

Title: Description of the book “Cossack Warriors – a true story”
Author: Jan de Kloe
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Following years of research into the lives of the protagonists, this book first gives a description of the background in which their lives developed: Czarist Russia, the First World War, the Bolshevik Revolution, the Russian Civil War, the Spanish Civil War, and the Second World War. The introduction covers the totalitarian ideologies which influenced their lives – imperialism, communism, and fascism. The Russian emigration dispersed the key players of this story to different countries, and they were to die in lands that were not theirs.

Igor Cherkasskiy followed the Military Academy in Saint Petersburg. He fought in the Russian Civil War on the side of those defending the monarchy (the Whites) and to escape Soviet rule he took exile in Belgrade. From there he went to Belgium to join General Wrangel as his chauffeur then later he ran a car dealership in Brussels. His role in our story is small but significant because of his marriage to (aunt) Tamara Ponomareff. She came to live with him after his first wife had died and she took along her mother Princess Tamara Imeretinsky from France. Family documents and photographs of interest to this story would not have survived without the link with Igor and his daughter Irina.

Sergey Ponomarev¹, the son of Princess Tamara Imeretinsky,² also followed a military education from the age of eight years in Stavropol and Saint Petersburg. He did not reach an officer's level but his life was governed by horse riding and by offering his military expertise in three wars, among them the Spanish Civil War for which he had the support of General Yevgeni Miller. After his wanderings through Europe, Sergey Ponomarev was to die in Germany. An extraordinary and colorful personality, he experienced the extremes of social status and wellbeing.

Like 10.000 other volunteers, Anna Kress came from the Ukraine to work in Austria where she met and married Sergey Ponomarev. After the war they lived in Germany. When her husband died she immigrated with her three children into North America. Her contribution to the story is of a very personal nature. The author was fortunate to meet this lady several times and he could consult her written memories. When interviewed she was a resident of Little Rock, Arkansas.

General Shkuro joined the Moscow Cadet School at the age of ten. He served in Persia and visited Brussels and Berlin. He took part in the First World War at the Galician front where he was wounded. After other assignments during this war, Russia entered the Civil War where the Red Army fought the Whites with Shkuro siding with the troops that stayed loyal to the Czar. After the communists had won this conflict, Shkuro, like Cherkasskiy and millions of others left his motherland. He went to France where he teamed up with Sergey Ponomarev. In the Second World War both entered the Cossack Divisions, fighting for a free Cossack state in southern Russia.

The story culminates in Austria where the members of the Cossack Division under German command were arrested by the British in 1945. Shkuro and his fellow officers were taken to Moscow for trial while Sergey and Anna managed to escape. Thousands of members of the Cossack Division were transported to Siberia many of whom committed suicide before or during the transport.

The story is an attempt to provide the family history of the Ponomarev's while the career of their friend General Shkuro is documented with added personal information and hitherto unpublished material of historic value.

The author has done research in Germany, Spain and Austria, and consulted the Russian collections at the Bakhmeteff Archive (Columbia University) in New York, the Hoover Institution at Stanford

¹ Some members of the Ponomarev family used or kept the French transliteration of the name, Ponomareff. A more precise transliteration to English would be Ponomaryov.

² The spelling Imeritinsky also occurs.

University and the Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminar in Jordanville, NY. Information was also obtained from Russian archives in Saint Petersburg and Yakutsk as well as through interviews with survivors and descendents of the Siberian transport. Primary information was provided by Tamara Ponomareff a.k.a. Tami Youmans-McCarty of Sherwood, Arkansas to whom the book is dedicated. She is the daughter of Sergey Ponomarev.

Physical description: 171 pages, in English, with appendices of documents in a variety of languages with annotations, 57 illustrations, about 300 footnotes, includes a detailed index, Cyrillic character set required. Softbound with cover picture of Sergey Ponomarev in Paris, around 1930 in Cossack dress. Back cover with photograph of the author.

About the author: Jan de Kloe was born in The Netherlands in 1943 and has been living in Belgium since 1967. Jan has degrees in computer science and music. He is the author of numerous articles about music and has prepared countless editions of sheet music for mainly German, British and American publishers. He wrote a biography on the Spanish composer Oscar Esplá and a textbook on the Argentinean guitarist Domingo Prat. Recently he published a bio of the Russian medic Boris Perott (1882-1958) who lived the second half of his life in London and who has been instrumental in the popularization of the classical guitar in Great Britain.

Published book summary:

Oscar Esplá in Belgium (1936-1949), Editions Orphée, Columbus OH (2001)

Cross-string Ornamentation Technique, Doberman-Yppan, Québec (2007)

Index of the *Diccionario de Guitarristas* by Domingo Prat, Editions Orphée, Columbus OH (2009)

Boris Perott – a life with the guitar, Chanterelle Verlag, Heidelberg Germany (2012)

For published articles see 'Publications' at www.dekloe.be