

Norwegian settlement at Kola (middle of XIX-TH – early of XX cent)

Norwegian enterprise and rational economic approaches would bring to life this unpopulated region', this view of Murman was widespread in the late 1850s and early 1860s in St Petersburg as well as in Arkhangelsk. What's the reason of this approach?

The Russian authorities faced with a foreign settlers in Murman because of Russian-Norwegian delimitation 1825-1827. Treaty obliged the inhabitants of Nyavdenskiy, Pazreckiy and Pechengskiy pogosts (districts) to take out citizenship, Russian or Norwegian. There were Sami people mostly. But only minority of them had chosen citizenship. A flexion of frontier made for muddle. In 1836 Russian minister of foreign affairs Nesselrode indicated there were many persons who did not choose citizenship. In the same year Dyakonov, noble assessor, visited Murman and described crossing of Norwegian Sami people to Norway.

There was similar situation to Finnish Sami. In 1833 special official-officer Ruktshel investigated conflicts between inhabitants of Finland and Arkhangelsk region gave to people time to take Finish or Russian citizenship. In 1836 assessor Gusev investigated the event of murder of Norwegian Sami by some persone from Finland and discovered in Pechenga pogost many Sami from Norway and Finland. According of archive document these people were involved to grazing of reindeers. Norwegian Sami refused from Russian citizenship, only 2 Finnish families were agreed to take it. Kola's authorities made requisition to Øst-Finnmarken official to force Norwegian Sami to comeback to Norway. In spite of Finland was united to Russian Empire, it was personal union only, i.e. Russian emperor was a Grand Duke of Finland grand duchy (as union between Sweden and Norway, 1814-1905). Frontier conflicts were reason for summit talks between minister of internal affairs and high-ranking court official of Finland. Local authorities of Arkhangelsk region adverted to finish people as foreigners. In 1847-1848 ministries of Foreign Affairs of Russia and Sweden-Norway made a treaty to expulsion of Russian Sami from Norway to Russia.

The beginning of Norwegian colonization connected to visit to Murman of Russian consul Mekhelin in 1858. He suggested to establish colony in Motovskaya guba (inlet) not far from Varanger. Mekhelin could compare actively developing Norwegian Finnmarken and desolated Russian Murman coast. Russian authorities extremely rapidly made reaction to this report. There was strong reason of it. The fact it was not first attempt of colonization. In 1847 the problem of colonization of Murman was the subject of correspondence between Ministry of State Property and Arkhangelsk Military Governor. It was talking about more better conditions for pomors hunting in Murman. Officials decided to establish temporary dwellings. It was fact local authorities knew exactly there were nor wood materials enough for building dwellings and

warehouses, but military governor made project for distribution of wood in Murman. Russian Empire confirmed this useless documents. There are no any evidences in Archives about realization this decree. In 50-60-s years first colonists lived in earth-houses we could supposed the project was failed.

The Russian government, which had set its sights on colonizing the unpopulated Murman coast, had before it the glittering example of Norwegian Finnmark, which had transformed itself in a few decades from being the backwards neighbour of Murman to an economically developed competitor. In the rosy plans of the 1850s and 1860s, the future Murman was to be a region blossoming under the influence of the culturally and technically advanced Norwegians. At the same time, there was a temptation to repeat the experience of the 18th century in creating German agricultural colonies on the Volga, mechanically transferring the practice to Arkhangelsk *guberniia* [province]. The optimism of the authorities was kindled by the fact that Arkhangelsk already had experience of foreign settlers, mostly Germans. Therefore, certain principles were placed at the core of the colonization of Murman, principles which had been approved in other regions of the Russian Empire, and according to which Murman should be cultivated by foreigners who would engage in agricultural practices. However, it proved considerably more difficult to implement such principles than had been anticipated.

In 1870, the Russian authorities received a wonderful opportunity to assess the progress of the settlement of the Murman coast: Grand Prince Alexei Alexandrovich set out on an expedition around the Arctic ocean. The disconcerting results of the Murman colonization brought to light during the study forced the authorities in Arkhangelsk to revise their opinions, not only on the activities of the colonists, but also on their nationality. Upon his return from the expedition, the Director of State Domains of Arkhangelsk *guberniia* informed the Ministry of Agriculture that ‘arable farming on the Murman coast is utterly impossible, equally on account of the lack of appropriate land, as on the shortness of the summer and, in general, for reasons of climatic influence. Therefore the chief provision for a livelihood for the population can only be the sea and sea fishing’.

Misfortune similarly overtook plans for a combined Norwegian-Russian colonization, in the course of which the Russian colonists would learn from the progressive experience of their western neighbours. In reality, the settlement of the coast split into two separate currents – Russian and Norwegian/Finnish with the two groups preferring to settle and live separately from each other.

Paradoxical as it may seem, pursuing isolation and maintaining a traditional way of life were major reasons that drove the Norwegians to settle new lands. The colonization of Murman was but a small part of the mass emigration from Norway, or the ‘Great Exodus’, which had

begun in the latter half of the 19th century and was, according to some historians, comparable with the period of the Viking invasions in terms of mass movement of the populace. The Norwegian researcher Ingrid Semmingsen, who has studied immigration of Norwegians to the USA, notes that many of those who took the radical step of leaving had been pushed to do so by their unwillingness to change their way of life: the residents of the Norwegian communities in the farms of the American Midwest saw a chance of avoiding urbanization for themselves and their children. Many researchers indicate that strong nationalism was a typical feature of the Norwegian settlers in the New World; wishing to protect their particular way of life from outside influences, they isolated their colonies, and would not allow strangers to enter their world. The colonization of the Murman coast demonstrated that the Russian authorities failed to take into account this not insignificant factor.

The displeasure of the authorities led to many Norwegians viewing their arrival in Murman as a temporary state. As the Governor of Arkhangelsk *guberniia* informed the Minister of Internal Affairs in 1870, ‘The Norwegians came and settled wherever they wished, without asking for permission, and when life in Murman no longer pleased them, they left in the same manner, without notice’.

In the mid 1870s the tension in the relationship between the authorities and the Norwegian settlers spilled over onto the pages of the Russian press. The first publication to voice the detrimental impact of the Norwegian colonization of Murman was the newspaper *Golos*. In 1874 the paper announced that relatives of the Norwegian merchants residing on the Murman coast were working as salesmen, and were not only failing to develop local industry, they were engaged in the sale of Norwegian rum and other contraband operations. ‘The rest of them are escaped criminals, certified as bankrupt, gone out of business, or tricksters looking for easy prey – in general, persons of an extremely dubious nature’. From this period an anti-Norwegian campaign started to unfold on the pages of the newspapers in Arkhangelsk, a campaign which took on a more widespread nature in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and as a result of which the local authorities gained an entirely free hand from the public to carry out their ethnic policies in Murman.

From the 1880s onwards, a disappointment with the Norwegian colonists became the general tone for official correspondence between local and central authorities, according to which the results of the colonization appeared to be very far from those anticipated. In the historiography this cardinal shift is generally linked to the appointment of N.M. Baranov to the post of Governor of Arkhangelsk *guberniia* in 1881, as well as with the general course of the domestic policies of Alexander III, and subsequently Nicholas II, which were directed towards limiting foreign influence in Russia.

The Norwegian colonists soon began to feel the change in colonization policy as it was applied: from 1890 to 1899, of a total of 94 loans issued for purchasing a homestead, 89 were received by Russian settlers and only 4 by Norwegians and Finns. The right to use the hay fields in Western Murman, the centre of Finnish and Norwegian colonization, was enjoyed by only 3.2% of the colonists, while in 'Russian' Eastern Murman, 47.8% colonists were entitled to use the hay meadows. The main reason for this situation was termed the 'general policy of the local authorities to restrain the settlement of Western Murman by Finns and Norwegians'.

The battle against foreign colonization was upheld likewise by a toughening of the rules of registration, whereby the Ministry of Internal Affairs proposed to establish 'special surveillance of foreigners denied their former citizenship'. The case of the widow of a colonist by name of Keränen became widely known. In 1898 she hired a Norwegian worker for salmon fishing. The police arrested the worker and shipped him back to Norway for having no license to catch salmon, and they similarly confiscated the widow's nets and her fresh and salted fish.

The limits on the rights of foreign colonists affected the Finns more than the Norwegians, even though the former were de facto subjects of the Russian Empire. There were considerably more colonists originating from the Grand Duchy of Finland than from Norway: in 1891 there were 180 Finnish families resident in Murman, and only 38 Norwegian households.

There is an opinion found in some of the history writing devoted to the colonization of Murman that alongside the 'pro-Norwegian' and 'pro-Russian' policies of the Murman authorities, there was also a period (in the 1870s) when much was staked on those of Finnish extraction for the colonization. The evidence for this 'Finnish' stage is claimed to be the statement by Governor N.P. Ignat'ev that the 'Finns are the best element of the colonization'. However, we have encountered no proof that the Finns in the period in question were particularly encouraged in comparison with the Norwegians or the Russians, so we consider this approach to be unjustified. As examples of model Finnish colonies, Ignat'ev cites two, in one of which the majority of the population were Norwegians. It is obvious that in Arkhangelsk they had difficulty differentiating the Finnish from the Norwegian colonists, a view further supported by the fact that in official documents data about the Norwegians and Finns are often amalgamated. To a great extent this confusion was facilitated by the fact that some of the Finns who moved to Murman had come from Norwegian Finnmark, which until recently had been subject to intense Finnish colonization.

The policy adopted by the Russian authorities to limit the Norwegian colonization was to some extent reminiscent of the measures which Norway had taken with regard to the Finnish colonists. The Finns had begun settling in northern Norway at the end of the 18th century, since which time they had built up powerful economic and cultural influence in the region, a fact

which displeased the local authorities. The Norwegian government 'recognized as pernicious the formation at the fringes of the state, in the border regions, of foreign colonies' and in 1863 and 1876, legislative limitations were imposed on the rights of foreigners to expropriate and deal in land. These measures, as well as the ban that followed in 1888 on foreigners purchasing or renting real estate in Norway, led to mass returns of the Finns to their own country; some of them, evidently moved to the Murman coast.

In contrast to the Russians, the Finns often settled in Murman jointly with Norwegians, which led to the appearance of mixed Finnish/Norwegian colonies. At the same time, the Finns, just as the Norwegians, preferred to isolate their settlements from those of the Russian colonists, which irritated the Russian authorities. The dominance of the Finns and Norwegians in the colonies of Western Murman led to concerns that the territory might possibly break away from Russia, an apprehension expressed by the Governor of Arkhangelsk *guberniia*, N.D. Golitsyn, who asserted that the Finnish Selm [parliament], which had facilitated the colonization, intended to annex Western Murman to Uleaborg province of the Grand Duchy of Finland (subsequent events demonstrated that this concern was by no means unfounded, and in 1920, part of Western Murman was in fact annexed by Finland).

While making great demands on the foreign colonists, the Russian authorities in their turn did little to make arrangements for their life in Murman. Social policy was distinguished by its chaotic and erratic nature, as was all other activity connected with colonization development, and in this sense the condition of healthcare and education in the colonies can serve as indicators.

According to a report from the Assessor of the *guberniia* administration who inspected the state of affairs in Murman in the spring of 1870, during the shipping months, three army doctors were mobilized along the coast, two of whom travelled the eastern side and one the western. Furthermore, this latter medic had to travel accompanied by a police representative, as he had no transport of his own. The Assessor recommended that gravely ill patients should be taken to Kola for treatment, although he admitted that the hospital care there was utterly worthless.

In August 1870 the *guberniia* medical inspector visited the Murman coast. He was not satisfied by the sanitary and epidemiological state of the settlements, as in many of them the fishing waste was discarded next to dwellings, and among the Norwegian settlers there were many children who had not been immunized against smallpox. The inspector explained 'this indifference towards inoculation against smallpox' by the fact that in the whole of Kola *uezd* [bailiwick] there were only two staff smallpox inoculators.

In 1883 a sanitary division of the Arkhangelsk local office of the Russian Society of the Red Cross was sent to Murman. The division consisted of four nurses, four army doctors and two staff members. In the same year, an emergency medical facility was opened in Tsyp-Navolok,

under the auspices of the Red Cross, and a newly arrived army doctor was stationed there, as the local army doctor led 'a way of life that was often not sober'.

The fact that the state of healthcare in Murman was unsatisfactory in the late 19th century is further illustrated by materials of statistical research carried out in 1899. Residents of the colony at Ura-guba told researchers that they had not seen the army doctor for two years, and he had never even set foot in Vostochnaia Litsa. In Zapadnaia Litsa the army doctor who had inoculated against smallpox did not reappear again for six years, and in Belokammenaia the doctor examined patients only in the house where he was staying, and limited his diagnosis to 'they will be healthy'. In Tsyp-Navolok, the Norwegians complained that the Russian doctors were not attentive enough to the patients and did not understand the language spoken by the colonists. One Norwegian colonist, who had brought his sick wife to Aleksandrovsk was refused assistance, and it was suggested to him that he take her more than 1,000 km to Arkhangelsk. The hospital in the *stanovishche* [fishing village] of Teriberka likewise refused to accept the woman, claiming that the hospital did not service the colonists. The sick woman was taken to Vardø, but she died en route.

By the start of the 20th century, several schools were operating in Murman, but they were all unsuitable for Finnish and Norwegian colonists because of the confession they upheld, as well as the distance from the colonies. At the same time, the level of literacy in Finnish and Norwegian families was higher than in Russian households. This could be attributed, to a great extent, to the practice of home teaching, which was an essential condition of a protestant upbringing.

Concern by the Russian authorities for the religious needs of the foreign colonists was demonstrated in the decision to send a Lutheran priest from Arkhangelsk or St Petersburg to Murman after pastors from Norway and the Grand Duchy of Finland refused to travel to the area. Another decision was made at the same time, to permit two local, well-educated colonists to carry out Lutheran evangelist teachings: Petri Kejonen from Ura-Guba and Erik Hermansen Khakman from Zemlianaia.

From 1900 to the 1910s, the local authorities, supported by public opinion, displayed an ever-growing disapproval of the foreign influence on the Murman coast. The essence of the furious statements issued by Arkhangelsk administrators was the notion that Russia's geopolitical interests were being flagrantly infringed upon on her own territory. In the periodical press of the *guberniia* from the turn of the century there are no positive comments to be found regarding the Norwegian colonists, although there were numerous articles about the harm inflicted upon Murman by foreigners.

However, the negative attitude of local leaders towards the Norwegian colonists did not impede Russian-Norwegian collaboration at the highest level. In 1905, Russia wholeheartedly supported Norway in its conflict with Sweden over union, and was one of the first to recognize the independent state of Norway. Somewhat prior to that, in 1895, a group of Norwegian engineers was invited to Murman, with the approval of the Minister of Finance, in order to build a new administrative centre for the region, which was given the name of Romanov-na-Murmane, and was later re-named Murmansk.

Overall, the local authorities had little success in limiting the Norwegian colonization of Murman, and for the most part their measures bore more of a declaratory character. This view is supported by the fact that for the whole of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the number of Norwegian colonists continued to grow steadily, and in 1910 there were 72 Norwegian families resident in Murman, which accounted for 11.5% of the entire population of the region.

A sharp decline in the number of Norwegians occurred after 1914, and was a result of the onset of the First World War. From then on, the attitude towards foreigners in the border territories became more and more wary: there are materials in the GAAO stores from a number of cases of spying activities by the Norwegians in Murman. The revolution in 1917, and the civil war that followed, put a final stop to the Norwegian colonization of Murman. Norwegians who were unable, or unwilling, to leave the coast encountered in Soviet Russia considerable difficulties connected with collectivization and the military reclamation of Murman.