Introduction

Historical anniversaries often serve as occasions for reflecting on existing readings of past events and on how perceptions of historical events have changed over time. All over the world, 2017 saw a multitude of conferences, exhibitions, and seminars devoted to the centenary of Russia's February and October revolutions. This testifies to the fact that the Russian Revolution is still considered of global importance, the reverberations of which reach far in space and time, including into our present. In Norway, several conferences were organized in commemoration of the centenary, and this book is the result of one of them. In October, 2017, UiT The Arctic University of Norway hosted an international conference—The Russian Revolutions of 1917: The Northern Impact and Beyond. The aim of this gathering was to explore the events of 1917 with a focus on the northern regions and, in particular, the impact of the revolutions on Russia's neighbor state in the northwestern corner of the empire, Norway. The conference also included contributions that reached beyond the North, opening up for more general discussion about the revolutions of 1917 and their effects in Europe, as well as in Russia. Several contributions explored the reception of the Russian revolutions of 1917 in Scandinavian states and their importance for bilateral relations between various countries.

Geographical notions are relative and their content varies with the vantage point of the subject. In this volume, "the North" refers in some contributions to the Nordic countries, in others to the High North—that is, the northernmost parts of Norway and Russia, including the adjacent border regions of the two states. The northern perspective is significant when it comes to the relation between Norway and Russia, as the two countries share not only a northern border, but also a long history of managing vast northern territories on land and at sea. Norway and Russia both consider themselves northern states, and their geographical location has played a critical role in the history of both

countries.[1] The articles in the present volume demonstrate that commemoration of the centenary of the Russian Revolution would be incomplete without an exploration of this (somewhat overlooked) northern dimension. These articles are presented in a more or less chronological order, charting various aspects of both the short- and long-term influence of the Russian Revolution within Russia, beyond its borders, and in the North as a whole.

Part one of the volume opens with the article by Vladislav I. Goldin of the Northern (Arctic) Federal University, Arkhangelsk. In "The Russian Revolution and Civil War in the North: Contemporary Approaches and Understanding," Goldin argues that the civil war in the north—as in Russia at large—can be characterized as a national and international phenomenon which included many political, class, social, economic, social-cultural, cultural, ethnic-national, and other conflicts, clashes, and contradictions. The Allied intervention in northern Russia started in early 1918, and lasted until the end of 1919. The Allies helped anti-Bolshevik forces seize power in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk, and initiated the main fighting against the Soviet forces. Goldin makes it clear that the withdrawal of the Allies led to the failure of the White cause in the Russian North, and that the question of Allied responsibility for the civil war in northern Russia is one of the most important in historiography. The Supreme Administration of the Northern Region could not solve the main questions which were put on the agenda: those concerning labor, peasant-agrarian issues, and the national question, etc. The administration was fully dependent on support from abroad. The Bolsheviks managed to capitalize on the Supreme Administration's problems, and skillfully carried out their propaganda offensive, accusing their opponents of unpatriotic, anti-Russian feelings and actions.

The next contribution, "The Russian Revolution in Sweden: Some Genetic and Genealogical Perspectives," is by Klas-Göran Karlsson (University of Lund, Sweden). Karlsson focuses on how Sweden influenced the Russian revolutionaries and on how the Russian Revolution, in its turn, made a lasting impression on Swedish society, politics, and culture. Conservatives—most of whom sympathized with Russia's world war enemy, Germany—completely repudiated the political changes that took place in Petrograd in March and November, 1917, and often depicted them as two stages on a downhill slide toward the decomposition of Russian society. Meanwhile, broader liberal and social democratic groups in Sweden welcomed the fall of the Romanov dynasty

1 Cf. K. A. Myklebost, J. P. Nielsen, V. V. Tevlina, A. A. Komarov (eds), *Net Severa, a est' severa: The Manifold Ideas of the North in Norway and Russia*. Moscow: URSS/LENAND, 2016.

and saw the rise to power of the Provisional Government in March, 1917, as a promising development that could promote stabilization, freedom, and democracy in Russia, and—indirectly—at home. However, when Petrograd became even more radicalized in 1917, these same liberal and social democratic groups saw a growing threat and dissociated themselves from Russia's social and political transformation. Russia in 1917 has often been used politically in Sweden as a menacing event, and constructed as bound up with events at home that resemble the revolution and the rise of the Bolsheviks.

Aspects of the immediate reception of the Russian revolutions of 1917 in Norway have been studied by Kari Aga Myklebost (UiT The Arctic University of Norway) in her article "The Idea of a Liberal Russia: The Russian Revolutions of 1917 and the Norwegian Slavist Olaf Broch." Olaf Broch was a leading expert on Russia in Norway, and wrote on a regular basis for the conservative newspaper *Aftenposten* about Russian politics and society. The political liberalization in the aftermath of the 1905 Russian Revolution, with the establishment of legal political parties and the Duma, was greeted with enthusiasm by Broch. He believed this to be the start of a new era for Russia, bringing her closer to the modern states of Western Europe, in general, and neighboring Norway, in particular. With the February Revolution of 1917, these expectations were reinforced. Broch reported in *Aftenposten* on the development of the situation in Petrograd, openly supporting the political strategy of the foreign minister of the Provisional Government, Pavel Miliukov. However, he was greatly disturbed by Lenin's rhetoric and the growing popular unrest during the summer and early autumn of 1917. He received the news of the seizure of power by the Bolsheviks in October with astonishment and disgust, and shared the opinion of Western Europe's establishment that the Bolsheviks were merely a temporary phenomenon. Through his widely read articles, Broch played a part in shaping the perception of the February Revolution as bloodless, glorious, and politically legitimate.

The socioeconomic aspects of the bilateral relationship between northern Norway and Arkhangelsk province during the revolutionary period are investigated by Tatiana Troshina and Ekaterina Kotlova—both of Northern (Arctic) Federal University, Arkhangelsk—in their article "Arkhangelsk Province and Northern Norway in 1917–1920: Foreign Property and Capital after the October Revolution of 1917." The Arkhangelsk Bolsheviks nationalized the property of foreigners, among whom Norwegians were prominent. However, when the Whites came to power in Arkhangelsk they refused to pay any compensation. The Whites claimed that it was the obligation of the Bolsheviks

and that, since they had lost power, no money would be forthcoming. The situation with foreign trade became further complicated when combined with financial and currency issues. Nothing was decided in a proper manner and the reputation of foreigners plummeted among locals. Foreign ownership existed for as long as it was necessary for the Soviet state to resolve its financial problems with minimal cost. The economic difficulties of the 1920s forced the Bolsheviks to issue special decrees to allow concessions, mixed companies, and foreign shares in enterprises. In Arkhangelsk province, these concessions mostly applied to the forestry sector.

Victoria V. Tevlina of UiT The Arctic University of Norway and of the Northern (Arctic) Federal University, Arkhangelsk, considers specific aspects of "Russian Emigration to Norway after the Russian Revolution and Civil War," while also reflecting on Russian migration to Scandinavia and the Russian diaspora in general. Migrants consisted of officers and government officials from the White northern government during the civil war, who had to flee when the Bolsheviks conquered Arkhangelsk; fishermen and peasant traders, who had had close links with northern Norway from before 1917; and Norwegians who had settled in Russia. The postrevolutionary wave of Russian emigration is undoubtedly a peculiar chapter in the history of Russo-Norwegian relations, despite its modest size.

Åsmund Egge (University of Oslo, Norway) analyses "Soviet Diplomacy in Norway and Sweden in the Interwar Years," focusing specifically on the role of Alexandra Kollontai. Kollontai was head of the Soviet diplomatic representation, first in Norway (1923–30, except for 1926–27 when she was in Mexico) and then Sweden (1930–1945), and an important figure for bilateral relations between the aforementioned states. Among her achievements were Norway's de jure recognition of the Bolshevik government and the establishment of trade agreements between the two countries. Egge's article looks at the dualistic nature of Soviet diplomacy—on the one hand, its wish to foment world revolution and, and on the other, its need to establish and consolidate normal diplomatic relations. Against this backdrop, Egge discusses the degree to which Kollontai affected relations between states. The article concludes that Kollontai was an outstanding diplomat, who gained respect and admiration as both a professional and an individual.

Ole Martin Rønning (The Norwegian Labor Movement Archives and Library, Oslo) is the author of "Apprentices of the World Revolution: Norwegian Communists at the Communist University of the National Minorities of the West (KUNMZ) and the International Lenin School, 1926–1937." Rønning examines

Norwegian participation at educational institutions for foreign communists in the Soviet Union during the interwar years, known as the international cadre schools. The objective of these schools was to strengthen the international communist movement and secure Soviet leadership. The article describes the formation and development of the cadre schools, and how the schools molded the political ideals and identity of its students. The cadre schools are seen through the lens of Scandinavian and especially Norwegian participation. The article also includes a section discussing the influence of former cadre school students within the Norwegian Communist Party up until the late 1960s. The article concludes that the cadre schools did play a role in establishing and maintaining a communist movement in Norway that was loyal to the Soviet Union.

Hallvard Tjelmeland (UiT The Arctic University of Norway) examines "The Impact of the October Revolution on the North-Norwegian Labor Movement"—that is, the counties of Nordland, Troms, and Finnmark. The scholar identifies pockets of left-wing radicalism and pro-Soviet/Russian sympathy throughout the region—for instance, in Southern Varanger in eastern Finnmark, in Hammerfest in western Finnmark, in Tromsø and Harstad in Troms county, and in mining communities, such as Salangen in Troms, and Sulitjelma, and Rana in Nordland. Pro-revolutionary, or revolution-inspired, sentiments manifested themselves, for example, in journalism, industrial actions, and a high proportion of voting for the political left, from the late 1910s to the present (with periodical variations in intensity and geographical spread).

Opening part two, Andrei Rogatchevski of UiT The Arctic University of Norway directs the volume's focus away from northern Norway to the Urals, and from revolutionary practices and feelings to the representation of the Russian Revolution on the big screen. His "Avant-garde Artists vs. Reindeer Herders: The Kazym Rebellion in Aleksei Fedorchenko's *Angels of the Revolution* (2014)" analyzes a memorable, heavily fictionalized, and mythologized art house film about the early 1930s Kazym rebellion of the Khanty and Nentsy against the Soviet policy of collectivization. Rogatchevski explains why such a mythologization is necessary, as opposed to a straightforward documentary about a little known but significant episode in the anti-communist struggle of indigenous people in Siberia.

The Russian Revolution led to mass emigration. In her article "1917: The Evolution of Russian Émigré Views to the Revolution," Catherine Andreyev (University of Oxford) summarizes various émigré attitudes to the revolution, from the *Vekhi* collection (edited in 1909 by Mikhail Gershenzon) to Mensheviks, and from Eurasianists and Solidarists to the Peasant Russia and

Changing Signposts movements. Having emigrated, major participants in the upheavals of 1917 tended to concentrate on the events of that year and often sought to justify their own actions, as well as criticize the actions of their opponents. Further, new émigré groups arose, which found arguments about what happened in 1917 inadequate and wanted to add new elements to the debate. Despite the diversity of opinion among émigrés concerning how they should relate to the USSR, and about what they valued within Russian culture, a fundamental continuity can be observed between prerevolutionary ideas and those which arose after emigration. Andreyev concludes that while it is still too early for us, perhaps, to judge the full meaning of the revolution, it was a central concern of those who had to leave Russia after 1917.

The article by Ekaterina Rogatchevskaia (The British Library) "Russian Revolutions Exhibited: Behind the Scenes" shares the author's thoughts on the 2017 exhibition *Russian Revolution: Hope, Tragedy, Myth* at the British Library, of which she was a lead curator. The exhibition was shown in commemoration of the centennial of the Russian revolutions, aimed at a broad and for the most part British audience, and drew most of its material from the British Library's collections. One of the ambitions of the exhibition was to contribute to the broader historiographical trend of viewing the Russian revolutions as part of a longer chronology that includes both the First World War and the Russian Civil War. Rogatchevskaia explains the curatorial decisions that were made, in terms of both the objects chosen for the exhibition and the aesthetic reasons behind their placement. The article also discusses responses from visitors and reviewers, and puts the exhibition into the wider context of similar projects commemorating the Russian Revolution.

Jens Petter Nielsen of UiT The Arctic University of Norway concludes the volume with "The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the Kremlin's Policy of Remembrance." His research question is: what kind of remembrance policy underlies the Kremlin leadership's management of the history of the Russian Revolution? It is not difficult to understand that after the breakdown of the Soviet Union the new, post-Soviet leadership in Russia needed a reinterpretation of the Russian Revolution. In the wake of the total rejection of historical materialism, it had to find a way to connect the country's past with the present. Putin wants to locate his new regime within the tradition of Russia as a great power, and underline the benevolent part played by the state in Russian history. Putin's problem, however, is that the Russian Revolution, which devastated the tsarist state and the Russian Empire, does not fit into this picture of historical continuity. At the end

of his article, nevertheless, Nielsen suggests that the October Revolution could have still been included in Putin's metanarrative of Russia's history, without weakening the continuity of the great power tradition.

The choice and treatment of the subjects outlined above make it clear that a hundred years after the Russian Revolution there are still new things to say about it. We hope this volume will encourage further studies of the topic.

Kari Aga Myklebost, Jens Petter Nielsen,
Andrei Rogatchevski