Arkhangelsk Province and Northern Norway in 1917–1920: Foreign Property and Capital after the October Revolution of 1917

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In the large body of work on Russian-Norwegian relations in the North, much has been written about border issues between the two countries, Russian settlements in eastern Finnmark, northern fisheries, the Pomor trade, and numerous other topics. Contact between Russia and Norway, and between northern Russia and northern Norway, has always been of interest to historians in both countries. Nevertheless, some issues have still not been sufficiently studied, or studied from only one perspective. Such issues include events related to the Russian Revolution of 1917.

The revolutionary period in Russia led to considerable changes in Norwegian-Russian relations. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were cut off between 1917 and 1924. Some Norwegians stayed in the Russian North after 1917. Many of them worked for Norwegian or international business in the area and did not leave until the situation became critical for them and their families. In this article, we present some sources that highlight the story of Norwegians and citizens of other northern countries in Arkhangelsk province, and the situation with their property after 1917. The data is obtained from documents contained in archives in Arkhangelsk and Moscow.

The aim of the study is to reconstruct the life of foreigners in the Russian North during the revolutionary and postrevolutionary period through the prism of the political, economic, and cultural transformations that took place

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in 1917–1920. We give priority to the fate of foreign property in the Russian North. This subject was chosen because of its potential to add to our understanding of the changes that occurred in postrevolutionary Russia and, at the same time, to enable easier tracking of the fate of foreign owners in northern Russia. The property issue was one of crucial importance in Communist Party ideology. At that time, the nationalization of resources and of the means of production led to the creation of new social relations and culture.

The years 1917–1920 are in focus in the present article because this was the period that saw the switch in power and the introduction of new legislation. The revolution of October 1917 triggered the changes. The revolution was followed by the civil war and the Western intervention which became a true battle for power in the country. In the end, the Bolsheviks prevailed. By the beginning of the 1920s, the territory of Arkhangelsk province had become "Red" and a new social, economic, and political order had been established, as well as a new culture.

Having crushed the old regime and social relations, the new authorities understood the importance of money for the survival of their authority and the new Soviet Russia. Nationalization and war communism helped significantly, but not enough to maintain power and rebuild the country. The issue of foreign property and foreign capital was of great importance, and caused an ideological paradox. On the one hand, communist ideology required nationalization of all foreign property; but on the other, foreign money was needed because of the difficult financial situation and inability of the economy to function on new, communist principles.

THE BACKGROUND

The proximity of Russians and Norwegians in the North had long led to close cultural and economic contact, and quite a few intermarriages. People of both countries had a great deal in common, despite religious and political differences. There are many examples of mutual assistance and conflict, but Russian-Norwegian diplomatic relations were benevolent by the beginning of the twentieth century. At the same time, tensions occurred in daily life over trade, fishing, and matters concerning colonization.[1] One more interesting

1 See K. Zaikov and A. Tamitskii, "Lapp Crafts in the History of the Russian–Norwegian Borderland in 1855–1900," *Bylye Gody* 45, no. 3 (2017), 915–927; and K. Zaikov and T. Troshina, "Local Society between Empire and Nation-State: The Russian–Norwegian Borderland in the Context of Bilateral International Relations in the Far North, 1855–1905." *Ab Imperio* 4 (2017): 140–145.

phenomenon existed at the time: poor people from neighboring Norwegian areas were hired by Russian Pomors. In the eighteenth century, Russian Pomors "handed over" their workers (Finns, Swedes, and Norwegians) as recruits to the Russian Army, instead of their own sons. Thus, Russian military commanders observed that

> the Arkhangelsk recruitment office sent people "who are native Swedes" to the army; they entered the service "through various deceits of our border peasants" in the Kem region … ; they were turned into recruits for their sons under Russian names, inasmuch as it was forbidden to accept foreigners to the Russian army since 1798.[2]

In time, peasants from Scandinavian countries began to establish themselves on the Kola Peninsula. Often, they were more prosperous than the locals. Perhaps this can be explained by their belonging to a different culture with its attendant attitudes to work—Scandinavian people were mostly protestant, after all—or it could be that they were able get more from the land and could seize the best territory.

A "them and us" dichotomy is clear when we analyze the contact between the local and the foreign populations. Three elements are important in this connection. The first has to do with ethnicity (whether a person was native or not native, Russian or foreign); the second, the country of origin (whether a person was from Russia, from a particular area of the country, or from a foreign country); the third element relates to the social and economic status of a person. All these issues were combined with negative stereotypes that existed for political reasons (for example, views of the Russian Empire and its citizens),[3] because of social and economic factors, or due to good or bad interactions with the "other." This probably explains why mutual deception in relation to the "other" was not considered shameful.

All in all, it is possible to say that the background of the issue is informed by three factors. The first is the history of Russian-Norwegian relations—the entwinement of peaceful and friendly interaction with conflicts primarily on personal grounds. The second factor is the October Revolution, which made the conflicts in Russian-Norwegian relations more visible due to the political

2 Russian State Military-Historical Archive (RGVA), F. 1, Op. 1, v. 1, D. 1647, L. 1–9.

3 See Jens P. Nielsen and Kari A. Myklebost, "Russlands rolle i det norske nasjonale prosjektet 1814–1855," in *Russland kommer nærmere. Norge og Russland 1814–1917*, ed. Jens P. Nielsen (Oslo: Pax Forlag 2014), 110–123.

divisions between the two countries, and which had significant consequences for ordinary people. The third important factor is the perception of the "other" in both countries and its transformation over time. We will now focus more on the Russian view of this situation by examining Russian sources and materials.

BREAKING THE BALANCE

The 1917 Revolution broke the relative balance of Norwegian-Russian relations. It was a revolt against modernization. The state, its power, and its institutions were perceived as *destructive* "modernizers." This differentiates the Russian Revolution from other European revolutions, which were rebellions against archaic forms of social, political, and economic structures, and were directed towards modernization.

While the revolution destroyed old and repressive archaic principles of the state, old conflicts resumed. According to archival materials, at the end of 1917 and in 1918, the number of conflicts between Pomors and the "colonists" increased (the documents have no information about who these "colonists" were; probably they were more prosperous neighbors or foreigners). The revolution made it possible to give an ideological form to these conflicts and to justify them, as if it was a struggle of the "poor" against the "rich."

In 1917, land committees (committees on the resolution of questions on the possession and use of land) seized privately owned land, as well as fishing grounds, and other privately owned property. The temporary abolition of Soviet power in northern Russia in 1918–1920 did not improve the situation, as people did not want to return the land.[4]

At the same time, the new government in Russia had to be cautious with foreign property, because of the need to attract foreign capital to prevent the complete collapse of the economy. The need for foreign capital made itself felt immediately after the Bolsheviks gained power, and foreign companies were not the first to be nationalized. In Arkhangelsk province, nationalization happened after 1920, when the Bolsheviks expelled the "Whites" and interventionists from the area.

Foreign investments appeared in the national economy after the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars on the general economic and legal conditions of concessions on November 23, 1920. Foreign capital in Russia had three forms: pure concessions; mixed companies; and foreign shares in

4 The State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), F. 5236, No. 1, D. 23, L. 8.

Soviet enterprises. The most common were the first two. The second form was dominant in the north and existed in the timber industry there. Joint stock companies were organized, where the state owned a certain part.

One of the most famous private Norwegian companies in Arkhangelsk province was Prytz & Co., owned by Frederik Prytz in 1913. Many rich and famous people were among its stockholders, such as the polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen.[5] A Swedish timber factory owned by Alfred Lidbeck had existed on Pechora River since 1901. It was bought by the Norwegian Martin Olsen, who established a factory called Stella Polare. All these factories had a significant impact on the economy of Arkhangelsk province. Their owners had important positions in local governing bodies or worked as consuls for their countries (for example, F. Prytz),[6] and played an important role in establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet government after 1920.[7]

The period between 1917 and 1920 was a time of turmoil. The Bolsheviks were replaced by the Whites in 1918 and then returned to power in 1920. The balance was broken and the future seemed to be unclear. In 1917–1920, Arkhangelsk province was the only region in the European part of Russia that shared a border with a neutral state—Norway. Not only were enterprises owned by citizens of neutral states located there, Arkhangelsk province also had an indigenous population, Murman colonists, and foreign entrepreneurs who had lived and worked in Arkhangelsk province for many years and had Russian citizenship.

Although after the 1920s the new authorities knew what to do with the locals and their property (that is, Russians, indigenous peoples, and other representatives of the peoples of the former Russian Empire), they did not know what to do with foreign property and its owners. Some of them had acquired Russian citizenship—they had lived in the North of Russia for generations and considered themselves Russians or at least Russian citizens. Economic difficulties made the Soviet government issue special decrees and allow concessions, mixed companies, or foreign shares in enterprises. In northern Russia, these

5 E. P. Bozhko, *Potomki "anglitskikh i sveiskikh nemtsev" na russkom Severe*, accessed 18 January 2018, http://paetz.ru/?page_id=4973.

6 A. V. Repnevskii, *Norvezhskii diplomat Frederik Priutz v revolutsionnom Petrograde 1918 goda* (St. Petersburg, 1999), accessed 18 January 2018, https://voencomuezd.livejournal.com/1382932.html.

7 See V. V. Tevlina, "Deiatelnost' norvezhskikh lesopromyshlennikov v Severnoi Rossii i Sibiri v 1890–1920-e gody," in *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia na Evropeiskom severe i v Arktike v pervoi chetverti 20 veka*, ed. V. Goldin and T. Troshina (Arkhangelsk: SAFU, 2015), 218–229.

concessions were applied most actively to the forestry sector. The next part of this essay explains how this happened.

THE 1917 REVOLUTION: FOREIGN CAPITAL AND PROPERTY IN THE RUSSIAN NORTH

How did foreigners manage during the October Revolution of 1917? What happened to foreign capital in Arkhangelsk province in 1917 and in the first months of 1918? These questions are of tantamount importance for our study.

Foreigners in the territory of Arkhangelsk province were mostly timber merchants and fishermen. At the beginning of the First World War, the sawmills stopped, and many foreign businessmen left the timber market. At the end of 1917, conflicts were caused by the nationalization of factories and vehicles. Foreign entrepreneurs fought for their property. They referred to the fact that they were foreign citizens and argued that revolutionary laws did not apply to them.

In conditions of legal anarchy, this was not always the case. It should also be considered that in 1917, after the introduction of an eight-hour working day, an increase in wages, problems with raw materials, and raised taxes, many entrepreneurs were ready to declare a lockout. For them, nationalization with compensation was the best way out.

It is interesting that after the liquidation of Soviet power in Arkhangelsk province in August 1918 by the Whites, many foreign entrepreneurs tried to regain the property that had been nationalized in 1917. These attempts came up against the refusals of the government of the northern region to pay compensation. The government referred to the fact that nationalization had been carried out by a previous government—the Bolsheviks. The result was Norwegians raiding parties that sought to take back property (if it had been seized in remote areas, far from cities and close to the border). Below is the October 1919 response to a request from the head of the Aleksandrovsky district:

> Armed detachments of Norwegians come here, dismantle small houses, take them out to motorboats and take them to their home, to Norway. Confidence in impunity has reached the point that the Norwegians attempted to take the iron barge belonging to the naval department from Vaida-Guba, for which purpose they brought new jacks and other tools from Norway.[8]

8 State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), F. 17 (Provisional Government of Northern Russia), Op. 1, D. 12, L. 128 (Response to the request to the Head of Murmansk Region from the Head of Aleksandrovsk District, October 1919).

Before nationalization, entrepreneurs were ready to announce lockouts at their factories because they lacked raw materials. In the first months of the revolution, peasants from the southern districts of Arkhangelsk and Vologda provinces prevented the cutting of timber—the raw material for sawmills. They wanted to receive compensation for cutting wood as long as they believed that the wood belonged to them. A new law allowed peasants to introduce additional taxes for entrepreneurs. It was assumed that the funds would be used for the social good of the village, such as the maintenance of schools and medical institutions.

But peasants often abused this right and caused problems for representatives of the new government. Peasants came up with a range of explanations to protect their interests. For instance, if the owner of the company or purchasing agent had a "foreign surname" or foreign citizenship, peasants justified their actions as a fear that the wood would end up with an enemy of the state. In correspondence between the commissar of the Provisional Government for the Kargopol region (*uiezd*) and the district (*volost'*) administration, the village governor writes:

> The timberman has prepared the wood and now rafts it to Onega. The population of Kenozero volost' have their doubts as to where this timber will go from Onega, as Wager is of non-Russian origin." The Commissar answers: " … you cannot obstruct Wager. Wager is a Swedish subject."[9]

The failure to harvest logs and a sharp increase in the price of wood was not the only cause of the crisis in the sawmill industry. In 1917, no contracts were concluded for the export of timber and sawn timber for the following year. The reason was that after the Bolsheviks had taken over national government, all commercial banks closed. Narodnyi Bank refused to engage in export operations because it had no foreign agents who could take care of the sale. In 1918, England stopped buying wood from Russia and started purchasing it in Norway at a cheaper price (in 1917, the "standard" cost was twenty-three pounds and in 1918 eighteen pounds).[10] In the 1920s, Russia returned to foreign markets with great difficulty by dropping its wood prices and using forced labor in logging.

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9 State Archive of Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), F. 1988, Op. 1, D. 41, L. 99. Andreas Wager was a Norwegian-Russian sawmill entrepreneur, active in Northern Russia in the beginning of the twentieth century.

10 Ibid., F. 177 (SNX), Op. 2, D. 3 (Forestry Section. April–June 1918), L. 7.

Another issue concerning relations between the populations of northern Russia and Norway was fish trade (or the exchange of Norwegian fish for Russian grain or flour). During the First World War, Russia had lost the Norwegian market. Archival documents show that Norway had no need for goods brought from Russia, especially grain: fish was sold to the Germans and all necessary goods were imported from the overseas colonies of England and the US.

What was the reason for this? Why did northern Russians stop trading with Norway during the war? One reason is that shipping was dangerous. Vessels were destroyed by mines and there were cases of seizure of merchant ships by German submarines. Gradually, the Pomors became accustomed to these dangers, and during the navigation season in 1915, approximately 150 Pomor ships sailed to Norway for fish. In 1916, the supply of Norwegian fish was reduced because part of the Pomor fleet and some of the shipowners and sailors were drafted into the Russian Army.

In addition, Pomors began to let their vessels as housing to workers who built the railway and port facilities. In these desolate places it was difficult to find housing for many workers. Therefore, even the holds of steamers and Pomor sailing vessels were used. Many Pomors aspired to get a job doing construction work, which was better paid. It was more profitable than sailing to Norway. Furthermore, Norwegian seafarers preferred to transport more cargo with a higher freight rate to and from Arkhangelsk—for construction works, for example.

During the war, a ban was imposed on the export of grain from Russia. Later, fixed prices for food were introduced. As a result, Pomor people had nothing to offer the Norwegians in exchange for fish. The Pomors were forced to take out loans to buy fish. Under war conditions, however, inflation began to develop. The ruble became cheaper and the Pomors sold Norwegian fish at a loss. Many Pomors could not pay their debts and lost their mortgaged ships.

At this period, Russian rubles were transported to Norway on ships. Norwegians raised the price for fish, not always realizing that Russian money was losing its purchasing power in Russia. The money of the Russian Empire was annulled by the Soviet government. Norwegian companies that traded with Pomors in Russian money were in a difficult situation.

At the end of 1917, a Norwegian cargo ship belonging to the Ob Company was on its way to Petrograd via Arkhangelsk. The revolutionary authorities in Arkhangelsk confiscated all these goods for their region after receiving formal permission from the central government. In November 1918, when a White

government had taken over in Arkhangelsk, the Norwegian legation applied for compensation to the Soviet government. A joint commission was set up. It was chaired by I. Epstein, an attorney of the Norwegian legation. The total amount of the confiscated property was estimated at seven million Norwegian kroner. It turned out that there was no Norwegian currency in the Commissariat of Finance. After approvals in December 1918, Norwegians received the equivalent of this amount—20.4 million rubles. But extremely high inflation made this sum insignificant.[11]

By the end of 1917, the difficult food situation forced Russia to abolish a number of bans on the export of goods from the country. However, it now became clear that the Norwegian market had already been lost. The place of Russian goods was taken by goods from the British and American colonies. The situation changed after the Germans introduced unrestricted submarine warfare. Cargoes from the colonies were difficult to deliver. In Russia, there was a need for fish, but there was neither currency nor the necessary goods for barter trade.

In postrevolutionary Russia there was no control over the goods delivered to the markets. The "Norwegian program for the Pomor trade in 1919" makes it clear that the Norwegian side was very unhappy with the quality of products delivered from Russia—dairy products and flax. Norwegians refused to buy the traditional goods of tar, turpentine, and so forth, because the uncontrolled trade of previous years had eliminated the need for them completely.[12] The same document noted that Pomors would be allowed to export fish from Norway only if it would be beneficial for Norwegians. It is necessary to understand what was meant by the benefits from goods provided from Russia. Norway was interested in food, which was completely lacking in Russia itself.

The Norwegian government created favorable conditions for Pomors. They could buy fish in Norway and sell their products (flax, hemp, and pitch) at a fixed price. As a result, the needs of Norwegians for Russian goods were completely satisfied. This created new difficulties in the purchase of fish. The White government admitted that there were no goods for exchange, and the rate of Russian money fell after its annulment by the Soviet government (in 1919, one Norwegian krone cost four rubles and one pound was

11 Russian State Archive of Economics (RGAE), F. 7733, Op. 1, D. 7927, L. 1–5.

12 State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), F. 3090 (Department of Trade and Industry of the Provisional Government of Northern Russia), Op. 1, D.169 (Organization of Pomor trade in 1919), L. 1.

worth sixty-five rubles).[13] Most of the banknotes were circulated only abroad. The "Northern rubles" issued by the Bank of England could be used for foreign trade operations, but only under the strict control of the British.[14] The government of northern Russia had already allocated currency (krone) for these purposes. There were cases when, having received a loan in foreign currency, merchants left Russia and did not return.

The years 1917–1918 saw many policy changes. By the time of the revolutionary events of 1917, foreign companies in Arkhangelsk province were ready to close down. The Bolshevik nationalization was not as bad for them as the option of losing everything for other reasons. Foreign owners, mostly Norwegians, tried to gain compensation for their nationalized property. The situation was as follows: property was considered nationalized, but the issue of compensation was an open one. At this point, the political environment changed again: the Bolsheviks were replaced by the Whites, who established their own government and spread their authority over Arkhangelsk province. There was, then, no money and no chance to save the situation. The forestry industry was in confusion. Where should it go? What should it do? Foreign trade was also complicated on account of the political uncertainty in Russia, currency problems, and the poor quality of goods. The decisions taken on these issues by the Whites also opened new opportunities for fraudulent activity. Nothing was decided in a proper manner, therefore.

THE BOLSHEVIKS RETURN: FOREIGN PROPERTY AND CAPITAL IN ARKHANGELSK PROVINCE BY THE 1920s

In a short period of time, in the years 1917–1920, several governments replaced each other in Arkhangelsk province, and both foreign policy and property laws changed several times. The Bolsheviks, who were back in power in the area, gave Arkhangelsk the task of procuring fish in Norway on a grand scale—that is, for the whole country.[15] The Soviet authorities successfully used the trade with Norway and attracted private capital for this. At that time, the export of food was prohibited in Norway, but it was possible to exchange

13 Ibid., F. 3090 (Department of Trade and Industry of the Provisional Government of Northern Russia), Op. 1, D. 169 (Organization of Pomor trade in 1919), L. 10.

14 Ibid., F. 17 (Foreign Affairs Department of the Provisional Government of Northern Russia), Op. 1, D. 11 (Correspondence with the White Guard embassies abroad, August 1918 to May 1919), L. 5–7.

15 State Archive of Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), F. 177 (SNKh), Op. 2, D. 3 (Forestry Section. April–June 1918), L. 7.

it for goods such as pitch, resin, and wood. Arrangements were overseen by the Danishevskii[16] export firm on behalf of the Soviet government. The businessman Epimakh Moguchii, under the mandate of the Arkhangelsk Province Executive Committee, traveled to Norway to negotiate all the exchange operations. As a fish procurement agent in Norway, he was released from the labor mobilization imposed on the bourgeoisie after the Revolution.[17]

The restoration of Soviet authority in Arkhangelsk province was accompanied by the transfer of part of the territory (Pechenga) to Finland in accordance with the Peace of Riga treaty. Finland offered no objection to Russia's trade with Norway. Nevertheless, this significantly complicated trade links across the land border.[18]

The interventionists left Arkhangelsk in the summer of 1919 and the "Whites" in February 1920. Individuals who could prove their foreign citizenship or "opted" citizenship (that is, citizenship of the states that had emerged after the destruction of the Russian Empire) could also leave Russia. Most of these people were owners of trade companies and factories that had been immediately nationalized by the Soviet authorities.

The natural desire of these people to regain their property created an impression among the public of Arkhangelsk province that foreigners intended to steal Russian land. The provincial authorities had no opportunity to control the border with Norway during the civil war. One document reported that some "unreliable" Norwegians, united in armed groups, exported

> food supplies … systematically plundered timber from the coast and coal from the island of Kildin, carried out fishing and sea mammal hunting in our waters… . With the onset of winter and the establishment of the sledge routes, they slaughtered reindeer and exported reindeer meat.[19]

In 1917–1918, the people of Arkhangelsk province gossiped about Norway's possible intention to take advantage of Russia's troubles and declare its jurisdiction over the islands of the Arctic Ocean and some other uninhabited

16 Ibid.

17 It is interesting that both Danishevskii and Moguchii themselves suffered from events relating to the Revolution. Later, their property was subjected to nationalization or—more accurately—plunder by local peasants. The provincial government was powerless to help them.

18 State Archive of Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), F. 352, Op. 1, D. 186.

19 State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), F. 17 (Provisional Government of the Northern Russia), Op. 1, D. 12, L. 128 (Response to the request from the Head of Aleksandrovsky District to the Head of Murmansk Region, October 1919).

territories. Similar suspicions fell on the expeditionary activity of Norwegian polar explorers.[20] The public's distrust also undermined the offer—made by Soviet government since 1919—of northern forests and fisheries to foreign concessions.

The lack of a fleet to protect waters in the northern seas helped to expand illegal fishing and hunting by Norwegian fishermen. In the spring of 1921, three fishing vessels were arrested. The captains were fined, but they insisted on their right to fish and did not agree with the decision of the court. Those arrested were released without a fine, but the catch was confiscated.[21]

The north of Russia still needed food, and it could only be obtained from neutral Norway. Immediately after the end of the civil war in northern Russia in the winter of 1920, the Arkhangelsk authorities informed all the foreign trade partners of the Whites that "the coup had been peaceful." These trade partners calmed down and began to send food purchased by the former authorities.[22] A telegram about the establishment of trade relations with the new government in Arkhangelsk province came from Norway. In February 1920, the Arkhangelsk provincial government decided to organize a "foreign trade department" and a special "economic commission" responsible for relations with foreign countries.[23]

Despite the existing monopoly for foreign trade in Soviet Russia, the initiative by the Arkhangelsk authorities received support. In Arkhangelsk, a branch of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Trade was established to trade the goods produced in several northern provinces of European and Asian Russia (Arkhangelsk, Severo-Dvinskaia, Vologda, Viatka, Perm, Ekaterinburg, Tiumen, and Murmansk).[24]

Foreign trade in this turbulent time had many risks. In the spring of 1920, a steamer with coal was detained in Tromsø at the request of its former owner, who had emigrated there. In response, the co-owners, Beliaevskii and Olsen, were taken into custody in Arkhangelsk, until "the coal was delivered to Arkhangelsk under the contract."[25] In 1921, timber sent to Holland was seized.

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20 See T. I. Troshina, "'Za Edinuiu i Nedelimuiu': Usiliia gosudarstvennykh i obshchestvennykh institutov Severnoi Oblasti po protivodeistviiu territorial'nomu razdrobleniiu i ekonomicheskoi zavisimosti Arkhangel'skoi gubernii," in Goldin and Troshina, *Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia na Evropeiskom Severe*, 229–244.

21 State Archive of Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), F. 352, Op. 1, D. 294, L. 46, 350–360.

22 State Archive of Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), F. 353, Op. 1, D. 4, L. 1, 2.

23 Ibid.

24 *Otchet Arkhangel'skogo gubernskogo ekonomicheskogo soveta Sovnarkomu i Sovetu Truda i Oborony (za period s 1 aprelia po 1 oktiabria 1922 g.)* (Arkhangelsk, 1923), 86.

25 State Archive of Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), F. r-353, Op. 1, D. 35, L. 17.

The owners, Alcius and Stewart, were informed by an official from Severoles about the redirection of their timber cargo. The new buyer helped to resolve the problem with the seized wood.[26] In summer 1921, the local authorities tried to solve the food problem:

> The Arkhangelsk provincial committee [*Arkhgubkom*] decided to send a trade delegation to Norway to sell the wood (which remained from the former owners in considerable quantities) and buy fish. The delegation consisted of three people. There was no visa, no suitable vessel. There was a boat for catching smugglers, but no one dared to sign on to it as a captain. The navigator agreed to take us to Vardø. But, as it turned out, he did not know the way and was not good at orienting himself at sea. A storm began.[27]

They reached Vardø with great difficulty. An "exchange of goods" began: the logs were thrown from the Russian boat, and in turn they received cod.[28]

The delegation then negotiated with the local administration and, as a result, gained a barter agreement. The provincial government began to exchange grain for other goods it needed. However, Nikolai Kulakov, the chairman of the Province Executive Committee, had to stand trial for such an amateur performance.[29] In the 1920s, punishments for economic crimes were not strict, and Kulakov soon returned to his former place of work.

The risky actions of the Bolshevik provincial authorities caused a food crisis. Thus, Commissar Yauronzolyn, "at his own peril and risk," allowed the residents of the northern areas of the Mezen District (where food shortages were particularly serious) "to send sailboats with wood to Norway and buy fish there; so, they did."[30] The revival of the "Pomor trade" with Norway[31] in the

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26 State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), F. 1005 (Verkhovnyi tribunal VTsIK), Op. 1-a, D. 381 (Delo o nalozhenii aresta na les, otpravlennyi iz Arkhangel´ska v Gollandiiu), L. 16.

27 State Archives of Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), Department of documents of socio-political history, F. 8660, Op. 3, D. 121 (Memoirs of G. Gurvich).

28 State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF), F. 1005 (Verkhovnyi tribunal VTsIK), Op. 1-a, D. 381 (Delo o nalozhenii aresta na les, otpravlennyi iz Arkhangel´ska v Gollandiiu), L. 16.

29 State Archives of the Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), Department of documents of socio-political history, F. 1, Op. 1, D. 299 (V gubernskaia konferentsiia RKPb. Dekabr' 1921 g. Otchet o rabote Gubispolkoma I. Bogovogo), L. 30g.

30 "Mezentsy trades," *Severnaia bednota*, October 3, 1921.

31 State Archives of Arkhangelsk Region (GAAO), Department of documents of socio-political history, F. 1, Op. 1, D. 299, L. 31v, 32b.

early 1920s was largely possible due to "connivance" on the part of the provincial authorities.

The reason why the Pomors did not fish was the lack of necessary tools and equipment. Economic disruption in the country led to a lack of tools for logging. The dearth of tools and means of production in all sectors of production in the country led to the concession policy (although this is a matter requiring special consideration) and made it possible for some foreign owners to retain their property in Russia for some years after the political changes in the country. Nevertheless, the situation was difficult. It was not only because of communist ideology, which considered foreigners a threat to the regime, but also a result of the economic collapse in the country. The White government in Arkhangelsk province during the civil war made people very suspicious of foreigners, and multiplied old fears that impacted on interpersonal and interethnic relations. This made the destruction of economic and cultural ties between Russia and Norway complete and difficult to restore. Later on, when the New Economic Policy came to an end, traditional contacts between the population of neighboring countries were further interrupted.

CONCLUSION

Everything that happened in the political history of Russia from 1917 into the 1920s broke the balance of relations in trade and property that had existed there for centuries. The European north of Russia had a complex ethnic, social, and economic status. By 1917, foreign companies in Arkhangelsk province were ready to announce a lockout. The Bolsheviks' nationalization policy was not as bad for the foreigners as the option of losing everything due to bad market conditions. The Whites refused to pay any compensation, saying that it was the obligation of the Bolsheviks and that, since the communists were not in power, no money would be paid. The situation with foreign trade was also complicated when combined with financial and currency problems. The decisions taken by the Whites on these questions opened up new opportunities for fraudulent activity. Nothing, then, was decided in a proper manner, and the image of foreigners diminished in the eyes of locals. This had negative consequences for the fate of foreign property.

Foreign ownership existed as long as it was necessary for the state to resolve its financial difficulties with minimal cost. The economic uncertainty in the 1920s forced the state to issue special decrees and to allow concessions, mixed companies, or foreign shares in enterprises. In Arkhangelsk province,

these concessions were mostly applicable to the forestry sector. The demise of the New Economic Policy in 1927–1928 led to the disappearance of foreign property in Arkhangelsk province as well as in all the remaining territories of the Soviet state.

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