



*Asesorías y Tutorías para la Investigación Científica en la Educación Puig-Salabarría S.C.
José María Pino Suárez 400-2 esq a Lerdo de Tejada, Toluca, Estado de México. 7223898473*

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TÍTULO: La cuestión del origen y desarrollo de los cosacos en la investigación histórica de los autores rusos emigrados.

AUTORES:

1. Dr. Alexander L. Khudoborodov.
2. Cand. Dr. Anna V. Samokhina.

RESUMEN: La historia de los cosacos fue ampliamente investigada y discutida entre los expatriados rusos en las décadas de 1920 y 1930. La literatura de emigrados sobre el origen y el desarrollo de los cosacos también es interesante para el público actual, ya que los cosacos rusos contemporáneos continúan discutiendo sobre la esencia de este movimiento y su génesis; aún debaten si los cosacos solían ser una sub-etnia, una nación o una clase de servicio militar en el pasado. El artículo tiene como objetivo identificar el grado de cobertura en la literatura histórica de emigrantes sobre el tema del origen y desarrollo de los cosacos en el período pre-soviético, así como revelar el impacto de los conceptos de los historiadores expatriados rusos.

PALABRAS CLAVES: emigrados, asamblea cosaca, estado moscovita, nativistas, Kazakiya.

TITLE: The question of the origin and development of Cossacks in the historical investigation of emigrated Russian authors.

AUTHORS:

1. Dr. Alexander L. Khudoborodov.
2. Cand. Dr. Anna V. Samokhina.

ABSTRACT: The history of the Cossacks was extensively researched and discussed among Russian expatriates in the 1920s and 1930s. The literature of emigrants on the origin and development of the Cossacks is also interesting for today's public, as contemporary Russian Cossacks continue discussing the essence of this movement and its genesis; they still debate whether Cossacks used to be a sub-ethnic group, a nation or a military service class in the past. The article aims to identify the degree of coverage in the historical literature of emigrants on the issue of the origin and development of Cossacks in the pre-Soviet period, as well as to reveal the impact of the concepts of Russian expatriate historians.

KEY WORDS: emigrated, Cossack assembly, Muscovite state, nativists, Kazakiya.

INTRODUCTION.

A unique phenomenon in the Russian history, unprecedented by meaning and scale, is the Russian expatriate world, which appeared in 1917–1922. About 2 million Russian citizens emigrated.

The post-Revolutionary emigration strived to preserve their Russian national features and traditions, to counteract assimilation. Most of the Russian expatriate intelligentsia considered themselves to be carriers of the national cultural traditions, and their main task – to preserve those traditions. That was manifested in the perpetual titanic efforts of the masters of culture, science, and art, while staying far from their Motherland, to preserve the spiritual values and historical knowledge for the links between times and generations not to break, in order to revive those traditions in the would-be Russia, after the Soviet power falls.

The Cossacks occupied a special place within the Russian emigration. This class suffered greatly from the Bolsheviks' repressions during the Civil war. Contrary to the Soviet state policy, the Cossack did a lot to preserve the customs, traditions and other elements of their class culture. This was especially true for the Kuban and Don Cossack, who cherished the regalia and relics of their troops while being abroad. By studying the Cossacks' past and its role in the Russian history, all émigré Cossacks' organizations strived to preserve the spiritual, cultural bases of their life, to transfer the historical memory of their class to the younger generation.

They paid utmost attention to collecting and publishing documents on the Cossack history. The Don ataman A.P. Bogayevskiy insisted on evacuating the Don Cossack archive from Constantinople to Beograd in spring 1920. In February 1925, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia gave permission to transfer the Don Cossack archive to Prague, which was one of the cultural and political centers of the Russian emigration. In 1926, the Don Cossack archive was supplemented with the funds of the Don Army archive. By 1934, all the Cossack archive materials were united within the Russian émigré historical archive in Prague.

Besides the Don Cossack archive headed by P.A. Skachkov, in 1923 there was a Don historical commission headed by V.A. Kharlamov in Beograd. The Don Army government posed a task for the commission: to publish materials and research for all periods of the Don Cossacks' history. In 1923–1924, the Don historical commission published a “Donskaya letopis” (“Don chronicles”) journal. In April 1923, the Don historical commission resolved to ask V.A. Kharlamov to prepare an article “Historical role of the Cossacks” for the “Donskaya letopis” journal (State Archive of the Russian Federation. F. 7030. Op. 2. D. 1. L. 7–8ob.).

In 1920s–1930s, multiple articles (scientific, popular, publicist) and monographs on the Cossack history were published in emigration, which have not been thoroughly analyzed by historiographers so far. The objective of the present article is historiographic analysis of the émigré literature on such

issues as the origin and development of the Cossacks during pre-Soviet period and the influence of concepts and provisions of the Russian émigré historians on the modern historical science and on the ideology of the reviving Cossack movement today.

DEVELOPMENT.

Materials and methods.

The methodological basis of the present work comprises the fundamental principles of historiography research: objectivity, scientific relevance, and historicism.

Objectivity implies that historical works are studied without bias, ideological schemes and stereotypes. That is why the authors tried to demonstrate both the pluses and minuses of historical guidelines and conceptions in the Cossack expatriate science, both solemn, realistic and apparently utopian, illusory features in the ideas and conclusions of the Cossack expatriates. In particular, quite a lot of utopian, unrealistic ideas, generated by mythologized consciousness, were contained in the concepts of ‘nativists’, especially regarding a fancy state of ‘Kazakiya’.

The principle of scientific relevance demands, in particular, to avoid political and ideological conjuncture of today in researching the scientific and cultural life of the Cossack émigrés of the 1920s–1930s. Actually, in the recent quarter of a century we rather frequently see transition from one extreme to another: from absolutely negative attitude to the White emigration, which was peculiar for the Soviet epoch, to its enthusiastic appraisal and idealization of any aspect of its activity. That will hardly facilitate the scientific research of such complicated and diverse phenomenon as historical works by the Russian émigré authors. We believe that Professor A.V. Kvakin was absolutely right saying: “...it is harassing that the works by émigré authors are transferred into contemporary Russia not as historical documents and monuments, but as ideological guidelines for the modern society...”

Today, a not so small number of amanuenses and commentators of the émigré literature under the slogan ‘Look how topical it is!’ involuntarily reproduce various émigré adages in a naïve belief that there is an underlying answer to the eternal Russian questions ‘Who is to blame?’, ‘What should be done?’, and ‘How can we rebuild Russia?’. The philosophical, literature and other heritage formed in the Soviet territory seems not convincing enough nowadays, as its authors existed under ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’, which deformed their consciousness. While the true Russian spirituality, the true Russian mentality, the true Russian language allegedly preserved in the Russian diaspora only. Thus, the mass consciousness is offered a rather subjective émigré self-assessment as the objective ‘new viewpoint’” (Kvakin, 1996, pp. 75-76).

Taking this into account, the article presents an objective estimation of historical works by the Russian expatriate authors, abstracting from the political and ideological conjuncture of today.

The principle of historicism implies comprehensive evaluation of the works by émigré historians, including taking into account the evolution and development of researchers’ views and concepts. For example, one cannot objectively and correctly estimate the role of a Don General I.F. Bykadorov in studying the Cossack history if one stems solely from the fact that he was one of the founders of the Free Cossacks movement in the 1920s and in 1930 published a much-talked-of book “History of the Cossacks” in Prague, where he attempted to substantiate the main idea of the nativists about an independent “Kazakiya” state, which allegedly existed in the past and was to be revived in future. However, it should be taken into account that as early as in the 1930s I.F. Bykadorov rejected the idea of an independent Kazakiya state, dissociated himself from the nativists and came out for the Cossack territories joining the Russian state according to the principle of federalism (Bykadorov, 1933, pp. 24–25).

The above methodological principles determined the use of specific historiographic methods in our research. The authors use synchronic method which allows making a horizontal section of the estimations and conclusions of the Cossack émigré historians in a specific period of time. We took into account both theoretical-methodological approaches and political attitudes of the researchers belonging to monarchists, moderate wing of the Cossacks emigration, and nativists.

Systemic-structural approach enables to view the works by the Cossack émigré historians as a part of the system of the Russian historical science, including the research centers, publishing houses and editorial boards of journals and newspapers where reviews on the Cossack historians were published. At the same time, the Cossack historians were a part of the system of the Cossack emigration; they interacted with such elements of that system as the Cossack unions, army generals and governments, the United Council of Don, Kuban and Terek, cultural-enlightenment and literature organizations, editorial boards of Cossack journals and newspapers, etc.

Our historiographic sources included books and articles on the Cossack history by émigré authors, as well as reviews of these works, published in the émigré and Soviet periodicals. The authors also used documents of the State Archive of the Russian Federation, in particular, materials of the Don historical commission of 1923–1924.

Results and discussion.

Certain aspects of historiographic analysis of the works by émigré historians on the Cossacks origin and development in the pre-Soviet period were reflected in the works by V.F. Mamonov (1995, pp. 17–21, 219), A.L. Khudoborodov (1996, pp. 62–66), S.M. Markedonov (1999), A.A. Gordeev (1968, 1991–1992), G.V. Gubarev (1957), M.I. Raev (1994). The issues of the history and historiography of the 1917 Revolution and the Civil war were analyzed by A.A. Cherkasov (2007), E.F. Krinko (2006), S.F. Fominykh (1995, pp. 149–188). These works are important as the Civil war and its consequences

had a great impact on the political world-outlook of the émigré Cossacks. However, there is still no comprehensive research on this topic.

At the same time, this topic is crucial for the research of the Russian émigré historical science of the 1920s–1930s in general.

The public-political significance of this topic is also apparent, as the modern Cossack movement in Russia still discusses the utopian ideas about the Cossacks as a special people or ethnos, i.e., the ideas of Free Cossacks movement of the 1920s–1930s are disguisedly propagated.

General features of the émigré Cossacks.

There are several characteristic features of émigré works on the Cossack history. First, many émigré Cossacks believed that their historical works contribute to the study of the Cossack culture, customs and traditions. Such “class patriotism” often resulted in exaggerating the role of the Cossacks in the Russian history, as well as in emphasizing the alleged superiority of the Cossacks over other strata of the Russian society. Second, there were few professional historians among the émigré Cossacks, and works on the Cossack history (in the genres of historical essays and memoirs) were written mostly by representatives of the Cossack intelligentsia and officers, such as P.N. Krasnov, I.G. Akulinin, A.G. Shkuro, G.V. Enborisov, A.V. Zuev, I.F. Bykadorov, A.P. Filimonov, V.G. Naumenko, etc. However, among the researchers there were also archivists and professional historians both from the Cossack class (S.G. Svatikov, P.A. Skachkov, V.A. Kharlamov, etc.) and those not belonging to the Cossack class, like a privat-docent of the Russian Free University in Prague S.G. Pushkarev, chairman of the Russian Historical Society under the Board of the Union of the Russian academic organizations abroad E.F. Shmurlo (Prague) and others. Third, many monarchists and nativists viewed their historical studies as a tool for ideological and political struggle among emigrants, their works being very biased and subjective. The scientific value of such works is rather low.

All émigré literature on the Cossack history can be divided into three groups.

Features of the nativists' works on Cossack history.

The first group of works on the Cossack history is comprised of the works by nativists, the representatives of the Free Cossack movement. In 1926 in Prague, a “Society for Cossack research” was established, headed by I.F. Bykadorov, S.A. Fedorov, T.M. Starikov, F.A. Shcherbina, and M.F. Frolov. In their works and reports, the Society members attempted to prove that the Cossacks were not descendents of fugitive serf peasants, nor a separate military class, but descendents of a special East-European Slavonic tribe, distinctive from the Russians, the Ukrainians, or the Belarusians. The “Society for Cossack research” as a part of democratic Cossack movement defended the concept of the Cossacks as a separate ethnos. In 1928, I.F. Bykadorov argued: “There were and there are various peoples: Great Russian, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Cossacks. Certainly, as Slavs, they are kindred to each other, but they differ in their moral, ideological content, their life, their economic interests” (Kazachestvo..., 1992, p. 103). In his opinion, forced Russification, especially of the Ukrainians and Cossacks, led to the riots headed by Bulavin, Pugachev, Mazepa, etc.

I.F. Bykadorov attempted to substantiate this and other ideas in more detail in his book “The Cossacks history” published in Prague in 1930. The author came to the following conclusions. The Russian (Kiev) state was formed as a result of mixing the Turkic peoples and the Slavonic Russians, in particular, from the Khazar Empire. Zaporozhye Cossacks were formed as a result of mixing the Slavonic Russians with the Turkic peoples from the Dnieper region (the Kabars, the Cherkass, the Bulgars, the Hungarians). They were also mixed with the “Black Klobuks”, the Turkic-speaking Berendei. “The Turkic population, which mixed with the Russians in the Dnieper region, russified, settled, absorbed agriculture, the language, and the Christian religion, still preserved their Turkic type,

way of living, and, most important, its warlike character, military traditions, and military structure” (Bykadorov, 1930, p. 25).

According to the author of the above-mentioned book, in the early Middle Ages the Russian south-east was called Kazakiya or Kazakhiya, and the local population – ‘kazaks’, ‘kazakhs’, or ‘cherkases’. Assimilation of the “Slavonic Russians” and the “Kazakhs” resulted in forming a “Brodniki people”, they in turn being the ancestors of the Don Cossacks. According to I.F. Bykadorov, appearance of the Cossacks had nothing to do with the Moscow Russia, while Brodniki people are predecessors of the Cossack, more ancient than the Great Russians and the Russian state (Kazachiy krug..., 1991, pp. 49–50).

I.F. Bykadorov contended that at the end of the 14th c the Don region suffered from a Tatar devastation, and the majority of the Don Cossacks had to move to the Moscow and Ryazan principalities, where they lived up to the end of the 16th c., and then returned to the Don river, to their ancestors’ graves. The author highlighted the state independence of the Don troops up to 1671, not admitting even vassalage of the Don Cossacks to the Moscow state.

Publication of I.F. Bykadorov’s book caused ambiguous response in the Russian emigration. The nativists were in raptures over the main ideas of the book, while most émigré Cossacks and the historians assessed it negatively.

Reviewers marked a very poor argumentation of the author; often I.F. Bykadorov’s conclusions were not based on documents and sources, but made “by analogy”, especially what refers to forming the Cossacks as a “separate ethnos”. S.G. Pushkarev noted that the book contained statements of impairment of the Russian people, in particular, that they allegedly do not have and cannot have the qualities unconditionally akin to the Cossacks, such as military courage, bravery, love for freedom.

Referring to documents and materials (in particular, volumes 18, 24, and 26 of the “Russian historical Library”), in his review S.G. Pushkarev proved the Russian origin of the Don Cossacks (by the

language, by the style of speech, by the participation of the Russians in colonization and development of the Don region, by numerous facts of adopting the Muscovites to the Cossack society, which I.F. Bykadorov tried to ignore (Pushkarev, 1930, pp. 24–32)).

As for the statements of the reviewed book's author about the absolute state independence of the Don troops in the 16th–17th cc, S.G. Pushkarev wrote: “Noone may deny that the Don Cossacks in the 16th–17th cc lived “by their own will” and were governed by their own elected authorities, but one may assert their complete state independence of Moscow only by shutting one's eyes to the facts and indisputable evidence of historical documents. Just to mention that the Don Cossacks and their atamans, in their military reports to the Moscow tsar, called themselves his “villains”, “asked him humbly”, and wrote about their true and unfailing service (absolutely unacceptable forms for independent states)...” (Kazaki..., 1930, pp. 28–29). As for the “centuries-long struggle between the Moscow and the Cossack worlds”, alleged by I.F. Bykadorov, S.G. Pushkarev stressed that it was not the Don Cossacks, but the “thievish Cossacks” (bands of fugitive serfs, criminals and various outlaw freemen) that “struggled” (i.e. did harm) against the Moscow state.

A negative assessment to I.F. Bykadorov's book was given in the article “Monarchy and the Cossacks” by the leader of the “Young Russia” Cossacks G.I. Chapchikov, who marked numerous contradictions and inconsistencies in the author's reasoning and conclusions (Chapchikov, 1931, pp. 14–19).

Although I.F. Bykadorov's book was subjected to comprehensive and well-argued critique, the representatives of the Free Cossacks movement issued a journal “Free Cossacks” in Prague in the 1930s, which asserted exceptional uniqueness of the Cossacks, as well as their inherent hostility to the Russian and the Russian state. It should be noted that similar views were contained in speeches by the representatives of the Union for the Cossack revival during the discussion about the “white”

movement in Prague on the 1st of November 1924, as well as in the prose and poetry of some émigré Cossack authors.

Monarchists on the role of the Cossacks in the Russian history.

The second group of works on the Cossack history is comprised of the works by monarchists. As a rule, they ignored the actual contradictions between the tsarist regime and the Cossacks which had been aggravating during the previous three centuries, while the life of Cossacks in the tsarist Russia was apparently idealized. A typical researcher-monarchist was P.N. Krasnov, who wrote several “Open letters to the Cossacks” in the first half of the 1920-s, as well as a number of articles.

In his article “The Cossacks, their past, present and future” (1928), P.N. Krasnov marked exclusively military-service character of the Cossack class. He wrote that in the 18th–19th cc “the Cossacks had to fulfill complex, hard tasks, demanding sweat, blood and severe deprivations” (Russkiy kolokol, pp. 12–13). At the same time, the author highlighted: “For fulfilling those tasks, the Cossacks received confirmation of their rights in a number of Emperor’s letters of commendation” (Russkiy kolokol, p. 13). Here the author was not fully objective and truthful; he failed to take into consideration that in reality the volume of the Cossacks’ rights, privileges and bonuses became more and more decreased, while the hardships, deprivations and the constantly increasing expenditures of the military services had undermined the Cossack economy by the beginning of the 20th c.

At the same time, P.N. Krasnov answered rather objectively to some questions, in particular, about the Cossacks’ origin, which makes grounds for agreeing with him. For example, he wrote:

“The Russian people went to the outskirts of the Russian (Moscow) state to ‘polyakovat’ (from the word ‘pole’) [‘polyakovat’ – ‘to live in the steppe’, from the Russian ‘pole’ – ‘field, steppe’ – translator’s note] by their own will and for various reasons. Some went because ‘strength was playing

in their veins’ – they wanted to spend it bravely hunting a beast or fighting a Turk; some went to seek military feats and loots, ‘to get some overcoats’...” (Russkiy kolokol, p. 10).

Others went because of their severe fate, the choice being ‘either a foot into a stirrup or a head into a stub’.... They escaped from poverty, from persecutions by the authorities for committed crimes, ran away from landowners for free life. Still others ran away from persecutions for ‘the Old Faith’ (Russkiy kolokol, p. 11).

Works by professional historians and the moderate wing of the Cossack emigration.

The third group of research unites, first of all, works by S.G. Pushkarev, I.G. Akulinin, S.G. Svatikov, P.A. Skachkov, etc. These authors were close to the moderate wing of the Cossack emigration, they were more objective in assessing historical events and used a rather broad circle of sources. For example, S.G. Pushkarev in his articles of both the Prague (1920s–beginning of the 1940s) and the American (1940s–1980s) periods of his life studied the comprehensive and ambiguous process of turning the Don troops of the 16th–17th cc into a hereditary military-service class of the 18th–19th cc (Pushkarev, 1926, pp. 78–86; 1970, p. 22).

Marking the features of this process in the 17th c, S.G. Pushkarev wrote, in particular: “The attitude of the Moscow government to the Don Cossacks was dual. On the one hand, it appreciated the military service of the Cossacks, who defended the south-eastern boundaries of the Moscow state from attacks of hostile neighbors, and regularly (in the 17th c) sent “remuneration” to the Don region, in the form of money, grain, and ammunition; on the other hand, it rather disapprovingly treated the independence of the Cossacks’ foreign policy, who attacked the Crimean or Turkish possessions without the knowledge or consent of the Moscow government” (Pushkarev, 1994, p. 109).

Head of the Don Cossacks’ Archive P.A. Skachkov in his work “Among the Cossacks (1922), analyzing relationships between the Cossacks and the tsar authorities, emphasized: Actually, the

Cossacks always served Russia ‘with good faith and fidelity’, they served like all other Russians, being the flesh and blood of the Russian people, but in their past they never were the blind executors of the tsar’s will, nor obedient servants of the tsar only. The tsar was for them the symbol of ‘order and power’, and as soon as that halo of the tsar’s authority started to wane ‘in the truth of life’, the Cossacks raised their voice against the tsar.

Correspondence of the Cossacks with the Moscow tsars rather vividly characterizes their interactions. The people’s riots, being reaction to imperfection of the state apparatus, were never as strong as when the free Cossacks participated in them. Such are the riots headed by Stenka Razin, Emelka Pugachev, and Kondratiy Bulavin. Until the faith in the tsar as a symbol of ‘truth and order’ waned in the Cossacks, just as in all Russian people, the Cossacks honestly did their service (Skachkov, 1922, p. 13).

Also, P.A. Skachkov did not conceal serious contradictions between the interests of the Cossack population and the tsar policy in the beginning of the 20th c. About that, he wrote: In 1905 the Cossacks saved Russia from the spreading anarchy. On their honest service to Motherland, the Bolsheviki built their misanthropic agitation against them as ‘counter revolutionists’ and ‘a bulwark of monarchism’; their adherence to duty was marked by [...] an Emperor’s letter of commendation. Nevertheless, when deputies of the 1st State Duma Kharlamov, Kryukov and Arakantsev raised the question of the Cossacks’ needs and the necessity to introduce ‘zemstvo self-government’ and to ‘free the Cossack regiments from executing police duties’, as doing them harm and violating the Law of the Cossacks mobilization of the 2nd and 3rd order, – that was again interpreted as huntsmen psychology, as ‘seditious’ ideas of the ‘passport-bearing’ Cossacks... A convinced monarchist, a most loyal person, a popular Don writer known all over Russian, greatly respected F.D. Kryukov was forbidden to enter the Don region (Skachkov, 1922, p. 15).

An even sharper assessment was given to interrelations between the tsar regime and the Don Cossacks in the beginning of the 20th c by a Cossack General G.P. Yanov in “Donskaya letopis”, the edition of Don historical commission, in 1923. In his article “Attitudes in the Don region by the time of the revolution” he poses the question:

How could it happen that in 12 years (from 1905 to 1917) both the Cossacks psychology and the world outlook of the broad Cossack masses faced a dramatic shift towards revolutionary mood, negative attitude to the Emperor’s Russia and sympathy to republican order? (Donskaya letopis, 1923, p. 61).

Answering this question, G.P. Yanov wrote that the guilt for that lies, first of all, on the Russia’s ruling circles, especially the Saint Petersburg’s officials, who refused to understand the problems and attitudes of the Don Cossacks. In particular, the author states:

Cossack officers were neglected, they were treated shabbily. Promotion was so limited that the rank of captain was considered a “sepulchral” rank, and a retired sergeant major was the pinnacle for 90% of the Cossack officers.

Perpetual gypsy life, due to the “privilege”, ruined the officers, and the reduced privilege salary (except for artillerists) made them suffer poverty...

A Cossack started to realize that the Don Army is like a patrimony given, as in the olden times, to ‘fatten a landlord’s stomach’ to various people who have nothing in common with the Cossacks. As for Saint Petersburg, under the existing circumstances, the Cossacks have nothing good to wait for. And by the moment of the revolution the Cossacks were convinced that all their ‘liberties’ and ‘century-old rights and privileges’ have been quietly, little by little, taken away from them (Donskaya letopis, 1923, p. 68).

The conclusion made in the article was unambiguous: “It was the tsar milieu that prepared the Cossacks for the revolution” (Donskaya letopis, 1923, p. 68).

A well-known figure, popular among the emigrants, was a historian S.G. Svatikov. His works were devoted to the history of the Don Cossacks. Sergey Grigoriyevich Svatikov, was born in the Don region, was a Parisian representative of the Russian émigré historical archive in Prague. In 1923, one of his large articles “Don Army Circle (1549–1919)” was published in “Donskaya letopis” (Donskaya letopis, 1923, pp. 169–265). In particular, the author wrote about the formation of the Don Cossack army:

The Don Army was a free colony of the Russian people, founded by the don Cossacks... Around 1549, a certain number of free Cossacks came to one place for a common goal – struggle with a common enemy, the steppe predators, – united into a single military, state and public organization and settled on that land.

The Don Army was not a result of the tsar’s order or a government activity, it was not a province or a colony of the tsarist state. The Don Army was a people’s colony, free and independent. It was a state, not a province.

The state power on Don originated from the people’s will, and the Don colony was a republic. The sovereign, supreme power in the Don republic belonged to the general people’s assembly, called a circle or a military circle (Donskaya letopis, 1923, pp. 169–170).

S.G. Svatikov distinguished several features common for an Ancient Rus’ veche and a Cossack circle, researches the functions of the circle and its activity in 1549–1721 as the supreme representative, administrative, and judicial body. In his article, he makes a conclusion:

The Army circle was not destroyed, but gradually losing its political significance, it turned into a pale symbol, the very meaning of which started to wane. However, the memory of the past power of the circle lived in the souls of the Don patriots, and the 1917 Revolution brought revival of the Circle as the body of the local, and then state, power, this time on the representation basis (Donskaya letopis, 1923, p. 181).

In 1924, in Beograd, a large book by S.G. Svatikov was published – “Russia and the Don (1549–1917)”. The author thus defined its objective: “Research on the history of state and administrative law and political movements in the Don region” (Svatikov, 1924, p. 15). In that summarizing history of the Don Cossack army, the author emphasized its autonomy and independent development, at the same time highly estimating the further pro-Russian orientation of the Don Cossacks. That work was published with financial support of the Don military government by the Don historical commission. The book was very popular with the émigré Cossacks; it is not accidentally that it was often called “the Cossack Bible”.

The historians of the Russian emigration showed great interest in S.G. Svatikov’s book. All reviewers marked the large amount of factual and documental materials, but there were critical comments, too. A.A. Kizevetter opposed S.G. Svatikov’s opinion that the Don region was a republic in 1549-1614, which was only a vassal of the Moscow state, while the Cossacks were born carriers of the ideas of social equity and republicans. A.A. Kizevetter noted that in his book S.G. Svatikov himself mentioned the facts contradicting that statement, when he described the prevalence of tsarist attitudes in the Don region and the history of the Cossacks’ stratification (Russkoye zarubezhye..., 1997, p. 570). Another historian – B.I. Nikolayevskiy – also noted that S.G. Svatikov failed to make a comprehensive and detailed analysis of the facts he cited, as well as to distinctly define the object of his research – the Cossack movement only or the political movements in the Don region in general (Nikolaevskiy, 1926, p. 125).

The early history of the Cossacks origin, the stages of its formation and development are one of the most complex and tangled issues in the Russian historiography. A lot of legends, hypotheses, and unreliable versions still exist in this sphere.

CONCLUSIONS.

In the cultural, scientific and public-political life of the Russian emigration in 1920s–1930s, a great role was played by the historical science, studies of the Russian past (Emelyanov, 2008; Pashuto, 1992; Raev, 1994). Both historical works and fiction helped the Russian émigrés to preserve their national mentality, language, traditions and customs of the old Russia, the feeling of pride for their great Motherland. An eminent researcher of the Russian emigration V.S. Varshavskiy wrote about that:

Turning into laborers and taxi drivers caused a kind of dual personality in many emigrants. Their better part of their “self” did not participate in the life of those countries where they got by fettering contracts. Nobody understood their language, nobody wanted to know anything about the sufferings they had endured; everybody saw only laborers, barbarians, “dirty metics” in them. But in their own minds they continued to be the Russian officers, clerks, intelligentsia [...]. The bitterer was the refugees’ fate, the brighter were the visions of the family home, childhood, youth, the whole glory and happiness of the past life in their Motherland. These reminiscences allowed the exhausted people, who had lost everything, to forget the grieves of emigration and to live with their hearts linked to all that sacred, grand, kind, beautiful and eternal, which was Russia in their minds. Apparently, they mainly needed such books which would tell about the lost paradise of the pre-revolutionary Russian life (Varshavskiy, 2007, pp. 172–173).

Such world-view of the émigrés influenced the historical science of the Russian emigration, all the more so that its prevailing genres were historical essays and popular science.

These features are in full extent characteristic for the historical views and attitudes of the Cossack émigrés, in particular, for the works on the Cossacks’ origin and development in the Russian Empire. The authors belonging to monarchists and nativists most actively responded to the “topic of the day”;

they used historical works and their conceptions in the ideological and political struggle within the Russian emigration.

It is significant that most émigrés, including the Cossacks, were rather critical towards the historical constructions of the nativists. A Russian émigré D.I. Meysner wrote about that in his memoirs: Among the Cossacks who used to be rich and well-to-do, and these were numerous in emigration, spread the idea that, had they be farther from Moscow, more independent of it as the Russian center, they would have done without Bolshevism, hence, would not have had to become emigrants. Some of them, to tell the truth – not without a cunning participation of foreigners, denied the very belonging of the Cossacks, including the Don ones, to the Russian people and slung lots of mud at Russia. Some “popovs”, “starikovs”, “bykadorovs”, “kolosovs” and bearers of other similar surnames suddenly, to everyone’s bewilderment and consternation, turned out to be not Russian at all. In their numerous public speeches, they explained in the purest Russian language, as they never in their born days knew any other, that the Don and Kuban regions were not Russia at all and that only the Bolshevik coercion kept those regions within it.

However, those extreme nativists were a minority among the Cossacks (Meysner, 1966, pp. 236–237).

It should be noted that in the 1950s, after the World War II, there were works written in France from the conceptual viewpoints of the nativists – P.K. Kharlamov “The Cossacks” (1956) and G.V. Gubarev “A book on the Cossacks: materials on the history of the Cossacks’ antiquity” (1957), which were published in Paris. The authors claimed that the Scythians and the Meoto-kazaks – the steppe tribes from the Kuban and the Black Sea region were the ancestors of the Cossacks, and that the Cossacks were just about the most ancient people in the territory of Eastern Europe. At that, no references to sources and documents were given. Similar statements about the exceptional uniqueness of the Cossacks were developed in a more fundamental book “History of the Cossacks” by A.A.

Gordeev published in 1968 in Paris and republished in Russia in 1991–1992 (Gordeev, 1968, 1991–1992).

It should be highlighted that the most significant contribution to the history of the Cossacks in emigration was made by professional historians and archivists, like V.A. Kharlamov, P.A. Skachkov, S.G. Svatikov, S.G. Pushkarev, E.F. Shmurlo, etc. This was admitted both by their contemporaries and the modern researchers in the sphere of Cossack studies.

In conclusion, one has to admit that modern historians and representatives of the Cossack movement in Russia continue disputing about the genesis of the Cossacks, their historical roots and stages of development. That is why it is still topical to research the Cossacks origin, whether they are a separate people, an ethnos; thus, it is essential to continue historiographic studies of the émigré historical literature on the topic.

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DATA OF THE AUTHORS.

1. Alexander L. Khudoborodov. Doctor of Historical Sciences. Professor. South Ural State Humanitarian Pedagogical University. Russia. E-mail: hudoborodoval@cspu.ru

2. Anna V. Samokhina. Candidate of Historical Sciences. Associate Professor. South Ural State Humanitarian Pedagogical University. Russia. E-mail: samokhinaav@cspu.ru

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