

УДК 357.1(571.53)(091)

Cossack Life Style of Irkutsk Cossack Army in the Middle of XIX – the First Quarter of XX Centuries (on the Example of Krestovozdvizhenskaya Cossack Village)

Yury A. Petrushin*

Irkutsk State University,

1 Karl Marx st., Irkutsk, 664003 Russia ¹

Received 6.11.2009, received in revised form 13.11.2009, accepted 20.11.2009

The given article considers the Cossack life style of Irkutsk Cossack Army on the example of Krestovozdvizhenskaya community. The author analyses the educational process in Cossack villages, Cossack day-to-day life and military service. The author presents the main stages of Cossack participation in the Revolution and the Civil war in Siberia. The process of turning Cossacks into peasants is also revealed. The article also contains a brief description of modern state of Cossack villages.

Keywords: Cossacks, Cossack life style, Cossack villages, an allotment system, military duties, moral education, Cossack Revolutionary Committee, repression measures.

Problem Relevance. In the rich history of Irkutsk region there is an interesting and unique page. It is closely linked to Cossacks history. Cossacks are known to have played an active role in the process of exploring the Angara region. They used the Russian waterways in a proper way. The Oka river, flowing on the territory of Nizhneudinsk district, was the connecting element for developing new lands. Settlers-farmers followed Cossacks. At the beginning of the XVIII century they became the first inhabitants of Kuytun volost communities: Kuytunskoe, Tulinskoe, Barlukskoe and Khaikhtskoe.

By the beginning of the XIX century Cossacks were scattered over towns, factories, transit camps and Russia-Mongolia border territory. Under the regulations of 1st of July, 1822

they were formed into the Second Irkutsk five-hundredth regiment.

With the population number growing and Eastern Siberia exploration developing, Cossacks had more obligations vested by the government. Under the regulations of 4th of January, 1851 an Irkutsk five-hundredth regiment was transformed into an Irkutsk six-hundredth cavalry. Headquarters of each *sotnia* were located in more populated Cossack villages.

To reinforce a new Cossack regiment there was taken a decision to recruit soldiers from European part of Russia and turn them into Cossacks. Among those were penalized persons. Thus, they came to our region. Some of them were given a land of a Kuytun free land fund. In this place there were Cossacks land allotments at the beginning of 50-s of the XIX century.

* Corresponding author E-mail address: serg_petr@mail.ru

¹ © Siberian Federal University. All rights reserved

Besides, Cossacks got a part of ploughed fields. Within this surveyed fields there was established the Krestovozdvizhenskaya Community (land lot 13) comprising of five Cossacks villages.

Newly established Cossack settlements were named after famous Russian dukes and holy tides. At first, these settlements belonged to Kimilteyskaya volost (Nizhneudinsk district, Kuytun part of Irkutsk region). Later they became a part of Kuytun volost.

Research Task. In the article the task to study the day-to-day life of Cossacks belonged to the Krestovozdvizhenskaya community is posed. Considering day-to-day microhistory advances accumulating new actual knowledge for this subject matter to be scientifically generalized.

Methodology of scientific cognition is comparative historical and ideographic methods.

Materials. If we look at the pre-revolutionary map of Irkutsk region we'll find out that Cossack settlements were situated as follows. From West to East toward the Moscow road, Alexander Nevsky village was located in a distance of 181 versts from Nizhneudinsk. Pokrovskaya settlement was established in 3 versts (184 versts from the district), Krestovozdvizhenskaya (188 versts), Petropavlovskaya (189 versts), Preobrazhenskaya (205 versts from the district)¹.

Cossack settlements were located in the forest places alternated with steps along the Ili banks flowed from the Maloy hills and replenished with non-frozen springs. The Ili flows into the Kimiltey river, which, in its turn, goes to the Oka. The right bank of the Kimiltey was settled by the buryats of Ashekhabat kin of Balagan okrug. Cossack villages bordered on them. To the South there were Prisayanye bogs with no large settlements. To the West there were also available lands.

Geographical and climate conditions disposed to farming and cattle-raising. Vegetables grew ripe. Trapping and fishing were also a great help. Cossacks-settlers had no need in building materials. Taiga provided them with timber of a good quality. Clay and sand were in plenty. Charcoal favoured smithcraft.

Old Cossacks estates have been preserved to the current period. If only they were able to speak they would talk a lot of interesting things concerning day-to-day life of the Cossacks. At the end of winter timber mainly form larch was laid in; later it was transported from taiga by horse-drawn vehicles. It was sandpapered, cut up, split on the lath for the houses to be built. Houses usually were of four or five walls with a mud room. Deep cellars were dug under the floor to keep potato, vegetables, salted food, and jams. Stoves were wide for children to make themselves comfortable. Every autumn crops were dried. In stoves bread was baked, tasty cabbage soup, cereals, milk were stewed. Among outbuildings there was a granary, a stable, and a shed. On the backyard there were usually baths. The entire farm was enclosed with a high and strong fence. The village community was engaged in making the places to pasture, a smithy, dug wells. All the structures were built thoroughly. At the same time it was necessary to think of day-to-day life and military service.

Cossacks placed a special position within a social structure of the XIX century. On the one hand, they were militants, on the other hand, they were farmers handled many crafts and skills.

Land surveying for Kuytun Cossacks (former soldiers) was carried out in conformity with laws being in force. First of all, men were given a land. An allotment could be of lands to farm and inconvenient ones (forest, bushes, swamps lands). For military service men were endowed with 30 dessiatinas (convenient and inconvenient lots) for life. Actually, farming map of 1850-s,

¹ SAIR, Fund 39, Register 1, Doc. 154, List 52. A map according to the data of district police at Irkutsk region Direction and public administration of Irkutsk Cossacks.

when Cossack settlements were formed, was the following. Each male Cossack from Kuytun district was endowed with approximately 1 dessiatina and 588 sazhen of ploughed field, 1 dessiatina and 63 sazhen of hayfield, steppe lands including places of 5 dessiatinas and 328 sazhen to pasture cattle, and 26 dessiatinas and 50 sazhen of forest. Thus, there was the need to develop forest and steppe lands. If any Cossack family managed to cultivate extra forest or swamp parts, this land regardless of its size was granted to this family. A land lot of Cossack's widows was of 15 dessiatinas, while orphans got a right to 30 dessiatinas. Reserve lands were forest places¹. Therefore, Cossacks had to work a lot in order to develop such land parts. In 25-30 years Cossack settlements were made comfortable to live in and there were enough ploughed lands. But some Cossacks especially those lived on the Kimmeltey river banks had difficulty developing and managing lands. In this connection, it is interesting to consider the following fact. On the 13th of September, 1880 in the name of Anuchin – a general-governor of Eastern Siberia – there was a petition of aldermen Cossacks Ephim, Andrey and Ermolay Ogloblins living in Nizhneudinsk district, Kimmelteyskaya volost, Preobrazhenskaya village. They wrote that the sovereign provided them with 30 dessiatinas to plough for military service in 1845. But their lots were of tundra kind. The Ili river was supposed to have rust and musty waters. It was not possible to use this water especially during wintertime. They reported that they had own families, were engaged in smithcraft, built up houses and estates. They asked authority to grant more convenient lands pointing to infringement of their rights. «We are ordinary dwellers of Siberia. We are oppressed by peasants, who do not allow us to mow grass for horses». Simultaneously

they complained on the volost clerk of Kimmeltey village making abuses.

At the end of September 1880 Cossacks got the answer from Bunin, a junior land surveyor. He wrote that there was no opportunity to endow the Ogloblins with a land as it would be necessary to cut the lands of settled native people of Balagansk department at Karymskoe settlement. These arguments were supported by a collegiate councilor Makhov – the head of Cossacks survey land-mark department. Thus, an official refusal in the name of the general-governor provided with arguments was sent. The arguments were that there was no approval of native people to allot and such an allotment system was impossible without the agreement of their community. That contradicted the authority and state intentions to unite Cossack population. «The person who wanted to buy a land lot should write a petition to be turned into a peasant social category».

But the Ogloblins demonstrated persistence and had no idea of stepping back. In 1883 they wrote an ordinary petition to Irkutsk region administration but had a refusal again. Zealous dwellers directed the petition in the name of State Property Minister. However, this attempt also failed. Authorities were not intended both to break the compactness of Cossack territory and sharpen the relations with native people. Cossacks were proposed to persuade peasants to change land lots or rent free lands².

Thus, land problem was triggered. This obstacle also resulted from tenseness of free lands when mass resettlement of peasants to Siberia started at the end of the XIX century and at the beginning of the XX century, and a railroad was built up. Close to Cossack villages new settlements of Kunduy, Karazey, Tagan, Amur emerged. Cossacks had to be more occupied with measures to improve fertility, purchase modern agricultural

¹ SAIR, Fund 41, Register.1, Doc.80, List 147.

² SAIR, Fund 41, Register.1, Doc. 65.

implements, and apply to agronomics. And they managed to succeed. Archive sources help to reproduce the common picture of crop capacity within those years. Cossacks sowed mainly rye and oats. According to figures of 1884 in the farmsteads of Nizhneudinsk district including the Krestovozdvizhenskaya community the crops equaled to 3(5) quarters per a dessiatina. (It is about 8 metric centners per a hectare). Given the climate conditions and weeds, it is considered to be a good result. At the end of the XIX – the beginning of the XX centuries the crops rose up to 8 quarters (12 metric centners per a hectare)¹. Cossacks sowed pea, buckwheat, vegetables. They jarred cucumbers and mushrooms for winter. In summer women and children picked strawberry in birch forests, they dried it to make kissel or broth in winter. In taiga and cool places there were bushes of bird cherry trees and currants.

The great attention was paid to breeding horses. Almost every farmstead had own horses. Horses had a lot of functions to do, as they being the main draught power. The horse was the major Cossack fellow traveler within military service. Cossacks' children spent time looking after horses. Kids pastured them, led to horse pond, and took part in procuring forage. In 1884-1885 Cossacks of Nizhneudinsk district had 545 horses, 484 heads of cattle, 617 goats and sheep, 186 pigs²². By 1917 according to aldermen memories there were well-to-do Cossacks having tens of horses and cows in villages of our community. The first settlers of Kunduy applied for work at Cossacks farmsteads, bought cattle and horses.

Trapping and hunting were a great help. In autumn and winter Cossacks hunted goats and wolves annoying cattle-breeders. In small weirs at watermills they set up large earthenware pots to fish crucians and galyans.

In spring the song of birds of passage filled all over. In May the unique songs of crested larks could be heard over the ploughed fields. At the same time at the side of gardens cuckoo clinks were resounded from forest. According to ancient Russian superstitions the cuckoo could predict the life-time. Some people tend to believe in it, while others ignore. Nor did Cossacks realize that through 50 years their stable life would come to an end. Impetuous events would alter their day-to-day life, sow discord and torment to their souls and fates.

FROM LIBERTIES TO MILITARY DUTIES. In the memory of the Russian nation, Cossacks are associated with liberty, independence and freedom. That is why, one can say that a Cossack is a free person. However, Cossacks were gradually subordinated to autocracy press losing former freedom traits. With Siberia being explored and economic ties enlarged, the autocracy established the control over Cossacks. Authorities were inclined to think Cossacks to be a point of rest while upholding special relations with this category of citizens. Persons endowed with a Cossack status had to carry out compulsory service and bear all the burdens and privations of this service according to the Military Charter.

At the middle of 1850-s village settlers were turned from soldiers into Cossacks in conformity with the regulations adopted on the 1st of July, 1822. The regulations made provisions for young Cossacks at the age of 16 to be called for service. As to service terms there was a provision «Sergeants and ordinary Cossacks should conduct duties in the way it is within other irregular military forces till they are able». Thus, Cossacks were given a hard fate to pass all their active life being in service.

There was one more feature concerning Cossack military service. They had to carry out service duties being a horse and worn own uniform

¹ SAIR, Fund 24, Register 8, Doc.14, List 5.

² the same

and accoutrement. To feed a horse, forage was given from the community treasury for 7 months. To lay in hay, meadows were allotted. Cossacks could get money for hay from the community treasury. Oats were given only in proportion of 1 peck per a day. The necessary condition was line of duty. Being at home they kept a horse at own costs.

New military regulations were adopted on the 4th of January, 1851. Many points concerning military service were not changed but there were introduced some differences. Thus, a service term was modified. Through a certain period of service any Cossack could get a leave for 1 year and return to his settlement to keep house. The overage term of service for officers was 25 years, for ordinary ones – 30 years. In whole, Cossacks spent 25 years for external and 5 years for internal service. Then Cossacks had the right to get a passport. Cossacks should have own uniform, accoutrement and a horse. A norm of provision for horses and bread allowance was increased. The matter was that land lots given to Cossacks were also widened to the size of 30 dessiatinas of ploughed land (in comparison with 15 dessiatinas of convenient lands given before). Officers could count on 60 dessiatinas. The regulations provided our settlers with a number of obligations. Cossacks had to be on the guard within towns and factories to help internal guards, be involved in night mounted patrols in towns, pickets and patrols close to factories and plants, catch runaway people in the place of dislocation. They also should dispatch prisoners in collaboration with inner guards, protect salty lakes, escort state transport, exercise border service as well as service in places determined by the chief staff. The important thing was to draw Cossacks mainly in internal protection service not to any unusual duties.

An annual service order was made by a regiment chief under the schedule, according to

sequence. Such orders were directed to the villages of the Krestovozdvizhenskaya community. Substitution of sequence was inadmissible. An exception to the rule was allowed only in cases when a father wanted to carry out a military service instead of his son and otherwise, when a brother wanted to serve instead of own brother. But they should be service Cossacks. Out of turn the duty obligations were applied to Cossacks pleaded guilty in the crimes by the Tribunal. Such offences included hard drinking, rudeness and theft.

REORGANIZATION of service was determined on the 19th of May, 1871 when new regulations were signed by Alexander II. The Irkutsk Cossacks cavalry was abolished and all villages except ordinary Cossacks and sergeants settlements (enrolled according to the regulations of 1851 from Cossacks of former regiments located in towns and Tunkynsky division of former border army) turned to be controlled by a civil department. What was the impact of the regulations upon dwellers of the Krestovozdvizhenskaya community? Ordinary Cossacks and sergeants with their families enlisted from peasants-settlers to the Irkutsk Cossacks cavalry in 1851 were again given a status of peasants. Moved to Eastern Siberia grass-root soldiers of former garrison battalions, which were granted a Cossack status in 1851 and land, were also turned into peasants. The number of such people was equal to 164 in An-Stanitsa, 145 in Pokrovskaya, 142 in Krestovozdvizhenskaya, 142 in Preobrazhenskaya, 143 in Petropavlovskaya including children. The total number was 736 persons¹. Thus, the preponderance of village dwellers was deprived of a Cossacks status and turned into peasants. In accordance with the regulations of 1871, former Cossacks turned into peasants were granted land lots of 15 dessiatinas

¹ SAIR, Fund 41, Register. 1, Doc. 80, 81,82, 83, 84,85-101.

per a man. They also reserved the rights to their farmsteads. The regulations prescribed the persons possessing 30-dessiatinas of land with a stable farm (it should be guaranteed by the public judgment) and having cultivated more than 15 dessiatinas to be proposed the extra land of 15-30 dessiatinas. Authorities did not stint Cossacks turned into peasants. The Russian state was interested in fortifying and settling Siberian territory of reliable citizens, which would be the strategic basis within the East direction.

One more innovation should be noted. In five settlements 439 persons of 736 dwellers – former Cossacks turned into peasants – had a record of their service to the time of the regulations (1871). As we found out they were transferred from soldiers to our region. That means they had a long service as soldiers. The long service as soldiers was added to Cossacks service. That is why such people (439 persons) had rights of retired soldiers that let them reserve all the rights to land lots of 30 dessiatinas per every man.

Within a Cossacks estate according to the regulations of 1871 there were native Cossacks which were considered to belong to former Irkutsk town regiment even before the regulations of 1871. The overall number of Cossacks and sergeants with young children amounted to 113. Demised land lots of 30 dessiatinas were retained for native Cossacks and aldermen.

In the archive it is possible to find out the names of widows and orphans. They were not set adrift. Thus, in Krestovozdvizhenskaya village a Cossack widow Anicya Bakulina lived in 1876. A widow of died Cossack sergeant G.Fedorov lived with children there. At the time of regulations adoption the whole number of widows living in the settlements of that time was equivalent to 40. The number of girls-orphans was 21. According to the regulations of 1871 the widows of ordinary Cossacks and sergeants as well as girls-orphans were granted a land from special lots till the

moment of marriage. Widows were supposed to receive 15 dessiatinas, girls-orphans – 7,5 dessiatinas. Those lands were doled out from special land funds of Cossacks. Gradually that fund belittled and the lots of forest and bush were the greater part. That causes discontent among Cossacks and even lawsuits.

After the reorganization the term of Cossack military service was determined in the following manner. A field service equaled 15 years, as to domestic one it was 7 years. Cossacks by turns carried out service duties for a year and then they had a privilege to stay at own village no less than for 2 years.

Being of 19 years old, all young Cossacks were included in the regular lists. But within a year they were not engaged in the service. They were involved in the initial military trainings. At the age of 21 they were brought to the military service of sotnya for 5 terms. Being at age of 35 they were transferred to domestic service. The age of 42 was the age of resignation. Being at privilege position in the village, Cossacks obeyed civil administration. The privileged Cossacks could be called up for military service only under the Tsar will.

The special concern of a young Cossack and his family was purchasing a uniform (an overcoat, a service cap, a horse harness). In February, 1856 to allay the trouble, under the order of Irkutsk Cavalry chief the special store was opened. Village dwellers could buy a uniform and an accoutrement by cash or in credit at the expense of allowances and guarantees of the local community. Under the Order of the regiment chief the impoverished and needy Cossacks could be given free of charge uniform. To this purpose it was necessary to present the petition of the village community signed by the general-governor of the region. Cossacks were armed with sabers and rifles. Officers had private weapons.

At service chiefs kept a watchful eye on moral state and clothes of Cossacks. In the cases of violating the service Cossacks sergeants could be reduced to the ranks. A tribunal conducted trials on substantial violations. Offences were considered in civil public places. The Cossacks circle appeared to be the form of education and punishment.

MORAL education was carried out by a church before the Revolution. In collaboration with Cossacks chieftains it paid much more attention to keep up Christian beliefs among Cossacks. Churches were opened in the places of Cossack settlements. In 1871 there was taken a decision to grant the clergy of parishes at Irkutsk and Eniseysk regiments with 300 dessiatinas of convenient land. This fostered Christian beliefs among state soldiers¹.

After abolishment of Irkutsk regiment in 1871 and its transforming into sotnya, according to the viewpoint of the military minister in a mutual agreement with the Sinod Chief Procurator and the Finance Ministry, the State Council let the Treasury Ministry grant money to build village churches. At the beginning of the XX century new parishes worked in An-Stanitsa and Krestovozdvizhenskaya villages. Unfortunately, at the middle of 1950-s these parishes were closed and later destroyed.

Moreover, within the village administrations there were special icon shelves. In Cossacks houses the necessary things were an icon-lamp, the Bible and the Gospel. Religious and moral norms of life were complied with a great zealotness.

In 1904 in accordance with a petition of Irkutsk Cossacks Division chief supported by authority and church, there was a transfer of an ancient Cossack sacred thing of the Sudarium gonfalon (a symbol of Siberia conquering) as well as icons of Kazan Madonna, Saint Varlaam

and Saint Ioann Ustyuzhsky from Ilimsk to the Irkutsk chapel of Cossack sotnya. Our settlers welcomed this event.

The majority of population in Russia and Siberia was illiterate. Cossacks took a better position. Even among Cossacks of mentioned villages there were literate people (able to read and write). In accordance to the High Edict of 1851 the school for Cossacks children was opened at the cavalry. The compulsory subjects were the Law, grammar of Russian language, arithmetic (till the rule of three). To teach these subjects, except the Law, literate Cossacks sergeants of a decent morality were enlisted. At the beginning of the XX century in An-Stanitsa there was opened a parish school with only one class. In 1913 there were 2 teachers of the Law, 18 boys and 12 girls. In the neighbor school of Krestovozdvizhenskaya village 14 boys and 2 girls studied. Until village schools were built up the peasant children had also attended schools for Cossacks kids.

As we noted, Cossacks families paid decent attention to morals. Moral education was linked to virtue deeds and actions. The sense of patriotism, loyalty to the state, zealousness was of a high value. Cossacks chiefs were forced to keep vigilant watch on the ranks behavior and their housekeeping activity. Negligence, misbehavior and drunken state were condemned. Cossacks chieftains were prescribed to check householding activity and farming diligence as often as possible. They were proposed to check Cossacks returned from earnings. While there was an archaic form of punishment humiliating human being dignity.

By the beginning of the XX century the population of villages increased. By 1900 in An-Stanitsa there were 109 persons, in Krestovozdvizhenskaya – 63, in Preobrazhenskaya – 34 persons belonged to Cossacks. At the same time the whole Nizhneudinsk district was actively being settled. New settler parts emerged in Kuytun volost. A part

¹ SAIR, Fund 24, Register 8, Doc.5, L. 63, 64, 65.

of migrants was hired by Cossacks. They bought cattle and horses in the villages. Thus, prosperous Cossacks used relatively cheap migrants-peasants hands. The process of interinfluence of cultural heritage as well as Cossacks assimilation took place.

During the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905 the significance of Irkutsk Cossacks rose again. The Cossacks sotnya was transformed into a battalion. There were plans to develop and strengthen Cossacks within the territory of the Angara. But the Revolution of 1917 changed the regular march of events including the Cossacks history.

The Soviet power abolished social estates. As to Cossacks it meant the cancellation of a former military service and a compulsory settled way of life. The establishment of the Soviet authorities in Kuytun volost brought about changes in the villages life. In spring of 1918 the fire of the civil war broke out in Siberia. The fire induced Cossacks to participate in. Some Cossacks supported a new power others were against Councils. The civil war undermined the united Cossack structure. It turned out to be a great tragedy for people. Under attacks of the Red Army, the White Army, kolchakovtsy, retreated to East toward Irkutsk since autumn of 1919. With the White army several Cossacks left these places. Their way led to the territory of Transbaikalie, Harbin. After that they emigrated. Their traces were lost within the world abyss (this theme is worth exploring). The Soviet authority took root, with the Red Army coming.

On the 30th of December, 1919 the First Russian Congress of Working Cossacks was opened in Moscow. The position of new authorities was declared. Cossacks were granted an amnesty. Actually Bolsheviks followed another way. Cossacks are known to have caused suspicion among people in power. According to Congress decisions a new decree of Sovnarcom

(the Council of Peoples Commissars) «About Building Soviet Power in Cossack Territories» was adopted on the 25th of March, 1920. Local governing and Cossacks trusted these decisions. In summer of 1920 Nizhneudinsk district revolutionary committee adopted a decision to form the Cossacks revolutionary committee in An-Stanitse. Delegates to Congress were elected from each 10th farmstead. The population of all five Cossacks villages equaled to 1234 persons. There was taken a decision to establish an independent Cossack village and inform Nizhneudinsk district Revcom (the Revolutionary Committee). However, the Soviet authority had no intention to vest independence to local Cossacks. The Center position was also changed. Authorities did not let Cossacks institute the Revcom. This could be considered the last attempt of Cossacks to defend its independence and originality¹. (8)

By winter of 1920 there were held elections to Local Councils in Nizhneudinsk. On the 5th of December, 1920 The First District Congress of Councils was assembled in Nizhneudinsk. It is interesting that one of its participants from Krestovozdvizhenskaya village was a householder I.Vakulin. He was the representative of the middle class owning 8 dessiatinas of ploughed field, 3 horses and 2 cows. The Congress proclaimed reforming district Councils. Thus, the Soviet power strengthened its positions in the region. The former life of Cossack villages went by. During 1920 –1930 Cossacks moved for other places. Collectivization and forming collective farms (kolkhoz) and state farms (sovkhoz) cut up the past and the present of Cossacks left here. Repressive measures taken by the Soviet power of 1930-s resulted in Cossacks moving away. In 1950-1960-s it was possible to meet aged persons in Cossack service caps and Cossacks estate of a good quality. Only three villages of

¹ SAIR, Fund 467, Register 1, Doc.52, List 2,4

five were preserved. They were renamed. Former Krestovozdvizhenskaya was renamed as the third village. Former Petropavlovskaya became the fifth settlement. Only An-Stanitsa kept its name. They became parts of kolkhozs and sovkhozs located in Kuytun district. At present, there is different form of economy in these places. But the history of these villages has not been forgotten. Cossack history of Kuytun district of Irkutsk region needs grateful researchers.

Conclusion. Climate, geographical, geopolitical and social and cultural factors had the decisive influence on forming the image of the Baikal region Cossack life as well as those of the Krestovozdvizhenskaya community taken as a typical object to explore the problem. The reforming of Cossack estate was carried out with respect to mentioned conditions.

The first stage of reforms took place at the first half of the XIX century (regulations of 1822 and 1851). The stage was conducted as developing lands (*frontier*, i.e. non-violent developing), holding positions and defending new territories of Siberia and Far East. The Cossack population size saw increase in number, their structure evolved along with the military duty tasks. The process of turning peasants, native people, soldiers, including penalized ones, into Cossacks widened. The ban to leave Cossack

estate, isolation and subordination to Ministry of Interior had the impact on Cossack life style. The contradictions with the peasant world became stronger. Conservatism of internal life of Cossack image was almost the main their trait.

The second stage of reforming Cossack estate occurred during the period of reforms from 1861 till 1917. The stage could be characterized with the contradictory policy conducted by Russian authorities. On the one hand, Cossacks were included into civilized process of modernizing the country and regions, and solving geopolitical tasks within Far East territory. The tendencies to intensify the economical activity as well as to strengthen the unified type of static population (military peasants) were on the rise. On the other hand, the conservation of land market in Siberia hampered the integration processes in the regions, maintained corporative way of Cossack life style and extensive character of their economical activity.

Since 1917 a final period of life and activity of Cossacks obtained more independence started. Cossacks turned to be the subject of interest for opposing forces seeking for power. The Soviet authorities did not let the Cossacks institute own autonomy, moreover, the Soviet rule turned the Cossacks into an ordinary class and abolished estates, Cossack villages and settlements.

List of Abbreviations

SAIR – State Archive of Irkutsk Region

References

Shuldyakov V. The Fall of Siberian Cossack Army (Moscow: Centrpoligraf, 2004) Vol.1: 1917-1920, Vol 2: 1920-1922

Sunderland W. Peasant pioneering: Russian peasant settlers describe colonization and the eastern frontier, 1880s-1910s, J. Soc. History. Vol. 34, № 4. (2001), 895 – 922.

Witzenrath C. Cossacks and the Russian Empire, 1598-1725: manipulation, rebellion and expansion into Siberia (London: New York, Routledge, 2007).