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The evolution of the Cossack communities

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THE EVOLUTION OF THE COSSACK COMMUNITIES

THERE are few terms which have passed through more evolutionary changes since the Middle Ages than the term "Cossack." Allow me to give you some examples of the difficulties that await the novice in attacking this subject. Given a man who goes by the name of Cossack, we might find, on inquiring into his origin, that he was a Great Russian, a Ukrainian, a native Mongol, a "Tatar," a Lett, or a Finn. If he has been a Cossack for some generations—*i.e.*, if he can be called a "hereditary" Cossack—he may, whatever his origin, have adopted the traditions of the old Cossack national communities of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Thus, first of all, it must be clearly understood that the modern Cossack regiments (*voiska*) and the historic Cossack national communities represent two opposite principles. Yet both of them formed ethnically a part of the population of Eastern Europe, though they live both there and in Asiatic Russia. But quite apart from these two groups must be the treatment of the people of purely Asiatic blood known as Kirghis-Kaizak and calling themselves simply Kaizak (which in pronunciation is almost identical with the Russian Cossack—Kazak). These Kirghis-Kaizak must not be confused with the Kirghis who rightly own this name, and who now live round by Pamir and Alai and in the Issyk-Kul district.

It is therefore necessary to enter into the origin and history of the term "Cossack," so as to differentiate these various types, and get a clear idea of the present relation of the different Cossacks to one another and to other peoples of Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Until quite recently this scientific inquiry would have been rather hampered by the policy of the old Russian régime of not calling things or peoples by their right names. Thus, the Turkic nation of the Kaizak were given the official name of Kirghis, possibly through ignorant confusion with the real Kirghis, but chiefly in order to reserve the word "Kazak" for the designation of the Russian regiments which had conquered Asia. Again, the Cossack regiments were not allowed to remember their independent national past, and remain a tool in the hands of the Government for the suppression of all national aspirations within the boundary of the Russian Empire.

As a member of a nation whose feeling of national independence was stronger than that of any other unit comprised within the old Russia. I had my first opportunity of meeting the Cossacks as ruthless suppressors of any public manifestation of religious and national life. Had my acquaintance with the Cossacks been limited to what I saw of them as they galloped on their Asiatic ponies through the streets of European Warsaw, using their iron-pointed whips or *nahaikas* on the peaceful crowd, it is possible that my interest in the Cossack social and racial problems might never have been awakened. When, later, I saw them in their own territories on the Don and in the Caucasus, it was difficult to conceive that they were the same people who, when sent to a far-distant province, carried their obedience to orders to such inhuman lengths. Yet another side of the Cossack character, the imaginative and exploratory, unfolded itself before my eyes when I saw them in Siberia. But it was not until I came to investigate the question of the Eastern Turks that I at last understood the profound historical and political reasons which led to the origin of Cossack communities independently in Europe and in Asia, both of which became subject to Russia in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

I may perhaps be allowed just to mention that, when visiting Warsaw some hours before the German occupation in the autumn of 1915, I had the opportunity of seeing the Cossacks once more in action on Polish land, but this time with a curiously reverential attitude towards the Polish people, and with boundless courage hindering, if only for a moment, the inevitable German advance.

These personal experiences have in many cases thrown light on difficult points in my ethnological researches.

HISTORY OF THE TERM.—In tracing the history of the term "Cossack," "Kazak," we can follow the origin and spread of the Cossack national organizations. Various theories have been put forward on the subject. Erskine,* the translator of "Baber's Memoirs," Sir Henry Howorth,† and Klaproth,‡ think that the term has no ethnic value, and is derived from an Arabic word which travelled through Persia and found its way to the Circassians of the Northern Caucasus, from where it spread to the Turks of Central Asia and to Russia. According to these authorities, the meaning of the term is "a martial man leading a roving life." Against these opinions we have the theory of Vámbéry* and Schuyler that the word has acquired ethnic significance in the course of time, and that it is of Turkic origin, from *kaz*, "to wander" (modern form *kez*, *kiz*), and the suffix of the verbal noun, *ak*. Another version derives the term from the words *khaz*, "a

* Erskine, "Baber's Memoirs," v., xi. See note to p. 7.

† Howorth, "History of the Mongols," Part II., Division I., p. 5.

‡ Klaproth, "Travels in the Caucasus," p. 311.

§ "Das Türkenvolk," p. 108.

steppe goose," and *zag*, "a steppe crow," thus making it of Perso-Turkic origin, and implying the meaning "free as a steppe bird."* So, whatever the difference in detail, it is agreed that the term describes a people living a free and wandering life.

Already in the tenth century the land on the Lower Don was called Kazachia (according to Porphyrogenitus), and in the eleventh century we hear from a Persian poet Firdusi (in his "Shah-Nameh") of the nomad Kazak people, armed with lances, and of their chief, Kazak-Khan. These Kazak are probably the ancestors of the Turkic Kaizak who later migrated to Central Asia, where they still live. But it is possible that the term may have remained in Eastern Europe from the eleventh century,† though we hear of people bearing this name in Eastern Europe some three or four centuries later.

HISTORY OF THE ASIATIC COMMUNITY.—After this mention in the eleventh century we hear nothing of the Turkic Kazak for two centuries, and it is probable that their organization was amalgamated with some other Turkic power. But in the thirteenth century, after the death of Jinghis Khan, we hear that they were included in that part of his empire which passed to his son Juji.‡

In the middle of the fifteenth century we find the Kazak again asserting themselves as a separate unit. In the meantime they seem to have formed part of the "White Horde" from which the chieftains of the modern Kaizak claim their descent, and were probably united with the Uzbek. About the middle of the fifteenth century, however, a number of these Kaizak-Uzbek, discontented with the rule of their Khan, Abulkhayr, migrated with their Sultans Girei and Janibeg into Moghulistan (between Issyk-Kul and Kashgar), and have since been called simply Kazak.§

This Kaizak steppe community continued to exist with increasing power till the end of the seventeenth century. Their Khans were called the Kasimov dynasty, after Kasim Khan, son of the Janibeg|| who led them on their migration. At the end of the seventeenth century one of their most famous Khans, Tiavka, divided them for

* P. Kuznietsoff, *La Lutte des Civilisations et des Langues dans l'Asie Centrale*. Paris, 1912, p. 60.

† H. Vámbéry, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

‡ W. W. Radloff, "Aus Sibirien," p. 193.

§ Mirza Haydar, "Tarikh-i-Rashidi," p. 82; F. H. Skrine and E. D. Ross, "The Heart of Asia," pp. 193, 194; H. H. Howorth, "History of the Mongols," Part II., Division I., p. 6.

|| V. V. Velyaminoff-Zernoff, "The Emperors and Princes of the Line of Kasim" (Russ.); A. Levshin, "Description of the Hordes and Steppes of the Kirghis-Kaizak," St. Petersburg, 1832 (Russ.); N. Aristoff, "Attempt at an Explanation of the Ethnic Composition of the Kirghis-Kaizak of the Great Orda, and of the Kara-Kirghis," 1894, pp. 391-486 (Russ.); N. I. Grodekoff, "The Kirghis and the Kara-Kirghis of Syrdarya Territory," 1889 (Russ.); T. Kazantseff, "Description of the Kirghis-Kaizak," 1867 (Russ.). A. N. Kharuzin, "Bibliography of the Ethnographical Essays on the Kirghis and the Kara-Kirghis."

administrative purposes into three groups, called Ordas—the Great, Middle, and Little Ordas. Since then the history of each Orda runs apart.

The subjugation of the Kaizak to Russia lasted from 1734-1864, when they were finally separated by the Russian military cordons from the other Asiatic powers. But they have not ceased to take every opportunity to emphasize their independent spirit. The most important rising was that led by Kenisary, who was master of all three Ordas for some six years, 1838-1844. While the Russian occupation of the Khanates of Central Asia roused the indignation of many people in Europe, the conquest of the Kaizak seems to have met with approval. Sir Henry Howorth, speaking on this question, gives us a somewhat uncomplimentary picture of the Kaizak. He says: "The Kazaks, whose very name is a synonym for freebooters and robbers, have been the scourge of all their neighbours for generations, habitually given to robbery and pillage, bound by no promise and no oath, and constantly disintegrating under the solvent of rival chiefs, with rival reputations as leaders of bandits. The Russians were long-suffering for years to their habitual treacheries and deceits." So much for this quotation. A personal acquaintance with these people produces a more satisfactory impression of their moral. But it is true that it is only with difficulty that they can be persuaded to abandon their nomadic life, and that they ally themselves easily with other nomads, such as the real Kirghis, called Kara-Kirghis, the Kipchak, and other Turkic steppe people.

An analysis of the history of the Turkic Kaizak, especially of the later period, from the middle of the fourteenth century, when their numbers were swelled in consequence of the Chinese Revolution of 1370 on the one hand and the sweeping conquests and imperial régime of Timur-Khan in Central Asia on the other,* leads us to the following hypothesis as to the cause, and even the inevitableness, of their organization.

Big empires composed of nations with such a variation of habits and cultures as the Empire of Mété (3-2 cent. B.C.), of Jinghis (13 cent. A.D.), or of Timur (14 cent.), were kept together only by strong autocratic rule and by imposing on all people one mode of life. Such a rule worked fairly satisfactorily in the regions near the centre of the Empire, but at the outskirts the rule would be naturally weaker, and hence would allow the people to revert, as it were, to the mode of life of their ancestry—*i.e.*, the nomadic life as against the more sedentary life of the Central Empire. The more autocratic and powerful the ruler of the Empire, the more often do we hear of rebellious people on the outskirts.

This explanation of the origin of the Asiatic Cossacks holds good

* L. Cahun, "L'Introduction à l'Histoire de l'Asie," 1896, p. 479.

when dealing with the European Cossacks, but of course, since the Central Empires of Eastern Europe were more sedentary than the Central Empires of Northern Asia, Cossacks of Eastern Europe were only half nomadic, whilst the Kaizak of Asia were pure nomads. In the ethnic formation of the Kaizak of Asia the Turkic blood predominated over the Tungus and Mongolic, while in the formation of European Cossacks the Slavonic blood predominated over the Turkic. Thus, however different the European and Asiatic "outskirts people" are, they possess three characteristics in common: love of personal freedom, aptitude for nomadic industries, and skill in warfare.

HISTORY OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.—I shall now pass to the history of European Cossacks, which is much easier to trace, since it is closely bound up with the histories of Russia, of Poland, and, to a lesser degree, of other East European countries.*

Several stages may be distinguished in the history of the European Cossacks. The *first stage* corresponds to the first State organization in the old Kieff Rus, from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries.

The *second* comprises the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, and corresponds to the development of the Cossack independent national communities.

The *third* covers the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the neighbouring States tried to subdue the Cossacks, and thus brought about the Cossack wars with Poland and with Russia, which led to a decline in the Cossack national strength, and eventually to their reorganization as the light cavalry of the Russian army (*voiska*).

The *fourth* is the stage of the Cossack cavalry, or *voiska*, in the nineteenth century and until the present war.

To take the *first period*. The idea of using these conquered nomadic people as defensive outposts on the borderland was already known in the days of the old Kieff Rus, in the time of Nestor, and thus existed before the term "Kaizak" came to this region. The first we hear of anything of this nature is in connection with a branch of the Pyechenyegs, the rivals of the Cumans in the invasion of Southern Russia in the twelfth century. These Pyechenyegs were subdued by the Rus people, and a part of them, called Chorno-Klobuki, was used for defensive purposes on the borderlands. The Chorno-Klobuki, known of as early as 1162, were some seventy years later (1239) fighting

* M. Hrushevskii, "History of the Ukraine-Rus," Lemberg, 1904 (Ruthenian); A. Jablonowski, "History of the Southern Rus until the Fall of the Polish Commonwealth," 1912 (Polish); V. Sukhorukoff, "Historical Description of the Land of the Don Voiska," 1895 (Russ.); A. Levshin, "Historical and Statistical Account of the Ural Cossacks, 1823" (Russ.); N. Kharuzin, "Information relating to the Cossack Communities on the Don" (Russ.); P. Korolenko, "The Chernomortsy" (Russ.); F. Rawita Gawronski, Bohdan Chmielnicki, 1906-1909 (Polish); N. Rojko, "The Cossacks," vol. xxiii, pp. 90-118, of Jezelnoff's Encyclo. (Russ.); A. Suroff, "The Cossacks," vol. xiii, pp. 882-894, of Andreievsky's Encyclo., 1895 (Russ.).

the hordes of Batu Khan on the side of the Russians. Like so many of the other Turks in Southern Russia, the Chorno-Klobuki accepted Christianity and adopted Russian habits, but, curiously enough, one branch of them still kept their Turkic language, and they live until now in Bessarabia, to the number of some 30,000, under the name Gagauzy.* I have purposely dwelt upon this interesting detail about the predecessors of the Cossack communities in Europe, because since the very beginning of Russia (then called Rus) the life of the State has seemed to need such a defence for its frontiers, which lacking natural boundaries, if left undefended, would have been open to invasion.

And, indeed, such an invasion actually occurred in the thirteenth century. It is significant that as long as the invaders occupied the Russian lands we hear nothing of the borderland communities. But after the Mongol-Tatars either withdrew into Asia or became merged in the local population, the end of the fifteenth century shows us again on the borderland a community this time called Cossack.

This marks the beginning of the *second period*. Over the land devastated by the invasion there poured all those rebellious members of the Polish-Lithuanian and the Moscow States who could not submit to the modernized state organization, with its industrial development and its class distinctions. The two big rivers of the south, the Dnieper and the Don, were the two chief centres round which these deserters congregated. The Dnieper community, whose history is bound up with the history of Poland-Lithuania and of the Ukraine, developed somewhat differently from the Don community, and has much more of a national character.

The constant invasions of the Crimean Khans, united with the Moscow Dukes against the Kieff and Chernigoff Princes, prevented the Dnieper community from settling on the open plains. Hence they moved towards the islands of the Dnieper, "beyond the rapids," which in the Ukrainian language is "Za porogi." From this phrase is derived their name of Zaporogian Cossacks. Since it was the Ukrainian land that these Cossacks colonized, the Ukrainian language became the language of the community, though Polish, and occasionally Latin, were often used as well. The remnants of the Ukrainian peasantry which had escaped the devastations of the Tatars amalgamated with these adventurous nobles of Poland, Lithuania, and Rumania, and the community was further increased by the addition of truant serfs and various social outcasts.

In a way this Cossack movement of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saved and developed the Ukrainian language, and laid the foundation of the Ukrainian national feeling which has just been given such dramatic expression.

* P. Golubowski, "The Pyechenyegi, the Törki, and the Polovtsy until the Tatar Invasion," Kieff, 1884 (Russ.).

The early organization of the Zaporogian Cossacks is so striking that I shall devote a few words to it. They were divided into Village Cossacks, living in the neighbourhood of the Dnieper, and Syech Cossacks—that is to say, those living in various inaccessible places on the cataracts of the same river. The Village Cossacks, united by ties of blood with the Syech, represented the family life of the Cossacks, while the Syech was a kind of military and moral order, involving vows of chastity and celibacy, adherence to the Orthodox Creed, and allegiance to the Dnieper community. In the early stages of the Syech, the educated classes predominated over the uneducated; but everyone was equal, no one was asked about his past, and in time of war everyone was obliged to render absolute obedience to the chief. Their chief was called *hetman*, or *ataman*, and was elected for a year. In time of war he had the power of a dictator, but in peace the supreme authority was in the hands of the Assembly, or *Rada*. No woman was allowed to enter the domain of the Syech, or to attend the political meetings or the men's dance, *kozachok*.

Though their protest against the countries from which they originally separated was chiefly based on a wish for more democratic conditions, the Cossacks soon developed two classes—the proletariat called *holytba* ("naked men"), or *chern* ("black men"), and the *domovityie*—i.e., "owning a house"—to which all the *starshini*, or elders, belong. With the advent of class distinctions among the Zaporogians, the old Draconic rules, which would hang a man found drunk during a war, began to be relaxed. But it was when their régime was at its strictest that the Polish King, Stefan Batory, made an attempt to register such Cossacks as wished to form a free army to be used for the protection of Poland's frontiers against the Turk. From the middle of the sixteenth century various reforms were introduced into the free community by the Polish Government. Among these were a more regular army organization with the famous division into tenths and hundredths which persists even now. The Cossacks who enlisted at the request of the Polish Kings were on Government pay, were ennobled like the Polish fighting men, and are known in history as the "registered Cossacks." But as soon as a war was over these regiments would naturally sink back unto the general Cossack organizations, to the dissatisfaction of the Poles, and the Polish administrators of the Ukraine would claim the unregistered as well as the registered Cossacks for the service of the King. It was obvious that an arrangement subordinating only one part of the Cossack forces could not be lasting, and the mutual misunderstanding between the Cossack organizations and the Polish administration reached its climax when, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, a strong man appeared within the Cossack community, who was, on the whole, more of a Ukrainian patriot than of a Cossack. His name was Bohdan Chmielnicki. Of Ukrainian-Lithuanian-Polish

parentage and Latin education, he joined the community only about 1627, and a few years later he was already at the head of the Separatist movement in the Ukraine. It was, however, a private affair that led to the final rupture. A Polish noble of the Ukraine, by name Chaplinski, carried away Chmielnicki's sweetheart. This gave the signal for the rising under the leadership of Chmielnicki, who was then elected Hetman of the Cossacks.

The Cossacks, it must be remembered, played at that time the rôle of the army of the Ukraine, and in alliance with the Turks they embarked upon a long and destructive war. Weakening as it was to Poland, the war was mortal for the Ukraine, and its Cossacks and led to the treaty at Pereyslav in 1654, where the Cossacks gave themselves up to such dependence on Russia as they had never known before. The Russian Tsars soon realized that the Ukrainians would never cease to claim their freedom as long as they had their Cossacks to support them, and there began a period of persecution and forcible reorganization of the Dnieper Cossacks more severe than anything ever suffered by the Don Cossacks. It failed, however, to produce the desired effect, for in spite of the forcible transportation of part of these Cossacks into the Northern Caucasus and the Azov country, the national spirit developed through all the persecution as it would never have done if the people had been left to themselves to assimilate naturally with their neighbours.

The Don community consisted largely of Great Russians, including such independent members of the Great Russian State as the Old Believers, together with other rebels of an intellectual type. Being farther away from Western Europe, the Don Cossacks had neither the quasi-monastic, quasi-knighthood organization represented by the Syech of the Ukrainians, nor did the class distinctions develop to such a great extent as among the former.

The Don Cossacks are mentioned already in the Moscow annals of the fourteenth century, and we hear of their being allied with the Russian Princes against the Tatars in Kulikoff's battle of 1380. When in 1549 the Nogai Prince complained to Ivan the Terrible of the depredations of the Don Cossacks, the Moscow Government replied that the Don Cossacks were renegades of Moscow and Lithuania who did not recognize the authority of the Tsar. Yet the Don Cossacks gave their help to Moscow in subjugating the Khanate of Kazan in 1552 and the Khanate of Astrakhan in 1556. In 1570 the Tsar sent to the Don Cossacks an envoy whose mission it was to persuade them to enlist in his service, for which generous compensation was promised. This was the first of incessant and forcible attempts to subjugate the Don Cossacks to Moscow, which was finally accomplished in 1623.

The *third period* of Cossack history, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is one long struggle between the growing power of the Russian State and these communities, whose reorganization into regiments or

voiska (depending directly on the Russian Government and not on the army) was a task neither easy nor rapid. Curiously enough, while the Dnieper and Don, Yaik and Terek regions for a long time have not ceased to be the quarter whence many liberative movements originated, and where rebels found support, those branches of the Don and Yaik Cossacks who were amalgamated with the forces sent from Moscow to the conquest of Siberia at once became the most devoted servants of the Tsar.

The history of the European Cossacks in Siberia is thus somewhat different from their history in Europe. Their relation to the Central Government took on at once the character of the relation of the *voiska* of the later type, and it dates from the time of Yermak, at the end of the sixteenth century. It was owing to the organization of two kinds of Cossack forces in Siberia, the *Lineynyie*, or Border Cossacks, and the Town Cossacks, who formed a kind of police force, that Siberia was kept under the sway of the Tsar. It was also to the exploratory and adventurous spirit of these voluntary Cossack detachments that the rapidity of the conquest was due. The first Russian town, Tiumen, was built in 1586, and the year 1647 saw the foundation of Okhotsk on the shores of the Pacific.

The Russian Cossacks in Siberia increased in numbers with the advance of the Russian conquests. The Nerchinsk Treaty with China in 1689 led to the formation of the Transbaikal Cossacks, the occupation of the Amur country in 1865 gave rise to the Amur Cossacks, and the Ussuri Cossacks were organized in 1882. But the Cossacks living near to the old centres, especially in the neighbourhood of the Don, often hindered the Russian advance by local rebellions. Thus, for instance, in 1557 a group of Cossacks on the Volga rebelled and stopped the conquest of the Volga Finnic tribes. On their submission, the rebels were renamed Yaik Cossacks; but these same Yaik Cossacks gave their support to the momentous rising of Pugachoff, and when Catherine the Great broke up this conspiracy the Yaik Cossacks were once more renamed, and have since been known as the Ural Cossacks.

The disintegration and renaming of the Ukrainian Cossacks has a still longer history.

There exists a great deal of literature on Cossack life, and the heroes of their earlier as well as of their later stage. Those who can avail themselves of the Russian or Polish originals, or, in some cases, of translations, can spend hours in an atmosphere of enthusiasm or of horror. Among the masterpieces are Gogol's "Taras Bulba," Slovacki's "Mazepa," the "Trilogy" of Sienkiewicz ("With Fire and Sword"), and many smaller literary works by eminent Russian and Polish writers. Beautiful as these are, and perhaps because of their high literary value, they often impose upon their readers to the extent of being raised from the level of fiction and given the weight of an historical record. But

in point of fact it turns solely on whether the writer is a Pole or a Russian whether any prominent Cossack leader is lauded as a hero or stigmatized as a scoundrel. This is true in the case of Mazepa, and to a certain extent also of Chmielnicki. Again, we find that Stanko Rasin and Pugachoff, two rebels of the Don and Yaik Cossacks still live in sagas and folk-songs as democratic reformers, fighting, for land and freedom for the people, generous to the Holytha, just to the Domovityie, severe in their moral, and devoted to their cause. It will be understood that scoundrel was the mildest epithet applied to them in the official Russian books. Probably, when his history comes to be written, the same double character will be given to the figure of Hetman Kaledin, Hetman once more after a hundred years, during which this title was a nominal one, held by the heir to the Russian throne.

A few words must be said as to the result achieved by the old Russian Government after they had succeeded in breaking the national spirit of the Cossacks, and had skilfully diverted their vitality to fighting the external enemies of Russia in Asia, and occasionally in the West. Until 1905, and to a certain extent until the outbreak of the Revolution, the Cossacks were used against all whom the old Russian Government considered dangerous to the State.

That a revolutionary movement, or at least a spirit of discontent with the corruption of the old Government, must have existed among them to a greater extent than appeared on the surface until 1916, is clear from the fact that in the time of the crisis of Tsardom the Cossacks took not much pains to uphold the old régime. But the significance of this must not be overestimated, for it is also true that but a few of them are found among the Left or Centre of the revolutionaries.

At present there are twelve large Cossack units or *voiska*, and several smaller units, such as the Irkutsk hundreds, the Yakutsk Town Cossacks, and the Turkoman Cossack division. The large units * are—

				Population.
Don, with its headquarters in	Novocherkask	...	...	1,500,000
Kuban	Ekaterinodar	...	...	1,350,000
Ural (Yaik)	Uralsk	...	...	900,000
Orenburg	Orenburg	...	...	530,000
Terek	Vladikhavkaz	...	...	270,000
Trans-Baikal	Chita	...	...	270,000
Siberian	Omisk	...	...	180,000
Amur	Blagoveshchensk	...	...	50,000
Semirechensk	Viernyi	...	...	45,000
Astrakhan	Astrakhan	...	...	40,000
Ussuri	Vladivostock	...	...	34,000
Yenisei	Irkutsk	...	...	30,000

Their total number is about 5,199,000, with a great predominance of males over females. The Cossacks own, or owned until recently,

* According to the recent book by Robert Wilton, "Russia's Agony," 1918, p. 316.

141,600,000 acres of land, varying from 14 acres per head (in Kuban) to 100 in Transbaikal. Speaking generally, the Cossacks have three or four times as much land per head as the Russian peasantry. In Siberia, where they own the greatest amount of land, only 9 per cent. of arable land was under cultivation in 1910-1911.

Besides these large endowments of land, the Cossacks have the privilege of being free from taxation and of being governed by a special Cossack Board in the Ministry of War, which makes them autonomous as regards the neighbouring population. In return for these privileges the Cossacks have to render military service to the State. Theoretically all the male population from eighteen years of age has to serve for nineteen years. Those not fit for military service pay money to the community, and are placed on the lists of special regiments called *lgotnyie polki*. The Cossack is obliged to provide his own horse and uniform, the Government supplying only arms. Several other duties normally devolving upon the Government, such as the upkeep of the roads, of schools, and the providing of medical treatment, rest with the Cossack community.

Each large unit or *voisko* is divided into districts (*okrug*) and village groups (*stanitsa*), these, again, being subdivided into villages (*hutor*). The head of the smaller division is subordinate to the chief of the larger. The land belonging to a *voisko* is only to a small extent used by its own people; a greater amount is rented to various non-Cossack people, excluding Jews. Thus, on the Don territory only 400 people per 1,000 are Cossacks, and on the other territories the percentage of Cossacks is still smaller. Some part of it is appropriated for the private estates of the Cossack nobles—*i.e.*, officers of high rank. The chief social distinction within the community is that the officers, who are nobles, are permitted to have private property in land out of the land belonging to the *voiska*. As a rule, also, they are better educated, though on the whole the percentage of illiterates among the Cossack population is a small one. The least educated are the Transbaikal Cossacks, among whom only 25 per cent. can read. The highest percentage is in the Astrakhan *voisko*—81 per cent. Among the Don Cossacks, where one would expect it to be high, the percentage of those who can read is only 66.

As compared with the bulk of the Russian army under the old régime, the Cossack regiments are of small proportions. In times of peace 55,000 Cossacks are under arms; in time of war the number is 180,000.* But as a matter of fact during this war many more of them have been called out. It is common knowledge that as a fighting force their quality far surpasses their quantity.

In peaceful times the Cossack industries are chiefly fishing and cattle and horse breeding. Next comes agriculture, which, however,

* N. Rojkov, v. 23; Jeleznoff Encyclo., p. 105.

is still at a primitive and wasteful stage. Then comes the cultivation of wine and tobacco plantations. The Asiatic Cossacks are well known as traders.

CONCLUSION.—Having traced the origin of these curious communities, followed their evolution, and seen something of their present state, I should now like to lay before you two momentous problems, one connected with the Kaizak, the other with the Cossacks, the solution of which is of vital importance to Eastern Europe and to Asia.

The first problem arises out of the existence, the character, and the circumstances of the Turkic Kaizak (*i.e.*, the Turkic Cossacks). They are a body who, despite their nomadic condition, have an importance not to be lightly estimated, for any cause, either within Russia or without, which has their support will be very considerably strengthened thereby. Numbering from four to five million, by no means thoroughly subjugated by Mongol or by Russian power, this half-nomadic race of the Kaizak, whom, as we saw, the Russians erroneously call Kirghis, represents a considerable fighting force in its own land, since its clan organization still remains strong. Lying between Europe and Asia, its country extends from the shore of the Caspian to Pamir, and is on the route to the fabulously rich mines of Altai and Sayan and the other wealth of Siberia.

The Kaizak may be regarded as an advance-guard to the Turks of Bokhara, Khiva, and other countries of Turkestan, but their sympathies are detached, for although they have much in common with these Turks racially and linguistically, their want of strong feeling for Mahometanism sets them apart. This is hardly surprising, since Islam was only brought to them two centuries ago, and it has never been in them a driving cultural force. On the other hand, they have always been in opposition to the Central Russian Government, an opposition of which the rising of 1916 and its subsequent massacres is a recent proof.* Their relation to the Russian Cossacks has been that of an insubordinate native tribe to a conquering Russian army, and yet Russian Cossacks and Turkic Kaizak have more in common with each other than either have with the Central Russian Government. Wherever Russian Cossacks have settled among Turkic Kaizak, it is the latter who have kept the upper hand, the Russian Cossacks adopting their mode of life and social outlook. In disregarding their essential kinship, and fostering dissension between the Russian and the Turkic Cossacks, the old Russian Government made a grave mistake. Friendly feeling and friendly terms have grown up and been established between the Turkic Kaizak and the progressive element among the Siberian colonists, which is a consideration worth noticing. There are two alternatives before the Kaizak, one of which

* For a fuller account on the Turkic Kaizak, see M. A. Czaplicka's "Turks of Central Asia," now in preparation (Oxford University Press).

they must choose. Either they must support the progressive Siberians who work for an all-Russian Federation, or they must throw in their lot with the Turks of Central Asia, among whom German-Osmanli propagandists work for the separation of the Turkish peoples from Russia. The support of the Kaizak will be an important factor in the future of the side they choose. It is not likely that the Bolsheviks will dominate the Kaizak, since Bolshevism has its roots in industrialism, which does not as yet enter into the Kaizak civilization. Attempts at impregnation at second-hand through ideas derived from a state of society quite unlike their own are not likely to be successful among any people; furthermore, the instinct of self-preservation, strong among all nomadic tribes, runs counter to the anarchy consequent upon Bolshevik methods.

The second problem centres round the five and a half million Russian Cossacks of Europe and Asia. I am classing them all as Russian, since the seven units dwelling in Asia have throughout the War and the Revolution never broken their allegiance to the Cossacks in European Russia. The position of the Russian Cossacks has been fundamentally influenced by the War and by the Russian Revolution. Acute economic, social, and political problems now confront them, which must react gravely upon Russia itself. As a strictly organized military people, with a male population of nothing but commoners and officers, they have seemed in recent days like a blessed island for the torpedoed, a community whose stability was a certain asset; yet their strength was entirely bound up with the old régime, which they upheld and through which they existed. To remove from their horizon the name and the idea of Tsar and autocracy, and to replace it by the name and idea of the Russian country and nation, would need a political genius greater than has yet appeared during the Russian Revolution.* The desire of the Cossacks for reforms in the old régime did not go to the length of wishing to change the form of government; but when the great majority of the other people of the country are moving in the direction of establishing a Republic, much might be gained by having the Cossacks with them. They might, of course, be won over in an evolutionary way, but the anarchy produced by the action of the extremists is not favourable soil for evolutionary changes. An essential initial step would be to identify the Cossack interests with the common cause. We know that at the beginning of the Revolution the Cossacks at the front joined the Revolutionaries, but they soon formed a separate all-Cossack party, led by the Don Cossacks, with the all-Cossack Congresses as a means of expressing their opinion. To this action they were led by the spoliation of

* For a curious confusion of old and new ideas among the Cossacks, see M. Philips Price's article in *Manchester Guardian*, November 29, 1918, "At a Cossack Provincial Assembly."

their land by the Revolutionaries. What actually occurred was a mistake characteristic of revolutionaries everywhere. Instead of raising the landed property of the Russian peasants to the level of that of the Cossacks, the Revolutionaries, jealous of the past privileges of the Cossacks, now threaten to abolish *all* their privileges. The only way to solve the problem of the Cossack communities would be to give them protection without preferential treatment; not to destroy their time-honoured military organization, but to use it as a militia to support the new order, freed from its old lust for conquest. But while modernizing the Cossack communities in this way, it would be very desirable at the same time to revive one of their seventeenth-century traditions—namely, no distinction of classes. Had this tradition been upheld, and the distinction between the two classes of commoner-rankers and noblemen-officers been less sharp, Bolshevism would not have gained such a footing among them, and the historic crisis culminating in the dramatic death of General Kaledin* might have been avoided.

There remains an economic problem: "How to arrive at a *modus vivendi* between the Cossacks and the Russian peasant village community?" If the Cossacks continue to be used for military service some other compensation ought to be provided for them than grants of enormous stretches of land which they neither can nor wish to cultivate. As to the national separatist feeling, it seems unlikely that this will grow if the other problems are satisfactorily settled.

The most acute of these national questions, directly connected with the Cossack problem, was the question of the Ukraine. But although the Ukrainian Cossacks have helped to preserve a separatist feeling in the Ukraine, their persecution by the Tsars was so effective that there is no longer a question of the Ukrainian Cossacks, but of the Ukrainian nation only. It is difficult to conceive a permanent bond between Germany and the Ukraine against the more natural ties which link her with her neighbours; but should Cossack communities be permanently deprived of the influx of Ukrainian blood, their racial character may become still more Asiatic, with the Great Russian element politically predominant and racially acting as a filter through which various Mongols and "Tatars" pass in the process of becoming Russified.

If oil is to be poured on the troubled waters of the present Russian chaos, it will be by the groups which prove to be the most highly organized, and the sooner the external and internal problems

* Whether after the Russian Revolution, which one must consider to be still in progress, the report of General Kaledin's death will be confirmed or not is not important, since the true significance lies in the impossibility of his position as a "Hetman" consequent on the spread of Bolshevism among his subordinates.

of the Cossacks are settled, the greater will be the rôle they will play in the remaking of Eastern Europe.

M. A. CZAPLICKA,

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Anthropology of the University of Oxford.*

The CHAIRMAN, after congratulating Miss Czapliska on the excellence of her paper, stated that opinions differed as to the moral qualities of the Cossack, and quoted Mr. Eugene Schuyler's description of the Orenberg Cossacks as "mild, amiable, and hospitable, the pioneers of Russian civilization, brave, industrious, and enduring." Mackenzie Wallace and others had described the extreme cleanliness and order of the Cossack homes. Personally, he had not had much opportunity of studying them carefully, although he had come across them on the Russian frontier north of Kashghar; again during the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78; and still later on the Danube, where there were Cossack patrols along the whole of the Russian bank of that river from Reni to the Black Sea; while at Galatz, where he had resided for some years, was the reputed tomb of the famous Mazeppa. He had also seen the Cossacks fighting against the Turks, and had greatly admired on one occasion their gallant and orderly retreat through three villages when attacked by a vastly superior force of Kurdish cavalry, who in those days were certainly no match for the Cossack.

One great reason for the want of unanimity among the Cossacks at the present time was the land question. The sedentary portion in the towns were inclined to sympathize with the Bolsheviks, while those who lived on the land were anxious to keep what they had possessed for centuries, and resented the inroads and claims of fresh settlers from European Russia, where the holdings were very much smaller than those of the Cossacks.

The Chairman concluded by proposing a cordial vote of thanks to Miss Czapliska for her most interesting and instructive lecture.

Sir DONALD MACKENZIE WALLACE: The Cossack communities varied greatly from each other in character at different times and in different localities, but it may be said, roughly speaking, that the important part which they played in Russian history during many centuries consisted in defending the ever-advancing agricultural population against the frequent raids of the nomadic tribes living beyond the frontier. The villages which they inhabited (called *Stanitsas*) were organized for that purpose. They were always regarded by the Tsar as his subjects, but in early times, when the Khan of the Crimea or the Sultan of Turkey complained of their depredations, they were sometimes described as runaways and outlaws for whose conduct the Moscovite Government was not responsible. In this description there was a small element of truth, because some of them had fled to

the frontier in order to escape punishment, and many of them were inclined to take part in insurrectionary movements in their native country. In later times they were brought thoroughly under control, and incorporated in the national army as a useful irregular force, employed chiefly in the defence of the long southern frontier stretching from the Black Sea to the Far East.

Lieut-Colonel A. C. YATE: A previous speaker remarked that one came across Cossacks everywhere—from the Don to the Amur. My earliest acquaintance with a Cossack was on the walls of my father's dining-room in Yorkshire, when I was a very small boy. His name was Mazeppa—a Pole who became Hetman of the Cossacks. As I first saw him, he was represented in two engravings, after the French painter Vernet, which pictured him bound naked on the back of a horse, and borne at that horse's wild will over steppe and through forest. The story of Mazeppa may be read in the verse of Byron or the prose of Voltaire ("Charles XII."), and in the writings of authors whose names are less familiar to the everyday reader. I have not risen to treat of a subject upon which several of the other speakers have already touched—viz., the ethnology of the Cossack. I would rather take him as a figure in art and literature, such as we find him portrayed in Tolstoi's "Cossacks" and in Sienkiewicz' trilogy, entitled "With Fire and Sword," "The Deluge," and "Pan Michael." The lecturer has already mentioned "Taras Bulba" by Gogol, a book which I have not yet read, but of which I see an English translation has just been published in *Everyman's Library*. The Napoleonic War period abounds in reminiscences of the Cossacks, and in the Baron Munchausen of that period, the Baron de Marbot, vivid pictures of their deeds, and his own, may be sought. As a constituent element of the Tsar's military forces the Cossacks have long been famous. If my memory be correct, I saw the Cossacks of the Guard march past at a Grand Review at Krasnoe Selo in 1890. Of more recent years the Russian Empire, extending its ægis over the mixed races of the Caucasus and Central Asia, has added other Turanian elements to its armies. I remember, at Amu Daryā on the Oxus, when Sir James Hills-Johnes and I were there in October, 1890, General Annenkoff brought up to us a Kirghiz Colonel and introduced him. The motive was plain. It meant: "You are proud of your Indian Army. We, too, have our Tartars, and—you may catch them one day." For the moment that day is over. The Cossack now looks like arraying himself side by side with Indian troops to check Turkish and Teutonic aggression in the East.

Mr. J. F. BADDELEY: I think I can throw some little light on one part of the question that has been raised as to Kirghiz and Kaisak. When the Russians first reached the Yenesei very early in the seventeenth century, and before the date of their first journey across the

Sayan Mountains (1616) to visit the Altin Khan at Ubsa-nor, they found the country on the western bank of the river largely inhabited by various tribes of a people they rightly call Kirghiz. They attempted to bring them under subjection, and exacted *yasak* or tribute in fur; but as the Mongols and afterwards the Kalmuks likewise claimed their allegiance, the unhappy Kirghiz were for more than half a century alternately bullied by all three of these nations. They were frequently at war with the Russians, attacked more than were even Krasnoyarsk and other towns; but eventually trekked south and south-west to the Tarbagatai country and the district west of Issik-kul, where under the name of Buruts, Kamenni (mountain), or Kara (black) Kirghiz, they may still be found. They are undoubtedly near relatives of the Kaisaks, but not identical with them. Of the Kirghiz who wander in former Sungaria an interesting account from personal observation will be found in Mr. Carruthers's "Unknown Mongolia."

Mr. Moon said that Sir Donald Mackenzie Wallace's book, which he had taken with him on several Russian expeditions and which he greatly admired, was probably published before Miss Czaplicka was born. He had entered a note in his copy from "The Statesman's Handbook for Russia," edited by the Chancery of the Committee of Ministers (vol. i., p. 123), as follows:

"ST. PETERSBURG, 1896.

"The word 'Cossack' is Turkish, and means a 'freeman,' or 'freelance.' The first Cossacks were settlers of various races on the River Dnieper. . . . Out of this free population in the region of the Dnieper gradually arose a martial Christian Society or Knighthood, calling themselves 'Cherkess' and subsequently 'Cossacks.'"

This doubtless represented the view which it was officially desired to promote or create at that time. The division of Cossacks into Eastern and Western, the former including the Kirghiz, had been unknown to him. Travelling through Siberia in pre-railway days, he was for several days escorted by a succession of Cossacks, who sat beside the driver of his tarantass from stage to stage. These Cossacks had the yellow band round their military cap, but had no Asiatic appearance. At a certain stage his escort forgot, or neglected, to warn a successor, so for some days he was without any such escort and, in consequence probably, was reported in London as lost.