

Linda Peetre Memorial fond
Translation from english
file: LindaMinnesfondEng.tex

Jaak Peetre

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This donation – 300.000 english Crowns – constitutes the major part of my maternal inheritance, means aquired by the dispose of two huses in Pernau (Pärnu) Estonia, my grand grandfather's and my grandgrandfather's house. Made of stone they have survived 50 year's mismanagement under communist rule.

1 Purpose

The capital has to be administered by a foundation subject to the Svedish Mathematical Society. The money is supposed to be used as a support for travel for mathematicians – regardless of sex, age or other ephemeral matters – in mathematical purposes such as participation in varuous meetings, visits to other mathematicians or mathematical institutions. Special preference will be given to candidates from the Baltic countries, in the first place Estonia, at least as long these states still are free and independent. The Society will therefore cooperate with the Estonian Mathematical Society (Eesti Matemaatika Selts, Dorpat), likewise with the corresponding organisations in the other three countries mentioned, in particular inform them about the period of application etc.

Since the 16th century, Russia (then called Moscovia) has tried to subdue Estonia. Det last abortive coup was done by Putin and his gang of youngsters Nashi ordered by him to Tallinn in April 2007.



Figure 1: Linda Peetre 1934

2 About Linda Peetre (born Leesment 1903-1961)

My mother Linda Peetre was born on 25 August 1903 i Pernau (now Pärnu). Her mother again, Olinde Leesment (born Olsson 1874-1949) was english and daughter of the sea captain Olof Olsson (born in the village Östra Torn close to Lund in 1835, died in Pernau in 1921).

At the age 8 Linda was hit by a great misfortune, which came to dictate the rest of her life; she got polio (a then epidemic illness in Europe at the time, which is supposed to have been connected to improved hygien – children began to use soap. To much cleanness is not good to you!) and was paralyzed in her feet. Consultations with medical authorities in Germany as in Russia (Professor Bekhterev in St. Petersburg in 1914) led to nowhere. Dispite this serious handicap Linda came to live a comparatively normal life.

In the early 1920s Linda spent some year at the clinic of the Estonian brain surgeon professor Ludvig Puusepps (1875-1942; a student and coworker of Bekhterev) in Dorpat (now Tartu¹). There one taught how to walk on cruches, but only with great difficulty. 1925-1929 Linda studied sciences at

¹Like Reval it is an ancient Estonian name. Lennart Meri (1927-2004), historian, film maker, writer and politician – in two rounds president of the republic– mentions that the namet Reval appears in an Irish cronicle from the 9th century, then city was a major port already then. Name like Peipus and Pernau perhaps come from a language related to Basque, spoken there thosands of years before the Balto-Finnic tribes (Finns, Estonians, Livs) reached this sea.

Dorpat University (founded in 1632 av Gustavus II Adolphus). Her main interest was however astronomy. A projected master's thesis was not even begun; other things came on her way. As supervisor she had then famous astronomer Ernst Öpik (1893 - 1985; raised in 1915-1922 the hypothesis that termonuclear reactions take place in the interior of stars.).² To the astronomical observatory – Dorpat's famous “Star Tower” (Tähe torn) with a Fraunhofer refractor³ – mother had to crawl up the stairs. Another av mother's teachers was Edgar Krahn (mathematics, mechanics; 1894-1961; a student of Richard Courant in Göttingen, known for the Rayleigh-Faber-Krahn inequality, worked later at the Naval Ordnance Laboratory (NOL) in White Oak, Maryland [1].⁴). Linda got her diploma *cum laude* in 1929 and got married. In the marriage two sons where born, both with a Caesararian, me (Jaak [James] in 1935) and my brother Jaan [John] (a dentist, in 1938), named after two grandfathers respective morfar (an utterly silly method!).⁵ Linda worked as a home teacher first in her home town Pernau and later (from 1845 on) i Lund⁶. She was my first math teacher.

3 Grandmother – father's side

My paternal grandmother Elisabeth was a half Latvian. As a young girl she had been the German teacher to the children of the Russian military commander of Pernau. Of here several children only my father reached an old age. One son Helmuth 10 years died in the famine organized by Lenin in 1920. Her eldest son, my uncle Edward was born in Latvia⁷, and my father in Kurland, in the estate Liel Jekavi (German: Gross Ekau), the grand... (grand)ⁿmother of the current (2008) english prime minister Fredrik Reinfeldt is supposed to have come from the same place. This is why I feel very tender about Latvia

²I met Öpik at Maryland, where he was a part time guest professor from the Amagh Universitetet in Northern Ierland. On my question if he was there temporarily he replied. “On this earth we are all only on a temporary basis!”

³Is in the Unesco World Heritage Liste.

⁴When I came to Maryland, Krahn was already dead, mother also passed away a short time afterword.

⁵To keep us apart mother had to have the letters K and N on our clothing!

⁶By coincidence, her grandfathers home tow!

⁷Edward took part in the Civil War on the red side, lived then in Abchasia (or somewhere else in the Caucasus) and had a family there, arrested by the NKVD, disappeared without a trace.

also.

4 My father

Addendum 14 March 2008

For the sake of completeness, I include a few lines about my father Arthur Peetre. He was born on 14 September 1907 in the estate Liel Jekavi (German: Gross Ekau, Estonian: Suur Ekavi) in the Russian province Livonia (now Latvia) 60 km South of Riga, the same place that our present prime minister Fredrik Rheinholdt comes from on his mothers side, however there is no kinship. My grandfather was a forester at the estate. Later the family lived in Riga and, during WW 1, was evacuated to Orël south of Moscow, where they were exposed to all the horrors of the Revolution and the Civil war. In 1922 the family “optioned” to Estonia⁸. As Arthur did not master the language, he had to take his baccalaureate at a Russian secondary school in Valga⁹. After having done his military service, he made his living as a warrant officer in the artillery, and, parallel to this, began to study law at Dorpat. He had wanted to be an engineer or a mathematician, but poverty stopped it. To me he told that he once, during a railway journey between Dorpat and Pernau, spent the whole night solving math exercises. After his marriage to my mother he worked as a lawyer in Pernau. During WW II he was prohibited to exercise this profession by both occupation powers (the red as well as the brown). Coming to Sweden at the age of 40, he had to re-educate himself to a historian. He ended up as an archivist at the history department at Lund University and taught also courses in paleography and chronology (a mathematical subject!). He died in Lund on 1 April 1989.

Contributions to the foundation may be sent to the SEB bank account nr 31025156, clearing number 5405, IBAN SE5350000000053291025156.

⁸In the Dorpat peace treaty, in 1920, between Estonia and the Soviet Union, which the Soviets broke already 4 years later, ethnic Estonians living in Russia were given the option to resettle in their native country.

⁹Border town between Estonia and Latvia.

References

- [1] Ülo Lumiste – Jaak Peetre (editors): Edgar Krahn 1894-1961. A Centenary volume. IOS Press, Amsterdam, 1994.