

The Nystad Congress and the Release of Russian Prisoners of War in 1721

Håkan Henriksson

ARKIVCENTRUM ÖREBRO LÄN, SWEDEN

ABSTRACT

After the Nystad Treaty had been signed on 30 August 1721 the work started to implement the articles of the treaty. Article 14 stipulated that the POWs from both sides should be released. The Swedish authorities soon put the wheels in motion to get rid of all the Russian POWs before the winter. The POWs were lodged in towns almost all over Sweden. It was first thought that the number of Russian POWs could still be as many as 1700. However, the real figure was closer to 1200, but throughout the Great Northern War, more than 4000 Russian POWs had been brought to Sweden.

By early November almost all Russian POWs had reached the vicinity of Stockholm, and they were ordered to march to the seaport at Vaxholm. The POWs, whose number by that time had reached about 1140 men, were in late November 1721 transported on five hired ships from Vaxholm to Reval. The POWs who had not managed to reach Vaxholm in time for the transport in 1721 were gathered in Uppsala during the winter, and in late April 1722, 60 Russian POWs could leave Vaxholm on two Swedish galleys with Åbo in Finland as the destination.

KEY WORDS: prisoners of war, Great Northern War (1700–1721), Treaty of Nystad 1721, Sweden, Russia

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: jeńcy wojenni, wielka wojna północna (1700–1721), traktat w Nystad z 1721 r., Szwecja, Rosja

The Peace Congress in Nystad 1721 and the treaty that was eventually signed by the two warring parties have been studied before, but few have dealt with the question about the prisoners of war (POW) in connection with the treaty, and none specifically in connection with the Russian POWs. This study intends to fill that gap and also give an overview of how the article about the POWs in the final treaty afterwards was implemented in Sweden¹.

Naturally, the main talking point at the Peace Congress was the question about which territories would be lost or won and the question about the POWs was of course not among the more discussed issues, but already at the opening of the first conference day in the Conference house of Nystad, on Thursday 11 May 1721², POWs were mentioned. The Swedish delegates Count Johan Lillienstedt and County Governor Otto Reinhold Strömfelt tried to answer a previous request from Tsar Peter's wife, Tsarina Yekaterina, that some of "her farmers" who were said to be POWs in Sweden should be released. King Frederick had also agreed to release them, but since the names of the farmers had not been specified, more information was needed about them before anyone could be released. The only present Russian delegate Count Jacob Daniel Bruce – Count Henrich Johan Friederich Osterman was to arrive a few weeks later – also promised that such information would be sent for³.

¹ For the study on the Peace Congress of Nystad and the peace treaty, see for example: G. Wensheim, *Studier kring freden i Nystad*, Lund 1973 and A. Smirnov, *Den gyllene freden 1721. Stormaktens undergång*, Stockholm 2022. For the study on the peace treaty and the Swedish POWs in Russia see for example: P. Sörensson, *De karolinska krigsfångarnas hemfärd från Ryssland*, "Karolinska Förbundets Årsbok" [next: KFÅ] 1923, pp. 120–200; Г.В. Шебалдина, *Заложники Петра I и Карла XII. Повседневный быт пленных во время Северной войны*, Москва 2014; *eadem* [G. Sjebalдина], *Karolinska krigsfångar i Sibirien*, Stockholm 2010, pp. 137–148. For studies on Russian POWs in Sweden see for example: H. Henriksson, *Ukrainian Cossacks and other prisoners of war in Sweden during the Great Northern War (1700–1721)* [in:] *Ukraïna v Tsentral'no-Skhidnii Yevropi*, V. Smolii (ed.), Kyiv 2016, pp. 247–259; H. Jorikson, *Granne med fienden. Krigsfångar i Sverige 1700–1721*, KFÅ 2005, pp. 47–148 and С.А. Козлов, *Русские пленные Великой Северной войны 1700–1721*, Санкт-Петербург 2011.

² All dates used in this article are according to the Julian calendar, which at the time was in use in both Sweden

and Russia. The Julian calendar was 11 days behind the Gregorian calendar in 1721. It means that the Peace Treaty was signed on 30 August according to the Julian calendar but on 10 September according to the Gregorian calendar.

³ Riksarkivet, Stockholm [next: RA], *Diplomatica Muscovitica* [next: DM], vol. 131, The Swedish minutes from the conference on 11 May 1721.

⁴ RA, DM, vol. 131, The Swedish minutes from the conference on 17 June 1721.

It was not until the conference day on 17 June that the question about the POWs once again appeared in the discussions. At the time, the Swedish side had also produced a preliminary peace treaty that included the POWs. At first, Count Lillienstedt mentioned the news that had reached Stockholm about the alleged ill-treatment of the Swedish POWs in Saint Petersburg. The treatment was said to have turned worse after the Russian Adjutant General Aleksandr Rumyantsev had returned home after his visit to Stockholm in 1720 with congratulations to King Frederick on his accession to the Swedish throne. The POWs had complained that they were not even allowed to go outside of their prisons to grasp some fresh air. These accusations were directly contested by the Russian side, and they explained that there was no truth behind this, and they also claimed, that to the contrary, the Swedish POWs were treated well and that they received both money and bread from the Tsar, and that they were free to go outside. Several of them were even teaching children and others were practicing their handcraft to such an extent they even owned their horses and could venture outside the city⁴.

Later the same day, Count Lillienstedt once again brought up the question about the POWs in the treaty and said that he hoped that the issue will be resolved without difficulties and that all POWs would be set free as soon as the peace would be declared. The Russian counterpart, Count Henrich Johan Friederich Osterman, who now also had arrived at the Peace Congress, answered that it would be unjust if they would not be released. Count Lillienstedt added that it was also customary all around the world that all POWs are set free when peace is proclaimed. Count Osterman then replied that it is not always the case, and he now also added an issue that he said was still in the memory of the Russians, how 500 Russians in Turkey, while King Charles XII was there, had been sold as slaves. He added that the instigator of this was the Swedish Colonel Christian Albrecht Grothusen.

Both Count Lillienstedt and County Governor Strömfelt contested these accusations and said that they had never heard of this and that it must have been produced by the enemies of Sweden. However, Count Osterman repeated the accusations and said that foreign diplomats in Constantinople even had suggested to the Tsar that he should massacre some of the Swedish POWs as revenge, but that he had not done so. He also added that the fate of the Swedish POWs now was dependent on how docile the Swedes would be while negotiating this treaty⁵.

Unexpectedly, on Thursday evening 27 July 1721, without any previous notice a Russian ship from Saint Petersburg had arrived in Nystad with a few released Swedish POWs, as well as the dead body of Count Adam Ludwig Lewenhaupt who had died already in February 1719. The released Swedish POWs were mostly old and crippled officers. Only a few days thereafter, they were transported over to Stockholm on a Swedish galiot. However, Count Lillienstedt and County Governor Strömfelt were not only happy about their release but in their letter to Stockholm they called it an “improper way of prisoner exchange” and they believed it was a kind of response to the prisoner exchange King Frederick had performed on his initiative in September 1720 in hope for a major prisoner exchange with the Tsar. At that time a little more than 200 Russian POWs had been released and transported on a ship to Reval. Lillienstedt and Strömfelt now noted that the Russian POWs had been transported at the expense of the Swedes⁶.

When the Peace Congress started to reach its end, on the conference day on Wednesday 16 August 1721, the article about the POWs once again appeared in the discussions. The Swedes then suggested that all POWs should be brought to the border at the expense of the one who holds the POWs. Count Bruce responded by saying that “it would cost us a hundredfold more than for you”. County Governor Strömfelt replied, “but You also benefit from the peace a hundred times more”. Count Bruce

5 *Ibidem*. The story about the Russian POWs that were sold as slaves in Turkey is probably the same that is mentioned in 1717 by the Russian diplomat Peter Shafirov in his propagandistic treatise “Рассуждение какие законные причины его царское величество Петр Первый царь и повелитель всероссийский и прочая, и прочая, и прочая: к начатию войны против короля Карла 12, шведского 1700 году имел...”, pp. 68–69. According to Shafirov this event is said to have happened in late 1713. However, Shafirov’s story is a little different. According to him, it was the Swedish King himself who had been responsible for about 100 of the Tsar’s subjects from Russia and Little Russia who had been sent from the Pasha in Bender to the Sultan in Constantinople as a present for his galleys.

6 RA, DM, vol. 133, pp. 366–367, 400–403, Letters to his Royal Majesty 28 July and 1 August 1721. Among the released POWs were the 60 years old Colonel Jurgen Johan Lode who had been captured at Narva in 1704, then 56 years old Major Florian Thilo who had been captured at Livonian Marienburg already in 1702, and the 49 years old Royal Chamberlain Carl Gustaf Güntherfelt who had been captured at Perevolochna in 1709 but was without hands since the battle of Kliszów in 1702. Among them was also the 75 years old Major General Fritz Wachtmeister who had been captured at Estonian Loop in 1704 but had been released already in 1712 on conditions he would be exchanged for one of the Russian generals. However, the exchange had never been realized but Wachtmeister had anyway not returned to his captivity until September 1720. Now he had been hastily released, and according to Lillienstedt and Strömfelt, he had wanted to stay there since his

wife had died four months earlier and he had not been able to sell his furniture, which now was left behind to the Russians.

7 RA, DM, vol. 133, The Swedish minutes from the conference on 16 August 1721.

8 *Ibidem.*

9 *Ibidem.*

continued by explaining that the Swedish POWs in Russia were placed far from the border, whereby Strömfelt asked why they had moved them there in the first place. Count Bruce then replied that they were better off there than in Moscow. County Governor Strömfelt ended the discussion by saying that in all our previous treaties it had been a customary practice⁷.

The same topic came back to the table on Friday 25 August 1721, when the Swedish negotiators once again demanded that the POWs should be transported to the border at the expense of their temporary master. The Russian side then replied that the soldiers could march to the border and the officers could be helped with a free carriage. The Swedish negotiators noted in their minutes that it was not possible to reach further with this⁸.

The Swedish side also had added a sentence in their preliminary treaty that the unburied bodies of deceased officers would be delivered at the request of their relatives, and that the graves of already buried officers should not be violated. Count Osterman was wondering why such a sentence was needed in the treaty. County Governor Strömfelt then explained that some relatives who had lost their relatives during their captivity might incorrectly imagine that they would be in danger if they were buried in countries ruled by the “Greek faith”. But he also reassured that he of course knew that there was no such risk, but such a text would ease the minds of the relatives, and besides that, it had always been customary in treaties with Catholic countries. The Russian side then reassured that the unburied bodies would, on request, be delivered to their relatives, but it was out of the question to add something about graves not being violated⁹.

Article 14 of the Peace Treaty and its implementation

On Wednesday 30 August 1721, the final edition of the peace treaty was written, and just before 3 a.m. on

31 August, the two copies were finally collated so that the four negotiators could sign the documents¹⁰.

In the final treaty, the question about the POWs ended up as article 14. The article stipulated that, after the treaty had been ratified, the POWs from both sides, of any nation, rank, and estate they might be, should, without any ransom but after all possible debts had been paid or a reasonable promissory note had been handed over, be set free from their captivity. Both sides should also, without delay and with consideration to the present location of the prisoners, provide them with enough transport, in any possible way and without any cost for them to get to the border. But those, who have taken service or otherwise have in mind to remain in any of the countries, shall have the free will to do so. This right, to stay or return home, also included the people who, under the present war, had been abducted. However, those who of free will and without constraint had adopted the Greek faith should remain in the land of his majesty the Tsar, and this shall be publicly announced in both countries¹¹.

As early as in the morning of Thursday 31 August 1721, due to good winds towards Stockholm, the package with the treaty as well as a few letters from the Swedish negotiators could be sent away with the young Count Carl Lillienstedt on a so-called double sloop¹². The package reached Stockholm already late on Saturday 2 September, but it was not opened until the Royal Senate¹³ was convened on the Monday morning of 4 September¹⁴. Now the treaty had to be ratified by each side within three weeks and the ratified treaties would then be exchanged in Nystad. By Friday 8 September, the official, and nicely written, ratified treaty still had not been written, even though it was said it was almost finished, and it was also signed and sealed by King Frederick the next day. However, at the same meeting, the Royal Senate decided it was already best to send notices to the commanding colonels that they should cease the hostilities against the Russians¹⁵.

¹⁰ RA, DM, vol. 133, p. 541, Letter to his Royal Majesty 31 August 1721.

¹¹ RA, Originaltraktater med främmande makter, Ryssland, vol. 21Ab.

¹² RA, DM, vol. 133, p. 541.

¹³ The Swedish Royal Council was usually known as the Royal Senate – *Kungliga Senaten* – during the reign of King Charles XII and Queen Ulrica Eleonora, as well as at the beginning of King Frederick's reign.

¹⁴ RA, Kunglig Majestäts kansli [next: KMK], Det odelade kansliet [next: DOK], Rådsprotokoll [next: RP], A 1: 137, pp. 13–45, Minutes from the Royal Senate 4 September 1721.

¹⁵ RA, KMK, DOK, RP, A 1: 137, pp. 90–99, Minutes from the Royal Senate 8 September 1721.

¹⁶ RA, KMK, DOK, RP, A 1: 137, p. 215, Minutes from the Royal Senate 16 September 1721. The State Secretary Joachim von Düben (1671–1730), who first had suggested gathering the Russian POWs, had himself become a POW after the Swedish surrender at Perevolochna in 1709 but had returned to Sweden from his Russian captivity in December 1719.

¹⁷ RA, Krigsexpeditionen [next: KE], B 1a: 6, pp. 1217v–1218r, Letter to the War College 16 September 1721.

At the meeting of the Royal Senate on Saturday 16 September 1721, when the treaty still had not been ratified and exchanged, the State Secretary Joachim von Düben asked if orders should not be issued for the Russian POWs to be moved towards Stockholm, so that they could be transported to Finland and from there to their homeland, as soon as the ratification had arrived. The King as well as the entire Royal Senate agreed, and it was decided that a letter should be sent to the War College – *Krigskollegium* – with orders to gather the Russian POWs from the entire country so they could be transported across the sea as soon as possible¹⁶. The actual letter with the order was subsequently sent the same day from the so-called War Expedition – *Krigsexpeditionen* – and tells that “all Russian POWs should be set free without any ransom and at our expense be transported to the border”. Furthermore, the order describes that the POWs should be gathered and moved to the closest port where the transports to Finland will be organized, and from there they should be transported to the border¹⁷.

Now the wheels were in motion to try to get rid of all the POWs before the winter. The War College, who now was responsible to lead this task, started by sending out orders on Wednesday 20 September 1721 to the different counties where Russian POWs were being housed. The order mirrored the letter from the War Expedition but they had added that it all should be done hurriedly. The War College had decided that all POWs should be brought up to Stockholm, mainly along two different routes – one from the western counties of Göteborg and Bohus, Halland, Skaraborg through Örebro and further on via Västerås to Stockholm; and one from the southern and eastern counties of Blekinge, Kronoberg, Jönköping through Linköping and further on via Södermanland to Stockholm. The State Office – *Statskontoret* – was also ordered the same day to issue travel passes for the POWs as well as orders on how they and their accompanying guarding officers and soldiers would be provided with

food and transport on the way¹⁸. This was also done on 26 September but they did not specify in the letter how much the POWs would get in daily allowance during the transport, which left the County Governors to decide¹⁹.

The order from the War College reached the County Governor Nils Posse in Göteborg and Bohus County within a week and on Tuesday 26 September he sent orders to the two commandants in the county that the Russian POWs in Göteborg, Nya Älvsborg, and Bohus should be present in Göteborg on the next Saturday and be ready to start their march towards Stockholm. All the POWs also seem to have been gathered within that time, but they only started their march eastwards on Monday 2 October, under the guard of Lieutenant Carl Neuberg and two non-commissioned officers. Altogether 46 Russian POWs now started their journey toward their homeland. Since the County Governor Nils Posse never had gotten a detailed order from the State Office on which daily allowance the POWs would enjoy during the journey, he decided that they should not be given the ordinary daily allowance for POWs, which originally was 3 öre silver coins, but, since the POWs were now set free and not POWs anymore, instead be given the ordinary daily allowance for Swedish soldiers, which was almost twice as much or 5 1/6 öre silver coins²⁰.

The 46 Russian POWs from Göteborg arrived in Mariestad, the residence town of Skaraborg County, on Tuesday 10 October. County Governor Petter Scheffer in Mariestad now got to know from Lieutenant Neuberg that the POWs had been provided with the higher daily allowance. It was a surprise for the County Governor who knew that the State Office had not given that order but on the other hand neither had specified if the POWs would get the ordinary allowance they previously had received. Scheffer now sent a letter to the State Office to get this clarified. In the letter, he also tells that the Russian POWs from Göteborg were so “stubborn and obstinate” that they in his office several times had claimed that it was

¹⁸ RA-Krigsarkivet [next: RA-KrA], Krigskollegium [next: KK], Krigskollegii kansli [next: KKK], B 1: 67, September 1721 no. 184–192.

¹⁹ RA-Landsarkivet i Göteborg [next: RA-GLA], Göteborgs och Bohus läns landskansli [next: GBLL], A 2a: 42, pp. 1702–1703, Letter to the War College 2 October 1721.

²⁰ RA-GLA, GBLL, A 2a: 42, pp. 1682–1683, Letters to the Commandants Bengt Ribbing in Göteborg and Per Hårdh in Bohus 26 September 1721; pp. 1702–1703, Letter to Krigskollegium 2 October 1721.

21 RA-GLA, Skaraborgs läns landskansli [next: SLL], A 2: 43, pp. 1020–1023, Letter to the State Office 12 October 1721; pp. 1044–1045, Letter to the War College 20 October 1721; p. 1047, Letter to County Governor Conrad Ribbing in Örebro, 21 October 1721.

22 RA-KrA, KK, KRK, Ec: 85, pp. 6559–6561, Letter from County Governor Petter Scheffer 20 October 1721; RA-Landsarkivet i Uppsala [next: RA-ULA], Länsstyrelsen i Örebro län [next: LÖL], Landskansliet [next: LKL], D 2c: 4, no. 98, Letter from County Governor Petter Scheffer 21 October 1721.

the will of his majesty that they were now free people and that they were granted the higher allowance by County Governor Posse in Göteborg. Furthermore, they said that if they would not get the higher allowance during the rest of their journey, they would refuse their previous ordinary allowance and instead continue and make their way through the country. It is easy to interpret these words by the Russian POWs as an implied threat and County Governor Scheffer also writes in his letter that he feared they could turn to violence and threaten the peasants on the way to get what they wanted. And for sure, the few accompanying guarding officers together with local peasants would have big problems stopping a big group of POWs from creating problems on the way. The State Office also replied swiftly and agreed to the higher allowance for the POWs²¹.

Another problem County Governor Scheffer had, was that the Russian POWs from Halland County had not yet arrived as planned. The War College had planned that they would have joined the POWs from Göteborg and the ones from Skaraborg County in Mariestad. After waiting for more than ten days without any news from Halland, it was not only the County Governor that started to worry but also the Russian POWs. Naturally, the Russian POWs, who already were on their way, were worried they would arrive too late in Stockholm so they would miss the transport home across the Baltic Sea. County Governor Scheffer explained the situation to the War College and wrote that the Russian POWs several times had visited him and requested to start the march towards Stockholm, and some were even said to have left by themselves. Because of this, he could not wait any longer, and on Saturday 21 October he let the 46 POWs from Göteborg together with the 102 Russian POWs from Skaraborg County start their march towards Örebro. Even though the group of POWs was much bigger now, the guard was the same as from Göteborg. At the Pow's disposal were 30 carriage horses for baggage and to help to transport sick and old POWs²².

The 148 Russian POWs arrived in Örebro on Friday 27 October and now it was up to County Governor Conrad Ribbing to decide if they should wait for the POWs that had yet not been heard of from Halland County. All POWs in Örebro county had been gathered to the residence town already on 16 October from the four other towns in the county that at the time were housing POWs so they could almost immediately continue the march towards Stockholm. However, County Governor Ribbing had suddenly received orders from Stockholm to halt the transport because of fears it was too late for the transport across the sea, but only to receive counterorders from Stockholm on Monday 30 October saying that the POWs should instead without delay decamp and now hurry with the march to Stockholm. Thus, already the same day, the 148 Russian POWs that had arrived from Mariestad together with the 267 POWs from Örebro County – altogether 415 Russian POWs – left Örebro²³.

Most of these 415 Russian POWs were ordinary soldiers and mariners, but 11 of them were officers such as Major Grigoriy Fustov [Пригорий Фустов], Cavalry Captain Timofey Varaksin [Тимофей Вараксин], the Captains Afanasiy Ogalin [Афанасий Огалин] and Thomas Hamilton, and the Lieutenants Semyon Nelidov [Семён Нелидов], Ivan Zakryukovskiy [Иван Закрюковский] and Ivan Strokin [Иван Строкин]. Major Grigoriy Fustov, who had been captured by the Swedes on a galley squadron in the Baltic Sea in August 1714, had after Prince Ivan Trubetskoy and General Avtomon Golovin had been exchanged in late 1718, been the highest-ranked Russian POW in Sweden and was also the one that corresponded with Russia on behalf of all the Russian POWs²⁴. Major Fustov, as well as two barber surgeons, had been ordered to be exchanged by the War College already on 14 September 1721, after the Swedish Major and Commandant at Marienburg Florian Thilo von Thilaw, a priest and a barber-surgeon had been released on parole during the summer by the Russians.

²³ RA, Länsräkenskaper [next: LRK], Örebro län, vol. 208, pp. 8446, 8456–8457; RA-KrA, KK, KKK, Ec: 85, pp. 6589–6591, Letter from County Governor Conrad Ribbing 30 October 1721; RA-ULA, LÖL, LKL, A 1a: 39, pp. 1409–1411, Orders to the Magistrates in Kristinehamn, Askersund, Nora and Lindeberg 30 September 1721.

²⁴ RA, LRK, Örebro län, vol. 208, pp. 8426–8457.

25 RA-ULA, LÖL, LKL, A 1a: 39, pp. 1667–1669, Letter to the War College 31 October 1721; D 1c: 14, no. 185, Letter from the War College 14 September 1721.

26 RA-KrA, KK, KRK, Ec: 85, pp. 6585–6587, Letter from County Governor Gustaf Funck 4 November 1721.

27 RA-KrA, KK, KRK, B 1: 67, December 1721, no. 1, Letter to the State Office 1 December 1721; Stockholms Stadsarkiv [next: SSA], Stockholms länsstyrelse [next: SL], Landskontoret [next: LKT], E 1: 7d, pp. 3432–3433.

However, the orders from Stockholm had for unknown reasons not reached the County Governor in Örebro until 29 October 1721, and thus Major Fustov was leaving together with the rest of the POWs²⁵.

From Örebro, the group of POWs marched on to Västerås, where the County Governor Gustaf Funck on Saturday 4 November 1721 could report that the 415 Russian POWs had arrived from Örebro and would now continue eastwards together with the POWs from Västmanland County²⁶. On Friday 10 November, the POWs reached Barkarby inn, about 16 km northwest of Stockholm. The group had now grown to 461 POWs: 1 major, 2 captains, 1 cavalry captain, 4 lieutenants, 1 regimental scribe, 1 artillery warrant officer, 1 chief mate, 450 non-commissioned officers, and soldiers. The Russian officers had received a daily allowance just like a Swedish officer, where the major got 24 öre silver coins and the chief mate 10 öre silver coins. The POWs did not continue into Stockholm as first had been planned, but instead marched on directly to the small town of Vaxholm, located northeast of Stockholm, which with its fortress controlled the northern inlet to the capital. On Thursday 23 November 1721, the commanding Swedish officer, Lieutenant Carl Neuberg, who had been guarding the Russian POWs along the roads from Göteborg, which was a distance of about 500 km, could deliver and embark the POWs on the ships that would take them to the Russian side²⁷.

At the same time as the Russian POWs were marching towards Stockholm from the western counties via Örebro, the POWs in the southern and eastern counties were also moving north via Linköping. This group of POWs reached Pilkrog inn, about 50 km south of Stockholm, on Saturday 11 November 1721. The group then consisted of 584 Russian POWs. Among them were only four officers – 3 captains and 1 cornet – one of them being Captain Fedul Tregubov [Федул Трегубов] who had been captured already at Fraustadt in 1706. The POWs

had been provided with 39 one-horse carriages for their baggage and for the POWs who had not been able to walk themselves²⁸.

Meanwhile in Stockholm

After the initial orders had left the War College in Stockholm on 20 September 1721, the bureaucratic machinery in the different counties continued working mostly by itself so that within two months almost all Russian POWs had arrived at the port in Vaxholm where the POWs were going to be embarked on the transport ships. However, there had been issues on the way, that from time to time appeared also in the Royal Senate.

On Monday 9 October 1721, the Royal Senate discussed a petition from a Russian merchant's servant from Olonets named "Simon Agaffanoff" who had been taken as a POW in Stockholm already in the autumn of 1700. Now, 21 years later when he was about 40 years old, he wished to return home as fast as possible, which was with the Swedish transport ships with soldiers that were about to leave for Finland. The Royal Senate almost unanimously agreed. It was only Count Gustaf Cronhielm who objected and said that the Russian merchant's servant could very well stay and wait for the main transport of the Russian POWs. He finally added that "the Tsar would not even set a small boy free"²⁹.

On Saturday 21 October 1721, and even before the Royal Senate had time to convene, the War Expedition had found it necessary to send counterorders with an express to the County Governors in Örebro and Linköping, that the POWs should not be sent to Stockholm but remain in Örebro and Linköping over the winter since "it now seems impossible" to transport them to Reval³⁰. Reval now seems to have been the destination for the Russian POWs and not Finland. Reval had also been the destination for the Russian POWs that had been released in September 1720, and it was of course also a cheaper

²⁸ SSA, SL, LKT, E 1: 7b, pp. 1623–1625.

²⁹ RA, KMK, DOK, RP, A 1: 137, p. 505, Minutes from the Royal Senate 9 October 1721; RA, KE, B 1a: 6, pp. 1339v–1340r, Open orders for the Russian merchant Simon Agaffanoff to follow the transport to Finland, 9 October 1721. Simon Agafonov, who originated from the town of Olonets in Russian Karelia, was taken into the service of the imprisoned Russian Resident Andrey Khilkov in December 1712, and accompanied Khilkov also when he was transferred from Stockholm to the town of Västerås in late May 1713. He lived in the same house as Khilkov in Västerås together with the fellow Olonets native Anisim Isakov. In June 1715, the latter mentions in a letter that he had sent 10 rubles to Agafonov's mother in Olonets, who apparently was still alive at the time. Agafonov seems to have been separated from Khilkov when the Resident was transferred to Visingsborg Castle on the island of Visingsö in February 1716. Agafonov, as well as Isakov, was later also transferred to Visingsö, but in early 1718. After Visingsborg Castle had burned down at Christmas 1718, Agafonov was later transferred back to Västerås in 1719, and he was still there at the end of the Great Northern War in 1721. RA-Slottsarkivet [next: RA-SA], Ståthållarämbetet på Stockholms slott [next: SHSS], G 1: 143, p. 1105; G 1: 145, pp. 990–991; RA, LRK, Västmanlands län, vol. 212, pp. 8039, 8045, 8047. S.A. Kozlov, *Russkie plennye Velikoi Severnoi voiny 1700–1721*, Sankt-Peterburg 2011, pp. 314–315, 327, 336.

³⁰ RA, KE, B 1a: 6, pp. 1384r–1384v, Letters to County Governors Conrad Ribbing and Ernst Johan Creutz 21 October 1721.

solution since transport to Åbo in Finland would have brought additional costs for transporting the POWs by land through Finland to the new Russian border.

At the next meeting of the Royal Senate, on Monday 23 October, this issue soon came up for discussion and the Secretary Carl von Carlson explained that the counterorder had been issued upon the suggestion from the president of the State Office, Swen Lagerberg because it had been found impossible to send the POWs to the Russian side before the winter since all transport ships were being used for the military transports to Finland. Later during the meeting, when President Lagerberg himself joined the meeting, it was explained that no preparations had been done for the transport across the sea for the POWs but only orders had been sent for them to come to Stockholm. The State Office had then suggested it would be better to keep the POWs in the countryside over the winter instead of an expensive lodging in and around Stockholm. Count Gustaf Cronhielm then said that it would have been better to embark the POWs who had been in southern Sweden from the closest ports such as Kalmar and Karlskrona instead of sending them all to Stockholm. President Lagerberg agreed but said that now it was important to organize a feasible transport for the POWs. The Royal Senate now decided that the special Royal commission responsible for the military transport to Finland also should prepare for the transport of the POWs. If not all of the POWs could be transported, at least some of them could, it was suggested. Count Cronhielm also was wondering why the Russian POWs had been given a regular daily allowance just like the Swedish military. To this, Count Johan Lillienstedt, who had returned from Nystad on 14 October, answered that since the peace with the Tsar had been concluded, “the status of the prisoners had changed and that they now had been given complete freedom, so it had not been possible to regard them as prisoners anymore”, and because of that it was also right to give them the same daily

allowance as was given to the Swedish soldiers. The rest of the Royal Senate agreed with Count Lillienstedt³¹.

Another question concerning the POWs also appeared at the meeting on 23 October. A letter from the County Governor Jakob Grundel in Västerbotten County had arrived saying that three Russian POWs had recently been brought from Finland. The prisoners were Captain “Ivan Putilof” [Иван Путилов], Lieutenant “Maxim Babarikin” [Максим Бабарыкин], and a dragoon by the name of “Duras Dorgopolof” [Дурас Долгополов], all belonging to the Lutskiy Dragoon regiment. Most probably these three POWs were the last ones to be captured by the Swedes during the Great Northern War. They had been taken by a group of farmers on 6 September 1721 at colonel von Essen’s estate in Tavastehus County, and from there they had been brought to Västerbotten. It was noted that they had been captured before the ratification of the peace treaty and that they now could follow the Swedish military transports over to Ostrobothnia. Likewise, a question from the War College about a Russian lieutenant who had been kept in arrest in Malmö for five years could be released, was answered that he now could be set free³².

Shortly after the meeting on 23 October, new counterorders were sent from the Royal Commission on 25 October urging the County Governors in Örebro and Linköping that they without delay should hurry with the march of the Russian POWs to Stockholm³³. And in Stockholm, the work of organizing the transport for the POWs across the Baltic Sea was finally started by the appointed Royal Commission. Already on Monday 30 October 1721, they could present a detailed report, dated 26 October, for the Royal Senate on how the transport of the Russian POWs to Reval would be organized. They had concluded that there were 1300 to 1400 Russian POWs who needed to be transported. They had also negotiated with private shipowners about the transport. However, the shipowners had not

31 RA, KMK, DOK, RP, A 1: 137, pp. 696–705, Minutes from the Royal Senate 23 October 1721.

32 *Ibidem*; RA, KE, B 1a: 6, pp. 1386v–1387v, Letter to County Governor Jakob Grundel 23 October 1721; p. 1390r, Letter to the War College 23 October 1721. The Russian lieutenant in Malmö was named “Daniel Slawskij” and had come over to Skåne from Danish Zealand in September 1716, when the Russian fleet at the time was standing there, not as a POW but as a deserter after an alleged duel when he had killed another Russian officer. RA-KrA, KK, KRK, Ec: 84, pp. 5945–5946, Letter from County Governor Carl Gustaf Hårdh 1 September 1721. The last captured Russian POWs who arrived in Stockholm were probably three other dragoons from the Lutskiy Dragoon regiment. They had been captured by the Finnish Captain Lars Kärckisudd’s free foot dragoon company and had been transported by land via Ostrobothnia, passing Torneå on 8 March, along the coast towards Stockholm. They had first been known as “Michiw von Kudzou”, “Wasiliwitz Kaschi”, “Achim Wasilion”, but after arriving at “Barnhuset” in Stockholm on 6 April 1721 they were recorded as “Mikifer Kudrin”, “Wasili Merkassin”, “Akim Wasilioff”. RA-SA, SHSS, G 1: 160, p. 685; RA, LRK, Väster-norrlands län, vol. 163, pp. 1203, 3545.

33 RA-KrA, KK, KRK, Ec: 85, pp. 6589–6591, Letter from County Governor Conrad Ribbing 30 October 1721.

34 RA, KMK, DOK, RP, A 1: 137, pp. 775–778, Minutes from the Royal Senate 30 October 1721; RA, KE, B 1a: 6, pp. 1401v–1404v, His Royal Majesty's resolution about the transport of the Russian POWs 30 October 1721; RA-KrA, Utredningskommissionen [next: UK], vol. 8, pp. 966–980, Report about the transport of the Russian POWs 26 October 1721.

35 RA, KMK, DOK, RP, A 1: 137, pp. 696–701, Minutes from the Royal Senate 23 October 1721.

been overly happy about such a late transport since the risk of being forced to stay in Reval over the winter was high, which would mean a considerable extra cost. Thus, the shipowners had demanded 15 daler silver coins per “last” which the Commission had managed to negotiate down to 13 daler silver coins. The POWs should also be provided with a month of sea provision to the same amount as the Swedish mariners. This provision consisted of dry bread, salted meat, herring, grains or peas, tobacco, salt, vodka, or malt drink. They also suggested a scribe was needed for each ship, who would be responsible for distributing the sea provision. Concerning the Russian officers, the Commission suggested it would be best to give them money so they could get their provision. The Royal Senate followed the suggestions made by the Commission, except that they did not find it necessary with any scribes since the provision could be distributed by the Russian officers. And if there would be any provisions left when they reached Reval they could keep it. It would be less expensive than keeping several scribes, who also might have to stay over the winter in Reval. Finally, they added that the Russian fasting period was soon approaching so it should also be ensured that fish and salt should be included in the sea provisions³⁴.

The number of Russian POWs who were left in Sweden

The knowledge about exactly how many Russian POWs there still were left in Sweden was vague. When the question came up at the meeting of the Royal Senate on 23 October 1721, Secretary Carl von Carlsson answered that it was alleged to be between 1500 to 1700 POWs in the counties, but he did not know how many there were in Stockholm³⁵. But as we have seen, the figure was soon revised down to 1300 to 1400 POWs, but also that figure was an exaggeration.

It is also hard to determine the exact total number of POWs who were captured by the Swedes during the Great Northern War. Many POWs were recruited by the Swedes shortly after being captured, such as after the battles of Kliszów in 1702 and Fraustadt in 1706³⁶. Others were exchanged or simply released shortly after being captured, such as at Narva in 1700 and at Nieśwież in 1706³⁷. Some of the POWs also died while being transported to Sweden³⁸.

But by counting how many POWs arrived in Sweden during the whole period of the Great Northern War, one will find that it was a little more than 15,000 POWs who for a shorter or longer time were being kept in mainland Sweden. Most of them were Saxon and Danish POWs, about 5,000 and 4,800 POWs respectively. The smallest group was the Poles/Lithuanians with about 1,300 POWs. The total figure for Russian POWs lands around 4,000, but that figure also includes about 620 Cossacks from the Ukrainian hetmanate as well as several English and Dutch POWs who had been in Russian service. But over the years during this long war, some POWs had been exchanged, some had been released due to old age or illnesses, some had managed to escape, and some had died in captivity³⁹. Not least, almost 200 Russian POWs died only in Stockholm during the plague epidemic of 1710⁴⁰.

From the beginning of the war, it had been the Defence Commission⁴¹ who had been responsible for the national overview of the POWs, but since the POWs were distributed over almost the whole country, it was locally the county and town administrations that had the responsibility to organize how the POWs were lodged and that they were kept under some kind of surveillance so they would not get a possibility to escape. But at the end of the war, it was the War College that had had the national responsibility for the POWs. When the War College in May 1721 had requested lists of the Russian POWs in each county, they got the figure of 1044 Russian POWs. However, it is obvious they were

36 At Kliszów in July 1702, about 900 of the Saxon POWs, both officers, and soldiers agreed to enter Swedish service only a week after the battle. They were subsequently sent to be stationed in Swedish Pomerania, but on the way, they all rebelled and escaped. At Fraustadt in February 1706, about 2400 Saxon POWs, soon after the battle, agreed to enter Swedish service in a Bavarian infantry regiment (1200 men), a French battalion (600 men), and a Swiss battalion (600 men). Furthermore, most of the other Saxon POWs that had been captured at Fraustadt also entered Swedish service within a year, but after they first had arrived in Sweden. In Sweden, they formed one Saxon Infantry regiment (1200 men) and three Saxon battalions (600 men each). G. Adlerfelt [published anonymously], *Warhaffter Entwurff der Krieges-Thaten Carls XII. Königes von Schweden*, Hamburg 1707, pp. 112–113; J. Nordberg, *Konung Carl den XII:tes historia*, vol. I, Stockholm 1740, p. 275; O. Sjöström, *Fraustadt 1706. Ett fält färgat rött*, Lund 2008, p. 271; F. Hjelmqvist, *Kriget i Finland och Ingermanland 1707 och 1708*, Lund 1909, pp. 119–122.

37 At Narva in November 1700, thousands of Russian soldiers were allowed to leave, though without their weapons, the battlefield, but only the Russian officers were kept as POWs. At Nieśwież, in May 1706, the garrison was set free shortly after their surrender. M. Laidre, *Segern vid Narva. Början till en stormakts fall*, Stockholm 1996, pp. 169–171; Kh. Khenriksson [H. Henriksson], *Shvedy v Nesvizhe v mae 1706 g. (po shvedskim istochnikam)*, "Acta anniversaria" 2018, t. 4, p. 140.

38 When about 4000 Saxon POWs who had been captured at Pultusk and Toruń in 1703 were being shipped from

Danzig to Sweden in late November 1703, hundreds of them died at sea in a terrible storm. When the transport ship “Wasa” was disembarked at the port of Kalmar on 2 December 1703, it was noted that 40 to 50 POWs had died on the way and had been thrown overboard. Another ship, “Profeten Jonas”, sank at Säckervik in Courland on 7 December 1703 with 164 POWs and only 21 were said to have survived. RA, Defensionskommissionen, vol. 9. Letter from County Governor Reinhold Rehmbinder 3 December 1703; RA-KrA, Amiralitetskollegium [next: AK], Kansliet [next: KST], B 1a: 78, pp. 50–53, Letter to the Defence Commission 9 January 1704.

³⁹ The figure on how many POWs who arrived in Sweden during the Great Northern War has been calculated from a wide range of sources, the main ones being the following: RA, Defensionskommissionen, vol. 75–231; RA-SA, SHSS, G 1: 113–160; RA, Militaria, vol. 1523–1524.

⁴⁰ RA-SA, SHSS, G 1: 139, pp. 1095–1204.

⁴¹ The Defence Commission – *Defensionskommissionen* – was a committee within the Royal Senate that was established in April 1700 at the outbreak of the Great Northern War. It held the general responsibility regarding the defence of the realm during the years King Charles XII was absent from Sweden. The Commission also had the general responsibility for the prisoners of war. The Commission held its last meetings in 1714 and the duties were mainly transferred to the Royal Senate.

⁴² RA-KrA, KK, KKK, Ec: 85, p. 6541, Report of the Russian POWs compiled from lists submitted from the counties 7 June 1721. For example, there are no POWs listed from Uppsala, Södermanland and Västmanland counties.

missing information from some counties. More likely, there were a little more than 1200 Russian POWs left in Sweden at the time⁴².

The Russian POWs start to celebrate the peace

The Russian POWs, at least the officers, were probably aware of the ongoing peace negotiations in Nystad, but negotiations had been held before without any treaty being signed, and life went on as usual also for the Russian POWs in Sweden during the summer of 1721. Therefore, it is not strange that the Russian Major Grigoriy Fustov in August 1721 asked the Russian POWs in the town of Nyköping to send one of them to Örebro to collect their part of the Russian money that had been transferred from the Tsar to the Russian POWs in Sweden. The Russian POW “Denis Zobow” got his travel pass for Örebro from the County administration for “8 à 10 days” on 25 August 1721, and already on 30 August he could return with the money from Örebro⁴³.

When the Magistrate in the town of Arboga on Monday 30 October 1721 publicly read aloud, for all the Russian POWs in the town, they received orders from the County Governor that they now had permission to march back to their homeland, after a – “God in glory” – peace had been settled with their government. According to the orders, they would march from the town on Thursday 2 November over which the Russian POWs “showed great joy and delight”⁴⁴.

In the town of Nora, the Magistrate informed on 2 October 1721 all the Russian POWs in the town that they now should get ready to leave and pay all their debts, but they were also, “now at the end”, exhorted to stay moderate and well, so that they would not cause any complaints. At the Magistrate’s meeting on Saturday 14 October, the day before they departed from the town, it could be ascertained that their debts were paid in time, but once again

the Russian POWs were exhorted to be ready to leave at 2 p.m. the next day and until then to “live moderate and calm”. However, it seems like the Russian POWs started to celebrate their impending freedom a little too early⁴⁵.

When the Russian POWs were about to leave the town of Nora on Sunday afternoon 15 October, it was found out that five of them were missing. One of the present Russians, “Jagor Anikieff”, was sent back to the town to look for the missing ones. He soon found “Darofei Kiriloff”, but he was not too keen on leaving, and instead he was looking for some more vodka to drink. They went on to Anders Andersson’s house to drink, but at the same time, the servant-man Nils Olsson entered and started to beat Darofei. The Russians tried to escape but Nils continued to beat Darofei out on the street where he remained lying unconscious. At the following court hearing, Nils Olsson explained that he had attacked Darofei because he had not followed the other Russians when they were leaving the town and that Darofei had been asking for vodka in several houses. Nils Olsson was sentenced to a fine of 12 daler silver coins for the assault, as well as paying for the treatment of Darofei after the beating and that he – at his expense – should arrange the transport of Darofei to Örebro, where the other Russian POWs were about to leave for Stockholm⁴⁶.

“Emergency coins” and debts

Another issue that appeared when the Russian POWs started to be gathered before the transport, was that some of them had received so-called “emergency coins” in copper which would be close to worthless in Russia. Understandable, they now wanted proper silver coins in exchange for the copper coins. The Royal Senate discussed the question at several meetings during the first half of November. The Senate finally concluded that the POWs could exchange their “emergency coins” for silver coins if they had gotten the copper coins in the

43 RA-ULA, Länsstyrelsen i Södermanlands län, LKL, D 2: 20a, Travel pass for Denis Zobow to Örebro 25 August 1721.

44 RA-ULA, Arboga rådhusrätt och magistrat [next: ARM], A 1: 21, p. 180, Minutes from 30 October 1721.

45 RA, Svea hovrätt [next: SH], Advokatfiskalen [next: AF], E 11e: 1851, p. 656r, Minutes from Nora Town Court 2 October 1721, pp. 665v–666r, Minutes from Nora Town Court 14 October 1721.

46 RA, SH, AF, E 11e: 1851, pp. 674v–676v, Minutes from Nora Town Court 23 October 1721, pp. 677r–677v, Minutes from Nora Town Court 25 October 1721. “Darofei Kiriloff” was a grenadier and had been taken as a POW by the Swedes when they had captured a Russian galley on the Baltic Sea in June 1715. He was born in a farmer’s family around 1670 in Kazan and was unmarried.

47 RA, KMK, DOK, RP, A 1: 137, pp. 794–795, 908–911, 945–949, 1123–1125, Minutes from the Royal Senate 2, 10, 13, 21 November 1721.

cases when they had changed promissory notes that they had received from Russia, but not if they were saved coins from the daily allowance they had received from the Swedes. In the latter case, the copper coins could be exchanged at the same rate as the Swedes later were supposed to be able to do – 14 öre silver coins for 1 daler “emergency coins”, which was less than half of the original value. However, some members of the Royal Senate on 21 November, when the transport was about to leave, had gotten news that the Russian POWs anyway had received 30 öre silver coins for each daler “emergency coins”. Secretary Gustaf Boneauschiöld then explained that a few days earlier, King Frederick had ordered the State Commission to pay the Russian POWs 30 öre silver coins for their “emergency coins”⁴⁷.

Another case was the debts some of the Russian POWs had in the towns where they had lived during their captivity. This mainly concerned the officers, who usually had not got any daily allowance from the Swedes and often also rented their quarters. The Royal Senate discussed the issue on Friday 10 November 1721 after they had received news from Örebro that some Russian POWs there had debts of about 500 daler silver coins. Most members of the Royal Senate were of the view that the debts could be paid by public funds so that all POWs could leave Sweden before the winter. Count Erik Sparre added that by paying the debts of 500 daler silver coins, the benefits would perhaps be 5000 daler silver coins, “in that the tsar could thereby be encouraged to show generosity to our prisoners in Russia”. Count Johan Lillienstedt agreed and said that there were many more Swedish POWs in Russia and that their debts were far higher. Only Count Anders Leijonstedt was of a different view and thought that they should follow the words of the Peace Treaty where it was stated that the POWs first should pay their debts or give some kind of security for their debts before they could be released. However, at the next meeting on Monday 13 November, the Royal Senate unanimously

decided that the debts should be paid by public funds since it would cost much more to keep the POWs over the winter, but that the money should be kept in mind when questions about the debts of Swedish POWs in Russia would appear⁴⁸.

The transport across the Baltic Sea in November 1721

Meanwhile, the responsible commission had continued planning for the transport of the POWs. Already on 26 October 1721 they applied at the State Office for 20.659 daler and 24 öre silver coins for the transport. Five merchant ships were contracted for the transport: *Magdalena* with the shipmaster Lorentz Axberg, *Sankt Olof* with the shipmaster Gustaf Carlsson, *Sankt Peter* with the shipmaster Brunsell, *Patriarken Isac* with the shipmaster Daniel Ström, and *Helena Galley* with the shipmaster Hindric Dodes. They also organized the work by building cook-houses and other needed constructions on the ships. Even though some of the Russian POWs had been given new clothes already in the counties where they had been staying, such as the 44 POWs in Göteborg and Bohus County who had gotten new wadmal coats and trousers, lockram shirts, wool socks, leather shoes to a cost of 10 daler 26 öre silver coins each in January 1721, it became apparent when the Russian POWs started to arrive in Vaxholm that many of them would need new clothing before their departure so they could stand the cold weather⁴⁹. Another reason was that news had reached Stockholm that the first Swedish POWs who had been released from the Russian side had been provided with new clothing⁵⁰.

Preferably, the Russians would be given old clothes from the military storehouse in Stockholm, but it was not enough so additional clothing had to be bought. A summary of how many clothes had been given to the Russian POWs at Vaxholm in November 1721 gives

48 RA, KMK, DOK, RP, A 1: 137, pp. 908–911, 945–949, Minutes from the Royal Senate 10, 13 November 1721.

49 RA-KrA, UK, vol. 8, pp. 962–964, 993–996, Letters to the State Office 26 October, 14 November 1721; RA-KrA, Krigshandlingar [next: KH], Stora Nordiska Kriget [next: SNK], Avd.14a, vol. 5, p. 67, Calculation for the clothing to the Russian POWs in Göteborg and Bohus County 18 January 1721; RA, KE, B 1a: 6, pp. 1404v–1405r, 1434v–1435v, Letters to the State Office 30 October, 2 November 1721; pp. 1433v–1434v, Letter to the War College 2 November 1721; RA, Statskontoret [next: SK], KST, B 1: 129, pp. 793–795, Letter to Johan Ehrenpreus 15 November 1721.

50 P. Sörensson, *op.cit.*, p. 133.

51 RA-KrA, KH, SNK, Avd.14a, vol. 5, pp. 21–22, Calculation for the clothing that was delivered to the Russian POWs in Stockholm 1720–1721; RA, KMK, Krigskollegiums skrivelser till Kungl. Maj:t, vol. 31, Letter dated 24 January 1722.

52 Lorentz Rothof is also said to have followed the Russian POWs from Reval to Saint Petersburg where he is supposed to have delivered them to the same Russian officer that took him as a POW at the Dnieper in 1709. However, this story is unsourced and very unlikely. Rothof was ennobled under the name Ridderhof in 1727 but died unmarried and without children in 1750, thus closing the noble family himself. G. Anrep, *Svenska adelns ättar-taflor*, vol. 3, Stockholm 1864, p. 406.

53 RA, SK, KST, B 1: 129, pp. 795–797, Letters to Erich Råfelt 15 November 1721; Travel pass for Captain Lorens Rothof 16 November 1721; RA, KE, B 1a: 6, pp. 1503v–1504r, 1520v–1521v, Letters to the State Office 13, 15 November 1721; pp. 1504v–1505v, His Royal Majesty's instruction for Captain Lorentz Rothof 13 November 1721; RA, KMK, DOK, RP, A 1: 137, pp. 1039–1040, Minutes from the Royal Senate 15 November 1721. Lorentz Rothof was ennobled in 1727 and was given the name Ridderhof.

the following figures: 550 grey wadmal coats, 421 blue broadcloth jackets, 14 wadmal jackets, 629 grey wadmal trousers, 158 blue trousers, 16 leather trousers, 1091 shirts, 1069 socks, and 933 shoes. Later in early 1722, the War College reported that it had handed out 446 new broadcloth coats and 158 broadcloth trousers to the Russian POWs. At the same time, the cost for all the new clothes that had been delivered to the Russian POWs was said to have amounted to 8313 daler and 5 1/3 öre silver coins⁵¹.

A commanding officer had also been appointed for the transport – Captain Lorentz Rothof of the Västmanland Infantry regiment. Rothof was 36 years old and an experienced soldier who had survived the battles of Lesna, Krasnokutsk and Poltava as well as the siege of Vepryk. He became a POW after the surrender at Perevolochna in 1709 when he still was an ensign. Then he endured ten years as a POW in Russia, for most of the time in Kazan where he is said to have earned his living by producing vodka and snuff, before he managed to escape via Livonia, Courland, and Prussia, and finally returned to Sweden in September 1719⁵². In his instructions for the transport, it says that the Russian POWs should be delivered to the Russian Commandant in Reval. He should also keep good order among the POWs during the sea journey and ensure that they would get enough food. Furthermore, it is also stated that he should do his utmost to deliver the POWs in Reval, but in case of headwinds or ice, he could sail to Riga, Pernau, or another port. If the ships would not be able to return due to the frozen sea, he should return by land going north to Finland. Only 5 non-commissioned officers and 5 soldiers assisted the captain during the transport of the POWs across the Baltic Sea⁵³.

There was not much time left before the transport would be impossible to conduct since the winter had already arrived. The inland Swedish waterways from Stockholm had been closed for the season by mid-November after ships had started to become icebound. However,

for a short time, it was still possible for outbound vessels to leave Stockholm⁵⁴.

One last obstacle before the Russian POWs could leave appeared when the transport was almost ready to leave. It became known that some of the Russians had brought their Swedish wives and children with them to Vaxholm and that they now intended to bring them along to Russia. It seems like it was the Stockholm Consistory that first brought the question to attention. On Monday 20 November 1721, they had sent a letter to Governor-General Gustaf Adam Taube in Stockholm requesting that the Swedish wives and children of the Russian POWs who had arrived from the countryside would not be allowed to leave the country together with POWs. The women were Lutherans and the Consistory now feared that their souls would be in danger if they would be allowed to leave the country and thus also the true faith. It was also in doubt if they all were truly married since the Russian POWs had only been allowed to marry Swedish women if they first had converted to the Lutheran faith and promised to stay in Sweden⁵⁵.

Governor-General Gustaf Adam Taube, who also was a member of the Royal Senate, brought the question to its next meeting on Tuesday 21 November. King Frederick started by saying that the Russian POWs probably already had left, but anyway he ordered Adjutant General Theodor Ankarcrona to directly go to Vaxholm and take away all women who could not prove they were married. Count Gustaf Cronhielm was of the meaning that also married women should be brought back since they were not allowed to marry the POWs if they first had not converted to our religion and intended to stay in Sweden. Count Johan Lillienstedt and the rest of the Royal Senate agreed. The King, who only had two votes at the meetings, directly left the meeting and went to his rooms after this discussion, probably dissatisfied with the outcome⁵⁶.

54 On 13 November 1721, the Hjälmaren Canal was closed for the winter by the head of the canal, Johan Nordgren, after four ships had become ice-bound in the canal. The last ships that had managed to pass had paid their canal dues on 9 November. RA-ULA, Länsstyrelsen i Västmanlands län, LKT, E 1c: 75, pp. 1720–1726.

55 SSA, Stockholms domkapitel, E 3: 69, no. 116.

56 RA, KMK, DOK, RP, A 1: 137, pp. 1111–1112, Minutes from the Royal Senate 21 November 1721.

At the next meeting of the Senate, on Thursday 23 November, Adjutant General Ankarcrona could report that the Russian POWs were already onboard the ships and were ready to leave since it was favourable winds. He had found out that 21 Russian POWs could prove with attests that they were married or engaged with Swedish women. Furthermore, all the married Russian POWs had said they did not want to stay in Sweden, “not even if it would cost them their lives”. Count Johan Lillienstedt then advocated that both married and engaged women should stay in Sweden, not least because the Peace Treaty stated that Swedish POWs who had converted to the Greek faith would stay in Russia. Count Carl Gustaf Rehnskiöld then noted that if they would let them go, the Tsar would be obliged to let the married Swedish POWs leave Russia. Governor-General Gustaf Adam Taube added that for each person we would keep, the Tsar would find an opportunity to keep some hundreds of our POWs in Russia. Count Nicodemus Tessin agreed that this should be considered to be a political question. But, he added, this was also a religious issue and he wanted to obtain further statements from Stockholm Consistory. Count Claes Ekeblad suggested they could let the transport leave but keep the 21 Russian POWs, who were married or engaged, over the winter. Governor-General Taube then explained that if they would keep them, then the Tsar would keep 100 Swedish POWs for each of the Russian POWs. To get more information from the Consistory, Vicar Sven Cameen was sent for to join the meeting, and a little later he was let in to be inquired about the question. After he had explained the situation, he said that perhaps the married couples could be allowed to leave, but it was another question with the engaged ones. Count Axel Banér then commented that the Russian POWs had been allowed to marry on the conditions they would stay in Sweden. Count Tessin still wanted the Consistory to meet for a more thorough discussion about this, preferably, on the same day. Vicar Cameen said it

would be difficult to convene on such short notice, but he would try⁵⁷.

The question about the married Russian POWs did not appear at the next meetings of the Royal Senate, and there are no minutes from an extra meeting of the Stockholm Consistory where they discussed this issue. Most probably, the issue solved itself when the five ships with the Russian POWs left Vaxholm. But it is also notable, that in the instructions for Captain Lorentz Rothof that were issued already on 13 November 1721, it is stated that the Russian POWs who were married, were by the grace of his majesty allowed to bring their wives and children, and they were as well provided with sea provision. This instruction was read out at the meeting of the Royal Senate the same day, but no one was commenting on this section⁵⁸.

Unfortunately, no lists of the Russian POWs that embarked on the ships in Vaxholm have yet been found in any Swedish archive. However, it is known how many POWs arrived from the western and southern/eastern routes: 461 respectively 584 POWs. Additionally, 48 POWs arrived from Uppsala and at least 49 POWs arrived from Stockholm and the nearby royal palaces Drottningholm and Ulriksdal. By adding up these figures we get the total figure of 1142 Russian POWs⁵⁹. Most probably the five ships with the Russian POWs left Vaxholm on Friday 24 November 1721, or at the latest the next day, taking advantage of the favourable winds⁶⁰.

A second transport with Russian POWs in April 1722

After most of the Russian POWs had left Sweden in late November 1721 there were still some left in Sweden. Most of them were the Russian POWs that had been lodged in the fortresses in Halmstad and Varberg in Halland County, and who did not reach Stockholm in time for the main transport in November 1721. The reason why they

57 RA, KMK, DOK, RP, A 1: 137, pp. 1126–1130, 1138–1140, Minutes from the Royal Senate 23 November 1721.

58 RA, KE, B 1a: 6, pp. 1504v–1505v, His Royal Majesty's instruction for Captain Lorentz Rothof 13 November 1721; RA, KMK, DOK, RP, A 1: 137, p. 945, Minutes from the Royal Senate 13 November 1721; RA-KrA, UK, vol. 8, pp. 997–1001, Letter to Royal Councillor, Field Marshal and Count Carl Gustaf Dücker, 15 November 1721.

59 SSA, SL, LKT, E 1: 7b, p.1623–1625; SSA, SL, LKT, E 1: 7d, pp. 3431–3433; RA-SA, SHSS, G 1: 160, pp. 701–702; *ibidem*, Ulriksdals slott, F 4:7.

60 The last clothes were delivered to the Russian POWs on the ships on 24 November 1721 and they probably left shortly afterward. RA-KrA, KH, SNK, Avd.14a, vol. 5, pp. 21–22, Calculation for the clothing that was delivered to the Russian POWs in Stockholm 1720–1721.

61 RA-GLA, GBLL, A 2a: 42, p. 1839, Letter to County Governor Axel Faltzburg 26 October 1721.

62 RA-GLA, Skaraborgs läns landskansli [SLL], A 2: 43, pp. 1100–1101, Travel pass for 37 Russian POWs 10 November 1721; pp. 1109–1110, Letter to the War College 13 November 1721. RA-ULA, LÖL, LKL, D 2c:4, Letter from County Governor Petter Scheffer 3 November 1721; RA-ULA, Länsstyrelsen i Västmanlands län, LKL, D 1: 56, no. 324, Letter from the State Office 24 November 1721; RA, SK, KST, B 1: 129, Letter to County Governor Magnus Cronberg 6 December 1721.

63 RA-KrA, KK, KRK, Ec: 86, pp. 4353–4659, Letter from County Governor Magnus Cronberg 8 April 1722; RA-KrA, KH, SNK, Avd.14a, vol. 5, List of Russian POWs who were delivered to Naval Captain Carl Ridderstolpe in Vaxholm on 25 April 1722. More information about the Cossacks from the Ukrainian Hetmanate can be found in: H. Henriksson, *Ukrainian Cossacks and other prisoners of war in Sweden during the Great Northern War (1700–1721)* [in:] *Ukraïna v Tsentral'no-Skhidnii Yevropi*, V. Smolii (ed.), Kyiv 2016, pp. 247–259.

never made it in time could probably be blamed on the County Governor Axel Faltzburg in Halland. The Russian POWs who had been stationed in Halland County had not been ready to leave before 26 October 1721, which was almost a month after the POWs in the neighbouring Göteborg and Bohus County had started their march towards Stockholm⁶¹.

The 37 Russian POWs from Halland reached Mariestad on 10 November and were hurried on from there to Örebro, but by the time they had reached Västerås, it was too late for them to be able to reach the departing transport ships with the main part of the Russian POWs. Instead, these 37 Russian POWs were rerouted to Uppsala to wait over the winter. The group reached Uppsala on 29 November 1721 when the other Russian POWs were already on their way to Reval⁶².

Later, in December 1721 and at the beginning of 1722 smaller groups of Russian POWs joined the POWs from Halland in Uppsala. Most of these POWs had been in private service in the countryside and had probably got the news about the transport in 1721 too late to be able to get to Stockholm in time. 55 Russian POWs left Uppsala on Monday 9 April 1722, leaving behind three other Russian POWs in Uppsala Castle's jail who were under trial for theft, but the others arrived in Vaxholm on Sunday 15 April. When the Russian POWs embarked on the two ships that would sail them to Åbo in late April 1722, a few more POWs had arrived in Vaxholm from other places so that there were now 60 Russian POWs, whereof 11 were Cossacks from the Ukrainian Hetmanate⁶³. None of them were listed as bringing wives or children. However, it is known that at least two of them, Sergeant Vassiliy Kurskiy [Василий Курский] and the Hetmanate Cossack Danylo Kharchenko [Данило Харченко] of the Pereiaslav regiment, had been married to Swedish women but their wives were already deceased. Another one of the POWs, the Hetmanate Cossack Andriy Kupriyanenko [Андрій Купріяненко] of the Pereiaslav regiment, had brought

a Swedish woman he was betrothed with and now wanted to bring with him. However, she was not allowed to follow her man, and consequently, she was sent back to her domicile⁶⁴.

Just like at the previous transport, the Russian POWs were given, if needed, new clothing. The 60 POWs were now altogether given 7 coats, 31 blue vests, 16 leather vests, 36 blue trousers, 18 leather trousers, 54 shirts, 54 socks, 54 hats, 41 pairs of shoes, and 13 pairs of boots. This time the Russian POWs were being transported in one of the two galleys that were destined to go to Åbo in Finland to get the first part of the Russian money that Sweden would receive according to the Peace Treaty. The POWs were all embarked on the galley called *Töva lite*. Commander for the transport was the Naval Captain Carl Ridderstolpe and it is recorded that the galleys lay at anchor outside Vaxholm and ready to sail on Wednesday 25 April 1722 and most probably they soon sailed away towards Åbo. The Russian POWs had been given sea provision for a month, and it was hoped that it would be enough also for the further transport by land through Finland to Russian Viborg⁶⁵.

At the same time as this second transport with Russian POWs left Sweden, Swedish POWs started to arrive from Russia in larger numbers, and by the summer of 1722 about 2000 Swedish POWs had returned from Russia⁶⁶. By the end of 1722, it was reported that 3408 Swedish POWs had returned from their captivity. Most probably, the actual figure was higher since complete reports from Finland were missing. Five years later, the total figure probably exceeded 5000 returned Swedish POWs⁶⁷.

The Russian POWs who decided to stay in Sweden

By the end of April 1722, most Russian POWs had left Sweden and thus one can conclude that article 14 of the Peace Treaty had been successfully implemented in

64 The Russian Sergeant Vassiliy Kurskiy had married Kerstin Larsdotter Holm in the town of Borås, Älvsborg County on 28 November 1714 and the Hetmanate Cossack Danylo Kharchenko had married Marta Jöransdotter on 16 May 1714 in Madesjö parish, Kalmar County. The Hetmanate Cossack Andryi Kupriyanenko had brought his betrothed Maria Håkansdotter from Gränna, Jönköping County who had to return home where she in 1722 gave birth to his child. Kupriyanenko also left a daughter in Sweden who had been born two months before Christmas in 1716 in Ljungby parish, Kalmar County. She was the daughter of Annika Hansdotter who Kupriyanenko had been betrothed to in 1715, but who he had been denied marrying since he had refused to assure he would stay in the country as a Swedish subject and convert to the Lutheran religion. RA-GLA, Borås kyrkoarkiv, C 1: 2, p. 500. RA-Landsarkivet i Vadstena [next: RA-VaLA], Madesjö kyrkoarkiv, C 1: 2, p. 9; Göta hovrätt [next: GH], AF, E 7BAA: 2071, Minutes from Gränna Town Court 2 October 1721; GH, AF, E 7AABA: 594, pp. 101v–103r, Minutes from Södra Möre district court 26 June 1721.

65 RA, KE, B 1a: 7, Letter to the State Office 2 April 1722; Letter to the War College 3 April 1722. RA-KrA, KK, KKK, B 1: 68, Letters to Captain Carl Ridderstolpe 4, 20 April 1722; RA-KrA, KH, SNK, Avd. 2, vol. 49, pp. 15–16, List of the clothing that was delivered to the Russian POWs on 25 April 1722.

66 RA-KrA, KK, KKK, Ec: 86, pp. 4345–4653.

67 P. Sörensson, *op.cit.*, pp. 157–158, 198–200.

68 RA-ULA, ARM, A 1: 21, p. 191, Minutes from 15 November 1721; Västerås rådhusrätt och magistrat, A 2: 19, Minutes from 13 November 1721; Köpings rådhusrätt och magistrat, A 1A: 15, Minutes from 13 November 1721.

69 SSA, Överståthållarämbetets äldre kansli [next: ÖÄK], F 1a: 12, no. 195.

a fairly short period. However, there were still probably 20 to 30 Russians left in different parts of Sweden. Some were awaiting trials for committing crimes, but most of them had married Swedish women during their time as POWs and they now wanted to remain in Sweden as Swedish subjects, which also was something they had promised when they had gotten permission to marry Swedes. Also, the Peace Treaty gave them the right to remain. However, some of them now wanted to be sure of their status as Swedish subjects and that they had the right to remain in Sweden also after the peace had been concluded. The County Governor Gustaf Funck in Västmanland County had already on 31 October 1721 asked for advice on how to deal with the Russian POWs who wanted to remain in Sweden. The temporary Defence Commission answered on 7 November 1721 that the “Russian POWs who here want to remain can be allowed if they change their religion”. This order was publicly proclaimed a week later in the towns of Västmanland County⁶⁸. One Russian who seems to have listened was “Jacob Krigof” who at County Governor Gustaf Funck in Västerås on 22 December 1721 requested and received permission to work in the countryside to earn his living⁶⁹.

In the town of Mariestad in Skaraborg County, two Russian POWs were interrogated at the Town Court on 18 October 1721, three days before the Russian POWs would leave the town. Both were Hetmanate Cossacks, Stepan Naumenko [Степан Науменко] of the Starodub regiment, and Ivan Martynenko [Іван Мартиненко] of the Pereiaslav regiment, and both had married Swedish women on the nearby island and parish of Torsö in 1720. They now asked for permission to remain in Sweden with their wives and children. The Russian translator Policarpus Garassimoff, who was present at the examination, added on their behalf that he knew that four POWs in Göteborg and three POWs in Lidköping had stayed in their towns. The County Governor Petter Scheffer later examined the minutes from the examination

and apparently, he decided to let them remain with their families since they were still with their families on Torsö several years later⁷⁰.

Also in Östergötland County, there were a few Russians who wanted to get confirmation on the right to remain in Sweden instead of following the Russian POWs who had already departed from the county. On 14 November 1721, the County Governor granted permission for three Russian POWs to remain in Sweden⁷¹. Later, in May 1722, the War College received a petition from three Russian POWs who asked for “permission to remain in the country” and to return to their Swedish wives in Småland⁷². In this case, they may have followed the other Russian POWs to Vaxholm, but in the end, had decided to stay in Sweden.

But only a few weeks earlier, on 18 April 1722, the War College had received a letter from County Governor Anders Lindhielm in Jönköping, where he was telling about three Russian POWs who had been asking him for permission to return home with their wives and children. However, the County Governor was reluctant to give them such permission since they had “ensured to assume the Lutheran religion when they got permission to build their marriages with Swedish women” and that the wives and children now were in danger to “plunge into eternal perdition” if they would be allowed to travel to Russia⁷³.

The War College forwarded the question from Jönköping to the King and the Royal Senate who discussed the issue on 26 April 1722. State Secretary Daniel Niclas von Höpken reminded the Senate that in Russia the nature of marriage was different because according to their religion “man and wife can separate when they please, but here in Sweden it is completely different”. The Royal Senate finally ended in the resolution to follow the proposal from the War College, to treat them in the same way as the married Swedish POWs in Russia, and thus had to wait and see if they would be allowed

70 RA-VaLA, GH, AF, E 7BAA: 4322, Minutes from Mariestad Town Court 18 October 1721.

71 RA-VaLA, Länsstyrelsen i Östergötland, LKL, A 2A: 37, pp. 999–1000. The three Russian POWs are named as “Michifor Jacoblof”, “Gregori Loveneu” and “Jacob Donaivitz”.

72 RA-KrA, KK, KRK, Ec: 86, pp. 4915–4916. The three Russian POWs are named as “Allexci Sidoroff”, “Petter Bottmonkoff” and “Mickel Jacobi”.

73 *Ibidem*, pp. 4363–4364–4916, Letter from County Governor Anders Lindhielm 10 April 1722. The two Russian POWs “Ivan Costencko” and “Petter Timofejo” both had wives and children, but the wife of the third POW, “Jacob Bespoli”, had died and they had no children.

74 RA, KMK, DOK, RP, A 1: 138, pp. 1571–1572, Minutes from the Royal Senate 26 April 1722.

75 P. Sörensson, *op.cit.*, pp. 156, 186–187; A. Demkin, *Ödet för svenskar som blev kvar i Ryssland* [in:] *Poltava – Krigsfångar och kulturutbyte*, L. Jonsson, T. Torstendahl Salytjeva (eds.), Stockholm 2009, pp. 81–89.

76 RA-VaLA, GH, AF, E 7BAA: 4322, Minutes from Mariestad Town Court 23 July, 4 August 1722.

to return to Sweden⁷⁴. However, it soon turned out that the Russian side exercised strict control of the departing Swedish POWs so hardly any converted Swedes with Russian wives and children would be able to leave Russia⁷⁵.

Of course, some Swedish women had had relations with Russian POWs but were left behind when the POWs marched away towards Stockholm. Most probably, one of them was the unmarried maid Kajsa Eriksdotter in Mariestad who gave birth to a child in June 1722. One month later she accused a student to be the father of the illegitimate child, but some witnesses had seen her on the day when the Russian POWs had left Mariestad on Saturday 21 October 1721. The witnesses could tell that they had seen her standing with the Russians on the square and that she had been crying when they were leaving. One of them could even tell that one specific Russian POW, who had had an old bag tied to his back, had come to her, taken his hands around her cheeks, and leaned his head against her. Kajsa could not deny that this had happened, but anyway she denied that a Russian POW was the father of her child⁷⁶.

There were even examples of Russian POWs who left their Swedish wives when they saw an opportunity to return home with the other Russian POWs in late 1721. One of them was the POW who was called Staffan Håkansson and who was said to have been born in the Dorpat region in Swedish Livonia but had lived and worked in Russia where he had learned the trade of tanning. In 1715 he had gotten permission to work as a tanner journeyman in the town of Karlstad, and in October 1719 he had received permission from Queen Ulrica Eleonora to start his own business as a master tanner in the town of Västerås. By then he had also converted to the Lutheran religion and married the Swedish woman Maria Joensdotter. However, there was not enough place for yet another tanner in Västerås so instead, Staffan started his tanner business in the town of Nora where he received burghership in

February 1720. However, in early October 1721, Staffan had without further notice left Nora, after selling all skins he had received. His wife, who was now left alone in Nora with merchants demanding to get back their skins, thought that he had travelled to Stockholm. And quite rightly, the suspicions were true. In early November 1721, County Governor Conrad Ribbing in Örebro received a request from the authorities in Stockholm with inquiries about the Russian POW Staffan Håkansson who now, daringly enough, demanded to receive the daily allowance he had not received for five years while being lodged in Karlstad. Of course, the County Governor answered that Staffan had not been entitled to receive any allowance as a POW since he instead had received a salary like any other tanner journeyman and that he also was a Swedish subject after his conversion and burghership in Nora. No news of Staffan was heard after this, and most probably he left with the rest of the Russian POWs in late November 1721⁷⁷.

But several Russian POWs were fully integrated as Swedish subjects and faithfully stayed with their Swedish families for many decades after the war had ended. One of them was the Tatar “Solleman Ibrasiow” from Kazan and “White Tataria”, who had been captured by the Swedes in Poland in 1707, and who had married the carpenter’s daughter and widow Anna Jönsdotter on 18 March 1715 in the town of Linköping. In 1715 he also had enrolled as the town’s mariner, under the name Jacob Abramsson Ahlgren, and thus also become a belligerent against his former masters. He continued as a mariner until 1724, after which he became a chimney sweeper in Linköping, and that was also his occupation when he as “Jacobus Christianus Ahlgren” passed away in Linköping on 28 April 1742, leaving behind his second wife Christina Nilsson, the daughters Sara, Margareta, and Helena⁷⁸.

Still, there were a few Russian POWs who later decided to return home on their own. Two of them were “Miklian Bassilia” and “Ivan Wasilenko”, who had been

77 RA, SH, AF, E 11e: 1850, pp. 17r–18r, Minutes from Nora Town Court 3 February 1720; E 11e: 1851, pp. 654v–655r, Minutes from Nora Town Court 2 October 1721; RA-ULA, LÖL, LKL, A 1a: 39, pp. 1510–1511, Letter to the Governor General’s office in Stockholm 11 October 1721; pp. 1724–1726, Letter to His Royal Majesty 6 November 1721. After Staffan Håkansson had deviated from Nora in early October 1721 he is mistakenly called Staffan Staffansson in the search notice, where he is described as a middle-aged man, tall and steady, with a rough face and black hair. He was wearing a grey broadcloth coat and could speak tolerable Swedish but with a Russian accent.

78 RA-VaLA, Linköpings domkapitel, A 1a: 35, pp. 31, 33, Minutes from the Consistory 10 and 17 February 1714; E 4: 134, no. 425, Petition from “Jacob Abramitz Slejman” examined by the Linköping consistory 21 November 1712; RA-VaLA, Linköpings domkyrkoförsamling, C 1: 2, p. 313; RA-KrA, Flottans arkiv, AK, Karlskrona station, Sjömilitiekontoret 2, Regementsskrivaren för båtsmanshushället, E 3a1: 1b, General Muster Roll for Tjust mariners’s company 1724, no. 136.

working for private employers and who got permission from the County administration in Kalmar on 31 May 1722 to return to Russia. They even had received travel provisions for their journey home. On 5 July 1722, they had reached Stockholm where they received their final travel documents before going home⁷⁹.

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