

## Russian Germans in Russian Historiography from the Last Third of the 18<sup>th</sup> to the First Half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century

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### Abstract

Russia and Germany have centuries-old cultural, economic, and dynastic ties. Until the end of the 17th century, the German diaspora in Muscovy was small and concentrated in the German Quarter in Moscow. The reign of Catherine the Great (1762 – 1796) featured an active campaign carried out in Russia to engage foreign colonists in the economic development of vacant lands on the outskirts of the state. In Russia, the colonist districts emerged in the Volga region and New Russia, which were home to dozens of thousands of Germans in the early 19th century. The Russian and German historical science still shows a strong interest in the history of Russian Germans. Many papers have been focused on the key events in the 20th century. At the same time, modern historiography studying German colonies in Russia in the first half of the 19th century is very scanty. Most German and Russian historians do not even mention publications completed in the pre-reform period (until the 1860s) in their works. This article is intended to review the publications about the German colonies in the Russian Empire, which were produced in Russia in the late 18th and early 19th century. We have employed a variety of historical research methods, such as retrospective, genetic, comparative, descriptive approaches, etc. This article is based on the material published in the Russian language in Russia in the late 18th and early 19th century. By their nature, these are travel essays, monographs, and journal articles.

**Keywords:** Russian Germans, Russian Historiography, Russian empire, German colonies, German colonisation in Russia.

### 1. Introduction

Ancient Rus established contacts with foreigners in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Those of them who could not speak Russian were called "nemtzy" (Germans) from the Russian word "nemoy" (Eng. "dumb") which denoted those who could not speak a common language. The popular mind referred all foreigners as Germans in subsequent centuries. This explains why the location, where, according to the decree by Tsar Ivan IV the Terrible, all foreigners were required to reside, regardless of country of origin, was named Nevetskaya Sloboda, i.e. German Quarter.

The massive inflow of immigrants from the German principalities was registered in the Russian service in the early 18th century, when many Germans made careers in the army, civil service, science, after they were conferred Russian titles of nobility. In the middle of the 18th century, Empress Catherine the Great relied on the foreign colonists to secure for Russia unpopulated border regions where the colonists were to ensure economical development. The ideas of Physiocrats, which dominated Europe, prompted the Russian empress to make a major bet on the creation of agricultural settlements – colonies. Only in the first years of foreign colonization (1763 – 1767), Russia became the destination for approx. 22 thousand Germans from the German principalities, who constituted a key component of the German diaspora in the Russian Empire in the second half of the 18th and early 20th century.

The history of German colonization has its own extensive historiography. However, the greatest interest lies in the issues pertaining the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20th century. (Fleishhauer, 1986, Eisfeld, 1992, Neutatz, 1993, Lor, 2003). The initial period in the history of the German colonies now mainly attracts Russian historians (Pleve, 2000) because of the poor preservation of historical sources. German and American scholars usually give the appropriate information in an extremely schematic form often with references to each other. The works, published in Russia in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, rarely come to the attention of modern historians.

Researching the history of Russian Germans generates several challenges, one of which involves our understanding of the key term 'Russian Germans'. One should, of course, examine this term with due regard for the conditions in which it came into being. On the one hand, this term can encompass all Germans living within the territory of the Russian Empire from the second half of the eighteenth century to the start of the twentieth. In this case it is necessary to address the history of Germans living or arriving in the country prior to the 1760s, and colonists who migrated under

the ruling circles' internal colonisation policy, as well as their descendants; here the term "Germans from Russia" is more appropriate. On the other hand, a narrower interpretation of the term under consideration can be allowed which only covers immigrants arriving in Russia from German principalities within the aforementioned internal colonisation activities from the 1760s to the 1830s, as well as their descendants. In other words, the term 'Russian Germans' applies exclusively to colonists or settler-property owners (from 1874 onwards). For the purposes of this paper we will be using a narrow interpretation of the term under consideration. However, one disclaimer needs to be made. In this publication the author will only refer to those German migrants and their descendants who settled in rural areas and who were originally under the jurisdiction of the Bureau for the Guardianship of Foreign Colonists - later known as the Office for the Guardianship of Foreigners - as well as the offices of the Ministry of State Property.

The authors writing from the eighteenth to the beginning of the twentieth centuries touched on various topics. However, in general they focused on the migration of Germans to Russia from the 1760s to the 1800s, the founding settlements which became known as colonies, and the socio-economic developments of the colonies, although some works address the cultural life of the colonists. Interest in any given aspect of the lives of the German colonists was determined to a large extent by the situation in the region or country. In other words, one can recognise that some publications were biased in nature. This applies in particular to the period at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries when interest in Germans stemmed from various political forces.

The basic territorial groupings which formed the German subnational group in the Russian Empire had been formed by the beginning of the twentieth century. The most numerous were the Volga, Novorossiysk or Black Sea, Volhynian, Siberian and Baltic groups. These groups included both migrant colonists and Germans who happened to be living on the same territory up to the eighteenth century. Proceeding from these definitions, this article will focus on all the enumerated groups, with the exception of the last.

The above characteristics allow us to discuss the possibility of splitting the entire body of literature into several thematic areas. The groupings can be made on the basis of language; in this instance domestic literature can be divided into Russian-language and German-language as works have been published in Russia in both Russian and German. However, it would be more appropriate to separate these works into chronological order by topic. The history of research into Russian Germans in this case can be divided into several consecutive periods, each of which has its own characteristics.

The first period extends from the 1760s to the 1820s. Anecdotal references to German colonists begin to appear in general works at this time. These works are predominantly geographic accounts of individual regions of guberniyas (provinces), given that their authors were journeying as members of expeditions organised by the Academy of Sciences. As a rule, these references are random and the information presented is reasonably superficial.

The second period covers the 1830s to the 1850s, when specialised publications on foreigners, including German colonies in Russia, begin to appear. In this particular case we refer to articles featured in institutional journals. The institutional affiliation of periodicals was largely determined by their content and the information presented in these materials predominantly concerns the history of the colonies in general. Authors specialising in accounts of colonies in any given region also began to emerge at this time. First of all, we should mark such publications as the *Journal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs* and *Journal of the Ministry of State Property*.

A further issue remains; it is necessary to determine the nature of the texts we use. They can, from one perspective, act as sources, but from another, as independent research. The texts selected for historiographic analysis contain not only information, but also show the author's position on any given issue.

As far as this issue is concerned, the texts deal with the history of colonial migration to Russia, the foundation of colonies in the aforementioned regions, and the socio-economic development of the colonies in various periods from the last third of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth.

## 2. Material and Methods

In the period between 1760s and 1870s, the German colonies existed in Russia in isolation from the rest of the population that lived in Russian regions (Volga region, New Russia, Volyn and others). But the colonists were regarded by the tsarist administration as an integral part of the population in the empire. The liberal paternalistic approach to Russian Germans adopted by Russian rulers in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century was an essential element in the multi-ethnic policies which replaced the Russian ethnocentrism. Despite being isolated, the German colonists were one of the forces that according to Andreas Kappeler, determined the country's historical development (Kappeler, 2000).

This article focuses on the publications describing the German colonies in Russia in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The paper uses various methods of historical research. The chronological approach has given us the

opportunity to study the problems which represented the essence of the research subject, by arranging them in the chronological sequence and identifying quantitative and qualitative changes that took place in them. Making use of the retrospective method has allowed us to turn to the past for a deeper understanding of historical processes and see them from a certain distance, when it became clear what historical results they produced. The genetic technique has enabled us to look from the historical perspective at how the research subject evolved in a specific area in a particular time period. The comparative method is based on a comparative analysis of the views expressed by authors in their publications on the issues linked to the emergence and growth of the German colonies in the Russian Empire.

This article is based on the material published in the Russian language in Russia in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. By their nature, these are travel essays, monographs, and journal articles.

### 3. Discussion

One of the first works to make reference to the German colonists was a geographic account composed by S. G. Gmelin. His multi-volume work *Journeys through Russia to Study the Three Kingdoms of Nature* was published in St Petersburg in 1777 (Gmelin, 1777). This work was completed in the manner typical of academic accounts of the time. It contains a description of the German colonies founded in the second half of the 1760s in the Middle Volga. The colony, founded by an evangelical community, made a great impression on Gmelin, who described it as "a true ornament for Tsaritsyn uyezd and indeed the whole guberniya of Astrakhan" (Ibid. 23). Gmelin refers to the rights and privileges of members of the Sarepta colony. The section of the work of greatest interest to us is that dedicated to describing the colony's population, their employment, tools, buildings, habits, social relations, and daily life (Gmelin, 1777). As it was collected by an eyewitness in situ, this information is of historical and ethnographic interest. One of the features of such investigations is that they can be regarded as within both the historiographical framework, and the bounds of traditional source studies, as independent historical sources.

A short while later the German colonies came to the attention of Doctor Ivan Lepekhin of the Russian Imperial Academy of Sciences; his travel notes were published at the end of Catherine the Great's reign (Lepekhin, 1795). The author turns his attention to the external differences between Russian villages and German colonies in the Middle Volga. Despite the fact that Russians and Germans found themselves in identical environmental and climatic conditions, Lepekhin noticed that the latter group yielded a richer harvest in 1769, a drought-affected year ((Lepekhin, 1795).

The topic of the Russian colonists' migration and economic life disappeared from the pages of periodicals and individual works until the 1830s.

Historiographic analysis of the works of this period must begin with A. A. Skalkovsky's historical work *A Chronological Review of the History of the Novorossiysk Territory. 1730-1823*. (Odessa, 1836-1838). The author sets out the genre of his work in the foreword; it is a chronicle, and he calls himself a chronicler. Indeed, *A Chronological Review of the History...* is reminiscent of a chronicle in its form, as the factual material describes the weather. The work's dedication to M. S. Vorontsov, the Governor General of Novorossiya and Bessarabia, also shows the spirit of the times.

The section of Skalkovsky's work of greatest interest to us is that pertaining to the region's history from the 1780s to the 1810s.

Skalkovsky attributes the authorities' widespread interest in colonising the Novorossiysk territory to the enlightened ideas of physiocrats which coexisted with mercantilism. This motivated Catherine the Great to "found colonies in the Novorossiysk territory which, following the breeding and enhancement of livestock, could begin trade in butter and cheese, not to mention the improvement of agriculture and the colonisation of unsettled plains" (Skalkovsky, 1836).

The author gives first place in German colonisation of the Novorossiysk territory to P. A. Rummyantsev, pointing to the fact that it was precisely he who "drew the Empress's attention to the Mennonites living in Prussia... He knew that the increasing Mennonite population, demanding more land than they could find in Western Europe, would be forced to seek other more affluent living space on fertile soil" (Ibid.). This statement appears strange, at the very least, as Rummyantsev was retired at this time and not involved in state affairs. Even stranger is the concealment of the role of Prince G. A. Potemkin, who at that time was Novorossiysk Governor General, in realising the colonisation process in South Russia in the 1780s. This fact can be explained by the tendency to banish Potemkin's memory from Russian history, a trend which has its origins in the reign of Emperor Paul I. At the same time, Skalkovsky does not overlook the mission of G. von Trappe, who worked on behalf of Prince Potemkin to recruit Mennonites in Danzig and its environs. However, despite its importance, this subject is limited to just one paragraph, and more detailed examination of it was deferred until the beginning of the twentieth century.

As a member of the Agricultural Society of Southern Russia, Skalkovsky showed an interest in economic issues. He was unable to pass this question by when describing the German colonies, as he was quite well-informed about the

foreign settlements' levels of economic development in the 1830s.

Everything seems perfect in this economic history of settlements; as recently as 1775 the lands populated by settlers from Danzig were "a den of gangs of thieves" (meaning the Zaporozhian Sich - V.S.), while now one could see "a string of flourishing villages from Yekaterinoslav to Nikopol" (Ibid.). The author does not dwell on describing the difficulties which arose for the settlers in their new place of residence. On the contrary, he draws the reader's attention on the reasons for the appearance of "flourishing villages". He attributes this to the monetary allowances and benefits provided under the colonisation policy, as well as the hard work of migrants. Skalkovsky particularly emphasises the guardianship policy of central and local authorities. He wrote on the subject that "the example of the Mennonite colonies, flowering on the banks of the Dnieper and again situated on the Crimean steppe, location of the best agriculture in the Novorossiysk territory, was the reason that the government accepted them willingly and in 1804 passed numerous resolutions to encourage the foundation and establishment of colonies" (Skalkovsky, 1838).

Skalkovsky pauses relatively briefly on the administration reform of foreign colonies in the Novorossiysk territory. He sees the growth of colonies in the region as the main cause for establishing the Guardianship Office in 1818.

It must be said that the publication of even the first volume of *A Chronological Review of the History of the Novorossiysk Territory* provoked an ambivalent reaction and its reviews in the printed press are an indicator of this. One of the first, sadly, anonymous reviews of this work appeared in the *Journal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs* (N.p., 1837). This contains a positive review of the work, although many facts are disputed. Nevertheless the positive side was recognised and, in order to eliminate the existing shortcomings, the author was asked to continue his work.

From the end of the 1830s the ranks of institutional journals swelled to include publications on the history of foreign colonisation in Russia and the colonies' economic activity. Among those we must first identify the *Journal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs* and the *Journal of the Ministry of State Property*, which persisted with this topic until the 1850s.

In the second half of the 1830s authors repeatedly turned to describing the locations of foreign colonies in various regions of the Russian Empire between the 1760s and the 1800s. However, they not only considered immigrants from German principalities, but also migrants from other parts of Europe.

The interest in this population group which emerged at this time was to some extent caused by reforms affecting a significant part of the country's rural population (the establishment of the Ministry of State Property, reform of state villages and so on).

A feature of the works under consideration is that, as their authorship cannot be verified, they are characterised as anonymous. Another feature is the lack of reference to sources used by the authors when writing their works. However, the texts feature relatively frequent direct or implicit references to written sources, mainly legislation, which makes analysis of the works a little easier.

Works published in institutional periodicals during the reign of Nicholas I had to indicate the loyalty of their content to the ruling system; we can conclude from this that, historiographically speaking, these works are consistent with the framework of protective direction.

Skalkovsky's 'Historical Survey of the Novorossiysk Territory' was published in several issues of the *Journal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs* from 1836 onwards. This work is an edited version of his *A Chronological Review of the History of the Novorossiysk Territory*, which had been released shortly before (Skalkovsky, 1836).

A series of articles dedicated to German colonisation in Russia in the second half of the eighteenth century was published in the *Journal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs* during 1837 and 1838. The first of the published articles was devoted to a historical review of foreign colonists' settlements in Russia (N.p., 1837). The unknown author indicates that, even during the joint reign of Tsars Ivan Alexeyevich and Peter Alexeyevich, "the government ... patronised hard work and talent, and was not averse to foreigners bringing their commercial expertise, or the arts of war, or the fruits of education" (Ibid.). However, it must be noted that the idea to establish an entire settlement of European immigrants belonged to Catherine the Great. The purpose of Catherine's colonisation policy was, in the anonymous author's opinion, not only the settlement of vast expanses of the Russian Empire, but also the spreading by foreign colonists of improved agricultural tools, the best means of land cultivation, development of urban trade, and so on, among "natural subjects" (N.p., 1837). Attention was therefore concentrated on attracting not only European farmers, but also townspeople.

The author reproduces the contents of the 1763 manifesto and the basic provisions of associated regulatory documents (the decree on establishing the Bureau for the Guardianship of Foreign Colonists, the Bureau instructions). Of particular import to him was Count G. G. Orlov's imperially approved report to the Senate on 19 March 1764, which is referred to in contemporary writings as the "agrarian code".

The government granted "care and contributions" to the colonists from the 1760s to the 1790s. However, despite this, the majority of foreign settlers were in distress. The author saw the main reason for this in the appearance of "speculators who, crookedly interpreting the manifesto, promised much more than was granted in reality" (N.p., 1837).

This situation forced the authorities to suspend the invitation process and develop a contract with professional enrollers. On the other hand, he recognises that the "indiscriminate" invitation to the colonists also negatively affected their status in their new places of residence. However, the author immediately adds that "many immigrants ... from laziness, negligence and depraved living have not only not managed to settle permanently; but also, without regard to the Bureau's exhortations and care ..., have accumulated considerable debt and remained without accommodation and livelihood" (N.p., 1837).

Furthermore, the author addresses the issue of colonial administration from the second half of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth, as well as government measures on inviting and welcoming colonists to new regions of the Empire. The fundamental idea of this section of the publication is that, during the reigns of Paul I and Alexander I, the authorities continued to provide various courtesies to the colonists. This is particularly clearly traced by the author through the examples of Paul I's manifesto to the Mennonites in 1800, and the government actions in the first years of Alexander I's reign (the allocation of significant sums of money, distribution of land from the state fund, permission to acquire land from landowners and so on). Colonial policy changed somewhat during the reign of Nicholas I. As before the authorities had a declared interest in the colonies' inner workings, but, on the other hand, the government began to recover long-term debts and arrears from the colonists, which is to say that there was a gradual transition from protectionism to a policy of equal rights and opportunities. Facts which lay on the surface thus began to take shape in the *Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire*, as evidenced by the extensive quotation of this source.

Among the individual foreign colonies, the one in Sarepta sparked the greatest interest. This was largely due to its specific population which existed as an evangelical society. Following Gmelin, Neidhardt published his own article in the *Journal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs* in 1838 (Neidhardt, 1838). The author defines the purpose of establishing the colony as primarily religious or educational: "to introduce the non-Christian peoples of the Astrakhan guberniya to the Holy Scriptures" (Neidhardt, 1838). At the same time he indicates the interest of the government, who hoped to foster the growth of various crafts in the region with the colonists' help.

The author pauses relatively briefly on the colony's history, drawing the reader's attention to the difficulties that the settlers were forced to confront. Among those primarily noted were the incursions of nomadic tribes and the destruction of Pugachev's troops. However, this section of the work notes that the settlers adapted to these new conditions sufficiently quickly, which can be attributed to the care of the Astrakhan gubernial administration and the continuous efforts of members of the community (Neidhardt, 1838).

A considerable number of publications contain information about the economic status of the Sarepta colony. Adverse economic and climatic conditions, in the author's opinion, forced colonists to concentrate their efforts on developing an integrated economy which included various sectors of agriculture and industry. However, this data was provided retrospectively. The author's judgements, which were based on the statistics given, demonstrate Sarepta's positive influence on the economic development of the neighbouring population. The main focus in this instance is on the sharing of experience in the Saratov German colonies. The material presented clearly shows that, in economic terms, Sarepta always aspired to occupy a free "niche". However, when the "niche" was occupied by competitors, Sarepta colonists abandoned it, finding new fields of application for themselves. Initially, at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, these fields became Spanish sheep breeding and weaving factories. The food industry experienced a boom in the 1810s: textile manufacturing was replaced by mustard and peppermint cultivation, on the one hand, and the mustard and oilseed processing industry, on the other. From the 1830s the main emphasis was on the development of flour milling.

In his conclusion, the author mentions Sarepta's links to various evangelical communities and their help in the colony's recovery from the disaster of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Particular attention is given to the colony's financial status and Neidhardt leads the reader to the conclusion that foreign colonists had considerable inherent potential and were competent enough to make use of external factors. This is clearly demonstrated by their obtaining significant loans from the treasury and Evangelical Fellowship and the relatively swift repayment of these (Neidhardt, 1838).

In point of fact, the Sarepta colony acted as a "locomotive", bringing the establishment and development of the region's various agricultural and industrial sectors.

Information about the various groups of foreign settler colonies in Russia began to appear in the *Journal of the Ministry of State Property* from 1842 onwards.

The author of 'Accounts of Mennonite Colonies in Russia' chose to be limited to initials only: A.Z. This article contains information about various aspects of the Mennonites' history and lives - their origins, migration to Russia, development of various sectors of industry, etc.

Presenting a brief history of the origins of the Mennonite sect, the author addresses the migration of their disciples

to Russia in the second half of the eighteenth century. The beginning of this process also relates to Rumyantsev's activities. However, the author indicates that the Mennonites who settled in the latter's estate in 1772 had their origins in Tiraspol. In contrast to Skalkovsky, A.Z. recognises von Trappe's enrolment campaign, although then ignores Potemkin's role in preparing the conditions for Mennonite migration and location in the Novorossiysk territory, noting that "the Empress ... at the request of Field Marshal Count Rumyantsev granted the Mennonites the following rights ... " (A.Z., 1842). However, in all fairness, it must be noted that Potemkin is nevertheless mentioned in the context of the events enumerated; he indicates that the Mennonite community "occupied Khortytsia island in the Dnieper, which previously belonged to Potemkin" (A.Z., 1842).

In contrast to his predecessors, A. Z. does not go into a detailed retelling of legislation, but rather focuses on the pace of migration, the conditions of the Mennonites' settlement in the Khortytsia, Pavlograd and Novomoskovsk districts. He makes reference to Kontenius's inspection trip, which showed the migrants' "inadequate conditions". According to the author's opinion, this encouraged the acquisition of new lands for the settlers at public expense, the prolongation of subsidised years, and so on. Such "gracious attentions" lead to the Mennonites' increased interest in Russia as a migration location. In concluding this section, A.Z. compares the overall level of development in Mennonite economies in the Tauris, Yekaterinoslav and Chernigov guberniyas, noting a significant retardation in the latter. The objective reasons for this are seen as a lack of land and isolation from the colonial administration, but there were also the subjective factors of "customs and prejudices in the economy" (A.Z., 1842).

Addressing the Mennonite economy, A. Z. focuses the reader's attention on agriculture, animal husbandry, forestry and horticulture, and crafts.

In the part of the article dedicated to agriculture, the author presents a rather idealised picture. Having read it, one gets an impression of the exceptional cultural sensitivity of this sector in Mennonite settlements. In particular, considerable attention is given to the practices of improved agricultural equipment for tilling. There is also information on the uses of the threshing machine invented by the colonist Dick in 1827 (A.Z., 1842). However, A.Z. indicates here that in 1842, i.e. 15 years later, their number had grown to 80. On the one hand, given the high prices of equipment in this period, this is proof of the dissemination and application of complex agricultural equipment in the Mennonite colonies of South Russia, but, on the other hand, this development may rather be a unique event.

A.Z. distinguishes between Mennonites and "the Germans' neighbouring colonists" in his article. This concerns the part of the publication under consideration, in particular. Speaking about the structure of crop rotation, the author notes the existence of "classical four-field farms" among the former and a lack of such among the latter, thereby demonstrating some Mennonite underdevelopment.

When considering the seeding structure, he notes the dominance of certain varieties of spring wheat, which were better suited to local environmental and climatic conditions. This allowed the Mennonites to replenish the stock in their bakeries and to sell a portion of the grain collected (around 40% in 1838) during years of plenty (A.Z., 1842). However, A.Z. does give a general picture of the gross grain yield, consumption expenditure, sowing in the following years and participation in sales. This picture is of course evidence of the grain sector's high value in the Mennonite colonies' economies, although it is essential to bear in mind that the proportion of prosperous peasant economies participating in grain sales was negligible.

Cattle breeding is also identified as one of the most important sectors in the Mennonite economy. The author pays particular attention to the spread of sheep farming in the colonies at the beginning of the nineteenth century which, in his opinion, "was generally very lucrative in southern Russia" (A.Z., 1842). Sheep farming was divided into two types: communal and privately owned. In contrast to Russians and Ukrainians, the Mennonites were cultivating superior breeds, which were imported from other regions of Russia and from abroad.

There were a number of Mennonite farms focused exclusively on sheep breeding, among which the author considered it essential to name the farms of Wilhelm Martens and Johann Cornies.

The author also calls attention to the Mennonites' cultural impact and in particular to Cornies for introducing cultivated sheep breeding among the neighbouring Nogais. It is true, however, that this "domestication" was marked by a range of conditions: only well-established farms received the right to temporary inclusion of sheep, the females were returned to the lenders on the expiration of a six-year term, and the offspring born during this period were divided in half. The profit was therefore communal.

According to A.Z., the position of sheep breeding was strengthened by the creation of associations for its improvement on the initiative of the Yekaterinoslav Office for Foreign Settlers.

Sheep breeding thus took on a great value not only for colonists, but also their neighbours. Revenues from keeping communal sheep were used for paying the wages of local public officials, maintenance of public buildings (sheepcotes, schools, places of worship, shops for bread and other provisions, etc.) and other communal needs (A.Z., 1842). Sheep

breeding bought additional income to those farms involved with that sector. Recently settled nomadic tribes were also included in this higher system of agriculture.

On the spread of capitalist relations in Mennonite settlements, we can speak about the examples of trades and crafts. In particular, A. Z. refers to Klassen's cloth factory in Halbstadt which was equipped with 14 machines and in which 89 workers were employed. The food industry (distillation, vinegar, oil, and flour production) spread in the colonies throughout the 1830s (A.Z., 1842).

In several sections of his work, A. Z. raises the question of using hired labour in agriculture and industry. However, he indicates that in agriculture and sheep husbandry in particular the majority of labourers were Russian and Ukrainian peasants who lived in the vicinity (A.Z., 1842). "Landless colonists" played the main role in trade (Ibid. 25). However, the proportion of hired workers in industry exceeded the share of agricultural workers. The statistical data cited in the text allows us to conclude that workers earned higher wages in industrial enterprises and trade in comparison with in agricultural production.

Alongside this, articles began to appear in which the authors have presented the agricultural experience of German colonists from various parts of the country. Johann Cornies' article 'On Irrigating Grasslands in the Molochansk Colonies' is an example of such publications (Cornies, 1842). The author reports on the experience of artificial irrigation of fields in the Mennonite colonies of South Russia. This information, as noted by the compilers of the *Journal of the Ministry of State Property*, was quite important for the central and southern guberniyas of Russia where water shortages were experienced. There is also information about the construction of dams (artificial water collectors) (Cornies, 1842).

The history of German colonies in Russia came to be described by not only for the staff of institutional journals, but also for authors of studies of other regions. A. Leopoldov, for instance, published his *Historical Study of the Saratov Region (1848)*, in which the history of the Saratov region from antiquity to the end of the eighteenth century is presented. In his work the author depends primarily on legal documents and local sources. He devotes several pages to the history and contemporary position of the German Volga colonies. Leopoldov links the beginning of the region's active economic development precisely with foreign colonisation: "the most important flood of people to this region came from Germany: two manifestos ... invited foreigners to Russia, with the gift of various benefits, rights and advantages" (Leopoldov, 1848). The heterogeneity of the migrants who arrived in Russia in the 1760s is noted. The vast majority of poor migrants and "speculators", "who, due to their interpretation of the manifesto, wanted to receive significantly more than the amount promised and, considering migration as a merit on the part of the Russian government, sought special compensation" (Leopoldov, 1848), caused great difficulties in the settlement process and it is precisely this fact which, in the author's opinion, prompted the government to suspend the call for foreigners to come to Russia. Leopoldov thus places responsibility for the colonies' adversities in the first years of their existence with the colonists themselves. At the same time, he notes the authorities' attempts to give every assistance to the economic blossoming of the German colonies, indicating that "the Russian government cared about these settlers and led them to the prosperity desired" (Leopoldov, 1848). This manifested itself in an additional allowance of suitable land and the removal of some treasury debt in the reign of Catherine the Great; in the establishment of the Saratov Office for the Guardianship of Foreign Colonists under Paul I in order to improve management of the colonies; and in Alexander I who "made various relief efforts for debts enumerated and only equalised the level of tax paid with that of state peasants in 1816" (Leopoldov, 1848).

A series of articles dedicated to foreign colonists in Russia appeared in the *Journal of the Ministry of State Property* and the *Journal of the Ministry of Internal Affairs* in the first half of the 1850s. It is particularly vital to highlight V. Blagoveshchenskiy's 'Overview of Government Measures Relating to Foreign Colonies in Russia' (Blagoveshchenskiy, 1850). The peculiarity of this article is its use of not only legislation as a source, which was typically cited at the time, but also Russian and foreign publications. In particular, the author links to Skalkovsky's work, *A Chronological Review of the Novorossiysk Territory*. However the text merely provides a summary of an actual event, which is presented in greater detail in the work cited. The author references other works by his predecessors, such as Neidhardt. Information on Russia's demographic composition or its individual sections is borrowed by Blagoveshchenskiy from foreign works published in German, such as Reden's *Imperial Russia* and Haurovich's *Topographic and Medical Descriptions of the Southern Part of Saratov Guberniya*.

At the beginning of the article the author takes the reader on a brief historical journey through the invitation of foreigners to Russia. In particular, he notes that "it is impossible to say with certainty when foreigners began to settle in Russia" (Blagoveshchenskiy, 1850). However, he indicates that immigrants began to arrive in the Russian state in the reign of Ivan III, but "almost all sovereigns succeeding him called for foreign scholars, artists and so on, with the aim of introducing our forebears to European civilisation" (Blagoveshchenskiy, 1850). It was therefore a question of "Cultur-Colonien" for a long time.

In the author's opinion, one can speak of burgeoning foreign economic colonisation in Russia from the start of the

eighteenth century. However, foreigners in this period preferred to settle in towns because of their professions and therefore "for a long time there was not one example of a purely agricultural foreign population "of the colonies" in a proper sense".

Peter the Great's heirs devoted little attention to issues of colonisation, citing specific examples of building up the number of military and agricultural settlers on Russia's southern borders.

Only on ascending the throne did Catherine the Great begin to pursue a policy based on "systematic colonisation in Russia" (Blagoveshchenskiy, 1850). Cultural goals were also pursued alongside economic goals as it was expected "that they would bring us that perfection which distinguishes the economic life of Europeans" (Blagoveshchenskiy, 1850). However, following his predecessors, Blagoveshchenskiy declares that the first governmental measures to attract foreigners in the 1760s contradicted the aims of the colonisation policy; that is, the authorities invited foreign colonists indiscriminately. Nevertheless, the author finds justification for this position - "this indiscrimination may ... explain the difficulties which beset the efforts to attract Europe's best working population to Russia" (Blagoveshchenskiy, 1850).

Following on from his predecessors, Blagoveshchenskiy pauses to summarise the positions of government documents from the 1760s in some detail. In this case it is essential for the author to give credit for arousing interest to the activities of private professional enrollers. Although it is true that he does not go beyond analysis of the legal framework. This can even be said of the colonisation of individual regions by the authorities.

If in previous works Rummyantsev was given first place in inviting Mennonites, then Blagoveshchenskiy passes over even this individual, stating that "in 1787 Catherine, wishing to populate the vast Novorossiysk plains, improve cattle husbandry and thereby begin trading butter and cheese, called to the environs of Danzig ... the Mennonites" (Blagoveshchenskiy, 1850). He thereby tipped his hat to the then ruling Empress.

There is one further assertion made by the author in this article, according to which "there was a greater proportion of disasters among Novorossiysk colonists than the Saratov colonists were subjected to" (Blagoveshchenskiy, 1850). He presents various arguments in corroboration of this: congestion in the barren and unsuitable farming lands, ineffective issuance of money loaned, and so on. This somewhat contradicts the stereotypes which had been entrenched in the literature to this point. The author undertakes an attempt to dispel the myth of the Black Sea colonies' economic superiority. Many of the problems facing them were resolved by government policies - the Treasury's acquisition of new lands for colonists, the relocation to towns of settlers unable to farm, the establishment of new administrative bodies such as the Novorossiysk Offices for the Guardianship of Foreigners and so on.

As with his predecessors, Blagoveshchenskiy was unable to overlook the issue of the colonists' economic life. However, he declares that "the lack of statistical information deprives us of the opportunity to examine the colonists' everyday economic life in the latter half of the preceding century (the eighteenth - V. S.); we are even less able to say anything positive about the influence the colonists had on their neighbours' economy" (Blagoveshchenskiy, 1850).

Another article published at this time was D. N. Strukov's 'A Look at the Situation of Different Sectors of the Rural Economy in Southern Russia in the Last Five Years, 1849-1854' (Strukov, 1855). A feature of this article is its presentation of material in this area's dynamic development. This became possible as a result of Strukov's long employment as an agricultural inspector in the southern guberniyas.

The first part of his work was dedicated to the resettlement of Germans in Russia's southern guberniyas, their interaction with the Russian and Nogai populations, land tenure and land use, and, in particular, agriculture. One of the features of the German colonists' position in Novorossiia was their isolation from the neighbouring populations. Contact was limited to "the recruitment of workers and occasional trade" (Strukov, 1855). Knowing the national characteristics of Russian, Little Russian and German agriculture relatively well, the inspector preferred the latter; in this instance, he indicates the existence of correct crop rotation and the use of improved agricultural equipment (ploughs, etc). Strukov thought that one of the reasons for the advantageous agricultural development of the colonists of South Russia was their lack of a steelmaking community and its substitution with the household allotment of plots of land. This allowed the community to avoid the fragmentation of land among heirs while maintaining under the ultimogeniture system of inheritance. The existence of this land ownership system demonstrated its fruits in time; primarily, high yields and, as a consequence, the prosperity of the colony.

The second part of Strukov's article is dedicated to the development of sericulture in German colonies. This sector was relatively new to South Russia at this time. It required significant expenditure, but, under a fortunate set of circumstances, promised a high level of profitability. Examining the conditions under which sericulture developed in the colonies, the author indicates "on the one hand, the peasants' higher level of education, their habit of neatness and order, and the convenience of facilities; and, on the other hand, communities, and their friendly agreement on local administration and on developing mechanical silk reeling. No sooner had the first cocoons begun to appear in the colonies than the colonists began to invent means of reeling and initially acquired Italian machinery..., but then their own



which were better and more convenient than foreign tools" (Strukov, 1855). The lack of tools of this quality among other inhabitants of Tauris and Yekaterinoslav guberniyas prohibited them from participating in this profitable trade.

In its own way, P. I. Keppen's *A Chronological Index of Materials for the History of Minorities in European Russia* also bears the hallmarks of this period in the study of the history of German colonies in Russia (Keppen, 1861). He conducted an enormous amount of research on the systematisation of the Russian Empire's legislation relating to various national groups. One of these sections is dedicated to Germans and contains all documents which reveal the legal position of this Diaspora from the eighteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth century (giving the date, name and source of the document).

#### 4. Conclusion

Hence, already in the late 18th century, individual monographs and journal articles raised the issue of how the German colonies were created and developed in the Russian Empire. Eventually, the nature of the information given in the works underwent changes. While in the second half of the 18th century, the travelers provided only superficial descriptions of the colonies and life of colonists in their notes, since the 1830s, the authors discussed more specific questions in their publications. This was primarily due to the fact that the authors of the 1830s and 1840s were government officials. They made inspection visits to the German colonies in the Volga region and Southern Russia. The material they collected in such journeys became the basis for ministerial reports and publications in departmental journals. This shaped the specific features of the articles as they put main emphasis on economic aspects. At the same time, they laid the foundation for scientific study into the foreign colonization in Russia. It was A. Skalkovsky who was the first to use archival sources in his works. On this basis, he reconstructed the process of German resettlement in Russia in the second half of the 18th century.

These two particular lines (the history of resettlement and economic development of the colonies) will further be elaborated on in historiography and history and remain relevant until today.

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