

Report

My journey to Sweden began on March 15 last year. I am a Ph.D. student from Velikiy Novgorod and the theme of my dissertation is «Comparative analysis of Novgorod Republic and Medieval Sweden». The aim of my work is to find similarities in political and social structures of these two states. In the beginning of my Ph.D. studies I came across a problem when I could not find materials on Sweden history and history of law in Russian libraries and archives. It is a well-known fact that it is impossible to find Swedish books and articles on the Internet, because it is prohibited by Swedish Law. Luckily for me The Sverker Åström Foundation gives amazing opportunity for young scientists and for those who are interested in Sweden to do research in Sweden. I was very happy to discover that I got a scholarship to do my research in Sweden.

I divide my impressions and experience in Sweden into four levels. The first one is, of course, the scientific one. For six months I did my research at the Centre of Medieval Studies that is a part of History Department at the Stockholm's University. I am very grateful for all people who work at History Department, because all of them were genuinely interested in my research and Novgorod's history. I am also very thankful for my two supervisors - professors Fredrik Ch. Ljungqvist and Kurt Jensen, that helped me with materials, gave me useful advises and were always supportive and kind. I got an opportunity to meet professors, who are like me is interested in Novgorod's history and one of them was Ingmar Jansson, who gave me directions to better understanding of archeological materials and theories of Novgorod and Sweden history. In addition to all of that I got to know how postgraduate studies and the process of writing a dissertation are organized in Sweden and I think Russian universities should adopt some aspects to their Ph.D. systems.

The second level is Sweden - all things that associated with this country, and all people who live here. I were in Sweden several times before my stay here, but always only as a tourist and not for a long period of time to become more

acquainted with one of the most well-developed country in the world. This country was a great inspiration to me since childhood and I finally experienced how to live in Sweden or more precisely how to be a foreigner in Sweden. For us, who got the scholarship, the main Swedish figure was Disa Håstad. She does an enormous work for the Foundation and helps scholars to feel themselves in Sweden like at home. Disa organizes such activities as celebrating of Swedish and Russian holidays (Easter, Christmas, etc), excursions, meetings with influential people of Sweden and Russia. She finds professors or people who can be interested in your research in Sweden. She also always helps with any kind of problems that scholars may come across while living in Sweden and I am greatly appreciating her for that. Thank to Disa and the Foundation I got a bigger picture of what Sweden actually is, who Swedish people are, what is happening here and despite all of differences between our mentalities, I must say that Sweden is welcoming and full of kind people country.

The third level is Russia, my home country, and Russians (Russian-speaking people) whom I met while I was in Sweden. It is very strange to say, but it is true for me - only here, in Sweden, I got to know Russia better. In Sweden I got a perspective on how big our country is, how we are all different even if we are all from the same country, how we are proud of our regions and how we are worry for the future of our country. For me it was so important to finally see the significance of Russian culture, history and mentality from different points of view. Russia is not only this or that, not just one stereotype; it is very complicated and full of contradictions country that is very interesting to study.

The forth level is a personal level. During my six months stay I got to know myself and the world around me better. I can say that I mentally grew up and became more confident and sure about what I am and what I want to do with my life. For that I should say «thank you» to my friends from our flat at Storgatan 38. I think it is amazing how Sweden became a place where we met and to where we always want to return.

Thank you once again The Sverker Åström Foundation for giving a chance to people from Russia to change their lives and get unforgettable experiences in Sweden.



The view of Stockholm in December.