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THE ALTAI OLD BELIEVERS — “POLES” IN ETHNOGRAPHIC WORKS OF THE IMPERIAL PERIOD

The article discusses the historiographic aspect of the study of the ethnographic group — the “Poles” which got its name in Altai due to the resettlement of Old Believers to Siberia from Poland in the middle of the 18th century. Since the formation of the “Poles” settlements, they periodically began to appear in publications in ethnographic works, which formed two historical stages of research of the Old Believers of Siberia in the Russian Empire. The first stage is characterized by the indirect attention paid to Old Believers “Poles” in the Altai by German travelers: P. S. Pallas, K. F. Ledebur, K. M. Meyer. The second stage, in the first place, is associated with the formation of regional departments of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society. In these works, Old Believers “Poles” appeared acted as objects of field ethnography. Also, during this period mentions of the ethnographic group were recorded in other periodicals.

The authors of the study paid special attention to the issues of the confessional composition of the “Poles”, the peculiarities of household activities and the development of territories by them interfaith and interethnic relations. As a result, considering the work of researcher’s errors were identified related to the presentation of the ethnographic group and the influence of the ideology of the imperial period on them was also noted.

Key words: Old Believers, “Poles”, Bespopovtsy, Beglopovtsy, Siberia, Altai.

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СТАРООБРЯДЦЫ-«ПОЛЯКИ» АЛТАЯ В ЭТНОГРАФИЧЕСКИХ ТРУДАХ ИМПЕРСКОГО ПЕРИОДА

В статье рассматривается историографический аспект исследования этнографической группы — «поляки», которая получила свое название на Алтае благодаря переселению в Сибирь старообрядцев с территории Польши в середине XVIII в. С момента образования поселений «поляков» упоминания о них стали периодически появляться в публикациях, в частности, в этнографических работах, которые сформировали в Российской империи два исторических этапа исследований старообрядцев Сибири. Первый этап характеризуется обращением косвенного внимания на старообрядцев-«поляков» на территории Алтая немецкими путешественниками: П. С. Палласом, К. Ф. Ледебуром, К. М. Мейером. Второй этап связан в первую очередь с образованием региональных отделов Императорского Русского географического общества. Благодаря им появились работы, в которых старообрядцы-«поляки» выступали уже в качестве объекта полевой этнографии. Также в этот период были зафиксированы упоминания этнографической группы и в других периодических изданиях.

Авторы исследования уделили особое внимание вопросам конфессионального состава «поляков», особенностям бытовой деятельности и освоения ими территорий, межконфессиональным и межэтническим отношениям. В итоге, в ходе рассмотрения работы исследователей были выявлены ошибки, связанные с представлением этнографической группы, а также отмечено влияние на них идеологии имперского периода.

Ключевые слова: старообрядцы, «поляки», беспоповцы, беглопоповцы, Сибирь, Алтай.

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The problems and historiography of the research of the Old Believers remain relevant to this day. Scientists remain interested in various aspects of the Old Believers in our time. This is a state confessional policy in relation to various historical stages, the study of written monuments of the Old Russian language, etc. Interest in the Siberian and Altai Old Believers manifested itself in the middle of the XIX century. But scientific schools were formed only in the 20th century.

A significant moment in the study of the Old Believers was the development in the 60s of the XX century the school of archaeographers in the city of Novosibirsk, created by N. N. Pokrovsky. Her goal was that she could gather under her roof scientists from various fields of humanitarian knowledge. An opportunity arose to exchange experience in research on the Old Believers, sectarianism, and popular religious movements that arose in the Russian Empire. As result, the works of N. N. Pokrovsky, T. S. Mamsik, N. A. Minenko made a huge contribution to the study and presentation of various aspects of old education in Altai. The classical struggle of the peasantry [Pokrovsky, 1974; Minenko, 1979; Mamsik, 1978, 1987].

In the Russian period, researchers are constantly studying various aspects of the Altai Old Believers and an often use the interdisciplinary approach. In the system of state-confessional policy the Old Believers in the territory of Altai and Siberia was considered by V. N. Ilyin and I. V. Kupriyanova [Ilyin, 2014, 2019; Kupriyanova, 2010, 2019]. It is worth noting the cultural studies conducted by N. A. Tadina, R. P. Kuchuganova, N. I. Shitova, in which ethnographers touched on the historical aspects of the formation and ethnosocial interaction of the Old Believers of Altai [Tadina, 1998; Kuchuganova, 2000; Shitova, 2005]. Researchers do not bypass the topic of social utopia that existed among the Altai Old Believers in the Imperial period. These include the work of E. E. Dutchak, Y. E. Krivonosov, K. S. Matytsin, L. N. Mukaeva, A. B. Ostrovsky, Yu. D. Rykov, V. A. Trusov, A. A. Chuvyurov [Dutchak, 2007; Krivonosov, 1998; Matytsin, 2019; Mukaeva, 2000, 2001; Ostrovsky, Chuvyurov 2011; Rykov, 2015; Trusov, 2006].

In modern science there is the rule of studying previous works before research has begun. At the same time, historiography as a scientific discipline in the study of the Old Believers of Altai remains little involved. Studying the historiography of the Imperial period, it is necessary to pay attention to the existing approaches to the study of the Old Believers. By touches on the problems of the Old Believers in the territory of Altai of the Imperial period, we single out historical, ethnographic, diocesan and investigative materials. So, in diocesan studies, the authors mainly focused on the currents, consents and the rites of the Old Believers. Investigative materials show the causes and severity of the offenses of the Old Believers in the Russian Empire (since the Old Believers, called sectarians by the official church and the authorities, were in a semi-legal position until 1905). In ethnographic works, emphasis was placed on the study of ethnographic groups. This approach to the Old Believers was preserved in the second half of the XX century. N. N. Pokrovsky in his work “Antifeudal Protest of the Ural-Siberian Old Believer Peasants in the 18th Century” divided all Old Believers of Altai into two ethno-religious groups: “Poles” and Kamenshiks [Pokrovsky, 1974: 312–314].

It is important to say about the influence of ideology on the methodology of historical science of the Imperial period. There were two political camps — conservatives and populists in the Russian Empire since the XIX century. On the one hand conservatives saw in the Altai Old Believers the sectarian, sometimes anarchist currents that did not recognize the

monarchical system. On the other hand, the Altai Old Believers could not exist outside of statehood in their opinion. The populists have seen the model of Russian peasant socialism in the Altai Old Believers by use the ideas of A. I. Herzen. Therefore, representatives of both political movements showed interest in the Old Believers of Altai in ethnography science.

Paying attention to the Old Believers-“Poles” in our work, it is important to single out two stages of ethnographic research, relevant topics and approaches. The first stage or the beginning of ethnographic research in Altai arose due to the election of P. S. Pallas by members of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences as a professor of natural philosophy in 1766, who later made expeditions to the Asian part of the Russian Empire. Even though the main purpose of the expeditions was to collect information on the flora and fauna of various areas, it's also examined the socio-political, historical and ethnographic aspects [Keppen, 1902: 153–162]. As a result, P. S. Pallas described the presence of Old Believers in Altai. The researcher believed that the Old Believers appeared here due to the resettlement from the territory of Poland.

In his work “Traveling to Different Places of the Russian State”, the researcher noted that from 1764 along the rivers Irtysh, Ob, Uba, Shemonaevka, Alea and further to the Zmeinogorodsky mine, Kolyvano-Voskresensky plant and along defensive outposts, settlements of Old Believers began to be established, resettled to this territory by decree of Catherine II [Pallas, 1786: 211]. Focusing on the description of the Old Believers, P. S. Pallas paid special attention to the village of Shemonaikhe, which almost entirely consisted of Polish immigrants. Here, the researcher highlighted the industriousness and agricultural skills of the “Poles”. At the same time, he also pointed out the difficulties that the Old Believers had to face: the harsh natural conditions of Altai, unsuitable soils for habitual grain crops, and poor water quality [Pallas, 1786: 217–218].

In 1826, K. F. Ledebur together with his students — A. A. Bunge and K. A. Meyer, made an expedition to Altai, organized by the University of Derpt, whose goal was to study flora and fauna. Expeditions of K. F. Ledebour was financed by P. K. Frolov, the head and the organizer of a mining factory in Altai [GAAK. F.1. Op. 2. D. 367].

The main results of the expedition K. F. Ledebour reflected in his work entitled “Traveling in the Altai Mountains and the Foothills of Altai”. At the same time, during his trip, the researcher described not only aspects relating to the sphere of his scientific interests, but also paid attention to the way of life of the local population. As a result, they also affected the Old Believer settlements. So, during his journey from Zmeinogorsk to Riddersk, he visited the indigenous villages of the “Poles” of the Zmeinogorsk district: Yekaterininskaya, Shemonaikha, Losikh (Verkh-Uba), Ubinsk, Malaya Ubinka, Bystrukha, Cheremshanka, Butakovo. Describing the inhabitants of the area K. F. Ledebur highlighted their hospitality. As an example of openness in communication between Old Believers “Poles”, the researcher cited the fact that on the way from Losikh to Ubinsk he met frequent complaints of peasants about the theft of their horses by representatives of the Turkic-speaking population. Moreover, K. F. Ledebur noted that despite the seeming hospitality and openness in communication, the peasants were suspicious of foreigners, who in turn caused an extreme degree of curiosity among local residents. The researcher attributed this to the fact that the bulk of the inhabitants of the above settlements were Old Believers, whose religious views did not allow them to completely contact foreigners. In his work K. F. Ledebur also noted that all the villages he visited in the Zmeinogorsk district were quite large, and the main activities of the local population were: agriculture, cattle

breeding and beekeeping. Like P. S. Pallas, C. F. Ledebur also drew attention to the problems faced by Polish immigrants. He added that in addition to difficulties in organizing economic life, residents of this territory were taxed by the treasury, land taxes, worldly taxes, and were involved in mining works [Traveling in Altai Mountains..., 1993: 35–46].

K. M. Meyer (the student of K. F. Ledebur) while traveling from Zmeinogorsk to Ust-Kamenogorsk, also indicated a number of indigenous Old Believer villages: Yekaterininskaya, Shemonaikha, Losikh, Sekisovka and Bobrovka. In his work “Traveling the Dzungarian Kyrgyz Steppe”, he described in more detail the economic activities of the “Poles” who lived in Sekisovka and Bobrovka. K. M. Meyer noted that beekeeping was the most important economic sector in this territory. Cattle breeding was less common here due to the lack of good pastures and frequent epidemics of anthrax, but the land here was extremely favorable for arable farming, which, most likely, brought great incomes to the peasants [Traveling in Altai Mountains..., 1993: 222–224].

In 1845, the Imperial Russian Geographical Society (IRGS) was organized [Berg, 1946: 5]. After the emergence of the peripheral departments of the IRGS, interest in the study of the Siberian Old Believers increases, the second stage of the study of the “Poles” begins. At this stage, fundamental work appeared about the Altai Old Believers-“Poles” by M. V. Shvetsova. She raised a number of issues related to the history of the formation of “Polish” villages in Altai, religious structure, relations with the government, economic and household activities, etc.

Upon the history of the appearance of the “Poles” in Siberia and Altai, M. V. Shvetsova pointed out that the Senate issued a decree in 1762 on the basis of the manifesto of Catherine II according to which Old Believers who lived in Poland (which, in turn, they fled as a result of religious persecution) were invited to voluntarily return to their homeland. In return, they were promised the complete forgiveness of all their “crimes” and were given the opportunity to choose their place of residence: either return to their former territory or settle as state peasants in the territories indicated in a certain “register”. One of such territories included in the “register” was the banks of the Uba and Ulba rivers in Altai. However, these measures did not have the desired result. In 1765 the Senate again issued a decree inviting the Old Believers to return to Russia, but now with the proviso that the “not willfully returned” link to Siberia awaits [Shvetsova, 1898: 1–77].

M. V. Shvetsova managed to find out that some of the Old Believers moved to Altai voluntarily. There were also stories of local residents that their ancestors were sent to Siberia after the suppression of the uprising in Poland in 1768. The researcher came to the conclusion that the resettlement of the “Poles” in Altai took place from 1763 to 1769. Also M. V. Shvetsova identified the same main settlements that they inhabited: Staroaleyskoye, Yekaterininka, Shemonaikha, Verkh-Ubenskoye, Sekisovka and Bobrovka. At the same time, the researcher pointed out that settlers founded their villages in the areas of the former Cossack outposts, while cossacks often went to new outposts. However, there were cases when the cossacks, under the influence of the Old Believers, went into a “split”. According to M. V. Shvetsova, Old Believers from Poland were reluctant to make contact with those adhering to official Orthodoxy, and as a result they quickly began to establish their own settlements, which consisted exclusively of “Poles”: Malaya Ubinka was founded in 1787, Bystrukha in 1790, and in 1799 Cheremshanka. As a result, by 1899 there were 21

“Polish” settlements in 5 volosts of the Zmeinogorsky okrug: in Aleisky volost — Aleyskoye, Shipunovo, Kamenka; in Aleksandrovsky volost — Shemonaikha, Ekaterina; in Vladimir volost — Losikha (Verkh-Ubinskoe), Sekisovka, Bystrukha, Malaya Ubinka, Volchikha, Zimovskaya, Aleksandrovskaya.; In the Ridder volost — Cheremshanka, Butakova, Cross, Strezhnaya, Fir, Orlovka; in the Bobrovsky volost — Bobrovka, Chistopolka, Tarkhanskoye [Shvetsova, 1898: 7–21].

M. V. Shvetsova divided the settlements of the “Poles” according to geographical conditions into two approximately equal parts: northern and southern. The northern part was a steppe with fertile soils. In it, the main occupation of the inhabitants was agriculture and cattle breeding. The southern part is a mountainous area in which cattle breeding and beekeeping were the main occupations. Most of the settlements were in the southern part and the most densely populated in the northern part [Shvetsova, 1898: 25].

In the work of M. V. Shvetsova it is said that Polish immigrants were registered as state peasants and were subject to double tax, which was established by Peter the Great for all Old Believers. However, it is worth noting that voluntarily resettled people enjoyed the benefit of all taxes and duties for a period of 6 years. The main occupation of immigrants in Altai was tillage, but since 1779 the situation has changed dramatically and state peasants began to be attributed to factories and mines, since mining was developing at that time. The Poles, however, affected these measures only 10 years later, in 1789, in view of the peculiarities of their territorial settlement. But despite this fact, according to M. V. Shvetsova “Poles” still suffered a serious blow to their usual way of life, except that they fell into a dependent position, they also had to enter into close relations with the “Nikonians”, whom they had previously shunned. Wherein M. V. Shvetsova emphasized that the “Poles” had a negative attitude towards recruitment. The recruit service entailed the interaction of the Old Believers with representatives of official Orthodoxy. The Poles believed that recruiting conscription leads to the death of the soul, and “they tried by all means to evade it: when it was possible, they paid off it with bribes; if they didn’t manage to pay off, they fled to the mountains, to Bukhtarma, to Uimon and other places — they escaped from the “world” to their beloved “mother-beautiful desert”. So, according to the researcher, in the wilderness of Altai, in impassable and almost inaccessible mountain wilds, new Russian villages appeared, the Russian colonization of the region spread” [Shvetsova, 1898: 11–19].

Analyzing the work of M. V. Shvetsova, it is worth noting that the researcher put forward, in our opinion, the erroneous idea of the participation of Old Believers “Poles” in the formation of another ethnographic group of Old Believers — Altai Kamenschiks. Arguing their findings, M. V. Shvetsova repeatedly referred to the study of P. S. Pallas. The “Poles” influenced the Bukhtarma Kamenschiks but did not participate in their formation. This was noted by B. G. Gerasimov, the contemporary of M. V. Shvetsova. For example, as he points out, the distinguishing feature in the clothes of the Bukhtarma Old Believer from adhering to official Orthodoxy was the Confederate hat. She was of “Polish” origin. At the same time B. G. Gerasimov emphasized that the Bukhtarma Old Believers did not call themselves “Poles” [Gerasimov, 1911: 21].

Describing the confessional composition of the “Polish” villages, M. V. Shvetsova pointed out that the peasants belonged either to single-faith or were Old Believers, from whom at the end of

the 19th century the sect of the Samovodurovets stood out. The researcher draws attention to the lack of official and accurate statistics on the state of the split in Altai. Therefore, guided by only approximate information, she concluded that the greatest concentration of Old Believers was observed in Vladimir volost and in the nearest settlements of Ridder volost. According to available official data and according to the testimony of the local population, M. V. Shvetsova, examining the “Poles” who referred to themselves as Old Believers, identified the following currents: “Austrians”, Pseudo-“Austrians”, Okrugniks, Beglopovttsy (Protivokruzhniki), Pomorians, Fedoseyevtsy, Filipovtsy, Stakikovets and Beguny [Shvetsova, 1898: 36–43].

Information about the “Poles” and their confessional composition we find in the work of G. D. Grebenshchikov “The Uba River and the Ubin People”. At the time of writing his work, the author on this territory recorded Edinovercy, “Austrians”, Starikovtsy, Fedoseyevtsy, Spasovtsy, Samokreschentsy, Okhovtsy (Vozdakhanites), Dyrniki, and Pomorians [Grebenshchikov, 1912: 31]. Also G. D. Grebenshchikov noted the presence on Uba of the so-called “white-footed faith”. A runaway Old Believer bishop came under strict incognito and sent out a service that included washing his feet, as a result of which his followers were called “white-footed” [Grebenshchikov, 1912: 33].

A. E. Novoselov tried to cite statistical data on the confessional composition of the “Poles”. He noted that since 1845 the Edinover’s church has existed in Shemonaikha. According to the observations of A. E. Novoselov, the most current in with Losikh (Verkh-Ubinsk) were Pomorians. There were also many Orthodox, Edinoverets and Fedoseyevtsy. Of the five thousand people in Sekisovka, approximately 60% were Edinovertsy, 15% were Bespopovtsy, 20% were Beglopovttsy, 4% were “Austrians” and about 1% were Orthodox. In Bystrukha the vast majority are Bespopovtsy [Novoselov, 1915: 4–7]. As we can see from the overall picture, the religious composition of the settlements varied among themselves.

In addition to the above-mentioned settlements of the Old Believers — “Poles”, in other ethnographic messages of the Imperial period, information appeared about their presence in the Biysk district. So, from S. L. Chudnovsky we see that in the Altaiskoe village in the XIX century several families of “Poles” moved in, which were already inhabited by peasants from the Yenisei province [Chudnovsky, 1890: 72]. Thus, the Old Believers “Poles” in Altai settled not only on separate territories provided by the state, but also on existing villages and villages. It is worth to say that when arriving in them, the “Poles” nevertheless sought to settle separately. For example, as wrote S. L. Chudnovsky — in Altai they occupied the mountainous part of the village.

Summing up, we note that the beginning of the study of the Old Believers in Altai coincides with the beginning of the study of the ethnographic group of “Poles”, since the resettlement of the Old Believers from Poland was official and to the territories established by the state. Other factors were the openness of the Old Believers “Poles” in communication and the economic interests of the state in relation to them. At the same time, researchers of the Imperial period, touching upon the Old Believers “Poles” in their works, often did not take into account the “other” Old Believers — immigrants from other territories of the Russian Empire. So, in ethnographic works there is a motley diversity of the confessional composition of the ethnographic group. Of course, the immigrants from Poland were representatives of different Old Believers currents. When settling in Altai, the contacts of the “Poles” were not taken with

the mining workers and peasants who were from the northern parts of the Russian Empire and the Urals, where Pomorians and Starikovtsy dominated. However, the researchers tried to highlight the special role of the “Poles” in the development of the Altai territories. In our opinion, this was dictated by the political course and state-confessional relations (in relation to the Old Believers, the political vector was directed towards unity of faith) in the Russian Empire.

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