

## ***The national question, monarchism and the state in the political views of the Russian emigrant Sergei Prokopovich***

OLGA KUZNETSOVA

SAINT-PETERSBURG UNIVERSITY

Sergei Prokopovich was a moderate socialist. In 1917, he held the post of the Minister of the Russian Provisional government coalition. In 1922, he immigrated first to Berlin and then to Prague. As a consequence, in Prague he organized the Economic Cabinet (1924–1939), a well-known scientific center dedicated to studying Soviet Russia. Considering Prokopovich political views, it is essential to pay attention to his article “Simple Thoughts” (“Prostye Mysli”).<sup>1</sup> Here he set a task to reply to the queries, addressed to him in private letters, about his views on “the united front of emigration”. He justified his position that had been developed as a result of rethinking and reevaluation of the events “by the end of the eighth year of the Russian Revolution.” (*February, 1917-O. K.*)

Thus, in the work “Simple Thoughts” the attitude of Sergei Prokopovich to monarchism was totally explained. As Prokopovich wrote, “being an adult, I was consciously and always avoiding demagogic methods, I associated myself with such Russian public that actively fought against the Russian autocracy.”<sup>2</sup> He claimed that the revolution experience had convinced him of the terrible legacy left by the regime based on the disenfranchisement of the people. As Prokopovich pointed out, after the revolution there had arisen even less motives to defend the monarchy or return power to the people who did not know how to use it. In addition, while in exile, he was responded to this allegation that “the Bolshevik Regime causes even more injustice to the people, plus the destruction of any hope for the revival of the country and its economy.” Agreeing on this, Sergei Prokopovich wrote, “The disease that has confounded the people after the death of autocracy is terrible for the country. But who cures one disease by inoculating another one? Who strives to impose another reaction during the reaction period?”<sup>3</sup>

As opposed to a large part of Russian emigrants, Sergei Prokopovich did not idealize monarchy and did not approve of the restoration idea. In his opinion, antimonarchist views were adopted even by Russian peasants. He claimed: “I had to consider the peasant movement slogans of 1919–1922 not as a politician, but as an observer-analyst. None of the peasant movements of these years put forward the monarchy slogan.”<sup>4</sup> He confirmed that “at this time the monarchists were only among such people who were suffering the loss of their personal privileges.” In the mid-1920s the situation was clear. Russia had experienced

---

<sup>1</sup> Prokopovich, Sergey N. “Simple Thoughts” *The last news*, September 5, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

a severe form of revolutionary fever and then was looking for ways of economic and political revival. He wondered “whether it would find them through the peaceful displacement of harmful elements and replace them; or there would be new bloody explosions. It did not change the nature of the movement and the content of the process.”<sup>5</sup> As Sergei Prokopovich emphasized, “this process is extremely diverse, highly deep” and “it cannot be eliminated with external ‘patches of salvation’.”<sup>6</sup>

According to Sergei Prokopovich, the alliance with the Russian monarchists was impossible. The monarchists, in his opinion, had forgotten their dignity, the dignity of Russia, and, finally, the will of their people, who not only refused to urge foreigners, but also stubbornly fought against them. In another article “To each his own” (Kazhdomu svoe) Prokopovich spoke out against the influence of monarchism in the emigration environment. Speaking of P.B. Struve’s statement that 85% of the Russian emigrants had been made up of monarchists, he wrote, “If Struve is right, it is a depressing sight. It means that the emigration has been blended with just those that have been to be eliminated.”<sup>7</sup> Expressing his negative attitude to the monarchist camp, Sergei Prokopovich simultaneously indicated his understanding of the democratic elements significance and their actions in the resulting situation. He demanded, “No concerted actions with Russian monarchists.”<sup>8</sup> Assessing the position of monarchism in the emigration, he stressed that “the monarchists themselves do not keep both feet on the ground, clinging to a fictional leader. How can we go hand in hand with them?”<sup>9</sup> At the same time, analyzing the popular masses behavior in Russia, Sergei Prokopovich asked emigrants the following questions: “What is to be proud of? Of the dark people who has realized neither the meaning of the Fatherland defense, nor the role of the All Russian Constituent Assembly as the mind and will of the nation? Of such a legacy of the monarchy?” He replied:

*“It is politically meaningless... Our path is opposite: taking advantages of relative spiritual freedom abroad, we must not back away in confusion, we must continue persistent work to prepare new progressive elements, as well as conditions that are capable to facilitate Russia’s entry into the family of cultural peoples in the near future.”*

Identifying the political tasks of the emigrants, S. Prokopovich wondered, “How should the emigrants treat this process and can they assist it?” According to his opinion, the assistance could have been very essential, but before the emigration must have been cleared of the remnants of those ideologies that were characteristic of the Civil war. As S. Prokopovich noted:

*“One of the main and the most harmful ideologies during this period is the view on the emigration as a material force capable of marching against the Soviet power. If*

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Prokopovich, Sergey N. “To each his own”. *State Archives of the Russian Federation (GA RF)*. F. 6845, In. 1, File 209.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

*in 1918–20, it had a semblance, but by 1925, the reference to such essence of the emigration sounds like a clear and calculated quackery. In order to fulfill its true mission, the emigration must, first of all, mercilessly get rid of this lie about itself.”*

He further submitted that this lie could become truth, if any of the powers, pursuing its own goals, wanted to engage in single combat with Russia and tried to use Russian emigrants as scouts or cannon fodder. S. Prokopovich expressed his attitude to this in a following way, “I personally do not agree to such a disgraceful role...”<sup>10</sup> The war against the Fatherland with the help of foreigners, from his point of view, was a criminal thing and unacceptable for a patriot. However, it is believed, this statement was more a rhetorical device than a reflective dimension of his political position.

In assessing the situation of the emigration, S. Prokopovich wrote: “Without any material force the emigration has, however, a major spiritual force. Developing it and projecting its development on the recovering Russia, the emigration can play an important role.”<sup>11</sup> In his opinion, the new Russia, Asian in its past, having a thin layer of Europeanism only in the educated classes, needed at this stage to learn the American-European culture. To the question, “Where is the overthrow of the Soviet power?” according to S. Prokopovich, the answer was simple:

*“We will leave this important matter to the will of the Russian people. Once it had the strength to overthrow the hated autocracy; and even then the Russian emigrants only joined and helped the process that took place in factories, villages, and intellectual circles.”*<sup>12</sup>

However, S. Prokopovich regretted that the Russian emigrants did not have this direct and blood connection with movements inside. And this was based on deep-rooted causes, not only the vigilance of the authority. Hardly anyone wanted to understand them. Meanwhile, as he suggested, the emigration would be able to take its *proper* political place only with the growth of certain political aspirations within Russia. He stated that “to give the leader a name on a platter now, which the inner Russia is not at all eager to, means to create a theatrical sensation that is neither capable of raising the profile of the Russian name in Europe, nor influencing favorably on the country’s internal forces.”<sup>13</sup> According to S. Prokopovich, leaders were born within a struggling people, not during foreign congresses that had no links to the actors in Russia. Mentioning that he had different paths to follow with the politicians far from Russia, but trying to speak on its behalf, he stressed:

*“We are absolutely sure that even Russia, which is now silent, will find the means to indicate them their place. ‘The United front’ is impossible with those, who try to dig up old graves and pass off the mummies, kept in them, as the healers of severe wounds of the Fatherland.”*<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Prokopovich, “To each his own”.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

This position of S. Prokopovich was deeply contradictory. Assessing the balance of power in Russia correctly and understanding the illusory intentions of the emigration politicians to return it to normal, he, however, did not go beyond the declarations of “the will of the Russian people”. Although it is obvious that in the conditions of a strict and authoritarian regime that resorted to mass repression, there could be no question of the free will of people. The intransigence to ideological opponents and to other political trends (whether monarchists or far-left politics) objectively hindered the consolidation of the emigration forces. The suggestions of arranging the Europeanization of the Bolshevik regime can also be considered extremely amorphous. It could hardly have happened both in the conditions of the constant “military alerts” of the second half of the 1920s and early 1930s, and in his striving to control the relations with foreign countries.

Reflecting on the Russian democracy goals and objectives, he suggested focusing on the European line of development, advocated for overcoming the political ignorance of the popular masses, and was a supporter of parliamentary democracy. Assessing its significance, he wrote: “Anywhere and everywhere, the democracy progressive elements are fighting on two fronts: against the Communists, who are trying to destroy the state link in all countries, and against the monarchists, who are trying to return Europe to the Bourbons times.”<sup>15</sup> Prokopovich believed that Russian democracy, that was weaker than the much-experienced Western one, should be guided by the line of European democracy. Against this background, Prokopovich’s assessment of Russian democracy forces state was quite remarkable, as well as its support among the masses, and the general situation in which it was situated. He noted: “There are very few of us here abroad. But there are many, many of us in Russia”. He suggested relying on the experience of Russian peasants and workers, who, in his opinion, “deal with a difficult, bloody and suffering experience. This experience is our strength. [...] We believe, our ear is listening well to the sounds of the Russian land [...] all our hopes are there, in Russia, and not here abroad.”<sup>16</sup> He assumed that the future, the new Russia would turn in Europe’s favor, not Asia. However, Russian democracy had certain practical tasks in emigration such as “to forge the ideology of the new democratic Russia”, “to strive to unite, first, with the democracy cultural layer in Russia, and second, to pave the way for the union of Russian democracy with the West ones.”<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that this position was largely characteristic of the emigrant Republican Democratic camp as a whole.

S. Prokopovich’s article “*The ability of the masses to democracy*”<sup>18</sup>, posthumously published in 1956, allows us to trace the author’s views on democracy in its development from primitive to more advanced forms. He considered the following aspects: 1. Primitive democracies, 2. The problem of the popular masses ability to political activity, 3. The growth of political consciousness and the popular masses will in Western Europe, 4. Dictatorship in politically underdeveloped countries. According to S. Prokopovich, each country had its own way of political national and historical development. First of all, he was interested not in the principle of democracy itself, which was unchangeable in any conditions, but in the

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Prokopovich, Sergey N. *The ability of the masses to democracy. A Collection of Papers. Posthumous edition*. Paris. 1956, 9–51.

political institution of democracy in its national historical development. In particular, he wrote that “for the adoption of democratic forms of government the popular masses must currently have political knowledge and abilities acquired only during a long life in society and the State.”<sup>19</sup> He believed that

*“the democratization of the political, economic and cultural system of society requires, first of all, a great political and cultural activity of the popular masses. It implies the awakening of their spiritual interests and abilities to political and public life and active participation in it as well as the formation of the national will to political self-governance.”*<sup>20</sup>

In the view of S. N. Prokopovich, the private sector activity of society members was the closest thing to socio-political activity. He claimed that “along with the culture growth of the popular mass, its socio-economic and political activity also increases.” He believed that in modern societies, in addition to passive people, it was always possible to find a large number of those who had enterprise and took an increasing part in the creation of social and spiritual life. As a result, the political structure of a modern society could not be represented as the outdated theory of “heroes and crowd”.

S. Prokopovich’s position was that the cultural and political development of the popular masses made it possible to democratize the modern state; in the masses it awakened the capacity for political creativity and allowed to build all the state activities on democratic principles, in particular, on self-governance and elective principle. As factors of the popular masses political growth he singled out the public education development, the population participation in cooperative and professional public self-governance bodies, as well as membership in political parties as schools of political thought that taught the masses to understand the difference between unattainable beautiful utopias and real politics. The main task of democracy, according to S. Prokopovich, was to overcome the political ignorance of the popular masses, to fight their political impressionability and illusions. He estimated that this process was taking place in the parliamentary democracies of Europe and America. From his point of view, the Parliament discussion of all political life issues of the country by people, possessing great political knowledge and experience, had an educational political influence on the whole bulk of voters. Prokopovich believed that the equality of political rights did not give people equal abilities and knowledge: if the popular masses knew what was ultimately necessary for their good, at the same time they did not always realize what means could be used to achieve these goals. However, according to S. Prokopovich, “governmental machine, as it is currently organized in parliamentary countries, is hardly suitable for solving complex economic, social and cultural problems.”<sup>21</sup>

Speaking about the process of political and cultural development in underdeveloped countries, he mentioned such a feature as their intention to preserve public institutions and achieved development degree. Their development was mainly limited to the assimilation of

---

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 12.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 37.

foreign achievements, which did not allow them to make the transition to a higher stage of political development. As S. Prokopovich pointed out,

*“in underdeveloped countries instead of continuous progressive political evolution we find a constant succession of periods of stagnation and forced leaps forward, revolutions, representatives of Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great, Lenin and Stalin, military and popular dictatorships. In underdeveloped states the progressive transformations, which the population does not realize and does not want, are often caused by the intention of the authorities for national independence as the first condition for national cultural development.”*<sup>22</sup>

The main reason for the distinction between Western democracy in advanced countries and Eastern democracy in underdeveloped ones lied in the political role of the vocal minority. S. Prokopovich drew special attention to the fact that in socio-political life the ways of establishing democracy were important, not only their final goals, not only the motives that determined them: “Violent measures have a demoralizing effect both on the people, teaching it to violence and sycophancy, and on the people’s dictatorship, teaching it to use violence as the easiest way to dominate.”<sup>23</sup>

Speaking about S. Prokopovich’s assessment of the Institute for Democracy, it becomes clear that the Western way of society and state development was preferable for him. Russia, on the other hand, was considered as an Eastern country, but he wanted for it the democratic transformations that would allow it to embark on the Western path of development. In this area his views largely coincided with the views of P. Milyukov. Both of them defined a possible path of Russia development as the Western one. “Westernism” can be seen in his numerous prognoses about the future development of the Russian countryside. As one of the memoirists D. Lutokhin recalled, S. Prokopovich had been very much engaged in studying the economy of the Russian countryside and argued that “a peasant should be given not only the land, but the capital, it is necessary to provide him with perfect technical tools, which will not be possible to implement without large financial transactions with the participation of America.”<sup>24</sup> However, the future amended the political assessments of democracy that had been expressed by S. Prokopovich. It appeared that the pattern “Western democracy (advanced states) – Eastern despotism (underdeveloped states)” was not always applicable to the interpretation of the political history of Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which had been witnessed by the Russian economist.

In the system of S. Prokopovich’s political views an important place was occupied by the assessment of the October revolution. He believed that in order to evaluate this phenomenon, it was necessary, first of all, to understand it as a historical event, “as a necessary or destructive, but inevitable link in the history of the Russian people.”<sup>25</sup> In his opinion, the first question that the researcher of October, 1917, was curious about was: “How and why had for the peasant Russia, which had been suffering primarily from the primitive nature of agriculture and agricultural resettlement, the main task become to fight the capitalist sys-

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 44.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 49.

<sup>24</sup> Almanac Past. Paris: Atheneum, 1986. T. 22. P. 55.

<sup>25</sup> Prokopovich, Sergey N. Ten years of experience. *Russian economic digest* no.11 (1927): 5–15.

tem, which was just beginning to develop in the country?” Referring to the essence of this phenomenon, he believed that “the problem of communism was not a natural stage on the way of economic and cultural growth of the Russian people in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This phenomenon is undoubtedly of a negative nature, not organically connected with the process of economic and social development of Russian democracy.”<sup>26</sup> According to S. Prokopovich, the past 10 years in Russia showed that the idea of communism was not viable. He believed that “the Russian experience has shown that it is not a creative idea of the future, but an empty romantic dream...”<sup>27</sup> In general, according to S. Prokopovich, a plurality of factors determined the current situation in Russia, he wanted that “the transition to a state of law would be made by the forces of the Russian people themselves and in line with the ideals and experience of modern democracy.”<sup>28</sup>

The values associated with the concept of “nation” played an important role in the liberal political theory of the emigration. An important place was taken by the analysis of national issues and movements in the works of S. Prokopovich as well. In his article “On the economic foundations of the national question” he wrote:

*“The national movements played a very important role in the October revolution, disintegrating the army at the front and eroding the power of the Provisional Government in the rear. Obviously, no matter how the power, that will govern the Russian state, will be named and how this state itself will be named, the national issues and movements will play a very significant, perhaps decisive role in its fate.”*<sup>29</sup>

It is no accident that when assessing S. Prokopovich’s views on the national issue, the newspaper “Rul”, that was influential in the emigration, emphasized his opinion that “it is better to have a small state, but with a single state language, than a multilingual federation that is doomed to an imminent collapse.” For S. Prokopovich when examining national issues and movements, a historical approach was required, and he argued that “where we are dealing with historical development, the economic aspect inevitably occupies a central position.”<sup>30</sup> In his opinion, at different stages of economic development the content, volume and forms of national existence and national struggle were different, so he believed that with the change in the economic structure of society its national life would also change. Highlighting the characteristic features of the national life at various stages of economic growth of society, S. Prokopovich used the so-called “classical scheme”<sup>31</sup> of society development. He argued that national life appeared only at the stage of the urban life development, and then the material basis for the modern state was already being created at the stage of capitalism development with the national market and national economy development. At the same time, modern political nations were formed simultaneously with the state. Ethnic

---

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 9.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Prokopovich Sergey N. On the economic foundations of the national question. *Russian economic digest*, no.9 (1927): 5–50.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 23.

<sup>31</sup> 1 stage – primitive tribes, 2 – closed household, 3 – urban economy, 4 – capitalist (or national) economy.

nationalities gave way to the new, much more powerful national formations, which were based not on a race and language, but, above all, economic links that united them. S. Prokopovich believed that the state, for the better development of the national economy, wanted to destroy national boundaries on its territory and erase existing national differences in order to “unite all the ethnic groups”, living on its territory.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, every modern cultural European or American nation was a conglomerate of many ethnic nationalities, merged into the highest degree of unity – the modern national state. The United States were the most spectacular example for him. He believed that the origin of modern nations was not based on coercion, but on economic, political, and social interests:

*“The formation of a national economy on a large territory inhabited by several tens of millions of people makes special demands on the political and administrative structure, on the development of public relations, and on the collective psychology of the popular masses.”*

Due to this, the development of capitalist economy along with the formation of a modern state created a political nation.<sup>33</sup>

Speaking about the political role of the state in the national formation, S. Prokopovich stressed that in order to overcome underdevelopment of the pre-capitalist forms of economy and clear the way for the new economic principles penetration into various segments of the population, it was predominant to ensure the targeted state intervention. He noted that the issue of state and national formation was a very complex process in which the economic aspect played a decisive role:

*“In the struggle for national interests, the idea of nationality is born. Under favorable conditions, the movement acquires a political character and leads to the political liberation of ethnic nationality... And with the development of capitalist relations and the national market, the character of the national movement changes radically.”<sup>34</sup>*

In his opinion, the state independence required, first of all, a developed economy, and if this was not the case, then the political independence became a fiction. Indeed, for S. Prokopovich the economic factor was the dominant force in the national development:

*“The economic aspect confirms the nation intention for political self-determination within ethnic bounds, the attempt to join territories inhabited by other, less economically developed nations. Freed from political dependence, young nationalities can easily fall into economic dependence, no less serious. Their trouble is that their political life is deprived of the economic foundation because of their economic backwardness.”<sup>35</sup>*

---

<sup>32</sup> Prokopovich, On the economic foundations of the national question, 37.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 42.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 45.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 47.

Referring to the national problems of Russia, he argued that the solution of the national question was difficult, because Russia had been devastated by the war and the revolution, as well as the Communists management. Considering the prospects for Russia's development, S. Prokopovich believed that, with the backwardness of Russian industry, the main national task was to preserve the country's political independence. He stressed that "the great difference in the economic structure of different nationalities in Russia makes it clear why we find a different form of national ideology and patriotism in Russians than in Ukrainians and Belarusians." He explained this by the difference of each nationality in the economic stages of development. For the future economic development of Russia, according to Prokopovich, it was necessary to provide the unity of law and the state language, to create legal order and railways. Russia should go not through political separation, but through the resolution of national conflicts. This path consisted in overcoming economic, social and cultural backwardness, in developing the national economy and productivity. Thus, for the emergence, existence and development of a modern democratic state, it was necessary to take into account a number of conditions: the existence of a political culture of the nation, economic activity, as well as the state regulatory role in this process.

S. Prokopovich's political views were demonstrated in his report at a meeting of foreign groups of the Constitutional Democratic Party on July 24, 1922.<sup>36</sup> He expressed theoretical views on the reasons for the need to create such a political organization as "The Republican Democratic Union". He believed that the flush of Bolshevism that had hit the country by the end of 1917, and especially in 1918–1919, would disappear, and Russia would return to a healthy state. As he believed, Bolshevism had been overcome psychologically. As a result, a new situation emerged. S. Prokopovich argued that the opinion that the old Russia had died and its new life had begun in February, 1917, was incorrect. Russia was alive and the starting point of development would be the Bolshevik coup. He believed that the decisive role in this case belonged to the peasantry, which had changed a lot. It had grown, its horizons had expanded very much, the former abjection had disappeared and people respected themselves. The peasants were aware that they were independent "at home" and this was the "first plus" of everything that had been experienced. The second one was the creation of local authorities (volispolkoms), which were volost zemstvos in fact. The "third plus" was the Red army that was full of national interests, which was especially valuable for the future formation of Russia. These were the three main factors of Russia's future structure. As for the workers, S. Prokopovich believed that this class, due to its privileged position and its peculiar Praetorian psychology, was useless for creating a new state order.

According to S. Prokopovich, Russia needed spiritual centers, which could not be currently created because of the strict control of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission (GPU). Therefore, it was necessary to establish such spiritual centers abroad, but not for the emigration interests, but for the new Russia "establishment". These centers were to be guided by three directives. First, it was necessary to desist from the monarchy restoration and revenge, second, it was important to renounce socialism, and third, the spiritual centers must not think themselves the representatives of the Russian people and must not demand

---

<sup>36</sup> Protocol of the meeting of the Paris Democratic group of the Party of People's Freedom of July 24, 1922. In minutes of the central committee and foreign groups of the Constitutional Democratic Party, 27. Vol. 6. Moscow: ROSSPAN, 1999.

any power. In his opinion, the role of the spiritual centers should consist only “in maintaining the new growing movement in Russia.”

Thus, in his political views, S. Prokopovich was a staunch advocate of democracy, political freedom, and the republican democratic regime. This is attested, first of all, by his categorical refusal to compromise with the monarchists, as well as his strict position of the importance of democratic elements in the life of society. He left the question of overthrowing the Soviet power to the “will of the Russian people” and not to the emigration actions and, moreover, intervention, which was very contradictory, since he realized, on the one hand, the illusory intentions of prominent emigrants, and, on the other hand, the impossibility of implementing the “will of the people” in the USSR in the 1930s under a totalitarian regime.

S. Prokopovich advocated a historical approach while examining the national issues, considered the economic factor to be the dominant factor of national development, and proposed to focus on the European line of development of a parliamentary democracy. He defended his vision of socialism in his public and political activities. In different years of life in exile, the degree of “politics” occupation of S. Prokopovich was different. In general, in the political arena of the emigration his place can be defined as “left of center”. His political position, expressed on such issues as the meaning of democracy, the definition of the place and the role of the emigration, his point of view on the national issue and the attitude to Soviet Russia, undoubtedly was “left-center”.

### Bibliography

Almanac Past. Paris: Atheneum, 1986. T. 22. P. 55.

Prokopovich Sergey N. Simple Thoughts. *The last news*, September 5, 1925.

Prokopovich Sergey N. On the economic foundations of the national question. *Russian economic digest*, no.9 (1927): 5–50.

Prokopovich, Sergey N. “To each his own”. State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF). F. 6845, In. 1, File 209.

Prokopovich, Sergey N. Ten years of experience. *Russian economic digest*. No. 11 (1927): 5–15.

Prokopovich, Sergey N. *The ability of the masses to democracy. A Collection of Papers. Posthumous edition*. Paris. 1956, 9–51.

Protocol of the meeting of the Paris Democratic group of the party of peoples freedom of July 24, 1922. In *minutes of the central committee and foreign groups of the Constitutional Democratic Party*, 27. Vol. 6. Moscow: ROSSPAN, 1999.

### ***The national question, monarchism and the state in the political views of the Russian emigrant Sergei Prokopovich***

Sergei Prokopovich was a moderate socialist and he held the post of minister of the coalition Provisional Government of Russia in 1917. In 1922 he was obliged to emigrate first to Berlin, and then to Prague. In Prague, he organized the Economic Cabinet (1924–1939), a well-known scientific center for the study of Soviet Russia.

---

Unlike a significant part of the Russian emigration, Sergei Prokopovich did not idealize the monarchy and did not approve of the idea of restoration. He posed the question of overthrowing Soviet power to the "will of the Russian people", but not to acts of emigration and moreover the intervention. Such position was very controversial, since he understood, on the one hand, the illusory intentions of prominent emigrants, and, on the other hand, the impossibility of realizing the "will of the people", in the USSR in the 1930s under the circumstances of the totalitarian regime.

Reflecting on the goals and objectives of Russian democracy, he proposed orienting himself towards the European line of development, advocated overcoming the political ignorance of the masses, and was a supporter of parliamentary democracy.

Analyzing the role of the state in the nation-building process, Sergei Prokopovich pointed out generally the economic factor as the dominant of national progress. First of all, Prokopovich advocated a historical approach to the study of national issues, when the development of the capitalist economy simultaneously with the formation of the state created a political nation (for instance in the USA). As for the independence of the state, firstly, the developed and independent economy was needed, because if it is not present, then political independence becomes a fiction. Considering Russian case, he believed that the resolution of the national question was very difficult because the country was devastated by the Civil war and the revolution, but it was extremely necessary for the future development of Russia to retain the unity of the state language and legal order, the suitable development of industry and railways too.

According to his political views, Sergei Prokopovich was a supporter of democracy, political freedom, and a social state. Thus, it can be attributed to the left-centrist wing of the traditional political spectrum.