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THE NEW AND THE OLD IN THE LIFE OF PROVINCIAL OFFICIALDOM DURING BOURGEOIS MODERNIZATION OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE*

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Abstract. During Russia's capitalist modernization in the second half of the nineteenth century, guberniia and uezd officialdom acted as an intermediary between the top echelons of power and the people, bringing the legislature to the latter and adapting it to local conditions. At the same time, bourgeois reforms created a "modern" official who was to represent the looming rule of law state (pravomernoe gosudarstvo). A modernizing Russian society demanded an updated administration. The transformation of the corrupt, poorly-educated, and socially self-contained pre-reform Russian provincial officialdom into a modern Weberian rational bureaucracy was never completed in the imperial period. It naturally took time and effort for the bureaucracy to slowly divest itself of many of these earlier flaws. Still, a number of significant changes occurred, including an end to estate limitations, a growth in professionalization and specialization of provincial Crown officials, and shifts in the socio-cultural values and needs of the officialdom.

Keywords: provincial officialdom, bourgeois modernization, socioprofessional characteristic, social status, carrier, corruption, everyday life.

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**СТАРОЕ И НОВОЕ В ЖИЗНИ ПРОВИНЦИАЛЬНОГО
ЧИНОВНИЧЕСТВА В ПЕРИОД БУРЖУАЗНОЙ МОДЕРНИЗАЦИИ
РОССИЙСКОЙ ИМПЕРИИ**

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Аннотация. В условиях капиталистической модернизации России второй половины XIX века губернское и уездное чиновничество исполняло роль посредника между высшими эшелонами власти и народом, доводя до последнего законы и приспособлявая их к местным условиям жизни. В это время под влиянием буржуазных реформ стал складываться тип «современного» чиновника, представлявшего формирующееся правовое (правомерное) государство. Модернизовавшееся российское общество в середине XIX века сделало запрос государству на новый, отвечающий вызовам времени управленческий корпус. Трансформация дореформенного коррумпированного, малообразованного, социально замкнутого чиновничества российской провинции в веберовскую рациональную бюрократию нового времени не успело завершиться до конца имперского периода. Бюрократия медленно и с трудом освобождалась от многих своих пороков предшествовавшей эпохи, что было естественным и объяснимым явлением. Однако существенные изменения произошли: были сняты сословные ограничения на доступ в эту среду, выросли профессионализация и специализация труда коронных управленцев в провинции, изменились социокультурные ценности и запросы чиновничества.

Ключевые слова: провинциальное чиновничество, буржуазная модернизация, социально-профессиональная характеристика, социальный статус, карьера, коррупция, повседневность.

The modernization of the Russian empire in the latter half of the nineteenth through early twentieth centuries could not but affect the provincial officialdom, since it was the social stratum of Russian society that was supposed to implement the reforms initiated by the monarch and the elite. Therefore, the evolution of the status, everyday service, and out-of-office practices of the provincial bureaucracy should take into account the struggle between the “due,” the “statutory,” the “ordinary,” and the “traditional.” By the “due” we mean the law-determined status of a sovereign’s

servant, who had to zealously execute the government's policy. The "ordinary" was formed from class and professional corporate traditions of the provincial bureaucracy as a whole and its individual strata. In practice, it primarily meant the pursuit of personal and group interests, as well as the maintenance of the status quo of the provincial bureaucracy in society.

During this period, an expansion of government bodies was accompanied by the growth of bureaucracy as a special social stratum that engaged in public service, had a class rank, and was endowed with specific rights and advantages. The bureaucracy was distinguished from other social strata and groups and social classes by specific legal features, in particular a set of clear, hierarchically constructed social roles and a desire for uniform interpretation of administrative norms. This social group had "great power" not only in the capitals, but also in the provinces. Already by this time, the bureaucracy was an inter-estate community, reflecting certain evolutionary processes of the estate system.

The formation of the bureaucracy as a special group, endowed with rights and benefits, was associated with the establishment of the Table of Ranks in 1722, which regulated the rank promotion of civil servants until the revolutionary upheavals of 1917. Entry into the civil service was determined by three fundamental conditions: ancestry, age, and education.

According to the "right of ancestry," children of hereditary and personal nobles, children of priests and deacons (both Orthodox and Uniate confessions) children of Protestant pastors and merchants of the first guild, and children of officers and officials who received personal honorary citizenship were allowed to enter the civil service. In addition to these categories, children of clerks (petty *prikaz* officials) could also enter the service (Drygin 2010, 15).

Another limitation was the age of applicants for service in the institutions of the Crown. For a long time in Russia, the law did not provide for a minimum age, which led to various issues with seniority. In the 1830s the government established fourteen years as the minimum age for admission to the service, while clarifying that active service began only at sixteen years (Pisar'kova 1995, 125). For some positions, particularly commanding ones, varying age limits were set, including twenty-one, twenty-five and thirty-five years (Arkhipova, Rumiantseva, Senin 1999, 115). From this point on, the common minimum threshold for admission to the civil service became firmly established in legislation.¹ Thus, the age of entry into the service was conditional on the assumed minimum age of capacity for specific public service roles.

In order to be promoted to the next rank, an official needed to achieve the corresponding status, dependent on the length of service, competence, education, and approval by their immediate superiors. Each rank in the Table corresponded to a particular title that established the legal

¹ Regulation on the Service by Government Appointment. Art. 14.

consequences of a personal and property character commensurate with this rank. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the state attempted to form an educated, mostly noble bureaucratic corps by favoring the promotion of nobles and installing obstacles (in the form of extended service ranks) for non-nobles. However, the reluctance of a significant part of local nobles to fill up the Crown offices in the provinces and, as a result, a large number of vacant bureaucratic positions forced the government to equalize the length of service for all classes and groups who had the right to public service. This applied both to the attainment of first rank and subsequent promotions (Shepelev 1991, 126–127).

The level of education in this period was not formally decisive for the occupation of a particular position in government administration or for career advancement. Even at the turn of the twentieth century a certificate of graduation or a passing score on a curriculum exam from the county school was sufficient to enter public service (Mel'nikov, Nechiporenko 2003, 78). However, with the country's modernization in the latter half of the nineteenth century, education came to the fore among many factors that determined officials' careers.

The growing complexity of the administrative system and the development of technology and infrastructure necessitated professional managers who possessed specialized knowledge and practical skills. Accordingly, the practical and legal requirements for officials gradually expanded during the post-reform period, with more and more attention paid to the education of public servants. For example, in addition to experience and honesty, a public servant had to show proper competence, supported by formal education. Career growth and salary levels largely depended on education (Pak 2006, 29). Already in the former half of the nineteenth century, according to B. N. Mironov, the career of an official was 31 percent dependent on education, 18 percent on social background, 12 percent on wealth, and 39 percent on other factors (1990, 141).

Modernization of society and growing demands for professionalism among officials also led to a noticeable desire from officials for education. A perfect example is found in the memoirs by S. A. Tunik (1892–1964). The son of an officer and small landowner, he graduated from a gymnasium (grammar school) in the town of Korochoa, Kursk province, and then from the Law Faculty of Kharkov University in 1915; next he entered service at a bank. Here is how S. A. Tunik planned his future life and career: “I entered service at the Kharkov branch of the Russian-Asian Bank and at the same time enrolled as a voluntary third year student at the Kharkov Commercial Institute. Everything was already prepared by the bank: a salary of 3,500 rubles a year for beginner employees, and a “bonus” after this training period. The bank had only a few employees with higher education, and therefore I was of interest to them. At the economic department of the institute, the situation was also simple.... I could, with minimal effort, earn another marker of higher education. In Russia at that time, this was of

tremendous importance. I was already promised by the bank that upon graduation from the institute I would be appointed an attorney for the bank. This job promised 5,000 rubles a month² to start.... Later on I was going to be sent for a few years to the Far East, where the main work of the bank took place. After that I could already count on being a bank director in some city like Kharkov. Salaries were no small deal. It all looks incredible now, but back then it was an ordinary matter for a person with two diplomas and the necessary acquaintances” (Tunik 2010, 163–164). The events of 1914 and subsequent years left this man’s plans unaccomplished. However, they were no mere fantasies; the author thought in the categories and realities of his time. He was surely familiar with examples of such career trajectories, and not only in the practice of commercial banks.

Graduates of higher educational institutions, especially those trained in their professional fields, had the most competitive advantages. The desire of university graduates to enter public service was due to a number of preferential conditions. They began service immediately with the ranks of X-IX. The prospect of consistent service promotion, seniority, legislative support for promotion, prestigious status, sufficiently high material support for high-class officials, and guaranteed retirement benefits also attracted graduates (Melnikov, Nechiporenko 2003, 81–82). Those who graduated from the gymnasium with special honors and received a golden or silver medal, as well as students of theological seminaries, were accepted into the service with the rank of XIV on the Table of Ranks.

Having completed a course of study in the gymnasium or at higher educational institutions, and having obtained a corresponding certificate, those who did not have the automatic right to public service were accepted without account for their social origin. The 1857 “Charter on the Civil Service” established this opportunity, which was also included in the third volume of the “Code of Laws of the Russian Empire,” which detailed all official duties, procedures for entering and leaving the service, promotions in rank, awards, pensions, uniforms and some privileges of the profession. Despite the prescribed restrictions on enrollment in the civil service, Article 5 of the Charter makes exceptions for individuals, “1) who acquires the right to rank in his place of origin, or who graduates from an institution that this Charter (Art. 88–351) establishes as allowing for service, regardless of ancestry and knowledge; or 2) when someone legally acquires a scientific or academic degree.”³

That was the first significant step toward the complete legal removal of class restrictions on the right to occupy governmental positions in Russia.

² Most likely, the author had in mind a salary of five thousand per year. In Imperial Russia, it was common to consider salaries per year, not month, Moreover, the indicated amount cannot possibly be true for this time period.

³ The Civil Service Regulations, Art. 5.

Thus, the development of education, the urgent need for qualified personnel, and the social atmosphere at the beginning of bourgeois reforms in the latter half of the nineteenth century opened a wider path for people from the lower classes to penetrate the ranks of the state bureaucracy.

In the early twentieth century, education, especially professional education, became the main requirement for entry into the service, while class qualifications played a shrinking role before being officially eliminated in 1906. Beginning in that year, all Russian citizens were given equal rights to enter the civil service, regardless of ancestry. The class restrictions that had initially been incorporated in the legislation on public service had largely lost their practical justification by the early twentieth century and became an anachronism. Meanwhile, education became one of the most important factors in eroding the class isolation of the bureaucracy as a professional group formed mainly from the nobility.

The study of personnel in the Crown institutions in Kursk province by A. A. Butusova (2006) clearly shows the processes of “denobilization” and democratization in public service. The nobility, who occupied more than half of all bureaucratic seats in the province in the 1860s, by the beginning of the twentieth century retained a little more than a third of these positions, while lower and middle level posts were occupied mostly by impoverished noblemen, who looked at service less in terms of honors and career, and more as a means of subsistence. Noble landowners became less and less bureaucratic in their activities, while mid-level service in local government ceased to be a “noble gentlemen’s club.” Status remained only for the highest provincial bureaucracy. Accordingly, in the early twentieth century, the social composition of the local bureaucracy was quite diverse; it included people from all the main social strata of the empire, which undoubtedly affected the daily traditions and official life of the bureaucracy. As has been correctly noted by many researchers and contemporary observers, non-nobles were more zealous in service, as it was the only way to support themselves and their families, and to “make one’s way in the world.” Such motivation also dominated among the impoverished hereditary provincial nobles, who moved to the city and entered the service, as well as among the personal and hereditary nobles who received nobility through impeccable service or merit. Thus, the bureaucracy gradually became a variegated group, losing its exclusively pro-nobility character and acquiring and strengthening its new traditions and interests.

Historiography has taken different approaches to the stratification of Russian bureaucracy. One option has been to divide the bureaucracy into servants of the state (military and civilian), private, community, and church offices. Although from the management’s point of view, they sometimes performed identical official functions, their social position was not always identical. For example, obtaining a profitable position in public service was often associated with patronage, bribery, or long, exhausting service, but with the qualities of personal initiative, enterprise, and innovation in a

private company. Moreover, material support for such officials, especially among the lower and middle ranks, was usually higher than the provision of public servants (Fidarova 2009, 17). According to the place of service it is reasonable to divide the provincial bureaucracy into provincial and county officials, with various functional categories within those groups. Thus, the category of county employees, the number and diversity of which was significantly less than in the provinces, included senior county officials, county heads and representatives of provincial institutions, county specialists (zemstvo chiefs, justices of the peace, members of county and city governments, accountants, cashiers, and others), and lower-level employees (police officers, bailiffs, secretaries, archivists, etc.) (Shatokhin 2011, 260–261).

In the first half of the nineteenth century, most bureaucrats were uninterested in service for the sake of service and to ensure the welfare and legality of the country. The top provincial officials viewed service as an additional means of enrichment, while lower-rank officials had neither the ability nor the desire to honestly engage in service, since their activities were entirely aimed at obtaining a minimum standard of living (Moriakova 1993, 32–33). Examples of the moral image of a “non-poor” official are found in the classics of Russian literature. Nikolai Gogol's novel, *Dead Souls*, set in the provincial city of N, describes the police chief as follows: “In general, he sat, as they say, in his place and comprehended his service perfectly.” It may seem that with such a chief of the police in charge, law and order ruled the life of the city and instilled good and honest morals in its residents. It would have been so if the chief had not understood the position in his own way: “he moved among the citizens as if they were members of his own family, and he visited the town's stores and taverns as if they were his own personal stockrooms.” Sarcastically, the author calls him “in some way the father and benefactor of the city” (Gogol 1951 [1842], 149). If this man was the father and benefactor, then what about the rest of them?

Insufficient resources and poor living standards during this entire period caused all sorts of deviations among the bureaucracy. Drinking and stealing were very common. Thus, I. T. Pletnev wrote in his memoirs about the Kursk bureaucracy of the 1860s: “By itself, the deterioration of morals among the bureaucracy was not an organic vice, but developed gradually, starting with the use of welcome offerings, which constituted an important support given the meager wages of police officials ... The evil of such offerings was that officials got accustomed to such handouts and turned them into a compulsory tax on residents, increasing their size by means of unfair pressure that was tantamount to extortion” (Pletnev 1915, 659). B. K. Kukel, appointed in 1862 as manager of excise duties and organizer of new business in Kursk province, recalled the destruction of wine sales in his writings three decades later: “Those who witnessed the ransom orgy probably have not forgotten it until now. Not just wine dealers, but the administration and the courts were all in on it, with only a few exceptions.

In the county town there was no civil servant who would not accept contributions of money and wine. No one hesitated to take ‘according to his rank’” (Kukel 1892, 178). Wine dealers did not hesitate to bribe even the governor himself. However, the history of Kursk governors also tells of honest ministers of executive power. Thus, V. I. Den (1861–1863) was well remembered by the people of Kursk for his severity in fighting bribery “as a chivalrous noble and honest ruler.” For local officials, he was an eccentric and terribly dangerous governor. In one episode that stunned sovereign servants, he defiantly refused to accept a bribe of 15,000 rubles from the dealers. The Chairman of the State Council I. Teleshev tried unsuccessfully to transfer the money to Den on Easter Sunday in 1861. Later he “assured his acquaintances that he could never have imagined such a strange position from the new governor. Six governors before him not only took no offense from it, but, quite the opposite, were on friendly terms with Teleshev” (Reshetov 1885, 543–545).

The presence of so many such examples of the struggle against bribery and embezzlement, as well as simple descriptions of corruption in the 1850s and 1860s in memoir literature, is not accidental. This time marked a broad struggle by uncorrupted forces within the bureaucracy itself as these plagues began, which were supported by the bourgeois transformations of Alexander II. It was not possible to fully overcome these problems. Still, in addition to a significant reduction in the scale of bribery, a most important state of affairs emerged: public opinion coalesced around an unambiguously negative attitude toward the evils of bureaucracy.

Further, the wages of provincial officials gradually grew. On average, they were very low in the mid-nineteenth century, but by the early twentieth century had become more acceptable. This growth made service in governmental institutions more prestigious and helped government and society in the fight against bribery. The latter was an integral part of the provincial bureaucracy prior to the Great Reforms, but declined in this later time period. Sources from the late nineteenth though early twentieth centuries no longer provide information about general and open bribery, nor about openly positive attitudes toward bribe-takers and those who practiced extortion in their official positions. This stain on the bureaucracy was not eliminated in this period. It just ceased to be public, having acquired a latent character.

As a high school student in the town of Korocho, Kursk province, S. A. Tunik recalls his Greek language instructor, who enjoyed great respect among the inhabitants of the town. The owner of one shop, Parmanin, often treated this regular customer, along with his supervisor when he visited the shop. “Caviar has been delivered,”—reported Parmanin. Then came the order to the clerk: “Serve the caviar and Selters.” Tunik continues: “Parmanin was legally selling vodka, but it was forbidden to drink in the store, and therefore vodka was brought in tea cups and called Selters. In the same way it was presented to the supervisor himself when he stopped by to

try some snacks. The police officer was supposed to monitor the execution of the law, but “Selters” was not vodka. Of course, it was a treat, not a sale” (Tunik 2010, 127). The shop owner welcomed both the school teacher and the official with honors and treats. Both were public servants, but while respect for the teacher was based on personal sympathy, the corresponding attitude toward the police officer was largely dictated by the desire to please him as a law enforcer. It was a kind of hidden bribe in exchange for overlooking violations of the law by the shop owner himself.

The conditions of life and the behavior of officials were largely influenced by financial circumstances, which were extremely difficult for most bureaucrats, with the exception of the highest ranking members. For example, the salary of a junior official in provincial government in the early twentieth century was thirty times lower than the governor’s salary (according to the staffing table). In reality, this difference was significantly greater, considering that many governors (like the entire bureaucratic elite) received various kinds of additional funding (Proskuriakova 2010, 90). With such meager salaries, titular advisers, collegiate registrars, and provincial secretaries lived like Gogol’s Akakii Akakievich: “they rented a room on the third or fourth floor, ran in hundreds ... toward different departments, and after 3 p.m. ... they returned home from their offices with briefcases under their arms.” Even relatively wealthy police officials had financial difficulties. Thus, in the early twentieth century, a bailiff’s salary in the city of Kursk was 750 rubles per year and 300 rubles for the maintenance of the office; the assistant bailiff’s salary was 500 rubles. After the Revolution of 1905–07, local employees were dissatisfied with their salaries because food prices were high: “Receiving fifteen rubles a month ... with day laborers earning twenty-five to thirty rubles, and craftsmen up to fifty rubles or even more, the majority of police officers look at their service as a transitional stage and at the first opportunity move to better paid positions” (quoted by Stepanova 2012). In 1908, the Kursk governor proposed to change the salaries of city police officers. His project provided for bailiffs to receive salary increases up to 1,200 rubles, office expenses up to 600 rubles, apartment expenses up to 487 rubles, and traveling expenses up to 300 rubles; to the bailiff’s assistants, respectively, the maintenance was up to 600 rubles, the housing up to 300 rubles, and traveling expenses up to 180 rubles (Stepanova 2012). Such measures, taken to improve the material situation of the police officers, were insufficient, as there remained a large number of other low-paid officials.

Great shifts in the development of the provincial bureaucracy in the post-reform period brought significant changes to its socio-cultural image. However, since the civil service in this period was partly, but not completely, freed from class traditions, the daily life of provincial officials was determined, on the one hand, by “ancestral traditions” and the size of family property, and on the other hand, by the specifics of their professional activities. In any case, officials can be divided into two groups: 1) those who

tried to lead a “noble” lifestyle, corresponding to the standards of the upper class, and 2) those who inherited the habits, customs, and problems of the lower classes. In the latter case, we can talk about common features of officials in their everyday lives. These included the need to endure skepticism from others, a sedentary lifestyle, a well-established work schedule, and a self-esteem that was dependent on their place in the hierarchy of ranks and titles. With the professionalization of bureaucracy, the last signs should have become increasingly important.

The circumstances of work and the low standard of living for most officials influenced both their daily lives and their mentality: “in the bureaucratic world, there was considerable simplicity in life, from dress to the last little things in everyday life. Prudence and frugality were in the foreground and it is not surprising that even with a small budget, officials managed to set aside savings for a rainy day” (Pletnev 1915, 735).

Leisure activities depended on the class, rank, and income level of officials. A high-ranking official could afford to visit clubs, restaurants, theaters, balls, and so forth. Many of them were fond of playing croquet, billiards, and, of course, card games, which occupied a huge place in the life of the prosperous and educated social strata in the eighteenth through early twentieth centuries. This way of spending off-duty time was dictated in many respects by the traditions that were formed in these social circles. Their composition was constantly changing; officials regularly changed their place of residence and social status, and retired or died. Further, traditions changed under the influence of fashion and the personal interests of participants, especially formal leaders. If the boss loved card games, then his closest subordinates were forced to sit at the card table to maintain their status. If the boss liked music, his subordinates either took up learning the instrumental pieces or vocals, or became grateful and enthusiastic listeners and connoisseurs of the talents of their boss.

Features of leisure and of everyday life writ large, depended on the place of residence of the official and the social group. Life in a provincial town was markedly different from life in a county town, while county towns themselves could differ significantly from one other in socio-economic terms, which was then reflected in the daily life of residents. In the memoirs of a contemporary, local statistician A. Dunin, we find an interesting description of the county town of Putivl, Kursk province, which attracted the attention of the author due to its picturesque surroundings and rich historical past. Dunin describes it as “a small one-horse town A cathedral, several churches, a monastery, about 1,500 houses and cabins—that’s the whole town In the middle of the town, like in all county towns, there is a bazaar, spread over a wide square covered with dung heaps. In the bazaar, from morning to evening, one can hear the shouting and scolding of merchants and tipsy peasants. There is also a *gostinnyi dvor* [shopping center] on the square, which is dotted with merchants’ signs, and a tavern with rooms for visitors. The tavern is like those of the 1860s, where the old-world

Chichikovs and Nozdrevs used to stay” (Dunin 1908, 463). The taverns (*traktiry*) were relatively cheap restaurants, often combined with hotels. They were places not just for eating or strong drinks, but also for relaxing, friendly conversation, and reading newspapers.

A. Dunin writes that “county life engulfs a person entirely... it is dangerous for a ‘newcomer’ to stay here longer than they should.” “But it’s good to live here for some time... What a contrast between the noisy dusty streets of the capital and the quiet green town!” In such a quiet and peaceful town as Putivl, life is “substantive.” He remarks, “After lunch, in the old fashioned way, there’s a midday nap. Be it the official who examines the cases of various Dovgochkhuns and Perepenoks [burlesque local surnames] every day, the artisan who dreams, after a thousand years, of covering peasant huts with tiled roofs, the ‘merchant’ waiting for Korobochka to visit the next bazaar with different ‘living creatures,’ or the attorney, all of them, even the street police officer, are immersed in a sweet afternoon nap” (Dunin 1908, 464). However, even “in this idyll of peace and quiet, things are already changing. There are traits of city life...” (Dunin 1908, 465). Despite the specific shortcomings of life in such a county town, Dunin praises the “cultural convenience” of the Putivl city public library, which “can measure its book wealth not only with the provincial, but in some departments, also with the imperial public libraries” (Dunin 1908, 467).

For literate citizens, including provincial officials, reading in their free time was one of the most enjoyable forms of leisure. In the context of the modernization of society, not only interest, but also the need for the acquisition of certain knowledge dictated the need for the development of literature. As confirmation we can use the data on libraries from the city of Kursk. The activities of the Semenov Public Library and the Pushkin National Library, which opened in Kursk in the late nineteenth century, were focused on various social strata of the population and their specific cultural needs. The data from the paid library reports from Semenov show that for the four years between 1901 and 1904, the library remained quite popular among public servants (about 25 percent of all visitors), who ranked second after students in the number of visits (37 percent in 1904). A significant and relatively stable group of readers consisted of individuals without specific occupations and officials.⁴ In Pushkin Library in 1901, most of the visitors were students, but in 1903 they were outnumbered by such categories as “employees in various institutions and people of free professions,” as well as

⁴ The Board 1901 Report on the Activities of the Semenov Kursk Public Library and the Related Pushkin Free People’s Library-chitalnia. P. 6; The Board 1903 Report on the Activities of the Semenov Kursk Public Library and the Related Pushkin Free People’s Library-chitalnia. P. 4.

“craftsmen, artisans, and factory workers.”⁵ Despite the fact that there were very few active readers in city libraries in the early twentieth century (in Kursk, 4 percent of the literate population), the culture of reading was gradually becoming a part of the urban lifestyle.

The late nineteenth century saw an intensification of social life in the province. Regardless of rank and income, officials, as well as representatives of other social groups, took part in the activities of various societies and charities. This participation influenced the cities’ appearance and their residents’ way of life, as well as the formation of the spiritual needs of the active members in these societies. Despite the limited size of the bureaucracy, it played an important role in the public life of the city.

In the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, significant qualitative changes took place in the life of the bureaucracy. Of course, we cannot speak of a total transformation of the provincial bureaucracy. On the one hand, in this environment there were remnants of corporate traditions that did not meet the requirements of modernization. Among them were a strong personal dependence by subordinates on the authorities, considerable police custody and supervision of “trustworthiness,” and the large role of patronage in entering a service, among other factors. On the other hand, modernization reforms caused significant innovations to emerge and gain force. The bureaucracy became not so much extra-class, but rather a supra-class social and professional group. Estate restrictions on access to this group were lifted. However, new obstacles arose, in particular the requirements for education due to the growing power of professionalization and specialization of management activities. In the mid-twentieth century, Russian society entered the era of bourgeois modernization, and therefore could not tolerate the medieval vices of the bureaucracy, in particular its addiction to “sinless revenues.” Society began to openly and aggressively make claims on the bureaucratic body and over time, this could have had a beneficial effect in sparking a cleansing process in the state administration system. Within the Russian bureaucracy, including among its provincial officials, a steady tendency toward the elimination of corruption began to take shape and strengthen. The change in the social appearance of officials and the growth of their educational and cultural levels, led to the emergence of new values and motivations in the lives of state servants. The subsequent changes are so marked that they allow us to speak about the destruction of the old traditions in public service and off-duty everyday life and the formation of new ones. The main factor determining the evolution of the Russian bureaucracy was the modernization of the Russian state and society.

Translated from Russian by Alexander M. Amatov

⁵ The Board 1901 Report on the Activities of the Semenov Kursk Public Library and the Related Pushkin Free People’s Library-chitalnia. P. 21; The Board 1903 Report on the Activities of the Semenov Kursk Public Library and the Related Pushkin Free People’s Library-chitalnia. P. 13.

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