Madame de Staël and the War of Opinion Regarding the Cession of Norway 1813-1814

Ruth Hemstad
National Library of Norway / University of Oslo

Abstract

A pamphlet and propaganda war raged in Great Britain and Europe around 1814 regarding what was called 'The Norwegian question'. In this war of opinion, the French-Swiss author Madame de Staël played an interesting and contested role. The Swedish Crown Prince since 1810, the former French Marshal Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, launched an extensive propaganda campaign from 1812 onwards in order to facilitate a union with Norway. In this rhetorical battle, Madame de Staël, as well as her German friend August Wilhelm Schlegel, played prominent roles, almost like spin doctors, defending the Swedish claims on Norway. The British-Swedish treaty of 1813 and the Norwegian upheaval against being transferred to Sweden in 1814 caused a strong debate in Great Britain, in Parliament and the press. Madame de Staël agitated for Bernadotte's cause in London in 1813-1814. After Napoleon's defeat, she moved back to Paris, still hoping for Bernadotte to replace Napoleon as French ruler. She did not really care for the Norwegian struggle for independence, but eventually advised Bernadotte to accept the 1814 Norwegian Constitution in order to strengthen his liberal image in France.

Keywords

Propaganda, pamphlet war, public opinion, public sphere, British-Scandinavian relations, Madame de Staël, Carl Johan

The Napoleonic Wars led to dramatic political changes in the Scandinavian countries around 1814. These changes are to quite a large extent due to the policy of a French marshal becoming a Swedish Crown Prince. Bernadotte, who served as Marshal of France for Napoleon between 1804 and 1810, was accused by British liberal newspapers of playing his 'Napoleonic tricks of the North' (*The Examiner*, 26 June 1814). One of these Napoleonic tricks was the conscious and extensive use of propaganda to facilitate and promote the transfer of Norway from Denmark to Sweden.[1]

Bernadotte's use of propaganda to influence public opinion was completely in line with the political measures employed by his master Napoleon. Both Bernadotte and Napoleon deliberately used a range of different channels of communication to convince public opinion. To control the newspapers was of vital importance for Bernadotte, as it was for Napoleon. Metternich underlined this point in 1808, stating that:

> The newspapers are worth to Napoleon an army of three hundred thousand men, for such a force would not overlook the interior better, or frighten foreign powers more, than half a dozen of his paid pamphleteers. (Metternich 1880: 225-227)

Bernadotte argued in similar terms for the importance of Madame de Staël's support (1766-1817), stating that to him her pen was worth 50 000 soldiers (Schinkel 1855: 73).

In the war of opinion regarding the cession of Norway around 1814, celebrated French-Swiss author Anne Louise Germaine de Staël-Holstein, more commonly known as Madame de Staël, did indeed play an interesting and contested role as one of Bernadotte's agents. In September 1814 the liberal newspaper *The Examiner* points out that, although Bonaparte had fallen, he had left imitators, 'who can play a still more insolent game than himself, by adopting his conduct upon the very ground of having put him down for it'. The paper goes on, claiming that 'Bernadotte has his Staëls and his Schlegels to puff and trumpet him wherever he goes, and to show that injustice and usurpation in him are not the same things as in other people' (*The*

Examiner, 11 September 1814). The 'Staëls and Schlegels' mentioned in the above passage from *The Examiner* were Madame de Staël – the author of the bestselling novel *Corinne* (1807) and, according to the profiled British liberal politician, Sir James Mackintosh, 'the most celebrated woman of this or, perhaps, of any age' (Mackintosh 1835: 264) – and her friend and secretary the German poet and critic, August Wilhelm von Schlegel.[2]

In this article I will address the role of Madame de Staël in the war of opinion regarding the cession of Norway in 1813 and 1814. In what way did Madame de Staël, not unlike a spin doctor, contribute to 'puff and trumpet' Bernadotte and to reinterpret 'injustice and usurpation' as something completely different? Like a spin doctor, she had the role of Bernadotte's advisor. Until the summer of 1814, she did not favour the Norwegian cause, and when she eventually did, it was not because she supported the country's national feelings but because she hoped for a French liberal future with Bernadotte back in Paris.

Bernadotte, Norway and the Propaganda War

Jean Baptiste Bernadotte was elected Crown Prince Charles John in Sweden in 1810. Bernadotte soon made an older Swedish vision into his own primary goal, namely to unite Norway with Sweden, and to turn the Scandinavian peninsula into a Scandinavian empire. This was presented as a 'just compensation' for the loss of Finland, which had been an integrated part of Sweden for centuries, to Russia in 1809.

In 1807 Denmark-Norway became an ally of Napoleon after the British attack on Copenhagen, which had the aim of keeping the huge Danish-Norwegian fleet out of the hands of the French ruler. This Danish-French alliance enabled Bernadotte to present his imperialistic ambitions to his new allies after 1812, i.e. Russia and Great Britain, later on also Prussia and Austria.

The Norwegian question arose as an issue in Europe, and especially in Britain, after the conclusion of the Treaty of Stockholm, a British-Swedish alliance treaty signed on 3 March 1813, which made reference to the Russian-Swedish alliance, established on 5 April 1812 with the Treaty of St. Petersburg. These treaties – followed by a treaty

with Prussia in April 1813 – ensured Sweden support for its claims on Norway, a highly disputed question with a range of political and legal implications. Sweden, with Bernadotte in front, was a desired but not quite uncontroversial ally, at least not for the British who, as mentioned above, wanted to be assured that they could trust this former revolutionary figure (Scott 1935: 30).

Together with diplomatic and military efforts, Bernadotte launched an official, as well as semi-official, systematic and extensive propaganda campaign as a complementary means to promote Swedish claims on Norway. He ordered the production and distribution of a range of different propaganda materials from 1812 onwards. Handwritten and printed pamphlets, proclamations, circulars, bulletins, annotated articles and letters flooded Norway, to such an extent that it was characterised by Danes as a 'deluge of proclamations' (Hemstad (ed.) 2014: 25). On the one hand, Bernadotte and his pamphleteers tried to convince the Norwegians, through economic and constitutional promises, that they would actually benefit from a union with their eastern neighbour. The propaganda material distributed in the Norwegian borderland attempted as well to stir up popular resentment towards Denmark, claiming that Denmark treated Norway as a colony (Hemstad (ed.) 2014: 88; 525; Glenthøj & Ottosen 2014: 191). By 1814 the Kingdom of Norway had been an integrated part of the Danish empire – one of the last absolutist empires in Europe – for more than 400 years. As it soon became clear, however, the Norwegians, with a reputation of being brave and freedom-loving, did not want to become 'Swedish slaves'. Only a few Norwegians actually shared the Swedish visions and, as was demonstrated by the events of 1814, they had their own dream of independence.

On the other hand, in addition to the propaganda material designed for a Norwegian public, specific pamphlets were produced to influence international opinion. Diplomatic agents, paid journalists and pamphleteers were all used as powerful tools to influence public opinion and mobilise support for Swedish political aspirations.

The Swedish pamphlets sought to justify Sweden's claim on Norway by means of geopolitical and strategic arguments. Constitutional promises also played a role in the international campaign, especially

directed against a British public. It was in this campaign that Madame de Staël and August Wilhelm Schlegel played a prominent role as Bernadotte's agents. The campaign was soon to be countered by Danish and, from 1814, Norwegian pamphlets and propaganda tracts. As a part of these countering efforts, the Danish Prince, Christian Frederik, was sent to Norway as Governor in May 1813, a move that would be of great importance the following year, as the prince became the key figure for the Norwegian resistance. Swedish propaganda led to countering pamphlets in Britain as well, mainly from Danes living there, from the liberal opposition, and from Whig oriented publicists. This pamphlet war was closely connected to the treaties and to the parliamentary debates: the pamphlets, proclamations and articles were closely interconnected and discussed the same issue, Norway, which for a short time was on the agenda (Hemstad (ed.) 2014: 13-91). This propaganda war has, so far, to a large extent been an untold story, but it is an integral part of the foreign policy and international relations of the time.

Madame de Staël, Bonaparte and Bernadotte

Madame de Staël, with her well known literary salon, was one of Bonaparte's most prominent opponents, and an old friend of Bernadotte. She was the daughter of the famous French Minister of Finances, Jacques Necker, and was married to the Swedish Ambassador to France, Baron Erik Magnus Staël von Holstein, who died in 1802. In her memoirs she refers to Napoleon's reaction after meetings at her place in 1802, where Bernadotte also participated: 'Bonaparte remarked that people always came away from my house less attached to him than when they entered it [...]'(Staël 1821: 69).

Madame de Staël was expelled from her beloved Paris in 1803, the starting point of her 'ten years of exile', the title of her memoirs. In 1810 she was expelled from France following the censorship of her book *De l'Allemagne*. As a consequence, she set out from her house at Coppet in Switzerland on her flight away from Napoleon's control in 1812, through Vienna, Russia and Sweden to London. She embarked on an anti-Napoleonic crusade and became an even more troublesome

opponent outside France, through her moveable salons, in St. Petersburg, Stockholm and London, her extensive correspondence and her powerful pen and famous publications.

Madame de Staël participated in different ways in what may be called an early example of 'public diplomacy' by supporting Bernadotte's efforts to influence public opinion abroad in order to create a favourable impression of Swedish foreign policy. Her speciality was her salon, being a part of a European and French tradition, functioning as an arena for what Glenda Sluga calls 'salon diplomacy' (Sluga 2014: 16; Steinfeld 2012: 218). Her salon in Stockholm and London gathered émigrés, dissidents, diplomats and politicians. It was, in the words of the Prussian envoy von Tarrach, 'a central meeting point for the large-scale plot against Napoleon' (cited after Sluga 2014: 6).

In one of the pamphlets ordered by Bernadotte, Bonaparte's efforts to influence his subjects is characterized in this way: 'the *concertos* of high-flown praises, which he takes care to circulate from one end of his empire to the other, annually, cost his subjects many millions' ([Schlegel] 1813: 10). Bernadotte, on the other hand, managed to get high-flown praises from Madame de Staël herself circulated almost from one end of Europe to the other, without having to pay much, if at all, for it. An example is the preface in her book *Réflexions sur le suicide*, published in 1813 in several countries. As a dedication, Madame de Staël published a flattering letter to Bernadotte, claiming:

> [...] it is perhaps not too much to affirm, that you would win the suffrages of a whole nation, one after the other, if every individual, of which it was composed, had the privilege of conversing with you for a quarter of an hour (Staël, 1813a: 5).

In this dedication, Madame de Staël also emphasised Bernadotte's liberal attitudes as a defender of constitutions: 'Under circumstances of peculiar delicacy, you have repeatedly shewn, that you were as zealous to guard the bulwarks of the constitution, as other Princes have been anxious to infringe them' (Staël 1813a: 6).

De L'Allemagne, 'the Natural History of Nations' and Norway

In her salon Madame de Staël recited from the only copy of her manuscript on Germany, which she had managed to bring with her. In this book, she emphasised the importance of national patriotism, which was also a means against Napoleon's claim to 'universal monarchy'. The book was published in different languages in several countries in 1813 and the first London edition was sold out within three days. Sir James Mackintosh commented in *The Edinburgh Review* that '[…] it is the smallest distinction of this work, that it is the first of suppressed books' (Mackintosh 1813: 198).

In the preface of this book Madame de Staël claims: 'Individuals ought to submit to destiny, but nations never; for they alone can command destiny […]'. She then goes on to underline, almost in the form of a catchphrase: 'The submission of one people to another is contrary to nature' (Staël 1813b: xiv). Who would now, she continues, 'believe in the possibility of subduing Spain, Russia, England or France?' Why, she keeps asking, 'should it not be the same with Germany' (Staël 1813b: xiv)?

The same question, I will argue, could have been asked concerning another people as well, although a much smaller population: why should it not be the same with Norway? Sweden was soon to be accused of wanting the Norwegians to submit to Swedish rule. A relevant question is therefore: what did Madame de Staël think about Norway?

In her overview listing different nations and peoples in her book, the Swedes and the Danes are named and counted: 'the Germans, the Swiss, the English, the Swedes, the Danes, and the Hollanders, are Teutonic peoples' (Staël 1813b: 1). The Norwegians, however, are not included. This probably results from Norway being a part of Denmark for 434 years, but may also be symptomatic of the lack of knowledge about this people living among their mountains, a huge distance away from the literary salons of Paris.

The principle highlighted by Madame de Staël, and by many others at this time, was of vital importance in the upcoming debate regarding the Norwegian question. She was the one underlining that '[…] the independence of mind, is about to lay the foundation of the

independence of nations' (Staël 1813b: xv). In 1814, the Norwegians protested loudly against being transferred to Sweden, like a herd of cattle, as it was said, and they proclaimed their willingness to die rather than to become Swedes.[3] British liberal politicians and newspapers applauded the Norwegian cry for independence, as in *Liverpool Mercury*, questioning the geopolitical arguments from the side of the Swedes:

> Man, every where, – even in the frozen regions of Norway – becomes gradually acquainted with his political rights […] he distinguishes himself, at length, from the transferable brute; and will not be made over from one master to another, however necessary his native country may be to complete the arrondisement of any particular dominions ('Political Observations', *Liverpool Mercury*, 6 May 1814).

Benjamin Constant later characterised Madame de Staël's book in this way: 'This work […] has added to modern science a very extensive domain, which I shall denominate the Natural History of Nations'. She has, he goes on, 'created the art of analysing the spirit of nations, and the springs which move them' ([Constant] 1817: 278).[4]

Supporting Sweden, or more precisely Bernadotte, in his pretensions towards the Norwegian people, did not, one may say, quite fit in with Madame de Staël's proclaimed political and national principles. This was also commented on in the debate. Is it possible to explain this gap between theory and praxis?

The answer lies in her specific interest in Bernadotte, her dream of getting rid of Bonaparte and seeing Bernadotte ascending the throne of France instead. In this, she had support from the Russian tsar, Alexander I. In 1812 the two of them could discuss this question in St. Petersburg, when Madame de Staël was on her flight away from Napoleon towards London. From Russia she continued to Sweden, and stayed there several months during 1812-1813. This stay had a great influence on her and, not least, on the propaganda war regarding the cession of Norway.

Madame de Staël in Stockholm

Madame de Staël and August Wilhelm Schlegel, who had accompanied her on the long journey, arrived in Stockholm in September 1812. During her stay, Madame de Staël frequently saw the Crown Prince. As stated by Constant:

> They canvassed the necessity, and, above all, the possibility of opposing a successful resistance to the destructive designs of Bonaparte. At this period indeed, she exercised a marked influence over the political events of Europe ([Constant] 1818: 278).

In her study, Sluga points in the same direction, emphasising that from 1812 Madame de Staël was 'literally in the middle of the intellectual and diplomatic machinations of a new European-wide coalition against Napoleon' (Sluga 2014: 4).

Besides meeting Bernadotte and cultivating her literary salon – which was characterised as a 'café politique' by the Swedish Foreign Minister, von Engeström – Madame de Staël wrote her memoires (Tegnér 1876, 202). *Dix années d'exil* (Ten Years of Exile), was published posthumously in 1821, but circulated already in 1813 (Sluga 2014: 7). In accordance with her revolutionary past, she wrote in this book – bringing 'the affair of Norway' forward – that 'one of the prevailing ideas of the nineteenth century, natural boundaries, rendered Finland as necessary to Russia, as Norway to Sweden […]' (Staël 1821: 115). By circulating this manuscript, she supported the liberal image of the tsar as well as of the Swedish policy. Bernadotte's main motive for joining the alliance against Napoleon, was to gain Norway. The vital question was if this policy was a 'great service to the universal map', as his followers asserted, or quite the contrary (Sluga 2014: 7). *The Morning Post* commented the following year: '[…] Norway alone was selected to be the foul spot in the map of Europe, where right and wrong seemed to be lost sight of, where the law of the strong must prevail' ('London', *The Morning Post*, 30 April 1814).

While in Sweden, Madame de Staël produced or contributed to a

range of publications. The pamphlet causing the most discussion of all in Bernadotte's campaign was *Sur le système continental et sur ses rapports avec la Suède*, a tiny semi-official book apparently about the continental system, namely Napoleon's attempt from 1806 on to destroy Britain economically by a large-scale embargo. The pamphlet was published anonymously, but the author was known and named in the countering pamphlets as August Wilhelm Schlegel.

The pamphlet was written under the direction of the Crown Prince, and more than likely discussed with Madame de Staël (cf. Brandt 1919: 145-147; Hasselrot 1950: 255-275). Schlegel was hired as one of Bernadotte's publicists, gained the title of 'Regjeringsråd' (Councillor of the Government) and followed him in the field in May 1813, while Madame de Staël went to London, and tried to influence opinion and opposition there.

The controversial pamphlet was originally published in French, ostensibly in Hamburg, but in fact in Stockholm, in February 1813. During the spring and summer of 1813 it was published in an impressive number of different translations and versions, in French, German, Swedish and English, in Stockholm, London, Berlin, Vienna and Boston (Hemstad (ed.) 2014: 307-309). The second English translation was published in the name of Madame de Staël herself, probably because of her reputation and position, with a more sellable title: *An Appeal to the Nations of Europe against the Continental System*. This version was reprinted in America, in Boston, in July. In the preface of the American edition, Madame de Staël was depicted as one who 'has watched the calamities of revolutionary and Imperial France, and has deplored the degradation of Europe with the philosophy of the other sex, and the sensibility of her own'(Staël [i.e. Schlegel], 1813c: 3). The pamphlet was widely read in Russia and Europe (Scott 1968: 25). After Napoleon's defeat in 1814, Schlegel reprinted it in Paris with his name on the title page, thereby confirming his authorship.

This pamphlet caused a range of critical reviews and counterpropaganda in different languages and countries. The main purpose of the pamphlet was to clarify Swedish policy to the outside world, and to influence international public opinion favourably, in order to facilitate the cession of Norway. The pamphlet pointed to

Sweden as the last independent state in Europe, and England as 'the only enemy before whom the star of Napoleon lost its brightness' (Staël [i.e. Schlegel] 1813c: 19). Bernadotte was praised as a leader who 'displayed chivalry in republicanism as well as in royalty' (Staël [i.e. Schlegel] 1813c: 61-62).

The crucial points were, however, made clear in the concluding paragraphs, explaining why Norway should form a union with Sweden. The vital concept was geo-political, framed in the concept of 'what may be termed the Scandinavian peninsula' (Staël [i.e. Schlegel] 1813c: 58). This was to be understood as the natural border, and this territorial claim was presented as the precondition for Sweden joining the alliance against Napoleon. The pamphlet sums up the ultimate claim on behalf of Sweden: 'The acquisition of Norway to Sweden, the most desirable of any she could make […]' (Staël [i.e. Schlegel] 1813c: 61). It was these concluding remarks that stirred up Danish resentment towards Sweden, resulting in a range of counterpropaganda, rejecting what were termed Sweden's 'troublesome Scandinavian dreams' (Feldborg 1813, 82).

Madame de Staël in London

Madame de Staël arrived in London just in time for the parliamentary debates on the Treaty of Stockholm in the middle of June 1813. She brought good news to the Swedish headquarters and her friend Schlegel, telling him: 'Your pamphlet has had the greatest success […]' (Staël to Schlegel, London 2 July, 1813, Solovieff and Jameson-Temper (eds.) 2000: 316.). The same day she also wrote to Bernadotte that she had arrived at a 'triumphant moment' for him in London, with the ministry defending successfully the treaty with Sweden (Solovieff and Jameson-Temper 2000: 317).

The treaty was, however, controversial, and the government was not sure they would gain the necessary support in parliament (Hemstad (ed.) 2014: 47-50). Madame de Staël admitted that the opposition did not approve of the politics towards Norway: '[…] every day the opposition attacks me in conversation on that subject, and my reply is that Denmark is a province of France, only more servile than all the

others […]' (Solovieff and Jameson-Temper 2000: 317).

The Danish author Andreas Andersen Feldborg, living in Britain, published a rather voluminous publication after the parliamentary debates, as a response to the Schlegel/Staël pamphlet. *Cursory Remarks on the meditated Attack on Norway*, *comprising Strictures on Madame de Stäel Holstein's "Appeal to the Nations of Europe"* was published in London in three separate editions in August 1813. The pamphlet strongly criticised and argued against *Appeal to the Nations of Europe*, as well as against other Swedish pamphlets circulating in Norway at that time (Hemstad (ed.) 2014: 51). The book underlines the strong relations between Norway and Britain, the Norwegian national character and their love of freedom and the strong resistance against becoming Swedish, in addition to describing Bernadotte's plan as a typical French project.

In London, Madame de Staël continued to spin the general cause of a coalition, as she had successfully done in Stockholm (Sluga 2014: 7). She continued more specifically to spin the cause of Bernadotte, towards the ministers and the opposition alike. Mackintosh wrote in September 1814: 'From him [Bernadotte] she came here full of zeal for the new alliance against France, of which he is the hope', and he told his daughters that she had been 'wonderfully well received' by the Prince and his ministers (Mackintosh 1835: 264).

The situation between Sweden and Denmark changed markedly after the Treaty of Kiel of 14 January 1814, which prescribed the dissolution of the Danish-Norwegian union. The Norwegian people strongly resisted and opposed becoming Swedish, refusing to accept what was called the Swedish yoke, or even slavery. The Swedish propaganda campaign thus had to continue, now concentrating primarily on Norwegian and British opinion. Madame de Staël and August Wilhelm Schlegel continued as Bernadotte's spin doctors, not least in London. Their target was British opinion and the opposition, which supported the Norwegians and strongly attacked the Tory government. Schlegel also provided the government with another pamphlet. Due to the Norwegian 'rebellion' Swedish diplomats urged the British government, by referring to the Treaty of Stockholm, to resume the blockade of the Norwegian ports. This was ordered in late April, resulting in increasing

popular sympathy for the Norwegian cause. The opposition accused the government of using famine to force the Norwegians to submit. The conflict developed into a party question, well suited for the opposition to attack the government (Hemstad (ed.) 2014: 67).

Schlegel had been writing pamphlets, bulletins and other propaganda tracts as secretary to Bernadotte for several months. During his short visit to London, for the purpose of following Madame de Staël back to her beloved Paris after Napoleon's recent abdication, he was asked to write a final pamphlet about the Norwegian question. The Swedish envoy, Baron von Rehausen, gave him this last mission in order to undermine the Norwegian arguments. The new tract was given directly to the government, to provide them with arguments to meet the expected attack from Earl Grey, the leader of the Whig opposition in the House of Lords.

The pamphlet was anonymously printed in French in London in 1814 and published in the newspapers and in the émigré journal, *L'Ambigu*, on 20 May. The journal was, together with *Courier d'Angleterre*, one of the French propaganda journals, a 'crusading newspaper' used by the British government as a channel of anti-Napoleonic information and influence, and distributed also in Russia and Sweden (Burrow 1993: 85-100).

In his defence against Earl Grey's almost three-hour long eloquent attack in the House of Lords, Prime Minister Liverpool did use arguments from this Swedish propaganda pamphlet. In this pamphlet, *Reflexions sur l'état actuel de la Norvège* (Thoughts on the Current State of Norway), it was claimed that Christian Frederik, heir to the Danish crown, had his own agenda and was deliberately misleading the Norwegian people, who would actually benefit from a union with Sweden and who had already been promised their own constitution (Hemstad (ed.) 2014: 76; 457-467). [5]

Madame de Staël may have contributed to this pamphlet as well. Through networking, her salon and her correspondence, she tried to spread and support the Swedish view. Few days before his announced major speech on the Norwegian question in Parliament on 10 May, Madame de Staël tried to influence Earl Grey. In her friendly letter to Grey, she presented her view on what was going on in Norway. This

was quite another story compared to the one told by the Norwegian representative, Carsten Anker, sent to London by Christian Frederik to try to influence the government, the opposition and the British public opinion. The government did not recognise him, and referred to the treaty with Sweden. Anker did, however, get the opportunity to influence the opposition and public opinion, stimulating a growing sympathy towards the struggling Norwegian people.

Madame de Staël's view was the official Swedish view, presented in pamphlets circulating in Britain simultaneously with the parliamentary debates, such as Schlegel's 1814 tract. Questioning the national character of the Norwegian resistance helped to reduce the gap between her proclaimed principles and the Swedish policy she supported. In her letter she claimed:

> Nothing is done there [i.e. in Norway] but on the instigation of the agents of a despot [the Danish king], and the liberal minded party of the nation is in favour of a union with the representative government of Sweden. By calling back the Prince of Sweden, whose existence is dependent on the Treaty of Norway, you would cause those who prefer not to have an elected person on the throne to enjoy a great triumph (Staël to Lord Grey, London, 7 May 1814, Solovieff and Jameson-Temper 2000: 338).

Further on she characterised Bernadotte with flattering words, calling him 'the best friend of liberty still in power'. The conflict was, in her view, between Swedish (and hopefully French) liberty and Danish despotism, not between Norwegian national independence and Swedish suppression. This was, one may say, a reinterpretation of Bernadotte's 'injustice and usurpation' as something completely different.

Earl Grey politely but firmly declined her wish for a 'cosy chat', countering her arguments and indirectly confronting her with her own principles:

> If the general disposition of the Norwegians is rather favourable than adverse to the Swedish government, there can be no necessity for our instituting a blockade of their coasts to

> reduce them by famine. If on the contrary they are earnest in maintaining their independence, need I describe to *you* the character of these measures which are taken to reduce them? (Earl Grey to Madame de Staël, Portman Square, 8 May 1814, Solovieff and Jameson-Temper 2000: 339).

After the parliamentary debates, which ensured the government further support, Feldborg published another pro-Norwegian pamphlet. 'An Appeal to the English Nation in behalf of Norway' was published in the journal *The Pamphleteers* in August 1814. In this pamphlet, Feldborg quoted Madame de Staël's famous statement from her book *Germany*: 'The submission of one people to another is contrary to nature' (Feldborg 1814: 259). Feldborg complained that Madame de Staël, as 'the first female writer of the age' was connected to the 'hateful faction' occupied with attacking Norway.

Feldborg also criticised the role of Schlegel, 'the most shameless of Bernadotte's advocates' (Feldborg 1814: 241, 275). By providing the government with misrepresentations regarding the Norwegian question, the government was misled, he argued: and the '*cause is to be found in the machinations of Bernadotte's agents*'. This could apply equally to Schlegel as to Madame de Staël. In trying to correct these misrepresentations, Feldborg stated that the Norwegians simply desire to be what they always had been, namely independent. He continued by stating that: 'The declaration of this wish is the free, clear, and spontaneous will of the nation itself. Not a voice is raised in favor of submission to Sweden in any part of the country [...]' (Feldborg 1814: 252).

Madame de Staël in Paris

At this time, Madame de Staël was finally back in Paris. Her salon was again, as *The Times* reported, 'the central point of the literary, political and fashionable world' in Paris, a 'centre of opinion', as the police reported (*The Times*, 14 October 1814; Sluga 2014: 11). From Paris, Madame de Staël continued to support Bernadotte's cause, also by giving him advice regarding the situation in Norway.

Bernadotte had returned to Sweden in late May 1814. By that time, the Norwegians had managed to draw up their own constitution and elected Christian Frederik King of Norway in spite of the blockade and the powerful alliance against them. The 'affair of Norway' was still not solved. Commissioners from the four Great Powers had travelled to Copenhagen and Christiania to settle the conflict in favour of Sweden, and to put an end to this last war in the North of Europe before the Congress of Vienna. Bernadotte also had his liberal image and French pretensions to think of. Madame de Staël kept reminding him:

> The success of your affairs in Norway, Monseigneur, will have an important effect here. We are doing what we can to keep the memory of you alive.[…] In short, you are always present in my heart, but bear in mind that your proclamations in Sweden are heard here, and give us the occasion to write about you. In the newspapers, despite *the censor*, we shall try to insert the kind of articles we owe you (Staël to Bernadotte, Paris, 4 June 1814, Solovieff and Jameson-Temper 2000: 341).

In her letter of 12 July, Madame de Staël urged Bernadotte to accept the Norwegian Constitution, in order to strengthen his liberal image in France. To settle this question was of vital importance, she underlined, and advised Bernadotte to remove the Danish Prince, replace him with the Swedish King, but otherwise accept the new Norwegian Constitution. (Höjer 1960: 170; Schinkel 1864, 73-74).

After a short war, Bernadotte followed the advice from his spin doctor in Paris, a solution suggested by the commissionaires as well. In the Convention at Moss of 14 August the Norwegian Constitution, which was to be the last revolutionary constitution in Europe, was accepted as a basis for the union between Norway and Sweden. An extraordinary parliament was elected to negotiate with the Swedes, and on 4 November the Swedish King, Carl XIII, was elected as King of Norway. The affair of Norway was finally solved, just in time to avoid it becoming an issue at the Congress of Vienna.[6] Madame de Staël played an important role in supporting Bernadotte in the critical years of 1812-1814. Bernadotte did win another kingdom, although not the

one which was the primary reason for the support of this powerful woman.

Endnotes

[1] This article is based on a research project on the propaganda war around 1814, based at the National Library of Norway as part of an 1814 project at the University of Oslo, and my books published in 2014: *'Like a Herd of Cattle'. Parliamentary and Public Debates Regarding the Cession of Norway 1813-1814*, Oslo Studies in Legal History, 9, Oslo: Akademisk Publisering and *Propagandakrig. Kampen om Norge i Norden og Europa 1812-1814*, Nota bene, Nasjonalbibliotekets skriftserie 9, Oslo: Novus forlag.

[2] Schlegel became von Schlegel after 1814, due to his services towards the Swedish Crown Prince. His brother was Friedrich Schlegel, his cousin the Danish professor of law J.F.W. Schlegel.

[3] See the discussion of this line of arguments in Hemstad 2014 and Hemstad (ed.) 2014, and by Mestad in his contribution to this publication.

[4] This hagiographic article, written after her death, is published anonymously, but the author is most probably Madame de Staël's close friend Benjamin Constant.

[5] The pamphlet is translated from French to English by Mette Gudevold and reprinted in Hemstad (ed.), 2014: 457-467.

[6] Cf. Michalsen's contribution to this publication.

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