

**After the Zaporizhia.  
Dissolution, reorganization, and transformation  
of borderland military in 1775-1835**

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## **Abstract**

The study focuses on the Russian imperial policies towards the Cossack communities in the New Russia region at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The reorganisation of the Frontier communities is analysed not just as integrationist project, but as interplay between the Frontier tradition and state need for resources extraction. The emphasis is on the difficulties of state policies in the borderland region and flexibility of the imperial rule.

Traditionally, the history of the Cossackdom in the region is ended in the 1775 and the whole process of the borderland integration is portrayed as a resistance of the Cossacks to the more and more centralising state. The author reassess this experience and argues that many state policies, traditionally portrayed as concessionary, in fact could have intentional character as well as the Frontier was not always only an obstacle in state-building process but also a rather valuable asset.

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## Introduction

Every Ukrainian schoolboy knows the harrowing story about the “brutal destruction” of the cradle of Ukrainian democracy, Zaporozhian Sich, by the Russian army in 1775.<sup>1</sup> Few, however, wonder whether the word “suppression” or “abolition” would be more correct. Few wonder if there was any other possible course of actions for the empire. This is how identity shaping works. National narratives, when incapable of creating heroes, create martyrs. Nevertheless, the regional life did not end despite the dissolution of the Cossack military units and the administrative reorganization of the province.

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> – early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the situation in the Pontic area was quite unique. First, a single power – the Russian Empire – for a time managed to make a contested Frontier into an internal province by weakening or even eliminating other major players. In 1686 Poland formally recognized the Left-Bank of the Dnieper as Russian territory in the Eternal Peace Treaty. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century there was no Poland. In 1774 the treaty of Kuchuk-Kainardzhi forced the Crimean Khanate to give up Ottoman protection. By 1783 Russia annexed the Khanate itself. Second, new pretenders – Ukrainian nationalism or German imperialist claims – had yet to emerge. Third, after the era of constant palace coups, the empire eventually had enough internal stability to pursue reforms and successfully implement them.

My study of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Cossacks does not depend on newly uncovered evidence. It takes, instead, a new approach. The purpose of this work is to apply two theoretical frameworks, one of the Frontier and the other of the state building, to the

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<sup>1</sup> The story is usually the same from textbook to textbook and almost any “Recommended by the Ministry of Education” reader has it. For the brightest examples, see Iurii Mytsyk and Oleh Bazhan, *Istoriia Ukrainy* [the history of Ukraine] (Kyiv: Kyievo-Mohylians'ka Akademiia, 2008), 200-208.

Bohdan Lanovyk and Mykola Lazarovych, *Istoriia Ukrainy* [the history of Ukraine] (Kyiv: Znannia-Press, 2006), 195.

Oleksandr Boiko, *Istoriia Ukrainy* [the history of Ukraine] (Kyiv: Akademiia, 1999), 164.

particular case of imperial policies towards the former Zaporozhian Cossacks in the late 18<sup>th</sup> – early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Such use of theoretical works with a specific case study may serve both to explore the utility and limitations of general theoretical schemes and to generate new questions with regard to the history of the cossackdom. Therefore, the object of this research is to analyze the imperial policies towards the post-Zaporozhian Cossacks in the Pontic region not as an isolated process with its own means and objectives, but to contextualize and conceptualize it.

The need for this contextualization is threefold. First, the late Cossack hosts, after the dissolution of Zaporizhia and incorporation into the monarchy, lose their importance in the grand Ukrainian narrative and, consequently, are primarily studied in regional centers. While regionalistic approaches allow deep, focused case studies, they artificially breakdown one problem into many smaller sub-problems. Second, the same fragmentation can be traced even on the higher, national level. For example, the existence of the Black Sea Cossack host on the territories of contemporary Ukrainian state is studied primarily by Ukrainian historians.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, Ukrainian historiography quickly abandons its interest in the same Cossacks when the host is resettled in the Kuban'. And today, due to the boundaries of contemporary states, the main studies of the Kuban' Host are done by Russian scholars.<sup>3</sup> Third, when a problem of the late cossackdom becomes separated into the histories of individual hosts, different scholars study each host separately. These different scholars use different, sometimes incompatible, methodology and theoretical approaches, making the analysis of the Cossacks in the wider perspective much more difficult. I seek to fill this gap, bringing together several case studies, reinterpreting them with respect to the recent

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<sup>2</sup> To name just a few Ukrainian scholars, who dealt with the mentioned problem: Liudmyla Malenko, Roman Shyian, Ihor Sapozhnykov. From the Russian side it is Boris Frolov, who, nevertheless, deals primarily with the Cossack melee weapons and material culture – the aspect, which could not radically change due to the resettlement of the host.

<sup>3</sup> Some examples of Russian (mainly from Rostov and Krasnodar) historians, working on this topic: Nikolai Ternavskii, Dmitrii Sen', Alexei Volvenko, Nataliia Korsakova, Viktor Chumachenko.

methodological frameworks, and creating a new generalized picture.

In the first chapter of this research I will outline the historical background of the Dnieper Cossacks and will provide a brief review of the theoretical literature. As I already mentioned, my main approaches will be state building theories, which stress the role of warfare and external factors in the development of states, and the Frontier thesis. Charles Tilly's concept of capital and coercion acknowledges both geopolitical and economic factors, so, his materialistic, even if somewhere simplified, argument is hard to ignore.<sup>4</sup> Thus, it will form one theoretical basis for my study. On the other hand, more and more scholars accept the Frontier not only as a military boundary or settlement borderland, but also as a symbol and a myth.<sup>5</sup> The latest interpretations of the Frontier concept will help to deal with the cultural dimension ignored by Tilly, yet hard to ignore today.

State building of the Russian Empire presents us with a case, when centralization was achieved through powerful coercion and control. Naturally, traditional Cossack communities resented and opposed growing state interference into their affairs. Still, while in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Cossacks had many opportunities to maneuver thanks to interstate struggle and the contested nature of the region, by the end of the 18th century Cossacks' only possibilities were adaptation to the new system, "everyday resistance" or emigration. In the following chapters I will concentrate exactly on this conflict between the Cossacks, wishing to preserve their traditional lifestyle, and the state, either repressing borderland warriors or negotiating with them.

The second chapter deals with the historical background of Cossack integration, pre-1775 attempts of the government to accommodate Cossacks into the imperial society, the dissolution of the Sich itself, and the early attempts to reorganize Cossack forces. On the

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<sup>4</sup> Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> For the evolution of the Frontier concept, see subchapter 1.2 *The Frontier*.

one hand, the state had already gained experience having successfully integrated the *Hetmanate* and *Slobodian* regiments. Since the early 1730s there was a gradual and careful spread of the imperial bureaucracy in the Southern region as well. While traditional Cossacks' "rights and freedoms" were generally respected, the empire exploited existing conflicts between the officers (*starshyna*) and rank-and-file Cossacks. In the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century there was a plan to purchase the loyalty of the Zaporozhian elite, thus peacefully limiting autonomy and reorganizing the host. However, in 1775 empire's course became much more decisive and instead of the gradual incorporation the host was dissolved completely. The Sich was suppressed, yet, the government rather quickly created new Cossack units. What was the reason? The dire military need? Lack of manpower for supporting roles, like customs and quarantines? Ambitions of the local governor, wishing to add "Hetman" to his titles? In order to answer these questions, the focus of this chapter will be on the formation of the Black Sea, Ekaterinoslav, Greek-Albanian, Tatar, and Bug hosts.<sup>6</sup>

The next, third, chapter will start with the exodus of those Cossacks, who did not want to accept their new status and decided to resettle to the Habsburg and Ottoman empires, hoping to preserve their traditional lifestyle. After all, a change of the sovereign was a typical Frontier tradition. In the 1790s the introduction of serfdom and army recruitment to the Southern provinces caused a wave of emigration as well. The existence of the alternative Cossack communities outside the Russian Empire attracted growing attention both of migrants and imperial officials, eager to prevent the population from leaving. The empire was spending resources to bring the migrants back – again, why was this? General

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<sup>6</sup> I list the hosts, which are considered Cossack by contemporary Ukrainian historians Liudmyla Malenko, Olena Bachyns'ksa, and Roman Shyian.

Inclusion of Greek-Albanian and Tatar Hosts is justified both by very similar status of these irregulars to the actual Cossacks and by perception of these units as Cossack hosts already in the imperial times. For example, see Vladimir Shenk, ed., *Kazach'i voiska: khroniki gvardeiskikh kazach'ikh chastei* [the Cossack hosts: The chronicle of the guard Cossack units] (Saint Petersburg, 1912), 24-26.

On the other hand, there also existed numerous smaller, short-living Cossack units, recruited just for several missions and later either disbanded or added to the already established hosts.



prestige of the state, advertisement of the new region to colonize, borderland management policies – a subtle move, part of establishing new, loyal regional identity without resorting to repressive means – all seem to have played a role. The spatial frames of this chapter will move beyond the Russian Empire to the Transdanubian Sich until its members returned home to become the newly established Azov Cossack Host.

At the turn of the century regular Russian regiments were widely used in the Napoleonic wars, however the southern border had to be protected and region's internal stability had to be maintained. I will concentrate on this interaction between the need to continue incorporation of the province and the countervailing external pressure, which once more forced the government to postpone its ambitious projects of integration. Ultimately, thanks to the work of Russian emissaries, agents and propagandists, émigrés were brought back in the 1820s. There were no pressing military needs, the process of administrative and military reforms in the region could be completed, yet the state changed its course again.

In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century common Cossacks were transformed either into state peasants or into regular troops, while their officers were transferred into the imperial army and ennobled. In 1835 with the new Statute (*Polozhenie*) of service the Cossacks became a separate closed estate. This Statute will be the closing date of the third chapter and this research in general, because from 1835 a new era for the cossackdom began. Hosts preserved only formal and external attributes of their traditional organization. Having little or no connection with the previous tradition they were more similar to the regular regiments of the Russian army than to their predecessors. On the other hand, Hosts' rights and obligations were legally confirmed and Cossack special status was finally acknowledged by the empire.

In general, the topic of the imperial reforms in the Southern Ukraine is important not only in national historiographies, but also in studies of the general state building process in

Eastern Europe and a role of Frontiers in it. I hope, that this project will strengthen the understanding of these reforms and will be a helpful basis for further studies dealing with the problem of military borderland reorganization both as a historical phenomenon and a symbol, used in the commemoration, myth-making and attempts to shape both regional and national identities.

## Chapter 1: The Cossacks between the Frontier and the State.

### Theoretical Framework

Two-person plays are usually boring. Nevertheless, the traditional narrative tells the story about the Tsar and the Cossacks as a play only for two actors.<sup>7</sup> Either the Cossacks were the loyal servants of the dynasty, consequently becoming honorable border guards and pious defenders of the Orthodoxy, or they were rebels and mutineers, who created havoc. Yet, in simplicity lies the inner strength of such approaches – they are especially hard to challenge on their own grounds. After all, how many possible relations can there be between only two entities? Therefore, for now I will not challenge old narratives, like fighting windmills. I will still try to make the story more interesting, starting with two additional questions.

First, there is little argument against the fact, that during the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Russian Empire was changing its attitude towards the Cossack question. The traditional interpretation of this phenomenon is that transformation of the Cossacks was just a step in the general policy of centralization and imperial unification. What is usually disregarded, is the rationale for centralization. So, my question here will be the reasons for such policies, since it seems that centralization was just a mean and not an end in itself.

Second, I am dealing with the late 18<sup>th</sup> – early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries when Russia achieved almost uncontested dominance over the Pontic region. However, imperial policies were gradual and cautious. Despite the general plan of the further region integration into the empire and actual power to implement needed transformations decisively and quickly, there was also place for negotiations and compromises. Thus my second objective moves beyond

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<sup>7</sup> Thomas Barrett, *At The Edge Of Empire: The Terek Cossacks And The North Caucasus Frontier, 1700-1860* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1999), 5.

the basic empire-province dichotomy to look for the other factors, which influenced the pace of the autonomies' integration and agents behind these influences. Thus, the purpose of the present chapter is threefold:

- to provide general historical background on the region in focus;
- to circumscribe theoretical approaches with which this region and its inhabitants can be studied;
- to assess their particular utility for the present purposes.

### **1.1 The Cossacks**

Communities living on the periphery of empires rarely evolve the same way as the societies of the central regions. The remoteness of state control, the dangerous natural environment, the strong presence of the “other”, and general instability certainly influenced the lifestyle of the borderland population. As a consequence, frontier inhabitants evolved among social structures, worldviews and stereotypes that were atypical or even alien to the stable non-frontier areas.

Such borderland communities of the Eastern European steppes are known as Cossacks. The social origins of the cossackdom were extremely diverse – hunters and gatherers, peasants escaping from enslavement, nomads from the other side of the frontier, religious refugees, outlaws, landless gentry, higher nobility wishing to participate either in the glorious pillage of the Tatars or perceiving frontier warfare as an adventure and a source of tales to impress neighbors and ladies. The ethnic and religious sources of the Cossacks were no less diverse. Naturally, in the Black Sea region most of them were from either Slavic or Turkic peoples, but in the sources there are also traces of Jews, Caucasian mountaineers, Greeks, and Western Europeans. In individual cases it was possible to find

even Africans among the Cossacks.<sup>8</sup>

Various origins of the Cossacks and the dangerous environment around them brought egalitarian ideas to their organization. Cossack officers were elected and the sense of brotherhood was rather widespread, still we should not exaggerate this egalitarianism and should take into account, that runaway serfs could very rarely become, for instance, colonels. While social mobility was possible at the borderlands, in the majority of cases only nobles had the required education, training and ambitions to become the Cossack elite.

On the one hand, the cossackdom is only one example from many societies, having existed along the vast Eurasian frontiers. On the other, geographical and social factors shaped the Cossack community in unique ways. First, Cossacks were not just militarized, but a military community. Undoubtedly, on many frontiers existence would be impossible without arms. Even Western Europeans, resettling to the overseas colonies with families and children, had to bear weapons to survive. Still, the frontier between the Christians and the Muslims gave rise to specific military organizations (orders for some, bands for others), living primarily on raiding and pillage. In this sense Cossacks were close to the Adriatic Uskoks, the South-Slavic Hajduks, and the Early Ottoman Ghazis.

Second, the great open spaces of the Eurasian steppes allowed the Cossacks to achieve much greater numbers than military brotherhoods from the Balkan Peninsula. By the early 16<sup>th</sup> century<sup>9</sup> the first Cossack hosts had already existed on the Dnieper, Don, and Volga rivers as powerful organizational centers, while the presence of the nobility among

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<sup>8</sup> For the latest comprehensive study of the Cossack origins, see Viktor Brekhunenko, *Kozaky na stepovomu kordonu Ievropy* [the Cossacks in the Europe's steppe frontier] (Kyiv, 2011), 93-111, 147-165.

However, the classical works by the founding fathers of Cossack studies may also be interesting and useful: Dmytro Iavornyts'kyi, *Istoriia zaporozhskikh kazakov* [the history of the Zaporozhian Cossacks] (Saint Petersburg: Tipografiia I. N. Skorokhodova, 1892).

Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, "Kozats'ki chasy do roku 1625 [the Cossack times till the year 1625]", vol. 7 of *Istoriia Ukrainy-Rusy* [the history of Ukraine-Rus] (Kyiv-Lviv, 1909).

<sup>9</sup> The first reliable appearances of the Cossacks in chronicles are dated 1444, 1502, 1538. See Shenk, *Kazach'i voiska*, 5.

their ranks gave Cossacks the idea of estate rights and rhetoric like “brotherhood of knights” and “traditional freedoms and privileges”.<sup>10</sup> While the Hajduks organized in small units waged guerrilla warfare in the forests and mountains, the Dnieper Cossacks in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century could field 20.000 – 30.000 warriors and by the 1630s their numbers are estimated as 80.000.<sup>11</sup> Such numbers made existence of large formation rather than dispersed bands possible.

Third, the geographical factor played another role – the Cossacks, unlike Balkan warriors, lived far from centers of power and could maintain their more or less independent status, at the same time benefiting from the inter-imperial struggle. From one point of view, this situation could not last forever and the moment one power achieved dominance in the region, Cossacks' fate was decided. From another point, the long tradition of free life outside empires was romanticized in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Zaporozhian and Don hosts, as the most numerous and the most ancient, became powerful symbols in the shaping of regional or national identities.

The cossackdom, which later national historiography claimed to be Ukrainian, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century existed as three distinct sub-communities: the Zaporozhians, the Slobodians and the Cossacks of the Hetmanate.<sup>12</sup>

The Zaporozhian Host was a cradle of the cossackdom in the region. It bordered the Crimean Khanate to the South and it was the area that took the empire the longest to assimilate. Zaporizhia formed due to Polish defense policy in the 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> centuries – or,

<sup>10</sup> Serhii Lepyavko, *Kozats'ki viiny XVI st. v Ukraini* [the Cossack wars of the 16<sup>th</sup> century in Ukraine] (Chernihiv, 1996), 32-42.

<sup>11</sup> Brekhunenko, *Kozaky na stepovomu kordoni*, 159-163.

<sup>12</sup> Following the established tradition, I use “Zaporozhians” or “Zaporozhian Host” when speak about the regions of *Zaporiz'ka Sich* or *Vol'nosti Viiska Zaporiz'kogo*. Under the “Hetmanate” I mean the region of *Hetmanshchyna*. The Cossacks of the Sloboda region (*Slobozhanshchyna*) will be called “Slobodians”.

one can say, lack of such policies.<sup>13</sup> It was a typical borderland military community, which initially emerged due to the self-organization of the local population and attracted adventurers, warriors, and pillagers of all sorts. The link between any state and Zaporizhia was traditionally weak, although in the 16<sup>th</sup> – early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries Cossacks here were struggling with the Polish-Lithuanian Union for their recognition as a military estate and the right to serve as defenders of the Southern border from the Tatars. This struggle was a partial success for the Cossacks – a small number of them became “registered” mercenaries for the Crown. Naturally, those left out of the register and without pay, stayed at Zaporizhia and often revolted, wishing to renegotiate the possibility and terms of their service.<sup>14</sup> In 1654, during the civil war of 1648–1681, which started as a religious conflict, peasant revolt and struggle of the periphery for autonomy in Poland-Lithuania and later led to the intervention of Russia and Crimea, the Cossacks switched sides and became a protectorate of the Russian crown. In reality, being on the edge of the Frontier, Zaporozhians were adept in maneuvering between different states and continued negotiations with other powers to get better terms.

To the North-West was the Hetmanate or the Left-Bank Ukraine. It was the region where Cossack customs and traditions were not indigenous, but where they were exported to during the war of 1648-1681. Left-Bank Ukraine became a core for registered Cossacks, where their officers achieved actual power both in military and civil spheres. Due to the prolonged warfare of the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>15</sup> the Hetmanate was heavily depopulated and the

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<sup>13</sup> Serhii Lepyavko, *Velykyi Kordon Ievropy iak faktor stanovlennia ukrainskoho kozatstva* [the great Frontier of Europe as a factor of emergence of the Ukrainian cossackdom] (Zaporizhia:Tandem-U, 2001), accessed June 04 2012. <http://www.cossackdom.com/book/bookkordon.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Initial revolt in the Poland began in 1648. Almost immediately the Crimea intervened to support the rebels. In 1654 Russia started the war against Poland. In 1655 Sweden declared the war on Poland. In 1656 Poland and Russia signed truce and Russia joined the war against Sweden, yet this alliance did not last long. Different factions of the Hetmanate were supported by Poland, Russia, the Crimean Khanate, and the Ottoman Empire. Consequently, the civil war in the region continued till the late 1680s.

locals had to militarize in order to survive, consequently becoming Cossacks themselves. Old noble elites were also butchered, had to escape or managed to join the rebels.<sup>16</sup> Influx of refugees into the rank-and-file Cossack at the same time when Cossack officers filled the power-vacuum in the region polarized previously more or less egalitarian Cossack community and sharpened the social tensions within the Cossack estate. As for the region in general, the privileges of the Hetmanate were not granted, but contractual, a result of negotiations between the Tsar and the local Cossack leaders during the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, at a time when local elites were still in a position to negotiate.

*Slobozhanshchyna* (from the *slobody* – the local name for large settlements), the borderland between Russia and the Wild Field, was to the east of the Hetmanate. If in the Hetmanate region, the social structure drastically changed as a result of the 1648-1681 civil war, in this area such structure was created – the active colonization of *Slobozhanshchyna* began only in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, sped up by the atrocities of war and mass refugees from the neighboring regions. The important trait of this area was that autonomy and privileges for the colonists were initially granted by the sovereign. Hence, *Slobozhanshchyna* was a young region without lasting traditions to preserve and all its privileges were derived from the will of the monarch, who could revoke them any moment.

To summarize, the Cossacks were military communities with a long tradition of autonomy. The nature and the speed of their integration process by the state were different from region to region and were influenced both by the geographical position and social specifics of each area.

Since the incorporation of the Cossack units into the regular army and of the Cossack autonomies into the imperial administration was a process which involved *at least*

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<sup>16</sup> Nataliia Iakovenko, “Kozats’ka era [the Cossack Age],” in *Narys istorii Ukrainy z naidavnishykh chasiv do kintsia XVIII st.* [essay on the history of Ukraine since the ancient times till the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century] (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2006), accessed 04 June 2012. [http://history.franko.lviv.ua/yak\\_r5-1.htm](http://history.franko.lviv.ua/yak_r5-1.htm).



two sides – the empire and its borderlands – one needs at least two approaches to study this interplay. It seems natural to apply the Frontier thesis to the study of borderland warriors. However, while perfectly suitable for Early Modern times, it needs to be supplemented to deal with the 19<sup>th</sup> century circumstances, when the Frontier was closing, state control over the region increased by much and the Cossacks were ultimately disseminated and incorporated by the state. A possible solution to this problem may lie in the addition of the state-building theories to the Frontier thesis. After all, to study the reaction of the population to imperial policies, these policies themselves have to be studied. To do so, I will apply Charles Tilly's works on the European state-building process to my case research and see how my case study fits larger conceptual frameworks.

## 1.2 The Frontier

The idea of great open spaces and their colonization as an important factor in history is not new. In the early 1830s Alexis de Tocqueville described the already existing poetic image of the virgin Wild West and its appeal to the agrarian part of the American society.<sup>17</sup> In the mid 19th century Russian historian Sergei Solov'ev emphasized the role of colonization in his country's history, being less optimistic and stressing the cost which the state had to pay in order to defend its vast borders from the nomads, to supply the frontier population, and to create a viable infrastructure. His followers, Vasilii Kliuchevskii and Matvei Liubavskii, also held similar positions.<sup>18</sup> In 1885 the Italian scholar Achille Loria wrote:

A tyranny ... is ... automatically regulated by the existence of free land, which of itself renders the exercise of true despotic government impossible so long as slavery is unheard

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<sup>17</sup> Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land. The American West as Symbol and the Myth* (New York, 1950), 138.

<sup>18</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, "Changing Concepts and Constructions of Frontiers: A Comparative Approach," *Ab-Imperio. Studies of New Imperial History and Nationalism in the Post-Soviet Space* 1 (2003), 42.

of; for the subjects always have a way of avoiding oppression of the sovereign by abandoning him and setting up for themselves upon an unoccupied territory.<sup>19</sup>

Yet, the origin of the Frontier thesis is closely associated with the name of Frederick Jackson Turner (who, naturally, was aware of and influenced by the works of de Tocqueville and Loria) and his “The Significance of the Frontier in American History”, presented in 1893. For Turner, the Frontier was a moving border between wilderness and civilization, colonization of the empty space, where the greatest challenge is nature forces (thus, possibly, perceiving Indians as the element of the natural environment as well), and a safety-valve for the social struggle.<sup>20</sup> Even if all these pillars of Turner's Frontier have already been revised and either refined or discarded, the value of his work lies not only in the scholarly dimension. Turner created a myth, which became the basis for the American historical narrative and identity shaped by this narrative. Even more, this myth easily gets adapted to other narratives and nowadays the resemblance between the popular images of the cowboy and the Cossack are striking. Both are glorified during secondary education, both are popularized by mass culture, both are exploited in all possible ways – commercial and non-commercial.

The scholarly application of Turner's thesis to Eurasia began with works by Owen Lattimore. His contribution to the Frontier concept was threefold. First, he replaced Turner's “empty land” with other society, stressing the cultural influences between different cultures in the Frontier zones, constant movement of the population in and out, and the problem of incorporation of the one society into another. Second, he was the first to notice and outline the persistent habit of borderland inhabitants to shift their allegiances very easily and their dual (or even triple) loyalties. Third, he emphasized the bi-directional exchange between the

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted by Walter Prescott Webb, “History as High Adventure,” *The American Historical Review* 2 (1959):64, 279.

<sup>20</sup> Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921), accessed 04 June 2012. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/22994/22994-h/22994-h.htm>.

frontier and society, thus starting the tradition of studies and debate on the impact of the colonists on the natural environment.<sup>21</sup>

William McNeil in his “Europe's Steppe Frontier, 1500-1800” followed Turner's ideas, even if not quoting him. McNeil brought attention to the role of the frontier with nomads in the internal development of Eastern European states, also developing the idea of Frontier's closure, when by the start of 19<sup>th</sup> century bureaucratic empires were finally able to demarcate their borders and bring peace, order and progress to the borderlands. Naturally, even in 1800 “assimilation to the [new] political, social, economic, and psychological conditions ... was far from perfect”, still “open frontier upon the steppe ... ceased to exist anywhere west of the Don”.<sup>22</sup>

Western studies of Russian frontiers were developing into several directions. Scholars of geopolitics adopted notions of the core areas and its frontier. They, however, used frontiers only as the intermediate zones between struggling empires. Still, John LeDonne and Dominic Lieven at least acknowledged differences between the societies of core areas and frontiers, while writing state and political histories.<sup>23</sup> The use of their contribution in my research is twofold. First, the influence of persistent warfare on borderlands is undeniable and states beyond the Frontier, other empires should never be discarded. Second, LeDonne raised an important point – he asked whether it is possible for Frontier to cease to be one, to become a core itself or whether its destiny is to be forever

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<sup>21</sup> For the brief overview of Lattimore's legacy see:

Alfred J. Rieber, “Frontiers in History,” *International encyclopedia of the social and behavioral sciences*, edited by N. J. Smelser and P. B. Baltes (New York: Elsevier Science, 2001), 9:5812-5818.

Andreas Kappeler, “The Russian Southern and Eastern Frontiers from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries,” *Ab-Imperio* 1 (2003), 47-64.

Ihor Chornovol, “Teoriia komparatyvnyh frontyryv [the theory of comparative frontiers],” *Rehional'na istoriia Ukrainy* [Regional History of Ukraine] 3 (2009), 41-66.

<sup>22</sup> William H. McNeill, *Europe's Steppe Frontier* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), 221.

<sup>23</sup> John P. LeDonne, *The Russian Empire and the World 1700-1917. The Geopolitics of Expansion and Containment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001).

contested by already established powers.<sup>24</sup>

Another tradition focused more on Frontiers themselves. Michael Khodarkovsky in his works highlighted the economic and cultural transfers between colonists and indigenous peoples, the need of center to adopt its policies to unique frontier circumstances,<sup>25</sup> while Thomas Barrett wrote the everyday life history of the frontier population.<sup>26</sup>

The Frontier concept was not only applied to local cases, but also theoretically refined and expanded. Andreas Kappeler distinguished between four meanings of this term: geographical frontier between different climatic zones; social frontier between different lifestyles, for example, between nomads and sedentary peoples; militarized frontier between two military entities; cultural and religious frontier between different cultural traditions. The cultural frontier was further divided into the categories, developed by Jurgen Osterhammel: imperial-barbaric border; national state territorial border; inclusive Frontier border.<sup>27</sup> Still, Kappeler viewed Dnieper Cossacks as a part of Polish-Lithuanian, not Russian history.

The main points from traditions introduced above were captured by Alfred Rieber and crafted into an elegant theory of complex frontiers. His key ideas are: there are three meanings of the Frontier – it can be a borderzone, contested by several imperial centers; a process of migration, colonization or deportation; a symbol, line between the civilization and savagery. The advance and defense of frontiers played crucial role in the creation, development and fall of the Eurasian empires. The interplay between the natural environment, persistent warfare and cultural changes could transform certain frontiers, contested by at least three powers, into complex ecological systems with long term effects on the demography and identities of the local population. As follows, the possibility of the

<sup>24</sup> John P. LeDonne, *Core Area and Frontier in Historical Perspective*, accessed 04 June 2012. [http://www.hist.ceu.hu/readers/miller\\_ma/ledonne.pdf](http://www.hist.ceu.hu/readers/miller_ma/ledonne.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> Michael Khodarkovsky, *Russia's steppe frontier. The making of a colonial empire, 1500-1800* (Bloomington–Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002).

<sup>26</sup> Barrett, *At The Edge Of Empire*.

<sup>27</sup> Kappeler, "The Russian Southern and Eastern Frontiers from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries," 48-49.

Frontier closure is challenged and even if one power achieves military and political dominance in a region, the Frontier persists as a symbol and a myth.<sup>28</sup> This persistence requires additional resources from the empire not only to bring local administration in accordance with the imperial structure, but also to create new identity for the local population, new image of the acquired region for the general imperial society, and, in a way, additionally legitimize new borders.

Post-Soviet historians, dealing with their home regions, readily adopted the concept of complex frontier regions. Moldavian scholars Andrey Kusko and Viktor Taki appealed to it in their recent “Bessarabia in the Russian Empire.”<sup>29</sup> Ukrainian researcher Viktor Brekhunenko used complex frontiers in his “The Cossacks in the Europe’s Steppe Frontier”. In Russia whole centers in Siberia and Caucasus are dedicated to the rewriting history of their regions through the Frontier thesis.<sup>30</sup>

As for Ukraine, contemporary Ukrainian historians almost unanimously use the concept of Frontier.<sup>31</sup> Ironically even recent works on Cossack studies point out the similarities between the Ukrainian Cossacks and western borderland military communities like Uskoks or Hajduks,<sup>32</sup> while indicating the differences between the Dniepr Cossacks and their eastern counterparts of Don, Volga and Terek.<sup>33</sup> On the one hand, this shift in historiography may be probably justified by external factors like the accessibility of

<sup>28</sup> Alfred J. Rieber, “The Comparative Ecology of Complex Frontiers,” in *Imperial rule*, edited by Alexei Miller and Alfred J. Rieber (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), 177-208.

<sup>29</sup> Andrey Kusko and Viktor Taki, *Bessarabiia v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii* [Bessarabia in the Russian Empire] (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2012).

<sup>30</sup> For the overview of recent trends in Russian regional historiographies, see Ihor Chornovol, “Frontyry Rosii [the Frontiers of Russia],” *Krytyka* 6 (2007), 17-21.

<sup>31</sup> Almost all contemporary Ukrainian scholars, dealing with the Cossacks and mentioned in this work at least acknowledge (while many actively use) the Frontier Thesis. For a brief overview of the Ukrainian historiography on this problem, see Brekhunenko, *Kozaky na stepovomu kordoni*, 19-24.

Ihor Chornovol, “Teoriia komparatyvnykh frontyryv [the theory of comparative frontiers],” 59.

<sup>32</sup> Lepyavko, *Velykyi Kordon Ievropy*.

<sup>33</sup> Brekhunenko, *Kozaky na stepovomu kordoni*, 445-455.

archives. On the other, the problem of Ukraine's place in the world, its history legitimization, and creation of new identity for the new state is still open.<sup>34</sup>

### 1.3 The State

The same way as the lineage of the borderland studies can be traced to at least the 19<sup>th</sup> century, generalizing theories of modern European state-building are far from recent. Traditionally, there are two main approaches to the problem. One looks for the main moving forces of state creation and development inside the state, focusing on the internal struggle (or cooperation) between social groups. The other accentuates the inter-state conflict and sees different paths of state building as a direct result of competition between states. Since this work focuses on a borderland region, where influences from the foreign state entities were always strong, the second approach seems a natural interpretative tool for my project, although I understand that roots of the modern state were complex and it is impossible to pinpoint one and only reason, discarding all others.

In 1906 German historian Otto Hintze argued that: “It is one-sided, exaggerated and therefore false to consider class conflict as the only driving force in history. Conflict between nations has been far more important; and throughout the ages pressure from without has been a determining influence on internal structure.”<sup>35</sup> Linking geographical position of the state to the exposure to warfare and exposure warfare to the emergence of absolutism, Hintze outlined two possible ways of development for European states – parliamentary British and absolutistic continental. Indeed, the perception of all European continental states as absolute monarchies was an oversimplification, however, in his main

<sup>34</sup> Mark von Hagen, “Does Ukraine Have a History?” *Slavic Review* 3(1995):54, 658-673.

Also see contributions by Alfred J. Rieber, Zenon E. Kohut, and Serhii M. Plochy to *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, edited by S. Frederick Starr (New York, 1994).

<sup>35</sup> Quoted by Thomas Ertman, *Birth of Leviathan. Building States and Regimes in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 11.

point, the effect of warfare on state building and internal policies, he was sound and this concept was later developed and refined.

Later works by Charles Tilly, Michael Mann, Brian Downing, and Thomas Ertman deepened the understanding of the role of warfare in state building. Tilly accepted the importance of war pressure, but also linked it to economic factors, creating a model of interplay between coercion and capital. Capital was primarily concentrated in cities, while rural lords possessed coercion – weapons and skilled men to use them. The concentration of coercive means for warfare led to state-creation, since these coercive means could also be used for tax extraction, policing, and attacking internal rivals. Yet, the paths of further state development, as many types of state from the European history show, were different. There were many possible combinations between concentrated capital, concentrated coercion, preparation for war, and position within the international system and the victory of the nation state was far from certain before the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>36</sup> Tilly suggests that states moved through four phases of organization: patrimonialism, brokerage (in which states contracted for mercenaries and arranged finances through independent capitalists), nationalization (in which states mobilized their national populations and their own fiscal apparatuses), and specialization (in which states expanded into new kinds of activities and bureaucratized their activities). As war became larger and more expensive, the state needed more resources. Consequently, the extraction apparatus had to grow and, what is especially important for my research, the traditional indirect rule was replaced by direct rule.<sup>37</sup> Russia in Tilly's model is an extreme case of coercion-intensive path, where the state clearly dominated and cities were rather weak.<sup>38</sup>

The same way as Tilly's model can be perceived as a refined version of Hintze's

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<sup>36</sup> Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States*, 14, 31-32.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, 53.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 60.

concept, the works of Mann and Downing can be assessed as an evolution of Tilly's argument. Mann also linked the extraction of resources to the state infrastructure and the state infrastructure to the political regime. Following Mann, taxation of cities was much easier for states than extraction of resources from the dispersed rural population. Thus, in case of primarily trade taxation, the state did not need excessive bureaucracy, but required it if major state revenues were coming from coercion.<sup>39</sup> Downing expanded this model adding into equation alternative sources of resources – income from the conquered lands and foreign subsidies, although staying faithful to Tilly's and Mann's premises.<sup>40</sup>

The scheme was made more complex by Thomas Ertman, who took the basic absolutism-constitutionalism scheme, added the factor of state infrastructure and got four combinations: patrimonial and bureaucratic absolutisms, patrimonial and bureaucratic constitutionalisms.<sup>41</sup> Still, even in his concept the main factor which influenced the development of the state into one or another direction was geopolitical competition and warfare.

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Can the above-mentioned theoretical approaches be brought together and applied to the New Russia region? The Pontic plain possessed the traits of all four Kapeller's types of the Frontier. It was a border between steppe and forest-steppe; between farming and nomads; between Catholics, Orthodox and Muslims. It was a typical military frontier between Poland, the Crimean Khanate, and later – Russia.

Who were the actors here? Naturally, the competing states themselves – the importance of external powers is acknowledged by the scholars coming from all three

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<sup>39</sup> Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power: A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1: 456-479.

<sup>40</sup> Brian Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change: Origins of Democracy and Autocracy in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 9.

<sup>41</sup> Thomas Ertman, *Birth of the Leviathan*, 10-35.



mentioned traditions – state-building studies, Frontier studies, and geopolitics. Indeed, Lattimor’s zone of contact and cultural exchange replaced Turner’s open space, and as a result in my study I will not be able to discard the Ottomans, Poland, western powers even in a period, when Russia was dominant over the Pontic region.

Were the Cossacks an actor as well, especially in the period of the Frontier’s closure and abolition of borderland communities? Yes, I tend to agree with McNeil and Khodarkovsky on the role, which local population played and that the state had to adapt its policies to better manage the borderland population. However, I wonder, was the Frontier really closed? Even with the further advance of borders and the development of modern linear boundaries, the recently conquered region had to be colonized, thus the Frontier as a process continued to exist, and the local Frontier tradition had to be integrated into the imperial history and imperial space, so the Frontier as mythology persisted as well. Here I fully accept Rieber’s notion of complex frontier regions, which existed as ecological system and, actually, did not close, but shifted. On the one hand, Cossack tradition forced the state to adopt its policies towards the borderland population, because the population still was able to migrate to other contested frontiers, on the other, the state was able to fully exploit the Frontier tradition both in maintaining internal stability and in justifying its further conquests.

As for state-building perspective, I agree with Tilly in general – the state needed to extract resources from its regions in order to survive. The more efficient mechanism of extraction was employed, the more chances the state had to survive interimperial competition. Yet, I would not accept coercion and capital as strict dichotomy, but will look on these categories as on continuum.

I accept Tilly’s notion, that in general Eastern Europe was a coercion-intensive

region, where cities were weak.<sup>42</sup> Yet, Tilly himself acknowledges, that the accumulation of capital could be possible not only through trade, but, for instance, also through piracy. So, cities were not the only capital-intensive powers. Maltese knights looting trade routes are shown by Tilly as a state following capital-intensive course.<sup>43</sup>

From this perspective, the Zaporozhian region provides rather atypical case as well. On the one hand, the Frontier warriors were even if dispersed, but coercion resource. With the stabilization of the borders in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and decrease in nomadic raids and counter-raids, the quality of this resource dropped. Cossacks were neither hardened in persistent Frontier warfare, nor trained as regular troops.

On the other hand, using the traditional rights and freedoms, Cossacks developed their own economy. By the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century Zaporizhia became grain-exporting region, Cossack officers steadily enriched themselves, Cossack society became tied with numerous loans and credits. It is viable to assume that the region could possibly transform into a capital-intensive one. Paradoxically, privileges granted initially to the warriors could allow middle- and high-ranking Cossacks to gradually transform into merchants. However, from the state perspective, the same privileges did not allow efficient resource extraction from the region. Consequently, Cossack status had to be revised.

Taking into account notions of infrastructure, which were present in the works of Solov'ev and Mann, by the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century advancement on both Western and Southern theatres of warfare transformed the former Frontiers into internal provinces. Still, the existence of large number of previous irregulars, armed people with questionable intentions, in internal provinces would not be an asset in the stabilization of the region and development of the trade. Thus, the Cossacks had to be either reorganized or resettled.

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<sup>42</sup> Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States*, 60.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

Actually, the Russian Empire undertook both these measures. First, in the 1770s-1780s the Cossacks underwent several reorganisations. Later, in 1790s-1820s, they were resettled to the Caucasus region, where they could still be useful.

The classical interpretation of the borderland military reorganization in the Ukrainian narrative is: the imperial general plan was to further centralize, to incorporate the region into the unified imperial structure, but fear of local revolts, lack of resources, continuous warfare distracted the state from this goal, forced the state to negotiate and make minor concessions to the provinces.<sup>44</sup> My working hypothesis is: imperial policies in the region were not purely concessionary, but intentional. The dissolution of the existing Cossack hosts was needed to forge new local identity; in military terms Cossacks were still needed as cheap irregulars, yet their reorganization had to weaken the link with previous treacherous tradition and to establish new, loyal one. Imperial claims had to be unified with the existing frontier mythology not only to pacify the local population, but also to legitimate recently conquered region as well as further conquests.

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<sup>44</sup> Liudmyla Malenko, *Pivdennoukrains'ke kozatstvo v politychnykh planakh Rosiis'koi Imperii v ostannii chverti XVIII-XIX stolit'* [The cossackdom of the southern Ukraine in the political plans of the Russian Empire in the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries], accessed June 04, 2012. [http://www.cossackdom.com/articles/m/malenko\\_pivdenkozak.htm](http://www.cossackdom.com/articles/m/malenko_pivdenkozak.htm).

## Chapter 2: Dissolution and Early Attempts of Integration

Collectors of folklore (as well as creators of the Ukrainian identity) Hrushevsky and Drahomanov noticed that there were lots of folk songs on the dissolution of the Sich, while almost none about the integration of the Hetmanate and Slobodian regiments into the imperial army.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, it is much easier to romanticize genuine frontier warriors than either “registered” servants of the crown (be this crown Polish or Russian) or militarized “*pokozachenni*” peasants. The myth of the Sich proved to be extremely resilient, while the cossackdom of the Hetmanate and Slobodian regions was quickly forgotten. Still it is rather difficult to isolate the 1775 events and study them without paying attention to the previous imperial policies towards both Zaporizhia and its neighboring regions. Therefore, in this chapter I will:

- briefly outline the trends in the Empire–Cossacks relations from the reign of Peter the Great, as wars of the 18<sup>th</sup> century greatly influenced Russian domestic policies in general and the treatment of the hosts in particular;
- point out what actually happened in summer 1775, considering that the image of the actual Zaporizhia dissolution was distorted and mythologized by the national narrative;
- move directly to the main part of my thesis – the reemergence of the Cossack hosts of the Pontic region in their reformed status.

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<sup>45</sup> Mykhailo Hrushevskyi, *Ilustrovana istoriia Ukrainy* [the illustrated history of Ukraine] (Kyiv: Naukova Dumka, 1992), 430.

Mykhailo Drahomanov, *Novi ukrains'ki pisni pro gromads'ki spravy* [new Ukrainian songs on civil affairs] (Geneva, 1881), 17-20.

## 2.1 The story so far (1700-1764)

Active policies of the Cossacks integration into the imperial army and administration started at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Why? Following the selected theoretical framework I will start looking for answers in the international situation. It was a time, when Russia was challenged both in the West and in the South. These two theatres were quite different but connected – in the West powers competed for hegemony (thus, this hegemony was possible to achieve), while the South had a centuries-old unsteady stalemate between the nomads and the settlers.

What could Russia achieve in the Pontic region? Demarcation of the open steppes was practically impossible and the only way to change the situation was to force Crimea out of the Ottoman influence – an act for which Russia was not ready.<sup>46</sup> The project of the European Anti-Ottoman coalition, inspired by Peter the Great (1682-1725) failed as well. Conversely, what could Russia lose? The first line of the Russian defense was client Cossack societies, which pledged allegiance to Russia half a century before. However, the loyalties of Frontier warlords were rather fluid, therefore the empire was extremely interested in the strengthening of the link between the dynasty and its clients.

What was the situation in the West? Russia faced not just an absolute, but a popular monarch Charles XII of Sweden (1682-1718).<sup>47</sup> Charles possessed a drilled regular army, which easily proved its superiority to the Russian forces at Narva in 1700, consequently forcing Peter to re-evaluate the role of semi-privileged “serving people”. It was a self-fulfilling prophecy, since the process was bi-directional. First, the supply of frontier irregulars depended on the Cossack “traditional rights and freedoms”. Second, the devaluation of the Cossack force led to a reconsideration of the imperial regional policy,

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<sup>46</sup> John P. LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy of the Russian Empire 1650-1831* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 28.

<sup>47</sup> Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change*, 11.

increase of subjects' obligations and revocation of their old rights. Third, increased obligations undermined both Cossack ability (irregulars had to sustain themselves) and willingness (the tyrant does not care for his subjects) to serve. Consequently, the waning of the Cossack military prowess led to new forms of military resource extraction from the region for all-imperial purposes. Once again, military demands shaped domestic policies, which in turn were shaping state capability for prolonged warfare.

I am uncertain that it was possible for Russia (already involved in the conflict) to resort to outdated means – indirect rule and traditional autonomies – and organize more effective extraction of the resources from the provinces. The centralization, as a form of the state monopolization of coercive means, had to be undertaken in order for the Russian State to survive inter-imperial competition.

In contrast, local notables still held some degree of power and did not wish to sacrifice it. As the defection of Hetman Mazepa and Ataman Hordienko to the Swedes demonstrated, centralization policies had to be undertaken subtly and gradually, in order not to alienate the elites of the whole regions, but to incorporate them into the imperial project, at the same time undermining their power. The general intention was clear, yet the pace of such policies varied from region to region.<sup>48</sup>

Integrational policy was the easiest for the center in the Slobodian regiments. As I mentioned earlier, they did not have collective autonomy and all their privileges were granted by the Tsar and were not the result of pacts, treaties or negotiations. Consequently, their transformations and reorganizations were the fastest here and *Slobozhanshchyna* became a testing ground for reforms in other Cossack units as well.

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<sup>48</sup> For the integration of the Hetmanate, see Zenon E. Kohut, *Russian Centralism and Ukrainian Autonomy: Imperial Absorption of the Hetmanate, 1760s-1830s* (Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, 1989). For specifics of the similar process in the Slobodian region, see Vladyslav Yatsenko, *Integratsiia ukrains'koho kozatstva do sotsial'noi struktury Rosiis'koi Imperii* [the integration of Ukrainian Cossacks into the social structure of the Russian Empire in the 18th century] (Kharkiv, 2007).

At the start of 18<sup>th</sup> century Cossacks had to adopt the Russian military organization. In 1700 the reelection of the Cossack colonels was forbidden and, once elected, a person could hold the rank till death. Officers were more and more frequently appointed by the Tsar rather than elected. In 1706 all regiments from the Slobozhanshchyna and Hetmanate regions were included into the Ukrainian division, which was subordinated directly to the Russian military command.<sup>49</sup> Since 1709 Cossacks were obliged to supply the Russian army units situated in Slobozhanshchyna, and the rights of the Cossack administration in the civilian sphere were limited with the introduction of the Russian courts in the region.<sup>50</sup> Next, the government strove to decrease the differences between the Cossacks and the peasants, forbidding the resettlement of Cossacks and their families and using them at different construction projects.

As for the imperial politics towards the integration of the Hetmanate, they were similar to the transformations in the Slobodian regiments. However, the autonomous status of the Left Bank Ukraine and the rights of the Cossacks here were codified in the treaties between the Hetmanate and Russia during the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> – early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. These rights and privileges had a contractual nature thus could not be revoked as easily as rights granted to the Slodobian Cossacks. Thus, the main difference here was the slower pace of the reforms. Yet, Left Bank elites opposed even such moderate measures and the conflict between the Tsar and the Cossacks culminated in 1708-1709, when Hetman Mazepa, supported by some officers, joined the Swedes in his rebellion against Peter's attempts to revise the rights of the Hetmanate. The Russian government managed to maintain control over the majority of Hetmanate's military, but decided not to antagonize still loyal units and continued further integrationist attempts more carefully. Nevertheless, in

<sup>49</sup> Olena Apanovych, *Zbroini syly Ukrainy pershoi polovyny XVIII st.* [Ukrainian armed forces of the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century] (Kyiv, 1969), 68.

<sup>50</sup> Yatsenko, *Integratsiia ukrains'koho kozatstva*, 18.

the long run, the hands of the center were free – the claim of betrayal could be used against any local opposition struggling against the Tsar. In perspective, Mazepa's gamble only accelerated the integration of the Hetmanate, whose loyalties were now questioned and additional control was justified. Later, in 1722-1725, the Hetmanate was gradually subordinated to the imperial officials in the administrative, judicial and fiscal spheres.

Even slower were the governmental reforms in the almost independent *Zaporizhia* region. By the end of 17<sup>th</sup> century the political ties between the Host and the dynasty were minimal. In order to expand its influence in the area, the Tsar's officials supported the construction of fortresses with Russian garrisons, tightening governmental control over the area. For example, from 1680 to the beginning of the 18th century, Russia constructed the *Novosergievskaiia*, *Novobogoroditskaia* and *Kamenezatonskaia* fortresses.<sup>51</sup> In the most distant region with the most questionable loyalties, active attempts to increase state control started earlier. Peter's policy of incorporating the autonomous borderlands, the attempts to limit the political activity of the region, further regulation of the Cossack military service, and the use of Cossacks as construction workforce – all combined to alienate the Zaporizhia. Therefore, Cossacks readily participated in Bulavin's revolt of 1707-1708 and in Mazepa's defection in 1708. Finally, in 1709 the empire resorted to the destruction of the Sich, the Host's center, and the expulsion of the Cossacks. The Zaporozhians, one more time showing the fluidity of their mentality, resettled and accepted a protectorate of Crimea, which they actually had until 1734.

Thus, the catalyst of the Cossack transformations was a war. As Tilly noted, “[c]oercion is always relative; anyone who controls concentrated means of coercion runs the risk of losing advantages when a neighbor builds up his means.”<sup>52</sup> In the 17<sup>th</sup> century Russia

<sup>51</sup> Yatsenko, *Integratsiia ukrains'koho kozatstva*, 20.

<sup>52</sup> Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States*, 71.



reached an understanding with the Cossack elites, since the price of their cooperation corresponded to the forces which they provided and these forces matched forces of the rivals of Russia. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the power of Russian rivals grew beyond the capabilities of the Cossack troops. Second, in the case of conflict, loyalties of Frontier rulers could easily change. Even more, the Pontic region was still contested and there was a real possibility to make this shift.

After Peter's death, Russia entered an era of constant palace coups – the resources of the country were completely exhausted in the wars, the internal and external strategic courses were uncertain, the highest nobility struggled for power with the absolute monarchy, while the order of succession was extremely uncertain. The situation in the capital was more crucial than the situation in the borderlands and for a time the court's attention was diverted. Weakened by power-struggle successors were not ready to complete the course, started by Peter I.

Still, during the reigns of Catherine I (1725-1727) and Peter II (1727-1730) Slobodian and Hetmanate regiments became subordinated to the War Collegium, imperial officials surveyed the social and economic situation in Slobozhanshchyna, regular summer field exercises as well as regular companies were introduced to the regiments. During the reign of Anna Ivanovna (1730-1740) the Slobodian regional administration became more closely controlled by imperial officials. The number of regular dragoon companies in Cossack regiments increased once more. Similar steps in the integration process were also undertaken in the Hetmanate region.<sup>53</sup>

The War of the Polish Succession 1733-1738 was less of a challenge for the Russian State than the Northern War, so there was no need for radical shifts in the domestic policies.

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<sup>53</sup> Yatsenko, *Integratsiia ukrains'koho kozatstva*, 18-21.  
Apanovych, *Zbroini syly Ukrainy*, 74.

Yet, the war with the Ottomans in 1735-1739 increased the impoverishment of the population in the Hetmanate<sup>54</sup> and the government of Elizabeth (1742-1762) required some concessions to the Cossack regions: regular companies were dissolved, taxes were decreased, still the role of imperial officials remained intact.<sup>55</sup>

In 1734 the Zaporozhians, expelled by Peter I in 1709 and serving the Crimean Khan to 1734, returned to the Russian protection.<sup>56</sup> For a time government made efforts to avoid offending the Cossacks and violating their “traditional rights and freedoms”. Still, St. Petersburg exploited the social conflicts between poor and rich Cossacks, sharpened them by purchasing the support of the Cossack officers with material advantages. The aim was to foster a peaceful reorganization of the Host.

From the 1750s the Russian government intensified its integrationist policy. The Empress began to colonize the Zaporizhia region and introduced restrictions on the Cossacks trade. Attempts of the Zaporozhians to defend their rights via official complains were not successful. The Land Commission of 1756-1760 ignored claims of the Host and supported state colonies. This caused the Cossacks’ resentment and made peaceful integration almost impossible. Cossack elites started their own colonization of New Russian lands and some were ready to protect their colonies with weapons.

Yet, this intensification was not just a step in a teleological trajectory to abstract centralization: it coincided with the Seven Years’ War of 1756-1763. Once again, the pace

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<sup>54</sup> Since this war took place in the Southern theatre, Cossacks had to supply fighting Russian army for five years. Naturally, this led to impoverishment of the Cossacks and their fighting capabilities suffered. More on this issue, see Oleh Repan, *Irzha na lezi: livoberezhne kozatstvo i Rosiis'ko-Turets'ka viina 1735-1739 rr.* [The rust on the blade: Left-Bank cossackdom and Russian-Turkish War 1735-1739] (Kyiv: Kyievo-Mohylians'ka Akademiia, 2009).

<sup>55</sup> Yatsenko, *Integratsiia ukrains'koho kozatstva*, 19.

<sup>56</sup> As shifting loyalties were a norm in the Frontier region, the moment Cossacks felt that their traditional rights were violated, they changed sides. Since it was a moment of growing tensions between Russia and Crimea, Russian side was interested in the weakening of the enemy before the war of 1735-1739. For more on this issue, see Volodymyr Mil'chev, “Viis'ko Zaporoz'ke Nyzove pid kryms'koiu protektsiieiu [the Zaporozhian Host under the Crimean protectorate],” in *Istoriia ukrains'koho kozatstva* [The history of the Ukrainian cossackdom] edited by Valerii Smolii (Kyiv, 2009), 1:587-604.

of regional integration in the Cossack lands, an intermediate region between Western and Southern theatres, increased during external challenges. The War of the Polish Succession and the short campaign against Sweden in 1741-1743 did not place great strain on Russian resources<sup>57</sup> thus did not require a readjustment of the domestic policies.

## 2.2 Abolished, Disbanded, and Destructed (1764-1775)

The situation changed during the reign of Catherine II (1762-1796). On the one hand, quite a lot had already been done to integrate the Cossack regions into the imperial military and administrative structure. On the other hand, the weakening of Poland and the Ottomans could certainly lead (and led) to wars, capable of reversing the century-old stalemate and moving the border further. The Left Bank and Slobodian areas could already be considered almost internal provinces rather than contested borderlands. In 1764 the Hetmanate was abolished and a year later a new Slobodsko-Ukrainian province was created. Common Cossacks were forced to become state peasants, while Cossack officers were transferred to the regular army.<sup>58</sup> In June 1775, after the first partition of Poland and forcing Crimea out of the Ottoman protection, the imperial government resorted to the dissolution of the Host and redistributed its lands between the New Russian and Azov provinces.

The tropes of the dissolution of the Zaporizhia varied greatly in different contexts. In the manifest of 3 August 1775, the Empress used the words “destructed” (*razrushena*) regarding Sich and “extermination” regarding the very name of the Zaporozhian Cossacks (*so istrebleniem ... i samego nazvaniia zaporozhskih kozakov*).<sup>59</sup> In the Ukrainian narrative

<sup>57</sup> LeDonne, *The Russian Empire*, 30-37.

<sup>58</sup> Yatsenko, *Integratsiia ukrains'koho kozatstva*, 22.

<sup>59</sup> “Manifest. Ob unichtozhenii Zaporozhskoi sechi i prichislenii onoi k Novorossiiskoi gubernii [Manifest. On the destruction of the Zaporozhian Sich and attaching it to the New Russian province],” in *Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii* [Complete Collected Laws of the Russian Empire], 1<sup>st</sup> series, 3 August 1775, no. 14353, 20:190-193.

the “destruction” (*znyshchennia* or *zruinuvannia*) persists<sup>60</sup>, while more nationally conscious authors also add epithets like “treacherous”.<sup>61</sup> Textbooks go further and talk about actual demolition – still few people know, what exactly was destroyed. Some authors<sup>62</sup> insist that the whole settlement, except the fortifications, was razed; others<sup>63</sup> limit the destruction only to fortress fortifications. Wordings like “razed to the ground” also appear, enforce the myth, even if their authorship is hard to trace.<sup>64</sup>

In the West “destroyed” is also used, for instance by Philip Longworth, presumably following the original source and implying symbolical destruction, destruction of organization, its dissolution.<sup>65</sup> Alternatively, Alfred Rieber used “abolition”<sup>66</sup> and John LeDonne – “Cossacks ... were disbanded”<sup>67</sup>, which both have fewer connotations with actual violence and devastation.

In general, there are few events, which had such strong impact on Ukrainian national historiography and produced such hot debates. Still, there are two possible extreme interpretations. Either it was the only natural, *predetermined* outcome for a more and more centralizing empire, which could not tolerate any autonomies and had to restrict them, or it

<sup>60</sup> It may be already found in the classical works of 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example, Dmytro Iavornyts'kyi, *Istoriia zaporozhskih kozakov* [the history of the Zaporozhian Cossacks] (Saint Petersburg, 1897) and persists in all contemporary Ukrainian works, mentioned in this chapter. In general, the myth of Sich destruction ascends to Apollon Skal'kovskii, *Istoriia Novoi Sichi abo ostann'oho Kosha Zaporoz'koho* [The History of the New Sich or the Last Zaporozhian Host] (Odessa: 1846), 3:205. The critical approach to this problem may be traced to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the sources publications of the state official documents by Vasili Bednov.

<sup>61</sup> Ihor Sapozhnykov, “Ivan Suhyna – nevidomyi koshovyi otaman chornomors'koho viis'ka [Ivan Suhyna – unknown Ataman of the Black Sea Host],” *Pivdenna Ukraina* [The Southern Ukraine] 5 (2000), 259.

<sup>62</sup> Nataliia Iakovenko, “Zgasannia kozats'kyh avtonomii u pidrossiis'kii Ukraini [the waning of the Cossack autonomy in the Ukraine and Russian rule],” in *Narys istorii Ukrainy z naidavnishykh chasiv do kintsia XVIII st.* [essay on the history of Ukraine since the ancient times till the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century] (Kyiv: Krytyka, 2006), accessed 04 June 2012. [http://history.franko.lviv.ua/yak\\_r6-1.htm](http://history.franko.lviv.ua/yak_r6-1.htm).

<sup>63</sup> Mytsyk and Bazhan, *Istoriia Ukrainy*. See chapter “Ukrains'ki Zemli pid vladoiu Rosiis'koi Imperii naprykintsi XVIII – u pershiy polovyni XIX st. [Ukrainian Lands under the rule of the Russian Empire in the end of 18<sup>th</sup> – first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century]” for perfect mix of romantic, Marxist, nationalist, and postcolonial discourses and picturesque description of Russia as empire of evil.

<sup>64</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaporizhian\\_Sich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaporizhian_Sich), accessed 04 June 2012 with, naturally, no further link to the literature. Even if scholars do not consider Wikipedia as a verified source, its role in retranslation of national myths and identity shaping of contemporary children is undeniable.

<sup>65</sup> Philip Longworth “Transformations in cossackdom 1650-1850,” in *War and Society*, edited by B. K. Kiraly and G. E. Rothenberg (New York: Colorado University Press, 1979), 1:395.

<sup>66</sup> Rieber, *Ecology of Complex Frontiers*, 187.

<sup>67</sup> LeDonne, *Grand Strategy*, 121.

was the *random* act of violence, while there were completely no reasons to suppress the Cossacks and deprive them of their traditional lifestyle. Below, I will provide main arguments for the problem why was the Sich dissolved, searching for the roots of both the decision to end the Zaporozhian Host in 1775 and to recreate Cossack units soon thereafter even if in a reformed status.

First, formerly frontier warriors were gradually transforming themselves from men of war into peasants (common Cossacks, who could not always afford weapon and a horse), farmers or merchants (middle-rank, who did not like the idea of leaving property for the time of long military expeditions), powerful landowners (higher command, who could simply hire mercenaries instead of serving themselves).<sup>68</sup> This was the result of many factors – stabilization of the southern borderland, governmental policies, aimed at social polarization of a previously egalitarian Cossack estate in order to easier absorb it into imperial estate structure, technological and organizational development of warfare, which became more complex and more expensive.<sup>69</sup> In the Cossacks' case problems were numerous. Irregular troops, being the vestige of the Frontier warfare, could not match large fielded armies of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century with their developed logistics systems. Consequently, irregulars either had to resort to traditional pillage, or be supplied by the state. In case of state supply, the problem of subordination sharpens and double hierarchy appears. Self-supply during long expeditions was also a problem in a situation when many Cossacks could not afford a required minimum of a blade, a gun, and two horses each. Next, the speed of the mobilization was completely uncompetitive since Cossacks had to work in the field, hunt and fish, produce some crafts in order to sustain themselves. Also, the military skill,

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<sup>68</sup> Apanovych, *Zbroini Syly*, 100.

On Zaporizhia transformation from grain-importing to grain-exporting region, see also Longworth, *Transformations in cossackdom*, 396-397.

<sup>69</sup> For the general impact of military development on both state and society see Downing, *The Military Revolution*.

traditionally acquired by Frontier raids was waning with the stabilization of Frontier, while Cossacks lacked the constant training and field exercises regular armies had.

Second, despite the fact, that many Cossacks were no longer fit or willing for borderland protection, they were very eager to preserve their rights (personal freedom, alcohol brewing, land owning, weapon bearing among them). They lacked the power to directly revolt against the empire, still there were many acts of “everyday resistance” in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. Petty robbery of the governmental colonists in the region was protection of the traditional freedoms for the Cossacks, while a move toward separatism for the imperial officials. The idea that Cossacks as frontier warriors in Ukraine were no longer necessary can be found already in the 1760s in the works of imperial ideologist Gerhard Müller. There was neither purpose, nor place for disobedient borderland military communities in the internal provinces of the empire.<sup>70</sup>

Third, speaking of everyday resistance, spread of rumors took specific turn in the Frontier region towards revolt and exodus. Already in the 1760s there were active rumors among the poorest Cossacks about the revolt against officers, forced election of new host leadership and flight to Crimea.<sup>71</sup> During the revolt of the common Cossacks against officers in 1768 a program to advance was electing new leadership, seizing horses, artillery, treasury, and fleeing to the Ottomans.<sup>72</sup> Were such plans real and an actual threat to the stability of the Russian State? Possibly, yes. During the Danubian expeditions of 1771-1774

<sup>70</sup> Gerhard Friedrich Müller, *Istoricheskie sochineniia o Malorossii i malorossiianakh* [the historical works about Little Russia and Little Russians], (Moscow, 1846), 1-36, 50-56.

<sup>71</sup> Apollon Skal'kovskii, *Istoriia Novoi Sichi abo ostann'oho Kosha Zaporoz'koho* [The History of the New Sich or the Last Zaporozhian Host] (Dniprotetrovsk, Sich: 1994), 571.

Nataliia Polons'ka-Vasylenko, “Zruinuvannia Zaporoz'koi Sichi [The destruction of the Zaporozhian Sich],” in *Zaporizhzhia XVIII stolittia ta ioho spadshchyna* [Zaporizhia of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and its legacy] (Munich, 1965), 1:136.

<sup>72</sup> Oleksandr Riabinin-Skliarevs'kyi, “Zaporiz'ki bunty 1771-1774 r. i pochatok Zadunais'koho Kosha [Zaporozhian revolts of 1771-1774 and the beginnings of the Transdanubian Host],” in *Naukovyi Zbirnyk ULN* [Proceedings of ULN] (Kyiv, 1927), 26:65.

Svitlana Kaiuk, *Znyshchennia Zaporiz'koi Sichi i dolia P. Kalnyshevs'koho* [The destruction of the Zaporozhian Sich and the destiny of P. Kalnyshevskii], accessed June 04, 2012. [http://www.ukrtterra.com.ua/developments/history/cossacks/kajuk\\_kalnysh.htm](http://www.ukrtterra.com.ua/developments/history/cossacks/kajuk_kalnysh.htm).

almost a quarter of participating Cossacks decided not to return to Sich and to stay in the Ottoman lands.<sup>73</sup> Frontier mindset and traditions were still alive among rank-and-file Cossacks and those who did not like expansion of Russian bureaucracy could easily resettle to places, beyond bureaucracy's grasp and preserve their traditional lifestyle.

Fourth, Zaporizhia continued to be volatile: some Cossacks participated in the revolt of *Koliyivshchyna* in Poland 1768-1769 and in Pugachev's revolt 1773-1775. Zaporozhians could easily become a catalyst for social discontent also in Hetmanate. Smaller revolts against Cossack officers or Russian officials during 1750s-1760s were numerous. On the one hand, it weakened the Cossacks themselves by giving the empire a reasonable claim to intervene and punish rebels. On the other hand, the treaty of Kuchuk Kainarji in 1774 between the Russians and the Ottomans turned Zaporizhia from a borderland, into an internal region. This led to further measures both to facilitate resource extraction and to forge a new loyal identity.

Fifth, while Cossack land had always been a beacon for runaway peasants, the protection of the land-owning nobility interests assumed greater importance for the state. Consequently, Cossacks had to be either resettled to new borderlands or enserfed. To summarize, a number of geopolitical, military, social, economic reasons coincided to force the reorganization of Zaporozhia.

On the other hand, were there reasons not to dissolve the Host? In the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia faced much trouble over borderlands. Uprisings of peasants in Hetmanate, insurrections of Iaik Cossacks, Bashkirs, Kalmyks, Pugachev's revolt – they all demanded quick and decisive actions and required imperial resources to pacify. Naturally, after the pacification of the rebellions, the state was interested in closer control over

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<sup>73</sup> Riabinin-Skliarevs'kyi provides figure of 227 who decided to stay out of total 1015 expedition participants. Riabinin-Skliarevs'kyi, *Zaporiz'ki Bunty*, 82.

borderlands in order to prevent future uprisings. Iaik Cossacks were suppressed, renamed as Ural Cossacks, revoked of their autonomies, still not completely disbanded even after their active participation in Pugachev's revolt. New civil authority was established also on the Don to bring its affairs closer to the all-imperial laws. Yet, only the Zaporozhian Host was liquidated.<sup>74</sup>

One possible interpretation is that the empire no longer needed the Cossacks of the Zaporizhia region and planned to transform them into peasants. Another interpretation is that the state perceived an opportunity to resettle the Cossacks to other frontiers on the empire's own terms, which meant granting lands and rights to the Cossacks by the Tsar in return for absolute loyalty to the dynasty.

Let us turn to the act of dissolution itself in search for other possible state motives. The initial rescript on the possible liquidation of the Host by Catherine II to Fieldmarshal Potemkin was issued 21 July 1774, so there is an assumption in historiography, that Potemkin postponed it till the suppression of Pugachev's revolt.<sup>75</sup> Next, in April 1775 Petr Rumiantsev, General-governor of Little Russia, sent a relation to Petersburg on Zaporozhian leaders' intentions to resettle the Host to the Ottoman lands. The court immediately summoned Ataman Kalnyshevskii to the capital, yet for unknown reasons he did not arrive. Consequently, Potemkin proposed a military operation to dissolve Zaporizhia and to arrest *starshyna*, preventing its escape.<sup>76</sup> So, the creators of the Host suppression plan were Rumiantsev and Potemkin.

However, the events of 1775–1776 were surprisingly peaceful. On the 4 June 1775, day of the Host dissolution, we have two main sources. One is a report from a participant,

<sup>74</sup> Longworth, *Transformations in cossackdom*, 394-396.

<sup>75</sup> Ol'ga Eliseeva, *Grigorii Potemkin* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiia, 2005), 165.

<sup>76</sup> Volodymyr Mil'chev, "Povernennia Viis'ka Zaporiz'koho pid Tsars'kyi Skipetr [The Return of the Zaporozhian Host under Tsar's scepter]," in *Istoriia Ukrain's'koho Kozatstva* [The history of the Ukrainian cossackdom] edited by Valerii Smolii (Kyiv, 2009), 1:615.



General Petr Tekelli, to the Empress dated 6 June 1775.<sup>77</sup> The second is an orally transmitted story, attributed to the former Cossack Nikita Korzh, collected in a romanticized form by local bishops in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>78</sup> Korzh's story acquired many additions. For example, in his version, after the ceremonial meeting, lunch and an excursion for imperial officials around the Sich, Tekelli read Catherine's decree to the Cossacks and ordered Ataman Kalnyshevskii, judge Holovaty, and chief scribe (*pysar*) Hloba to prepare to travel to Petersburg. The official document skips the introductory part, stating only that Cossack officers were arrested immediately, to prevent their possible escape. Military banners, archive and treasury were transported to Petersburg, church relics and icons were distributed between the closest eparchial centers.<sup>79</sup> The host itself reconfirmed its oath of loyalty to the empire. There was no bloodshed and only three persons were arrested. All three, Kalnyshevskii, Holovaty, and Hloba were exiled to monasteries. A year later Potemkin named Kalnyshevskii's crimes too horrific to offend the merciful heart of the Empress by recounting them, yet did not specify what kind of crimes the former Ataman had committed.<sup>80</sup>

Still, the reasons for this punishment are unknown. After all, both common Cossacks and officers yielded peacefully. On the one hand, decapitation of the local elites is a usual practice of borderland management for empires. On the other, could these three officers be a

<sup>77</sup> "Vsepoddaneishee donesenie imperatritse Ekaterine II general-poruchik Tekeliia, ob unichtozhenii Zaporozhskoi Sechi. Soobshchil Gavriil, arhiepiskop Tverskoi [General-poruchik Tekelli's most humble report to the Empress Catherine II. Reported by archbishop of Tver Gavriil]," in *Zapiski Odesskogo obshchestva istorii i drevnostei* [The notes of Odessa history and antiquities society] (Odessa, 1853), 3:587-588.

<sup>78</sup> Gavriil Rozanov, comp., *Ustnoe povestvovanie byvshego zaporozhtsa, zhytelia Ekaterinoslavskoi Gubernii i uezda, sela Mihailovskogo, Nikity Leont'evicha Korzha* [The Oral Story of the Former Zaporozhian, inhabitant of Ekaterinoslav Governorate and Uezd, Mihailovskoe village Nikity Leont'evicha Korzha] (Odessa, 1842), accessed June 04 2012. [http://gorod.dp.ua/history/doc/korzha\\_opovid.pdf](http://gorod.dp.ua/history/doc/korzha_opovid.pdf).

<sup>79</sup> Main source on the preservice of Sich buildings – memoirs by Vasilii Abaza, who visited the former Host capital several months after the "destruction" and described it. On the problem of church relics transfer from Host Church to other Churches, see also: Ioann Karelin, "Materialy dlia istorii Zaporozh'ia: Nikopol' [The materials on the Zaporizhia history: Nikopol]," In *ZOOID* (Odessa, 1867), 6:523-538.

<sup>80</sup> Viacheslav Lopatin, comp., *Ekaterina II i G. A. Potemkin. Lichnaya perepiska* [Catherine II and G. A. Potemkin. Personal Correspondence], (Moscow: Nauka, 1997), 99-100.

threat to the state, capable of organizing revolt or becoming symbols for opposition? Well, they certainly became martyrs but only after the imperial intervention. But was there an objective need to create these martyrs?

I will argue that the accusations of Kalnyshevskii were unreasonable. It could be false accusation by overzealous officials, power struggle between old regional and new imperial elites or just a mistake. Still, there are several reasons to say that the Ataman posed no threat to the empire.

Two days later after the dissolution of the host the imperial auditors arrived in order to create the inventory of *starshyna's* properties and estates. Thanks to this revision, we have a source on the economic situation in late Zaporozhia. As an authority figure, Kalnyshevskii was one of the richest and most influential people in the region.<sup>81</sup> His estates and villages were numerous and stretched as far as the northern part of the contemporary *Poltavs'ka oblast'*.<sup>82</sup> On a personal level he had very much to lose and the idea of him organizing the Cossack exodus to the Ottomans does not seem very convincing.

Second, when I spoke about the reasons to dissolve Zaporizhia and constant revolts of the poor Cossacks, I mentioned that the idea of exodus or change of the sovereign was the idea of the masses, not of the elites. By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century many Cossack officers were awarded and accepted Russian military ranks,<sup>83</sup> had nothing against enserfment of their poor

<sup>81</sup> Just for comparison: imperial revisors found more than 47000 roubles in cash only when arrested the Ataman. See Polons'ka-Vasylenko, *Zaporizhzhia XVIII stolittia ta ioho spadshchyna*, 1:291-317. The state financing of the building of strategically important Kerch fortress was 138362 roubles. See Vladyslav Hrybovs'kyi, "Istoriia Nikopolia na perekhresty istoriografichnykh tradytsii [The history of Nicopol' at the crossroads of historiographical traditions]," *Prydniprov'ia: Istoryko-kraieznavchi doslidzhennia* [Prydniprov'ia: historical-regional studies] (Dnipetrovsk, 2010), 8:90.

<sup>82</sup> The inventory of rather impressive *starshyna* properties is now stored in the Dnipetrovsk Historical Museum, Department of Manuscripts, Fund 3, AFD 169. Parts of it have already been published and introduced to scholars. For inventories of Cossack leaders, punished in 1775, see Nataliia Polons'ka-Vasylenko, "Maino Zaporiz'koi Starshyny iak Dzherelo dlia Sotsial'no-Ekonomichnogo Doslidzhennia Istorii Zaporizhzhia" in *Zaporizhzhia XVIII stolittia ta ioho spadshchyna* [Zaporizhia of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and its legacy] (Munich, 1965), 1:186-381. Svitlana Abrosimova and Svitlana Mohul'ova, "Zymivnyk Ostann'oho Viis'kovoho Pysaria Ivana Hloby [Winter Abode of the Last Host Scribe Ivan Hloba]," in *Istoriia ta Kultura Podniprov'ia* [History and Culture of the Dniپر Region] (Dnipetrovsk, 1998), 30-47.

<sup>83</sup> Mil'chev, "Povernennia Viis'ka Zaporiz'koho pid Tsars'kyi Skipetr," 616.

brothers-in-arms, and were almost incorporated into the imperial society. The rhetoric of “traditional rights and freedoms”, which a century before was the rhetoric of Cossack elites, became the rhetoric of commons, for whom it was a matter of survival or starvation. *Starshyna* in general had nothing against transformation into *dворянство*.

Third, the revolts of common Cossacks against officers, who became rich, were spoilt, and betrayed brotherhood and traditions were very common in the 1760s. Kalnyshevskii himself suppressed several peasant and Cossack revolts, thus his popular support was highly questionable. Once he even had to dress into a monk’s robes and flee the angered mob.<sup>84</sup> The empire masterfully antagonized (both by action and inaction) the lower and upper parts of the Cossack society, yet was unable to reap the fruits of this conflict.

Could Kalnyshevskii become a second Mazepa? No, Russia achieved dominance in the region and there was no power willing to accept a protectorate over Cossacks and fight with Russia. Could Kalnyshevskii become a second Pugachev and lead a peasant war? No, his power was derived from ranks and money, he lacked popular support and the Ataman himself was the enemy number one for rebellious commoners, not some distant Emperor or Empress. Could he lead emigration to the Ottomans or Habsburgs? No, it was against his own interests, which he certainly understood. Would other powers welcome organized exodus and risk Russia’s wrath? I doubt it.

Rumiantsev’s initial accusation of Kalnyshevskii in the plan to pledge allegiance to the Sultan can be compared with Rumiantsev’s letters a year after the dissolution of the Sich. “To my surprise, I read ... on former Zaporozhians ... appearing in large numbers near Ochakov ...”<sup>85</sup> It may mean either total confidence of the imperial officials in the threat

<sup>84</sup> Polons’ka-Vasilenko, *Zaporizhzhia XVIII stolittia ta ioho spadshchyna*, 107-126.

Lopatin, *Ekaterina II*, 661.

<sup>85</sup> “*K nedoumeniiu moemu mezhdru prochim prochital ya v raporte vashem o byvshikh zaporozhtsakh, chto oni v okolichnosti Ochakova i chislom velikim v vide promyshlennikov na rybach’ikh lodkakh okazyvaiutsia.*”

Quoted by P. A. Ivanov, “K istorii zapozozhskikh kazakov posle unichtozheniia Sechi” in *ZOOIID* (Odessa, 1904), 25:24.

of exodus coming only from the Ataman and his supporters and discarding the possibility of emigration, started from below, or it can mean that the initial accusation was a fake. I will not speculate on the problem of personal intrigues between Kalnyshevskii, Rumiantsev, and Potemkin, yet a similar idea is already present in the recent research. Svitlana Kaiuk supposed that the removal of Kalnyshevskii from the region was in the interest of and largely thanks to Potemkin,<sup>86</sup> while Andrey Zorin proved that Potemkin needed the Ataman title later for himself in order to inspire Orthodox insurrections in Eastern Poland and weaken the Polish state before the next partition.<sup>87</sup> Using this interpretation, we may see both interstate competition and exploitation of the Frontier myth even in this, presumably small, internal problem of the dissolution of the Sich.

### 2.3 Restoration of the Cossack hosts (1775-1791)

Documentary sources do not speak about any disorder or revolts during the months following dissolution. When appointing Colonel Petr Norov as a new commander (*komendant*) of the former host capital, General Matvei Muromtsov ordered him to be ready to repress any signs of disobedience and not to hesitate to use force. However, there was no need to apply it.<sup>88</sup> The former center of the Host after the requisition of the military symbols became an ordinary town – Pokrovsk (or Pokrovskoe). The Russian noble Vasilii Abaza, who travelled there in autumn 1775 left his memoirs and did not notice any signs of dissent.<sup>89</sup> However, with the application of imperial law and imperial bureaucracy many

<sup>86</sup> Kaiuk, *Znyshchennia Zaporiz'koi Sichi*.

<sup>87</sup> Andrey Zorin, *Kormia Dvuglavogo Orla... Russkaia Literatura i Gosudarstvennaia Ideologiia v Poslednei Treti XVIII – Pervoi Treti XIX veka* [Feeding the Two-Headed Eagle... The Russian Literature and State Ideology in the Last Third of the 18th – First Third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century] (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2004), 144-148.

<sup>88</sup> Potemkin's fund (Fund 52) in the Russian State Military Historical Archive (RGVIA) contains no documents on Cossacks' active resistance following the dissolution of the host. See Kaiuk, *Znyshchennia Zaporiz'koi Sichi*.

<sup>89</sup> Vasilii N. Abaza, *Otryvok iz memuarov V. N. Abazy s opisaniem Zaporozhskoi Sechi* [an excerpt from V. N. Abaza's memoirs with the description of the Zaporozhian Sich], accessed 04 June 2012. [http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/Dokumenty/Ukraine/XVIII/1760-1780/Abaza\\_V\\_N/text1.htm](http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/Dokumenty/Ukraine/XVIII/1760-1780/Abaza_V_N/text1.htm).

Cossacks decided to emigrate – their fate will be traced in the following chapter. Here I will concentrate on the Russian policies of borderland military transformation.

As LeDonne noted, the whole imperial border from the Caucasus to Poland was under a single military command.<sup>90</sup> Grigorii Potemkin, besides being prince, field marshal, lover of the Empress, and the second person in the empire, was the real ruler of the New Russia region. In 1776 he was the Vice-President (from 1783 - President) of the War Collegium, the Commander of the light cavalry and irregulars, the Viceroy of *Astrakhanskaia*, *Novorosiiskaia*, *Azovskaia* provinces (from 1783 – *Ekaterinoslavskaia* and *Tavrisheskaia*).

Judging from the military needs, the moment to disband Zaporozhians was ideal – just after the victorious war, when the risk of the new conflict was minimal – the Ottomans did not have resources and will to fight while the Habsburgs and Prussia would not allow Russia to expand further.<sup>91</sup> However, the Frontier was not closed (if it is ever possible) and the Ottomans could rise again. The borderline shifted, but the empire still needed irregulars to protect its vast frontiers. Despite the official rhetoric and accusations of the Cossacks in banditry,<sup>92</sup> Potemkin almost immediately started to establish new irregular units. The Greek-Albanian Host was created in 1775 (existed as irregular Cossack host till 1797, later reorganized into a regular unit)<sup>93</sup>. The Tatar Host formed in 1784, was continuously in

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Original is stored as No. 702, pp. 132-135, reverse side in Fund 12, Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine.

<sup>90</sup> LeDonne, *The Grand Strategy*, 121.

<sup>91</sup> On the containment of Russia by Western powers and the postponed annexation of Crimea, see McNeil, *Steppe Frontier*, 194-195.

<sup>92</sup> Müller, *Istoricheskie Sochineniia o Malorossii i Malorossiianakh*.

<sup>93</sup> “Imennyi. Danni Generalu Grafu Orlovu. O dozvoleni sluzhivshim vo flote pod predvoditel'stvom ego Grekam poselit'sia v gorodakh Kerchi i Enikolp s predostavleniem im osobykh vygod [Personal decree. Given to General Count Orlov. On permission for Greeks having served in the navy under his command to settle in cities Kerch and Enikop and granting them special privileges],” in *PSZRI*, 1st series, 28 March 1775, no. 14284, 20:101-104.

“O priniatii poselennogo v Tavrii Grecheskogo polka v vedomstvo Voennoi kollegii, i o imenovanii onogo Grechskim batalionom [On transfer of the Greek regiment settled in Tavriia to the War Collegium and naming it as a Greek battalion],” in *PSZRI*, 1st series, 30 January 1775, no. 17774, 24:312.

“Ob unichtozhenii Grecheskogo divisiona, iz Grekov i Albantsev sostavlennogo [On the dissolution of the Greek division, formed from the Greeks and Albanians],” in *PSZRI*, 1st series, 3 August 1775, no. 17972, 24:617-618.

existence till 1796 and was recreated several times – for instance during the Patriotic War of 1812, Russo-Turkish War of 1828-1829, Crimean War 1854-1855.<sup>94</sup> The Bug Host was created in 1785 (existed till 1817).<sup>95</sup> As a result of the growing military need in the Russian-Turkish War of 1787-1791, former Zaporozhians were also called to serve in the Ekaterinoslav<sup>96</sup> (1787-1796) and Black Sea Hosts (1788-1792, later resettled to Kuban').<sup>97</sup>

All the above-mentioned units participated in the war with the Ottomans 1787-1791.<sup>98</sup> The military value of these hosts may be judged from their numbers. Basing on the financial documentation, the Greek-Albanian Host in 1785 consisted of 567 soldiers and officers.<sup>99</sup> The Tatar Host was more numerous – it had 950 soldiers and 85 officers in 1784.<sup>100</sup> The Bug Host numbers became an entire regiment and in 1792 could field 1532 men.<sup>101</sup> The Black Sea Host in 1791 could field 7500 men at any one time, while having 12620 warriors in total.<sup>102</sup> The Ekaterinoslav Host was the largest and could field more than 10000 men – 10052 to be exact.<sup>103</sup> So, it seems that only the hosts that were formed from

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Roman Shyian, *Grets'ke (Albans'ke) kozats'ke viis'ko* [The Greek-Albanian Cossack Host], accessed 04 June 2012. [http://www.cossackdom.com/articles/s/shiyan\\_grekvoisko.htm](http://www.cossackdom.com/articles/s/shiyan_grekvoisko.htm).

<sup>94</sup> Roman Shyian, *Kryms'ko-Tatars'ke kozats'ke viis'ko* [The Crimean Tatar Cossack Host], accessed 04 June 2012. [http://www.cossackdom.com/articles/s/shiyan\\_ktvoisko.htm](http://www.cossackdom.com/articles/s/shiyan_ktvoisko.htm).

<sup>95</sup> Olena Bachyns'ka, *Buz'ke kozats'ke viis'ko* [The Bug Cossack Host], accessed 04 June 2012. [http://www.cossackdom.com/articles/b/bachinska\\_bugvoisko.htm](http://www.cossackdom.com/articles/b/bachinska_bugvoisko.htm).

<sup>96</sup> “Ob obrashchenii odnodvortsev, poselennykh po byvshei Ukrainskoi linii v Ekaterinoslavskoi gubernii, v kazach'iu sluzhbu [On the transfer of one-yard peasants, living at former Ukrainian Line of Ekaterinislav province to the Cossack service],” in *PSZRI*, 1st series, 3 July 1787, no. 16552, 22:863.

Roman Shyian, *Katerynoslavs'ke Kozats'ke Viis'ko* [The Ekaterinoslav Cossack Host], accessed 04 June 2012. [http://www.cossackdom.com/articles/s/shiyan\\_katervoisiko.htm](http://www.cossackdom.com/articles/s/shiyan_katervoisiko.htm).

<sup>97</sup> Lopatin, *Ekaterina II*, 258.

“O sostavlenii kazach'ego voiska iz iamshchikov i meshchan [On the creation of Cossack host from coachmen and burghers],” in *PSZRI*, 1st series, 20 April 1788, no. 16647, 22:1069.

Roman Shyian, *Chornomors'ke Kozats'ke Viis'ko* [The Black Sea Cossack Host], accessed 04 June 2012. [http://www.cossackdom.com/articles/s/shiyan\\_chernomvoisko.htm](http://www.cossackdom.com/articles/s/shiyan_chernomvoisko.htm).

<sup>98</sup> Greeks served primarily in the fleet. Tatars – as light cavalry. Three other hosts participated in the assaults of Ochakov, Kinburn, Izmail.

<sup>99</sup> Shyian, *Grets'ke (Albans'ke) Kozats'ke Viis'ko*.

<sup>100</sup> Shyian, *Kryms'ko-Tatars'ke Kozats'ke Viis'ko*.

<sup>101</sup> Bachyns'ka, *Buz'ke Kozats'ke Viis'ko*.

<sup>102</sup> Shyian, *Chornomors'ke Kozats'ke Viis'ko*.

<sup>103</sup> Shyian, *Katerynoslavs'ke Kozats'ke Viis'ko*.

former Zaporozhians could be more or less potent military force. The other three hosts certainly had their uses in the war, yet, I suppose, their primary role was not military.<sup>104</sup>

Additionally, the question of the Zaporizhia dissolution remains open. Since the empire needed the irregulars, why was the initial Host dissolved and not just resettled to the new borderlands and reorganized just like the Don and Iaik Hosts? At first glance, such an alternative would be an ideal solution – the Cossacks would be happy to preserve their Frontier lifestyle, the empire would remove disorderly elements from its internal provinces. The empire could either side with the almost incorporated Cossack elites and could then suppress any insurrection of the common Cossacks, or play on the dissatisfaction of the poor masses with the old officers and replace these officers with new appointed ones – just like in the Don case. Potemkin himself reorganized the Don Cossacks and they did not rebel against appointed Atamans and the use of imperial law in the courts of appeal.<sup>105</sup> Presumably, the Zaporozhian case was different.

First, the Zaporozhian Cossacks had the reputation of being not just rebels, but traitors. As a typical frontier community, they could serve the Polish and Swedish Kings, the Crimean Khan, or even the Ottoman Sultan directly. If the empire wished to consolidate the Frontier as a symbol for its own success, then such a treacherous tradition had to be suppressed. Consequently, both the image and the name of the local cossackdom had to be reforged. After all, Catherine demanded not only dissolution of the Host, but also extermination of its name<sup>106</sup> – it is doubtful that such punishment was employed only as a

<sup>104</sup> Besides low numbers the discipline of these irregulars could be rather questionable as well. See “O nadelenii sluzhashchikh v Grecheskom polku zemliami, lezhashchimi okolo Balaklavy po beregu moria, i o bytii im voennymi poselianami [On granting land near Balaklava on the sea shore to the men serving in Greek regiment and their status of military colonists],” in *PSZRI*, 1st series, 29 October 1797, no. 18227, 24:785.

<sup>105</sup> Marc Raeff, “In the Imperial Manner,” in *Catherine the Great* (London: Macmillan, 1972), 207.

<sup>106</sup> “Manifest on the destruction of the Zaporozhian Sich,” 190.

retaliation for the robbery of state-sponsored settlers in the lands of “traditional Cossack freedoms”.<sup>107</sup>

Second, with the advance of the borders and inclusion of new territories, the state had to conceptualize both the temporal and spatial dimensions of New Russia, the empire had to include it into the all-imperial narrative, and make the most efficient use of the local symbols both for internal borderland management and for the external claims for further conquests.

The northern shore of the Black Sea had an almost sacral meaning for the Russian Empire. It was symbolically connected with the legacies of Ancient Greece, the Kievan Rus', and the Byzantine Empire. “The Tavric Kherson – is the source of our Christianity and consequently – our humanity...”<sup>108</sup> – Potemkin wrote to Catherine in 1783. Gavriil Derzhavin saw the annexation of the Crimea as the recovery of the ancient Russian cities.<sup>109</sup> Andrei Zorin interpreted “the Greek project” as the return of the ancient sacred place to Russia and this return was accompanied by the ellinization of the region. The Russians came to the province, which belonged to the Greeks once, restored its original image and regained their own faith and history. All this could be a step to the liberation of Greece, powerful claim over the Byzantine legacy and expulsion of Turks from Europe.<sup>110</sup> Or it could be just a move in the Balkan competition between the Romanovs and the Habsburgs, an unrealistic project, which nevertheless was a powerful rhetorical tool.<sup>111</sup>

Even when the Greek project was discarded in Saint Petersburg, it was present in a different form in New Russia. It evolved into the “New Russian project” – an attempt to turn

<sup>107</sup> In the original manifest the Empress provided 6 reasons to disband the host. Three of them concerned banditry, two – occupation of lands without permission, one – acceptance of runaways and criminals into the cossackdom.

<sup>108</sup> Lopatin, *Ekaterina II*, 180-181.

<sup>109</sup> Iakov Grot, comp., *Sochinenia Derzhavina s ob''iasnitel'nyu primechaniyami Ia. Grot* [The Works by Derzhavin with explanatory remarks by Ia. Grot] (Saint Petersburg, 1870), 3:604.

<sup>110</sup> Zorin, *Kormia Dvuglavogo Orla*, 102.

<sup>111</sup> Raeff, “In the Imperial Manner,” 201.



the province into a melting pot, to forge a unified and loyal identity out of the colonists, many of which had little or no connection with the region and each other.<sup>112</sup> In the context of these two projects Potemkin started the “toponymic revolution”: Tavrida replaced Crimea, Khersones reemerged as Sevastopol’, Akht Mechet was renamed into Simferopol’, Kafa became Feodosiia, Taman’ transformed into Fanagoriia, there was a plan even to change the name of Taganrog to Sparta.<sup>113</sup> In the same context the companies of the Greek Cossack Host were named as the ancient Greek cities: Macedonian, Epirus, Spartan.<sup>114</sup>

The Russian government shaped the imperial time the same way as it managed imperial space. The history of New Russia, ordered by Potemkin from archbishop Evgenii Bulgariis had to emphasize the legacy of Ancient Greece, the mission of St. Andrew, the brave Rus’ princes, the glorious advance of the Russian Empire.<sup>115</sup> The times of the Tatars and Cossacks were portrayed as dark times, when barbaric hordes ruled the empty space and only the Enlightened Empire restored the province to its ancient glory.

The Greek-Albanian Host would become the symbol of unity between the ancient and recent glory. The Tatar Host, formed from those Tatars who decided to stay in Russia, and the Bug Host, formed initially from South Slavic refugees and colonists, could be an exemplar of New Russian identity. The Zaporizhia, the vestige of the dark times, was to be not just reformed, but erased completely and to be later reborn as Ekaterinoslav and Black Sea Hosts.

But all these irregular units were also connected with the Cossack legacy. Borderland warriors of the complex Frontier still bore great symbolical value. Potemkin himself adopted the traditional Cossack title of Hetman in order to use the Cossack myth,

<sup>112</sup> Hrybovs’kyi, “Istoriia Nikopolia na perekhrestii istoriografichnykh tradytsii,” 88.

<sup>113</sup> Zorin, *Kormia Dvuglavogo Orla*, 102.

<sup>114</sup> “O sformirovanii odnogo pekhotnogo Grecheskogo polka iz Albanskogo voiska [On the creation of one infantry Greek regiment from the Albanian Host],” in *PSZRI*, 1st series, 3 August 1779, no. 14901, 20:855.

<sup>115</sup> “Iz bumag kniazia G. A. Potemkina-Tavricheskogo. Soobshchil A. A. Vasil’chikov [From the prince G. A. Potemkin’s Papers. Reported by A.A. Vasil’chikov],” *Russkii Arkhiv* [The Russian Archive], 9 (1879), 19.

inspire revolts in Poland, gain power over the western Russian borderlands, even if not as king bearing the Piast crown, but as Hetman recognized by Orthodox population.<sup>116</sup> It is possible to assume that this title could also play a role in Potemkin's plan to gain the Moldavian crown as well, if the Greek project would be successful.<sup>117</sup> Thus, the Cossacks could possibly be used by the empire not only as low-cost irregular units, but also as a prolongation of the Frontier myth, giving more or less legitimate claim over neighboring territories.

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While the Cossacks of the Hetmanate and Slobozhanshchyna regions had been already converted to state peasants, irregular units still existed in New Russia. These units, on the one hand, had unified organization, similar to the Don Host. On the other, they were allowed (even for a time) to preserve some traditional traits even on the brink at the turn of the 18-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Cossack customary law regulated the internal life of the units; their Military Councils still held some power. It is possible to assume that the existence of the Cossack Hosts was a concession from the government to the freedom-loving region. Yet, another interpretation is possible as well.

The same way as the Russian Tsar could be the Khan for the East, Basileus for the South, and Emperor for the West, proconsul Potemkin could be the President of the War Collegium in Saint Petersburg and Hetman of the Cossack Hosts in the South. Imperial rule could be very flexible – after all, the first step in forcing subjects to do something is to speak their language. Potemkin used the Frontier tradition to defend the imperial border creating Cossack units and used the Cossack myth to strengthen the imperial claims over conquered

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<sup>116</sup> Zorin, *Kormia Dvuglavogo Orla*, 144-148.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 147.

lands. At the same time he used this myth to consolidate his own power over New Russia and, possibly, to claim other provinces to rule.

Judging from the pure state-building perspective, the reformed Cossack hosts were just a coercive force, useful in times of war yet dangerous in times of peace. Following this logic, I can say, that once the war of 1787-1791 with the Ottomans ended, the government did not need large numbers of the light cavalry while semi-regular armed people were no longer necessary to control and pacify the New Russia region. Consequently, the Black Sea Host was resettled to the Kuban' in 1792 and Ekaterinoslav Host was disbanded in 1796. Adding the Frontier symbolism, I can add, that after Potemkin's death in 1791 the new rulers of the region had neither the power nor the trust of the Empress to build plans rivaling Potemkin's ambition. They could not pretend to claim the Polish lands to their domains, while the Greek project, if it was ever feasible, was gradually becoming just an illusion.

Thus, we see another reason to disband or resettle former Zaporozhians – Potemkin's power gamble died with him and the new imperial officials in the region looked for other means to control the local population. From the state-building perspective, they were totally right in the monopolization of coercive means.

To summarize, by granting military banners and lands to the Cossacks, the government, at first glance, was making a concession. At second, the empire was actively forging a new local identity – connected with the region, yet loyal to the empire. In no way I imply that this identity was to be separate. Quite the contrary, local independent identity was to be suppressed and replaced by the imperial one. In no way I imply that the identity shaping was the only reason for the Cossack Hosts existence – official reasoning for their creation was protection of the region.<sup>118</sup> Semi-autonomous militarized colonists had already proved their value both as inexpensive troops and settlers to invigorate the economic life of

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<sup>118</sup> Lopatin, *Ekaterina II*, 258.

the region. However, even if the hosts continued to exist, this existence was still regulated by separate and not always consistent decrees. Cossacks' status was rather uncertain and they were not acknowledged as a separate estate yet – the empire situationally transferred Cossacks either into state peasantry or into regular troops. Naturally, such uncertainty affected the morale of the Cossacks and could not last long.

### Chapter 3: Cossack rights – from traditional to legally acknowledged

The Enlightened monarchs of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century were conscious of the value of population.<sup>119</sup> In contrast, population of the frontier regions was not very conscious of the benefits imperial rule could bring. Cossacks, determined to preserve their traditional status, runaway serfs, and marginal elements like brigands and deserters – those who were accustomed to the opportunities of freedom on the Frontier were not always ready to submit to imperial law.

In 1775 the empire dissolved the Zaporozhian Host and redistributed its lands between Azov and New Russian provinces – a classical example of the movement from indirect to direct rule. Still, while administrative centralization is an essential part of state building,<sup>120</sup> the process does not always proceed smoothly. There is an assumption among some Ukrainian historians that the empire planned to use the Slobodian model of social integration (gradual integration of the officers to the army and nobility and transformation of the common Cossacks into non-privileged estates) for Zaporizhia as well,<sup>121</sup> however, imperial officials were not immediately able to take control over the region and its population accustomed to the self-rule. A process of mass emigration started. In 1796 serfdom was introduced to the New Russia region accelerating the pace of emigration. The empire responded by introducing additional legislation and making some concessions. Consequently, the purpose of this chapter is twofold:

- To study the emigration from New Russia in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, creation the of the additional Cossack hosts outside the Russian empire by émigrés, governmental attempts to bring migrants back, their success leading to reemigration in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>119</sup> McNeil, *Steppe Frontier*, 190.

<sup>120</sup> Tilly, *Coercion, Capital and European States*, 103-106.

<sup>121</sup> Yatsenko, *Integratsiia ukrains'koho kozatstva*, 24.

- Trace the general trends in the Russian policies towards the Cossack Hosts in the late 1820s-1830s – the period, when the state needs to attract migrants back home and to increase the manpower resources extraction from the Cossack regions were no longer pressing considerations in the formation of policy toward the Frontier.

### 3.1 Danubian alternatives (1778-1828)

Judging from the state-building perspective, the migration of people from one state to the other is a double loss for the one side and a double gain for the other. In our case, Russia's loss of the thousands of armed and skilled men was multiplied by the Ottoman gain. Moreover, it became doubly difficult for the empire to reconstruct the regional identity along the frontier and reform the hosts while alternative Cossack communities existed across the border of a rival empire.

In the former Cossack Korzh's story an episode about the flight of the Cossacks to the Ottoman Empire retells how they asked Russian officials for the right of passage to the shores of the Black Sea, explaining their need to have access to fishing grounds, and how in one night 1000 men fled abroad.<sup>122</sup> In the later romanticized versions this figure grew to 5000.<sup>123</sup> Recent studies proved that this migration did not occur at a single moment but only over a decade of constant migration.<sup>124</sup>

In the period of 1775-1828 there were a number of reasons to emigrate. First, those Cossacks who strove to preserve their ancient traditions and life-style were rather discontented with the dissolution of the host and did not wish to become either regular soldiers or state peasants. For them emigration was a natural, if not the only, choice. Second,

<sup>122</sup> Rozanov, *Ustnoe Povestvovanie*, 14-17.

<sup>123</sup> Skal'kovskii, *Istoriia Novoi Sichi*, 3:234.

<sup>124</sup> Svitlana Kaiuk, "Zadunais'ka Sich (1775-1828 rr.) [the Transdanubian Sich (1775-1828)]" (Candidate of Historical Sciences diss., Dnipropetrovsk National University, 1999), 12.

with the imposition of the imperial administration, many Cossacks were forced to resettle from their farms to newly founded villages and cities.<sup>125</sup> This too bred resentment. Even if this group was not initially ready to migrate to the Ottoman lands, these Cossacks had little choice when their lifestyle was directly threatened by radical change. Third, Cossacks who were spending the 1775 summer fishing near the shores of the Black Sea may only have heard rumors about the dissolution but very few returned home. Possibly they feared being punished as deserters or runaway peasants. Indeed, the Russian laws of the time equally punished resettlement into another state without official permission and desertion.<sup>126</sup> From the legal point of view, these Zaporozhians could have been executed. Moreover, after the Host dissolution the status of the Cossacks was very uncertain until the publication of the imperial manifest two months later.<sup>127</sup> Fourth, the empire organized censuses (revisions) in 1782 and 1795 in order to extract resources more efficiently from the regions, yet the Frontier population was not accustomed to such policies.<sup>128</sup> In 1796 serfdom and then recruitment obligation were introduced to New Russia, bringing the social life of the region in accordance with other provinces of the empire. Consequently, part of borderland population, unwilling to become enserfed, joined the emigrants and bolstered their numbers. Furthermore, the southern border was porous – escape was easy for the local population while the state did not have enough resources to patrol its steppe borders.<sup>129</sup>

Ironically, in 1775 the empire was quick to arrest the Ataman for possible intention to resettle the host to the rival empire, yet, Russia was not ready to stop spontaneous emigration. As a result, in 1778 6.000-7.000 men, mainly former Zaporozhians, took an oath

<sup>125</sup> Hrybovs'kyi, "Istoriia Nikopolia na perekhrestii istoriografichnykh tradytsii," 87-90.

<sup>126</sup> Kaiuk, *Zadunais'ka Sich*, 76-77.

<sup>127</sup> "Manifest. On the destruction of the Zaporozhian Sich", 190-193.

<sup>128</sup> "Ob uchinenii vo vsei imperii novoi revizii [On the organization of the new all-imperial revision]," in *PSZRI*, 1st series, 16 November 1781, no. 15278, 21:304-306.

<sup>129</sup> Kaiuk, *Zadunais'ka Sich*, 75.

of loyalty to the Ottomans.<sup>130</sup>

What was the situation for the Zaporozhians in the Ottoman Empire? Natural environment of the Danube was similar to that of the Dniper; the fishing grounds were rich and continuation of the traditional lifestyle was possible. Social conditions were at first glance rather favorable as well – the Ottoman Empire did not interfere in the intercommunal life of the Cossacks. The Sultan required only military service while the nature of the Ottoman state allowed the Cossacks to improve their position by bargaining with different pashas and the central government in search for the most beneficial conditions. For example, from the very beginning of the migration Istanbul demanded that the Cossacks settle on the right bank of the Danube, more remote from Russian territory. However, many Cossacks preferred the Ochakov steppe (region dangerously close to Russia and still contested) and simply refused to resettle peacefully. Only in 1780, when military units supported the sultan's decree (*firman*), were the Cossacks settlements relocated in accordance with the needs of the Ottoman state.<sup>131</sup>

However, not all conditions were favorable in the Ottoman lands. The Ottoman Empire accepted not only the former Zaporozhians, but also Old Believers from Don (*Nekrasovtsy*), who had settled along the Danube from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The settlements of the *Nekrasovtsy* Cossacks were close to the best fishing grounds. Zaporozhians sought access to the profitable fish trade as well. This competition led to conflicts and erupted into open violence. Several settlements from the both sides were butchered during the 1790s-1810s.<sup>132</sup>

In the late 1780s the Zaporozhian Sich, which became Transdanubian, was rebuilt in

<sup>130</sup> Kaiuk, *Zadunais'ka Sich*, 84-87.

<sup>131</sup> Volodymyr Mil'chev, *Zaporozhtsi na Viis'kovomu kordoni Avstriis'koi imperii 1785-1790 rr.* [Zaporozhians on the Military Frontier of Austrian Empire 1785 – 1790] (Zaporizhzhia: Tandem-U, 2007), 25.

<sup>132</sup> Kaiuk, *Zadunais'ka Sich*, 108-112.



Katyrlez.<sup>133</sup> Subsequently, the Cossacks had to suppress revolts by the pashas against Selim's reforms in 1798, the Serbian uprising 1804-1813, and the Greek Revolution 1821-1830.<sup>134</sup> As warfare diminished their numbers the Cossacks were permitted to replenish their numbers with Russian deserters. Consequently, the borderland between Russia and the Ottomans became a zone for competing propaganda – the Russians sought to persuade Cossacks to return, while the Ottomans raised no obstacles to the recruitment of Russian subjects.

What was Russia's response to these challenges? First, spread of rumors encouraging emigration was severely punished. Corporal punishment and exile to Siberia were used to stop "empty" talks about existence of free Cossack communities outside Russia. Second, the empire used military units to catch runaways on borders and bring them back. Third, Russian agents spread anti-Ottoman propaganda among those Cossacks, who had already migrated, and threatened to punish them severely when Russian army would occupy the Cossacks' new settlements. At the same time they promised wealth and freedom if only the Cossacks would return. Fourth, using diplomatic channels Russia demanded that the Ottomans repatriate the Cossacks back to the Russian Empire.<sup>135</sup> These means were successful only partially.

For example, the Russian government constantly issued amnesties. The fact that amnesties were issued repetitively suggests that they were not successful and had to be

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<sup>133</sup> Naturally, this was the center of the Transdanubian host, but not the only Cossack settlement. There also existed temporary camps for the migrants (for example, Vylkove), villages for married Cossacks (for example, Karaorman), dispersed settlements all over Balkans (for example, Cossack villages in Gallipoli). Katyrlez was abandoned in 1806 due to lasting conflict with Old Believers and advance of the Russian army, stationed dangerously close to the Sich in the war of 1806-1812. The new, last, Sich was built in Dunavets in 1814. For more on Zaporozhian settlements, see Anatolii Bachyns'kyi, *Sich Zadunais'ka. 1775-1828* [the Transdanubian Sich. 1775-1828] (Odessa: MP Hermes, 1994), 13.

<sup>134</sup> Although, the majority of the Zaporozhians had already returned to Russia in 1828.

<sup>135</sup> Kaiuk, *Zadunais'ka Sich*, 84-87.

Kaiuk, *Znyshchennia Zaporiz'koi Sichi*.

Mil'chev, *Zaporozhtsi na Viis'kovomu kordoni*, 20.

constantly renewed.<sup>136</sup> For instance, in the summer of 1784 only 83 persons returned,<sup>137</sup> whereas 7.000 – 10.000 continued to serve the Sultan<sup>138</sup> and 1.000 Transdanubians, unsatisfied with the Ottomans, in 1785 moved further and pledged their loyalty to the Habsburgs.<sup>139</sup>

However, in time reemigration began to increase. First, the rumors that the hosts were being restored in Russia ignited interest among some Cossacks. Small numbers of them started to defect to Russia already during the war of 1787-1791 and to join the Black Sea Host.

Second, the death of Catherine in 1797 and the ascension of the new Tsar became an important event for the Cossacks. Several high-ranking Cossack officers immediately asked the Russian consulate for recommendations in order to cross the border without difficulties. The consul, however, was cautious and feared a possible provocation – he only reminded the Cossacks about the prolongation of the amnesty.<sup>140</sup> Later, in 1798 pashas' revolts in the Balkans and the participation of the Transdanubians in their suppression greatly postponed the possibility of the Cossacks' return.

Third, Russian agents worked in order to bring Cossacks back; the Russian consulate in Iasi organized groups of repatriates and supported them materially; those Cossacks, who returned could obtain high ranks in the Russian army, becoming symbols of the all-forgiving

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<sup>136</sup> For the examples of manifestos see:

“O vyzove voinskikh nizhnikh chinov, krest'ian i pospolityh liudei samovol'no otluchivshikhsia za granitsu [On the call to the low-rank military and peasants, who left the country without permit],” in *PSZRI*, 1st series, 5 May 1779, no. 14870, 20:817.

“O prodolzhenii sroka dlia iavki vsem otluchivshimsia za granitsu voiskim nizhnim chinam, krest'ianam i prochim eshche na odin god [On the one year prolongation of the term to arrive to Russia for low rank military, peasants and others, who left the country],” in *PSZRI*, 1st series, 27 April 1780, no. 15006, 20:932.

Similar amnesties were later issued by Alexander I and Nicolas I. Russian consul in Iasi and governors of the borderland provinces attempted to spread information about amnesties among the Cossacks on the local level.

<sup>137</sup> Kaiuk, *Zadunais'ka Sich*, 141.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid, 94.

<sup>139</sup> Mil'chev, *Zaporozhtsi na Viis'kovomu kordoni*, 96.

<sup>140</sup> Bachyns'kyi, *Sich Zadunais'ka*, 32.

motherland.<sup>141</sup>

Fourth, the life in the Ottoman Empire was not a paradise as some could have hoped. Persistent conflict with the Old Believers, constant threat of a resettlement or an occupation by the Russian army, the natural aging of the holders of the old tradition – all played a role in the repatriation. Besides, the stratification of the Cossack society, which was already visible in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, only sharpened in the emigration. Part of the Cossacks had nothing against military service, receiving money for it and living as the Frontier warriors of old. With time, however, another group emerged. Those Cossacks who were more interested in fishing or trade, those preferring married life, those deserters, who joined the Transdanubians only to avoid service in the Russian army – did not wish to fight with the Russians in the wars of 1787-1791 and 1806-1812. Nor they wish to serve the Sultan and suppress Greeks and Serbs. These Cossacks were a perfect target for the Russian propaganda. As the flow of repatriates only grew with time, it is possible to assume that this group was becoming a majority. If in 1784 only 83 men returned during three months period, in the 1820 a group of 1000 moved back to become Russian subjects.<sup>142</sup>

Fifth, the Russian empire specially created new hosts to attract Transdanubians – in 1807 the Budzhak Host of the Danubian Delta (*Ust'-Dunaiskoe Budzhatskoe Kazach'e Voisko*) was created. Later, in 1828, the empire formed the Danubian Host.

The same way as the emigration of the Cossacks was not a one-night exodus in 1775 but continuous migration since 1775 till the 1790s, their repatriation was a lengthy process since the 1800s and not a one-time resettlement in 1828.<sup>143</sup>

For a number of reasons, the first peak of this reemigration movement was 1806-

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<sup>141</sup> For example, in 1795 Cossack officer T. Pomelo immediately after his defection got the rank of the 2<sup>nd</sup> major in the Russian army. See Kaiuk, *Zadunais'ka Sich*, 145-146. According to the Table of Ranks, this rank meant also personal ennoblement.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 178.

1807. First, conflict between Transdanubians and *Nekrasovtsy* sharpened and *Nekrasovtsy* destroyed the Sich in Katyrléz. Second, with the start of the Russo-Turkish conflict of 1806-1812 the Cossacks had to participate in the war. However, the ideas of war in general and war with Russia were not popular among Transdanubians at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Third, rapid advance of the Russian troops under the command of General Ivan Mikhelson to the Danube directly endangered Transdanubians, who in December 1806 were in the close proximity of the Russian army. Fourth, the Tsar allowed to create a new host specially for the repatriates.<sup>144</sup> Many Transdanubians joined the host and by the summer 1807 it numbered 1387 men.<sup>145</sup> However, besides the emigrants the host attracted brigands, deserters, runaways and very soon it started to create problems for the local population. Considering the diverse origins and diverse discipline of this unit, its military value is questionable as well. Consequently, the Budzhak host was disbanded in June 1807 – only five months after its creation.

In 1812-1820 the flow of migrants weakened. Partly, the Cossacks were dissatisfied with inconsistent Russian policy and the dissolution of the Budzhak host. Partly, due to the Treaty of Bucharest in 1812 the Danube islands were considered a neutral territory and it was forbidden to settle there. Both Russian and Ottoman administrations worked to demarcate the border. The Sultan resettled the Cossacks once more, to the regions more remote from the border, thus reemigration became more difficult.

The new peak of repatriation started in the 1820s with the Greek Revolution. Five thousand Cossacks participated in the suppression of this uprising, yet many preferred to resettle to Russia, receiving status and privileges of the foreign colonists. With the chance of

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<sup>144</sup> “O imenovanii voiska formiruemogo iz Zadunaiskikh Zaporozhtsev, Ust'-Dunaiskim [on the naming of the host formed from the Transdanubian Zaporozhians as Ust'-Dunaiskoe],” in *PSZRI*, 1st series, 20 February 1807, no. 22465, 29:1024.

<sup>145</sup> Bachyns'kyi, *Sich Zadunais'ka*, 43.

the Russian intervention and the close proximity of the Russian army it was rather an appealing choice. There also was a fear that the Ottomans would resettle the Host to Anatolia – a place completely unknown and thus incompatible with the traditional lifestyle.<sup>146</sup> The war with Russia in 1828-1829 only intensified the already ongoing process.

In May 1828 the Russian government attracted the last major group of the Transdanubians led by Iosyp Hladkyi and bearing banners and relics. Military banners and regalia granted by the Ottomans bore great value and symbolised the return of the Cossacks as a whole to Russia – Hladkyi received the rank of colonel, Cross of St. George (4<sup>th</sup> class), even if the group led by him consisted of less than thousand men.<sup>147</sup> With the creation of new Danubian and Azov Hosts for these émigrés, the Russian government demonstrated flexibility of its rule. By various means it was able to prepare and organize the reemigration of almost whole host – the group of 1828 was the last big one.

If the creation of the first reformed hosts (Greek-Albanian, Tatar, Bug, Ekaterinoslav, Black Sea), can be interpreted as empire's planned move, the hosts created in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century in New Russia and Bessarabia can be seen only as an improvisation and adaptation of state policies to the reality challenges. Russia, wishing to preserve population, made some concessions to the Cossacks – they were invited as foreign colonists and were not enserfed, the land was granted to the hosts, for a time Cossack customary law was in use in this units. It seems that such an innocent tool of everyday resistance as spread of rumors encouraging emigration proved to be more efficient in the Frontier realities than Pugachev's peasant war, which caused only reaction.

Still, the story of Transdanubians and their return home emphasizes another problem of the Cossack estate in this period. Returning Cossacks did not even raise the question of

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<sup>146</sup> Kaiuk, *Zadunais'ka Sich*, 161-165.

It is unknown, however, was it an actual plan of the Istanbul or a rumor spread by the Russian agents.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 171.

the traditional rights and restoration of the Sich. Their prime interests were economic. Frontier did not close, it shifted, yet its inhabitants transformed. The cossackdom was abandoning its militaristic lifestyle and becoming similar to the peasants and the fishermen. In any case, if fifty years before Cossacks were still able to maneuver between several powers looking for the highest bid at the same time not always serving in return, in the 1830s their possibilities were rather limited. But again - taking the victor's side was, possibly, not the worst choice.

### 3.2 Reorganisation and Transformation (till 1835)

In 1775 the Zaporozhians resettled to the Ottomans interested in the preservation of their traditional lifestyle. In 1828 the Transdanubians returned to the Russian Empire. In 1835 Statute (*Polozhenie*) of the Cossack military service was introduced to the Don. Soon it was adapted to all other hosts of the empire (except the Ural).<sup>148</sup> This statute granted a corporate identity to the Cossacks and transformed them into a separate estate with legally acknowledged duties and privileges. Presumably, the integration of the Cossacks into the imperial society was complete – not as transfer of the former Cossacks into other estates but as inclusion of the Cossack estate into the imperial hierarchy.

Was this integrationist process smooth and undisrupted? Certainly, not. But what was its rationale, its logic? To answer these questions I will trace the evolution of the imperial attitude towards the integration of the cossackdom, outlining its major phases and turning points.

Initially, prior to the 18<sup>th</sup> century traditional Russian policies aimed at the newly acquired or conquered regions were not very integrationist. Usually, only the pledge of

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<sup>148</sup> Robert H. McNeal, "The Reform of Cossack Military Service in the Reign of Alexander II," in *War and Society*, edited by B. K. Kiraly and G. E. Rothenberg (New York: Colorado University Press, 1979), 1:409.

loyalty from the local elite was required, while the life of the region did not experience almost any change from the inclusion into the empire.<sup>149</sup> From the Frontier perspective, this was especially true for the complex frontier region requiring quite a lot of financial and manpower resources for conquest and maintenance, not to speak of further expansion.<sup>150</sup> From the state-building perspective, these policies were enough for the level of external pressure Russia experienced.

The situation radically changed with the Great Northern War 1700-1721, when Russia was challenged by Sweden fielding a regular army. In order to survive inter-state struggle Russia had to increase the efficiency of resource extraction from the provinces and to promote state monopoly over coercive means. However, general policies of integration were to proceed more rapidly in the southern region, where frontiers were unstable and Cossacks' disloyalty could cost Russian state a lot. Indeed, the alliance between part of the Cossacks and the Swedes proved unreliable nature of the Cossack troops, yet allowed the St. Petersburg to question all Cossacks' loyalties and to punish potential betrayers, intensifying integration reforms. The completion of this process was delayed by power-struggle in the capital during the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, but gradual integration was only interrupted, not discarded completely.

Still, despite the strife to more efficiently extract resources from the Cossack regions, the state had to acknowledge the existing Frontier tradition and learn to use it. As the Frontier existed on several levels, the empire had to solve a set of problems. Initially the state was faced primarily by the military aspect – it had to defend borderlands and to maintain the borderland military (Frontier as a place, military borderland).

The next turning point was the advance of the Frontier in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, when

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<sup>149</sup> Mark Raeff, *Political Ideas and Institutions in Imperial Russia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 126-140.

<sup>150</sup> Rieber, *Comparative Ecology*, 180.

the region was conquered and the importance of two other Frontier aspects rapidly grew. The state had to colonize the new territories and to exercise some degree of control over the spontaneous resettlements (Frontier as a process of constant migration). Next, empire had to legitimize new conquests both in the eyes of its own population and foreign powers, to suppress the old myths about the land beyond the border, to create the new, loyal to the empire, identity for the regional population, possibly incorporating the Frontier legacy into the imperial narrative and imperial space (Frontier as a symbol).

In fact, these three aspects of the Frontier were deeply interconnected. For example, the military reorganization in 1775 caused mass emigration, while the initiated since the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century state colonization of the region could also serve as an additional legitimization of the new borders.

In 1775 the empire dissolved the Zaporozhian Host. However neither its coercive force was abandoned, nor was its myth erased. Many former Zaporozhians were called to serve in the Black Sea and Ekaterinoslav Hosts, while in 1790 Potemkin adopted the title of Hetman both to better manage imperial borderlands and to advance imperial claims. Frontier warriors became a justification for further expansion. At the same time several smaller Hosts were formed (Greek-Albanian, Tatar, Bug), possibly, with purely symbolical role.<sup>151</sup>

What was the initial status of the first generation of the reformed Cossacks? They generally, resembled the Don – hosts preserved self-governance, their officers could be elected, customary law was allowed in the internal life of the units. As irregular troops they were to self-sustain themselves. What was their destiny? Many Bug Cossacks were transferred into state peasants in 1797, while the unit itself was reformed into regular one in 1817. The Tatar Host was dissolved in 1796. The Greek-Albanians were reformed and in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century resembled a regular unit. Black Sea Cossacks were resettled to the

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<sup>151</sup> For the numbers of these Hosts, see pp. 42-43 of the present research.



Kuban' in 1792, where they continued to serve alongside the part of the former Ekaterinoslav Host, disbanded in the 1796.<sup>152</sup>

On 19 February 1801 Paul's I (1796-1801) decree established Military Chancellery consisting of appointed imperial officials for the Black Sea Host. This Chancellery controlled all spheres of the Cossack life accordingly to imperial laws. The Ataman was appointed by the Tsar from the list of the proposed candidates rather than elected by the Military Council. The Military Council itself soon ceased to exist.<sup>153</sup>

What did the empire achieve with these hosts? The Cossacks served in the war with the Ottomans in 1787-1791. They were a proven tool for the military colonization of the unsettled lands. These hosts probably contributed to the exploitation of the Frontier symbolism by the empire. Also, the imperial officials more closely controlled the new Cossack hosts, so the chance of Cossack disloyalty decreased. The Cossacks could still revolt if they were sent into distant expedition or underpaid, but the main problem of the 17<sup>th</sup> – early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, shifting loyalties of the borderland population, was solved. Even the Transdanubians émigrés were gradually returning after the death of Catherine II in 1796. Yet, even the recreation of the hosts on the empire's own terms did not solve all problems with the Cossacks.

First, the quality of the military Cossack units was deteriorating. The Frontier stabilized and there were no constant raids and counterraid, where high-quality light infantry, light cavalry and marines could be tested. The problem sharpened in the 19<sup>th</sup> century – the maintenance of separate military people was outdated in the era of mass armies and military standardization.

<sup>152</sup> Malenko, *Pivdennoukrains'ke kozatstvo*.

<sup>153</sup> Olena Bachyns'ka, "Kozatsvo v systemakh Rosiis'koi i Turets'koi imperii [the cossackdom in the systems of the Russian and Turkish empires]," in *Istoriia Ukrain's'koho Kozatstva* [The history of the Ukrainian cossackdom] edited by Valerii Smolii (Kyiv, 2009), 2:338-339.

Second, the Frontier myth persisted (supported with rather practical considerations) and led many people to join Cossack hosts in vain hopes of “being free” – not being subject to recruitment, labor services, and tax-payment. Examples of the Cossacks wishing to have privileges yet not wishing to serve are countless as well. In the previous subchapter I mentioned how Transdanubians, receiving payment from the Ottomans for military service, were rather unwilling to participate in the actual warfare in the 1820s and many preferred to migrate to Russia instead. The Greek-Albanian Host acted similarly, when its members sought Cossack status, but resisted active service.<sup>154</sup> This myth of a free Frontier life also attracted runaway peasants, who attempted to become Cossacks.<sup>155</sup> Runaway serfs, criminals, deserters – many people still believed in the Cossack freedom, even if the Cossack units were already semi-regular. Naturally, the local nobility complained because it lost workers. Local officials complained about the Cossack crimes. Military commanders complained about the Cossack low discipline. This set of problems caused the dissolution of the Budzhak Host. An ambitious project to attract migrants quickly became a magnet for marginal elements and had to be disbanded almost immediately after its creation. Other hosts faced this problem as well.<sup>156</sup> In this sense, the Frontier as a symbol made bringing imperial order to the region rather difficult.

The liquidation of the Transdanubian Sich in 1828 solved the problem of the compact Cossack communities outside the Russian Empire, which troubled the government during the late 18th – early 19th centuries, so the state could concentrate on the first two problems. The solution of the first problem, the Cossack’s military capabilities, was rather easy. Settling Cossacks in the regions, where they will be needed, where they will face

<sup>154</sup> Shyian, *Grets’ke (Albans’ke) Kozats’ke Viis’ko*.

<sup>155</sup> Olena Bachyns’ka, *Kozatstvo v pisliakozats’ku dobu ukrains’koi istorii* [the cossacks of the after-cossackdom age of the Ukrainian history], (Odessa: Astroprint, 2009), 152.

<sup>156</sup> Malenko, *Pivdennoukrains’ke kozatstvo*.

persistent frontier warfare and not battles with the European armies, where they will be useful both in border patrol and supportive policing roles. Thus, in 1828-1832 from the former émigrés the Azov and Danubian Hosts were formed. The Danubians were settled in Bessarabia, where they protected the south-western border of the empire, while the Azov Cossacks were actually participating in the persistent Caucasus conflicts.<sup>157</sup> They patrolled the Sea of Azov preventing the Ottoman support of the Caucasian mountaineers and making the Russian advance in the Caucasus a bit easier. These two hosts were not big – by the 1840s the Danubians counted 8213 persons including families. In the same period, the Azov Host consisted of 8748 people. However, the state bolstered the numbers of these hosts by transferring state peasants and other non-privileged social groups into the cossackdom, planning to give the Cossacks viable self-sustaining economy.<sup>158</sup> These were the smallest Cossack hosts in Russia, yet they existed till the Era of Great Reforms – it seems that the empire still needed them after all.

According to the imperial system of command, Azov and Danubian units were subordinated directly to New Russian general-governor both in the civilian and military questions. The general governor reported to the Military Ministry, while the questions Ministry could not solve were forwarded to the Senate, which worked closely with the Tsar himself. In order to control Azov and Danube Hosts, the government also included regular army officers to the Cossack units. The Frontier in New Russia did not close, it shifted, yet its tradition shifted with it. Cossacks, whose legacy can be traced to Zaporizhia lived in the new frontiers of the empire - Bessarabia and the Caucasus.

The solution of the second problem was ingenious, indeed. The Don Statute of

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<sup>157</sup> Bachynska, *Kozatstvo v pisliakozats'ku dobu ukrains'koi istorii*, 145-148.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 149.

1835<sup>159</sup> was applied to almost all others Cossack units. Different hosts of the empire got unified status and unified legislation with only minor differences. These differences, however, resulted mainly from current Hosts' size and not its previous traditions.

On the one hand, this Statute did not change much in regards of host's administration. The Cossacks were already controlled by the state officials, their Atamans were appointed, and their internal life was brought in accordance with imperial laws. On the other hand, it created the Cossack estate – frontier warriors got their corporate identity. Was this a concession from the empire? From the state-building point of view, the empire already had real control over the Cossacks. From the Frontier position, Russia exploited existing borderland tradition in order to defend its own borders. After the 18<sup>th</sup> century attempts to integrate the Cossacks into other estates, the empire adopted the Frontier language itself and legally included the Cossack into its social structure. After all, the Cossacks struggled for such recognition since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. However, this change of imperial policies not only bolstered Cossack morale, but also helped to solve problems with borderland irregulars. The problem of runaways was partially solved by making the Cossacks a *closed* military estate. The problem of possible banditry after the demobilization was solved by the rotation system between service in expeditions and home service.

Naturally, the state was more powerful than borderland communities. Naturally, it first suppressed and only later restored the cossackdom in New Russia. Doubtful that the empire would recognize Cossack estate without the preceding reforms of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. This means, however, that the state needed the frontier warriors even in the era of mass-armies.

In general, irregular Cossack units were still rather cost-efficient. First, Cossacks had

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<sup>159</sup> “Polozhenie ob upravlenii Voiska Donskogo [The statute of the Don Host command],” in *PSZRI*, 2nd series, 26 May 1835, no. 8163, 10:453-536.

the experience of borderland warfare, knew the territory, and could sustain themselves. They were cheap and they could be used in support and police functions, they could gradually advance the Russian line of settlements in the Caucasus, their myth no longer opposed the state but was included into the state ideology. The re-creation of the Cossack units did not demand much time and funds. Even more, the possibility of at least temporal estate rights could ease the social tensions in the region. At the same time, the empire benefited from the military service of the unruly Frontier elements, placed under double (civilian and military) supervision.

The emergence of different Cossack hosts in the New Russian region during the last quarter of the 18th – first quarter of the 19th centuries became possible only due to the coincidence of interests of, on the one hand, the state, which wanted to increase the military presence at the same time maintaining the internal stability in the Cossack regions, and, on the other hand, Cossacks themselves, who hoped to receive certain benefits in exchange for military service, even if the long-time military need for Cossack units in the Southern region was rather questionable. Only the Azov, Danubian, and Black Sea hosts continued to exist till the era of Great Reforms and were finally disbanded in the 1860s. However, the separate corporate identity was created and this identity was loyal until the fall of the empire. Yet, once the empire fell, it was hard to find a place for the Cossacks either in revolutionary socialist projects or in attempts to construct nation states.

## Conclusions

In this research I demonstrated an episode on the Russian state changing its policy towards the Cossack communities in the Pontic region. I suppose that this project is crucial – it showed the flexibility of the imperial rule; it showed the use of the Frontier by the empire instead of generic subjugation of the borderlands by the center; it showed how the borderland warriors became finally incorporated into the imperial society, gaining the recognition which they previously lacked (even if in the later national historiography they became martyrs). Still, since any research is an ongoing process, this project not only enriched the existing picture with some nuances, but also raised more questions.

I wonder, if the Frontier can be actually closed? In the early modern times Wild Field was a typical Frontier. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the Russian empire achieved dominance in the region and, in a certain sense, the Frontier closed. Imperial law was brought to the previously independent regions, the number of nomadic raids greatly decreased, the local borderland tradition was initially suppressed and later integrated into state plans on the empire's own terms. In contrast, the Cossackdom became a myth for the emerging Ukrainian historiography. Cossacks' integration into the state was only partial. Officially, the European frontier closed in 1800,<sup>160</sup> yet even in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Soviet government had problems with nomads in Central Asia. And it is hard to deny that the Frontier reopened (if it was close) in 1918, 1941, 1991 – especially speaking of the early 1920s, when Cossack regions claimed their separate, not only social, but also a political identity.

The second question, which this research raised, is the interplay between the state and Frontier. Was the imperial policy always centralising? No, state officials made concessions for the Cossacks, there was a place for negotiation. Were the Cossacks always

striving to be independent? No, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century they wanted to serve the Crown in return for legal status and regular pay. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century they became one of estates of the Russian Empire and participated in its state-building process instead of ignoring or sabotaging it. Was the Frontier an obstacle in the state-building? Not always. In some cases it required great resources to control and protect, while usually providing little resources itself. Still, the Frontier could also help the empire to expand its borders by providing both suitable myths and resources, if the state was able to extract them.

Another possibility for further research is the place of the Cossacks in national and regional historical traditions, contemporary commemoration practices and myth-making. Ironically, majority of Cossack studies ends the Cossack era in the South Ukrainian region in 1775 with the dissolution of the old host. Yet, only sixty years later the Cossacks in this region got legal recognition of their status – a recognition, which they actually sought since the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>160</sup>McNeill, *Europe's Steppe Frontier*.

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Common abbreviations in this project are:

PSZRI – Polnoe Sobranie Zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii [Complete Collected Laws of the Russian Empire]

ZOOIID – *Zapiski Odesskogo obshchestva istorii i drevnostei* [The notes of Odessa history and antiquities society]

Note on transliteration: for titles in the Cyrillic I used the Library of Congress romanization tables.

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