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THE SIBERIAN POLONIA IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURY IN THE POLISH HISTORIOGRAPHY

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ABSTRACT: The period between the 19th – early 20th century witnessed waves of actively forming Polish communities in Russia's rural areas. A major factor that contributed to the process was the repressive policy by the Russian Empire towards those involved in the Polish national liberation and revolutionary movement. Large communities were founded in Siberia, the Volga region, Caucasus, and European North of Russia (Arkhangelsk). One of the largest communities emerged in Siberia. By the early 20th century, the Polonia in the region consisted of tens of thousands of people. The Polish population was engaged in Siberia's economic life and was an important stakeholder in business. Among the most well-known Polish-Siberian entrepreneurs was Alfons Poklewski-Koziell who was called the "Vodka King of Siberia" by his contemporaries. Poles, who returned from Siberian exile and penal labor, left recollections of their staying in Siberia or notes on the region starting already from the middle of the 19th century. It was this literature that was the main source of information about the life of the Siberian full for a long time. Exile undoubtedly became a significant factor that was responsible for Russia's negative image in the historical memory of Poles. This was reflected in publications based on the martyrological approach in the Polish historiography. Glorification of the struggle of Poles to restore their statehood was a central standpoint adopted not only in memoirs, but also in scientific studies that appeared the second half of the 19th – early 20th century. The martyrological approach dominated the Polish historiography until 1970s. It was not until the late 20th century that serious scientific research started utilizing the civilizational approach, which broke the mold of the Polish historical science. This is currently a leading approach. This enables us to objectively reconstruct the history of the Siberian Polonia in the imperial period of the Russian history. The article is intended to analyze publications by Polish authors on the history of the Polish community in Siberia the 19th – early 20th century. It focuses on memoirs and research works, which had an impact on the reconstruction of the Siberian Polonia's history. The paper is written using the retrospective, genetic, and comparative methods.

1. Introduction

In the second half of the 18th century, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth lost its statehood with its territory being split between Russia, Austria and Prussia. The last partition took place at the Congress of Vienna already in 1815. As a result, the Russian empire obtained Ukrainian, Belarusian and Lithuanian lands. It should be pointed out that the Polish crown lands became part of the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Prussia.

The Polish noble class or *szlachta* in Polish, whose lands were located on the territories that were integrated into Russia, was co-opted into the Russian nobility. However, the Polish elite and the Russian government developed very controversial and inconsistent relations. Part of the Polish nobility found a way to put up with the loss of the original statehood and accepted the inclusion in the new state. Another part of the elite took up the struggle for the restoration of the Commonwealth by participating in protests against the Russian administration (the Tadeusz Kosciuszko Uprising, the Polish-Russian war 1830–1831, the January Uprising in 1863, etc.). Similar contradictions pertained to Russia's policy toward Poles, ranging from extreme liberalism (the Polish constitution of 1815) to massive repressions (after the 1831 and 1863 Uprisings).

The “*frondeurs*”, who advocated for the restored Polish state within the borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, formed the basis for Polish communities in various regions (European North, the Caucasus, and Siberia). Understanding the subject of the study requires outlining main stages in its development.

Between the 19th and early 20th century, the most rapid growth was characteristic of the Siberian Polonia. First exiles arrived in Western Siberia in the late 18th century. They were Polish Confederates pardoned by Emperor Paul I (1797). A new Polish inflow to Western Siberia was registered in 1815 when Polish soldiers who fought in the army of Napoleon Bonaparte were sent to the region. In the 1830s, after the Polish-Russian war 1830–1831 and repressions that followed, several thousands of Poles were scattered across Siberia. It is possible to identify several centers where they concentrated, i.e. Tobolsk, Kurgan, Tara in Western Siberia (Poles lived as exiles here) and the Nerchinsk mining district in Eastern Siberian (Poles served penal labor here). Thanks to the amnesty granted by Emperor Alexander II in 1857–1859, Poles received an opportunity to leave Siberia. As a result, the Polonia reached its minimum size. In 1864–1865, more than 15 thousand Poles were deported to Siberia to serve penal labor (total deprivation of civil rights, severe compulsory labor in mines and at factories), penal settlement (restriction of civil rights) and exile (deprivation of civil rights). At the end of the 19th century, Siberia became the final destination for resettling Polish peasants who actively replenished the Siberian Polonia. The increased migration flows took the Polonia's size to approx. 30 thousand people (1897).

In 1900–1915, the number of Poles in the region dramatically rose due to migrants (1900–1913) and refugees of the initial period of the World War I (1914–1915). By 1917, the Polonia amounted to more than 50 thousand people.

Once in Siberia, Poles had to integrate with the regional economy. Economic niches they occupied were largely determined by the community's social composition and educational level of its members. Until the early 20th century, Siberian Poles were highly educated people (the nobles exiled to the region studied at universities or gymnasiums). This allowed them to play an important role in administrative bodies, military apparatus, education and food industry. The community's social dilution, which was later brought about through arriving peasants, drastically reduced the educational level of the Polish population and altered its place in the economic system of Siberia.

2. Material and Methods

Following the Partitions of Poland in the second half of the 18th – early 19th century, Poles became one of the numerous ethnic minorities in the Russian Empire before the early 20th century. The beginning of the 19th century saw Polish communities founded in the Russian provincial regions, such as the Northern Caucasus, Siberia, the Urals, the Volga region, and the European North of Russia. The “Polish question”, which arose in the second half of the 18th century, was addressed by society and government in opposite ways at different periods, which meant implementation of liberal or repressive measures. Poles themselves provoked the authorities to move away from liberalism and democracy to conservatism. This atmosphere became the background for the evolving multi-ethnic policies which replaced the Russian ethnocentrism. Despite all the difficulties, Poles, along with Jews, Germans, Ukrainians and other ethnic groups were one of the forces which were behind the country's historical development (Kappeler 2000).

The subject of this paper includes the publications on the Polish community in Siberia, produced by Polish authors in the second half of the 19th – 20th century. The study uses various methods of historical research, including the chronological approach, retrospective method and genetic technique. They have enabled us to look at the scientific issues from the temporal perspective and identify changes that took place in them. One of the key approaches leveraged by the paper has become the comparative method based on a comparative analysis of the views expressed by authors in their publications on the issues under discussion.

This paper's material comprises works on the history of the Polish community which existed in Siberia. The works were created by Poles and published in the Russian and Polish languages in the late 19th – 20th century.

3. Discussion

The political bias of the Polish question in Russia in the 19th – early 20th century shaped negative attitudes to the Polish national liberation movement in the so-called official (conservative) historiography. The liberal historiography could not deal with this issue.

Already in the second half of the 19th century, a tradition was established to study Polish exiles in Siberia in the Polish-language historiography. Some of the studies in the Polish language, which directly or indirectly developed this line, began appearing in the late 1860s. For example, the work titled “People’s memories” by Eustachy Heleniusz Iwanowski was published in Paris in 1861 and 1864, and in 1876 his “Memories of the past years” was published in Cracow.

Almost every Polish writer uses “The description of the Trans-Baikal region in Siberia” by Agaton Giller (1831–1887) as a source, which was published in Lipsk in 1867. Giller was one of the first authors who introduced Polish readers to the Trans-Baikal. The book “In exile” was published in Lvov in 1870 and was also dedicated to the history of the Polish exile.

These works provided the basis for the martyrological (mythologized) study into the Siberian Polonia by taking a course on the glorification of exiles as fighters for the restoration of the Polish independent state. This line was prevailing in the Polish historiography until the end of the 20th century

A significant step in the exploration of the life of Poles in Siberia was made in the mid-1880s, when Zygmunt Librowicz’s monograph “Poles in Siberia” (1884) was published in Cracow. The author was a writer, a historian and an educator. He lived in St. Petersburg from 1875 to 1917 and worked in publishing. Librowicz made an invaluable contribution to the preparation of the books in the “Picturesque Russia” series for publication, which started in 1879.

Having numerous scientific works at his disposal, Librowicz embarked on a written description of the history of the Siberian Polonia in the mid-1880s. The geographical scope comprises not only Eastern and Western Siberia, but their surrounding areas as well, such as the Amur and Orenburg Krajs, Kirghiz steppes, Kamchatka and Southern Urals (Librowicz 1884). This suggests an extremely broad interpretation of the concept “Siberia” in the Polish tradition. The sources employed by the author included works published in Russian (Maksimov 1871), in Polish (Giller 1867), published recollections by the Poles who had returned from the Siberian exile (N.p. 1875), periodicals and other.

Librowicz was one of the first authors to suggest his own periodization of the Polish presence in Siberia. For example, he dated first mentions of Siberia in Polish sources to the 13th century. It was in this period when Poles visited Kara Korum as part of a diplomatic mission. The next stage covered Polish captives exiled to Siberia

following the war between Russia and Poland in the 17th century. An important milestone was the exile of the Bar Confederates to Siberia. "A new significant party arrived after the War of 1812" (Librowicz 1884, 362). As time passed, the exiles were allowed to return to their homeland, which indicates the occasional presence of Poles in the region. A totally different situation developed later. For example, an essential stage was the period starting from the 1830 Cadet Revolution and ending in 1848 (Ibid., 363). The final stage was the exile of the insurgents involved in the January Uprising. This narrowness is explained by the time of the work's writing.

In his narrative about the Poles exiled in 1830–1848, the author gives personal data and specifies places of their stay and types of activity. For example, he writes that "Onufry Pietraszkiewicz was a secretary in the Tobolsk Order for Public Charity" (Ibid., 131). The author also mentions of the orchestra which was organized under the military governor of Omsk. There were also some Polish exiles performing there. For example, Kozhirkevich played clarinet, Kholvynsky played trumpet and cello, and Hozhnatsky was a violinist there (Ibid., 139–140). Unfortunately, there is no accurate data available on the number of people exiled to Siberia at that time.

However, describing the exile in the middle of the 1860s, the author already provided specific data. "In 1863, 524 people arrived in Siberia, in 1864 – 10 649, in 1865 – 4671, in 1866 – 2829. Of these, 3894 were sentenced to penal labor, 2153 to penal settlement, 2254 to exile and 8491 to penal placement; 1830 people came voluntarily. 4000 were settled in the Tobolsk governorate, 6306 in the Tomsk governorate, 3719 in the Yenisei governorate, 4424 in the Irkutsk governorate, 56 in the Yakutsk region" (Ibid., 160). These figures were borrowed from Sergei Maksimov, as the author pointed out in his text.

In addition to exiled Poles, Librowicz highlighted other problems in his work as well. He also focused his attention on their economic activities. For example, he made mention of the operations carried out by "distiller" Alfons Poklewski-Koziell (the author put his name as Kozierr-Poklewski) in connection with the short commentary from Kurgan, which appeared in the "Yekaterinburgskaya nedelya" in 1882 (No. 42). The message of the piece came down to the idea that "Poles were making Siberia accustomed to hard drinking" (Ibid., 196). However, Librowicz himself believed that this accusation was groundless.

The work places a considerable emphasis on the religious life of exiles. The church remained a vital point of contact for Poles. Thus, according to Librowicz, "the center of life of the Polish community of Tobolsk was the Catholic church" (Ibid., 205).

The author featured the issue of amnesty to those involved in the January Uprising. He drew attention to the fact that the government first loosened the restrictions on them as early as 1865. This was followed by the 1871 and 1874 manifestos. The culmination was the manifesto dated 15 (27) May 1883 issued by Alexander III (Ibid., 257). This led to a conclusion that the repressive policies against the

insurgents were not unconditional, as all the repressed were released from penalty over the next 20 years.

Librowicz was one of the first researchers to expand the composition of the Siberian Polonia and add other groups there besides exiles. He repeatedly noted that the class of those exiled from Poland to Siberia included not only anti-government protesters, but also criminals. There were voluntary migrants in the Polonia as well. For example, referring to the publications in an Irkutsk newspaper "Sibir", the author stressed that in 1881, 4955 people came to Siberia from the Kingdom of Poland, and in 1882 – 5708 (Ibid., 265).

An undisputed merit of Librowicz, as noted by later historians, was his formulating the subject of the Polish-Siberian relations (Janik 1928). It was the civilizational activity undertaken by Poles, which largely contributed to their beneficial nature. This was also in line with the sentiments that were widespread in the Polish community, whose members considered it their predestined mission to facilitate wider use of the achievements of European civilization.

This work prompted Polish researchers to give a closer look to the topic, which was reflected in the books by A. Klaushar "The Bar Confederates in Siberia" (Cracow 1895), G. Virchinsky "Literature of Siberia" (1898), M. Janik "Polish-Siberian literature" (Lvov 1907), M. Rolle "In the past century" (Lvov 1908), and others. As we can see, these studies appeared outside the Russian Empire where their publication was impossible due to censorship.

One of the most prominent writers of the Siberian Polonia in the early 20th century was Bronislaw Pilsudski (elder brother of Jozef Pilsudski, first head of Poland restored after World War I), exiled to Sakhalin for his involvement with revolutionary activities. He lived in Eastern Siberia and the Far East for many years and was actively engaged in scientific work. Of course, Pilsudski kept contact with members of the local Polonia. The result was a booklet "The Poles in Siberia", published in the Polish language in 1918, translated into Russian in the early 21st century and annotated by B. S. Shostakovich, a well-known modern Polish Studies historian (Pilsudski 2001). The centerpiece of Pilsudski's booklet was the periodization of the Polish exile beyond the Urals, where the starting point was the exile of Polish prisoners of war in the middle of the 17th century. He also turned his attention to the issue of adaptation, which Poles had to deal with in new location. In this connection, he noted that first contacts with local inhabitants were not always amicable, for which he blamed the "ignorant priests and malicious persons". At the same time Pilsudski marked a major beneficial influence exerted by Polish exiles on the local population.

In the interwar period, the Polish-Siberian subject remained to be relevant in historical science of sovereign Poland. One evidence was the monograph by M. Janik "History of Poles in Siberia" (Dzieje Polaków na Syberii), published in Cracow in 1928. The author was strongly influenced by the national-patriotic movement, which was reflected in the content of the book. Unlike the above writers, Janik had

nothing in common with the Russian reality. He was born in Austria-Hungary and graduated from the Cracow (Jagiellonian) University.

Being addressed to Polish readers, the book starts with an extensive geographic and climatic description of Siberia. Based on medieval historical sources, Janik cited details on travels by Poles to Asia and Siberia, particularly, starting with the diplomatic mission of John of Plano Carpini. The history of the 19th century Siberian Polonia was examined primarily through the prism of the personified history, which already became a tradition for the Polish historiography. On the one hand, it helps define the circle of people who were caught up in the Siberian exile. But on the other hand, it sometimes poses an obstacle to putting together a coherent picture. It is fair to say, however, that Janik was concentrated not only on penal laborers and exiles, but also on those Poles who settled in Siberia of their own free will. For example, he gave quite scrupulous attention to the activities by Alfons Poklewski-Koziell. He also cited mentions of his help to exiles in the mid-1860s (Janik 1928, 289).

Unlike Librowicz's work, the book by Janik contains no abundant statistical information on the Siberian Polonia, which greatly impoverishes the study. In addition, it lacks a deep critical analysis of a specific socio-economic situation in the region and has no references to archival materials, other researchers of the Polish historiography pointed out (Oplakanskaya 2001, 43). We believe that an explanation could lie behind the situation which was the context to Janik's research.

After World War II, Poland preserved some interest in the Siberian Polonia's history. However, the martyrological approach also survived aimed, in the first place, at studying the Polish exile. One evidence is the work by Wladyslaw Jewsiewicki, "In the Siberian exile," published in 1959. The book, in particular, argues that after the Polish Uprising of 1830–1831 was suppressed, about 50 thousand people were exiled to Siberia, of which about 20 thousand were soldiers and officers sent to Siberian garrisons, and the remaining 30 thousand belonged to civilians (Jewsiewicki 1959, 19). This statement is unlikely to be accurate. Consider also that according to the Polish notion of Siberia in the 19th century, represented in memoirs and other sources, it included all Russian provinces, located to the east of Moscow. For this reason, for many Poles unfamiliar with the regional geography, Siberia also comprised the Urals and the Volga Region.

In the last quarter of 20th century, the increasingly growing popularity was gained by the civilizational approach that sought to look closer at the inclusion of Poles in the life of Siberian society in the 19th and early 20th century. One of the most remarkable events was a collection of works "Siberia", published in Poland in 1993, which consisted of two parts. The first part, prepared by Antoni Kuczyński, is a historical outline on the history of the Polish diaspora, and the second part is a historical and cultural anthology which includes articles on individual aspects of the diaspora's life.

Kuczyński's "Four hundred years of the Polish diaspora" embodies his vision of the periodization of the diaspora in Russia. The first stage, which he described in the Section "Out of the dark ages", spanned from the turn of the 16th – 17th century to the Partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This period is characterized by the appearance of individual migrants in Siberia, who came there from Poland and were in the Russian service. For example, with a reference to the study by Librowicz, Kuczyński speaks of Aleksei Chehanovetsky (Kuczyński 1993, 27) who is mentioned in Russian sources.

A new stage in the diaspora's formation extended throughout the last quarter of 18th and first half of 19th century (from the Confederation of Bar to the January Uprising) and was related to occasional political exiles in Siberia. Already at that time Poles began to favorably affect liberal inhabitants of Siberia, whom they had to communicate with. An example of familiarizing Siberians with the European musical culture, according to Kuczyński, was the participation of some Polish exiles in the Omsk orchestra (Ibid., 69). Describing numerous problems encountered by Poles in their new place of residence, the author also points to the support that they received from Siberians. The proof can be found, as noted by Kuczyński, in letters by exiles (Ibid., 91).

The next stage was linked to the massive exile of those involved in the January Uprising. As he examined this period, Kuczyński could not ignore the question of the number of the repressed in this period who came from Poland and Lithuania. He noted that data on the subject given by Polish literature varied, and the discrepancy ranged from 80 to 250 thousand people (Ibid., 92). This information, according to him, had nothing to do with reality. The only reliable source – archival documents of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Empire – reveals that the figure was 36 459 people repressed before the middle of 1868 (Ibid.). The number of those exiled reached 27 908 people, including 13 018 sent to Siberia (Ibid., 93). Hence, his findings differ significantly from the data commonly found in Polish publications.

The Manifesto issued on May 27, 1883 marked the beginning of a new stage in the history of the Siberian Polonia, which was associated with the exile of Polish revolutionaries, for example, members of the "Proletariat" group (Ibid., 101), as well as the arrival of Polish researchers and migrant workers in the region, who went to Siberia in search of better life. However, when describing this stage, Kuczyński gives almost no details on the voluntary resettlement of Polish peasants in Siberia at the end of the 19th century and refugees who fled at the beginning of the World War I. These categories contributed much to the size of the Siberian Polonia.

The final stage is related to the repressive policies by the Soviet government, through which various Siberian regions became exile for thousands of Poles.

To summarize, Kuczyński suggested the most comprehensive periodization of the history of the Siberian Polonia, which encompasses periods from the Middle Ages to the mid-20th century.

Following the scientific tradition, Kuczyński prefaced his scientific outline with a historiographical overview. However, he put main emphasis on Polish scholars. He gave a rather detailed description of Siberia's accession to Russia and its economic development over the end of the 16th – 18th centuries. This material considers Poles as well, who lived behind the Urals for various reasons.

Once again, it is necessary to stress that Polish historians have gradually departed from the martyrological approach and address not only to the issue of the Polish exile in Siberia, but switched to other problems related to the Siberian Polonia as well.

Modern Polish historians point out that there were not only political exiles, but also criminals among the Poles whom various circumstances forced to live in Siberia. But today's historical literature, as rightly admitted by Polish historians, is one-sided, since it only contains information on the activity of political exiles, their merits and martyrology. This topic is explored by a professor at the Warsaw University, E. Kaczynska, in some of her publications. She rightly raises the question of the proportional correlation between the political and criminal types of exile, pointing out that political exiles accounted for not more than 1% of all exiles in the 19th century. At the same time, the number and significance of the criminal component are outsized. For example, she speaks of "enormous armies of criminals and vagrants" in Siberia, claiming that depending on the district, there was 1 exile per 3 to 10 free inhabitants, including infants (Kaczynska 1998). Siberia is portrayed as "the territory, where the total population has an extremely large proportion of people belonging to the scum of society" (Ibid., 21). Against this background, pitiable Polish political exiles, in her opinion, stood out in stark contrast as they were "former representatives of relatively high culture."

Over decades, the Polish historiography has paid almost no attention to the voluntary resettlement of peasants from provinces of the Kingdom of Poland in the areas beyond the Urals, while the process was actually equal to the emigration to the United States in scale. One of the first scholars who were in the forefront of scientific interest to the subject was Wladislaw Masiarz, who summarized his findings in his dissertation defended in 1995 (Masiarz 1995). In his coverage of the first half of the 20th century, the author also suggested reasons explaining why Poles started to live in the region. He assigned a particular role to the volunteer peasant migration in the Polonia's formation. The characteristic feature distinguishing publications by Masiarz is his extensive use of Russian published and archival materials. This was expressed not only in his dissertation, but also in subsequent works.

In 1999, Masiarz's monograph dedicated to the Polish community in Tobolsk in 1838–1922 was published in Cracow (Masiarz 1999). The chronological framework of the study, introduced in the title, is much narrower than real one. The author began his study with the Poles who first appeared in Tobolsk in the first half of the 17th century. In addition to those who were in the Russian service (Ibid., 15), there also were Jesuit missionaries who made it to the Urals (Ibid.).

Masiarz gave a sufficiently deep overview of the Tobolsk community in the 19th century. His sources were both numerous studies by Siberian historians and archival materials. This allowed him to identify stages, delineate specific sources of the Tobolsk Polonia, and provide its demographic characteristics. A particular line of study was the work of priors in the Tobolsk Church in different historical periods. Masiarz also traditionally mentioned the assistance provided to exiles by Poles who resided in Siberia (A. Poklewski-Koziell, and others) (*Ibid.*, 91), emphasizing their common ethnicity.

For several reasons, the number of studies on Western Siberian conducted by Polish historians is extremely inadequate – they are mainly interested in Eastern Siberia. Still, it is possible to single out several important publications. For example, modern Polish historians, such as Masiarz (2002) and Kaczynska (2002), primarily highlight socio-economic and demographic issues. Conclusions, drawn by the authors, are interesting enough. For example, Masiarz points out that at the end of the 19th century, Polish provinces indicated growing migratory sentiments among peasants, but local administrations artificially restrained peasants from migrating to Siberia. This administrative decision failed to eliminate the problem, and resulted into a larger number of unauthorized migrants, who crossed the Urals, having no permits whatsoever (Masiarz 2002).

4. Conclusion

Thus, the Polish historiography has shaped its own research traditions with regard to Polish communities that existed in Siberia in the 19th – early 20th century. The scientific study of the Siberian Polonia was based on the recollections left by the Poles, who were sent to Siberia at that time to serve exile or penal labor sentences. Being under their major influence, the Polish historiography throughout the 60s of the 19th – first half of the 20th century predominantly relied on the martyrological approach to the study of the Polish diaspora in Russia and the Siberian Polonia in particular. This long-lasting and persistently dominating personification of the history with its partial mythologization can be explained by the pathos in the views Polish society held about the victims of the national liberation and revolutionary movement of the 19th – early 20th century. It was not until the last quarter of the 20th century that the Polish historical literature showed the dominant civilizing approach. The changed guiding principle did not undermine the urgency of studies into the history of the Polish exile. The new approach has enabled a significant expansion of the research field. Making use of both Polish and Russian sources, Polish historians are now exploring the issues of the peasant resettlement in Siberia, and the role of Poles in labor migration against the background of entire Russia at the

turn of the 19th – 20th century. They have raised the question of the position that the Siberian Polonia occupied in the economic, social, and cultural life of Siberia in the 19th – early 20th century. This has made it possible for the Polish historical science not only to avoid further biased development, but also to obtain new perspectives in the study of Polish communities in Russian provincial regions.

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