Preservation of historical and cultural traditions of the Polish population in the Arctic of the second half of the XIX century: illustrated with the example of Arkhangelsk province

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Abstract. The paper is devoted to the problem of preserving the national identity of Poles in exile in the Russian Arctic (Arkhangelsk province) during the second half of the XIX century. The research is based on modern Russian and Polish historiography, as well as on published memoirs of Poles in exile. Analysis of sources has shown that the basis for preserving the national identity of Poles in exile was their Catholic faith and national traditions.

1. Introduction
Since the first quarter of the 19th century, the national liberation movement has been growing in the former territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, resulting in a series of uprisings for the rights and freedoms of the Polish people, their Catholic faith and national identity. The identity of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth inhabitants was based on a historically formed awareness of political and civil rights and freedoms, deep religiosity and commitment to the Catholic faith, the preservation of historical memory and the desire to restore the Polish-Lithuanian state [1]. At the same time, the Polish issue was one of the most acute in the internal politics of the Russian Empire, in fact, from the destruction of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the collapse of the Russian Empire [2]. The problem of regulating relations with the Polish population of the Russian Empire has been hotly debated since the second half of the 19th century in the circles of the Russian intelligentsia [3]. Representatives of Polish public thought took an active part in the struggle for freedom in the early 19th century on the territory of the Russian Empire in support of the Decembrist uprising [4]. Later, the desire for freedom developed into the national liberation movement for the freedom of Poland in 1830-1831, as well as in 1863.

Uprisings suppressed by the Russian Empire are still the most important memorable events for Poles and Lithuanians, and the heroes of the uprising, both leaders and ordinary participants, were and are the heroes of modern residents. The study of the uprising of 1863, as well as the life of Poles sent into exile in the North of the Russian Empire, is an urgent problem in historical, cultural and sociological research.

2. The Poles in the North of Russia

2.1. Periodization of migration "waves" of the Polish population to the North of Russia
Mass exile of Poles to the Northern territories of the Russian Empire is connected with the events of the first half of the 19th century, namely, with the Uprising of 1830-1831, when, after the suppression of the uprising, more than 600 Polish rebels were exiled to Arkhangelsk province. In particular, not only ordinary participants, but also the intellectual elite of the Polish nation (Jan Sobolewski, Romuald Podbereski, etc.) found themselves in the harsh conditions of the Far North.
Another wave of exiled Poles arrived in the North after the defeat of the January uprising of 1863. In the second half of the 19th century, in the European North of Russia, Poles accounted for up to 80% of all political criminals [5, p. 5]. In the following years, their number decreased, as Poles began to be sent to settlements in Siberia (by the beginning of the First World War, Poles made up from 8 to 7%).

The revolution of 1917 divided all Poles into "red" and "white" [6]. With the establishment of Soviet power, Polish exiles continued to dominate the repressed peoples who found themselves in the North of Russia. In 1928-1930, entire Polish villages were relocated from the South-West of the Soviet republics, in particular, from Ukraine. This was the first major wave of resettlement of Poles in the USSR, associated with the policy of collectivization. The second big wave occurred during the period of mass repression in the USSR (the period of the 1930s), and the third was the deportation of Poles, which began with the annexation of Poland in 1939, when 58,000 Poles were sent to Arkhangelsk region.

2.2. Exiled Poles-participants of the January uprising (1863)

After the suppression of the January uprising of 1863, there were two categories of exiled Poles in the territory of Arkhangelsk province. The first category included prisoners (Arkhangelsk prison regiment), mainly Polish peasants and burghers were kept in the prison company. In this first category, we can distinguish two subgroups: exiled to the company for a specific period and "perpetual to-regiments" [7, p. 138-141]. The prisoners lived in quite acceptable living conditions, they were engaged in socially useful activities: cleaning streets, repairing roads, deepening the bypass canal and ditches, as well as various jobs, such as locksmithing, blacksmithing, carpentry, and so on [7, p. 119]. A significant part of their work was devoted to the maintenance of the company itself. The company was stationed in the area of Solombal.

The second category was "supervised", that is, direct participants in the uprising, who were sent to Arkhangelsk province for residence under the police supervision, with the deprivation of all personal and appropriated rights and advantages. Mostly, they were placed in the cities of Arkhangelsk province: Mezen, Piniga, Kholmogory, Shenkursk, Onega and Kem'. At the same time, Arkhangelsk itself was extremely rarely used as a place of exile under the police supervision. Most of the "supervised" in Arkhangelsk province belonged to the privileged classes (56% of them were nobles who participated in the uprising and 22% of the Catholic clergy who inspired the uprising), which determined their type of activity. Highly educated "supervised" people were often recruited by local authorities to work as officials, doctors, and thus had an impact on local life [7, p. 183-184].

3. Preservation of historical and cultural traditions of the Polish population

Being in exile, separated from their home, motherland and roots, the Poles were able to maintain their national identity. Living in a hostile cultural environment, exiled Poles preserved the historical and cultural traditions of the Polish people through the music-singing culture. Konstantin Borovsky (1844-1915) wrote in his memoirs about Arkhangelsk exile: "in the casemates, day and night, especially in summer, when the windows were open, our music, different mazurkas, krakowiaks sounded from everywhere...we arranged various amusements among ourselves. Choirs sang wonderful folk songs with ringing voices." The presence and active ascetic activity of the Catholic clergy became a factor of moral, cultural and historical core for the exiles.

The most important function of the company authorities was to meet the spiritual needs of the exiles. For this purpose, a Catholic priest, Titus Krasovsky, who was respected by the prisoners, was assigned to Arkhangelsk prison company [8, p. 24]. Konstantin Borovsky described him as follows: "a real Pole, a great patriot, our true friend" [8, p. 25]. The priest received payment for his work, gave lessons at the gymnasium, but lived in poverty and modesty, which could not fail to arouse the prisoners’ respect. For worship, a small chapel was built in the casemate itself, where the Ostrobram icon of the God Mother, a symbol of the memory of the Motherland, the main Shrine of the Polish-Lithuanian nation, was placed. Probably, the prevalence and veneration in Arkhangelsk of Ostrobram God mother’s image, the main Shrine of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, was due to the fact that a large number of Lithuanians and Latvians lived in the city [8, p. 30].

In connection with the mass migration of exiled Poles to Arkhangelsk, the need to build a Catholic church became obvious [9, p. 63]. This was headed by priest Kovalevsky. The local authorities did not obstruct the religious worship, in particular the execution of spiritual duties by prisoners. The Catholic
diocese was very extensive; it included Arkhangelsk and Vologda provinces, which were regularly visited by the priest [8, p. 25]. During the absence of priest Kovalevsky, his duties were performed by priest Krasovsky. The services were held at a time, on Sundays, in the company church or chapel. According to Borovsky, the church was small with two altars, but there were small organs for three voices. On the main altar, the place of honor was occupied by the Ostrobram icon of the God mother. The Church’s servants were Catholic Poles, and even a Polish soldier of the city garrison served as a watchman [8, p. 26]. Despite the presence of organs, there was no permanent organist at the church, and this role was often performed by musicians from their prison company. On holidays, when representatives of "supervised" Poles gathered in the church, a choir of 40 prisoners-singers was organized, which was led by Konstantin Borovsky.

Despite the difficult living conditions of Catholic priests, their pastoral activities were not limited only to the care of Catholic Poles, but carried the character of missionary activity. For example, priest Krasovsky converted a Bulgarian, Gard Gingrich, who used to profess Islam, to the Catholic faith [8, p. 27]. That was actually the breach of the Russian Empire laws, forbidding any proselytizing activities of the Catholic priests in the country [10]. The Catholic faith, the church and the priests became a spiritual and moral anchor for exiled Poles, helping them to preserve their identity and the memory of their Homeland. This explains the zeal with which the prisoners carried out worship, which caused respect among the Orthodox population of the city. As an example, we can cite an episode from the funeral of a Latvian by the surname of Svistun’ from Kovno province. As Konstantin Borovsky recalls, the prisoner was recorded on the papers as an Orthodox, although he was a Uniate, so an Orthodox priest came to bury him. Seeing the deep grief of the Poles for their "Catholic brother", as well as the fact that the funeral was organized entirely by the prisoners themselves, the priest interrupted the Orthodox chants and invited the Poles to perform "Miserere Mei Deus" [8, p. 28-29].

The exiled Poles maintained a respectful attitude towards Catholic priests even after the Revolution of 1917. It was especially evident in the harsh conditions of the Solovetsky special purpose camp (SSPC). The Polish prisoners enthusiastically welcomed the arrival of the sixty-year-old priest Baranovsky in the camp as a prisoner in the second half of the 1920s. Each of them was eager to see him, talk to him, or at least briefly greet him, "Every Catholic expected comfort from him and everyone wanted to help him... everyone shared what they could: pieces of bread, sugar" [11, p. 76].

4. Conclusion
For the Poles exiled to the North of Russia, the Catholic faith and national traditions were the cultural and historical anchor to preserve their identity. The national tradition of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was expressed in the veneration of the main Shrine of the capital of Lithuania, the zealous worship of the Virgin Mary and the preservation of elements of folk culture, contributed to the formation and preservation of their identity. The deep love of the Polish nation for the Motherland became the core that did not allow the Polish identity to dissolve in the hostile environment.

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