

Egorov E. V. The Russian Empire Meets Scandinavianism: Imperial Visions, Communication Channels, and Practices of Rule (1843–1864): Diss. ... Doctor of Philosophy in History. St. Petersburg: National Research University Higher School of Economics; Turin: University of Turin, 2023. 583 p.

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[Text of the dissertation](#)

[Resume](#) (in Russian)

[Summary](#)

Mikhail G. Agapov, Doctor of History (=Doctor of Historical Sciences), Tyumen State University, the Dissertation Committee Member:

Evgenii Egorov's dissertation is devoted to an actual historical problem. The author focuses on Scandinavianism as a complex cultural phenomenon and multilevel political ideology that emerged in the 1840s, flourished in the 1850s — early 1860s and gradually lost influence after the defeat of Denmark in the Second War for Schleswig of 1864. Scandinavianism is considered in the study from the point of view of Russian imperial policy as a kind of challenge to the ideas of the Russian Empire about itself and the model of the European political system supported by it. Thus, the presented work is a complex problem-historical research carried out at the intersection of several topical thematic fields, the most important of which are global politics, Russian-Scandinavian relations, German, Finnish and Polish questions.

The aim of the study is to analyze the dynamics of government, public and private reactions to Scandinavianism in the Russian Empire and Finland in 1843–1864. The author demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of historiography on the subject of the study, the main approaches to the study of various aspects of Scandinavianism and the discussions around it. The research is based on a wide and sufficient range of historical sources to achieve this goal. The author uses both already published and for the first time introduced into scientific circulation documents from the Russian central archives. The dissertation consists of an Introduction, six chapters and a Conclusion. The first chapter gives a general description of Scandinavianism and reveals its essential role in the tensions that were rising between Sweden and the Russian Empire around the Grand Duchy of Finland. The second chapter is devoted to the concept of *Norden* and its interpretations in the public sphere of the Scandinavian countries and Russia. The third chapter analyzes the position of the Russian diplomatic corps in relation to Scandinavianism within the framework of the Vienna system. The third chapter analyzes the influence of Scandinavianism on the development of Finnish national identity and the attempts of the Russian administration to take control of public opinion in Finland. The fourth chapter

examines the evolution of Scandinavianism in the European turbulences during that dramatic 1848 and the impact of revolutionary events on Russia's policy towards Finland. The fifth chapter analyzes the attempts of the Russian administration to oppose the Scandinavianism with Fennomania during the Crimean War and the postwar settlement. The sixth chapter reconstructs the views of the Russian establishment on Scandinavianism in the context of the aggravation of the Polish and Schleswig questions in the early 1860s. As a result, the author comes to the conclusion that the policy of non-interference in the affairs of the Scandinavian countries was regarded by the Russian imperial administration as more appropriate to imperial interests in comparison with the policy of intervention.

Thus, the author achieves his goal and gives exhaustive answers to the questions posed by him. An integrated approach and multilevel analysis, taking into account all the most important internal and external contexts of the events under study, are the undoubted advantage of the presented dissertation. Perhaps the author should have analyzed the conspiracy component of the Russian imperial ideology in more detail. As can be seen from the text of the dissertation, conspiracy theory in many cases was the main explanatory model for imperial officials. Conspiracy theory was the prism through which they looked at international politics. Closer attention to the conspiracy thought of the mid-19th century could successfully complement the study. However, this remark is of a debatable nature and in no way detracts from the above-mentioned undoubted advantages of the work under review.

Tatiana Yu. Borisova, PhD in History (=Candidate of Historical Sciences), PhD in Law, National Research University Higher School of Economics, the Dissertation Committee Member:

Mr. Egorov's dissertation is a wonderful historical exposition of the Russian Empire's interactions with Scandinavianism in turbulent decades 1843–1864. Its major research question is focused on change that occurred in imperial perceptions of Scandinavianism in the Russian Empire. The research approaches of the dissertation are novel and original in several aspects.

Firstly, in terms of historiography, Mr. Egorov situates his research in three fields of historical studies which communicate to each other insufficiently — the history of Russian Empire, national history of Finland, Russian diplomatic history. Simultaneously, the author doesn't mention as specific fields of his expertise many works on the history of Sweden, Norway, Denmark as well as conceptual works on the history of empires and nationalisms — all of them he uses efficiently for development of his own arguments.

Secondly, the scope of archival sources analyzed in the dissertation is very impressive. Along with published materials the dissertation relies on sources from eleven archives located in the Russian Federation, Finland, Denmark, and Sweden. In general sources and literature in eight languages — Danish, English, Finnish, French, German,

Norwegian, Swedish, and Russian were used in the dissertation which is absolutely fascinating in terms of both the scope of research ambition itself and its successful fulfillment.

Thirdly, in terms of methodology the dissertation considers Scandinavianism in the framework of imperial situation as a sort of a nationalist challenge to perceptions of various agents of Russian Empire. To demonstrate how the challenge of Scandinavianism was perceived in the imperial situation, which was not somewhat static, Mr. Egorov efficiently uses the conceptual framework of translation.

Altogether the dissertation makes a substantial contribution to a more nuanced understanding of how nationalism became a worldwide challenge to empires in general, and how Russian Empire, in particular, coped with this challenge in Finland before radicalization of its national movement in the late 19th — early 20th centuries.

My subsequent comments are not aimed to criticize research approaches of the dissertation or its conclusions, but directed towards encouraging Mr. Egorov to develop his dissertation into a monograph. By doing so he will make an important contribution to a better understanding of the public dimension of policy making in the Russian Empire before the Great reforms of 1860s–1870s. In this respect, I find particularly interesting and valuable Mr. Egorov's findings on the relations of Scandinavianism and multiple public spheres. One of the objectives of his research is focused exactly on 'tracing the reactions of the imperial multilingual public spheres to the dynamics of pan-Scandinavian project' (p. 12).

Although the author doesn't put to defense any conclusions directly connected to this objective, in the dissertation he clearly demonstrates that Scandinavianism was a product of a certain assumptions about 'public' in Northern Europe and the Russian Empire. Still, here are some questions which need to be clarified: Was there an understanding of 'imperial multilingual public spheres' in the Russian Empire in 1843–1864? If yes, in what terms they were perceived and who perceived them? How was the role of 'arising transnational epistemic communities' perceived in Northern Europe and in the Russian Empire? Can we really think of 'European public sphere' (p. 21) or 'Nordic public sphere' (p. 67)? In general, would it be useful to specify the categories used by actors or generalizations like that are more productive in the historical analysis?

These questions are inspired by recent scholarship on public sphere in Russia, which problematizes clear demarcation lines between 'public' and 'governmental' domains. This line of critical take on categories of historical analysis seems to be useful and I would like to hear what Mr. Egorov thinks about it.

To conclude, I commend Mr. Egorov for writing an ambitious and very well researched dissertation. The accomplishments of his work are stimulating for historians

beyond the field of the 19th century Russian Empire and thus should be transformed into a monograph in not too distant future.

Kristiina Kalleinen, Doctor of Social Sciences (=Valtiotieteiden tohtori), Helsinki, the Dissertation Committee Member:

The dissertation thesis' theme is highly relevant and also original in the sense that its focus is on Russia's relationship to Scandinavianism — a research theme that has not been studied before. Until now studies about Scandinavianism have not been based on materials of Russian archives, which is a notable shortcoming, and Egorov's dissertation thesis thus fills a significant gap in historical research. The best parts of the thesis are those that rely on primary sources from several Russian archives and thus increase our understanding about how imperial agents at various levels perceived the threat of pan-Scandinavianism and how this perception changed over time. The thesis also sheds new light on the perceptions of Finnish governors-general prince A. S. Menshikoff and F. W. R. Berg about Finland's political position and strategic importance in the context of the empire.

This has been a very ambitious research project since the researcher has had to try to learn in depth 19th century history of many countries: along with Russian history the history of Finland, Sweden and Denmark. Against that background it is understandable that not all details have been correctly understood.

Due to the broad subject matter of the thesis, also the amount of the source material is enormous — both the amount of archival material and research literature is overwhelming, especially the primary source material used is impressive! Still, I wonder why Osmo Jussila's *Suomen suuriruhtinaskunta 1809–1917* (2004), which is also translated into Russian¹, is not included in the bibliography and is not referred to in the thesis? Jussila, for example, comprehensively describes the argument between A. I. Arwidsson and I. Hwasser, which author of the thesis also mentions. One could also ask, however, if the Arwidsson-Hwasser controversy is relevant from the point of view of the thesis — to my mind it could be omitted as well.

There are some terms I'd like to discuss more thoroughly. Especially problematic I find the term *Finlandish*, which is used in the thesis to describe the political and administrative agencies of the grand duchy. The use of the term is explained and I can understand its connection to Russian language from which it stems, but since the text is in English, *Finlandish* seems improper. After all, the question was about Finnish administration (administration of the Grand Duchy of Finland), Finnish authorities (authorities of the Grand Duchy of Finland) etc. regardless of the language of these actors. Only in the case of gendarmes I accept and consider correct using the word *Finlandish*, i. e. *Finliandskoie zhandarm'skoe upravlenie* (*suomenmaalainen santarmihallinto* in Finnish).

¹ Юссила О. Великое княжество Финляндское 1809–1917 / Пер. с фин.: В. М. Авцинов, А. В. Анисимов, С. С. Беляев, И. Е. Налетова под ред. А. Ю. Румянцева. Хельсинки, 2009.

I have also some comments about the Gendarme Administration of Finland: I wonder why the author speaks of the *Third Section* instead of *Gendarme Administration* while discussing Finland? It is incorrect to write that ‘The headquarters of the Third Section in Finland were established in 1826’, because already when Finland became a part of the Russian Empire 1809 its territory was gradually integrated into the gendarme system of the Empire. First gendarme teams were established already in 1817, and only ten years later after the Third Section was founded in St. Petersburg Finland was included in the first gendarme district of the Empire together with St. Petersburg and some other northern governorates. The post of gendarme field officer in Finland existed since 1829 (Helsinki), and provincial units were founded in Turku (Åbo), Vyborg and Kuopio.

The main task of the gendarmes since 1836 was to control and monitor public order. The actual gendarme administration in Finland was established only after the Crimean War, when August Tobiesen became the first chief of the Gendarme Administration in Finland. All this and much more information concerning the Gendarme Administration of Finland is to be found in Marina Zagora’s publications². Hence, there was no office of the Third Section in Finland but *Finliandskoe žhandarmskoe upravlenie*.

Considering that the manuscript is extensive (over 500 pages) and includes several long narrative parts, the author should consider shortening the text, since slightly more concise and shorter manuscript would have preserved the main idea of the research clearer. As the saying goes, one must learn to ‘kill one’s darlings’ meaning that a researcher must learn to delete and thus make one’s own writings more concise.

The thesis as a whole is excellent and profound especially in its analysis of Russian foreign policy and policy strategies with regard to Scandinavianism and the security politics of the Baltic Sea.

² Загора М. Г. Жандармский контроль в Великом княжестве Финляндском в XIX в. // Вестник ЯрГУ. Серия Гуманитарные науки. 2020. № 3. С. 40–43. URL: <http://j.uniyar.ac.ru/index.php/vyrgu/article/view/994> (20.12.2023); Она же. Великое княжество Финляндское при генерал-губернаторе Н. В. Адлерберге (1866–1881): Дис. ... канд. ист. наук. М., 2021.