

Anna Reid

Born 15.1.1965

Life story by her father Alex.

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1. Introduction

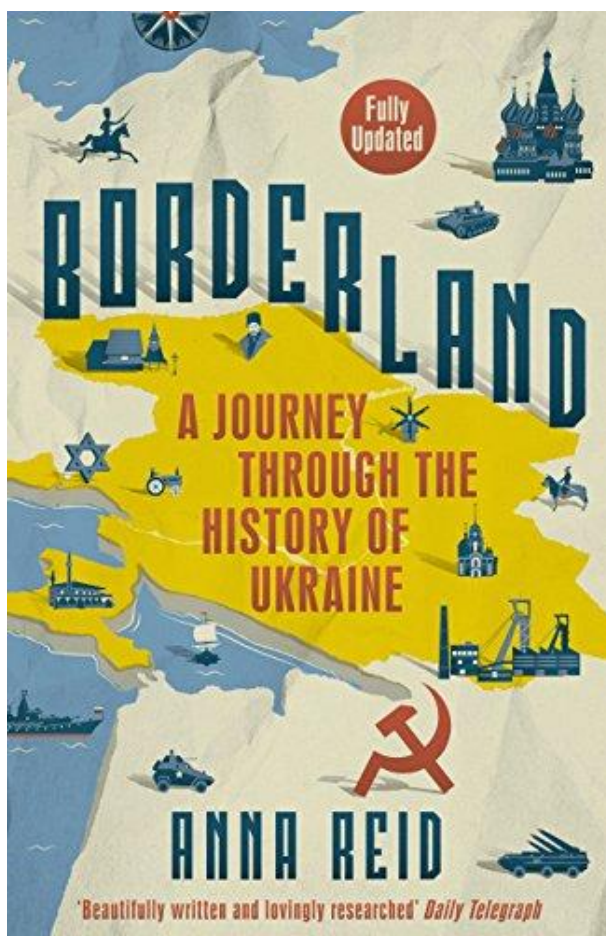
The following introduction was archived in 2021, with acknowledgement and thanks, from Wikipedia.

Anna Reid read law at Oxford University and studied Russian History at the University College London School of Slavonic and East European Studies. After working as a consultant and business journalist, she moved to Kiev, where she acted as the Ukraine correspondent for the Economist from 1993 to 1995. From 2003 to 2007 she worked for the British think-tank Policy Exchange, editing several of their publications and running the foreign affairs programme.

Reid has published three books on East European history: *Borderland: a journey through the history of Ukraine*, *The Shaman's Coat: A Native History of Siberia*, and *Leningrad: The Epic Siege of World War II: 1941-1944*. Critics have praised her for her highly descriptive narratives of the locations she studies. She has received especially high praise for *Leningrad*, which is the first 21st century book-length account of the Siege of Leningrad (modern-day Saint Petersburg) by the Germans from 1941 to 1944. In its use of newly discovered primary sources from the Siege, including private diaries of ordinary citizens who suffered from cold and starvation during the winter of 1941-1942, the book has been called "a relentless chronicle of suffering."

She is currently (January 2021) working on a book, to be published by John Murray, on the Allied anti-Bolshevik 'Intervention' into the 1918-20 Russian Civil War.

2. Borderland



*Anna Reid's first book, *Borderland*, was a history of Ukraine, published by Weidenfeld & Nicholson in 1995. An updated second edition was published in 2015. The following review by Louise Doughty, was published in the Daily Telegraph in May 2008. It is archived with acknowledgement and thanks.*

Anna Reid lived in Ukraine for two years in the 1990s and contributed to The Daily Telegraph's foreign pages from there. The book she produced afterwards, *Borderland*, is a highly engaging and informative look at a much-misunderstood nation.

In a little over 200 pages, Reid takes the reader on a breathless canter through 1,000 years of the history of this complex, oft-invaded and fought-over territory, from the founding of Kievan Rus in the 10th century to the disaster of Chernobyl and the collapse of the Soviet empire. Issues of ethnicity in Crimea, famine and purges under Stalin and the appalling events of the Second World War are all explained succinctly in her clear and evocative prose.

So much material in one book could have made for a turgid read in lesser hands, but Reid has an acute eye for detail, whether it's a bunch of snowdrops wrapped in ivy leaves or the Ukrainian male's fondness for salo - raw pig-fat eaten with black bread, salt and garlic. My favourite story concerns her visit to a post-Communist group on the far right, which campaigns under a priceless slogan: "Vote for us and you'll never have to vote again".

Excerpts from other reviews, archived in 2021 from the Weidenfeld & Nicholson website:

Beautifully written and lovingly researched ... This book brims with colourful historical personalities ... The mixture of travelogue, history, political analysis and anecdote makes Anna Reid's account a highly digestible popular introduction to the tragic plight of a country whose very name means "Borderland". "The West ... had difficulty taking Ukraine seriously at all," she writes. Her first (and I hope not her last) book is a noble and praiseworthy attempt to correct this gross historical injustice. *Daily Telegraph*.

A compelling and improbably enjoyable read ... Despite its problems [Reid] says, the country has the potential to be one of Europe's greatest states. *The Scotsman*.

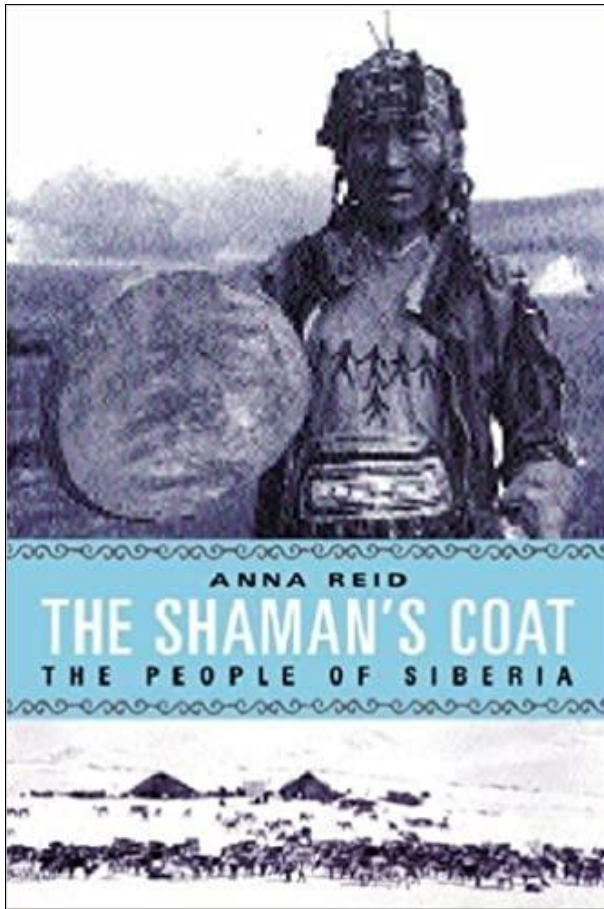
A beautifully written evocation of Ukraine's brutal past and its shaky efforts to construct a better future ... Reid succeeds in vividly conjuring up dozens of little-known heroes and villains of Ukrainian history ... Reid summons up the rogues and poets of Ukraine's past with a deft touch, but her real theme is the tragedy which has been Ukraine's lot for much of its history ... Borderland is a tapestry woven of the stories of all its inhabitants, recording their triumphs and their conflicts with the fairness of a compassionate outsider. *Financial Times*.

This book takes the reader on a fascinating and often violent odyssey, spanning more than 1,000 years of conflict and culture. Reid covers events from the coming of the Vikings, to Stalin's purges and beyond to the independence celebrations of 1991. She translates her obvious mastery of her subject into an accessible work, which should enrich the experience of any traveller to this new country. *Independent on Sunday*.

Anna Reid ... has sharp vision and an enquiring mind which launched her on a journey through the country's history to help her make sense of what she saw. Often controversial but never stuffy, she takes her reader at the same time on a tour of Ukraine, relating past events to a modern context ... [she] proves herself an astute observer of the Ukrainian scene. *Times Literary Supplement*.

Gripping history ... [Reid] writes with authority having lived for three years in Kiev as a reporter ... [she] is remarkably clear-headed about the many competing versions of Ukraine's history and its mostly invented heroes. A wise and generous government in Kiev would give her a medal. *The Times*.

3. The Shaman's Coat



Anna Reid's second book, the Shaman's Coat, was published in 2002. The following is archived, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the New York Times review of the book by Benson Bobrick. It is archived with acknowledgement and thanks.

Toward the end of the 16th century, Siberia fell to the Russians as an unexpected prize. When this conquest and occupation began, European Russia stood deep in its own ashes after a half-century of war, famine, plague and despotic rule under Ivan the Terrible, Russia's first czar. Ivan's imperial ambitions had been thwarted to the west by Poland and Sweden and to the south by the Crimean Tatars backed by the Ottoman Turks. Russia then turned to the east, and within the space of a few generations acquired a territory larger than the Roman Empire.

In statistical terms, that territory covers five million square miles (about a twelfth of the total land surface of the globe) and stretches from the Arctic to Central Asia, the Urals to the Sea of Japan. Its mineral wealth makes it potentially the richest resource area on earth. But "not everything that counts can be counted," as Einstein once remarked, and after the geologist and the geographer have exhausted their estimation of its dimensions in numerical wonder, there remains its human heart. When the Russians first arrived, Siberia (like aboriginal America) already had a diverse life and culture of its own, and it is the idea of Anna Reid's captivating new book, "The Shaman's Coat: A Native History of Siberia," to explore the impact of the Russian conquest on that aboriginal culture's fate.

A former Kiev correspondent for the Economist and the Daily Telegraph, Reid is no ordinary journalist. As in her previous book, "Borderland: A Journey Through the History of the Ukraine," she sets out on her travels determined to bring the land of her reckoning alive. In this she is aided by her acute curiosity, fine descriptive gifts and delight in detail. The result is almost always to give us, in her own wry way, an indelible sense of place.

Consider, for example, her description of flying from Moscow to Tobolsk: "The in-flight movie . . . was 'Some Like It Hot,' accompanied by rye bread, cucumber and soapy mineral water, served on battered aluminum trays. The Tupolev's engines kept up a homely rumble, and the sun sparkled on the scratches on the windowpanes. As we came in to land, no bossy loudspeaker said to belt up or stow bags in overhead lockers, the unoccupied seats flopped forward in unison and a canteen of cutlery jingled down the center aisle. On the runway our baggage tumbled onto potholed tarmac awash with meltwater and the cawing of rooks."

Or, later, her impressions of a voyage in western Siberia: "The river Ob, wide, brown, meandering mightily among leafy islets, has cast a spell on our hydrofoil. On deck men in paint-spattered trousers . . . smoke in silence, shifting only to point out the rise of a fish or the current's churn past a tethered buoy. . . . When the engine cuts, sky and water tilt gently upward, silence washing over us like the floodwater drowning the willows on either bank. The trees part and a village drifts alongside, strung along a low scarp of soft brown earth. Then the cabins and fences spin away, and we are skimming again between mazy walls of green. It would be no surprise if parrots flashed out of them, or a hail of arrows."

Some part of Siberia's vanishing present will always be preserved by words that attend it with such care. But it is the plight of the indigenous peoples that is Reid's chief concern. Like other conquering powers, the Russians insisted on their colonial right to civilize the "savage" and make the wilderness their own. Ultimately, their way was cleared by slaughter, alcoholism and disease. Reid's account of her own journey -- part history, part travelogue, part excursion through the outback of Siberian lore -- more or less follows the progress of Russian domination eastward as the Khant, Buryat, Sakha, Ainu, Chukchi and other peoples are subdued.

It was not long before some of them were struggling simply to survive. In 1876, for example, there were said to be only about 1,600 Yukaghirs left, the pitiable remnant of a once-powerful tribe. Here and there, their ancient burial mounds could still be seen, containing skeletons with bows and arrows, spears and shamanistic drums, but the descendants of these mighty warriors had fallen into such indolence and addiction that their chief delight was a coarse Ukrainian tobacco stretched with dung.

Under the Soviets, the Yukaghirs and other small nomadic groups essentially disappeared. Stalin, in fact, distrusted all native peoples because they lacked an "industrial proletariat," the only class to which he could pretend to relate. But in the parsing of native life, the new categories did not apply. "The Small-Numbered Peoples," Reid explains, "possessed no exploiters and exploited in the Marxist sense. . . . Owning a hundred deer did not make a man a kulak; prospective sons-in-law working out their bride-prices were not hired laborers; a shaman was not the

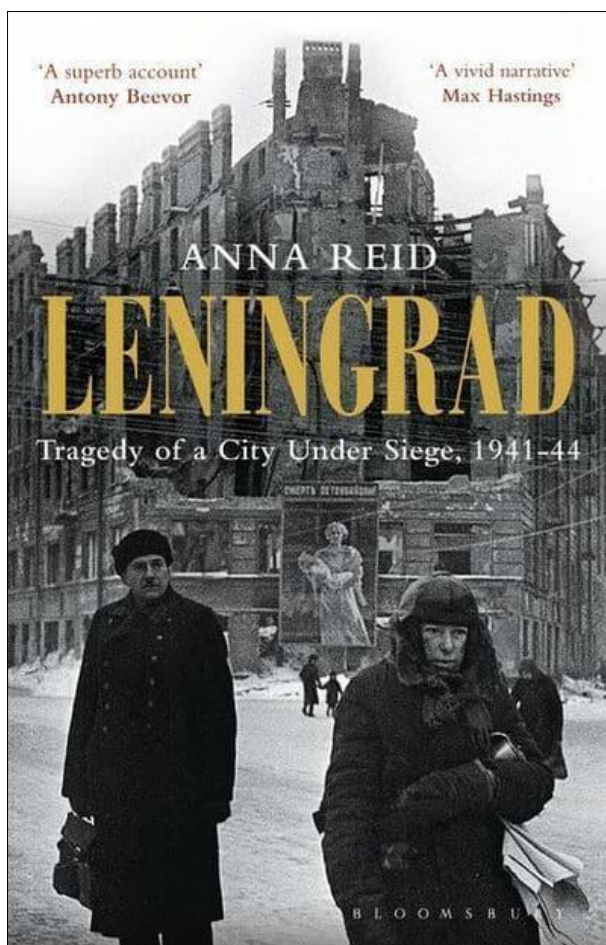
same thing as a priest." No matter: it was not the people but the categories that counted, and collectivization programs proved as devastating to Siberian natives as to peasants in Ukraine.

The history of their obliteration has since been obliterated -- the erasure of an erasure, so to speak. In St. Petersburg's State Russian Museum, we learn, "the sole evidence of the native Siberians' existence is an 18th-century ivory," while the vast collection housed by the Hermitage contains but a single "china figurine of an Itelmen girl, one of a series of 'national types' produced by the Imperial Porcelain Factory in the 1780's."

Forty years ago, it was still possible to find whole communities of the Khant, a west Siberian people, where their language was spoken. Today, only the elderly keep it alive. Though a somewhat primitive tongue (in that it lacks a capacity for abstraction), it is evocative and vivid, with a poetic particularity all its own. A photograph, for example, becomes by analogy "a pool of still water"; a hat, "a wide-crowned tree that keeps off the rain."

Losses of all kinds abound. At Goose Lake, once home to a thriving monastery, the author goes in search of the head lama and finds him "in a cabin in the temple grounds, hiding from his mother, girlfriend and infant sons behind a newspaper. The wall above his bed was decorated with 3-D posters, one of kittens in a basket, another of a table laid with Ben Nevis whiskey and tomatoes sliced to look like flowers." The shaman's true power and knowledge, in exaltation, belong to another book. Here we find it in its fall.

4. The Siege of Leningrad



Anna Reid's book 'Leningrad: Tragedy of a City Under Siege 1941-44' was published by Bloomsbury in 2011. The following review by Ian Thomson is archived, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the website of the Guardian newspaper.

The Nazi science of mass murder was first put to the test in occupied eastern Europe. Hitler's plan to acquire "living space" for German settlers in Russia required the elimination of entire Slav populations. This was done by gassing, shooting or by a slow death from hunger. Though historians have paid it little attention, Hitler's "hunger plan" was integral to his war against the Jews and other "useless mouths". In this impressive book, Anna Reid turns an appalled eye on the German's two-and-a-half-year-long siege of the city.

With scholarship and narrative verve, Reid makes effective use of diary accounts and other material kept by survivors. Inevitably, hers is a chronicle of human loss; what happened in Russia's pre-revolutionary capital was unspeakable, inhuman. By January 1944, when the Wehrmacht finally began to retreat, around 750,000 civilians had been deliberately starved to death. This amounted to a quarter of Leningrad's population. At this book's terrible heart is a warning to those who deliver facile judgments or condemnations: only those who survived the siege have the right to judge or condemn. And even they may not be properly fit to do so, for those who fathomed the depths of human degradation in Leningrad did not survive

to tell the tale. From KGB files, Reid has uncovered the extent to which Leningraders resorted to cannibalism, for many years a taboo subject in the Soviet Union. The typical Leningrad "cannibal", though, was neither the Sweeney Todd of legend, nor a bestial lowlife, but a housewife seeking protein to save her children. In the agonised hunt for food, sustenance of sorts could be got from the bodies that lay unwept-for and disregarded in the snow. Contrary to the official Soviet narrative, the siege did not sanctify its victims.

During the early months of the siege, Leningraders were dying at a rate of 100,000 a month. Hitler had blockaded all supply routes to the city; temperatures plummeted to -30C. In desperation, some blokadniki killed their neighbours for ration cards. German army intelligence gloatingly reported on the effects of famine diseases such as dysentery and typhus.

As well as a vivid documentary, Leningrad is a key to understanding totalitarian incompetence. Disastrously, Stalin failed to evacuate Leningrad before the siege ring closed and made little attempt to stockpile extra food when it was still possible. As starvation set in, inhabitants began to boil calf skins for hoped-for nutrition or eat joiner's glue made from the bones and hooves of slaughtered livestock. Fantasy menus or succulent meats were dreamed up in conditions of appalling isolation. "Hunger has changed almost everyone," a diarist despaired. A windfall piece of bread could make all the difference between life and death.

As Reid reminds us, Hitler's invasion of the USSR on 22 June 1941 had taken Stalin by surprise. In spite of their ideological differences, the dictators had been united in their determination to destroy Poland, having carved up the country in the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of 1939. Without this opportunist alliance, Hitler would not have been able to implement the mass killings of Jews in Poland, or Stalin been able to deport thousands of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian "enemies of the people" to the frozen immensity of Siberia. Now, unexpectedly, the former allies were at deadly loggerheads.

For all that Reid conveys horror, her book is filled with tales of ordinary heroism and fortitude. A family at death's door learns Pushkin by heart: Hitler could make their bodies starve, but not their minds. Orthodox Christians convinced themselves that the siege was sent as a test for mankind – an intolerable but manifest mystery of His will. Thus religion served as a defence against dehumanisation. Even today, Leningraders are learning to understand the wartime demolition of their city and its inhabitants. There have been other military sieges in recent times but none so ferocious, so total in its effect. Having starved the city into submission, the Nazi plan was to raze it outright. Leningrad is magnificent living history: all life and death is in these burning pages.

The following review is archived, with acknowledgement and thanks, from the Economist magazine.

Wartime commemorations come round so often that the 70th anniversary of the siege of Leningrad may seem unremarkable. More attention is paid nowadays to the battles for Moscow and Stalingrad. Yet the collapse of the Soviet Union has made available a trove of new material. In the first full-length book on the siege since

1969, Anna Reid (a former Economist journalist) uses these records to compelling effect to tell this horrific and occasionally inspiring story.

There is no doubting its epic scale. Launched on September 8th 1941, the siege was the deadliest in history. It famously lasted for almost 900 days and killed some 750,000 civilians (almost one in three of the pre-war population) and about the same number of soldiers. The eventual expulsion of German forces has left an image of determined Soviet citizens holding out against frenzied Nazi attacks in freezing conditions. Dmitri Shostakovich's bombastic "Leningrad" symphony, broadcast towards enemy lines in August 1942, has cemented this impression. Yet it is misleading, in two respects.

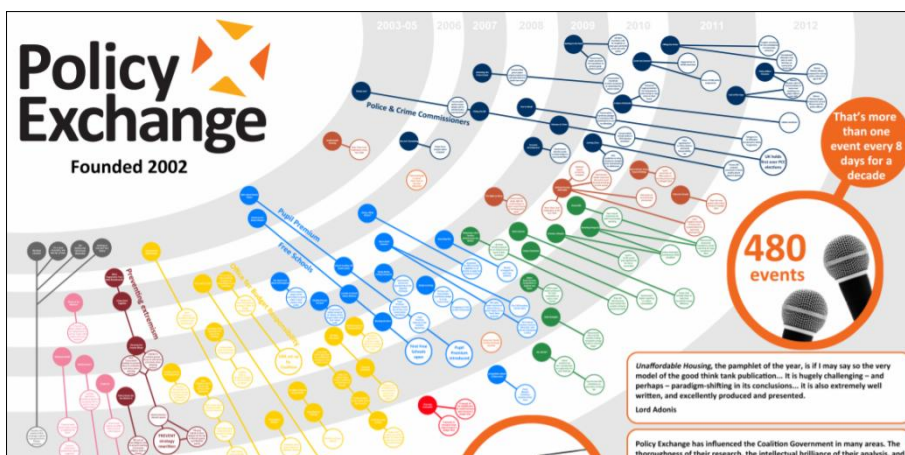
The first concerns the question of why the Germans never took the city. The answer, Ms Reid suggests, is that they did not really try. Soon after the siege began, the military focus switched to Moscow and then moved south. The Germans dropped fewer bombs on Leningrad than on London, and never offered terms for surrender. They did not want the responsibility of feeding 2.5m people. It was easier to let Leningrad's inhabitants starve.

The second is that the terrible suffering of Leningrad owed as much to Soviet errors as to Nazi aggression. This goes beyond Stalin's wilful refusal to prepare for an invasion, despite countless warnings. Ms Reid lists a string of catastrophic blunders: the delayed evacuation of Tallinn, which led to the worst-ever Soviet naval disaster, with 65 ships sunk; the deaths of thousands of young conscripts in the "People's Levy", who were thrown into the front-line with no training; the failure to evacuate Leningrad until too late; the criminal negligence in not stockpiling food.

The crunch came when Leningrad's last land link was cut in early September. But the real pain began that winter, one of the coldest on record. This period, up to March 1942, forms the heart of the book. Famine set in early, as the daily individual ration fell to 125 grams or less of "bread" (often bulked out with sawdust or wallpaper paste). The personal diaries quoted by Ms Reid, many written by middle-class academics, artists, doctors and their families, offer a relentless drumroll of deaths, often attributed to "dystrophy", not starvation. Entire families were wiped out. Dogs, cats and rats went too. A 12-year-old girl poignantly notes in her diary, "only Tanya is left". Cannibalism was widespread, first of the dead and then of the living. After this gruesome tale the easing of the siege comes as an anticlimax. Rail links were fitfully restored as the German army was pushed back. The "ice road" across Lake Ladoga let some supplies in and people out. By the winter of 1943 the end was in sight, though it took another year to lift the siege entirely.

Yet for all the celebrations of Stalin's victory over Hitler, the aftermath was almost as grim. Harsh Soviet rule continued to cost lives. Stalin retained a deep suspicion of Leningrad, making life miserable for the city's residents. It is an irony that Russia's rulers today hail from St Petersburg, and they sometimes want to rehabilitate Stalin. Were Vladimir Putin ever to read this book, he would surely desist.

5. Policy Exchange



From the Policy Exchange website in 2021.

From 2003 to 2007 Anna Reid worked for the British think-tank Policy Exchange, editing several of their publications and running the foreign affairs programme. Policy Exchange describes itself on its website thus:

'Policy Exchange is the UK's leading think tank. As an educational charity our mission is to develop and promote new policy ideas which deliver better public services, a stronger society and a more dynamic economy. The authority and credibility of our research is our greatest asset. Our research is independent and evidence-based and we share our ideas with policy makers from all sides of the political spectrum. Our research is strictly empirical and we do not take commissions. This allows us to be completely independent and make workable policy recommendations. There are numerous examples of where our policy ideas have been taken forward by government. Below are just a few examples:

- Directly elected police commissioners
- The pupil premium
- Free Schools

- Our research predominantly falls under three main themes
 - Jobs and Growth
 - Poverty and Social Mobility
 - Public Services'

Examples of Policy Exchange publications edited by Anna Reid are:

Size Isn't Everything: Restructuring Policing in England and Wales. Mar 10, 2006.

The government plans to amalgamate the 43 police forces of England and Wales into 17 larger ones. *Size Isn't Everything* argues that since small forces perform at least as well as larger forces, and since amalgamations would reduce accountability and take resources from neighbourhood policing, the government should abandon this misguided attempt to introduce regional government by the back door. Instead, the government should allow forces voluntarily to federate where necessary, extend

the remit of national policing agencies and/or re-establish Regional Serious Crime Squads, devolve more responsibilities to Basic Command Units, and make them genuinely accountable to local communities.

Taming Terrorism, It's Been Done Before. Mar 10, 2005.

Case studies by five distinguished academics come to some expected and unexpected conclusions: that security agencies must learn to look forwards rather than back; that the countries most likely to under-fund their security agencies are those with a history of militarism; that tough anti-terrorism legislation is hard to sustain; and that economic growth often does more than political reform to tackle terrorism's root causes. Military occupation of terrorist-producing territories only succeeds if armies are held accountable for their actions, and political wrangling and bureaucratic bumbles can allow even a tiny, unpopular group to survive for decades.

Taming Terrorism reminds us that despite al-Qaeda's global reach and use of modern technology, today's global struggle is not unprecedented. We have beaten similar groups before and can do so again.

Lion Cubs? Lessons from Africa's Success Stories. Jan 15, 2004.

While prophecies of an 'African Renaissance' were over-optimistic, out of the headlines some African countries have been doing relatively well. Lion Cubs brings together an international group of contributors in four case studies. Botswana demonstrates how Africans should manage natural resources; Tanzania the difficulty of moving to privatisation and de-regulation; Rwanda and Mozambique the importance of broad-based, inclusive government for successful conflict resolution.

6. The Ukrainian Institute in London



The Ukrainian Institute in London, Holland Park Avenue.

Anna Reid is a trustee of the Ukrainian Institute in London. It describes itself on its website thus:

The Ukrainian Institute London is a centre for Ukraine-related educational and cultural activities. We explore challenging issues that affect not just Ukraine but all societies today. The Ukrainian Institute is a registered charity, and an affiliate of Lviv's Ukrainian Catholic University.



A Ukrainian Institute in London event.