest of honour. As part of the celebrations he took part in an ecumenical service in Santiago's cathedral at the Plaza de Armas.

The visit to Chile included a gala performance at the Teatro Municipal and a visit to the Salvador Allende museum together with grandchildren of the deceased president.

In the course of the two-day visit political talks were held with president Bachelet and with the Ministers of Health in Brazil, Ecuador and Bolivia.

Yet again the good diplomatic and commercial relations between Norway and Chile were stressed.

Ireland

On the occasion of the State Visit to Norway by the President of Ireland, HE Mrs. Mary McAleese on 14 – 16 October, *The Magazine's* editors were among the guests at a concert in Grand Hotel, Oslo. The Irish state visit was a return visit following HM King Harald and Queen Sonja's visit to Ireland a couple of years ago. Crown Prince Haakon was also present at the concert and the subsequent reception with hot-food buffet.

The renowned Dúhas ensemble performed traditional Irish music on original instruments which included the Irish bagpipes Uillann Pipes. Two professional dancers, Pataic Moyles and Niamh O'Connor, demonstrated folk dance as well as the stylised and hectic "Riverdance." With arms kept straight down

the side of the body, heavy stamping of the feet, rapid steps and quick turns, Irish dance is characterised more by restrained energy than intense sensuality.

President Mary McAleese is famous for her eloquence and irony, examples of which we guests received in abundance! She also said that there was much to bind Norway and Ireland together, both historically and in the present; the arrival of Christianity from Ireland to our West-country fjords among them. However, the president said she was relieved that she had not met any Vikings during her visit to Norway; the Irish had mixed experience of confrontations with these seafarers during the Middle Ages!



*From the left we see the ambassador of The Czech Republic, HE Mr Lubos Novy, The President of Ireland, HE Mrs Mary McAleese and HM King Harald 5.
(Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)*

Georgia

The president of Georgia HE Mr. Mikhail Saakashvili made an official visit to Norway on 29 October. The agenda for the visit included political talks with Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg and meetings with the President of the Storting and the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, and HM King Harald received Georgia's president in audience.

Norway has promised Georgia financial support worth NOK 235 million, an amount characterized by Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre as a substantial contribution following the conflict which flared up in August when Russian and Georgian forces entered into combat.

Republic of Turkey

HRH Crown Prince Haakon made an official visit to Turkey on 25 – 27 November at the invitation of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The Crown Prince travelled with a delegation of representatives of the Norwegian state and Norwegian trade and industry. HRH Crown Prince Haakon is the first member of the Norwegian royal family to make an official visit to Turkey.

The Crown Prince laid a wreath at the hall of honour for the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, a tradition for all official visitors from abroad. The programme included participation at a seminar on hydroelectric power, the purpose being to establish rela-

tions between Norwegian and Turkish enterprises in the field of hydroelectric power, with the possibility of Norwegian involvement in the development of hydroelectric power in Turkey. The programme further included a seminar on climate challenges at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara. The visit finished in Istanbul with a maritime seminar and a guided tour of Istanbul's historical city Sultanahmet.

The purpose of the visit was to strengthen existing links between Turkey and Norway following the signing of a cooperation agreement between the two countries in April.

NEW AMBASSADORS

The Magazine for Corps Diplomatique welcomes the following new ambassadors to Norway:

The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, HE Mr Boubakeur Ogab
Bosnia and Herzegovina, HE Ms Elma Kovacevic
The Arab Republic of Egypt, HE Mr Tamer Abdel Aziz Khalil
The French Republic, HE Ms Brigitte Collett
The Republic of Guatemala, HE Mr Juan León Alvarado
The Republic of Iceland, HE Dr Sigridur Duna Kristmundsdottir
The Republic of India, HE Mr Banbit A Roy
Ireland, HE Mr Gerald Francis Ansbro
The Republic of Latvia, HE Andris Sekacis
The Republic of the Sudan, HE Mrs Ilham I M Ahmed

*The Oslo Diplomatic List – October 2008
Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oslo*

A taste of Norway



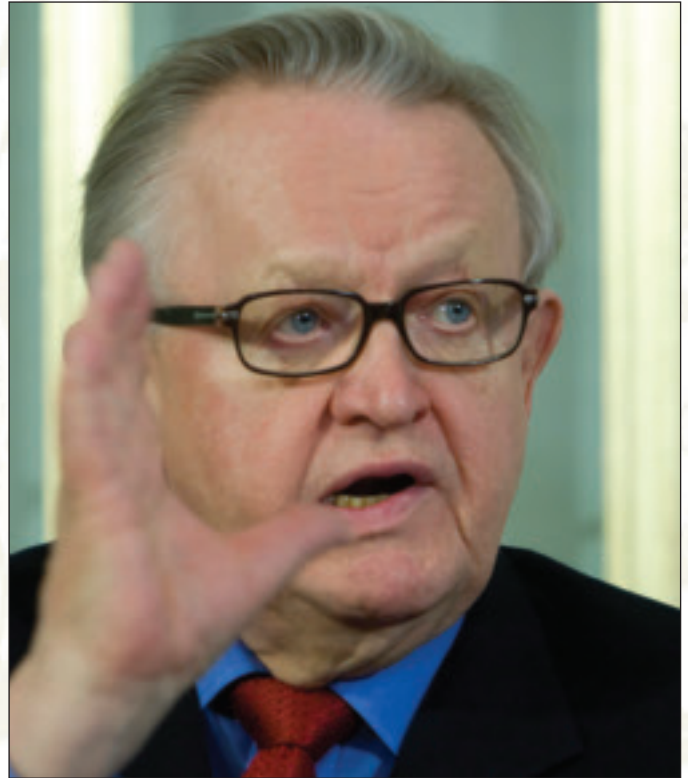
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NOBEL PEACE PRIZE 2008



*Martti Ahtisaari
(Photo: Bjørn Sigurdson/Scanpix)*

On 10th October The Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for 2008 to Martti Ahtisaari for his "important efforts, on several continents and over more than three decades, to resolve international conflicts. These efforts have contributed to a more peaceful world and to 'fraternity between nations' in Alfred Nobel's spirit.

Throughout all his adult life, whether as a senior Finnish public servant and President or in an international capacity, often connected to the United Nations, Ahtisaari has worked for peace and reconciliation. For the past twenty years, he has figured prominently in endeavours to resolve several serious and longlasting conflicts. In 1989-90 he played a significant part in the establishment of Namibia's independence, in 2005 he and his organization Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) were central to the solution of the complicated Aceh question in Indonesia. In 1999 and again in 2005-07, he sought under especially difficult circumstances to find a solution to the conflict in Kosovo. In 2008, through the CMI and in cooperation with other institutions, Ahtisaari has tried to help find a peaceful conclusion to the problems in Iraq. He has also made constructive contributions to the resolution of conflicts in Northern Ireland, in Central Asia, and on the Horn of Africa."

Cordial receptions from July – December 2008

July

14. For the first time France's new Ambassador to Norway, HE Ms Brigitte Collet, could welcome guests to a celebration of France's National Day (La Fête Nationale) at the Embassy Residence.

In her Bastille Day speech, Ms Collet emphasised the importance that the French tradition of liberty has had on the formulation of human rights in an international perspective. As far back as 26th August in the revolutionary year 1789, the French citizens' assembly passed a resolution concerning the declaration of the rights of citizens. It was also in Paris that the UN human

rights declaration was agreed to in 1948. For his fundamental work with the formulation and implementation of this declaration, the Frenchman René Cassin was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1968.

The celebration of France's National Day is one of the summer's most popular events in Oslo. That is why inclement showery weather could not dampen the festive atmosphere. A sumptuous buffet, protected by a large marquee, was prepared in the garden where there was champagne and other fine wines to accompany the food. Paris is not only the capital of human rights – but also

of gastronomy! A French musette ensemble helped make the atmosphere truly Parisian.

Norwegian opera singer Gjøril Songvoll sang the national anthems of both France and Norway. All of Ms Collet's diplomat colleagues who were in Oslo were in attendance. We saw leading representatives from the Norwegian government, parliament, the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and well-known celebrities from all sectors of Norwegian society.

The Magazine hopes that Ms Collet will have many fine and interesting years her in Norway.

23. Egypt's National Day was celebrated with a reception at the Embassy Residence, Drammensveien 87, in Oslo. The reception was also to bid farewell to Ambassador HE Mr Wagu-ih Said Hanafi who has been in Oslo

since 2004. He is returning to Cairo to take up an important directorship at the Egyptian foreign office. The atmosphere was convivial in the fine summer weather. A number of official representatives from the Corps Diplomatique,

the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norwegian politics were in attendance. *The Magazine* also met several Egyptians resident in our capital. All the guests were generously plied with food and drink.

31. On the occasion of the 9th anniversary (30 July) of the Ascension to the Throne of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Morocco's Ambassador to Norway held a reception at the Embassy Residence. HE Mr Yahdih Bouchaab invited his guests to a gen-

erous buffet comprising Moroccan delicacies, and received his guests in national costume.

Despite the holiday season in Norway, many of the ambassador's colleagues in Corps Diplomatique were in attendance. We also saw representa-

tives from the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Norwegian politics as well as other Norwegian guests. It was an occasion when Moroccan cuisine gained many new friends!

31. China's military attaché to Norway, Senior Colonel Jin Yufu and Mrs Wang Yun, invited Norwegian and foreign guests to a reception in the country's newly restored Chancery, Tuengen Allé 2 B in Oslo. The occasion was the 81st Anniversary of the Founding of the

Chinese People's Liberation Army.

A number of the hosts' colleagues from the Corps Diplomatique in Oslo were present, as were representatives from the Norwegian government, the Ministry of Defence and all branches of Norway's armed forces.

China's Embassy has a reputation for having one of the best kitchens among the diplomat stations in Oslo. The July reception confirmed this well-earned culinary reputation.



France's new Ambassador to Norway, HE Ms Brigitte Collet. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)



Egypt's National Day, the country's Ambassador to Norway, HE Mr Waguih Said Hanafi. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)



Morocco's National Day Ambassador to Norway, HE Mr Yahdih Bouchaab. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)



China's military attaché to Norway, Senior Colonel Jin Yufu and Mrs Wang Yun. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)

August

15. **India's** new Ambassador to Norway, HE Mr Banbit A. Roy, welcomed many guests to a reception at the Embassy Residence in Oslo to celebrate the country's National Day. It is now 61 years since India gained its independence in 1947.

The country, which calls itself "the

world's largest democracy" can be proud of its great economic growth and social progress for large portions of the population (more than one billion).

A large marquee had been erected in the garden where assembled guests could enjoy Indian delicacies. Among

those attending were a number of representatives from Corps Diplomatique, the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norwegian politics and many sectors of Norwegian life.

The Magazine hopes that Ambassador Roy will have many rewarding and interesting years here in Norway.

20. This day a special reception was arranged in the Czech Embassy Residence. The occasion was not in honour of any celebrated person from the **Czech Republic**, but was to celebrate a car with personality. The Skoda Superb 2008 was parked out in the garden. It is now seventy years since the first Skoda Superb rolled off the assembly line in

1938. It was evident that Czechia's creative Ambassador to Norway, HE Mr Lubos Novy, had been looking forward to this event which was arranged in co-operation with the Skoda importers Harald A. Møller. Assembled guests also appreciated that the event was marked with the serving of Czech delicacies and the country's famous beer,

which is among the world's best.

Many motoring enthusiasts, the ambassador's colleagues in Corps Diplomatique among them, could admire the new luxury car. The most enthusiastic were also allowed to test drive the Skoda Superb.

26. On the occasion of **Indonesia's** 63rd National Day since independence in 1945, the country's Embassy in Oslo held a reception a few days after the actual date (17th August). Hosts were Chargé d'Affaires Mr Mansyur Pangeran and Mrs Febie Mirashanti Mansyur at the country's Embassy Resi-

dence on Bygdøy in Oslo.

On this fine summer day there was a convivial atmosphere both indoors and out in the garden's maritime environment near Oslo harbour and the inner part of the Oslo Fjord.

A number of representatives from the Corps Diplomatique, the Royal

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Norwegian authorities were in attendance. Assembled guests were served aromatic Indonesian dishes and rice. Furthermore we could choose between non-alcoholic beverages, genuine champagne and other wines. A successful arrangement.

28. On the occasion of the **Turkish** Armed Forces Day the country's Military Attaché to Norway, Naval Captain Yasar Barbaros Büyüksagnak and Mrs Güliz Büyüksagnak, invited diplomat colleagues in Oslo and other guests to a reception and generous buffet. The

reception took place at the country's Embassy Residence in Kristinelundveien 25.

Among the guests we saw representatives from the Norwegian Ministry of Defence and senior officers from all branches of the Norwegian armed

forces. Through NATO there have been sixty years of close connection between the Turkish and Norwegian military. Among other activities, both countries have supplied peace-keeping forces to various UN operations.

September

2. **Brazil's** National Day is 7th September. As the date fell on a Sunday this year, the official celebration in Oslo was held on 2nd September. The reception was held in Glasshuset, the assembly room of Oslo Konserthus. Hosts were the country's Ambassador to Norway HE Mr Sérgio Eduardo Moreira Lima and Mrs Ana Maria K L Moreira Lima.

The co-operation between Brazil and Norway has been expanded

considerably in recent years, not only through mutual state visits but also due to extended trade relations and investments. Therefore many well-known figures from Norway's business and commercial sphere were present, as well as other sectors of Norwegian society. A number of the host's colleagues from Corps Diplomatique in our capital were also in attendance. The same applied to representatives from the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and

other political authorities.

A children's choir, supplemented by a few adults, was a great success. Among other musical items they sang Bachiana's famous Brasileiras No. 5 by Heitor Villa Lobos (1887- 1959). In the very friendly atmosphere that prevailed, assembled guests were served a generous buffet with Brazilian wines and other delicacies in which the country specialises. A well-organised and successful arrangement.



HE Mr Banbit A. Roy.
(Photo: Republic of India's Embassy)



HE Mr Lubos Novy and Brand Manager Tore Nilsen Breen
– Skoda importers Møller Bil AS. (Photo: The Magazine)



Chargé d'Affaires Mr Mansyur Pangeran and Mrs Febie
Mirashanti Mansyur. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)



Polish Army Day August 25th. From left: Ambassador HE
Mr Wojciech Kolánczyk, Mrs Alina Wanda Kolánczyk,
Mrs Malgorzata Zajac and Defence Attaché Colonel
Ryszard Zajac. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)



Turkish Military Attaché, Naval Captain Yasar Barbaros
Büyüksagnak and Mrs Güliz Büyüksagnak.
(Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)



HE Mr Sérgio Eduardo Moreira Lima.
(Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)

3. **Ukraine's** new Ambassador to Norway HE Mr Oleksandr Tsvietkov and Mrs Kateryna Tsvietkova arranged a reception in Oslo Militære Samfund on the occasion of the country's National Day. Independence Day, which marks independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, is 24th August. This

year, however, it was more convenient to have the official celebration a few days in advance. Ambassador Tsvietkov emphasised that, besides the actual connections, there have been good relations between Ukraine and Norway since medieval times when a princess from Kiev was Norwegian queen. We

saw a number of representatives from the Corps Diplomatique in our capital, from the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Norwegian institutions. *The Magazine* hopes that the new ambassador and his wife will have some fine and interesting years in our country.

18. **Chile's** National Day this year was marked in an original manner because Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg was celebrating the day as an official guest in Chile's capital Santiago. Accompanying him on the trip was the Chilean Ambassador to Norway HE Mr Roberto Alonso-Budge. Before leaving, however, he sent a book as a present to his Norwegian contacts. It was a reproduction of the Chilean lyricist Gabriela Mistral who was awarded

the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1945. Gabriela Mistral (1889 - 1957) is still reckoned to be one of the greatest lyricists in Spanish language poetry. Her powerful poems revolve around the central subjects of all poetry since antiquity: Love, death, the joy of living and the sadness of death.

A translation into Norwegian (nynorsk) of Mistral's most famous poem earned Tove Bakke a translation prize in 2007.

Gabriela Mistral also wrote about Chilean culture's Spanish-Indian roots. Furthermore, she was a pioneering teacher with a burning passion for women's and children's rights. She fought this battle under the pseudonym Godoy Alcayaga.

Ambassador Alonso Budge received several letters of thanks for the unconventional gift, including one from Norway's Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre.

18. On the occasion of the country's National Day, **Slovakia's** Ambassador to Norway HE Mr Dusan Rozbora and Mrs Lucia Rozborová welcomed a large number of guests to a reception in Glasshuset, Oslo Konserthus. Slo-

vakia's National Day is 1st September, but this year's celebration in Oslo was postponed.

Many representatives from the official Norway were in attendance and the majority of the hosts' colleagues

in Corps Diplomatique in our capital were present. We were all generously plied with fine refreshments, which included Slovakia's magnificent and much-appreciated Topvar beer.

18. **Guatemala's** National Day (15 September) was celebrated with a reception in the country's Embassy Residence in Oslo. For the first time the country's new Ambassador to Norway HE Mr Juan León Alvarado and Mrs Eluvia Hernandez Sanic could welcome guests

to a National Day event here in Norway. A number of the hosts' colleagues in the Diplomatic Corps Diplomatique were present. We also saw representatives from the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other official Norwegian institutions. The assembled guests

were generously plied with refreshments. *The Magazine* hopes that the new ambassadorial couple will have many rewarding and interesting years in Norway.

19. German naval visit by the frigate "Schleswig-Holstein." Commander Andreas Seidl held an official reception onboard that evening for a large number of guests. The occasion was to welcome Lieutenant Colonel Rolf Becker, **Germany's** new Defence Attaché to Norway, and Mrs Gabriele Becker. At the same time we said goodbye to the

popular Military Attaché Lieutenant Colonel Andreas von Büren, who had spent many years in Norway. The other military attachés stationed here in Oslo were also on board. In addition we saw a number of foreign ambassadors. Staff officers from all branches of Norway's armed forces were also in attendance. There was a convivial atmosphere

among the guests who were generously plied with refreshments both on deck and in the officer's mess afterwards. *The Magazine* hopes that the new attaché and his wife will have many rewarding and interesting years in Norway.



HE Mr Oleksandr Tsvietkov and Mrs Kateryna Tsvietkova. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)



HE Mr Roberto Alonso-Budge. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)



HE Mr Dusan Rozbora and Mrs Lucia Rozborová. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)



HE Mr Juan León Alvarado, Mrs. Elvira Hernandez Sanic and their daughter Ixchel Alvarado. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)



Commander Andreas Seidl, Lieutenant Colonel Andreas von Büren and the new Attaché, Lieutenant Colonel Rolf Becker. (Photo: The Magazine)

October

1. On the occasion of the 59th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of **China**, the country's Ambassador to Norway HE Mrs Jian Gao welcomed her guests to a reception in the Embassy's newly restored Chancery. In her welcoming address the ambassador emphasised the good relations existing between China and

Norway. She also hoped that this year's Summer Olympics had managed to bring harmony to future relations between China and the rest of the world. Furthermore, she took the opportunity of congratulating the Norwegian medal winners. We guests reciprocated by congratulating Ambassador Jian Gao not only for a well-organised Summer

Olympic Games, but also with the host nation winning most medals!

The assembled guests, whether official representatives or private individuals, were generously plied with excellent refreshments from the embassy kitchen which has one of the highest culinary standards in our capital.

3. In the course of only one year The Republic of **Korea's** Ambassador to Norway, HE Mr Byung-koo Choi and his wife Mrs Kyung-soo Kim, have earned for themselves great popularity. This is due both to their professional skill and to the extrovert and

open friendliness with which they greet their contacts. This day they welcomed guests to a celebration of Republic of Korea's National Day at the Embassy Residence, which was attended by their colleagues in Corps Diplomatique. The same applied to representatives from

the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the world of Norwegian politics.

Everyone was well plied with refreshments in the convivial atmosphere that the ambassadorial couple always manage to create.

7. Twelve cellists created a warm and resonant musical atmosphere during the celebration of this year's **German** National Day. The main hall of Gamle Logen with its fine acoustics was well chosen as the venue for such a concert in Oslo. The programme was classically varied. The virtuoso number which received the most applause from a packed auditorium was the Norwegian composer Johan Halvorsen's arrangement of G Fr. Händels famous Passacaglia. The young virtuosos were

Phillip Wollheim (violin) and Ortwin Bader-Iskraut (cello). After the concert the many guests were served excellent refreshments in the ground-floor reception rooms.

Germany's National Day is 3rd October, but as it fell on a Friday this year, HE Ambassador Mr Roland Mauch and Mrs Marion Irene Mauch chose to celebrate the event the following Tuesday. As usual, the German ambassadorial couple were in excellent spirits and looked after their guests in a most

hospitable manner.

The "Willy-Brandt Award 2008" was also awarded in connection with this year's National Day celebration. The recipient was Mrs Grete Lächert for her "...unique commitment to the project called Grieg at School as well as long-standing work as German teacher at the department for further training of the Royal Ministry for Foreign Affairs," said Ambassador Roland Mauch in his speech at the reception.

13. Since 1977 **Spain's** National Day has been celebrated on 12th October. As it fell on a Sunday this year, Spain's ambassador to Norway held a reception at the Embassy Residence on Bygdøy the following day.

HE Mr Fernando Alvargonzález told the editor of *The Magazine* that he came to Norway in the spring of 2004 because of his Norwegian ancestry. One of his great-grandfathers, Georg

(Jorge) Mowinckel, was a member of the well-known Bergen family that were shipowners and ran a fish-exporting company dating back to the 19th century. In 1858 Georg Mowinckel moved to Spain to take over the family's Spanish office in Santander. There he married and eventually became a Spanish citizen.

At this, his last reception as host for a Spanish National Day celebration in

Oslo, Mr Alvargonzález had assembled most of his colleagues from Corps Diplomatique in our capital. We also saw representatives from the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the world of Norwegian politics and the travel industry. The assembled guests were well plied with refreshments in pleasant surroundings on Bygdøy.



*Ambassador to Norway HE Mrs Jian Gao.
(Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)*



*HE Mr Byung-koo Choi and his wife Mrs Kyung-soo Kim.
(Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)*



*HE Ambassador Mr Roland Mauch.
(Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)*



*HE Mr Fernando Alvargonzález and his daughters
Marta (left) and Cristina.
(Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)*

23. Hungary's National Day (20 August) commemorates the country's heroic and tragic struggle against Soviet occupation forces in 1956. During the reception, which Ambassador HE Mr Lajos Bozi and Ms Zsuzsanna Binczki arranged at the Embassy Residence,

we also met veterans who had found a new fatherland after the defeat.

Most of the hosts' colleagues from Corps Diplomatique in Oslo were present. We also saw representatives from the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian sphere of politics.

Everyone was generously plied with refreshments from a well-stocked buffet. Together with the food we could enjoy a selection of the country's excellent wines; on this occasion *The Magazine's* editors fell for the plum brandy with the onomatopoeic name Zwack!

27. Austria's Ambassador to Norway HE Dr. Anton Kozusnik arrived in Oslo in February 2004. Thanks to his solid, academic education and linguistic prowess (he speaks fluent Norwegian) he has been an insider when it comes to Norwegian politics, social issues and culture. In the autumn of 2008 Dr

Kozusnik welcomed his guest to a National Day celebration (26. Oct) for the last time as ambassador. Most of his diplomat colleagues from Corps Diplomatique in Oslo were in attendance, together with representatives from the official Norway. Because Vienna is the musical capital of the world, a number

of celebrities from Norway's world of culture were also present.

We were all served food and wonderful Austrian wine. *The Magazine* would particularly like to express thanks for the pleasure derived from some of the superb wines he had in his private cellar.

28. As 2008 marked the 90th anniversary of Czechia's National Day, the event was celebrated with Moravian folk music and subsequent reception in Oslo Konserthus. With his ready wit, Ambassador for the Czech Republic to Norway HE Mr Lubos Novy was an entertaining host for the arrangement.

The Wajdovci Ensemble comprised highly professional singers and instrumentalists. Their leader Jura Wajda, who is himself a jazz pianist, had somehow artistically "infiltrated" syncopated rhythms into the folk tunes so that they seemed to be "organic."

After the concert assembled guests,

both official and private, were generously plied with refreshments from a well-stocked buffet in Glasshuset. *The Magazine's* editors particularly appreciated the selection of famous Czech beer.

29. Autumn 2008 marked the 85th anniversary of modern-day Turkey's founder Kemal Atatürk establishing a progressive, liberal constitution with a clear division between religion and politics, as well as equal civil rights between men and women.

Turkey's Ambassador to Norway

HE Mr Hayati Güven and Mrs Berna Güven welcomed guests at a reception in the Embassy Residence in Oslo. Most of their colleagues from the Corps Diplomatique in Oslo were in attendance, together with representatives from the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Because both Turkey and Norway

are members of NATO, staff officers from all branches of Norway's armed forces were also in attendance. We were all generously plied with refreshments from a well-stocked buffet.

We hope that the new ambassadorial couple will have some rewarding and interesting years in Norway.

30. On the occasion of Romanian Army's Day, the country's Defence Attaché Col. Gheorghe Stanciu and Mrs Olimpia Stanciu held a reception in the Embassy Chancery here in Oslo. A

number of the hosts' colleagues from Corps Diplomatique were among the guests.

All were furnished with fine food from a generous buffet and served with

Romanian wines. The hosts, together with the Romanian Ambassador and his wife, created a convivial atmosphere during the reception.

November

4. The Italian Defence Attaché to Norway Col. Giovanni Domenico Pintus and Mrs Stefania Pintus welcomed guests to a reception at the Italian Embassy Residence on the occasion of the

country's Defence Day. Most of the hosts' colleagues in Norway were in attendance. The same applied to representatives from all branches of the Norwegian armed forces.

There was a convivial atmosphere at the reception during which we were all generously plied with refreshments.



*HE Mr Lajos Bozi and Ms Zsuzsanna Binczki.
(Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)*



*HE Dr. Anton Kozusnik (right) together with guests.
(Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)*



*HE Mr Lubos Novy.
(Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)*



*HE Mr Hayati Güven and Mrs Berna Güven.
(Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)*



Defence Attaché Col. Gheorghe Stanciu and Mrs Olimpia Stanciu. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)



*From left: Col. Giovanni Domenico Pintus, Mrs Stefania Pintus and HE Mrs Rosa Anna Coniglio Papalia.
(Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)*

12. For the first time Latvia's new Ambassador to Norway HE Mr Andris Sekacis could bid guests welcome to a National Day celebration (18. Nov). The large arrangement was held in Gamle Logen, Oslo, where official as well as private guest were served plentiful refreshments. Mrs Dina Grube,

Head of the Latvian Invest and Development Agency in Norway, was also present. We saw a number of representatives from the Corps Diplomatique and from the Norwegian Establishment.

After the ambassador's welcoming speech a toast was proposed to "a pos-

itive future" and to bilateral relations existing between Latvia and Norway. Entertainment during the reception was provided by a jazz duet.

The Magazine hopes the new ambassador will have some rewarding and interesting years here in Norway.

13. Belgium's Ambassador to Norway HE Mr Christian Monnoyer and Mrs Véronique Monnoyer welcomed guests to a celebration of King's Day. The reception was held in their distinguished mansion, Tidemands gate 6, Oslo, which was once the home of the

world-famous Norwegian opera singer Kirsten Flagstad.

Among the guests were most of the hosts' colleagues from Corps Diplomatique, representatives from the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norway's world of politics.

As no other country produces more brands of beer than Belgium, tasting a representative selection was an exciting experience. We were otherwise well provided with fine refreshments.

27. Brazil's Ambassador to Norway HE Mr Sergio Eduardo Moreira Lima and Mrs Ana Maria K L Moreira Lima were hosts when the President of the Brazilian-Norwegian Chamber of Commerce (BNCC), Mr Terje Staalstrøm, received the Order de Rio Branco. He was formally appointed Officer of the Order of Rio Branco for his many years of untiring efforts in promoting good

relations between Brazil and Norway. The Order, which has many grades, is named after Baron Rio Branco, patron of the Brazilian Corps Diplomatique.

Mr Terje Staalstrøm (MSc) is a Senior Vice President of Det Norske Veritas (DNV), the international Norwegian Classification Society. He spent twenty-four years of his career outside Norway, mostly in Latin-America and

North America. Mr Staalstrøm has worked for improvements in maritime safety and environmental protection throughout his entire career. He was a founder member of the Mexican Naval Architect Association and is a member of both the Brazilian and the US associations for maritime professionals. Mr Terje Staalstrøm has been President of BNCC since 2002.

December

1. On the occasion of the National Day of Romania, the country's Ambassador to Norway HE Dr Cristian Istrate and Dr Gabriela Carmen Istrate arranged a reception for a number of guests at the Embassy Chancery in Oslo. As the result of a conversion in the basement that provides a cloakroom, the beauti-

ful mansion in Oscars gt. 51 has become highly suitable for receptions.

The majority of the hosts' diplomat colleagues were in attendance. We also saw representatives from the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway's world of politics and celebrities from various parts of Norwegian society.

True to tradition at this embassy, there were delicious refreshments and plenty of Romanian wine and other drinks. Mr and Mrs Istrate always manage to create a happy and friendly atmosphere at their receptions.

4. Thailand's National Day, 5th December, was celebrated one day earlier this year. Thailand's Ambassador to Norway HE Mr Jullapong Nonsrichai and Mrs Siriporn Nonsrichai welcomed a number of guests to a reception in Selskapslokalene (assembly rooms), Kronprinsens gt. No.1 in Oslo. The country's National Day marks the

Birthday anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadeij.

Following the serious anti-government demonstrations by the opposition who managed to cripple Thailand's tourist industry due to a blockade of the international airport, it was a relief for the hosts that the country's High Court took a decision that resulted

in the resignation of the controversial prime minister and an end to the blockade.

The many official and private guests were generously plied with special Thai delicacies. We could also choose between several wines and non-alcoholic beverages.



*HE Mr Andris Šķekis and Counsellor Mrs Dina Grube.
(Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)*



HE Mr Christian Monnoyer and Mrs Véronique Monnoyer. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)



*HE Mr Sergio Eduardo Moreira Lima and Mr Terje Staalstrøm (left), President of BNCC.
(Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)*



*HE Dr Cristian Istrate and Dr Gabriela Carmen Istrate.
(Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)*



HE Mr Jullapong Nonsrichai and Mrs Siriporn Nonsrichai. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)

5. This year Finland's National Day (6th December) was celebrated one day in advance with a reception at the Embassy Residence in Oslo. Hosts were Finland's Ambassador to Norway HE Peter Stenlund and his wife Mrs Kristina Stenlund, who was wearing the national dress from the ambassador's home county of Sør Botten (South Bothnia) for the occasion.

This year there was a special reason for the Finns' national pride. Five days afterwards, Finland's former president Martti Ahtisaari received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo City Hall for his efforts as peace negotiator on several continents. As his biography demonstrates, there is no incomparability between a patriotic defence against for-

eign aggression and international peace efforts. Without Finland's heroic struggle against the Soviet invasion during the winter of 1939/1940, the country would undoubtedly have shared the same fate as the Baltic States and been occupied by the Soviet Union for the next fifty years.

Finland's military resistance ensured the nation's liberty from Soviet totalitarianism and Stalin's despotism. But the uneven fight could not prevent Finland losing large tracts of land, including the annexation of heavily populated Karelia with its beautiful district capital Vyborg. From there thousands of Finns fled westwards; the prizewinners parents among them. As a young boy Martti Ahtisaari became a refugee

in his own country; an earth-shattering event that, according to the Nobel Laureate, was to have a powerful influence on him for the rest of his life. He learned that wars of aggression can be worthwhile if the aggressor is one of the victors in a major war. As we know, only the losers are charged with war crimes. Being among the victors Josef Stalin, one of the worst criminals in the history of mankind, is celebrated as a "hero of freedom" – unfortunately also in Norway.

All guests, both official and private, were generously plied with refreshments at this historic celebration of Finland's National Day.

9. Japan's National Day is the Emperor's Birthday. Emperor Akihito was born on 23rd December 1933 and therefore celebrated his 75th birthday in 2008. However, it is difficult to arrange a reception one day before Christmas in many countries. That is why the country's Ambassador to Norway HE Mr Hisao Yamaguchi and Mrs Chieko Yamaguchi welcomed a number of guests to a reception at the Embassy Residence on 9th December.

In his well-constructed speech the ambassador underlined the many common interests linking Japan and Norway, internationally as well as bilaterally. With a touch of irony Mr Yamaguchi emphasised that Norwegians very often refer to themselves as "a small people from a small country" In his opinion, anyone travelling along Norway's beautiful and lengthy coastline would have difficulty realising that Norway was small! Furthermore the

ambassador maintained that Norway is a superpower when it comes to research, production and export of energy.

The assembled guests, both official and private, were provided with plentiful refreshments. One characteristic aspect of National Day receptions at this embassy is the welcoming of guests with champagne. This year's brand was Pieper Heidseck!



Ambassador to Norway HE Peter Stenlund and his wife Mrs Kristina Stenlund. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)



Ambassador to Norway HE Mr Hisao Yamaguchi and Mrs Chieko Yamaguchi. (Photo: Per Arne Carlsen)

Tragedy at Barajas (Madrid) Airport

153 people lost their lives when Spanair flight JK 5022 crashed on take-off from Barajas airport at 14.45 hrs on 20th August 2008. The aircraft was on its way from Madrid to Las Palmas with 172 passengers onboard.

The following day a book of condolence was opened at the Spanish Embassy Residence on Bygdøy in Oslo. A number of ambassadors from Corps Diplomatique in Oslo came to sign the book and offer their condolences to Spain's Ambassador to Norway, HE Mr Fernando Alvargonzales.

Representatives from the Norwegian Establishment, headed by the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs came to the Spanish Embassy Residence on 21st August to express their sorrow and demonstrate respect for the bereaved. Other Norwegians, especially from the travel industry, also came to pay their respects that day.



*Spain's Ambassador to Norway, HE Mr Fernando Alvargonzales.
(Photo: The Magazine)*

Mourning for the victims in Kauhajoki

On 23rd September 2008 the 22-year-old Finnish citizen Matti Juhani Saari murdered ten of his fellow students at the technical college in Kauhajoki, Finland. This was barely one year after a similar tragic occurrence in another Finnish town (Jokela). The 18-year-old killer from the first school tragedy had been in close contact with the perpetrator from Kauhajoki.

On 24th October 2008 a book of condolence was opened at the Finnish Embassy in Oslo for the second time in connection with a massacre at a Finnish school. A number of representatives from the Corps Diplomatique in our capital expressed their sympathy by signing the book of condolence. Many representatives of the Establishment in Norway and other Norwegian citizens were also in attendance to show solidarity and sympathy with their Finnish neighbours.



*In the picture we see Finland's Ambassador to Norway,
HE Mr Peter Stenlund. (Photo: The Magazine)*



Idar Aarheim is editor-in-chief of *The Magazine*. His academic background is literature, history of religions and history of ideas from universities in both Germany and Norway.

Mr Aarheim has had extensive experience from Norwegian media having served as editing secretary in *Morgenbladet* and as culture-editor in *Morgenposten*. In the past, he has

edited several magazines and has previously had responsibility for information and press-relations for two of Norway's largest companies.

Idar Aarheim has written on the subject of wine for a great number of publications in Norway. He has also carried out a great number of international wine-judging assignments.

Idar Aarheim received the order of Knight of the Spanish *Isabella La Catolica*.

Mr. Aarheim has been the publisher of *The Magazine* since the start in 1993.



Aase Melby Block is an editor with an academic background in literature, history of art, and history of ideas. In addition she has been an art-critic for *Morgenbladet*, Norway's oldest daily newspaper.

As a co-editor in *The Magazine for*

Corps Diplomatique right from the start in 1993, she is a special contributor to the cultural section. Amongst other achievements, she has written several books about Norwegian artists.

Mrs Melby Block has a multilingual background. Having lived abroad in several countries, she also has a broad understanding of international affairs.

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