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*Toyokawa Koichi,
Meiji University,
Tokyo, Japan*

*Тоёкава Коичи,
Университет Мэйдзи,
Токио, Япония*

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OLD BELIEVERS AND THE PUGACHEV REBELLION: PUGACHEV'S STRATEGY AND SUPPORT BY OLD BELIEVERS

СТАРООБРЯДЧЕСТВО И ВОССТАНИЕ ПУГАЧЕВА: СТРАТЕГИЯ ПУГАЧЕВА И ПОДДЕРЖКА СТАРООБРЯДЦЕВ

Abstract:

The connection of the Pugachev uprising with the *staroobriadtsy*, *raskolniki* or Old Believers is also noted in the general works on the history of the eighteenth century. A.S. Pushkin in his work "The History of the Pugachev Rebellion," giving a description of the leader of the uprising, called him "Don Cossack, *Raskolnik* Pugachev." Under the influence of Pushkin's work, many pre-revolutionary historians considered the Old Believers to be one of the main driving forces of the uprising. This idea was based mainly on three factors. First, Pugachev was associated with the Old Believers, especially with Filaret, the Old Believer abbot in Irgiz. Secondly, many of the Iaik Cossacks, who were the main force of the uprising, were Old Believers. Thirdly, Pugachev's manifestos and decrees contained Old Believer motifs. Thus, there was a certain tendency to consider the split as a phenomenon most directly related to the uprising of Pugachev in the pre-revolutionary historical literature.

Looking at previous studies, the following questions surfaced. First, how Pugachev related to the Old Believers on the eve of the uprising? Especially did the Old Believers influence the pretending of Pugachev? Secondly, did the Old Believers play an important role in the process of Pugachev's uprising? What traces or influences of the Old Believers can we notice in the specific activities, decrees, and manifestos of the Pugachev camp? We will investigate these problems.

Keywords:

Pugachev Rebellion, Old Believers, Iaik Cossacks, Cross and Beard, Flags

Introduction

The Pugachev rebellion had a “composite” character. Various categories of people from different societies participated, and the rebellion unfolded while cooperating with, opposing each other, or alienating from each other, so to speak, in an autonomous manner. These relationships defined the movement of the rebellion.

The eighteenth century in Russia was a time when the Russian Orthodox Church split (1666-67), originating from the liturgical reform of Patriarch Nikon (Patriarchate 1652-66) and the people’s estrangement from Christianity, was accelerated. Already at the end of the seventeenth century, several Old Believer strongholds adhering to the pre-reformation liturgy appeared throughout Russia. Their resistance led to repression by the authorities, and the Old Believers continued to come under intense scrutiny. For Old Believers, a return to the “*staraia vera* or ancient faith” before “the Liturgical Reformation” became a signpost pointing to overcome the predicament of tsarist surveillance and repression of the people. Considering this situation, I hypothesized that the movements of the Russian people in the eighteenth century, such as the Pugachev Rebellion, contained many elements of the Old Belief, and that the rebellions could be regarded as one manifestation of such demands for improvement of the situation.¹

Russia’s greatest national poet Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837) described the leader of the uprising as “Don Cossack and *Raskol’nik* or secessionist Emel’ian Pugachev” in his work “*History of the Pugachev Rebellion* (1834).”² Perhaps because of this, many scholars of the Imperial Russian period attributed one of the main driving forces of the Pugachev rebellion to the Old Believers, i.e., *Raskol’niki* (plural of *Raskol’nik*). The first reason for this is the relations of Pugachev (1740 or 1742-75) with the abbot of the same sect Filaret. Secondly, the Iaik Cossacks, who would become the main force of the rebellion, were Old Believers. Third, Pugachev’s proclamations and manifestos contained Old Believer’s motifs. The following historians based on this idea: Peter Shchebal’skii (1810-86), Pavel Mel’nikov-Pecherskii (1818-83), Alexander Brikner (1834-96), Danil Mordovtsev (1830-1905) and so on.³ On the other hand, the Soviet historian Il’ia Kadson (1923-83) denied the religious component of the rebellion.⁴ Nikolai Pokrovskii (1930-2013) stated that the ideas of the Old Believers, in their radical forms, played a role in creating the political momentum of the eighteenth century. Although the possibility of exploiting the purpose and character of the Old Believers in the Pugachev Rebellion was limited,

¹ Toyokawa K., “People and Religion in Russia in the Eighteenth Century: Peter I’s Church Reformation and Old Believers,” *Sundai Historiography* (Toyo: Meiji University), № 162, 2018, p. 94. For the relationship between the Old Believers and the popular movement, its research history, and the author’s research perspective, please refer to pages 68-70. For more information on the relationship between the Cossacks and the government, which are the mainstays of the Russian popular movement, and the influence of the Old Believers, please see: Toyokawa K., “Old Believers and Cossacks: The Source of the Popular Movement,” in Sakamoto Hideaki and Nakazawa Atsuo, eds., *History and Culture of the Russian Orthodox Old Believers* (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 2019).

² Pushkin A.S. *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*. Vol. 9. Part 1 (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1950), p. 13. Pushkin also wrote in another passage that “Pugachev never went to the [Orthodox] church, because he was a *Raskolnik*” (*Ibid*, p. 26), this point will be corrected in this paper.

³ Shchebal’skii P.K. *Nachalo i kharakter Pugachevshchiny* (Moscow: Univ. tip., 1865), pp. 37, 52; Mel’nikov-Pecherskii P.I. *Sbornik Nizhegorodskoi uchenoi arkhivnoi komissii v pamiat’ Melnikova*. Vol. IX. Part II (Nizhnii Novgorod: Nizhegor. uchen. arkh. komis., 1910), p. 231; Brickner A., *Istoria Ekateriny II*. Vol. I (St. Petersburg: Tip. A.S. Suvorina, 1885), p. 225; Mordovtsev D. L., *Politicheskie dvizheniia russkogo naroda*, Vol. II (St. Petersburg: Izdatel’stvo K.I. Plotnikova, 1871), p. 177.

⁴ Kadson I.Z., “Vosstanie Pugacheva i raskol,” *Ezhevodnik muzeia istorii religii i ateizma*, Vol. IV, 1960, p. 224. Kadson’s position was to deny the role of religion in popular movements, as indicated by the publication of *Ezhevodnik muzeia istorii religii i ateizma* or the Annals of the Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism.

nevertheless, it can be said that the Old Believers were to some extent the religious basis for such struggles.⁵

In 2015, a new edition of Pugachev in “*Zhizn’ Zamechatel’nykh liudei, Seriiia biografii* or The Life Biography of the Great Men Series”, which has a tendency somewhat different from the above trends, was published. In it, the author Evgenii Trefirov examines in detail and appreciates the role of the Old Believers in the Pugachev Rebellion.⁶ Tatiana Romaniuk pays attention to the relation between Pugachev, the Old Believers and the monks in Irgiz, and so on (2018, 2019).⁷ Furthermore, the modern Ukrainian historian Sergei Taranets’ work on Old Believers also more specifically discusses the close connection between Pugachev and the Old Believers (2021).⁸

I regard the reciprocal relationship between Pugachev and the Old Believers as important, rather than the role of the Old Believers in Pugachev Rebellion. How did Pugachev establish connection with the Old Believers, and did he make good use of them in one place? How did the Old Believers deal with Pugachev in another?

Chapter1: Pugachev and the Old Believers on the Eve of the Rebellion

Pugachev’s career was diverse. He was born in 1740/42 in Zimoveiskaia village and went with the army to the front of the Seven Years’ War with Prussia (1756-63) and the Russian-Turkish War (1768-70). In 1770 he was appointed *khорунжий* or second lieutenant in the Don Cossack army. However, at the end of 1771, disgusted by the discrimination against Cossacks by the standing army, he fled to the North Caucasus, where he was registered with Terek Cossack but captured in Mozdok in February 1772. In the spring and summer of the same year, he lived among the Old Believers near Chernigov and Gomel.⁹

Pugachev, with the help of the Old Believers of Slobodskaia Ukraine, one of the strongholds, headed to Starodub’e. There the monks of the Old Belief monastery helped him cross the Russian-Polish border. After crossing the Old Believer land of Dobrianka and returning to Russia, Pugachev met with Peter Kuznetsov, the Old Believer merchant of Irgiz. The merchant encouraged Pugachev to meet Filaret, the abbot of the monastery there. Kuznetsov came from a family of Moscow merchants and had extensive ties to the Old Believer merchants of Moscow, Kazan and Starodub’e, who were prepared to financially support the rebellion.

In June 1772, Pugachev crossed the Polish border with Kolovka’s son Anton. They were detained and interrogated by Russian military officers sent to partition Poland. After liberation, the two went to *Raskor’s* Sloboda near Vetka (now a city in Gomel Oblast’, Belarus), one of the Old Believers’ strongholds. Anton would remain there, but Pugachev went to the Dobriansk outpost (Dobrianka, Chernigov Oblast’, Ukraine, which now borders Belarus. There was a “*karantynoi dom* or quarantine house,” where Pugachev was kept and met many fugitive Russians, obtaining lots of information about how to enter Russia. Among the people he met was

⁵ Pokrovskii N.N., *Antifeodal’nyi protest uralo-sibirskikh krest’ian-starobraiadtsev v XVIII v.* (Novosibirsk: Nauka, 1974), pp. 338-339.

⁶ Trefimov E., *Pugachev* (Moscow: Molodaia gvardiya, 2015), pp. 32-36, 171, 172.

⁷ Romaniuk T.S., “Uchastie starobriadcheskogo naceleniia v vosstanii pod predvoditel’stvom E.I. Pugacheva na Iaike,” *Vestnik Ekaterinburgskoi dukhovnoi seminarii*, 2018, № 4 (24), pp. 315-334; “Kontakty E.I. Pugacheva so starobriadcheskimi Irgizkimni monastyriami i beglykh startsev Filareta i Gurii,” *Vestnik Ekaterinburgskoi dukhovnoi seminarii*, 2019, № 2 (26), pp. 256-274.

⁸ Taranets S., *Starobriadtsestvo v Rossiiskoi imperii (konets XVII-nacharo XX veka)*, Vol. 1: *Vzaimoosnosheniia starobriadcheskikh soobshchestv s gosudarstvom i ofitsial’noi Tserkov’iu* (Kiev: «Vidavnitstvo Lira-K», 2021), Second edition, pp. 309-311.

⁹ Panin T.S., “Petr III, Pugachev, samozvantsy, Portretnaia galeria povesti A.S. Pushkina «Kapitanskaia dochika»”, *Chetvertnye nauchnye pushkinskie chteniia, Orenburg, iun’ 2012 g.* (Orenburg: Izdatel’skii tsektor OGAU), 2013. p. 37.

the fugitive soldier Alexei Rogachev. He was a person who made the opportunity that caused Pugachev to be a pretender.¹⁰

On the way to Irgiz, Pugachev stopped at the house of an old acquaintance. Pugachev said, "If it is inconvenient to live in Irgiz, go to the Kuban where the Nekrasov faction is." The Nekrasov faction was one of the Old Believer groups who, after a rebellion led by Don Cossacks' ataman, Ignat Nekrasov (1660-1737), fled to the Kuban in the Caucasus in search of the protection of the Crimean Khan and the Ottoman sultan. Pugachev had heard the rumors that the Nekrasov faction people had lived a good life under the rule of the Muslim monarch.¹¹

Passing through the city of Saratov via the Don, Pugachev was caught by officials, but escaped by explaining that he was "from Poland" and arrived in Malikovka in early November 1772. On foot, he visited a *Raskor skit* or monastic retreat, near Mechetnaya Sloboda. There he met Filaret, whom Kozhevnikov had invited Pugachev to meet.¹²

What did Pugachev talk about with Filaret? During an interrogation in Kazan on February 8, 1774, Filaret told the magistrate that the person who came to him showed him his passport and said, "I'm looking for a more convenient place to settle." Pugachev revealed a lot about his relationship with Filaret during interrogation. Although there are some unknowns, it cannot be denied that Filaret was the first person to whom Pugachev mentioned his plan to take Iaik Cossacks to Kuban.¹³

In the 1760s-70s, tensions continued in the Cossack society of Iaik and Don. From the end of the seventeenth century, the Russian government restricted the autonomy and freedoms in Cossack society at every opportunity. In doing so, the government sought to suppress the disgruntled lower strata by incorporating the upper Cossack strata and to gain strong control over the society. Under these circumstances, the Iaik rebellion of 1772, which stood up against social injustice, was led by the Old Believer priest Mikhail Vasil'ev. However, the rebellion was suppressed by the authorities in November of the same year.¹⁴

There were rumors in the Iaik that Peter III had appeared in Tsaritsyn and fled the area to Iaik. This became a reality in the case of the monastic death of the fugitive peasant F.I. Bogomolov. He was sentenced to prison in 1772 and died in Nerchinsk on his way to a Siberian penal colony.¹⁵ Pugachev's appearance in Iaik came at a time when such problems were smoldering.

Pugachev told his companion Sytnikov about the true purpose of his journey to Iaitskii Gorodok. Currently, Iaik Cossacks were suffering persecution by the government, but he wanted to talk to them about it and take them to the Kuban if they agreed. He had stores of 200,000 rubles worth of goods at the border, which he could use to make ends meet. And across the border was the "Turkish Pasha". If necessary, the Pasha was ready to provide up to 5 million rubles. When Sytnikov was surprised to hear this, Pugachev explained his plan to become an *ataman* or Cossack's head. He even promised that if it succeeded, he would put Sytnikov in the position of

¹⁰ Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov (RGADA), f. 6, op. 1, d. 512, Part 1, 346ob.-347; Part 2, 47-47ob., 105ob., 429, 429ob., 431; *Emel'ian Pugachev na sledstvii*, (Moscow: Iazyki russkoi kul'tury, 1997). pp. 62, 107, 141, 224.

¹¹ See Sen' D.V., «Voisko Kubanskoe Ignatovo Kavkazskoe»: istoricheskie puti kazakov – nekrasovtsev (1708 - end of 1920s) (Krasnodar: Izdatel'stvo «Kuban'kino», 2002), Second version, pp. 80-113. See also Toyokawa K., "Old Believers and the Cossacks", p. 140.

¹² RGADA, f. 6, op. 1, d. 512, Part 2, 432, 432ob.; *Emel'ian Pugachev na sledstvii*, pp. 62, 144, 145, 242.

¹³ RGADA, f. 6, op. 1, d. 506, 26; d. 512, Part 2, p. 432; *Emel'ian Pugachev na sledstvii*, pp. 62, 110, 145, 149.

¹⁴ For the relationship between Pugachev, the Old Believers and Iaik Cossacks, see author's article "Old Believers and the Cossacks," pp. 144-145.

¹⁵ Ignatovich I., "Krest'ianstvo vtoroi poloviny XVIII veka i pugachevshchina," *Trudovoi put'*, 1907, No. 2, pp. 41-42.

starshina or Cossack's upper echelon.¹⁶ The above story was at Tarovoy *Umet* or hamlet, about 60 versta (about 60 km) from Iaitskii Gorodok, where Pugachev stopped to stay.

Contrary to what Pugachev told Sytnikov, he appeared as "Peter III" in Iaik. A widely circulated view is that Pugachev's idea of pretender to the throne "Peter III" and to lead Iaik Cossacks was instigated by Filaret. We must consider this point.

It is no coincidence that Pugachev chose this region – Irgiz "contaminated by the spirit of *Raskor*."¹⁷ According to S. Taranets, the main forces of Pugachev's army were Cossacks, Muslims, and people who adhered to the "ancient faith – Old Belief."¹⁸ Under the banner of the pretenders, the Old Believers of the *Popovtsy* or Priestly sect came from Iaik, the Volga and the Urals, despite the great alarm of the Old Believer clergies and merchants. It is worth noting that Pugachev's words and deeds were not supported by the *Bespopovtsy* or non-Priestly sect,¹⁹ but this point must be considered separately.

On October 2-6, 1774, after his detention, Pugachev was questioned by the preliminary hearing in Simbirsk about the plan to force Iaik Cossacks and others to flee to the Kuban. This was instigated by Andrei Kuznetsov. He said: "Now that there is a great persecution of the Old Believers in Irgiz, it might be better to go somewhere else."²⁰ And regarding the pretender, when Pugachev appeared to see Filaret, he already had the idea. This was also suggested by Kozhevnikov and Kolovka. During interrogation, Pugachev said: "Father, I [Pugachev] was with Kozhevnikov and talked with the escaped border guard, and he advised me that I looked exactly like Peter III, and Kozhevnikov and Kolovka told me that I should take that name [Peter III]."²¹ Thus, Pugachev's pretending to be Peter III was instigated by others rather than by himself, and it was conceived before he met Filaret. This point will be examined in more detail in the next section.

The frequent court coups of the eighteenth century are linked to the appearance of pretenders in Russia. In the ten years after the reign of Peter I (reigned 1682-1725), Peter's eldest son, "Crown Prince Alexei (Tsarevich Alexei)," who was executed in 1718, appeared several times.²² And in 1723, in the Tambov County appeared Peter Petrovich, the "younger brother" of Alexei. In 1765, the Old Believer Ivan Evdokimov proclaimed Peter II (r. 1727-30, son of Crown Prince Alexei). S. Taranets mentioned that the basis for the "elevation" of the tsar's son and crown prince, Tsarevich, to tsar was the power of the Old Believers.²³ Although this is an interesting point, but it must be discussed in another article. Rather, V.O. Kliuchevskii, the leading historian of the tsarist period, called it "a chronic disease of the state."²⁴ K.V. Chistov, the famous folklorist of the Soviet era, described the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries Russian peoples' imagination (or creativity) for miracles and salvation by the Russian monarchs, especially the embodiment of

¹⁶ RGADA, f. 6, op. 1, d. 512, Part 1, 394-394ob.; d. 512, Part 2, 257-257ob.; *Emel'ian Pugachev na sledstvii*, pp. 146-147, 228-229.

¹⁷ Bartenev A., *Kratkii istoricheskii ocherk mer, prinimaemykh protiv raskola preimushchestvenno v noveishee vremia, Strannik. Dukhovnii ucheno-literaturnyi zhurnal za 1861 g.*, (St. Petersburg, 1861), Vol. 2, p. 317.

¹⁸ Taranets S., *op. cit.*, p. 309.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* The schism of the Russian Church first gave rise to a "priestly faction" that accepts priests and a "non-priestly sect" that does not. For more information on this situation, see Taranets S., "The Development of the Priestly School," in Hideaki Sakamoto and Atsuo Nakazawa, eds., *History and Culture of the Russian Orthodox Old Believers*.

²⁰ RGADA. f. 6, d. 512, Part 2, 48 ob.; *Emel'ian Pugachev na sledstvii*, pp. 107.

²¹ *Vosstanie Emel'iana Pugacheva: sbornik dokumentov*, (Leningrad: Ogiz: Sostekgiz Leningr. otd-nie, 1935), p. 76; *Emel'ian Pugachev na sledstvii*, p. 145.

²² Although it is examined from the perspective of historical history, the following essay can also be referred to: Doi Tsuneyuki, "The Crown Prince Alexei Case: A Historical Review," *Otaru University of Commerce Humanities Review*, Vol. 135, 2018.

²³ Taranets S., *op. cit.*, pp. 309-310.

²⁴ Kliuchevskii V.O., "Kurs russkoi istorii," *Sochnenia*, Vol. 9, Part 3 (Moscow: Mysl', 1988), p. 26.

legends about the “returning Tsar or Crown Prince.”²⁵ The Russian people could not help but wish for liberation from the various social traps caused by serfdom. This problem is a phenomenon unique to early modern Russian society.

Certainly, the Old Believers were participants in a series of uprisings that occurred even before the Pugachev rebellion. In this regard, the case of Vasily Selezniev, a fugitive soldier, Old Believer, in 1768, which preceded the Pugachev rebellion, should be noted. He declared flatly, “I do not want to obey Her Majesty’s orders and her power because of her unorthodox faith.”²⁶ Between 1764-98, more than 20 pretenders claimed to be Peter III, and the Old Believers played an important role in the 1760s-70s. They were particularly associated with famous pretenders such as Klemnev and Evdokimov.²⁷

Pugachev must have known for sure that some of the pretenders had the support of the Old Believers.²⁸ Pugachev himself was from the Don, where there were many Old Believers, and in addition to what was mentioned above, it is strongly assumed that Pugachev has a close relationship with them.²⁹ In view of the above circumstances, it can be assumed that the idea of pretenders was given by some other Old Believers, if not Filaret, and it is reasonable to assume that the government was also paying attention to the interaction between Pugachev and the Old Believers.

Russian and Soviet historians believe that Denis P’ianov was the first person to reveal the “secret” of Pugachev being a Tsar in November 1772.³⁰ What matters, however, is why a mere Cossack took the name Peter III. The frequent appearance of pretenders in the eighteenth-century plagued Catherine II and her government. The authorities were convinced after interrogation that Pugachev himself took the initiative in being a pretender to the throne. Iaik Cossacks knew that Pugachev was not a tsar but a “*prostoi chelovek* or ordinary man,” but that did not matter, and they used and supported him to enhance the position of the Iaik Cossacks.³¹

²⁵ Chistov K.V., *Russkaia narodnaia utopiia (genezie i funktsii sotsial’no-utopicgheskikh legend)* (St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2003).

²⁶ RGADA, f. 6, op. 2, d. 2047, Part 1, 233; f. 7, op. 2, d. 2047, Part 1, 179ob.

²⁷ Sivkov K.V., “Samozvanchestvo v Rossii v poslednei treti XVIII veka,” *Istoricheskie zapiski*, Vol. 31 (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1956), pp. 102, 108. In this paper, Sivkov was pointed out by C.M. Solov’ev, a prominent historian of the tsarist period, who mentioned the relationship between pretenders and Old Believers, and noted the movement of Old Believers-Odnodvortsy or special group of smallholders in Kozlov and Tambov Counties. It is considered using Shchapov’s ideas (*Ibid*, p. 102). Regarding the number of pretenders, Sivkov stated that more than 21 appeared from 1764-96, excluding Pugachev, and that the largest number was after the Pugachev rebellion (*Ibid*, C. 133). On the other hand, the English historian Longworth putted the number at 23 in the seventeenth century, 44 in the eighteenth century, and 26 in the reign of Catherine II (Longworth Ph. “The Pretender Phenomenon in Eighteenth-Century Russia,” *Past & Present*, no. 66, Feb. 1975, pp. 61, 66). The following article introduces the gossip that “Peter III is alive” and the unpublished ancient documents about the consequences (incidents) that it wrought. See: Toyokawa K., “The Consciousness of the People in Early Modern Russia: What Did the People in the Eighteenth Century Want?” *Bulletin of the Institute for Research in Humanities* (Toyo: Meiji University), Vol. 58, 2006.

²⁸ Kadson I.Z., “Vosstanie Pugacheva i raskol,” 1960. p. 229.

²⁹ Kadson I.Z., “Vosstanie Pugacheva i raskol,” in *Krest’ianskaia voina v Rossii v 1773-1775 godakh*, Vol. III. ed. Mavridin V.V. (Leningrad: Izdatel’stvo Leningradskogo Universiteta, 1970), p. 349.

³⁰ For example, the following see: Dubrovin N.F., *Pugachev i ego soobshchniki*, Vol. I, (St. Petersburg Tip. I.N. Skorokhodova, 1884), pp. 156-158; *Krest’ianskaia voina v Rossii v 1773-1775 godakh*, Vol. II. ed. Mavridin V.V. (Leningrad: Izdatel’stvo Leningradskogo Universiteta, 1966) pp. 84, 85; Ovchinnikov R.V. *Sledstvie i sud na E.I. Pugzhevym i ego spodvizhniki* (Moscow: Institut rossiiskoi istorii RAN, 1995), pp. 131, 132. Of course, not all researchers think so. For example, see the following research. Andrushchenko A.I., *Krest’ianskaia voina 1773-1775 z. na Iaike, v Priural’e, na Urale i v Sibiri*, (Moscow, 1969), pp. 22, 23; Klibanov A.I., *Narodnaia sotsial’naia utopiia v Rossii. Period feodalizma*, (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), pp. 154, 155.

³¹ “Sledsyvie i sud na E.I. Pugachevym,” *Voprosy istorii*, 1966, № 3, p. 131; *Emel’ian Pugachev na sledstvii*, p. 71.

Chapter 2: The Old Believers in the Pugachev Rebellion

Pugachev's attempt to persuade Iaik Cossacks to flee to the Kuban was unsuccessful. He was captured and sent to a prison in Simbirsk but was transferred from Simbirsk to Kazan with the help of the Old Believers. In addition, thanks to bribes, the heavy shackles placed on Pugachev were replaced by light shackles and he was transferred to a regular prison, where he was allowed to go out into the city. Eventually, with the help of Tver' tax collector V. Sholokov and Moscow merchant I. Khlebnikov, he was able to escape from prison.

In September 1773, on the eve of the rebellion, Pugachev again appeared among Iaik Cossacks. He had already gone to Irgiz and received the blessing of Filaret. However, at this time, the issue of fleeing across the Kuban to escape Russian rule was not talked about, and the uprising Cossacks felt that they could stay in Russia and overturn the old order and system of the state. They expressed their dissatisfaction and fought "for the sake of the old, that is, for the sake of the righteous god, the ancient belief." According to the symbolic expression of the Soviet researcher V.G. Kartsov, "behind Pugachev the organization of the Old Believers was moving as an apparition."

In December 1773, in the Pugachev headquarter camp near Orenburg, the Old Believer Afanasii Perfil'ev, an active participant in the Iaik Cossacks rebellion of 1772, appeared. He was sent to arrest and kill Pugachev by Catherine II and Grigorii Orlov (1734-83, a favorite of Catherine II, marshal, and senator). But Perfil'ev, who had sympathy for Pugachev, explained why he was dispatched. The appearance of Perfil'ev among Iaik Cossacks convinced the uprisers that Pugachev was the true Tsar. Later, Perfil'ev became one of Pugachev's closest leaders.³²

When Filaret, the Old Believer monastery of Irgiz, was arrested and imprisoned in the Kazan fortress, a man named Ivan Ivanov appeared in Pugachev's camp. He was Astafy Dolgopolov, the Old Believer merchant of Rzhev, who persuaded Pugachev to go to Kazan.³³ Filaret was then freed by the guards.

Traditionally, when considering the relationship with the Old Believers, the importance of the "ancient faith" and the fact of the gift of "*Krest i Boroda* or Cross and Beard", as seen in Pugachev's decrees and manifestos, has been pointed out by many historians. This has caused historians to identify the Old Believers as one of the reasons for the uprising. A further reason for this may be that Pugachev was an Old Believer (*Raskol'nik*), which is especially important given that the Old Believers promoted the ideological banner of the rebellion as seen by the Old Believers. Although the truth of this point will be discussed in more detail later, the history books established Pugachev's reputation as an Old Believer who believed the "ancient faith."³⁴

In fact, the motifs of "ancient faith" and "Cross and Beard" can be found in Pugachev's edict to the inhabitants of the Krasnogorskaia fortress and the Avzyano-Petrovskii factory (October 1773), in the manifesto to the serfs on the right bank of the Volga (July 1774), and in the manifesto to the Don Cossacks (August 1774).³⁵ The gifts to the Don Cossacks and Volga Cossacks "according to the ancient legends of the Holy Fathers: the cross and prayer, the head [i.e., shearing hair in the Cossack style] and the beard" are also mentioned in the decree of the "Military Council" of the Pugachev army.³⁶ Pugachev's decree dated October 23, 1773, addressed "Levontii Travkin, Cossack, and other inhabitants of the village of Mikhailova in Orenburg County," and gave them Cross and Beard, rivers and lands, grass and sea, monetary salaries and bread, bullets and gunpowder, and many freedoms for their faithful service.³⁷

³² See: RGADA, f. 6, op. 1, d. 425, 36-44.

³³ *Emelyan Pugachev at the investigation*, pp. 339-341.

³⁴ Kadson I.Z., "Vosstanie Pugacheva i raskol," 1970, p. 349.

³⁵ *Pugachevshchina*, Vol. 1, (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1926), pp. 32-33, 40-42.

³⁶ Ovchinikov R.V., Slobodchikh L.N. "Novye dokumenty o krest'ianskoi voine 1774-1775 gg. v Rossii," *Istoricheskii arkhiv*, 1956, № 4, p. 138.

³⁷ RGADA, f. 6, op. 1, d. 433, 19-19ob.

Whether or not “Cross and Beard” became a universal slogan in subsequent movements, it probably played a major role not only in causing Pugachev to emphasize his association with the Old Believers, but also in drawing various categories of people into the uprising army to cling to old customs and manners and free themselves from the institutional shackles of the state. It should be noted, however, that Pugachev did not issue manifestoes like the ones mentioned above only for Old Believers.³⁸ It should be noted here, however, that Pugachev issued the above-mentioned manifesto not only to the Old Believers, but also to the Bashkirs, to the Kalmyks, and to other ethnic groups.³⁹ The peoples of the Urals and the Volga coast, which were also religiously oppressed,⁴⁰ saw the above manifestos as a declaration of freedom of religion, that is, free adherence to traditional religious worship held by the people. Perhaps the Old Believers also interpreted Pugachev’s manifestos that way.

The following facts are known about this. In November 1773, during the siege of Orenburg, a *kontorshchik* or bailiff of the Kanonikol’skii factory who was participating in the uprising army was captured by government forces. During his interrogation, he said that Pugachev allowed the Old Believers, like many of the factory residents, to stretch their beard and cut cross with two fingers (the index finger and the middle finger), “as they were accustomed to.”⁴¹

Thus, the inhabitants who were the subject of Pugachev’s manifesto, which proclaimed the gift of the “Cross and Beard,” may have envisioned the restoration of their traditional rights rather than promoting the ancient faith as the state religion. Pavel Potemkin’s letter to Catherine II of 17 September 1774 clearly illustrates this. Potemkin wrote of Iaik Cossacks: “According to their way of speaking, they are the oldest and the most important. According to their own words, since the earliest times the Iaik Cossacks have had the unbidden use of the cross and beard given to them by the Tsar. However, they state that it is not known when the Cross and Beard was mentioned in the *gramota* or deed. For they claim these as *Raskol’niki*, but they are illiterate and fall into ignorance in the most absurd way.”⁴²

Similarly, it must be pointed out that non-Russians interpreted Pugachev’s testimony as a revival of their traditional rights. For example, the Bashkir Akkchkar Churagurov clearly stated: Pugachev said that “they [the Bashkirs] followed [him] in the footsteps of the previous reign of Tsar Peter I and gave them an admonition with promises to free them for their faithful service.”⁴³

Pugachev’s manifestos are certainly the historical sources that described “facts,” but to get closer to the “truth,” it is also necessary to listen to the opinions of folklore scholars. They regard these manifestos as repeating the unique form of Cossack songs and legends in which the Cossacks were given the Don, Terek and Iaik rivers from their upper reaches to their mouths. As for the gift of the “Cross and Beard,” these motifs are traditional, and the refusal to forcibly shave the mustache and beard is often found in Cossack songs of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. According to V.K. Sokolov, who studied songs and legends about the rebellion that occurred in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the social hopes of the serfs and the aspirations of the Cossacks were fundamentally directed towards “the past.” Moreover, these were created by the specialties of daily life peculiar to conservative and traditional Cossacks.⁴⁴

³⁸ *Pugachevshchina*, Vol. 1, p. 28.

³⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 30-31.

⁴⁰ For the situation of religious oppression of ethnic groups, see: Toyokawa K., *Studies in the History of Ethnic Unity in the Russian Empire: Colonial Policy and the Bashkirs* (Sapporo: Hokkaido University Press, 2006).

⁴¹ Pushkin A.S., *op. cit.*, p.247.

⁴² Grot Ia.K., *Materialy po istorii Pugachevskogo bunta. Bumagi, otnociashchiesia k poslednemu periodu miatezha i poimke Pugacheva – prilozhenie k XXV- tomu «Zapisok imperatorskoi akademii nauk», № 4.* (St. Petersburg: tip. Imperatorskoi Akademii nauk, 1875), p. 78.

⁴³ RGADA, f. 349, op. 1, Part. II, d. 7183, 187ob.

⁴⁴ Sokolov V.K., “Pesni i predaniia o vosstaniakh Razina i Pugacheva.” in *Sb. Russkoe narodno-poeticheskoe tvorcestvo. Materialy dra izucheniia obshchestvenno-politicheskikh vozzrenii naroda. Trudy Instituta etnografii, novaia seriia*, Vol. XX, (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1953), p. 54.

Pugachev's decree was addressed to the Iaik Cossacks and dated 17 September 1773, the first day of the rebellion. In this, he claimed the gift of the entire Iaik River from the top of the river to the mouth, land, salaries, bullets, and gunpowder and food, but did not mention the "ancient faith" or the "Cross and Beard,"⁴⁵ although the almost Cossacks were Old Believers, and that was shortly after Pugachev had arrived from an Old Believer village.⁴⁶

Does this mean that Pugachev, who was aware of Iaik Cossacks's interests, forgot to give them the "Cross and Beard," or that Pugachev used the slogans about "ancient faith" only for incitement purposes? Could it be that the slogan had only a secondary meaning to him? There are no historical documents to answer these questions. What is unique, however, is that in its manifesto on the gift of the "Cross and the Beard," it did not raise any opposition to *Nikonianstvo* or Nikon Orthodoxy. The only exception was the August 1774 manifesto addressed to Don Cossacks. This shows all the Old Belief elements of the Pugachev Rebellion. The manifesto stated: "The above-mentioned evil nobles have completely disrupted and insulted the transmission of the Christian faith by the ancient fathers. Instead, German customs brought from them the evil of their illusions, namely to another [i.e., different from Orthodox Christianity] faith, the most ungodly shaving beards, the cross and many other things that behaved [i.e., attacked] violently against the Christian faith."⁴⁷ But the criticism of foreign-influenced Christianity described in this manifesto does not seem to be so meaningful. Because, after Pugachev's army gave up the occupation of Iadrinskii and Krumyshskii Counties and left, the movement became less intense and was scaled down. Nor did the attacks on "German customs" persecute the German population who had moved from their homeland to the Volga valley in response to the decree of Empress Anna (r. 1730-40) and the call of Catherine II (r. 1762-96), much less did it entail the suppression of Catholic and Lutheran churches.

The above points are most clearly illustrated by two famous sentences by Ivan Guliaznov to Chelyabinsk on January 8, 1774. One was addressed to Cheliabinsk governor Sverbeev and his subordinates,⁴⁸ and the other was addressed to the residents. The former condemned the governor and his associates for "degrading" Orthodox Christianity and for not recognizing Pugachev as Peter Fedorovich (i.e., Peter III). The latter said: "We do not need the blood of Orthodox Christians, we trust [you] as you believe in the Orthodox faith."⁴⁹ In other words, Pugachev expressed his trust in the people who believed in Orthodoxy and called on them to join the rebellion.

However, I.Z. Kadson believes that Gliaznov used the religious consciousness of the Cheliabinsk population – to incite people. Neither Pugachev's manifestos nor Gliaznov's writings contain any of the Old Belief's creeds. They simply used the religious elements of the uprising.⁵⁰ However, it was already stated in tsarist literature that Pugachev's manifestos contained the idea of proclaiming religious freedom for pagans, Muslims, and *Raskol'niki*.⁵¹

The same may be true of the Razin rebellion. The only difference is that Pugachev himself, like Razin, was far from religious piety, but he was more sensitive (or radical) and more consistent in the religious affairs of the inhabitants than Razin. For example, while the Cossacks destroyed and robbed churches, Pugachev emphasized piety and faith. As Kadson notes, whether Pugachev saw this as a lie,⁵² according to folklore: "when [Pugachev] entered the peasant's house,

⁴⁵ *Pugachevshchina*, Vol. 1, p. 25.

⁴⁶ *Anuchin D.*, "Pervye uspekhi Pugacheva i ekspeditsiia Kara (Materialy dria istorii Pugachevskogo bunta)," *Voennyi sbornik*, 1869, № 5, p. 10.

⁴⁷ *Pugachevshchina*, Vol. 1, № 21, pp. 41-42.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, № 69, pp. 73-74.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, № 70, p. 75.

⁵⁰ Kadson I.Z., "Vosstanie Pugacheva i raskol," 1970. pp. 354-355.

⁵¹ *Ignatovich I. op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁵² Kadson I.Z., "Vosstanie Pugacheva i raskol," 1960. p. 232.

he said a short prayer to the icon, where he worshipped God, greeted his master, and then sat down at the table. He started drinking, but he cut a cross with each drink.”⁵³

Alongside the “Cross and Beard” gift that appeared in Pugachev’s manifestos, historians note that the *Raskor* crosses were sewn on the flags of the Pugachev army. This is what Pugachev himself testified,⁵⁴ and judging by all the circumstances, it is an indisputable fact. Flying the flags with this eight-pointed crosses sewn on them, Pugachev’s army marched from Tolkhachev village.

About how things happened, Pugachev’s “comrade-in-arms” Chika-Zarubin described during interrogation after his detention: “Like Kharchev [the centurion of Iaik Cossacks], [I] carried four flags (which had existed under Kharchev since the time of the uprising of Iaik Cossacks against General Traubenberg [1772], and I brought them with me), divided them in half and remade smaller flags.”⁵⁵ Under these flags, Pugachev’s army fought near the walls of besieging Orenburg.⁵⁶ After that, the flags on which the *Raskor* crosses were sewn disappeared. There are no other confirmed historical sources from during the occupation that confirm that Pugachev’s troops hoisted a white flag with a *Raskor* cross sewn on it.⁵⁷

According to the testimony of Chika-Zarubin, the flag flying in the Pugachev camp was already very useful during the Iaik Cossacks rebellion in January 1772. Until this time, however, no one was convinced that the rebellion was ideologically or otherwise related to the Old Belief. Therefore, it is important to point out that the presence of the above flags in the Pugachev army did not attract the attention of contemporaries, and that there was no trace of its evidence in the rebellion.

Thus, neither Pugachev’s manifesto nor other sources from the rebel camp can be regarded as a program for the new state system envisioned to approve the Old Beliefs. Also, the main posts of the Old Believers in Moscow, Irgiz, Kerzhenets and Ukraine could not be said to have had solid ties with the leaders of the Pugachev army. With individual exceptions, neither Iaik Cossacks nor other Old Believers attempted to convert the inhabitants of the rebel-occupied areas to their teachings.

Considering the above, it is clear we should not just focus only on the participation of Old Believers in the Pugachev rebellion. Rather, what is important is the social situation of the time, including the Old Believers, and how this social situation was reflected in the movement. It is certain that the peasants, Cossacks, and factory workers who participated in the rebellion stood up above all for their own social interests and for the “good Tsar.” For this reason, we should pay attention to Pugachev’s manifesto itself, which is an essential historical source for the study of the ideology of the rebellion. In particular, the manifesto of July 31, 1774, issued to bring in the serfs of the Volga River valley region while the Pugachev army moved there, expressed the peasants’ feelings quite clearly: “As sovereign and father, by this decree of my mercy, I look to those who were peasants before and are now under my lordship, that is to say, those who are slaves loyal to my crown, and I do not collect recruits, nor levy a per capita tax or other money, but I give them the ancient crosses and prayers, head [i.e., hair] and beard, freedom and liberty, and eternal Cossack, and I give them the right to the kingdom of the king. and freedom and liberty, and to be Cossacks forever. And they are allowed to purchase lands, forests, and revenue lands for mowing, fishing grounds, salt lakes, and the like, and to hold them without paying *obroks* or tribute [land

⁵³ *Pesni i skazaniia o Razine i Pugacheve* (Moscow and Leningrad: «Academia», 1935), p. 193.

⁵⁴ “Dopros E. Pugacehva v Moskve v 1774-1775 gg.,” *Krasnyi arkhiv*, № 2-3 (69-70), p. 188.

⁵⁵ RGADA, f. 6, op. 1, d. 506, 330; *Pugachevshchina*, Vol. 2, (Moscow and Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1929), pp. 131-132.

⁵⁶ *Arkhiv Sankt-Peterburgskogo otdel'nii Instituta istorii Rossiiskoi Akedemii nauk* (Arkhiv SPbII RANA), f. 36, op. 1, d. 422, 61ob.

⁵⁷ See: P-l'ev, “Kazan' 12 iulia 1774 g.” *Kazanskii birzhevoi listok*, 1874, № 54; Gavrilov I.N., *Kazanskii kalendar' na 1869 g.* (Kazan': Izdanie K.A. Tilli, 1868). p. 59. Dubrovin considered this information to be true (See: *Dubrovin N.F., Pugachev i ego soobshchinki*. Vol. 3. p. 397)

tax]. And I release the peasants and all the people from the taxes and all the burdens formerly incurred by the wicked nobles and the bribing judges of the cities.”⁵⁸

V.I. Semevsky, a prominent nineteenth-century scholar of peasant history, described Pugachev’s manifestos and argued that the “eight-edged cross” characteristic of the Old Belief did not interest everyone.⁵⁹ While the Manifestos strongly appealed to the consciousness and feelings of the people, the ownership of land and forests, the collection of tribute and taxes, and the permanent liberation from the oppression of the nobility and bureaucracy were the wishes of the people. In this sense, the social interests of the people prevailed over their religious feelings.

Chapter 3: Orthodox and Contemporaries’ View of the Pugachev Rebellion

The government and church leadership denounced Pugachev as *Raskol’nik*, because they recognized him as “a brutal enemy of the Church of Christ.” However, such impeachment cannot be a complete proof that Pugachev belonged to the Old Belief. It should be noted that even the most important historical sources on the part of the government do not necessarily agree about this. For example, the religious council admonition issued to residents and clergy in April 1774 and August of the same year, did not say a word “Pugachev *Raskol’nik*.” Also, Catherine II’s manifesto of 19 December 1774 on the suppression of the rebellion, and the accompanying “Description of the identity, incidents and destruction of the villain Emerika Pugachev, an insurgent and a monk” didn’t identify Pugachev as a member of the “Old Believers.”⁶⁰

In a report from the Regional Religious Affairs Department to Antony, Bishop of the Nizhegorod Alator Division, Pugachev was considered “an impostor” claiming to be Emperor Peter III and stipulated that his associates were bandits.⁶¹ A report from another province addressed to the same bishop (dated August 11, 1774) identified Pugachev as a national villain and a barbarian and admonished his followers about his “treacherous” behavior. While strictly ordering them not to join them, these reports are silent about the rebellion itself.⁶²

Furthermore, Catherine II’s decree to Antony (dated 9 September 1774) issued by the Council of Ecclesiastical Affairs stated that the clergy should not recognize Pugachev and should strive to eradicate this enemy.⁶³ Antony’s own report (August 29-September 17, 1774) described a case in which the priest who had accepted Pugachev as Peter III was stripped of his priesthood.⁶⁴

During an interrogation on May 10, 1774, Timofey Padulov testified to Cossacks as the following in the words of Pugachev: “I [Pugachev] just wanted to strip the church of its four-ended cross [like a Lutheran church] and raise it with an eight-pointed cross [like Old Believer church].” He continues: Pugachev not only did not condemn Iaik Cossacks for insulting the Orthodox Church, but perhaps “allowed them to do so.”⁶⁵ Padurov, an Orenburg Cossack who represented the Cossacks in the Commission for the Compilation of the Code of Catherine II and later became one of Pugachev’s close associates, testified as follows in Pugachev’s own words to the Cossacks.

According to Padulov, Pugachev often said: “If God makes me ruler, I will command all to observe the old faith, to wear Russian clothes and not to shave their beards, but to shave their hair

⁵⁸ *Pugachevshchina*, Vol. 1, pp. 40-41.

⁵⁹ Semevskiy V.I., *Krest’ianskii voprosy v Rossii v XVIII i pervoi polovine XIX veka*, Vol. 1. (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Tovarishchestva «Obshchestvennaia Pol’za», 1888), p. 178.

⁶⁰ Kadson I.Z., “Vosstanie Pugacheva i raskol,” 1970, p. 350.

⁶¹ Gosudarstvennyi (Tsentral’nyi) arkhiv Nizhegorodskoi oblasti v Nizhnom Novgorode (TsANO), f. 570, op. 555, d. 14, 1, 2, 3, 4. 5-5ob., 6-6ob., 7, 8-8ob., 9-9ob., 10, 11-11ob., 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17.

⁶² TsANO, f. 570, op. 555, d. 16, 8.

⁶³ TsANO, F. 570, op. 555, d. 18, 1.

⁶⁴ TsANO, f. 570, op. 555, d. 23, 1.

⁶⁵ *Pugachevshchina*, Vol. 2, № 60, pp. 187-188.

short in Cossack style.”⁶⁶ The same was said by Maksim Shigaev, one of Pugachev’s comrades-in-arms.⁶⁷

N.S. Sokolov, the son of a clergyman, who graduated from the Theological Academy in St. Petersburg and became secretary of the Statistical Committee in Saratov and then secretary of the Academic Archives Commission, introduced the words of Strypin, the Cossack ataman. He said, “When he [Pugachev] was with *Raskol’niki*, he was *Raskol’nik*, but when he was with Orthodox Christians, he was Orthodox,” and this was true.⁶⁸ Sokolov wrote that in the cities and villages occupied by Pugachev, icons, holy flag (church flags depicting Christ or saints leading the march of the cross, etc.), and clergy with crosses greeted Pugachev, and he would kiss the cross reverently. In Iaik, the Orthodox priest Zhvetin officiated the wedding to Ustinya Kuznetsova, whom Pugachev chose as his second wife. Focusing on the above, Sokolov concluded that the Old Believers would never allow such a remarriage as a belief and creed.⁶⁹ Could it be that Pugachev was not an Old Believer?

Pugachev, who was captured by government troops, described himself as “a believer in the Orthodox Greek faith, a universal religion, not *Raskol’nik*, unlike other Don Cossacks and Iaik Cossacks, and prayed to God on the same cross as all Orthodox Christians, crossing with the first (but not last) three fingers [thumb, index finger and middle finger].”⁷⁰ The testimony of his wife Sofia Dmitrievna confirms this.⁷¹

Therefore, it is difficult to conclude that the slogans “Cross and Beards”, “Ancient Faith”, and “Faith and Law” that appear in the “decrees” and manifestos of the Pugachev army had enough universality to spur the people to rebellion. These slogans may have appeared only when Pugachev establishes close relations with the Old Believers. Kadson goes so far as to say that, except for the manifestos, no Old Belief ideology can be traced in any historical source emanating from the peasants, Cossacks, and factory workers on the rebel side.⁷² From such historical circumstances, he argues, the relationship between Pugachev and the Old Believers is not clear, as Tsarist scholars have argued. Kadson concludes that the idea of the popular rebellion originated in the hermitage of the Old Belief, that is, it could not be said that the Old Believers were the instigators and leaders of the rebellion.⁷³

It is important to note that Pugachev’s argument with Filaret in the monastic retreat was not about starting a rebellion on the cause of it, much less march to Orenburg and Kazan, which were Russian bridgeheads to Asia. The aim of the rebellion was rather to escape from the harsh situation surrounding the Russian people, such as serfdom and to obtain real salvation. This was the earnest wish of the people. Moreover, this can be seen as consistent with the worldview of the Old Believers, especially that of one of its sects, the “Fugitive sect.”⁷⁴ In fact, thousands of Old Believers fled to Irgiz and Kerzhenets.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁶⁷ Arkhiv SPbII RANA, f. 113, op. 1, d. 58/2, 43ob.

⁶⁸ Sokolov N.S., *Raskol v Saratovskom krae*, Vol.1, (Saratov: Tip. N.P. Shtertser i K, 1888), pp. 43-54. This is the following quote from Vitevsky, on which Sokolov relied: *Vitevskii V., Raskol v Ural'skom voiske i otnoshenie k nemu dukhovnoi voenno-grazhdanskoi vlasti v plovine XVIII v.* (Kazan’: Tip. Universiteta, 1877), p. 19.

⁶⁹ Sokolov N.S., *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁷⁰ RGADA, f. 6, op. 1, Part. 2, d. 512. 100-100ob.; *Emel’ian Pugachev na sledstvii*, p. 56; “Sledstvie i sud and E.I. Pugachevym, Podgotovka k pechati, arkhograficheskoe vvedenie i primechaniia R.G. Ovchinnikova,” *Voprosy istorii*, 1966, № 3, p. 132.

⁷¹ Pushkin A.S. *op. cit.*, p. 107.

⁷² Kadson I.Z., “Vosstanie Pugacheva i raskol,” 1960, p. 230.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 229.

⁷⁴ For this point, refer to the following paper. Toyokawa K., “Popular Movements in Eighteenth-Century Russia and Its World: Focusing on the Lord-Peasants in the Pugachev Rebellion,” *Journal of Social Sciences* (Toyo: Waseda Univeresity), Vol. 33, № 3, 1988, pp. 303-337.

There are no historical sources that can give a definitive answer as to whether Pugachev was an Old Believer. Rather, as he stated at the inquisition, the facts – do not support this claim. However, as already mentioned, he went through the Old Believers' monasteries and received great help from them. It should also be remembered that under Iaik Cossacks, many of whom were Old Believers, he sought to impress himself as Tsar Peter III, and even enlisted their support in the uprising.

Apart from the above, one thing that must be considered is how people at the time of the rebellion viewed Pugachev. Many pre-revolutionary history books assert that Pugachev was an Old Believer (*Raskol'nik*), but these books began with a repetition of the phrase from Pushkin's "History of the Pugachev Rebellion" mentioned at the beginning of this article. One reason behind this was the relationship between Pugachev and the Old Believers, which was built on the eve of the rebellion. A further reason may be that the government historical documents at the time of the Pugachev rebellion refer to the ringleader of the rebellion as "*Raskol'nik*."

In addition, the archbishop Veniamin of Kazan, the bishop of Viatka, Valforomei, and other chief priests of the Orthodox Church, in their "admonitions," accused Pugachev of destroying the church and insulting the relics of Christ. They labelled him "*Raskol'nik*." And Catherine II and her chief retainer Nikita Panin decided that Pugachev was "*Raskol'nik*."

European diplomats stationed in St. Petersburg and Russian diplomats posted abroad also believed that Pugachev was a "*Raskol'nik*." This was clear, for example, in a November 1773 letter from the British minister Robert Gunning to Count Svorik in England. In a meeting with Petr Panin, Gunning discussed the war with the Ottoman Empire and observes the claims that Pugachev was an Old Believer who escaped from a Kazan prison and that many Old Believers later gathered under him. Gunning stated: "Various accounts are received of the progress of insurgents in the province of Orenbourg [sic. Orenburg]. The man who personates [sic. impersonates] Peter the third is a schismatic cossak [sic. Cossack], who was imprisoned at Cazan [sic. Kazan] for some crime, from whence he contrived to make his escape, and has been since joined by a great number of the same sect. The troops in that country are so dispersed, that it may possibly be a work of time to suppress this insurrection: but the greatest inconvenience that is apprehended from thence, is the difficulty of recruiting the army."⁷⁵

Many foreigners thought about the role of "*Raskolniki*" in the Pugachev rebellion. In other words, Iaik Cossacks not only retaliated for the insult to Cossacks, but also wanted to retaliate against the church that played a leading role in it, as Kadson stated. However, there were some government sources that differed from those that referred to Pugachev as "*Raskolnik*."⁷⁶ Indeed, according to Pugachev's statement, he was baptized in a church in his native Zimoveiskaia village, attended church since childhood, had a confession priest, and received the Holy Communion.⁷⁷

Conclusion

From the above discussions, we can draw some conclusions. First, it is difficult to find evidence that the Old Belief and other heresies were ideological markers of the Pugachev rebellion. Or, from a different perspective, we could say that one should not confuse Iaik Cossacks, who formed the core of Pugachev's army and took the initiative in the rebellion, with the ardent allies of the Old Believers who fled to Kerzenets and Irgiz. There were many Old Believers among Iaik Cossacks, and the fact that Iaik Cossacks destroyed the church and killed the priests cannot be overlooked. Therefore, it cannot necessarily be said that they aimed to rebuild the "ancient faith" in Russia.

⁷⁵ *Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obshchestva*, Vol. 19, (St. Petersburg: Tip. K. Mattisena, 1876), p. 385 (No.191, Sir Robert Gunning to the Earl of Suffolk, St. Petersburg, November 12 (23) 1773).

⁷⁶ Kadson I.Z., "Vosstanie Pugacheva i raskol," 1960. p. 228.

⁷⁷ RGADA. f. 6, op. 1, d. 512, 100-100ob.; *Sb. Vosstanie Emel'iana Pugaceva*, p. 92.

In the first place, what role did the Old Belief slogans play in the slogans of the rebellion? Judging from historical documents, it was not necessarily something big or universal. However, there is no doubt that it was an opportunity for the people to join the rebellion.

Second, Pugachev's comrades-in-arms aimed first and foremost to be Cossack, and then to be Old Believers (*Raskol'niki*). Their social ideals were embodied in the "good Tsar" or Cossack autonomy, but not as Old Believers who cut a cross with two fingers, index and middle fingers of their right hand. We must consider that the Pugachev Rebellion was a popular movement in which all elements of society participated.

Thirdly, it can be said that the Old Belief was the religious basis for such struggles, although the possibility of using the purpose and character of the Old Belief in the Pugachev Rebellion was limited. Nevertheless, Nikolai Pokrovskii thought, it can be said that the Old Believers were to a certain extent the religious stronghold of such struggles.⁷⁸

Fourthly, most importantly, Pugachev had the opportunity to form a relationship with the Old Believers, used this to escape from the authority to Poland, return to Russia to settle down, and promote the rebellion in one place. The Old Believers cooperated with him to be free themselves from suppression and used their own network in another. In this sense Pugachev and Old Believers cooperated closely. The Pugachev rebellion had a "composite" character. The slogan for Old Believers made various categories of people participate easily in this rebellion. A total of about 300 million people participated in the rebellion indeed. But the organization of the human network of the Old Believers is open to further discussion.

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Information about the author:

*Toyokawa, Koichi (Tokyo, Japan) - PhD. (History and Area Studies),
Prof., Department of History and geography, School of Arts and Letters,
Meiji University, Tokyo, Japan,
toyokawa @meiji.ac.jp*

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