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Genesis and Evolution of the Public in the Russian Empire Under the Conditions of Modernization in the Second Half of the 19th Century

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Abstract

The article analyzes the factors associated with the history of forming the basics and characteristic features of the phenomenon of the regional public as a constituent part of all-Russian modernization experiments in the second half of the 19th century. It was discovered that in the Stavropol Province, a Southern region of Russia, the evident minimal activity of the overwhelming majority of the population was determined by its peasant composition, the low number and poverty of the nobility and the prevalence of the merchant element in the urban self-government. At the same time, the points of growth were actively manifested through the so-called “newcomers” or nonresidents (those who moved into the region as a result of the abolition of serfdom in Russia and in fact could become full members of the established peasant “world”). These points of growth also included representatives of a number of confessions from those who could potentially, in the course of social development, open up to processes of public association in order to protect their social and cultural interests, having already certain traditions of organized activity, and well-educated population of the urban environment, constantly replenished by the steady development of the education system in the city and in the countryside and united in the framework of legal public organizations to solve various local problems.

Keywords: Modernization experiments, Public, social activity, Population structure, Multi-religion, Education, Charity social associations, the Stavropol Province, the Russian Empire.

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Introduction

According to the opinion generally accepted in modern European science, the formation of highly differentiated social structures is the criterion of classical modernization [3; 10]. The history of European modernization, including the recent history of the entry of Eastern European countries into the community of Western post-industrial nations, corresponds to this approach. The history of Russia as a “Euro-Asian empire and culture partly based on the Byzantine tradition” allows those who study its transformation to follow A. Gerschenkron in this regard, concentrating primarily on the economic aspects of modernization [2; 5-30]. Regarding countries with a backward economy (compared to the West), but with the necessary resources, institutional prerequisites and mobilization ideology, not only factors such as asynchronous industrialization, but also the imbalance in the dichotomy “economy – society” did not play a decisive role for him and his followers. That, in turn, allows us to abandon the view on the history of Russia and its development in reliance only on such general categories as backwardness or progress.

Research methods

For those interested in the problems of modernization processes in Russia in the course of its long-term development, a methodological complex of their historical measurements is acceptable. It was formed on the basis of the definition of modernization proposed by Hans van der Loo and Willem van Reijen who understood it as a complex of “interrelated structural, cultural, physical and mental changes that crystallized over the years of the past centuries and, thus, formed the world, in which we live at the moment, and which always moves in a certain direction” [8; 11]. This position is quite consistent with such methods of historical research as historical-comparative, problem-chronological, historical-genetic, historical-systemic, historical-typological methods that we use in our case.

Discussion and research results

In the collective work “Models of social reorganization of Russia. The 20th century” S.V. Tyutyukin claimed that “the modernization process in Russia occurred with a lot of difficulties and costs in various spheres of public life” [9; 112]. In contrast to the points of view that existed earlier in Western historiography M. Hildermeier saw a broader development of civil society in the Russian Empire recognizing the dynamic modernization in it [19; 56-68]. He refers to the analysis of the history and activities of new urban elites, urban and rural self-government, publicistic activity of the public in the enumeration of social structures and actions that existed in post-reform Russia, thus, confirming the above-mentioned statement. At the same time, the author particularly emphasizes such an aspect as rallying of various social groups in the city and their joint actions at the local level as the public.

Agreeing with A.S. Tumanova’s critical approach to the analysis of the stereotypical view that existed for a long time in literature and that considered the Russian province as “society with low standards of life and customs, distant from the main ways of developing of national culture” [18; 280], we can note, however, an obvious originality of Stavropol Krai, which was determined by several important factors.

From the standpoint of the local community formation, the studied territory underwent this process at an accelerated pace and, in many respects, it was different from the internal provinces of Russia. Having begun its territorial-administrative history since the formation of the Russian statehood here in the last quarter of the 18th century, the territory of the present Stavropol Krai was turned into an object of intensive civil colonization already in the early 80s-90s of the 18th century, according to the order of the government [5; 61].

Cossack-peasant development of the region was an integral part of the formation of such structures in the center of the North Caucasus, which, as assistance to the government, supported the role of the region as a strategic outpost on the southern borders of Russia. Stavropol was the center of the military and civilian

administration already in the period of the Russian-Turkish wars of the end of the 18th century and later became the seat of the headquarters of the commander of the Caucasian line and the Black Sea coast.

All of the above naturally determined the specificity of the population structure of the future Stavropol Province. As G.N. Prozritelev wrote in his work "The First Settlements in the North Caucasus and in the Current Stavropol Province" in 1913, "The composition of the population was very diverse and included Ukrainians-smallholders, retired hussars, retired soldiers of the Caucasian corps and their children, Gypsies, people of forbidden ranks, former Zaporozhians, people of different ranks and positions (raznochintsy) ... Kiev Cossacks, infantry soldiers, etc." [15; 3]. By the end of the 19th century the province consisted of 1221 settlements, and "only 2 of them were cities (Stavropol and the city of the Holy Cross or Karabagly)".

Accordingly, the rural population was not just predominant. According to careful comparative calculations made by E.G. Kolesnikova, "The territory of the Stavropol province was more "rural" than the entire Russian territory ... and the distribution of the population between the city and the countryside in the Stavropol administrative territory was its specific feature, which undoubtedly influenced many social processes" [6; 42]. In this regard, it is natural to expect the minimum social activity of the overwhelming majority of the population of the province, whose life was regulated mainly within the patriarchal peasant community.

It is known that by the end of the 19th century in the Stavropol Province, there were 122 independent rural communities [10; 25] that participated in organizing their entire internal life under the conditions of relatively low population density (compared to European Russia), and, therefore, greater opportunities for economic growth of peasant farms. Potentially, the growth of social mobilization in the peasant environment of Stavropol could be based on the so-called "newcomers" or nonresidents, that is, the majority of those who moved into the region as a result of the abolition of serfdom in Russia and in fact could become full members of the established peasant "world". Such people, according to E.G. Kolesnikova's calculations based on the materials of the First General Census of the Population of the Russian Empire in 1897, made up 24.98% in the Stavropol Province, i.e. a quarter of its total population [6; 45].

An important feature of the Stavropol community, which also influenced the development process of its structural diversity, was its multi-religious nature. 8.9% of the population of the province who did not profess Orthodoxy attributed themselves to the followers of Islam (4.42%), Buddhists and Lamaites (1.19%), Protestants (1.05%), Gregorian Armenians and Catholic Armenians (0.61%), Roman Catholics (0.23%), the Jews (0.16%) and followers of other possible religions (0.01%). The specificity of religious beliefs of a part of them was associated with the closure of local communities for the outside world. Others, such as Roman Catholics, Gregorian Armenians and Catholic Armenians, formed the basis of those who could potentially, in the course of social development, open up to processes of public association in order to protect their social and cultural interests, having already certain traditions of organized activity.

Taking into account the fact that "the majority of forms of independent public participation come from the elite owning property and education" [19; 65], it is acceptable to consider in more detail, first of all, the main features of the urban life of Stavropol society, which underwent the modernization processes during capitalist reform in Russia.

The specifics of the development of the region led to the fact that even by 1913, Stavropol agriculture (prevailing as the main branch of the economy) was mainly communal peasant farming, and 83% of the entire land of the province were allotments and belonged to peasant communities. Only 10.2% of the land belonged to private owners of "different classes", many of whom became such as the results of the Stolypin agrarian reform and did not become part of the elite. Although it is natural to assume that the children of a part of the new emerging rural elite had the opportunity to receive urban education and live in cities.

For quite a long time Stavropol was one of the most dynamically developing cities of the North Caucasus. Almost from the moment of its foundation it became the center of the military and civil administration in

the region, received the status of an administrative center and turned into a commercial city. This is perfectly illustrated by such sources as annual reports of the city police department to the Caucasian civil governor on the state of the city of Stavropol. Topographic data, information about the nature and number of buildings, population, marriages concluded, the number of people born and died, the nature and amount of urban economy and the state of handicrafts and industry, the welfare of citizens, public institutions, police actions and monetary rates enable to see the dynamics of urban life and the roots of urban society. For instance, according to the Report of 1838 [12; 126-138], 5,329 inhabitants lived in the Stavropol Province at that time, and 1,126 of them were officials. Obviously, almost one fifth of the urban population included highly educated people. It is also evident that the need for such people grew with the development of Stavropol itself.

With so many highly educated people (this is also the specificity of Stavropol society), according to a district leader Trodzhimov, on 19 February, 1842, only 25 persons of the nobility lived in the city of Stavropol. Here, as in the whole Stavropol region, the nobles were represented incommensurably weaker than in the inner provinces of the Russian Empire.

At the same time, due to its strategic military-economic significance and location on the Rostov and Tsaritsyn paths, Stavropol was one of the biggest trade centers of the region. The documents of 1838 already demonstrated that the urban population included 27 merchants of the 1st guild, 10 merchants of the 2nd guild, 456 merchants of the 3rd guild with 25 nonresident merchants and 14 “nonresident merchant children learning to trade” [17; 129]. The city budget revenues of 34,107 rubles 94 kopecks largely consisted of taxes “from merchants who declared capital for 1838 (2,560 rubles)”, “from nonresident traders (3,000 rubles)”, revenues from two fairs (17,075 rubles 65 kopecks [1; 14-15]. Such statistics, with regard to the subject under study, could lead to the overwhelming prevalence of the merchant element in city self-government, which inevitably resulted in to conservativeness in the policy of the latter.

However, on the other hand, the stability of the city budget was the key to the successful development of the education system, which was proved by the statistics of the following years. The same report on Stavropol of 1838, while stating the presence of a religious school with 28 students, a public school with 32 students, a gymnasium with 105 students, a private school with 18 students (13 of them girls), showed budget expenditures only for the maintenance of the parish school and only as part of general expenditures together with the maintenance of the police, fire department, council, apartment commission, court and almshouse in the amount of 17,791 rubles 10.25 kopecks [1; 14-15]. In 1888 the provincial Stavropol with a population of 34,303 people and with a total annual income of 144,708 rubles 57.75 kopecks, 16,504 rubles 58 kopecks were spent only on “the maintenance of educational and public institutions and allowances to different persons” [11; 13, 18-19].

The results of a one-day census of the city’s population, held on December 18, 1874 gave certain ideas about the potential of the society of the provincial city of Stavropol from the point of view of its ability to realize itself as a “discursive community separate from the state” in the context of Russian reforms of the second half of the 19th century [16]. This census discovered the following groups: hereditary and personal noblemen and honorary citizens – 3,833 people (13.11%); clergy of all confessions – 1,058 people (3.57%); urban social estates – 11,442 people (38.63%); rural social estates – 3,592 people (12.3%); military social estates – 3,357 people (11.34%); 3,436 retired people and people on vacation (11.59%); 2,432 people of different ranks (*raznochintsy*) (8.22%); foreigners – 334 people (1.13%); non-Russians – 47 people (0.16%); 36 people who did not testify about their class (0.12%). 29,617 people were interviewed. Representatives of the nobility, honorary citizens, members of urban social estates and, of course, people of different ranks (*raznochintsy*), who in total accounted for 59.96% of the respondents, can be considered more or less open to conscious civil social actions. The census showed important data that 1,219 male and 486 female

students attributed themselves to students in educational institutions, 428 males and 236 females were homeschooled, and 62 male teachers and 36 female teachers taught them [17; 158-161].

The first secular educational institution in the city of Stavropol emerged at the discretion of the urban community in 1804 and was maintained "from public revenues". By the time of the transformation of this "civilian" public school into a parish school "with the transfer to the management of educational authorities" at the end of 1815, it had been functioning for 8 years in a building owned by the city, and the teacher was provided at the expense of the community (200 rubles a year); "heating, lighting of the school house and maintenance of the caretaker were provided as well". But, judging by the materials of the "Historical Reference of the First Primary Schools in the Caucasus and in Stavropol" [4; 233-236] published in 1913, it was the only citywide public action to create an educational institution for children from simple families until May 7, 1862. Moreover, the petition and active efforts of a school director Ya.M. Neverov who worked at the end of the 1850s and who sought to establish a Sunday school for poor children at the gymnasium, "which was supposed to give them free education and, if necessary, textbooks" did not find support from the city and artisan leaders. That is why neither Governor P.A. Bryanchaninov nor his brother Ignatius, the Bishop of Caucasus liked this idea. The Caucasian vicar, Prince Baryatinsky "to whose resolution this case was submitted" reacted as follows, "Without expecting from such an institution particular benefits a Sunday school should not be established". When the ongoing efforts of Ya.M. Neverov, nevertheless, were rewarded with success and he managed to open two Sunday free schools in the city (only one of them received 80 children), both of them soon closed "due to discomfort not only to them but to public education in general and even opposition from representatives of Stavropol communities both spiritual and worldly". Thus, in the city of Stavropol, which by the end of the 1860s had 20,545 inhabitants, there was only one two-year school with 96 students. However, educational institutions for children from privileged social estates such as the Croupier boarding school (since 1838), the St. Alexandra school (since 1847), the school of staff captain Demidov (since 1856) and others functioned.

It is worth noting that by 1878, there were 2 urban elementary schools and 96 rural elementary people's schools in the province [13; 102] (the number of the latter significantly exceeded the average indicators in all parts of the region) [13; 139]. This fact can lead to the suggestion that such a local community was formed in the province, where, on the one hand, representatives of the peasant world had to gradually "open up" to public mobility through education, but, on the other hand, this openness was least needed due to special firmness of the community, large patriarchal families and successful running of the household.

During Russian bourgeois modernization experiments new organization forms that stood apart from traditional communities and institutions and that were modeled after all-Russian patterns were introduced in the Stavropol Province. Such new forms were associated mainly with the constantly increasing intelligentsia and were the factor of structural diversity in the region. For instance, by the last quarter of the 19th century a number of various charity communities were established and actively functioned in the region. Some of them provided various forms of assistance to the population in need: the creation of free canteens, the organization of almshouses and night shelters, payment of benefits, etc. Some specialized in providing certain types of assistance, primarily for disabled students in particular educational institutions. Thus, each of the four gymnasiums in the city of Stavropol at the turn of the 19-20th centuries was taken care of by a separate community that assisted students. To assist in providing education for people the Stavropol Community set the main goal as "to popularize religious moral concepts among people and to disseminate initial useful knowledge through people's schools" [7; 8]. Its establishment was initiated by A.V. Arkhangelsky, a teacher of the Caucasian Theological Seminary, and most of the members of the Community's Committee had a higher education and worked in urban secondary educational institutions. The Community's achievements included opening and supporting new people's primary schools, organizing free national libraries and Sunday schools, regular holding of people's readings on geographic, historical,

literary, religious and other topics. The experience and possibilities of this and many other public charitable associations formed the basis for the activities of the Stavropol provincial zemstvo (elective district council in pre-revolutionary Russia) on the planned organization of out-of-school education for the population of the province [14; 378-384], which, in turn, led to the expansion of the ranks of potentially socially mobile citizens.

Conclusion

The analysis of only several factors associated with the history of forming the basics and characteristic features of the phenomenon of the Stavropol public enables to conclude the following: first, this process as such occurred in modernized Russia since the second half of the 19th century; second, taking into account all its specifics, the evident dynamics of the gradual development was traced. In the Stavropol Province the apparent minimal social activity of the overwhelming majority of the population was determined by its peasant composition, the low number and poverty of the nobility and the prevalence of the merchant element in the urban self-government. At the same time, the points of growth were actively manifested through the so-called “newcomers” or nonresidents (those who moved into the region as a result of the abolition of serfdom in Russia and in fact could become full members of the established peasant “world”). These points of growth also included representatives of a number of confessions from those who could potentially, in the course of social development, open up to processes of public association in order to protect their social and cultural interests, having already certain traditions of organized activity, and well-educated population of the urban environment, constantly replenished by the steady development of the education system in the city and in the countryside and united in the framework of legal public organizations to solve various local problems.

Conflict of interest

The authors confirm that the data do not contain any conflict of interest.

Footnotes

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