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Asymmetrical Neighborhood of the Empire and a Small Nation in the Far North: The Image of the Russian “Otherness” and Russian-Swedish/Norwegian Relations in the 19th — Early 20th Centuries

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Abstract. The work examines the features of relations between the Russian Empire and Sweden and Norway in the context of the asymmetric proximity of the 19th – early 20th centuries. The authors have analyzed and identified specific features characteristic of the asymmetrical neighborhood of the empire and a small nation, as well as factors in the formation of ideas about the “Russian threat” to Sweden and Norway during this period and have traced the stages and dynamics of the transformation of these ideas in the Scandinavian countries. Russian-Norwegian and Russian-Swedish relations go back several centuries of asymmetrical proximity, contacts and conflicts, which, of course, influenced the formation of images of the “eastern neighbor”. The Swedes and Norwegians’ fears and expectations, based on perceptions of themselves, about their collective “Self”, contributed to the formation of images of the Russian “Otherness”, the attitude towards which was ambiguous and primarily depended on internal preconditions. Therefore, a detailed study of the transformation of images of Russia in Norway and Sweden allows us to take a new look at the history of relations between these countries, as well as to identify the domestic and foreign policy interests of Norwegian and Swedish societies associated with certain images of Russia.

Keywords: *Far North, empire, small nation, myth of the “Russian threat”, Russian-Norwegian relations*

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Introduction

Russia, Sweden and Norway have a centuries-old history of neighborhood and relations in the Far North. The peculiarity of this neighborhood was that they were neighbors, different not only in their territorial size, but also in their internal dynamics of development [1, Zaikov K.S., Kuprikov N.M., Kuprikov M.Yu., pp. 2272–2279; 2, Zaikov K.S., pp. 154–174].

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Russia was a huge multinational dynastic empire, following a conservative-traditionalist path of development, which consisted of the paternalistic nature of power, a cautious, often reactive attitude toward technological modernization and, at the same time, high tolerance to the presence of open border zones in the Far North of Europe.

Sweden and Norway, joined together in a union in 1814, were small states on a modernist Western European path of development. In the 19th century, Norway gradually moved towards building a national state and sought to outline hermetic political borders with the Russian Empire. Sweden, which tried to maintain its geopolitical significance in northern Europe throughout the 19th century, sought to keep Norway in the union as long as possible. Stockholm used any argument to strengthen this union, including the image of an external threat to consolidate the union states.

These external and internal differences, which were often asymmetrical and based on imaginary visions of the neighbor, formed the basis for Russia and Sweden-Norway to perceive the other side.

This problem remains relevant in the present period. Modern Russia is perceived by its northern neighbors as a source of threat to the “sustainable development” of European states. However, for the development of relations, it is extremely important to separate facts from speculation and reality from expectations. By studying the myth of the “Russian threat”, it is possible to extract new meanings that will help to better navigate in the ideologised information space of our time. Of particular importance in this context is the study of the emergence and subsequent transformation of the myth of the “Russian threat” in Sweden and Norway in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

We believe that it significantly affected the dynamics of bilateral relations and sometimes, unfortunately, led to wrong foreign policy actions, which were reflected at the closest local level of the neighborhood between the countries. The purpose of this article is to rethink Russian-Swedish/Norwegian relations in the border space of the Far North of Europe in the 19th and early 20th centuries in the context of the asymmetry of the neighborhood of empire and small nation.

Materials and methods

The article is based on the array of historical documents from the archives of Russia, Norway and Sweden, as well as historiographical analysis of works by Russian and Scandinavian scholars. In order to study the interstate relations between Russia and Sweden-Norway in matters of transboundary cooperation in the Far North in the 19th – early 20th centuries, the funds of the State Archives of Norway (Oslo), the Hoover Institution Archive (USA) and the Foreign Policy Archives of the Russian Empire were used.

An important group of sources was the periodical press, in particular, materials from the newspapers “Aftenposten”, “Svenska dagbladet”, “Menigmands Blad” and others, since it is the

press that is of greatest interest for studying the formation and development of the myth of the “Russian threat” within the framework of the concept of ideology.

A wide range of sources from the funds of the Russian State Historical Archive, the State Archive of the Arkhangelsk Oblast, the State Archive of Oslo (Norway) were used to reconstruct the process of delimitation of the Russian-Norwegian border in 1826, Russian-Swedish negotiations on the problem of cross-border activities of the Finnish and Norwegian Sami, as well as to study the attitude and view of regional (Finnmark province, Arkhangelsk province, Grand Duchy of Finland) and central authorities of Russia and Sweden-Norway to the so-called “Ioparskaya problem” and cross-border relations in the period from 1826 to 1920.

The methodological basis of the analyzed historical material was the world-system and functional approaches, which recognize the multi-subjectivity and multi-spatiality of the process of territorialization of physical space in a historical perspective, which is important for studying the images of space and its influence on the development of the territory and cross-border relations.

The poststructuralist approach was used to study the “symbolic system” (images of space and neighbor) in Russian-Swedish/Norwegian relations, the influence of this system on the dynamics of the development of an asymmetric neighborhood within the framework of the dichotomy “empire — small nation”.

Besides, one of the most important concepts of the study is the concept of “Self – Otherness” and the partly related concept of identity, in particular, the study of the problem of the myth of the “Russian threat” as a means of forming identity. Finally, the concept of communication and perception allows us to consider the mechanism of myth formation and dissemination.

The problematic field of the research goes beyond the scope of historical science, so it is necessary to take into account the methodology of related disciplines. One of the most important methods used in this work is the method of constructing models — mental constructs that simplify reality, “in order to emphasize the repetitive, general and typical, which is presented in the form of features and attributes” [3, Burke P., pp. 26–27]. This method is used in studying the process of formation and transformation of ideas about the “Russian threat” in Sweden and Norway. The main indicators within the models will be the security sector (economic, political, military, social), the source of the threat, the object of the threat and those who directly experienced fear about the threat. It is important to note that in this case we are talking not only about the myth (as it concerned primarily a direct military threat), but about the entire set of manifestations of a possible “Russian threat”, some aspects of which were quite real.

In addition to the main analytical methods (analysis, synthesis, comparison), the authors use a set of specific methods due to the multidimensionality of the phenomenon under study. Thus, the retroductive method, built on criticism and comparison of theories and models, was the basis for the analysis of historiography. The abductive method, which includes a step-by-step, logical comparison of research concepts/hypotheses with the documents included in the analysis and the subsequent modification of the former, depending on the documents, became the basis for

the selection and analysis of sources related to the study of the symbolic system and dynamics of the asymmetric neighborhood of Russia and Sweden-Norway.

Discussion

The overwhelming majority of studies close to the topic of this publication are localized around certain aspects of the history of Russian-Norwegian relations. A collective monograph edited by Professor J.P. Nielsen and published in 2014 is devoted directly to the history of the asymmetrical neighborhood of Russia and Sweden-Norway, which became partly the methodological basis for this article [4].

The works of O.A. Johnsen, A. Podvysotskiy, N. Golubtsov [5; 6, pp. 6–7; 7] are devoted to individual issues of the history of the Russian-Swedish/Norwegian borderland, its political aspects. A compact generalization is presented in the publications of E. Niemi, in the “History of Southern Varanger” by A. Lunde [8; 9].

Diplomatic aspects of the history of the demarcation of 1822–1826 are partially studied in the publications by C.F. Palmstierna [10] and V.V. Roginsky [11]. The issue of adaptation of the indigenous population to the established border is studied in the works of A. Andresen and M. Lähteenmäki [12; 13].

Researches devoted to the study of images of Russia in various countries have significantly influenced the formation of approaches to the above-mentioned issues in both foreign and domestic historiography. First of all, it is worth mentioning the work of the Norwegian specialist in international relations I. Neumann [14] “Using the “Otherness”. Images of the East in the Formation of European Identities”. According to Neumann, the Russian “Otherness” was a means of forming national identity in European states, which, comparing themselves with Russia, emphasized their civilization. It is worth noting that Neumann notes the discursive ambiguity and ambivalence of the images of Russia.

A significant part of the works devoted to the issue of Russia in the 19th century belongs to historical journalism. In the 20th century, Swedish scholar F. Lindberg wrote the classic work “Den Svenska utrikespolitikens historia. 1872–1914” [15]. One of the largest studies devoted to the image of Russia in Sweden, and more specifically, the image of the “Russian threat”, was conducted by historian G. Åcelius, professor at the Swedish National War College [16].

E. Niemi [17], T. Christiansen [18], and others were among the Norwegian authors studying the problems of perception of Russia and Russian-Norwegian relations, including in the Far North.

It should be noted that the existing historiography of the issue, unfortunately, is not represented by studies that comprehensively reconstruct Russian-Swedish/Norwegian relations in the Far North in the context of the asymmetrical neighborhood of the empire and a small nation in the 19th – early 20th centuries.

Results

The general agenda of relations between Russia and Sweden-Norway in the Far North in the 19th century, which included the issue of delimitation of the Russian-Norwegian borderland, regulation of Sami cross-border activities, as well as Pomor trade, was formed quite a long time ago, but only since the second decade of the 19th century these relations developed in a qualitatively different sense.

The prerequisite for changing the nature of bilateral relations were the events of the so-called era of the Napoleonic Wars, which radically changed the political map of Northern Europe.

The Napoleonic Wars became one of the most significant events that had a direct impact on the formation and development of mutual ideas and relations between Sweden, Norway and Russia. The creation of a union between Sweden and Norway became possible in many ways due to the political processes that took place in Europe in the first decade of the 19th century. According to some historians, the Russian Empire played a key role in this.

In September 1809, the Treaty of Fredrikshamn was signed between Russia and Sweden. The document, which began with the words "There shall henceforth be peace, friendship, and good understanding between his Majesty the King of Sweden, and his Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias", put an end to direct military conflicts between Russia and Sweden, which has been repeatedly noted by historians of the two countries. Nevertheless, in 1809, the fact that this Russian-Swedish war would be the last was not obvious. According to the treaty, Sweden lost Finland (a third of the state's territory and approximately a quarter of the population), which became part of the Russian Empire as an autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland: 1809 was truly *annus mirabilis* ("miraculous year") in the history of Finland [19, Meinander H., pp. 76–77].

The "Finnish War" seriously changed the political situation in Sweden. Military failures and the deepest economic crisis contributed to the growth of discontent among the noble officers and young officials, which eventually led to the coup of March 13, 1809 [20, Andersson I., p. 308]: King Gustav IV was deposed, his uncle Charles XIII ascended the throne, and a constitutional monarchy with separation of powers was established in Sweden.

At the same time, the war and the events that followed it actualized the image of Russia in Swedish society, which was designated by the concept of "arvfiende" (hereditary enemy). This image had been formed over the centuries and was associated with the long-term military confrontation between Russia and Sweden in the Baltic region. O.V. Chernysheva, who conducted a study of this issue, noted that many Swedish travelers and diplomats of the 16th–17th centuries noted such traits of Russian character as "a tendency to drunkenness, deceitfulness, unreliability, hatred of everything foreign, self-confidence" [21, p. 102]. Such characteristics complemented the stereotype of "Russian barbarism", which was widespread in many European countries at the time.

Such a distinction was not accidental. The image of the Russian "Otherness", which was formed in Sweden, served to draw the line between "civilization" and "barbarism". At the same time, the Swedes, opposing themselves to the Russians, endowed them with those traits that

should not be characteristic of “civilized” states. The context of the formation of this image is the time of Sweden’s dominance in the region, the so-called period of “Swedish great power”.

The Russian-Swedish wars of 1741–1743 and 1788–1790, associated with the ideas of possible revenge, the return of lost territories and influence, ended in defeat for Sweden. In 1789, a pamphlet entitled “On the Threat to the Political Balance in Europe” was published in London. It is believed that it was written “on the instructions of the Swedish King Gustav III” [22, Mezin S.A., p. 154] by the French journalist Mallet du Pan. This work examines three areas of Russia’s aggressive policy: Crimea, Sweden, and Poland; the author calls on European powers to fight against Russia. Nevertheless, by the end of the 18th century, Russia’s strengthened position, in the opinion of many, “gave it the right to play a role in European politics” [14, Neumann I., p. 124].

Thus, by 1809, anti-Russian sentiments were already quite strong in Sweden, which can be explained by the extremely difficult experience of relations between the two states in the Baltic. The last war was also in many ways a catalyst for the emergence, primarily among the nobility and officers, of a “fear of Russia” and a desire to find a powerful ally in the inevitable (as many believed) struggle with it.

As a result of the war with Sweden in 1809, Russia not only acquired Finland, but also the common borderland of Russia and Sweden-Norway was significantly lengthened and expanded from the Finnish salient in the northwest to the Rybachiy Peninsula in the northeast, increasing almost threefold [23, Pokhlebkin V.V., p. 307]. The Norwegian-Russian borderland no longer had the outlines of a single frontier, since the western and northwestern sections had acquired clear demarcation lines, but the northeastern part still retained the frontier status. The Russian presence on the Scandinavian peninsula was much stronger. The Grand Duchy of Finland and Finnish immigrants in Norway embodied the Russian presence, so the image of the border began to acquire an increasingly military-political significance among the Norwegian elite.

Russia, fearing political instability in newly acquired Finland, sought to reconcile the Finnish elite with the new imperial order as much as possible. In 1810, Finland acquired the status of a Grand Duchy, becoming one of the few territories of the Russian Empire to receive broad self-government. Certain independence in shaping domestic policy and St. Petersburg’s fears of losing Finland created a favorable environment for the Grand Duchy to influence the foreign policy agenda and bilateral relations between Russia and Sweden-Norway in the 19th century.

In 1814, after the dramatic events of the summer of that year — the war with Sweden — Norway defended its right to broad internal autonomy within the framework of the new union with Sweden. Although the foreign policy of these countries was formally common, Sweden’s desire to keep Norway in the union allowed Norway to shape its own agenda of Russian-Norwegian relations during the 19th century, with Stockholm often playing the role of arbiter in resolving issues between St. Petersburg and Christiania.

Thus, in 1814, the reformatting of the geopolitical map of the Far North of Europe was completed, as well as Russian-Norwegian relations.

One of the pressing issues on the agenda of bilateral relations between Russia and Sweden-Norway since 1814 remained the problem of delimiting the northern frontier, the so-called “common districts” located in the south of the Varanger Fjord. Since the 18th century, Norway, being in a union with Denmark, was unsuccessfully trying to initiate negotiations with Russia on delimiting the frontier [24, Goldin V.I., Zaikov K.S., Tamitskiy A.M., pp. 519–535; 25, Goldin V.I., Zaikov K.S., Tamitskiy A.M., p. 855]. For the inhabitants of Eastern Finnmark, the territories of the common districts were a vital space, which had long been used economically by the Norwegians. However, it was only in the union with Sweden that the border issue was given a new development. This was possible for a number of reasons.

Firstly, Sweden and Russia had formed a strategic alliance for the first time in many years, and at the same time, the danger of Russia’s dominance in Europe forced the King of Sweden-Norway, Carl Johan, and the Stockholm court to be very cautious about the presence of open zones on the northern edge of Sweden-Norway. Therefore, when in 1816 the Norwegian government proposed to Carl Johan to initiate negotiations on the delimitation of the border in the “common districts”, he approved the decision of the State Council without much delay. The King understood that Alexander I would obviously not send Russian troops to tear Finnmark away from the Kingdom, but in the longer historical perspective no one could guarantee that the disputed territories would not become a pretext for Russia’s expansion to the northeast, as in the case of Finland. Furthermore, delimitation of the border was necessary for the internal consolidation of society in Sweden and for keeping Norway in the union.

Official negotiations on the delimitation of the northern frontier began in 1823, after the receipt of notes from the Russian ambassador Pyotr Sukhtelen to the Swedish-Norwegian Foreign Ministry in May–June 1822, with complaints from Russian subjects — the indigenous inhabitants of the common districts — the Skolts (Sami) about the activities of Swedish-Norwegian subjects on the territory of their pogosts.

In Russia, the Sami settlements were part of the Arkhangelsk province, and the Russian regional administration, supporting them, considered the disputed territories to be part of the Russian Empire and appealed to the Russian Foreign Ministry with a request to facilitate the expulsion of Norwegian subjects from the Russian land. The head of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Vice Chancellor Karl Nesselrode, did not study all the nuances of the issue of the status of the territories. The Vice Chancellor, acting reactively, considered the opinion of the Arkhangelsk officials to be the truth, sent a note of protest to Stockholm, which played the role of a catalyst in putting the issue of delimitation of the Russian-Norwegian border on the agenda of diplomatic relations between the two neighbors ¹.

Stockholm replied to St. Petersburg with a proposal to organize studies of cross-border fishing conflicts. Nevertheless, Stockholm feared that the Russian note might have been prompted

¹ State Archives of the Arkhangelsk Oblast (SAAO). F. 4. Invt. 3. Arch. 642 1-50; F. 1367. Invt. 1. Arch. 87 (p. 1) – Sh. 10-140.

by Russia's unilateral desire to annex all the disputed territories, so after consultations with Christiania, it was decided to prepare projects for the delimitation of the frontier and at the same time to propose that Russia recognize this space as common and draw the border².

During 1823–1824, several border delimitation projects were prepared in Norway and Russia, which give us a clear picture of the asymmetrical perception of the border problem between Russia and Sweden-Norway, including the perception of each other³.

In Russia in 1824, it was clear that the Governor-General of the Arkhangelsk Province Stepan Minitkiy had no conclusive evidence that the disputed territories belonged to Russia and that the territories disputed by the Norwegians were likely to have frontier status. Despite this, Alexander I, in his correspondence with the governor S.I. Minitkiy, recognizing the frontier territories, questioned the necessity of drawing the border⁴.

Following the logic of imperial thinking, Alexander I was calmly disposed to the existence of an open frontier with Sweden-Norway, which did not pose a threat to Russia. The Emperor intended to preserve the frontier status of the Russian-Norwegian borderland in order to support the traditional industries of the subjects of Russia and Sweden-Norway. However, he decided to convene a bilateral delimitation commission to prepare a border delimitation project in the summer of 1825 due to the persistence of S.I. Minitkiy and the Swedish chargé d'affaires Nils Frederik Palmstierna.

In the winter of 1825, S.I. Minitkiy and N.F. Palmstierna actually forced the Emperor to make a decision. At the same time, not trusting both petitioners, the Emperor decided to entrust the delimitation of the border to an independent commission. The decision was prompted by St. Petersburg's attempts to find a compromise between the interests of the indigenous inhabitants of the Arkhangelsk province and the policy of good neighborliness with Sweden-Norway, and this circumstance required the Emperor to take into account the interests of Norway⁵.

Ultimately, a joint border commission headed by Lieutenant Colonel Valerian Galyamin on the Russian side and Colonel Johann Sporck on the Swedish-Norwegian side was in charge of resolving this issue⁶. The draft delimitation prepared by the Galyamin–Sporck commission was in many points in line with the Storting Committee's project. It proposed shifting the border line to the southeast to the Jakobselva River and was successfully approved in Stockholm and Christiania, but the death of Alexander I made adjustments to the decision-making process on the border issue⁷ [10, p. 234].

² State archive in Oslo. RA/UD, Prebensen samling, G05/10/boks 5213; 40, D-RA/S1076/F/Fb/L0001.

³ SAAO. F. 1367. Invt. 1. Arch. 87 (p. 1); 42, RSIA. F. 1286. Invt. 4 Arch. 910; 40, D-RA/S-1076/F/Fb/L0001.

⁴ National Archives of Norway (NAN). RA/PA-0409/V/L0003/boks — VI-1B; 39, SAAO, F. 1367. Invt. 1. Arch. 87 (p. 1) — Sh. 119–153.

⁵ NAN, RA/PA-0409/V/L0003/boks — VII; 39, SAAO. F. 1367. Invt. 1. Arch. 87 (p. 1) — Sh. 139-139rev., 153; 41, NAN, RA/PA-0409/V/L0003/boks — VII; 41, NAN, RA/PA-0409/V/L0003/boks — IX.

⁶ Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Empire (AFPRE). F. 1. Invt. II-6. Arch. 75 p. I — Sh. 9-21.

⁷ NAN, RA/PA-0409/V/L0003/boks — IX.

In March 1826, the new Emperor Nicholas I suddenly decided to make significant changes to the Galyamin–Sporck project and proposed drawing the border along the Paz River. However, already in April, the Emperor, wishing to maintain the policy of “good neighborliness” in relation to Sweden-Norway, decided to approve the Galyamin–Sporck project, according to which Russia ceded the districts of Neiden and Pasvig (the area of modern Kirkenes) to Sweden-Norway and agreed to draw the border from the Vorjema River (Norwegian — Jakobselva)⁸.

In this story we see that, despite the asymmetry of the neighborhood of a great power and a small state, the mutual desire of St. Petersburg and Stockholm to maintain a positive atmosphere of bilateral relations led to the resolution of a complex, long-standing territorial dispute between Russia and Norway. Nevertheless, the main goal of the convention of 1826 to put an end to disputes and mutual distrust on both sides of the border was not resolved.

After acquiring new lands, Sweden-Norway became even more wary of its Russian neighbor. Paradoxically, the result of the demarcation, which was favorable for Sweden-Norway, created conditions for the cultivation of ideas about the “Russian threat”, which had been popular here since the second third of the 19th century. In general, Christiania was satisfied with this border. At the same time, the restraint shown by Russian diplomacy in concluding the treaty became one of the prerequisites for the erroneous ideas about Russian expansionism in the North. The treaty was favorable to Norway, but the awareness of this fact by the Norwegian political elite contributed to the emergence of fears that Russia might later claim back some parts of the old common districts.

It was assumed that Russia would achieve great economic and military advantages by taking control of Finnmark with its ice-free sea bays. The thesis that Russia was hatching secret plans to annex the ice-free harbors of Northern Norway became widespread since the 1830s. It was assumed that the Russians did not have access to ice-free coastline along their own territory in the North, and therefore needed one or more Norwegian fjords to develop a navy. All this became the geopolitical basis for the idea of the existence of a “Russian threat” to Norway [26, Zaikov K.S., p. 67].

Therefore, the importance of the Russian-Norwegian borderland and cross-border ties in the bilateral relations between Sweden-Norway and Russia in the second half of the 19th century only increased.

In Russia, the treaty split the positions of the regional public and the central government. Residents of the Arkhangelsk province perceived the border of 1826 as a territorial loss. The treaty became the reason for the emergence and spread of the idea of a “Norwegian threat” in the Russian North, which was also shared by officials in the capital at the end of the 19th century⁹.

Thus, the convention gave rise to new images of neighborhood in the Far North, which were reflected in the bilateral relations of the second half of the 19th century.

As noted earlier, another important event in the bilateral relations of the first half of the 19th century was the negotiations on the regulation of transboundary activities. The issue con-

⁸ NAN, Fund — Collection of documents of Arnold Restad RA/EA-4036/H/Hc/L002.

⁹ SAAO. F. 1367. Invt 1. Arch 87 (p. 2) — Sh. 232-233rev.; 42, RSIA. F. 1286. Invt 4. Arch 910 — Sh. 1-2, 107.

cerned the Finnish and Norwegian Sami along the Norwegian-Finnish section of the Russian-Swedish-Norwegian border.

The Grand Duchy of Finland did not participate in the negotiations on the delimitation of the Northern Frontier, but the convention of 1826 also established a Norwegian-Finnish section of the common border, which corresponded to the line established according to the Danish-Swedish border treaty of 1751. This fact was acceptable to the Norwegian side, but the Finnish Senate was outraged by the delimitation of the Norwegian-Finnish section of the common border without the participation of delegates from the Finnish side in the Galyamin–Sporck negotiations [27, Zaikov K.S., Tamitskiy A.M., p. 632].

The rules of the convention of 1826 also caused irritation. The Finnish Sami of Enara parish, who harvested on the territory of Neiden County, did not have their interests secured in the text of the convention. According to the paragraphs of the convention, privileges were partially preserved only for the indigenous inhabitants of the border settlements on the side of Arkhangelsk province. This concerned the Pazretskie Sami.

Even more significant issue was the question of what norms could be used to regulate the reindeer grazing of Norwegian-Finnish mountain Lapps. Until 1809, reindeer grazing was regulated by the Sami Code, an additional protocol to the Norwegian-Swedish border treaty of 1751. However, the economic needs of the Lapps changed at the beginning of the 19th century: the Finnish Sami became interested in sea and river fishing, which were significantly limited by the code. At the same time, the migration of Norwegian reindeer increased, which did not suit the Finnish border residents. The Senate of Finland hoped that the code could be abolished and new rules for cross-border activities could be developed. The question of the fate of the Sami code was left to a joint commission of border officials in 1832 in Pulmak.

During the negotiations in 1832 and 1834, the imperial Ministry of Foreign Affairs tended to favor the Norwegian position: the Sami code should be the basis for regulating Lapp's activities on the Norwegian-Finnish section of the border. Norway did not consider that there were any hidden motives behind Russia's actions, but gradually, from the mid-1830s, the assessment of Russia's actions in the negotiations on this issue began to change significantly [27, Zaikov K.S., Tamitskiy A.M., pp. 635–636].

Thus, in the 1830s, information about the existence of a military "Russian threat" to Norway appeared. In Russian historiography, it is generally accepted that the idea of a "Russian threat" to Norway is of foreign, primarily Swedish and English origin. However, it is important to make several reservations here. Firstly, relations between Russia and Norway in the first half of the 19th century can hardly be called idyllic; it is worth mentioning the point of view of E. Niemi, who believed that "the roots of the idea of a "Russian threat" go back primarily" to the 1810–1820s and are associated with Russia's economic expansion in the North [28, Niemi E., p. 19]. Secondly, Norwegian liberals sought to achieve greater independence within the union and at the same time

had a rather negative attitude towards the policies pursued by Russia. It is obvious that the images of a “Russian threat” to Norway are also associated with internal factors.

Despite the struggle of the Storting, Sweden had a dominant position in the union during this period, which was clearly demonstrated by the so-called “Bodø affair”. English smugglers, acting with the connivance of the Swedish authorities on the territory of Norway, stole the goods confiscated from them, and subsequently demanded that Norway pay them compensation. Sweden did not oppose this, which led to a rather serious cooling of relations. The “Bodø affair” is also interesting for us because John Rice Crowe, the British vice-consul in Hammerfest, who combined diplomatic service and entrepreneurial activity, was involved in it.

Due to his involvement in this case, Crowe was removed from office in 1836, but he made a very interesting political move in this situation. The British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston, known for his anti-Russian views, received a report from Crowe that “Norwegian Finnmark will soon be seized by Russia” [29, Davydov R.A., p. 361]. Crowe was soon promoted to consul and returned to Hammerfest. It is difficult to say whether Crowe really believed this or simply used the hypothetical “Russian threat” for promotion, but he was well aware of the tense situation that existed in the “border districts” until 1826.

During about the same period, the Scottish traveler Samuel Laing argued in his book “Journal of a Residence in Norway” that Russia would try to seize northern Norwegian territories (although Laing never reached Finnmark on his journey). In his opinion, this was due to the fact that Russia had seized Finland — those territories that were in close proximity to the Norwegian border. The assumption that Russia needed ice-free harbors on the Norwegian coast gave certain logic to the idea of a military “Russian threat”. Laing noted Russia’s natural attraction to the seas, concluding that the “scenario of events on the Scandinavian Peninsula is not an idle speculation” [30, Laing S., p. 187]. It is important to note that in this case we are no longer talking about an economic threat, but about a hypothetical military invasion of Norway by Russia. This idea found support among the military commanders of the kingdom. The Swedish liberals, in turn, were aggravated by Carl Johan's friendly relations with Nicholas I, while the Norwegian liberals expressed their negative attitude towards Russian policy in Europe.

Crown Prince Oscar I, who became the head of Sweden-Norway in 1844, was not satisfied with Russia’s dominance in Scandinavia after 1809. It is known that he wanted revenge for the loss of Finland and was waiting for a favorable foreign policy situation in order to receive additional guarantees of stability of political borders with the eastern neighbor. At the same time, one of the first, as it seemed at the time, logical explanations for the existence of a Russian threat to Sweden-Norway appeared.

The idea was that Russia’s true interests in Scandinavia were aimed at capturing the ice-free fjords in Norway’s Finnmark. This idea was formulated in the late 1830s by British consul John Rice Crowe, who became an ardent advocate of the idea in the British and Swedish-Norwegian Foreign Ministries. It appealed much to Oscar I's views on Russia and, in addition, complemented

the general image of Russia that was popular among the majority of the Swedish-Norwegian elite. In the 1840s, Russia symbolized the “gendarme of Europe” — the main reactionary force that was holding back the development of European society. It seemed obvious that the main motive for Tsarist Russia’s foreign policy towards the Kingdom was Russia’s desire to expand its territorial borders at the expense of Norway and Sweden. The image of the “Russian threat” became a guideline in the development of Sweden-Norway’s foreign policy towards Russia. This was encouraged by the clumsy and contradictory actions of the imperial Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the issue of the trans-border activities of the Finnish Sami [31, Zaikov K., pp. 34–38; 13, Lähteenmäki M., p. 226].

The claims of the Finnish side were constantly expanding. The Senate insistently demanded to change the border line approved in 1826 or to exchange territories. In the 1840s, the Finnish population experienced severe famine, and one of the salvations was the fishing industry in Norway, which was hindered by the norms of the Sami code, imposing some restrictions on coastal fishing for Finnish Lapps. The Russian government, fearing the death of imperial subjects, yielded to the Senate and agreed to support the radical line in negotiations with the United Kingdom¹⁰.

In 1840, Sweden-Norway offered Russia an exchange of territories. The object was the so-called “Finnish salient” of the Norwegian-Finnish section of the border. In exchange, Stockholm offered Russia part of the holy lands in Jerusalem and property in Moscow. This proposal was received positively in St. Petersburg also because it partially coincided with the project for the exchange of territories, presented to Alexander I by the Russian envoy in Stockholm, Count Sukhtelen, in October 1826, on the eve of the Emperor’s death.

The project was outlined in a dispatch to Vice-Chancellor Nesselrode. Sukhtelen proposed entering into new negotiations with the Swedish government on revising the border. It was about exchanging territories, and the Count proposed exchanging the territory of the Grand Duchy — the so-called Finnish salient — for a part of the former common districts in Norway, located from the river Paz to the middle of the Varanger fjord (modern Varangerbotn) and from it to the river Tana¹¹.

In the 1840s, Nicholas I decided to take Sukhtelen’s project as a basis and, if approved by the Swedish court, to include the acquired southern Varanger in the Grand Duchy. This would allow Finland to acquire a corridor to the Arctic coast and solve the problem of trans-border activities. However, this proposal was rejected by the Norwegian government. Subsequent negotiations in 1846–1848 also had no result: the Norwegian representatives avoided granting the Finnish Lapps any privileges. Feeling futility in attempts to settle the issue on the basis of the 1751 code, which was more beneficial to the Norwegian Sami, the Imperial Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to recognize the Sami code as optional and negotiate more aggressively.

¹⁰ NAN, RA/PA-0409/V/L0003/boks — XIII.

¹¹ AFPRE, F.1. II-6. Arch 75. P. I.Sh. 288–289.

On the eve of the next round of negotiations in 1851, at the preparatory interdepartmental consultations, the Russian Foreign Ministry decided to present Norway with an ultimatum: Norway must recognize the legal non-binding nature of the 1751 code and accept the proposal to expand the rights of the Finnish Lapps. If Norway did not agree to this, then Russia would declare the code non-binding and close the Norwegian-Finnish section of the border for cross-border activities.

The curators of the negotiations, Count A.S. Menshikov and Senator K.F.F. Langenskjöld, were confident that the ultimatum would persuade Norway to accept the Russian project. They believed that the Norwegian side would make a concession. The Norwegian mountain Lapps needed pastures in northern Finland no less than the Finnish Lapps on the Norwegian northern shores. No one assumed that Norway would neglect the interests of the mountain Lapps. Moreover, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs really believed that there was no point in preserving any rights for the Norwegian mountain Lapps if only one side was receiving advantages [27, Zaikov K.S., Tamitskiy A.M., p. 638].

The abrupt change in the position of the Imperial Foreign Ministry received a different logical explanation in Sweden-Norway. Stockholm interpreted the Russian claims as a potential desire by Russia to expand its sovereignty in the future and annex the ice-free harbors in Norway's Finnmark. The Norwegian side considered that in the future, Russia could use Finnish migrants in Norway as a pretext for territorial claims. In this situation, the "Russian threat" outlined by John Crowe found "fertile ground", which seemed logical in the context of the general anti-Russian sentiment in Western Europe. In 1848–1849, Russia took an active part in suppressing the Hungarian rebellion in the Austrian Empire, which for many years fixed Russia's image as a reactionary force in Europe. This also strengthened anti-Russian sentiments in Stockholm and Christiania, making Swedish-Norwegian officials very susceptible to Crowe's anti-Russian Doctrine, and the situation with the negotiations on the Finnish Sami only confirmed their fears. Therefore, Stockholm preferred to close the Norwegian-Finnish section of the border to cross-border activities, which was done in 1852 [10, Palmstierna C.F., pp. 294–295].

In the 1850s, the impression was formed in Norway that Russian guarantees of border inviolability were not enough. Distrust in the motives of Russia's foreign policy and desire to obtain additional guarantees of inviolability of the 1826 border pushed Oscar I to a new political agreement with England and France, Russia's main rivals of that period.

On the eve of the end of the Crimean War, it became clear that Russia was losing its status as a European hegemon, and in November 1855, the so-called "November Treaty" was signed between the three players. Sweden-Norway pledged not to enter into an alliance with Russia; in return, Great Britain and France guaranteed the inviolability of the Kingdom's borders.

Along the entire length of the Russian-Norwegian border from Kolto Jaure Island to the mouth of the Vormá River, the border was given clear political and ideological guidelines. This

predetermined the gradual politicization of the border activities of the Russian Lapps in the second half of the 19th century.

The main controversial point of the Convention of 1826 was the question of the rights of part of the border pogosts of the Skolts, namely the lands of the Pazretskie Sami on the territory of Sweden-Norway. The point is that a part of their pogost territories, where the areas of traditional activities (fishing, sheep and reindeer herding) were located, was transferred to Sweden-Norway as a result of the demarcation. Traditional ideas about the space and boundaries of the semi-nomadic culture of the Sami did not correspond to the political imagination of the space of the young Norwegian state, which was concerned with achieving full independence, and therefore sought to delineate the borders of its own territory as soon as possible. At the same time, the Russian Empire, whose presence in the Far North was ensured mainly by the loyalty of the Sami communities, which had broad autonomy, was interested in preserving the extraterritorial forms of economic activity of the Skolts for maintaining the stability of its power.

A partial solution to the problem caused by the mechanical division of the pogosts in 1826 was the so-called “additional protocol of 1834”. According to it, the Pazretskie Sami retained the right to salmon fishing in their former fishing grounds on the territory that was ceded to Sweden-Norway. All other fisheries in Norwegian territory were forbidden. This partial indulgence did not make the treaty of 1826 less unfair for the Skolts and less restrictive of their ancestral possessions. At the same time, the servitude legalized by the additional protocol on the border burdened the Norwegian side and was perceived as evidence of Russia’s readiness to violate the sovereignty of a neighboring state. Therefore, this servitude, adopted to protect the traditional nomadic economy of the indigenous inhabitants of the border area, became a prerequisite for the emergence of the problem of the so-called “Lapps fisheries” in the history of Russian-Norwegian relations. Norway made attempts to limit the scope of the Skolt’s fishing rights on its territory as much as possible, and Russia tried to protect these rights¹².

Due to the spread of public education and growing political mobilization in support of Norwegian autonomy in the second half of the 19th century, the idea of building a unified ethno-national state began to dominate in Norwegian society. According to this understanding of political space, the territory of the state corresponded to the territory of settlement of the nation, which was interpreted in a narrow ethno-cultural sense. Accordingly, the predominance of the non-Norwegian population in Eastern Finnmark and especially in the area of the Russian-Norwegian border was perceived as a foreign invasion — the penetration of Russia into Norwegian territories. The new national social imagination saw the reason for this situation not in the centuries-old history of the region, but in the vulnerability of the border territories [50, Niemi E., pp. 153–158]. Fears of Russian expansion were fueled by the injustice of the 1826 borders in the Russian press¹³.

¹² AFPRE. F. II Dep. I-3 Invt 446. Arch 104 — Sh. 238-243; 41, NAN. RA/UD, Prebensen samling, G05/10/boks 5213.

¹³ NAN, RA/UD, Prebensen samling; 41, NAN, RA/UD, G05/10/boks 5213; ASV 1877.

The active construction of a national state in Norway and the fear of the huge multinational Russian Empire, which seemed to the Norwegian authorities and the public to dominate their small country, led to the fact that the insignificant Skolt fisheries on Norwegian territory were seen by Norway as a symbol of the Russian presence.

Until the end of the 1870s, the Finnmark authorities, fearing a new involvement of St. Petersburg in the issue of regulating the fishing territories, turned a blind eye to the fact that the Russian Sami were violating the articles of the 1834 protocol. In the 1880s, the situation changed. The real reason for this was the increase in fishing competition between the Sami and the Norwegian colonists. The Norwegians began to use more progressive fishing methods, and the competition for salmon became unequal. The servitude of 1834 was extremely inconvenient for the inhabitants of Finnmark, and in this sense, the inclusion of the problem of the Lapps fisheries in the context of the doctrine of the Russian threat served as additional argumentation for promoting in Christiania and Stockholm the idea of Sweden-Norway withdrawing from the protocol of 1834 in order to make the Russian-Norwegian border more “hermetic”¹⁴.

In Russia, albeit several decades late, there was also a rethinking of the problem of the Lapps fisheries. At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, Russia gradually began to catch up with Norway in the development of political thought; the ideology of Russian ethnic nationalism began to crystallize on the territory of the empire, gradually penetrating into the Arkhangelsk province [33, Tolz V., pp. 16–17, 174–175; 34, Hosking G., pp. 449–462].

This nationalism was mixed with the former imperial patriotism, and it can be said that the regional intelligentsia and bureaucracy were seized by a kind of imperial nationalism — the idea of cultural and economic consolidation of the Russian North, where a unified ethno-cultural space was considered a necessary factor in ensuring the socio-economic development of the region. In fact, the concept of the “Russian North” appeared and began to be actively used in journalism and scientific historical literature in the 1890s. This generalizing and unifying category replaced the previous perception of the region as a set of separate lands and groups of local populations (Lapps, Pomors, Nenets).

The complex of Russian imperial nationalism was based, among other things, on the concept of “natural borders”, which became widespread in the second half of the 19th century and which made it possible to reconcile the idea of a historical national territory with the policy of expansionism. Many officials and journalists who travelled along the Russian-Norwegian border drew attention to a strange “salient” that did not correspond to the modern “scientific” principle of natural borders. The “artificial nature” of the border in the area from the Church of Boris and Gleb and further southeast to the Vorema River led to the loss of the salmon fishing grounds of

¹⁴ HIA; HI/Russian Missia; Norway/Missia; Sweden/Lapps/box127/11.

the Pazretskie Sami. Thus, more than half a century later, in a completely different intellectual and political climate, the problem of the “Lapps fisheries” became relevant again¹⁵.

A new and larger national mobilization around the problem of the northern borders was supported at the beginning of the 20th century by the regional and metropolitan press, which supported the “Lapps fisheries” in Norway. It was no longer a question of protecting the traditional privileges of the Sami, but of countering the threat of infringement of the “Russians” (who in this case were recognized as the Orthodox Sami). Calling for a revision of the 1826 border, newspapers constantly turned to the image of the “old border”, i.e. the demarcation line proposed in the 1820s by Governor-General Stepan Ivanovich Minitskiy [35, pp. 30–56].

The growth of mutual mistrust and accusations of expansionist plans led to negotiations between Russian and Norwegian diplomats in 1896–1903. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs supported the position of the Arkhangelsk public, which, on the wave of national consolidation and mobilization, formulated a program of revenge for the “territorial concession” of 1826: in fulfillment of the “moral duty to the Lapps”, to register the Skolt salmon fisheries on Norwegian territory as private property, including a ban on fishing in the fisheries for Norwegian subjects¹⁶ [36, Pokhlebin V.V., p. 74]. On the contrary, the Norwegian side, which sought to eliminate the servitudes, tried to test the possibility of a unilateral withdrawal from the 1834 protocol or at least to limit the commercial activities of the Russian Sami as much as possible [12, Andresen A., pp. 80–100].

The negotiations came to nothing. The idea of achieving extraterritoriality not only for their subjects, but also for their commercial hunting grounds on the territory of a neighboring sovereign state did not find understanding on the Norwegian side. Russian diplomats failed to formalize the “frontier” regime in an official treaty, allowing the Pazretskie Skolts to supplement salmon fishing with all the accompanying activities (reindeer and sheep grazing, catching other types of fish), permitted by the Norwegians in 1861.

In 1905, in the midst of the crisis of the union of Norway and Sweden, Russia had an opportunity to change the geopolitical balance of power in Scandinavia that had been established in November 1855. The possible withdrawal of Norway from the union gave an opportunity to weaken the influence of Great Britain on the peninsula.

At that time, the struggle of the Entente and Triple Alliance blocs for the division of spheres of influence in the world was gradually leading to a major war. Russia needed to secure its northern borders from a hypothetical threat that could come from the northern direction. The withdrawal of Norway from the union automatically cancelled the treaty of 1855.

An independent Norway was beneficial to St. Petersburg, but the Stockholm cabinet and Great Britain tried to intimidate Norway with the Russian threat in order to keep it in the union. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, avoiding the isolationist position of other powers regard-

¹⁵ RSIA. F. 1286. Invt 31. Arch 452; Essay, 1895: 36; 42, RSIA. F. 560. Invt 28. Arch 520. — Sh. 1-13; SAAO. F. 4. Invt 16 vol. 1. Arch 988 — Sh. 4–14; 43, AFPRE. F. 155, 1–5. Invt 930. Arch 2. — Sh. 168rev.

¹⁶ HI/Russian Missia; Norway/Missia; Sweden/Lapps/box127/11.

ing the recognition of Norwegian independence, tried to indirectly make it clear to Christiania that Russia was ready to support its independence [36, Pokhlebkina V.V., pp. 12–16]. This was demonstrated during the visit of the Russian cruiser “Bakan” to Norway in the summer of 1905 and during the negotiations on the dissolution of the union of Sweden and Norway in Karlstad in September 1905 [36, Pokhlebkina V.V., p. 6].

On October 11, 1905, the head of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs V.N. Lamsdorf assured the Norwegian Prime Minister Hr. Mikkelsen that Russia would recognize the Norwegian state immediately after ratification of the Karlstad agreements, and already on October 29, Russia was the first in the world to recognize Norwegian independence. Russia’s open gestures, however, did not allay fears that Norway, in search of more significant guarantees of territorial integrity, would try to enter into an alliance with its opponents. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs received information from several channels in London and Stockholm that Great Britain and Sweden were trying to restore the anti-Russian November treaty [36, Pokhlebkina V.V., pp. 48–49].

The central issue in the November treaty was the inviolability of the border, which became the most pressing issue for independent Norway. The reason for uncertainty was the fear that Russia was seeking to seize southern Varanger. In this context, the fishing disputes on the Russian-Norwegian border were a convenient moment for public manipulation, fueled by the Swedish press.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was afraid that the Norwegian government might be influenced by these sentiments. Russia had to get ahead of its rivals, to be the first to announce its guarantees of Norwegian territorial integrity and to assure Norway that there were no special political considerations under the Lapps question. The corresponding note was transmitted by the Russian envoy in Christiania A.N. Krupenskiy to the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs J.G. Løvland on 7/20 December 1905 [36, Pokhlebkina V.V., pp. 61–65]. Confirming Russia’s further peaceful and friendly intentions, the note contained a proposal to conclude a collective agreement to guarantee Norway’s territorial integrity.

The Treaty on the Integrity of Norway (Integrity Treaty or Christiania Convention), concluded in 1907, secured the balance of power in Northern Europe. According to this treaty, the great powers guaranteed Norway’s territorial integrity. Initially, Norway planned to conclude the treaty so that, if necessary, it could unite with Sweden and Denmark to jointly protect neutrality (the first Norwegian king was the Danish prince Carl, under the name Haakon VII). This was disadvantageous to Russia, whose policy in the Scandinavian region was aimed at preventing a pan-Scandinavian union due to fears that it would pursue a pro-German policy. The final version of the treaty suited Russia, since this agreement prevented Norway from getting closer to Sweden and could also prevent English influence on Norway. As a result, the Treaty on the Integration of Norway was signed by Britain, France, Germany and Russia in 1907.

Norwegian historian Jens Petter Nielsen wrote that after gaining independence, the Norwegian attitude towards Russia can be described as “Bjørnsonian”: “It is necessary to show Russia

trust and establish good relations with this country in order to stop its expansionist tendencies” [37, Nielsen J.P., p. 22]. Nevertheless, certain problems in Russian-Norwegian relations of that period were connected with the process of delimitation of maritime borders in the Arctic region. Many Norwegians earned money outside their national borders: this concerned the traditions of fishing, whaling and seal hunting. Therefore, Norway sought to extend its sovereignty to some Arctic island territories, and also took care to protect the borders of its territorial waters. In this area, the clash of interests between Norway and Russia led to conflicts, the resolution of which had an impact on the relations between the two states.

For example, the issue of Novaya Zemlya caused certain disagreements related to the actions of Norwegian fishermen. In 1908, A.N. Krupenskiy, the Russian ambassador to Norway, commented in a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs A.P. Izvolskiy on the situation with the Tromsø skipper society declaring the northern part of Novaya Zemlya a “no one’s land”. He noted that this was done with the aim of “securing the right of Norwegian hunters to hunt on Novaya Zemlya” [38, Komarov A.A., p. 39]. Russia’s position on this issue was unwavering: Krupenskiy called such hunters poachers. Later, Norway recognized that Novaya Zemlya was part of the Russian Empire.

Economic contacts in the North and the inevitable contradictions associated with them also influenced the perception of Russia. In December 1910, an article entitled “The North and its industrial wealth” appeared in *Novoe Vremya*, a socio-political newspaper published in St. Petersburg. The main content of this text can be summarized as follows: Norwegians who were fishing off the coast of Murman were accused of poaching and even of pirate attacks on Pomor ships. This article caused serious indignation in the Norwegian press, and Olaf Brock, who translated it into Norwegian, played a significant role in this process.

As we have already noted, Olaf Brock idealized the Russian people in many ways while criticizing the state. As a professional Slavist, he repeatedly noted that there were very few Russian surnames among Russian politicians. Brock saw hope for the Russian people in the revolution of 1905–1907. However, when the revolutionary movement declined, Brock criticized the return to the “old regime” because it did not solve the problems that had been clearly identified during the revolution. Thus, the publication in *Novoe Vremya* once again convinced Brock that the government of the Russian Empire should be treated with caution.

One can agree with the opinion that these events became the first “diplomatic crisis” [39, Nielsen J.P., pp. 4–17] in bilateral Russian-Norwegian relations. For Olaf Brock, the situation threatened the loss of direct ties with Russia; there is evidence that the Norwegian Foreign Minister Irgens repeatedly discussed this issue with representatives of the Russian mission in Christiania. Ultimately, this incident ended well for Brock, but it testified to the fact that significant contradictions remained in Russian-Norwegian relations at the beginning of the 20th century.

Conclusion

The history of bilateral relations between Russia and Sweden-Norway can be divided into two periods in terms of the dynamics of relations and perceptions of each other: from 1814 to 1855 and from 1855 to 1905.

The period from 1814 to 1855 was mainly spent under the conditions of the so-called “alliance of 1812” or “good-neighborliness policy” between Russia and Sweden-Norway, which was formed as a result of the alliance of Karl Johan and Alexander I against Napoleon. It is not surprising that this period was marked in the history of bilateral relations by several major diplomatic achievements: the delimitation of the Russian-Norwegian border in 1826 and the signing of a new trade agreement with Russia in 1838. At the same time, the good-neighborliness policy in the 1840s gradually began to change towards a policy of mistrust of Russia and a certain fear of it. By the mid-1850s, the image of the “Russian threat” had finally become established as a kind of doctrine for the perception of Russian foreign policy towards Sweden-Norway, which was popular among the liberal elite in Stockholm and Christiania.

Under the influence of this asymmetrical perception of Russia, the issue of cross-border activities of the Finnish Sami in Norway was resolved in the 1840s and 1850s, the results of which became the biggest defeat of Russian diplomacy in the Far North in the first half of the 19th century. However, the final turn towards a policy of containing Russia in the Far North was made in 1855 with the signing of the November treaty between Sweden-Norway on the one hand and Great Britain and France on the other. Thus, the November treaty became a kind of boundary for bilateral relations in the context of perception of the neighborhood of a small national state and a large empire, which had far-reaching consequences.

In the period from 1855 to 1905, the image of the Russian threat becomes one of the factors in building Norway’s internal border policy, as well as one of the factors in shaping the agenda of bilateral relations. At the same time, serious changes were taking place in Russia, despite the restrained attitude of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the November treaty and the anti-Russian sentiments in the capitals of Sweden and Norway. In the 1870s–1880s, the image of a Norwegian threat was gradually spreading among the bureaucracy and intelligentsia of the Arkhangelsk province, and from the 1890s — among the capital officials of the Russian Empire. These two asymmetries of perception were most clearly reflected in the bilateral negotiations on the cross-border fisheries of the Russian Sami in Norway in 1880–1905.

The moral debt to the “Russian Lapps” for the unfair demarcation of 1826 forced the imperial authorities to try to revise the terms of the treaties. The fear of the unjust use of force against a small national neighboring state contributed to the failure of these negotiations. The episode presented is related to a sluggish border conflict and illustrates the difficulties of the asymmetrical neighborhood of a huge empire with a small border state that experiences constant tension from such a neighborhood, but at the same time seeks to assert itself at its expense.

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