

## **“Sometimes Bread Was Not Enough for Our Own Sustenance” The Gentry of Russia on the Eve of the Abolition of Serfdom in the Years Post-Reform Social Emancipation**

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**Abstract:** The gentry of Russia at the present stage domestic and foreign historiography is largely unexplored layer of the noble class. And this despite the fact that in the pre-reform period in some regions of the Russian Empire, they represented more than half of representatives of the nobility. The poor knowledge of the layer of landowners is due to actually lack of the necessary source base. On the other hand, as for historians of the 19-20th early 20th centuries and modern scholars of the upper class of the Empire, they were not of particular interest. Primarily, this was due to their “unnobility”, everyday life of small landlords more resembled the life and worldview of the peasants, the middle arm. The “bottom” of the landed nobility and peasant standards was poverty. This applies to those who had from 1-3 Dec. and personally I went for the plow, sowed bread, the hired farmhand to a more prosperous neighbor. No knowledge of this stratum of the nobility, its evolution in the post-reform period, can lead to the depersonalization of the nobility of Russia in social history. That is, the nobility will be presented in a truncated form.

**Key words:** Nobility, gentry, peasantry, pre-reform and post-reform periods in Russia’s history, social history

### **INTRODUCTION**

The problem of not noble way of life of small landowners was raised for virtually all of the 19th and early 20th centuries and became a social axiom among the upper layer of the nobility. However, the way of life of the small landowner views in the upper groups of the nobility, historians and publicists of the time were simplistic. And as you can compare the owner or 2-3 80-100 des. with the corresponding number of registered males in the shower. Socio-cultural gap in the strata landed was very striking. But modern researchers pay a little attention to this. You must take into account the fact that in a given stratum officially passed impoverished average land owners or heirs to large estates after his section. They usually represented the top of small subgroup stratum of the nobility from 51-100 des. The educational and cultural level here was much higher. However, they are well aware of their place in the class structure of their own social community. In the post-reform period, the representatives of the upper subgroups of the landed nobility were more attuned to social modernization.

### **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

Two analytical approaches were used in our research to confirm proposed provisions: historical-comparative

and historical-system. The historical-comparative method allows us to trace the stratified structure of not only the nobility but also of its separate layer. In particular, the landed nobility. In the end, this allows you to identify general and particular in social evolution landed nobility. The use of the historical-systemic analysis helps to reveal the interdependence of the transformation of the Russian society in general and social modernization of small landlords.

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Socialization of the younger generation of small landowner nobility was distinguished by its specificity in the context of education in general, the nobility (Field, 1976; Blum, 1961). Labzina, remembering her childhood in a small family, in particular sessions with a nurse, noted that she taught her to work (embroidery) for the possible future supply of accommodation. To teach to the basic skills of children in most landed families was the rule rather than the exception. No wonder the contemporaries noted: “In Russia a lot of petty nobles whose situation is a very bitter fate; their way of life differed little from the peasant, they often lived in huts, serfs with their fellows and ploughed and sowed and cleaned from the fields of your bread. Well, if fate has pushed these poor people from the neighboring wealthy landowners, sometimes take

part in them, will scatter children to schools or will determine son into the regiment to your account or daughter will sew dowry". In other words, the landed nobility, especially the lower subgroup have not great choice, sow "bread" or through the largesse of rich relatives or neighbors to "get by". Therefore, the willingness to work was vital. All of the above did not always find understanding among the representatives of the upper layer of the nobility. This is most reflected in the relations between the representatives of the nobility as part of their daily contacts. When the poor nobles in the name day and other solemn days were come to congratulate their more wealthy neighbors, in most cases they were not planted at the common table and ordered them to submit to eat in some side room or the nursery. Humiliation to the address of the minor from the major nobles was not naming the first name and middle name and nicknames. It sort of indicated the place and role of small landowners in the noble hierarchy. Naturally, among the small landlords were the ones who did not allow himself to drop his own honor. But they were few. On all point and major novelist of the second half of the 19th century (Terpigorev, 1899).

In the preparation and reform of the abolition of serfdom, the government took into account its implications for different categories of noble land ownership. When averaged approach to the fate of landlordism minor nobles would have lost almost all their land if the sizes of peasant allotments and the conditions for their receipt have been specifically stipulated for this category of landowners. In 1857 it specifically pointed out III the section: "Minor nobles owning small estates will be subject to perfect ruin, if they will not put any special measures". In this regard was developed a special program of assistance landed nobility:

For freed without land peasants (domestics, farm laborers) were given an allowance from 50-100 rub. in silver for every census soul, minus all lying on their estates debts.

Owners who gave their land to peasants on a common basis for set duties was given an allowance up to 50 rub. silver for each census soul with less debt or to offset the loans were given to state-owned land.

Small landowners, who in the course of reform has not proved the land was granted at their request the right to resettlement in much land province with gratuitous allocation of land (Skrebitsky, 1868).

Thus, the government, to support the bulk of the nobility was ready to take on considerable financial costs and transfer of state lands to privately fund.

For assistance with estates of small landed nobility were surveyed by local agencies responsible for reform.

The main criteria for assistance -possession of less than 21 census soul, with no means of livelihood except their own economy. For example, in Kursk province at the beginning of the post-reform period there were 3134 landed gentry with 22 711 census souls. Of them were recognized as eligible 2 844 (90.7%) of owner 18 873 census souls which received from the state 415206 rub silver (146 rubles per 1 landowner). Amount issued based on 22 RUB silver on soul revision lists (Bogdanov, 1959). The amount of assistance, at a cost equal to the price of 5 Dec. was clearly not significant and was unlikely to prevent further decline in the land holdings of small landowners. In the course of the reform, in addition to providing financial assistance, applied special rules of giving land to the peasants in the estates of the nobles in this category. In paragraphs 3-4 of the "additional rules about the device of the peasants, restored the estates of landed proprietors and on the manual of owners" was stressed: "farmers placed on the land of small owners, get in constant use, for the specified service due to wearing of the farmstead and field of the earth and lands on a precise basis of local regulations but those of the peasants who with the promulgation of the Regulations was not in the least endowed with land, small owners do not agree, in any case, to take such allotment". That is, minor nobles were not obliged to take land for the peasants, not endowed with land before the reform.

"If in areas that have low per capita size of the peasant holding, the peasants little owner used to date the earth in number less than the lower per capita allotments and in areas where we identified these shower wearing less than the specified allotment, the small landowner is not obligated to increase peasant inheritance". According to this rule, relation to the existing allotment to the set lower size of the plot was not required.

If landed nobleman, for whatever reasons, wanted to break completely with the earth and receive her lump sum cash payment, on the basis of these "additional rules" set out in paragraph 10: "in the name addressed to the office of state properties, landowner receives from the treasury a remuneration corresponding to the annual dues which according to the rules of local regulations would be due from the peasants for giving them a plot. For the calculation of this remuneration, the aforesaid annual dues capitalization of six percent that is: multiply to sixteen and two-thirds and deduced the amount issued to the owner". As under "general provisions" the price of land in the landed estates was estimated not from its market value and capitalization of cash rents farm households but unlike the nobles of the higher layer, small landowner received a "fee" immediately and not

stretched for a decade. In this case, the land was sold to the state, peasants and small landowners were passed in the state status with all the attendant rights and obligations.

After the reform of 19 February 1861 the marginalization of a large part of the landed nobility became more distinct. The inability to subsist with meager plots of land contributed to this. Contemporaries noted the increase of drunkenness in the environment of small landowners. A separate small family fully socialized among the peasants, agricultural labourer's life was their inheritance in economic matters they were arguing with the neighbouring peasants and were often screwed. Quick ruin of the landed nobility in the post-reform period has been noted by many researchers (Hamburg, 1984). Having a small financial capacity, small plots of land they could not oppose the socio-economic challenges in the post-reform period. Most of the small landowners had surrendered their land plots to rent themselves moved to the city, arranged at the lower bureaucratic positions, have joined the ranks of artisans, rural teachers, etc. Noble post-reform "impoverishment" most affected by this category of nobility which in the Russian society of the 19-20th centuries. very few people associated with the noble class.

### CONCLUSION

Material wealth, level of education and culture of the landed nobility in the second half of 19th-beg. 20th centuries differed sharply from the lifestyle of the nobility of the upper layer. The last is not even seen in the small landowners are the representatives of their class. Over time these ideas became characteristic and in general for Russian companies. Minor nobles themselves were well aware of their place in the hierarchy of the nobility, evolutionary in everyday terms towards peasant everyday life. It had to work. Personal physical labour for the landed gentry was a necessity here and there is no place for a noble pride. Life dictated its own terms. In the post-reform period "impoverishment" landed nobility increased dramatically and it is in fact with the category of

landowners has been transformed into the category of landlords, craftsmen, clerks and teachers. In the public consciousness of the Russian society of the turn of 19th early 20th centuries, the gentry have little associated with the noble class.

**Summary:** Pre-reform socio-economic status of the landed nobility, in times of crisis manifestations, became the basis of post-reform mass ruin of small landowners. Post-reform social modernization of the landed gentry, taking into account the redemption transaction peasants, very dramatically changed the foundations of life of the landowners. But if average local and large local nobility had land had reserve fund, based on the large size of their estates, small landowners, despite the special program of liberation of the peasants in their estates, were really on the brink of survival. Post-reform social emancipation, in fact, gave rise to the termination of the existence of the nobility as a link in the chain of the nascent rural bourgeoisie. Small landowners were massively flowing into the city, breaking with the land and to occupy a lower niche in the bureaucratic hierarchy, craft circles and the provincial teaching.

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