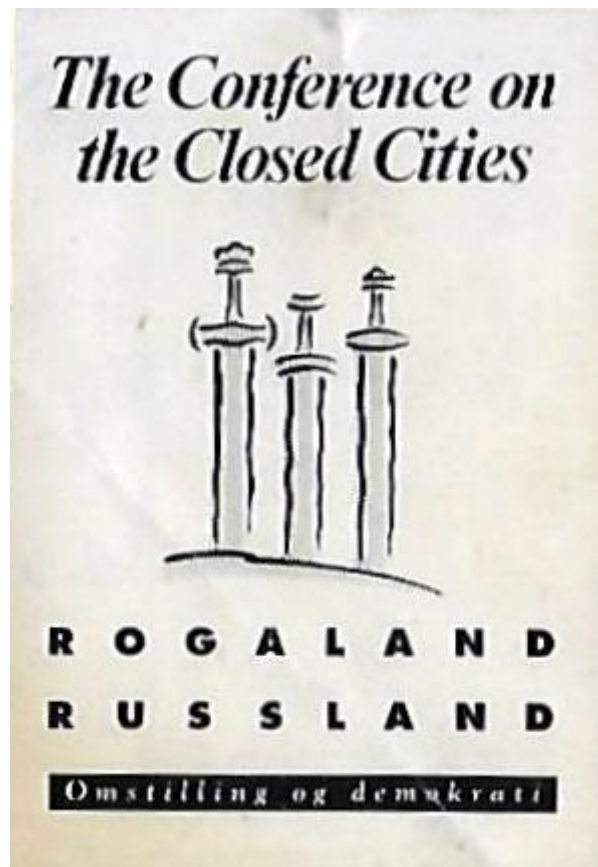


Chernobyl, Chelyabinsk or the Corona pandemic

are classic examples for the limits of natural science to assess the consequences of applying results of research to expand the growth of economy without taking the effects on the global environment into consideration.



Twenty-eight years ago Dr. Peer Lange, head of research on Northern European Affairs at the German Institute for International Relations and Security interrupted my afternoon tea nap with a call, asking to help him with a demand of the Norwegian Embassy in Bonn to send a scientist of our Institute to attend and report on a conference the Kingdom of Norway organized with the Russian Federation to prevent further nuclear radiation on their northern shoreline. The conference was titled "Conference on the closed cities – Rogaland-Russia".

I was overwhelmed by the idea, that somebody like me, who until May 1992 was only acknowledged as an expert for Central Europe conventional weapon disarmament and conversion, was called up to

attend a conference about nuclear disarmament. So I hesitated to say "Yes", but answered: "Why you ask me?" Peer said: "You are the one who analysed conditions of conversion from military use of weapons to civil use. You are the right man for the mission." I answered: "But I am a nobody in nuclear disarmament and neither anyhow acquainted to Norwegian problems with the Russian Federation nor I understand Norwegian or Russian language." "The conference language is English and any Russian contribution will be translated." "That's not enough when it comes to details like Chelyabinsk or any other details about hitherto unknown secret cities."

I knew well that Peer had his own personal experience with the Russians who imprisoned him in Eastern Germany 1946 when he was just 17 years old, accusing him being a Werwolf and destined to fight for the final victory against the allies after they invaded Germany. He was sentenced to ten years in a Vorkuta labour camp.

After Konrad Adenauer, first chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany managed it in autumn 1955 to negotiate an agreement with the Soviet Union on the release of 10.000 members of the Wehrmacht as well of 20.000 political prisoners back to Germany he could return to his meanwhile divided homeland. I knew about Peer's personal history and understood that he could, but not liked to meet his former prison guards in Stavanger, Norway. So I followed his request to contact the chancellery of the Norwegian embassy in Bonn. They were quite pleased to get my call and did not have any dissent to my request to bring in a team consisting of Dr. Petra Opitz an economist fluent in Russian language who was preparing her rigorosum at Humboldt University Berlin and Dr. Annette Schaper, a physicist and nuclear expert at the Hessian Foundation for Science and Conflict Research in Frankfurt/Main.

Two hours after Peer called me, I remembered an article in the Journal of the Atomic Scientist by Robert S. Norris who focused his research on Soviet nuclear infrastructure and weapons. I called him using the phone number I got from the journal. He was very excited and promised to send me a study he recently accomplished for the Natural Resources Defense Council in New York via UPS express and delivery next day.

What a miracle: 24 hours later late afternoon one of new the brown UPS delivery vehicles arrived at the Stiftung Wissenschaft and Politik building in faraway Ebenhausen south of Munich. Imagine the triumph I enjoyed when I unwrapped a two hundred page study about the Soviet Union's Nuclear Weapons Complex? It was stunning. I just wondered how the Americans made it to use the window, which opened for a short time after Gorbachev's fall, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Boris Jelzin's take-over as President of the Russian Federation, to reveal the secrets of the former closed cities of the Soviet Union and their impact

on the future of their archival for 45 years. Freedom of information means access to the facts. These were my thoughts when I took a plane to Oslo to spend two lovely sunny days in the capital of Norway before departing to my final destination: Stavanger, the center of Norwegian oil and gas exploration in the Northern Sea.



A legation councilor of the Norwegian Foreign Ministry welcomed me at the airport. On the way to my hotel I asked him, if the people at his Ministry have read the report compiled by Robert S. Norris. They never heard of it. So I gave him the original and begged him to produce enough copies to forward them to all invited participants including the Russian delegation spearheaded by Viktor Nikitovich Mikhaylov, Ministry for Atomic Energy of the Russian Federation (or Rosatom).

The Russian delegation comprising 110 people of all ranks serving the Russian nuclear complex from party ranks to managers and trade union representatives arrived one day later with their Aeroflot plane. They all crowded the Stavanger Forum together with 100 Westerners and 50 Norwegians which were more concerned about permanent radioactivity caused by the nearby nuclear submarine harbor in Murmansk while the Russian delegation was rather interested in business opportunities like nuclear waste storage or recycling of fuel rods.

The Russian contribution culminated in a fifty minutes big screen

presentation about the incredible potential of the underground facilities in Chelyabinsk, one of the most important closed cities of the Soviet Union east of the Ural mountain range. I'll never forget these pictures of endless illuminated tunnels built by prisoners of war populated by Soviet comrades wearing protecting clothes and strange hats like cooks or surgeons sitting in front of outdated computer terminals. It was a Western produced commercial using an US song about the good feeling when drinking Champaign while enjoying life. Just strange as other presentations like waste management using caverns to be filled with nuclear waste of all kind – from industrial to clinical – than igniting a micro nuke which is strong enough to glaze the rubbish 600 m underground. The Russian delegation even let the rostrum to a Russian entrepreneur to promote the new technique. The Norwegian Foreign Ministry seemed to be happy about the fact that the dialog proceeded under the eyes of an international audience, which included investors from the USA or the UK. After the first day the meeting was adjourned and everybody was invited by Rogaland County to a bus tour to attend a Champaign reception and a sumptuous dinner cheered by Norwegian entertainment at Statoil headquarters.



Next day, after the conference was adjourned, some two hundred participants went on a boat trip to a salmon farm half an hour away from

Stavanger harbor. After visiting an aqua farm everybody was invited to dinner, tasting grilled Norwegian salmon accompanied by a selection of fine white wines from France or any other drink at choice. The Russian liked the party so much that the boat back to Stavanger left close to midnight.



Next morning I checked in at Stavanger airport at 6.30, enjoying a good coffee, boarded at 7.00 and fell asleep till hearing the captains announcement: "Ladies and gentleman, we are approaching Brussel airport, please fasten your seatbelt..."