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USSR policy of 1920 in relation to people forced to emigrate to Asian countries after the end of the civil war of 1917-1922

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Andrey Ivanovich Baksheev * Mikhail Dmitrievich Severyanov ** Vladislav Nikolaevich Vorontsov *** Sergei Tihonovich Gaidin **** Alexander Georgievich Rogachev ***** Sergey Alekseevich Safronov *****

Abstract

It examines the military activities of white emigration in China, especially in Manchuria, evaluates attempts to influence the situation in the neighboring regions of the Soviet Union in the 1920s, and further characterizes the reaction of the Soviet authorities. General scientific methods (analysis, synthesis) and

general historical (historical-genetic, historical-comparative; problembased and chronological, historical-systemic) are used. The authors dwell on the background and reconstruction of the general context of the facts. Vivid and extensive quotations from various witnesses are provided. By way of conclusion, the hypothesis of the study is confirmed that the influence of white emigration on the life of the Soviet population, which is undesirable for the Soviet authorities, is eliminated by a combination of measures of force and propaganda: the creation of borders, troops, campaigns, and the assassination of emigrated leaders. The actions of the paramilitary units of the White emigration hinder the life of the local population and are neutralized thanks to the policy of the Soviet authorities.

Keywords: Soviet Russia; China; Manchuria; Harbin; Russian Military Union (RAMU).

^{*} Prof. V.F. Voino-Yasenetsky Krasnoyarsk State Medical University of the Ministry of Healthcare of the Russian Federation, Krasnoyarsk, Russia. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7607-731X

^{**} Siberian Federal University, Krasnoyarsk, Russia. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4764-8181

^{***} Irkutsk State Transport University, Irkutsk, Russia. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1944-4501

^{****} Krasnoyarsk State Agrarian University, Krasnoyarsk, Russia. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0301-7505

^{*****} Krasnoyarsk State Agrarian University, Krasnoyarsk, Russia. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9818-1812

^{*******} Siberian Federal University, Krasnoyarsk, Russia. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6417-8260

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Política de la URSS de 1920 en relación con las personas forzadas a emigrar a países asiáticos después del final de la guerra civil de 1917-1922

Resumen

Se examinan las actividades militares de la emigración blanca en China, especialmente en Manchuria, evalúan los intentos de influir en la situación en las regiones vecinas de la Unión Soviética en la década de 1920 y, además, caracterizan la reacción de las autoridades soviéticas. Se utilizan métodos científicos generales (análisis, síntesis) e históricos generales (histórico-genético, histórico-comparativo; basado en problemas y cronológico, histórico-sistémico). Los autores se detienen en el trasfondo y la reconstrucción del contexto general de los hechos. Se proporcionan citas vívidas y extensas de varios testigos. A modo de conclusión se confirma la hipótesis del estudio de que la influencia de la emigración blanca en la vida de la población soviética, que es indeseable para las autoridades soviéticas. se elimina mediante una combinación de medidas de fuerza y propaganda: la creación de fronteras, tropas, campañas y el asesinato de líderes emigrados. Las acciones de las unidades paramilitares de la emigración Blanca dificultan la vida de la población local y son neutralizadas gracias a la política de las autoridades soviéticas.

Palabras clave: Rusia Soviética; China; Manchuria; Harbin; Unión Militar Rusa (RAMU).

Introduction

The relevance of the topic of the study is determined by the need for further research into the Russian emigration of the 20th century as a phenomenon of not only Russian but also world history. An integral part of this phenomenon is the history of the Russian White emigration over 1921– 1929, in particular in China, where one of the centers of the ideological and political development of the White emigrants was located.

As a result of the events of the civil war, in total, more than two million people left Russia for other countries (Goldin, 2007). Politically, the Russian emigration was a rather complex conglomeration of forces and movements – from radical monarchists to Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. In general, it was a powerful and ideologically motivated force that still hoped for the implementation of plans to resume hostilities with Soviet Russia (Baksheev *et al.*, 2021b).

The greatest danger to the latter was posed by the Russian officers and their organizations abroad. In his works, the leader of the Soviet state V.I. Lenin wrote that White Guard organizations were actively working to try and create military units and, under favorable conditions, invade Soviet Russia (Shkarenkov, 1986).

The analysis of the formation and activity of Russian emigration in China in the 1920s carried out in several studies (Ablazhei, 2007; Goverdovskaya, 2004; Melikhov, 2003; Pisarevskaya, 2002; Revyakina, 2002) allows one to contribute to the further scientific development of many aspects in the history of international socio-political processes, as well as to the study of Russian-Chinese relations in the first half of the 20th century.

At the same time, some issues related to this topic, in our opinion, have not been sufficiently developed in historiography. First, this refers to the features of the White emigration in China, the struggle of its military faction with Soviet Russia, as well as the measures taken by the authorities of Soviet Russia outside Soviet territory. It seems to us that the study of the influence of White emigration in the 1920s is one of the tasks of modern historical science.

The scientific novelty of the article is determined by the study of the general and special features that the life of the white emigration had in various regions of China; analysis of the problems that existed in the protection of the state border of the Far East and Eastern Siberia at the time as well as an analysis of the set of measures adopted by the Soviet authorities.

The hypothesis of the study: the influence of the White emigration on the life of the Soviet population in the 1920s that was undesirable for the Soviet authorities was eliminated by a wide range of force and propaganda measures: the creation of border troops, campaigns, and the murder of emigration leaders.

1. Methods

In the study, we used a set of general scientific (analysis, synthesis) and general historical (historical-genetic, historical-comparative; problembased and chronological, historical-systemic) methods.

The use of methods of analysis and synthesis made it possible to identify the features of the status of White emigrants in China and to show their influence on the Soviet Far East and Eastern Siberia in the 1920s.

The historical-genetic method made it possible to recreate a comprehensive image of the features of the White emigration in China.

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Through the historical-comparative method, we showed the general and specific features of the life of the White emigration in various regions of China. At the same time, the activities of the paramilitary units of the White emigration are presented in the context of a real historical process, determined by the features of goal setting.

Using the problem-based and chronological method, we identified the corresponding problems with the protection of the state border of the Far East and Eastern Siberia at that time.

The historical-systemic method, as one of the fundamental methods of historical research, made it possible to consider a set of measures by the authorities of Soviet Russia, which were taken outside the Soviet territory to normalize the peaceful life of Soviet citizens in the region.

2. Results

• Features of White emigration in China

The first Russian emigrants in China were officials of the Russian diplomatic corps who did not agree to follow the instructions of the Soviet government "based on the platform of the Second All-Russian Congress" as noted in the order of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs (NKID) dated 26 Nov. 1917 (Shkarenkov, 1986). Among them were ambassadors to Japan V.N. Krupensky, and China N.A. Kudashev, the consul in Harbin, Prince D.V. Meshchersky, and many others. In addition, the following remained in Manchuria: the headquarters, part of the officers, and lower ranks of the Zaamursky district of the border guard and the board of the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) (Ablova, 2007). During the Civil War, Ataman I.M. Gamov's Amur Cossacks temporarily hid in China in spring 1918, and in February 1920 so did Ataman I.M. Kalmykov's Ussuri Cossacks.

The emigrant community in China was mainly reinforced by the military personnel of the defeated White armies, their families, and civilian refugees:

- In May 1920, the separate Semirechensk army of the ataman B.V. Annenkova.
- In November 1920, a small part of the "Kappelevtsy" (White members of the military who assumed the informal patronage of the deceased General V.O. Kappel) and "Semenovtsy" (members of the White units previously deployed in Transbaikalia, headed by Ataman G.M. Semenov).
- In October 1922, the zemstvo army of General M.K. Diterikhs (this is the rest of the former "Kappelevtsy" and "Semenovtsy").

There are still discrepancies in the assessment of the number of Russians who ended up in China at that time. According to official data, in the 1920s only in Manchuria, there were more than 100 thousand people who arrived from Russia. According to other sources, 450 thousand Russians lived here. Although a lot of people arrived there even before the 1905 revolution and lived in the exclusion zone of the CER (Ivanov, 2003).

The Far Eastern White emigration shared the global fate of the entire White emigration with a significant difference: the first months in the refugee camps were particularly terrible. In the spring of 1920, White émigré camps appeared in Northern China (the current Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region), where soldiers, Cossacks (Kuraev *et al.*, 2019), officers, refugees lived, and lieutenant general A.I. Dutov took command over them. The total number of the population of the camps is unknown because the Soviet leadership was more worried about Dutov's six-thousand detachment in Suidong. On 7 Feb. 1921, A.I. Dutov was killed by agents of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission (Usov, 2002).

In the spring of 1921 famine broke out in the camps and reached catastrophic proportions. People died every day, the corpses of the dead were not removed for weeks, a huge number of sick and poor people appeared, robberies became commonplace. A similar situation occurred in most refugee camps in northern China (Aurilene, 2008), the only exception being the end of the camp near Chuguchak. On 24 May 1921, units of the Red Army crossed the border, captured most of those who were in this camp, and transported them to Soviet territory. Such a development of events was only possible in a civil war. Only professional soldiers managed to avoid deportation to their homeland, command over which was assumed by Lieutenant General A.S. Bakich (executed in May 1922 after the defeat of the expedition of Lieutenant-General von Ungern-Sternberg) (Pisarevskaya, 2002).

The same could be seen not only in North China but also in Shanghai. In his memoirs, the Soviet diplomat M.I. Kazanin described the Russian Shanghai colony with Bolshevik gloating and prejudice.

What awaited Russian women in the future? To live today so that the owner of the boarding house, who has not been paid for three months already, does not throw you into the street – this is the immediate goal. Then... work in bars and dance halls as paid partners for drunk sailors who came to dance – and, in the end, selling themselves by the hour in specialized institutions. Their future is a hospital and a morgue. It was no better for men.

The poor died quickly. Those who owned some valuables tried to trade, although they usually did not know how to, those who were physically stronger were hired by the British police, or as security guards for the rich Andrey Ivanovich Baksheev, Mikhail Dmitrievich Severyanov, Vladislav Nikolaevich Vorontsov, Sergei Tihonovich Gaidin, Alexander Georgievich Rogachev y Sergey Alekseevich Safronov USSR policy of 1920 in relation to people forced to emigrate to Asian countries after the end of the civil war of 1917-1922

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Chinese competing with the Sikh Indians or became strikebreakers when the Chinese workers went on strike. Some went into military service with Chinese generals and died even faster than women (Ivanov, 2003).

The comments of the Soviet official were partly confirmed by Colonel L.I. Shtin, who served in the detachment of General K.P. Nechaev subordinate to the ruler of northeastern China Zhang Zuolin. In 1925, there were 4,000 people in the detachment (infantry, cavalry, artillery). In his memoirs, the Colonel increasingly asks himself the question: "We are fighting, we are suffering losses, our people are dying – for whom and for what?" The officers' pessimism was confirmed by the assessment of General A.S. Lukomsky, who noted that in two and a half years, only Nechaev's detachment lost more than 1,000 people in the battles of the civil war in China (Balmasov, 2007).

However, there were also oases of former life in China – Harbin and the Three- River area. The Three-River area is a special geographic region in the northwestern part of Manchuria (basin of the Argun River), where Cossacks settled on numerous farms. According to Japanese data, at the beginning of the 1930s, there were more than 20 farmsteads, from 10 to more than 100 households in each (55 thousand Russians). However, the Japanese probably underestimated the Russian population of the Three-River area, from which they recruited fighters for the White Guard units (Klyaus, 2015).

Harbin, a city built with Russian funds at the end of the 19th century, became the center of the White emigration for many years. The city had a Russian administration, two dozen Orthodox churches, a polytechnic institute, and a commercial school. Trade was controlled by the merchant Churin, restaurants and cafes were controlled by the Georgian Gamarteli, and Russian performances were staged in theaters (Kapran, 2011).

The emigrant poets called Harbin the Far Eastern Paris. The poet Arseny Nesmelov (A.I. Mitropolsky) performed in the salons, F.I. Chaliapin gave concerts, V.L. Durov performed in the circus. Fourteen Russian-language newspapers and 82 magazines, streets and urban areas retained their Russian names (Kapran, 2011).

In 1940, the former Irkutsk citizen I.I. Serebrennikov, a historian and publicist, wrote: "emigration brought many intellectual forces with it to Harbin. Never during its existence has Harbin seen such a large number of the highly qualified intelligentsia" (Varaksina, 1999: 30).

However, if Harbin resembled Novocherkassk or Rostov-on-Don, then in the provincial cities of Manchuria, a real swamp of Atamanism formed, where people not so much drank too much Chinese vodka – "the prude" (baijiu), as smoked opium, and the Chinese treated Russian emigrants as criminals (Lin, 2001). Soviet workers of the CER and those who had business trips to China were unpleasantly surprised and shocked to find themselves in Manchuria. Here is what the future general and hero of the defense of Stalingrad V.I. Chuikov (1979) wrote on his experience:

Having crossed the border, I did not immediately feel that it was no longer Russian land under the wheels... But soon, looking out the window during a train stop, I realized that we were in a different world. Life seemed to have frozen there, stopped and in a moment, we went several years into the past. Russian officers walked along the platforms in military uniform with stars. The Chinese authorities involved them in guarding the road... Careful preservation of uniforms and personal weapons... The uniform is stale... The look is wary and hostile....

Chuikov described Harbin as a trade, economic and political cell of Manchuria, and at the same time a cell of smuggling and espionage.

The whole city is a black market. Everything here was a commodity. If something is unavailable, they will get it from any part of the globe. Harbin is a city of contrasts: on the one hand, there are rich people, on the other, there are many beggars. The city was invaded by the elements of the black market, police terror, a wave White Guards (Chuikov, 1979).

The existence of those who could get a job at the CER was relatively prosperous because the economic crisis of the 1920s, which also hurt Russian enterprises in China, was accompanied by massive unemployment. The factories stopped working, instead of wheat they grew poppy which the Chinese processed into opium (Melikhov, 2003).

• The fight of the White emigration with Soviet Russia in the Far East and Eastern Siberia

On 1 Sep. 1924 following order No. 35 of General P.N. Wrangel, the Russian All-Military Union (RAMU) was created in Sremski Karlovci (Serbia), designed to unite all the officers of the former White Army abroad and preserve the military organization (Goldin, 2007). Members of the armies of A.V. Kolchak, N.N. Yudenich and others were also allowed to join. General management was carried out by General Wrangel's headquarters.

RAMU included those who remained faithful to the ideas of the White Cause, and its main task was to retain personnel for the creation of a new Russian army in the future. At the decisive moment, this army was supposed to be mobilized for a new war against Bolshevism, where it was to become an important military and political factor.

RAMU consisted of six departments, which were divided geographically: Department I included military emigrants from France and England, Department II – in Germany, Department III – in Bulgaria, IV – in Yugoslavia, V in Belgium, VI – in Czechoslovakia. By the end of the 1920s, Andrey Ivanovich Baksheev, Mikhail Dmitrievich Severyanov, Vladislav Nikolaevich Vorontsov, Sergei Tihonovich Gaidin, Alexander Georgievich Rogachev y Sergey Alekseevich Safronov USSR policy of 1920 in relation to people forced to emigrate to Asian countries after the end of the civil war of 1017-1022

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there were about 100 thousand people in RAMU. Over time, not only white emigrants who lived in Europe, but also in Asia, South, and North America, began to join RAMU (Goldin, 2007).

Thus, in 1928, the Far Eastern Department of RAMU was created, its organizations were in Dairen, Mukden, Harbin, Tianjin, and Shanghai (Ivanov, 2003).

The department was headed by generals M.V. Chanżyn, and later M.K. Diterikhs. The chairman of the Russian emigration in the Far East was General D.L. Horvat, a former CER manager who established excellent relations with old China, with the diplomatic corps, and united Far Eastern emigrants (which no one else in Europe succeeded in) to fight Bolshevism. This fight began with the purging of its own ranks and the suppression of attempts to return to the USSR in connection with the decree of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars dated 9 Jun. 1924 on amnesty for all privates of the White armies stationed in the Far East, Mongolia, and western China (Dubaev, 2002). The most notorious episode was the murder of D.N. Chernyavsky, the editor of the "Smenovekhovtsy" newspaper "Novosti Zhizni".

RAMU members were engaged in intelligence in the border regions of the USSR. Armed detachments of White émigrés repeatedly crossed the state border to carry out sabotage raids: "gangs familiar with the area were based on Chinese territory and, with support on Soviet territory, carried out attacks on the local population..." (Krotova, 2014: 69).

However, it should be noted that, despite all the efforts and funds that were invested in the activities of the militarized White émigré groups, the goal that was set for them was not achieved (Baksheev et al., 2021a). Judging by the documents, a lot of emigration efforts were dedicated to organizing an uprising in the Far East and Eastern Siberia to separate these territories from the USSR. However, with the exception of the uprising in the Amur region in 1924, the goal was not achieved. Moreover, in 1927 only six families left this area, motivating their decision with attacks from abroad (Sviridenko and Ershov, 2000). This dealt another blow to the counterrevolutionary underground as people were tired of the war and wanted to work in peace, not fight.

Operations of the Soviet border troops

The active actions of the radical representatives of the White emigration in the border regions of the Far East and Eastern Siberia were facilitated by the lack of development of the state border, which was rooted in the times of the Russian Empire. This can be explained by the substantial length of the border in an underpopulated region; the absence until 1917 of the units of a separate Border Guard Corps of the Russian Empire on the Far Eastern border and the impossibility of recruiting civilians for the border corps; the interest of the local population in the development of the smuggling industry.

The land border with China was four thousand miles long. Moreover, the region was sparsely populated: about 1.7 million people lived in an area of more than three million square kilometers, which averaged 1.1 people per one km², while in the European part of the country there were 30 people per one km².

As a result of studies of the Russian-Chinese border, back in tsarist Russia, a project was developed for the establishment of a border guard in Eastern Siberia. The project provided for the creation of border control posts, the construction of patrol roads, and other activities. The total number of guards was to increase to four thousand people (based on the calculation of one border guard per one verst). The main problem for the border guards was smuggling since after the closure of the Far Eastern "free port" (duty-free import of foreign goods) in 1907, it was not possible to stop the flow of smuggled goods. The fact is that for most residents, who lived mainly at the expense of crafts, smuggling was the most important aspect of unofficial income (Plekhanov and Plekhanov, 2003).

Undoubtedly, the civil war inflicted great harm on the border guards of the Far East and Eastern Siberia. One cannot ignore the fact that the troops of the interventionists (especially the Japanese) did everything possible to destroy the infrastructure and material base of the border troops.

Four years of civil war helped to strengthen the position of smugglers in the area. That is why the Soviet border troops had to start guarding the state border almost from square one. While their opponents were professional military men. The border troops located along the border in small groups, without constant communication, were in very difficult conditions (Buyakov and Shinin, 2013). In the Far East and Eastern Siberia, similar work continued with varying degrees of intensity until 1939 (the defeat of the Japanese armed forces on the Khalkhin-Gol River).

The following figures testify to the efficiency of the Far Eastern border guards: from 1925 to 1935, 31,092 violators of the state border, 384 spies, 37 saboteurs, 216 bandits, and 9,679 smugglers were detained (Gladkikh, 2010). The number of violators, terrorists, and White bandits killed in this case cannot be counted, because, according to the commandant of the Iman commandant's office: "the main task of the border guards was not to throw the gang back into the adjacent territory, but to completely destroy it. To strike them off the centralized register, so to say" (Gladkikh, 2010: 20).

The activities of the border guards gave their results during the constant military conflicts and provocations of the 1920s, among which the most notorious were the military actions in 1929 at the CER (with China).

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Regular units of the Red Army provided significant assistance to the border guards. In July 1924, the 18th Rifle Corps headquarters in Chita (later transferred to Irkutsk) and the 19th Rifle Corps headquarters in Khabarovsk were formed as part of the Siberian Military District.

The 18th Rifle Corps consisted of:

- 35th Siberian Rifle Division, stationed in Irkutsk.
- 36th Transbaikal Rifle Division in Chita.
- 5th separate Kuban Cavalry Brigade in the village of Berezovka (now Divisional near Ulan-Ude) (since 1927, the brigade's headquarters at Dauria station).
- since 1926, the Buryat-Mongolian cavalry squadron (since 1 Oct. 1927, a separate Buryat-Mongolian cavalry division) – the village of Berezovka.

The 19th Rifle Corps included:

- 1st Pacific Rifle Division in Vladivostok.
- 2nd Priamurskaya Rifle Division in Khabarovsk.
- 9th separate Far Eastern Cavalry Brigade in Nikolsk-Ussuriysky (Baksheev, 2020).

Discussion

Despite constant tension along the Soviet-Chinese border, in the conditions of an undeclared war with shots not only across the border but also military operations on Soviet territory, the intensive development of the Far East and Eastern Siberia region continued (Baksheev *et al.*, 2020).

To ensure a peaceful life for Soviet citizens in the region, in addition to the actions of the border guards, the Soviet government and its defense and law enforcement agencies implemented a set of measures that were carried out on the other side of the Soviet border. The actions that were carried out by Soviet workers can be divided into the following components:

- campaigning and propaganda work among emigrant organizations since November 1922. Thanks to this activity, already in March 1923, 1,200 officers and soldiers stationed in Jilin (Manchuria) abandoned active military operations against the USSR, and 900 people left this anti-Soviet organization. There were no more than 500 people left in the White Guard organization of the interim Amur government of General I.F. Shilnikov, 3,000 people left the Genzan organization (Korea), etc. Moreover, the actions of Soviet workers contributed to the return home of the former White Guards. Thus, at the beginning of 1923, four echelons with former members of the White Army crossed the state border. We believe that in subsequent years, the return from emigration was also facilitated by the results of the trial which took place in Chita over General A.N. Pepelyaev and his associates, who were taken prisoner in June 1923 during the Okhotsk-Ayan expedition led by S.S. Vostretsov. Contrary to Pepelyaev's pessimistic forecasts, the General and 65 others were sentenced not to execution but to ten-year imprisonment, 11 people to five years, and the Yakut Filippov to five years' probation (Ablazhei and Komissarova, 2007).

- Large-scale military actions in China: the capture of residents of the Chuguchak camp in May 1921; actions of "unknown" guerilla detachments in the Three-River area, etc. (Buyakov and Shinin, 2013).
- The physical destruction of key figures of the Far Eastern emigration, an example of which was the murder of Lieutenant General A.I. Dutov and the organization of the extradition of Lieutenant General B.V. Annenkov by the Chinese (1926) (Buyakov and Shinin, 2013).

Conclusion

The White emigration in Manchuria played an active role in attempts to destabilize the situation in the east of the USSR. At the same time, after the end of the civil war in 1922, for the first time in the entire period of the development of the Far East and Eastern Siberia, a border factor arose which included murders, terror, and attacks by armed detachments on Soviet territory, in which Russian emigrants also actively participated. However, the military raids of the White emigration that made the life of the local population harder were eliminated thanks to the policy of the Soviet authorities.

Thus, the hypothesis of the study was confirmed.

An analysis of the creation of fascist political organizations in Manchuria by White military emigration, their cooperation with the Japanese occupation authorities in the struggle against Soviet Russia after the Japanese occupation of Manchuria in 1931 may become a prospect for further research.

Certain limitations of the study include the lack of analysis of archival documents when writing this article, as such documents were not available to the authors due to restrictions on access to archives. Andrey Ivanovich Baksheev, Mikhail Dmitrievich Severyanov, Vladislav Nikolaevich Vorontsov, Serget Tihonovich Gaidin, Alexander Georgievich Rogachev y Sergey Alekseevich Safronov USSR policy of 1920 in relation to people forced to emigrate to Asian countries after the end of the civil war of 1917-1922

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⁷ In some cases, we only place the initial of the name of the authors, because this is how it appears in the original source, and it was not possible to locate its full name.

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