

УДК 323.11(574)“18/19”

Interethnic Relations in Russian Central Asia (19th – Early 20th Centuries)

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Received 02.09.2018, received in revised form 24.10.2018, accepted 07.11.2018

The article views the interethnic relations in Semirechye, one of the regions of the Russian Central Asia. During the first half of the 19th century, this territory became part of the Russian Empire. These were the Cossacks who played the main role in its accession and colonization. Initially, the government strongly encouraged the Cossacks and, thus, ensured the growth of their number both by creating favorable conditions for life and service and by including the representatives of other social groups (peasants and soldiers) in the Cossack population.

The conquest of Semirechye being over, economic objectives but not military and police ones became prioritized for the region's Russian-speaking population. The Cossacks were unable to solve these tasks due to the congestion with the official duties.

This led to the situation when in their colonization policy the authorities began to give preference to the peasants of the region, deterioration of the Cossacks' socio-economic situation and strengthening of the indigenous population's position being the consequence.

The result of this policy was the aggravation of inter-ethnic relations in the region. This culminated in the Turkestan uprising of 1916, which led to numerous victims among all ethnic groups in the region.

The research is based on the historical-and-genetic method, which was used to consider the development of the relations between the indigenous population of the region with the Semirechye Cossacks, and the historical-and-systematic method, which revealed a set of factors that influenced this process.

The scientific novelty of the research is in identification of a multidimensional role of the Semirechye Cossacks not only as a colonization element aiming at the region's economic development but also a military one. Ignoring the military component by the Russian authorities caused the increased tension in the relations with the local population at the beginning of the 20th century.

Keywords: Central Asia, Semirechye, interethnic relations, the Cossacks, colonization, the Islamic peoples, the Turkestan uprising.

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Research area: national history.

Citation: Kolesnik, E.G., Tarasov, M.G., Gergilev, D.N., Novoseltsev, N.R. (2018). Interethnic relations in Russian Central Asia (19th – early 20th centuries). *J. Sib. Fed. Univ. Humanit. soc. sci.*, 11(12), 1968-1990. DOI: 10.17516/1997-1370-0348.

Introduction

Semirechye, which became part of Russia during the 1st half – mid 19th century, was a territory inhabited by Muslim peoples – the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and Uzbeks. Later, Chinese Muslims – the Uighurs and Dungans, who moved from Xinjiang, – joined them. Under these conditions, the region’s Russian (mostly Cossack) population was forced to build a special mechanism of interaction with the local Muslim population.

Problem Statement

Interaction of the Cossacks and Muslim peoples of Semirechye in the 19th – early 20th centuries is of particular interest nowadays, the research providing more information about the relations of the Muslim and Christian communities in one of the historical regions of Central Asia.

Historiography

The history of relations between the Russian population of Central Asia and the indigenous people of the region has traditionally been among the priorities for the Russian scientists. The historians’ particular attention was paid to the relationship of the main part of the Russian population in southern Kazakhstan, the Semirechye Cossacks, with the Turkic peoples, the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz. This problem was reflected in A.S. Elagin’s “Kazachestvo i kazach’i voiska v Kazakhstane” (*The Cossacks and the Cossack Troops in Kazakhstan*) (Elagin, 1993), E.N. Leshchev’s “Okhrana gosudarstvennoi granitsy Rossiiskoi imperii Semirechenskim kazach’im voiskom (1867–1917)” (*Protection of the Russian Empire’s State Border by the Semirechye Cossack Army (1867-1917)*) (Leshchev, 2004), D.A. Sapunov’s “Uchastie kazachestva Urala i Sibiri v prisoedinenii Srednei Azii k Rossii (40–90 gg. 19th v.)” (*The Ural and Siberian Cossacks’ Participation in Accession of Central Asia to Russia (the 40s-90s of the 19th century)*) (Sapunov, 2001). Ethnic composition of the Russian population in Central Asia, particularly the Cossacks, and external factors that influenced its formation are considered in A.I. Kortunov’s article “Orenburgskie frantsuzy: sud’ba voennoplennykh Velikoi armii Napoleona priniavshikh russkoe

poddanstvo i ostavshikhsia na poselenii v Orenburgskoi gubernii (1814–1836 gody)” (*The Orenburg Frenchmen: the Life of War Prisoners of Napoleon’s Grand Army Who Became Russian Citizens and Settled in Orenburg Guberniia (1814–1836 years)*) (Kortunov, 2015). In his works “D.A. Miliutin i kazaki” (*D.A. Miliutin and the Cossacks*) (Volvenko, 2016) and “Vremennyi komitet po peresmotru kazach’ikh zakonopolozhenii: organizatsiia, sostav, deiatel’nost’ (1865–1872)” (*The Interim Committee on the Revision of the Cossack Statutes: Organization, Structure, Activities (1865–1872)*) (Volvenko, 2018) A.A. Volvenko examines the authorities’ policy towards the Cossacks in the middle of the 19th century, the policy determining the change in their number in Central Asia and their place in the system of interethnic relations. The beginning of the Russians’ penetration to Central Asia in the XVIII century, formation of the Cossack population and their relations with the Turkic population is considered by V.D. Puzanov in his work “Formirovanie i sluzhby vypisnykh kazakov Sibiri v 18th v.” (*The Siberian Cossacks’ Formation and Discharge Service Cossacks in the 18th Century*) (Puzanov, 2017). The policy of the official authorities in the Russian Empire in the Kazakh steppe, the Cossacks’ participation in its implementation, interethnic relations of the Russian and Kazakh population in the northern regions of Central Asia are viewed by G.B. Izbasarova in “Institut popechitelei v Kazakhskoi stepi 19th v.” (*The Institute of Trustees in the Kazakh Steppe of the 19th Century: Legal Status and Job Descriptions*) (Izbasarova, 2017).

Methods

The research is based on historical-and-genetic and historical-and-systematic methods. The former was used to study the process of formation of the indigenous population’s relations with the Semirechye Cossacks throughout the considered period of the 19th – early 20th centuries. The latter made it possible to analyze the problem in a historical context when taking into account a complex of factors affecting the Cossacks’ place in the system of interethnic relations on the territory of Semirechye.

Discussion

Semirechye became a place of the Russian merchants’ interest as it was a transit country for trade with China from the beginning of the 19th century. In 1811–1812, accompanied by the Cossacks the first Russian trade caravans passed through Semirechye to China. In 1812, two delegates from the Kyrgyz – Kazybek and Jakup – arrived in Tobolsk with the Cossack convoy to ask for the Russian “protection”. During

this period, strong trade relations were established between Russia and Semirechye (Leshchev, 2004: 48–49).

With the start of regular trade, there arose the issue of the trade routes protection. The preferred option for this was the Cossacks who required less money for their maintenance than the regular units and could effectively interact with the Turkic population due to their experience and knowledge of the nomadic peoples' language and customs. These were also the reasons why the Cossacks were a valuable colonization element to consolidate the Russian presence in the region. In this regard, the government sought to increase their number by different methods (Kortunov, 2015; Puzanov, 2017).

In 1822, in the course of the reform of managing Siberia M.M. Speransky published "The Charter on the Siberian Kyrgyz". According to the Charter eight external districts were established for managing the Kazakh population, three of them – Ayaguz, Kokpekty and Uch-Bulak – were located in Semirechye (Polnoe sobranie, 1830).

In 1825, the first Cossack fortifications were built on the lands of the Karatal river to protect the Kazakhs, who had taken Russian citizenship, from the people of Khiva and the Chinese. It was the same year, 1825, when the cornet T. Niukhalov's detachment visited the lands of the Kyrgyz while accompanying the ambassadors of the bugu tribe to the places of their nomads who appealed to the Russian authorities for citizenship. The bugu tribe representative's request was accepted (Leshchev, 2004: 19).

In 1828–1829, the Russian citizenship was requested by the Kazakh sultan Sart-Uly, who roamed with his people in the area of the Ayaguz river. He suggested "forming an okrug (district) external from the land". In 1830, he already published the Supreme decree on the external Ayaguz okrug formation. Thus, the okrug formation, declared in 1822, was implemented (Katanaev, 1908a: 12).

From 1839, the Cossack squads went from Siberia to Ayaguz to protect the Kazakhs who became Russian citizens and to ensure the order. The need for this was confirmed in the same year of 1839, when on the bank of the Lepsa river the sotnik Medvedev's detachment defeated the Kazakhs in Matai, acting under the Kokand pressure against the Russian authorities. After this defeat, there had been not any confrontation of the Kazakhs with the Russians in the region for a long time (Leshchev, 2004: 21).

Kenesary Kasymov who started an uprising against the Russian authorities in 1837 was pushed back by the Cossacks from Central Kazakhstan to Semirechye in 1846. Here he invited the sultans and beys of the Senior zhuz to join him, but almost all the tribal leaders of the Semirechye Kazakhs ignored his proposal. In June 22, 1846, on the Lepsa river the border chief N.F. Wishnevskii hosted the sultans of the Senior zhuz

main tribes – the Dulats, Albans, Suans, Shaprashtins and Zhalairs, took their oath of allegiance to the tsar, and got their promise to fight against the rebels (Ledenev, 1909: 65). Kenesary was forced to leave the territory of modern Kyrgyzstan, where in 1847 he was captured by the Kyrgyz and soon killed (Maksheyev, 1890: 105).

The foundation of the Kopal fortification at the foot of the Semirechye Alatau in 1847 by the request of the Kazakhs from the Senior zhuz favoured the accession of all the Northern Semirechye, stretching up to the Ili river, to Russia (Sapunov, 2001: 101).

In 1848, the post of the sergeant at arms of the Great Horde was established in the Ayaguz okrug to manage the Senior zhuz, an okrug office being established in each okrug. The chief of the local sultans was the head of the office which consisted of two Russian and two Kazakh assessors. The Siberian Cossacks' detachments serving as the military police forces were "sent to the steppe and ... encouraged to the permanent settlement there" (Leshchev, 2004: 23; Izbasarova, 2017).

The Russian government, seeking to maintain good relations with the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz of Semirechye, provided them with both military and economic assistance. In particular, the Russian authorities allocated forage and money to the Kazakh families whose cattle suffered from the strongest drought of 1850 (Sapunov, 2001: 102).

In 1850, in an effort to force the Kokand khanate from Semirechye the Cossacks' detachment was forwarded to the Touchback fortress, its regional pivot post, to participate in the Kazakhs' military actions. The Kazakhs, however, underestimated this small Russian squad and did not support it in the clash with the Kokands. Forced to fight with 6-7 thousand Kokand army alone, the Cossack detachment of only 175 people repelled all the attacks and destroyed a large number of enemy soldiers. This dramatically increased the prestige of the Russians in the region. In 1851, the Touchback fortress was taken by the colonel I.M. Karbyshev's Cossack detachment. This had strengthened Russia's influence in the region and in 1853 the Kirghiz, led by the manap Urman Niyazbek, became Russian citizens (Maksheyev, 1890: 137).

The conquest of Trans-Ili region started in 1853. The control over it made it possible to support the Kazakhs of the southern regions of the Middle zhuz and the Northern Kyrgyz in their confrontation with Kokand. In 1854, the major M.D. Peremyshl'skii, a sergeant at arms of the Great Horde, built the Vernoe fortification to strengthen the reputation of Russia in Trans-Ili region. As a result, the whole region stretching up to the Chu river became part of Russia, and, in 1855, 10 thousand families of the Kyrgyz bugu family, who roamed in Southern Semirechye, took out Russian citizenship (Sapunov, 2001: 107). In September 26, 1854, the Kyrgyz, wandering on the Eastern shores

of the lake Issyk-Kul, filed a petition for the Russian citizenship. After the Russian authorities' consent the cornet Lutshev's detachment was forwarded to the lake. In January 17, 1855, the local Kyrgyz took an oath of allegiance to Russia (Tsentrāl'naia Aziia, 2008: 44–45). In 1855–1859, the Russian military-scientific expeditions to the areas of Issyk-Kul and Tien Shan granted the Russian citizenship to some Kazakhs of the Senior zhuz and to Northern Kirghiz (Tsentrāl'naia Aziia, 2008: 72). In February 1860, at the request of the chiefs of a number of Kyrgyz clans to be granted the Russian citizenship two Cossack detachments were forwarded to the Issyk-Kul region. As a result, several Kyrgyz families refused the protection of Kokand and became Russian citizens (Veniukov, 1868: 149–152). In 1860, the colonel I.E. Tsimmerman's Cossack detachment was forwarded to the Chui valley and occupied the Kokand fortresses of Tokmak and Pishpek. Thus, the weakness of Kokand and the strength of Russia were demonstrated to the local Kyrgyz which contributed to their reorientation towards Russia (Khalfin, 1962: 129–130).

In 1862, the Chui Kyrgyz rebelled against the Kokand rule. They killed the Khan's deputy. The attempt to assault Pishpek being unsuccessful, they appealed to the Russian authorities for help. In November 1862, the lieutenant colonel G.A. Kolpakovskii's thousand-and-a-half detachment, including the Cossacks, infantry and artillery, came to support the Kirghiz and forced Tokmak and Pishpek again. After these fortresses had been occupied and destructed and the Kyrgyz tribes of Solto and Sarybagysh had taken out the Russian citizenship the Chui valley became part of Russia (Terent'ev, 1906: 258–259).

Thus, in the 1st half – mid 19th century, the majority of the Kazakhs of the Middle zhuz and the Senior zhuz and the Kirghiz of the Horde became the citizens of Russia and Semirechye finally became part of Russia. The Cossacks played the most active role in this. That time the Russian authorities faced the task of protecting the border, managing and maintaining order in the region. Semirechye was necessary to colonize and develop. The Cossacks, who knew the region's geography and its population and perfectly adapted to both military actions in local conditions and farming, turned out to be the most suitable element here.

Permanent Cossack population had been formed in Semirechye for several decades. In 1841, five families of the 8th Siberian linear battalion soldiers assigned to the Cossacks settled in Ayaguz. In 1847, Nicholas I approved the plan of Semirechye occupation and the Siberian Cossacks' resettlement. In 1847, 50 families of the 9th Siberian Cossack regiment were settled in Ayaguz [Polnoe sobranie, 1861, p. 35404]. The same year of

1847, the captain S.M. Abakumov's detachment founded a fortification in Kapal plot of land which later (in 1848) turned into the village of Kapal, where 200 Siberian Cossacks with their families were moved to resettle (Leshchev, 2004: 50).

In the fortification of Verny, built in 1854 on the Alma-Ata river, a garrison consisting mainly of the Siberian Cossacks was formed. Nearby, on the Talgar, Issyk and Kaskelen rivers, the Cossack families, who began the local lands development, also started to settle. In 1855, the Cossack village of Almaty was founded near Verny. 132 families of Siberian Cossacks were moved to it. In 1856, 200 peasant families of the Cossack estate from Tomsk and Tobolsk provinces were settled here (Leshchev, 2004: 51). In addition, the government allowed everyone to settle here on condition that the settlers turned into the Cossacks (Tsentral'naia Aziia, 2008: 416).

From 1847 to 1867, a significant number of Cossack families from the Siberian Cossack army were resettled in Semirechye, thus, forming 14 Cossack villages and settlements (Galuzo, 1965: 162). The Cossack settlements in Semirechye were located along the promising state border, which was supposed to divide the Muslims of China and the Kokand khanate (Sapunov, 2001: 185).

On July 13, 1867 by the decree of Alexander II an autonomous Semirechye Cossack army was formed on the basis of the 9th and 10th regimental districts of the Siberian Cossack army, Verny being its centre (Polnoe sobranie, 1871: 44845).

At the beginning of 1868 there were 14 648 people in Semirechye army – 7832 males and 6816 females (Kazach'i voiska, 1873: 151). About 400 refugees from China – the Mongols and the Kalmyks – were recruited to replenish the army in 1869. In 1870, the Semirechye army numbered 17111 people – 9220 males and 7891 females (Elagin, 1993: 59–60). In 1871, the Siberian Cossacks from Altai were moved to the Chinese border (RGIA. Fund 483. Inv. 1. File 79. Sheet 1-2).

In 1860–1870, despite the considerable efforts the Cossacks who moved to Semirechye from Siberia were relatively few. The number of new villages grew due to the settlements of the Semirechye Cossacks and granting the Cossack status to the migrant peasants (The uprising of 1916, 1960: 192). However, throughout the 2nd half of the 19th century the region's Cossack population was steadily increasing. In 1880, it numbered 24398 people: 23409 Orthodox and 809 Buddhist-Mongols (Kazach'i voiska, 1873: 151).

According to the 1897 census, of 988 thousand residents of the inhabited area the Russians were a little more than 85 thousand people (9.7%). The Kazakhs and Kyrgyz made up the major population of the region, their number being about 795

thousand people (80.4%). 56 thousand Uighurs (5.7%), 15 thousand Uzbeks (1.5%), 14 thousand Dungans (1.4%) and about 8 thousand Tatars (0.8%) also resided in the region (Leshchev, 2004: 70).

By 1900, there already were 29 settlements of the Semirechye Cossacks, and the population had increased to 36688 people¹. In 1906, the Cossack population of the region was 25% Russian, or 4% of the total population². It is obvious that the share of the Cossack population in the region had decreased.

The Cossack settlements were distributed unevenly. They mainly resided in Verny, Dzsharkent and Kopal uyezds (districts), in the road areas between the Siberian and Turkestan military okrugs. As for Northern Kyrgyzstan, there were no Cossack settlements there at all. The Cossacks being important for the region, it is only at the beginning of the 20th century when four Cossack villages were founded on the Kyrgyz lands in Pishpek and Przhivalsky uyezds (Sapunov, 2001: 192).

In 1912, the Cossack population in Semirechye was already 57 thousand people and continued to grow (Bekmakhanova, 1980: 108). On January 1, 1916, the Cossack population of the region numbered 63462 people. They lived mainly in the North of the region.³

After the Turkestan uprising of 1916 the authorities wanted to increase the number of Cossack settlements and the Cossack population in Semirechye. At the meeting with the Turkestan governor-general A.N. Kuropatkin they decided to found five new Cossack villages (60 yards each) on the Kyrgyz lands. Later, two more Cossack villages were expected to be built. It was planned to allocate 300 thousand acres of land to them. The plan was not implemented due to the February revolution (Iarkov, 2002: 53).

The extensive military lands served the economic basis of the Semirechye Cossack army. Despite the Regulation of 1846, which determined the Cossack's per capita allotment of 30 tithes, at the initial stage of the army formation the Cossacks occupied the land on the basis of the "right of seizure". Direct seizure of land by the Cossacks led to numerous conflicts with the indigenous population (Elagin, 1993: 60).

In 1867, in the course of the Semirechye Cossack army formation the best lands of the local Kazakh and Kyrgyz population were seized by the authorities in favor of the Cossacks. However, K.P. Kaufman, the governor-general of Turkestan, believed that the Cossacks were unable to establish an effective economy on their plots. This

¹ RGVIA. Fund 330. Inv. 61. File 1168. Sheet л. 2 об.–5 об.

² RGVIA. Fund 330. Inv. 61. File 1168. Sheet 83–84.

³ RGVIA. Fund 330. Inv. 61. File 1168. Sheet 539.

view was shared by G.A. Kolpakovsii, the military governor of Semirechye (Volvenko, 2016, 2018). Trying to defuse the situation in the region, the government began to return part of the Cossack lands to the Kazakhs in 1870-1880. During this time, 213 thousand acres were taken away from the Semirechye Cossacks. Although the supreme authority recognized the seizures as illegal and ordered to return the land, the local authorities ignored this decision (Tsentral'naia Aziia, 2008: 216). The Cossacks' rights were violated later as well. In the "Explanatory note" to the "Steppe regulation" of 1891 it was said that in Semirechye and a number of other regions in case of self-government the lands given to the Cossacks for temporary use were seized and transferred into the ownership of the cities (Tsentral'naia Aziia, 2008: 416). However, regardless of anything, the amount of land in the Semirechye army went on growing. Whereas in 1884 the army had about 570 thousand tithes, by 1916 it already had 744 thousand. In 1904, the land per a male capita in the Semirechye army was 95,3 tithes, that was more than in any other Cossack army of Russia (Bekmakhanova, 1980: 108–109).

It should be recognized that due to their heavy workload with official duties the Semirechye Cossacks cultivated only a small part of their huge plots, even using the Kazakhs' and immigrants' cheap labor. Formally, it gave a reason to assert that the land use by the Cossacks was not effective enough. However, the region's key military-police factor was ignored. Restraint of the Cossack colonization of a newly accessed region, populated by numerous migrants of different ethnicity and faith and potentially hostile people, was fraught with the threat to the Russian presence in Semirechye. Further events will confirm this.

Accession of Semirechye to Russia which took place in the 1st half – mid 19th century could not avoid conflicts with the indigenous population. The local Kazakhs and Kyrgyz were under the influence of China and Kokand which were hostile to Russia. Quite humane policy of the imperial authorities and specific qualities of the Cossack community promoted the establishment of their normal relations. The Siberian Cossacks, who formed the basis of the Russian colonists, had a long-term experience of interaction with the Kazakhs of southern Siberia. Ordinary Cossacks could speak the Kazakh language in everyday situations. The officers also studied it in the Omsk cadet corps, where ethnic Kazakhs studied (Katanaev, 1908b: 14). Although it was impossible to completely exclude the cases of ordinary Cossacks' violent actions against the local population, they always led to severe punishment if known to the authorities (Leshchey, 2004: 51–52).

The most important role in the Cossacks' relations with the indigenous population of Semirechye was played by the economy. The Cossack lands hosted numerous Turkic populations, including nomadic cattle breeders who wintered here and the Dzhatok people who had to settle here and be engaged in farming because of the loss of cattle. The development of the Cossack farming in Semirechye provided the Dzhatok people with an additional source of income through employment. Huge Cossack farms needed a large number of workers. Doing the military service, the Cossacks could not farm themselves. Working for the Cossack gave the poor Kazakhs a chance to survive, especially in harsh winters and in cases of loss of cattle from starvation (Vostok Rossii, 2011: 96).

The Dzhatok people, especially hereditary ones, knew the Russian language well and borrowed many elements of the Cossacks' everyday life and economic activities. In the conditions of the Dzhatok people's permanent residence in the settlements there were cases when the Cossacks baptized and educated the Kazakh children who were later often admitted to the estates of the Cossacks or bourgeois (Leshchev, 2004: 54).

The nomadic Kazakhs frequently rented the Cossack hayfields, could employ the Cossacks with horse mowers to make hay at a cheap price, etc. The hay stocked by the Semirechye Kazakhs and Kyrgyz in winter either with the Cossacks' assistance or following the way the Cossacks did it helped them keep the cattle from mortality during the period of "jute", a sleet preventing grazing (Sapunov, 2001: 198–199).

In places with a predominantly nomadic population the emergence of Cossack settlements stimulated the transition of the indigenous population to agriculture. The local residents borrowed the Cossacks' new crops, skills of working with agricultural tools, modern methods of cattle breeding, the best cattle breeds, etc. (Tsentral'naia Aziia, 2008: 226). They also borrowed the Russians' progressive household skills (Brusina, 2001: 38).

At the same time, intensification of agricultural activities among the Kazakhs and Kyrgyz under the influence of the Russian Cossack population had a negative side. The Turkic population of the region began to value the land, which, in particular, made it difficult to establish new Cossack villages [Leshchev, 2004, p. 75].

Despite some inconveniences due to the rejection of part of the indigenous population's land in favor of the Cossacks, the Cossacks' relations with the local Turks in the 2nd half of the 19th – early 20th centuries were generally friendly. The period of their relative hostility was followed by the time of peaceful relations. The Cossack song ran: "We really became friends with the Sarts // So did we with the Kyrgyz" (Pesni Orenburgskikh kazakov, 1904: 163).

The situation changed at the beginning of the World War I. Mass mobilization led to a sharp reduction in the number of battle-ready Cossacks in Semirechye. This had a negative impact on the situation in the region and became one of the main reasons for the Turkestan uprising in 1916.

In addition to special reasons of anti-Russian propaganda by Muslim clergy, German and Turkish agents and seizure of weapons from the Russian population for the front, there were two main causes for the uprising. These were the weakening of the Russian population, especially the Cossacks, because of the call to active service and the confrontation of the Russian settlers with the indigenous people because of the land issue (K istorii vosstaniia kirgiz, 1926: 73).

The reason for the uprising was the decree on the call of “male foreign population” to rear work dated June 25, 1916. It was planned to call 60 thousand people from the territory of Semirechye. It is important to note that the representatives of the indigenous peoples of the region traditionally did not serve in the Russian army (Vosstanie 1916 g., 1960: 81–82).

In Semirechye, the first attack was an armed attack of the Kazakhs of Kyzylburg volost (Vernensky uyezd) on the members of the Kazakh volst board and the Russian officials on August 3. One person was killed, three ones – wounded. The Cossack squadron which promptly set out from Assa “excellently punished” the rebels (K istorii vosstaniia kirgiz, 1926: 70).

The Kyrgyz population took the most active part in the uprising. On August 9, the disorders began in Przhevalskii uyezd, where there were attacks on the villages of Grigor’evka, Stolypin and Belotsarskoe. In Belotsarskoe village the rebels killed almost all the men and captured the women. The destruction of the Cossack population started. On August 12, two officers and a few Cossacks were killed, and some corpses were disfigured (Ganin, 2016: 98). There were also attacks on the villages located on the banks of the lake Issyk-Kul and along the path from Przhevalsk to Okhotnich’e village. The rebels looted and killed the villagers, burned their houses. 28 settlements and 35 farms were destroyed. The most active part in the riots was taken by the Dungans who fled to Semirechye after the suppression of Muslims in Xinjiang in the 1870s. In August 1916, the Dungans massacred the Russian population in villages, showing their particular cruelty when murdering the people¹. It was Przhevalsky uyezd where the Russian population of Semirechye suffered the heaviest losses during the uprising

¹ RGIA. Fund 1292. Inv. 1. File 1933. Sheet 244.

(about two thousand people were killed). On August 11-12, in Pishpek uyezd there were attacks on the settlement of Samsonievskaya and the villages along the river Chu. On August 13, Tokmak was besieged by the five-thousand crowd of the Kyrgyz. At that time, the authorities of Semirechye feared the complete destruction of the Russian population here (K istorii vosstaniia kirgiz, 1926: 70).

The Cossacks were immediately involved in the rescue of the Russian population in Semirechye and suppression of the uprising. Older Cossacks got mobilized, all non-combatant groups were engaged. This made it possible to replenish the existing Cossack units and form new ones (Sapargaliev, 1966: 256). The captain Kravchenko's detachment of Cossacks and combatants started active restoration of order in the areas of the lake Issyk-Kul and the river Tekes. On August 12-14, the Cossack detachments brought the Russian population from Przhevalsk okrug to the city which became a centre of defense (K istorii vosstaniia kirgiz, 1926: 72). On August 13, the colonel Bazilevskii's detachment dispersed a large crowd of rebels in Dzhailmyshevskaiia volost (K istorii vosstaniia kirgiz, 1926: 70). To remove the siege from the city of Tokmak, protect nearby Russian villages and suppress the uprising in Pishpek uyezd they sent the captain Bakurevich's detachment. The Cossack detachments were also sent to other centres of the uprising – those of Dzharkent uyezd, the areas of Naryn and Pishpek cities, etc. (K istorii vosstaniia kirgiz, 1926: 67). The shortage of forces to suppress the uprising being acute, the government sent the 1st and the 2nd Semirechye Cossack regiments, the 7th Orenburg and the 9th Siberian Cossack regiments from the front to Semirechye (Tsentral'naia Aziia v sostave..., 2008: 156). After the suppression of the uprising they were left in the region to maintain the order (Leshchev, 2004: 142). In October 1916, after a number of continuous defeats, the last rebels and their families left for China.

The uprising led to the destruction of Russian and Cossack villages, primarily in the southern part of Semirechye. Przhevalsk and the southern part of Dzharkent uyezds suffered most. More than 9.000 Russian settlers' farms and the railway were destroyed; bridges, schools, hospitals and churches were burned. 2.325 Russian people were killed; 1.384 people were reported missing. 79 soldiers and 4 officers involved in the suppression of the uprising were killed, 77 soldiers were reported missing (Vosstanie 1916 g., 1960: 549). Up to 4 thousand people of local population in Semirechye were killed. 164 thousand people fled to China, about 12 thousand of them died on their way there (Tsentral'naia Aziia v sostave..., 2008: 156). Having lost the cattle taken by the Chinese, the part of the fugitives received the permission and soon returned back.

Yet, about 70 thousand people remained in Xinjiang. Those involved in the murder of Cossacks, their families and Russian settlers lost their lands which were given to Cossack and peasant villages (Tsentral'naia Aziia, 2008: 227).

Russian authorities in Semirechye both the czar and “democratic” ones assisted the returning fugitives. Five million rubles were allocated to the Kyrgyz and Kazakhs who returned from China, the Russian victims were allocated about six million¹.

More than 3 thousand people were detained on suspicion of participation in murders and robberies, 933 people were put on trial, 346 of them were acquitted and 587 were convicted. 201 people were sentenced to death, but only 20 convicts were hanged (Vosstanie 1916 g., 1960: 74). Given the number of the Russians killed, the regional authorities were extremely merciful.

As a result of the uprising of 1916 the relations between the Cossacks and the region's Muslim population were struck a hard blow.

Conclusion

In general, regarding the Cossacks' role in the system of interethnic relations in the territory of Semirechye, it is necessary to take into account the fact that it was largely to them that the region became a part of Russia. They became the basis of the region's Russian population, guaranteed the local peoples' loyalty.

After Semirechye finally joined Russia at the beginning of the 2nd half of the 19th century the Russian administration placed a priority in colonization of the region on the peasants who were more efficient farmers. The Cossacks' most important function – the military and police one, which ensured the membership of Semirechye in Russia, was ignored, and the Cossack colonization sharply slowed down.

In the 19th – early 20th century, the Cossacks' relations with the indigenous peoples were mutually beneficial and, generally, neighbourly. However, there were contradictions between these two population groups, the reason being not only ethnic and religious differences, but also economic contradictions and first of all the land ones.

The uprising of the Muslim peoples of Semirechye, which began in 1916, proved in practice that it was impossible to disregard the Cossacks in the system of interethnic relations in the region. The Cossacks' deterrent police force was undermined by mass mobilizations. Alongside with the slowdown of the Cossack colonization it became one

¹ RGVIA. Fund 400. Inv. 1. File 4639. Sheet 108 – Sheet 108 back side.

of the main reasons for the uprising. Despite this, these were the Cossacks who could reverse the situation and save the Russian population of Semirechye. The attempts to solve the problem of control over the region by increasing the Cossack population which were taken by the authorities in late 1916–early 1917 were already belated.

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List of abbreviations

RSHA – Russian state historical archive.

RSMA – Russian state military archive.

Межэтнические отношения в российской Центральной Азии (XIX – начало XX в.)

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Предметом исследования настоящей статьи являются межнациональные отношения в одном из регионов российской Центральной Азии – Семиречье. В течение первой половины XIX в. эта территория вошла в состав Российской империи. Главную роль в присоединении и колонизации Семиречья сыграло казачество. Первоначально правительство всячески поощряло казачество и обеспечивало рост его численности как путем создания благоприятных условий для жизни и службы, так и за счет включения в состав казачьего населения представителей других социальных групп (крестьян и солдат).

С окончанием процесса завоевания Семиречья приоритетными для русскоязычного населения региона стали не военно-полицейские, а экономические задачи, решить которые казачество было не в состоянии в силу перегруженности служебными обязанностями.

Это привело к тому, что власти начали отдавать предпочтение в колонизации региона крестьянам. Следствием явилось ухудшение социально-экономического положения казачества и усиление позиций коренного населения.

Результат подобной политики – обострение межэтнических отношений в регионе, кульминацией чего стало Туркестанское восстание 1916 г., приведшее к многочисленным жертвам среди всех этнических групп региона.

В основе исследования лежит историко-генетический метод, с помощью которого был рассмотрен процесс развития отношений коренного населения региона с семиреченским казачеством, и историко-системный метод, который позволил определить совокупность факторов, влиявших на этот процесс.

Научная новизна исследования обусловлена выявлением многомерной роли семиреченского казачества не только как колонизационного элемента, основной задачей которого было экономическое освоение региона, но и военной составляющей, игнорирование которой русскими властями привело в начале XX в. к усилению напряженности во взаимоотношениях с местным населением.

Ключевые слова: Центральная Азия, Семиречье, межэтнические отношения, казачество, колонизация, мусульманские народы, Туркестанское восстание.

Научная специальность: 07.00.02 – отечественная история.



Fig. 1. Russian settlers in Central Asia (photo by S.M. Prokudin-Gorsky)

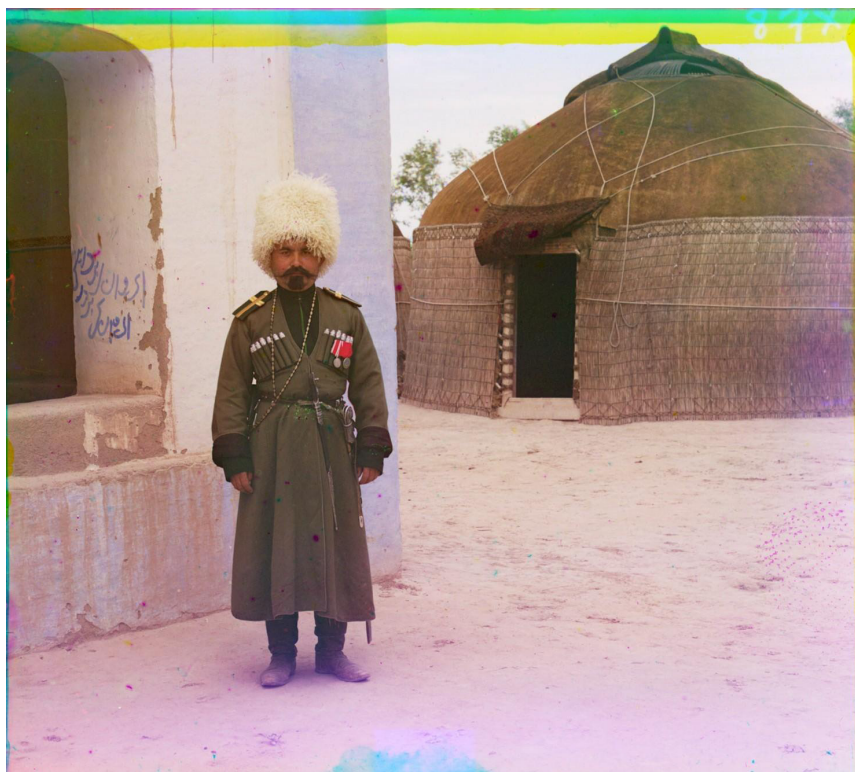


Fig. 2. The Cossack of the Semirechye Cossack army (photo by S.M. Prokudin-Gorsky)



Fig. 3. The Uzbek family (photo by S.M. Prokudin-Gorsky)



Fig. 4. The camelcade in a Russian settlement in Central Asia (photo by S.M. Prokudin-Gorsky)



Fig. 5. Oriental Bazaar (photo by S.M. Prokudin-Gorsky)



Fig. 6. The Kazakh family in the steppe (photo by S.M. Prokudin-Gorsky)



Fig. 7. The camelcade loaded with fodder thorns in the Mirzacho'l steppe (photo by S.M. Prokudin-Gorsky)



Fig. 8. The Mirzacho'l steppe. Russian specialists with a local guide (photo by S.M. Prokudin-Gorsky)



Fig. 9. A group of Russian peasant settlers in the Semirechye region (photo by S.M. Prokudin-Gorsky)



Fig. 10. The Cossacks (A postcard of the early 20th century)



Fig. 11. A pirate K.K. Kazak and a field-officer of the Semirechye Cossack army. 1867



Fig. 12. The Semirechye Cossacks foragers (A photo of the early 20th century)