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Coverage of the history and culture of life support of the German settlers of Bessarabia and the Left Bank of the Dniester in the late twentieth - first decades of the XXI centuries in the printed scientific literature of Germany

The author studies the modern period in the history of studying the historical fate and cultural heritage of German settlers of Russia (1814-1940) in the works of researchers from Germany. The chronological framework of the study covers the end of the XX – beginning of the XXI centuries. The author notes an increase in interest in the historical fate of the Bessarabian Germans and Germans living on the left bank of the Dniester, in scientific communities and in public circles of Germany. This is explained by the collapse of the Soviet system and the socialist camp, the processes of ethnic revitalization in the states of Western and Eastern Europe, which, in turn, receive additional support in connection with the activation of migration processes.

Keywords: *historiography, foreign colonists, Germans, Germans of Russia, Germans of Bessarabia, history of Bessarabian Germans.*

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Освещение истории и культуры жизнеобеспечения немецких поселенцев Бессарабии и Левобережья Днестра в конце XX – первых десятилетиях XXI веков в печатной научной литературе Германии

Исследуется современный период в истории изучения исторической судьбы и культурного наследия немецких поселенцев России (1814 – 1940 гг.) в трудах исследователей Германии. Хронологические рамки исследования охватывают конец XX – начало XXI вв. Автор отмечает повышение интереса к исторической судьбе бессарабских немцев и их соотечественников, проживавших на левобережье Днестра, в научных сообществах и в общественных кругах Германии. Это объясняется распадом советской системы и социалистического лагеря, процессами этнической ревитализации в государствах Западной и Восточной Европы, что, в свою очередь, получает дополнительную подпитку в связи с активизацией миграционных процессов.

Ключевые слова: *историография, иностранные колонисты, немцы, немцы России, немцы Бессарабии, история бессарабских немцев.*

The end of the 20th century – first decades of the 21st century are characterized by global socio-political transformations resonating throughout the world, which in turn is characterized by a surge of national consciousness in the countries of the post-Soviet space, the socialist camp and Western Europe in particular.

In the Western European community, ethno-revitalization processes are supported by growing external migration testing the strength of cultural foundations and traditions. This often leads to internal confrontation of ethno-social communities and draws attention of both politicians and ordinary citizens. Germany, as a leading European power, also faces these processes [39]. Therefore, it is quite understandable that the German community is increasingly

interested in its historical heritage. One of the poorly studied pages of the past was the historical fate of the Russian Germans, which attracted the attention of German researchers at the turn of the 20th - early 21st centuries and continues to be of interest to scientific community up to the present time. Considering the limited number of publications, the author will focus his attention only on the main works directly or indirectly dealing with the least researched ethno-social community of Russian Germans of Bessarabia and the Left Bank of the Dniester (currently the Republic of Moldova).

Using the historical and chronological, historical and comparative and historical and typological methods, let's examine the historiography of Germany.

Germany. The turn of the twentieth – twenty first centuries in German historiography can be described as a time of rising interest in the history of German colonists [10; 5]. This is explained by quite obvious processes.

The collapse of the Soviet system gave rise to the new states on the territory of former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. That was happening amid intense criticism of communist regimes and a rethinking of their legacy. The issue of the history of ethnic identity and the fate of individual ethnosocial communities, especially those affected by the communist legacy, has become one of the key ones in a large list of claims to the communist past, both in the countries of emerging democracies and in European countries, which after the collapse of the Soviet Union, together with the USA, played an active role in shaping a new picture of values in Eastern Europe [7].

German colonists naturally came to the attention of German researchers, they actually have never fallen out of it. But there are "trendy topics" in history. For example, in Russia, the issue of Varangian participation in the formation of statehood has been raised since the discussion between M. F. Miller and M. V. Lomonosov in the 18th century. It is usually examined by a limited number of historians. But during periods of social transformations, this issue suddenly begins to excite the minds and hearts of a huge number of people, as well as the question of autochthony of individual peoples. Among so-called painfully acute topics is the global problem of identity identification, through the prism of which the problem of German colonists in Russia and their historical fate passed.

The Institute for German and East European Studies of the Göttingen Research Center has taken on a large research mission to study the Germans of Russia and the post-Soviet space. Since 2002, the Institute has been a part of the North-Eastern Institute at Hamburg University. Another German research centre is the German Association for East European Studies, one of the largest German research associations working in this field.

Among the most notable works dealing with the historical fate of Bessarabian Germans produced by contemporary German authors is an illustrated edition titled "The Valley of Peace in Bessarabia: A Look into the Past", with a foreword by Gotthilf Entzinger [6]. The publication contains photographs introducing the reader to the geography of Bessarabia, its nature and various aspects of German settlers' lives. This edition can be described as popular, aimed primarily at recovering the memory of German colonists' descendants of their roots.

In 1993, D. Brandes published a study devoted to the history of settlement of Odessa and Bessarabia by German settlers, but also, importantly, attempted a comprehensive study of settlement of the region by Danubian settlers [2] who included Bulgarians, Gagauz and even about five percent of Moldovans.

This study was positively taken by Russian colleagues [25]. Special attention should be paid to the book by E. Völkl, which analyzes the situation of the German population in Left Bank of the Dniester region during the Romanian rule in 1941-1944 [11].

It is necessary to point out some works co-authored by G. Gyotte and G. Molotkov, which are devoted to the poorly studied topic of the Swiss colonization of the south of Russia (now Ukraine) [14]. Their generalized monograph in Russian, which was published in Germany in 2014, is devoted to colonization of the south of the empire [14].

The thick book is also of interest within the context of the issue under study because Bessarabian colonists are not left without attention in it. One of the paragraphs of the first chapter is devoted to the colonization of Bessarabia [14, p. 35–38]. The authors introduced the reader to the polyethnic Bessarabian land where German colonists settled, having different control centers, first present in one of the largest settlements of the Germans - in Tarutino, in Chisinau, and then transferred to Odessa. The authors rightfully stressed that at first German settlers were quite active in vineyard cultivation, but this activity turned out to be hard because of the epidemic of phylloxera and only remained as the main activity in Shabo mainly inhabited by the Swiss. They give a special attention to this settlement.

The second chapter of the book is entirely devoted to the individual aspects of lives of German settlers. It examines contribution of the Germans to the development of social, scientific, technical and cultural life, and highlights basic occupations, religion and education of the Germans, and contains a paragraph, which covers the everyday life of this ethnosocial group.

The theme of the Swiss colonization of southern Russia, which was started by the authors in their articles, was continued in the third chapter of the book under consideration. This material also remains interesting in the context of studying our issue, as Germans often settled along with Swiss settlers. This, in particular, is discussed in the paragraph devoted to the description of the Swiss colony of Shabo.

The authors should be credited not only with covering the economic activities of Shabo residents, but also the colonists' affiliated colony of Foundations. The book also compares the formation of ethno-social values by Swiss people from different cantons of Switzerland. Thus, colonists from German Switzerland of the Canton of Zurich, who lived in the colonies around Zurich, after some time could distinguish the Swiss origin only by surnames. The German language prevailed. It was only in Shabo that the French-speaking language environment was preserved. The authors explain the lower predisposition to assimilative processes among the Shabo colonists by their pronounced self-consciousness. At the same time, when the inflow of Swiss colonists stopped, the colony began to accept Germans for settlement. The authors drew attention to the emergence of inter-ethnic marriages. This led to the spread of French-German bilingualism in the settlement [14, p. 143]. Given that most of the school subjects in the colony were taught in Russian.

The religious component played an important role in the life of the colony. In 1847, the colonists started building a church. And here, as the researchers noted, disciples of different confessions, Swiss French Calvinists and German Lutherans, argued what should be used to crown the church, a cross or a rooster. They agreed on a cross crowned with a rooster. And the prayers were read in two languages, in French and German [14, p. 144].

However, such concessions and mutual understanding were frequent in the history of the settlement. Especially during the first decades of its existence, when local population provoked conflicts by grazing their cattle in the gardens and orchards of the colonists. Conflicts reached such an extent that the authorities of the region had to intervene. It is important to stress that it took some time for peace and understanding among the colonists themselves to reign. These aspects of the lives of foreign settlers are also covered by the authors [14, p. 125–127].

The last part of the book deals with the problem of eviction of Bessarabian Germans and the difficulties encountered by German peasants during the new round of hardships.

Among the modern authors writing about the Germans of Russia worth mentioning is V. F. Dizendorf, originating from the Germans of the Volga region, an active participant in the social movement of the Germans of Russia in the 90s of the last century, the author of numerous books and articles on the history, demography and legal status of German settlers. Since 2007, Mr. Dizendorf has lived in Germany, so in our brief historiographical essay we consider him as a German researcher.

The researcher has written [15; 16; 17; 18; 19; 20; 21] and compiled [23; 24; 26 and others] numerous books about the Germans of Russia. Book compiler: Another work demonstrates the dynamics of Russia's ethnic policy towards German settlers. In 2006, V. F.

Dizendorf published a collection of documents "The Germans in the History of Russia", covering the period from 1652 to 1917. The book contains two hundred documents, some of which demonstrate the attitude of the Russian authorities towards the Germans of Bessarabia and the Left Bank of the Dniester. These are "Decree of Alexander I on relocation of German colonists from Poland to Bessarabia" (1814), "Resolution of the Committee of Ministers on relocation of colonists in Bessarabia (1817)", "Regulation on the management of the colonies of southern Russia approved by Alexander I (1818)", etc. [23, p. 172, 178, 190, etc.].

Among the works of V.F. Dizendorf one should also mention the study "Historical Demography of the German Population of Russia and the USSR (18th - beginning of the 21st centuries)", which analyzes in detail the demographic indicators of the German population to include those relating to the regions of Bessarabia and the Left Bank of the Dniester being studied by us. In the preface, the author himself stated that "he is far from overestimating his publications," emphasizing that there is still a lot of archives, including numerous revision tales, etc., which he would like to take on in a separate study [19].

We should also mention another work by the author in which he discusses the problem of the language barrier between the colonists and their neighbors. Knowing this aspect of the problem greatly contributes to a better understanding of the retardation and, in some cases, the lack of integration of the German population into the Russian cultural space. The author points out that, unlike other regions, the Germans of Bessarabia spoke Russian and used it much more widely than, for example, in Volyn, Saratov and Samara provinces [20]. This work contributes to a better understanding of the transformation of linguistic identity of German settlers in a multi-ethnic environment. It should be supposed that in the context of the development of sparsely populated Bessarabia, the Russian language could be used by migrants, foreign colonists, not only as a language of communication with the authorities, but with each other as well, unlike, for example, the Volga Germans, who had to isolate themselves in a more homogenous Russian environment.

Extra food for thought is the work of Victor Dizendorf "Clash of Civilizations and Russian Germans" [21]. The book introduces the reader to researcher's vision of the process of mutual influence of cultures and civilizations, using the conceptual approaches of S. Huntington, A. Toinby, F. Fukuyama, etc. The author's reflections on the relationship between civilizations, on the mission of German settlers in the Russian cultural space, on the hard fate of German colonists are quite interesting. The book attempts to compare the foreign development of modern Europe and German colonization of Russia.

Without directly touching the Germans on the two banks of the Dniester River, the book nevertheless provides a large number of generalizations and introduces a conceptual view of the problem of German presence in Russia, with the author's understanding of intercultural interaction.

Numerous works of V. F. Dizendorf represent a multifaceted layer of the material reviewed by the author and actualized in the conditions of ethno-social transformations of the 90s –two thousand years. It is also necessary to note the considerable educational significance of Mr. Dizendorf's works.

A special attention should be given to the work of the German researcher Ute Schmidt. She is an author of several serious works that deal with the historical fate of Bessarabian German colonists.

The first elaborate work on the contribution of German peasants to the development of Bessarabia and the historical memory of descendants of Bessarabian Germans of their ancestors was published in 2004 [9].

The reviewer of the book Kristan Sandler emphasized the professionalism of Ute Schmidt in studying the tragic one hundred twenty-six year long history of German colonists of Bessarabia [12]. The author's ability to use the methods of related scientific disciplines without "getting into the sociological genre" was pointed out as the strength of her approach. Schmidt provided interviews that included representations of three generations of colonists in the

historical context: the generation of experience, the intermediate generation of war children or newborn children, and the generation of consumer children. A procedure that, according to Sandler, ensures "convincing integration". As the reviewer notes, Ute Schmidt's research is done on the basis of systematization of obtained interviews with the involvement of a great number of documentary sources [12].

It should be added that the resulting study demonstrated that the history of Bessarabian Germans has remained not only a page in public history, but a legacy of their tragic fate in the memory of their descendants as well. The family pages of the past contain many recollections carefully collected by the author, who is a descendant of Bessarabian colonists too.

After a while, another work of the researcher "Bessarabia. German colonists of the Black Sea region" was published. The book was originally published in German in 2012 [1] and a few years later, in 2015, in Russian [28], which greatly expanded its readership. In her work, Ute Schmidt made a successful attempt to present a wide range of information, from the history of settlement to the mass relocation of Germans in 1940. The author is distinguished by her weighted judgment and deep knowledge of the problem. Keenly appreciating the material under study, Dr. Schmidt emphasized the specific feature of the Bessarabian Germans, who until 1940 considered themselves to be colonists, and who lived in isolation and, unlike the Germans of Transylvania, failed to form a burger urban culture [28, p. 11], even though a small German diaspora lived in Chisinau, which, in fact, in the 19th – early 20th centuries, with the exception of a few central streets, was more like a village. The author's words about the special experimental-privileged position of the Bessarabian Germans, in comparison with the German settlers of other territories of the empire, sound just. It should be noted that history does not tolerate the subjunctive mood and when discussing the historical fate of this ethnosocial group of Germans it should be taken into account that due to geopolitical circumstances they followed their own historical path. The revolution and the peripheral position of Bessarabia, then being a part of Romania, after the deportation and a difficult search for a new homeland. Unlike their coethnics in Ukraine, the Germans of Bessarabia, including the Moldova's autonomous territorial unit (Transnistria), did not have enough time to experience the Soviet system in full. All this makes us approach the study of their 126-year history with these and other peculiarities being taken into account. The book by U. Schmidt was welcomed by the readership with interest, as evidenced by the reviews of the monograph made by experts from different countries.

The author of one of them I. Nastasă-Matei (Romania) was right to emphasize the comprehensive approach presented in the Ute Schmidt's study, including the involvement of anthropological data related to settlement, occupation, and living in rural areas. The reviewer drew the reader's attention to the author's attention to the role of the church in the preservation of the language and identity of German colonists in a foreign ethnic environment [13]. However, the Romanian researcher's review shows some signs of tension, which is probably related to the fact that the Romanian period in the fate of the Germans is presented by Ute Schmidt in an unbiased manner, with the emphasis on pan-Romanian sentiment in the internal policy of the Romanian state to extend to German settlers as well.

The Russian researcher S.V. Kretinin, while talking about the book of his German colleague, underlined the serious source base of the study, which naturally testifies to the weight of the work done by the author. The reviewer was right to note that German historiography paid its attention to the East, in connection with geopolitical transformations experienced by the post-Soviet space [22, p. 102].

The German settlers were kind of hostages to history. In some ways they can be compared with the subethnic group of Russian Cossacks, which in some periods acted as a pillar of tsarism, and in certain periods turned into a persecuted community. Bessarabian Germans, as most distant from monarch St. Petersburg, nevertheless had time to enjoy the benefits granted to foreign immigrants, which was followed by harsh times after 1871. It resulted from the replacement of German local self-government by volost one, the wave of intolerance towards the foreign ethnic environment at the beginning of the 20th century, which was encouraged by the

authorities and resulted in Jewish pogroms, and resonated with the German colonists being presented as an enemy.

Ute Schultz managed to feel the uneven rhythm of life of Bessarabian Germans, who waited for three generations for grain (prosperity), and once they had gained it, the oppression and persecution began.

It should be added that the book is written in a rich language (for the Russian version, the translator should also be praised), this important detail makes the perception of the material a pleasure.

The great demand for this monograph is evidenced by it having been translated into English, Romanian and Russian.

A considerable number of publications issued in post-socialist Germany is devoted to repressions and deportations of Germans in the USSR and is indirectly related to the problem under study. Since the Bessarabian Germans experienced a slightly different historical fate, such works should be regarded as a general background characterizing the attitude towards the German population on the part of the Soviet system as a whole [4; 8].

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