

## **Russia and Denmark: comparison of empires (told by Elena Korchmina)**

(0:03-1:04) Hello viewers of *Sinus*, I'm Mikhail Rodin. In a few seconds you will see a new episode of *The land of elephants*, but I want to announce some videos soon to be uploaded on our youtube channel *The Past (Proshloe)*. The link to the channel is in the description below this video, click and subscribe, you won't regret it. In the coming days we are going to film and upload the story of the chariots' origins in the Old World, we will talk to the one of the leading experts on the subject across the globe – Igor Chuchushkov. We have a deal with Maxim Lebedev to guide us through the ancient Egyptian tombs and show us how they worked. Nikolay Plavinsky from Belarus is going to take a photo of the sword recently discovered in Bobruisk for us and tell all about it. This is just the upcoming plans, so you won't be disappointed if you subscribe. Beyond that, if you like the content of *The Land of the elephants* and *The Past* you can click the link to *Donation Alerts* and support us – it is much appreciated. Now, please enjoy *The land of elephants*.

(1:07-1:30) Caesar, the crusades, Borodino – these are the façade of the history. What is stored in the cellars? Broadcasting *The land of elephants* – what scientists usually don't tell you – because nobody asks. The show has been rated 16+.

(1:31-3:35) Hello everyone, this is *The land of elephants* – the show about historical myths, history we don't know, and facts obvious to scientists that we didn't catch on. I'm Mikhail Rodin. Today, I reckon, we are covering a dangerous topic, as it can blow minds of people with sort of a static way of thinking. Firstly, there's a lot of new information, and secondly it's totally different from what we're used to, because generally people perceive historians as either beating a dead horse – say, let's reread Radishchev and see how bad it was, reinterpret and retell it – or, once again, busting some myths and turning everything upside down. Today we will discuss how science moves forward, as contemporary science is primarily constructive criticism of the sources, like when we try to understand why Radishchev saw and thought like that. On top of that we add new sources: roughly speaking, we have considered all those villages from Radishchev's point of view, now let's look up the statistics – what do the economists say about precise records from a ledger on how people lived in the villages? In other words we add a new perspective to the story. It is per se an assessment by comparison, for example, one of the methods of contemporary comparative studies is to determine how much a peasant produced in a household and to assess whether it's a lot or a little by comparing to something. So today we are discussing this absolutely remarkable new work in progress and it's my particular pleasure that we are talking to one of the few people who does economic history from that angle in our country, a person who has single-handedly dug through countless sources to tell us all about it today. We have a Research Associate from New York University Abu Dhabi Elena Korchmina on the line. Good afternoon.

**(3:36) Good afternoon.**

M. Rodin (3:37-3:53) Excuse me for the long introduction, I'm just really excited after reading the paper you have co-written with your Danish colleague, as it's truly a totally new look at history for me. You work on it with Paul Sharp from Denmark, right?

**(3:54-4:03) Yes, from the University of Southern Denmark, which is not even in the south, nevertheless, he's a Professor of Economic History there.**

(4:04-4:36) Right, and your research focuses on comparing Denmark and Russia, two arctic agricultural empires, as you call them. My mind is blown on this stage already, because you would think, how can one compare small Denmark out there in Europe and our enormous northern Russia. What do they have

in common? Let's start with where the idea to compare these two empires came from and whether they are empires at all, it is not obvious to a Philistine.

**(4:37-8:23)** It is obvious to a Philistine that Russia is an empire, clearly. Sure, it is less obvious that Denmark was an empire until we take a look at the map of Denmark in the beginning of the 19th century, for instance, and see that it had colonies even outside of Europe. Denmark included Greenland, we just tend to forget that Denmark used to be big, in fact, even Danish historians start to forget it to some extent. I am not certain that I am willing to fight for the word *Empire* to be honest, but I dare say it is a fair approach and the imperial complex gives it all the feeling of spatiality. The reason we are able to compare – because, in fact, I once heard at a conference that Denmark used to have serfdom and it absolutely didn't align with the image of present-day Denmark that I'd had in my mind. For another thing why it's interesting to compare these two empires, there is a very good Danish film called *The Royal Affair* in English, I don't remember how exactly it's translated in Russian, and it's about the events of the late 18th century. Let me tell you about those events for a bit and you'll tell me if anything seems familiar. At the end of the 18th century the Enlightenment came to Denmark with the rest of Europe and it started to reform, it also had troubles with the king who could be deemed legally incompetent and the queen's favorite Struensee urged changes in the empire. Does that ring any bells? So, there are certain instances that lead at some point to the realization that Denmark and Russia have a lot in common. These two countries have developed, or had a chance to develop in Russia's case, basing their economy on agriculture. Moreover, if we take a look at the territories; Russia has the vast area of Siberia that cannot be used for agriculture and the same goes for Denmark. True, ratio-wise it's not the best comparison – if we take Russia's number of square kilometers and Denmark's land area. However, we try to compare the comparable, I think the unique aspect of our research is that we don't take all of Denmark and all of Russia, we compare the agriculturally productive parts of their lands. Only working with empires broken down to parts we can really compare Russia to anything, because usually Russia is approached as too unique and too big – an impossible task. It is possible, Russia can be compared to Spain, Russia can be compared to Turkey, but only with Denmark we have a case where both countries had serfdom, which was abolished just a little bit earlier in Denmark, and both countries had a similar land tenure system of landed nobility. Both had absolute monarchy, both started moving to the Enlightenment at approximately the same time, both had educated monarchs and then at some point the countries parted their ways. The question is why they had been following the same path for so long and then split up and why Russia today can't – for all it may sound insulting – can't catch up with Denmark.

**(8:24-8:40)** Right, this is where we reach the timeframe of the research. You start in the beginning of the 18th century when these countries were so similar and end with the October Revolution when they had clearly parted ways and broken connections.

**(8:41-9:59)** Absolutely, in fact, our interest in comparing these countries is not very modern. In the middle of the 19th century, when the issue of abolishing of serfdom arose in Russia, scholars, who researched agriculture, themselves wrote about that comparison. "Look! the Danish abolished serfdom 50 years before and they managed just fine! Well, they lived through the crisis of the 1820s, regardless they did live, let's look up to them and learn from the experience". That is, instead of following one of the two paths in the classic fork – Prussian or English, we could have followed the Danish path, which was based on the communes and scattered landholding, among other things. Perhaps, the outcome would have been totally different, we can't know, but this question had been posed in research in the 19th century and when we discovered the question in the studies of the time we decided to see if the research had been right. It is one thing for us to say that living is harder than ten years ago, this is different, so we decided to look up the records to see if it's true. Then we gathered records on wages and prices in Moscow and Copenhagen.

**(10:00)** Yeah.

**(10:00-10:58)** We plotted two graphs following European methodology and saw that the contemporaries actually were right, up to the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the two countries followed the same path, were at the bottom of the list of the European countries and life was pretty harsh in both countries, Russia and Denmark, – meaning Moscow and Copenhagen. We compare the comparable, not the entirety of Denmark and Russia but two regions. In the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, however, serfdom in Denmark was abolished and Denmark started to outstrip Russia very slowly bit by bit in terms of living standards. The graph shows this divergence nicely. Then in 1861 we abolished serfdom and the question whether we could catch up was raised. Accordingly, we are in the process of answering this question right now.

(10:59-11:08) Yes, it should be noted that as far as I understand the paper you've published is just the beginning of the research, you've set goals to achieve.

**(11:09-11:12)** Furthermore, the paper is not published yet and right now I'm in fact –

(11:12-11:14) Oh, I was reading an unpublished paper? [laughter]

**(11:15-12:27)** Spoiler! The paper has got good reviews and it will be published, I hope, but it was a spoiler. The paper is in English, I speak Russian and I want to show a picture, it's not in the paper, that accounts for the whole story of Russia and Denmark from the agricultural perspective – why the agriculture of the two countries was so different. I want you to have this image in mind. The picture goes like this: Russian peasants come to Europe, they are sent to Europe in a manner that now would be called exchange of best practices and then they describe what they've seen. Well, two stalls with cows, the difference between Denmark and Russia is that Danish cows had their tails tied to up nails, so they don't soil their milk-giving parts during vital processes, and the Russian ones didn't. I believe that when we discuss why Denmark worked out and Russia didn't, the image of a tied-up tail can fully sum up that time period.

(12:28-12:44) [laughter] Alright, let's slice and dice this situation, you've broadly outlined that both states had serfdom in the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, you've also mentioned this graph of quality of life you have in your paper.

**(12:44)** Yes.

(12:44-12:50) What is it based on? I'm interested in the sources; do we really have well-documented data on the earnings of the different social groups?

**(12:51-13:26)** We obviously have no well-documented data on the wages, but we do have a very boring and fantastically eye-filling source in the form of the estate documentation both here and there with the information on which products were bought, for how much, who was paid and for what. This information can be discerned in an undoubtedly sad and tedious but such a beautiful process! These people we are never –

(13:26-13:31) The process of studying this source is tedious, you mean, because you must dig through a lot of information, right?

**(13:32-14:30)** Yes, as it sucks out your soul a bit because it goes on and on the same, but there are these people we are never going to read about in textbooks, some widow Maria who would go out to mow the hay and how much she earned for that harvest season. The same thing with serfdom happened in Denmark, both here and there we have sources from the estates. In this regard, remarkably, the same on the principle of comparison sources have survived in Russia and Denmark, carrying the same information. Then we figure out some consumption pattern, it's very indicative, we can disagree with it, however, since the set of products is the same, the work is the same, we think that it's the best we can get from a comparison.

(14:31-14:45) Alright, and this graph shows that at first everything was the same and then the differences appeared. Ok, let's discuss the country. As far as I understand, in the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the serfdom was arranged, give or take, identically, as well as the broad society?

**(14:46-14:57) Say, it's a good question! How detailed of an answer do you want from me right now, may I ask?**

(14:58-15:08) General level, addressing mostly the agriculture that we are comparing, as I take it. To have an idea what exactly we are comparing.

**(15:08-16:40) Ok, so when we are talking about serfdom in Denmark, we are talking about exclusively male serfs from an age that varied to sixty years old, although that could also vary. In Russia, as we know, serfs were male and female, which in reality wasn't that different from being the wife of a serf in Denmark, who was bound to the same estate – it's all the same. Even if we take into consideration that serfdom extended to men from 13 years old, while in Russia it was since birth, it's all splendid but what would that serf do before turning 13 if not work at the estate with his family? That is, there were legal differences, however, they didn't change the situation de facto. Structurally the society of both countries consisted of the nobility, the peasants attached to the noblemen estates; the landholding was scattered: there were large latifundio and small estates in the outskirts balancing each other. In the same vein, both countries were naturally absolute monarchies, so all the key factors were fundamentally the same in our view.**

(16:41-16:51) Right, and what was the most important in terms of the economy? The way I see it, agriculture was the main industry?

**(16:52-17:34) Both countries obviously engaged in commerce, they exported grain, so they are similar in this manner. Another fascinating thing is the resembling climate conditions. Comparing Moscow and Copenhagen in terms of quality of the soil, average number of sunny days per year, rainfall, we discover that these areas were very alike. It's also fascinating since we are talking about the same geographic climatic zone.**

(17:35-17:54) Yes, but if we take geopolitics into consideration, seemingly, there appears to be a distinction since Denmark is out there in the middle of Europe while Russia is remote from the European reality. Clearly, they differ in the ways they are tied into European relations.

**(17:55-19:05) I'd agree with you if we didn't see the countries' history through the eyes of a modern man. It's a question sensitive to the time period, say, if we discuss the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Russia and Denmark were permanent partners against a common enemy – Sweden. Both countries effectively replicated Sweden's fiscal system since it's a common tactic to borrow useful features from an enemy that acts as the trigger. Therefore, the fiscal systems were alike, troops compositions were alike. The Danish were of course less successful – aside from the epoch of Vikings when that territory held virtually the whole world at bay – yet still, they were accomplished soldiers. The borrowing of key institutions was held in the same manner. Besides, let's be real, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century both Russia and Denmark were the periphery.**

(19:06-19:12) Right there, you mention several times in your paper that both countries are peripheral, why?

**(19:13-19:51) Well, because they were. Admittedly, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia stated growing and playing a considerable role in the European theatre, but Danish narratives on their history recount that they are also one tough cookie. It's just that from our perspective – all due respect to my Ryazan State University History department but I didn't remember anything on Scandinavia. Meanwhile, if you ask the Danish, they know there is Russia and all that connects us in the known history narrative is princess Dagmar.**

(19:51) Yes.

**(19:52-20:19) Generally speaking. Did you know that when princess Dagmar became the Russian empress, suppose somebody wanted to get an appointment somewhere in Europe, the shortest way to get it was to serve as a Russian Ambassador in Copenhagen? Even in this sense, the link between the two countries was very strong.**

(20:20) Uh-huh.

**(20:20-20:22) I believe it's a matter of perspective.**

(20:23-21:06) It must be noted that the period in question was the time of Sweden's great prosperity and absolute monopoly in supplying metals, semi-processed materials to the whole world. Russia and Denmark didn't hold a candle, so to speak, but only in the beginning of the said period – the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Alright, moving on, how did the situation develop, did the divergence occur immediately after the abolishment of serfdom in Denmark or not? What were the differences? We've been discussing similarities, now let's proceed with differences in the beginning of that period.

**(21:07-22:22) I will introduce a slightly stylized and simplified model we use as a working hypothesis with my co-author. It can be changed; I'm going to describe our theories as we were making sense of the information we'd discovered. The abolishment of serfdom happened while Europe was going through the events that turned everything upside down, namely, the Napoleonic wars. After the Napoleonic wars both Denmark and Russia experienced varying degrees of economic crisis that can be assessed in different ways, nevertheless, in 1820-1830s Europe was in crisis, the Danes were in a very difficult situation, living standards were falling. We don't know much about Russia, but all things considered it was also miserable business. Then England made an entrance, that's another image I want you to keep in mind, England manifested as a powerful empire with rising living standards and embarked on buying more and more products.**

(22:23-22:28) They entered the industrial revolution and started to actively consume resources.

**(22:28-22:38) Exactly. My co-author would be sad if I didn't mention it, one of those resources was of agricultural production - butter!**

(22:38) Uh huh.

**(22:39-23:39) The grain industry was going through hardships as new strong competitors emerged, like USA, for instance, and cheaper grain started to flow into Europe. Denmark could hardly compete, and it switched to butter production. It began making high quality butter and shipping it to England. So, while the British consume incredible Danish butter in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, what did the Danes consume, if they exported theirs? Well, the Danes consumed amazing Russian butter, which was imported to Denmark since it was somewhere in between Britain and Russia. Therefore, England eats excellent Danish butter, Denmark eats good Russian butter, and Russia eats whatever it eats; I have an impression that we've only started to consume butter at such rates in the Soviet Union when we were made to eat 5-10 grams of butter daily in summer pioneer camps.**

(23:40) [laughter]

**(23:40-23:49) I think it's a Soviet invention. Anyway, that's the transportation sequence we have happening in Europe.**

(23:50-24:04) Alright, we have two minutes before an advert break to discuss yet some other significant differences between Russia and Denmark in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> that'll influence later events.

**(24:04-24:43)** The absolute monarchy in Denmark ceases at some point and self-governance becomes prominent, something that never happened in Russia – that's for basic structure things. Serfdom is abolished, society gets more mobile and living standards go up just because people start choosing what's best for them, the best way to organize, the so-called cooperative movement arises, which happened way later in Russia, under the influence of Denmark, among others.

(24:44-23:54) Am I right that serfdom in Denmark as well as in Russia extended to just a part of the country's territory? Only where it was agriculturally profitable?

**(24:55-25:18)** Just like in Russia, only the core of Russia had serfdom, who would you even enserf anyone in Siberia, to be honest. Likewise, Greenland had no serfdom, it was totally unnecessary. Let's not forget that Denmark also included Schleswig-Holstein, the northern German state, it was Danish, too.

(25:18) Uh-huh.

**(25:19-25:22)** It also had serfdom, accordingly.

(25:23-25:49) Right, excellent. This is the show *The land of elephants*, today we are on the line with Abu-Dhabi talking to Elena Sergeevna Korchmina who is conducting a comparison between the Danish empire and the Russian empire with her Danish colleague, we are exploring the agricultural development of the countries, their similarities and we will return and continue after the news.

(25:50-25:59) Broadcasting *The land of elephants* – what scientists usually don't tell you – because nobody asks.

(26:02-26:51) Hello again, this is *The land of elephants*, my name is Mikhail Rodin, today we have Elena Sergeevna Korchmina from Abu-Dhabi on the line and we are discussing brand-new research on the comparison between the Danish empire and the Russian empire. In the first half of the show we've talked about why we can compare seemingly disparate entities, just remember the size, discovered that from historical perspective we have a period in the past when these countries were very similar, now let's unwind this time spiral some more. In the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the countries palled up against a common enemy that was Sweden, this is when they started to actively collaborate, right? What was it like, what spheres were affected?

**(26:52-27:15)** Yes, absolutely. Actually, while you were speaking I had time to think about what you've said, what doesn't happen very often; so about the comparison between two countries, it seems to me that we are used to compare mechanically, as in we take a thing from one country and compare it to the same thing in another country.

(27:16) Uh-huh.

**(27:16-27:32)** However, it's not a comparison! Well, it can be, but I believe that it's much more interesting to have countries that run parallel to each other.

(27:32) Yes.

**(27:33-27:50)** A real comparison we are talking about is a theoretical framework. We can compare France and Russia and find resemblances, but here we have an interesting case of two countries that not only followed similar paths but essentially aimed at the same goal of defeating Sweden.

(27:51) Uh-huh.

**(27:51-28:34)** In addition to the common enemy, they were interacting alongside, creating a tangle... Tentatively speaking, the history of these two countries can be used to describe the development of the entire Baltic region. It is significantly more interesting than mechanical takes on how there was

Struensee there and Potemkin here, let's dispute. This is not about it. People interacted with each other; and quite literally it's fascinating how this tangle of Denmark, Sweden and Russia created unique scenarios. For example, in one of the archived cases – I'm trying to talk on the issue of the fiscal system, if you lose the thread of conversation.

(28:34) Yeah.

(28:35-28:55) Since Denmark and Russia borrowed the Swedish fiscal system to some extent, in Russia it existed known as the poll tax – a simple taxation model that imposed a single rate on all serfs allowing easy collection with landowners as the mediators.

(28:55-28:59) That's something Peter the Great introduced during the war with Sweden.

(29:00-29:56) Absolutely correct. The tangle of three countries got us a fiscal system that defined Russian history for centuries, to be frank. This tax history included an extraordinary case that I have never encountered for any other country, and I've spoken to various specialists about it. There was a northern region in Russia, bordering both Sweden and Denmark in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. A small piece of land populated by the indigenous Laplanders tribe. Well, one thousand of these people, which is a lot to Denmark, nothing to Russia and few to Sweden, a thousand of these people were nomads there, moving from one lake to another. For a hundred years three countries taxed them –

(29:56) [laughter]

(29:57-29:58) – and the Laplanders paid.

(29:58-29:59) All three taxes!

(29:59-31:38) All three taxes. The Danish took a bit in martens and the Swedish with Russians took a bit in thalers. Then in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century at some point the Laplanders decided to stop paying and Russia investigated the reasons why they were paying in the first place, whoever levied them – that's how the case turned up in the archives. The investigation found the records stating it had dated way back from the war with Sweden. This nomadic tribe of a thousand people that lived part-time here and there and there – why did they pay at all? Looks like this tribe was the most protected people in Europe at the moment, protected by Sweden, Denmark and Russia from themselves, it appears. So, our comparison in interactions of these countries is complemented with a fantastical situation in which something inexplicable from any point of view existed on the periphery of the three empires. No historian will tell you why they were paying those taxes because why does one pay taxes? To get something in return. In this case, they got nothing in return, they travelled across the lands. Even better, if somebody was to force them to pay, where'd they send people? Neither the Danish nor the Swedish could say anything about them, on the scheduled time they just came to the certain place where the Russian side, Russian clerks also came to collect tribute. This centennial tax history of one tribe proves incredibly appropriate in studying these three countries and their interactions.

(31:38) Uh huh.

(31:39-31:59) In this sense, the potential of this research subject is infinite, because it's such a peripheral story, a story that exists beyond any historical perspective, you know, who even are these people? With it, history gains flavor, color and smell, that's what I'm talking about. Regarding the comparison.

(31:59-32:18) Yes, nevertheless, you've just described the specific ways of the information transfer or, better say, the management practices through this case. About the particular history of Russia and Denmark having duplicate fiscal systems for a while. This poll tax was introduced at approximately the same time and was carried out the same, right?

**(32:29-32:47)** Absolutely, although it wasn't a poll tax, it was what's called a farming tax, but all three countries identically imposed the tax on the Laplander tribe at rates that appear to be convenient to them, otherwise they wouldn't have been paying at all, they'd just run away where nobody could ever find them. Nonetheless, this tribe agreed to pay to the three great empires and only revolted during the Napoleonic wars, when things went south.

**(32:48-32:56)** Uh-huh. Alright, what are other examples of our interactions and learning from the experience of others?

**(32:57-33:34)** There are one-off examples – In general, when talking about the interactions with Denmark we have a weird tendency to view all the things we either way got from them as our own. Maybe it's because there are so few Danish that they effectively dissolved. For instance, when I worked at Tobolsk archive and went to a museum in Kremlin – a beautiful city! – so in Tobolsk in this museum, I don't remember which one, you go up the stairs and see a big poster "People who helped us in Siberia" and a portrait of Vitus Bering on it.

**(33:35)** Uh-huh.

**(33:36-34:06)** Among Ermak and others. There you have it, Vitus Bering was a Dane in Russian service who indeed had done a lot so Russia would become an empire. Who remembers that? Well, you might ask why anybody would remember that, but it's interesting to us how it happened that we don't even remember the things we adopted, we deem them our own. The most fascinating story, in my opinion, if you don't intend to interrupt me right now, because I get a feeling that you intend to interrupt me, don't you?

**(34:07-34:08)** No, I don't, I like how this is going. [laughter]

**(34:09-35:33)** [Laughter] Really? The most fascinating story, two stories, really, concern the transfer of agricultural knowledge. With the transferring from one party to another we always ask who the holder of the knowledge is, who is sharing, how it happens. So, there are these incredibly curious examples, the first is the story of Koefoed, Andreas Koefoed, or Andrey Koefoed as he was named in Russia, and the second one is the story with the butter. A few words about Koefoed since he's already been spoken about in Davydov's last book, for instance; he wrote that Koefoed was a Dane who happened to end up in Russia, learned Russian, spent 50 years here, was the ideologist or one of the ideologists of the Stolypin reforms. The Stolypin reform essentially was Koefoed's idea that he had preached for 20 years beforehand. From what I gather, Russian historiography agrees that Koefoed accidentally happened to get noticed by Stolypin and the rest ensued by chance. As a historian I believe in a chance and I think that luck is more important than anything, but luck is one thing, and Koefoed knowing empress Maria Fedorovna personally is another.

**(35:34-35:35)** The one, Dagmar.

**(35:35-35:17)** Absolutely. I know it from my Danish colleague who has read about it among other cases we'd ordered from the Copenhagen archive, it had a more complicated access system... Basically, there is an obituary stating that Koefoed had ties with the empress. No trace of it in the Russian sources, but it explains everything, it explains why Koefoed ever got access to such eminence. The history of the Stolypin reforms could be reconsidered since it's clear how Koefoed arrived at these ideas, they convey something Denmark had already gone through.

**(36:18-36:24)** Please elaborate on this, what had Denmark gone through? What did Koefoed instill that Stolypin embraced?

**(36:25-39:05)** As I've already said, landowning in Denmark was divided into pieces among landowners. So, upon the abolishment of serfdom there was dealing with transferring the lands to the peasants,



naturally, the question of resettlement arose. The Danish have opted for giving the peasants a consolidated piece of land not scattered around the places. Koefoed graduated from an agricultural school in Odense where they examined if it was better for a peasant to own a consolidated piece of land or a good hayfield here, a good ploughland there and so on. For the Danish it was evident that concentrating the whole piece of land in one place was more effective. In Russia this practice would be known as *khutor* farmsteads. So, when Koefoed came to Russia, originally to see his friends, the transfer of Danish agricultural knowledge was conducted from person to person. We know the holders of this sacred knowledge that physically manifested in Russia, learned our language to some extent and proceeded to educate the masses. When Koefoed came here he really fought for the concept of *khutor* farmsteads as well as Stolypin who preached giving a peasant a piece of land. By the way, in the recent reedition of Koefoed's memoirs where apart from Koefoed's text there were recorded memories of peasants, those peasants that went abroad for experience exchange noted that proximity of arable lands to homes allowed to save a lot of strength and energy. It could be used to keep livestock that didn't need to be sent grazing far away, they stayed nearby and were easier to feed well, since both Denmark and Russia practiced stabling. The second story with the butter only happened in Denmark thanks to keeping cattle close to the household in the stables allowing better control over the butter-making process. It wasn't like this in Russia and all peasants noted that the livestock suffered from the scattered lands the most, not the ploughland, not the crops, it's livestock. Livestock means meat, milk, the literal life quality for the peasants.

(39:06-39:31) Did I get it right that the Danish had to intensify their economy due to the aforementioned new competitors in the grain industry and inability to supply European markets with grain, which compelled them to come up with the butter and so on? In contrast, Russia's vast territories could and continued to be a grain supplier up to the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**(39:32-39:49) The crisis of 1820-1830s played a big role in appearance of new competitors. It drove everybody who couldn't keep up from the Danish market. In this sense, a positive impact of the crisis on the Danish economy –**

(39:49-39:51) What was it caused by, this crisis?

**(39:51-39:57) The Napoleonic wars resulted in a big mess in Europe.**

(39:57) Uh-huh.

**(39:58-40:09) The countries were debt-ridden, new grain suppliers emerged, a financial crisis broke out, a disadvantageous situation... Sometimes, like right now, it happens that –**

(40:10-40:12) Circumstances ruin everything.

**(40:13-40:18) Well, you've put it classy, I'm a historian from a plow, I could call it blatantly for what it is.**

(40:18) [laughter]

**(40:19-40:37) Basically, things are bad, things were bad for the miserable Danish citizens of the time. Living standards were falling and all was going south, but those who survived, their children in a few decades lived to enjoy the beneficial aftermaths of the crisis.**

(40:38-40:50) Here we arrive at the point to talk about the butter. What's that got to do with the butter, so to speak? We know the famous butter brand *Vologodskoe Butter*, turns out, it's not that simple and it didn't appear from thin air. What's the story?

**(40:51-43:53) Yes, moreover, there is *Vologodskoe Butter* and then there is *Sibirskoe Butter*. When I came to Tobolsk no longer ago than this summer I asked about the *Sibirskoe Butter* and heard back**

that they only had omul. "But what about the butter," I asked again and got told something in lines of "Well, here, have the butter". It means they've forgotten how in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Germans and the British were horrified about the overflow of butter in Siberia. Turns out, it occurred because of Denmark and *Sibirskoe Butter* is a spin over of *Vologodskoe Butter*. It stems from the marriage of the famous painter Vereshchagin, this story is surrounded by dozens on legends and theories, I'll tell you again a somewhat stylized version of it. Vereshchagin once invited a Danish couple to Russia, who were one of the best butter manufacturers in Holstein and Holstein was Danish territory then. Indeed, these guests, the Buman family got their education in Denmark surrounded by Danish traditions, then moved to Russia and appeared in Vologda, where Vereshchagin lived. So, one of the goals of our research is to compare the economic performances of Holstein and Vologda, which is more interesting than Copenhagen and Moscow. That is where we have similar territories that were the birthplace of the industry. So, the Buman family came to Vologda governorate, installed the first creameries, opened a school and the first recipe of *Vologodskoe Butter* was written by the Bumans in the Russian language. The book is publicly available in the Russian State library, free to read, written by Eva – Eve? – Eva Buman. The fact that they also opened a school is incredible because they effectively transferred the Danish experience. That's how they did things in Denmark, organized creameries through the cooperative system, bought milk from the local peasant households, controlled the quality at reception and developed the butter-making skills. Upon finishing the school, the students gradually moved to Siberia. That led to two fantastical stories, one about a well-known Siberian butter manufacturer Randrup, there is a spectacular advertising poster with Randrup as, hold on, I'm mixing up the surnames... Randrup as Yermak, it slipped my mind.

(43:53) Yes.

(43:54-44:30) It's a beautiful picture, can also be found in the State library, a lot of written material on it. You know what's the deal with butter? Historians usually don't really address that, it's the specialists-butter makers' field, implying a different kind of literature. There are also incredible Danish posters that read "Siberia is like America for the Danish, new America".

(44:30) [laughter]

(44:31-44:49) It was essentially a goldmine for the Danish, for a long time they viewed Siberia as a potential enormous manufacturing area, there were a ton of Danish companies cultivating it. Another issue with butter is to transport it.

(44:50) Yes.

(44:51-45:13) Now, it's not that easy. A proper transport system for the butter to get anywhere needs to be established and so on and so forth. Amusing that in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Russian butter was already drawing near Danish in quality on the butter-making exhibitions.

(45:14) Uh-huh.

(45:15-45:26) The Danish managed to raise a competitor to themselves, however, the events of 1917 followed and the whole affair was forgotten, unfortunately or fortunately.

(45:27-46:02) Right, the logistics played a fundamental role; I've found the part in your paper that deals with the construction of the Trans-Siberian railroad and the outburst that ensued. Quoting the numbers, "In 1894, only 400 poods (16,38 kg) of Siberian butter was exported to Britain from Siberia, in just two years it was 150,000 poods, and 1917 this amounted to 4,500,000 poods." I'm not good at math, but it's hundreds, thousands times the original exported amount.

(46:03-47:06) Absolutely, it's vast amounts. Beyond the Danish, another fantastic story is that developing the butter transportation system also resulted in eggs transportation, for instance. They

compressed the eggs, transferred abroad, collected them – the whole story is amazing. Funny how before Buman creameries there was no butter in modern understanding in Russia. Only melted butter that could neither be transported nor used. A giant industry that generated millions of rubles for the Russian empire prior to the First World War was launched from scratch. Uniquely, we know the exact starting point of the story, know it ends, although I want to hope that there will be a continuation.

(47:07-37:31) [laughter] Right, about the continuation. Now we have seen how the agricultures of the two countries were developing in a bit different ways, how various industries like butter-making appeared, how we were borrowing the experience from the others and learnt from it. Globally speaking, what's next, what's your research agenda? What are you going to compare next and what sources to use?

(47:32-48:30) The further agenda is simple. For now, we have laid the foundation. We have conducted a study and found resources useful for the comparison of Moscow and Copenhagen, next to the actual comparison from the points of living standards, geography, going deeper into the econometrics, finding more data on the living standards to see when exactly the divergence between the countries happened. So far, the graphs point to the abolishment of serfdom, but I think that's too simple and plain, too apparent; besides, I believe that serfdom wasn't that bad of an institution, it was functional. We need to make a detailed semantic comparison of the territories within the countries.

(48:31-48:38) That means, different regions, their geography and economic contribution reviewed in detail?

(48:39-49:29) Totally, reviewed in detail. I love this study awfully, I believe in it, because I have a feeling that we have found a key to compare Russia to other parts of the world and Europe. The same thing has been done to China for a long time, you break it down into parts, take the Huang He territory and compare it. We want to find such parts for comparison with Denmark to see the moment of the divergence. It means archive work, sourcework, econometric methods. I believe that it's an important work because we walk away from the narratives and pretty portraits. I value visual arts –

(49:29-49:36) From Radishchev I mentioned in the beginning, who only described the sorrows of living. We are working with the numbers.

(49:37-50:24) Yes, we want to lay a foundation for comparison. Moreover, if we manage to do the breakdown, the other side of the comparison will no longer matter. With data on Russia in scientific circulation we will be able to compare Russia to Spain and Turkey. I believe if we manage to compare four peripheral empires: Denmark, Russia, Spain and Turkey, we will learn something about the history of Europe and the world, seeing how differently all countries developed, it would be a sophisticated survey. Certainly, the whole butter deal needs further research in the Vologda archive. We need the numbers, the broad numbers we possess now –

(50:25-50:30) Elena, excuse me, we have 10 seconds left. We need a summary. So.

(50:31-50:41) So, study and comparison of Denmark and Russia will allow us to write a new history of Russia, both countries, maybe all of Europe.

(50:42-50:50) [laughter] To my understanding, it's a sort of breakthrough in methodology, we get many comparison modes from this study.

(50:51-50:53) I believe it and then we'll see.

(50:53-51:00) Thank you a lot, it was *The land of elephants* with Elena Sergeevna Korchmina. My name is Mikhail Rodin. See you later, goodbye.