

Methods for determining the class of owners of noble enterprises at the early 20th century

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ABSTRACT

Social classes and the estate system in Russia are among the key topics in modern historiography. The owners of capitalist enterprises, who formally belonged to various groups of the nobility, had different attitudes towards bourgeois entrepreneurship, which objectively turned them into a new social stratum. To identify them within these groups, it is necessary to apply special techniques and methods presented in this article. The answer to the question about the ratio of such representatives within the general stratum of noble entrepreneurs clarifies the genesis of capitalism in Russia with due regard to the specifics and characteristics of Russia's evolution along the path of bourgeois development.

After the abolition of serfdom, Russia and its ruling class needed to develop capitalism. This was a fundamentally new task, having nothing to do with military reforms had traditionally been the main activity of the autocratic state and its ruling class, i.e. the nobility. In this regard, the nobility faced the problem of preserving not only its hegemony in the changing Russian society but also saving itself as an estate. Consequently, an increasing number of estate members began to take an active part in various types of entrepreneurial activity. At the beginning of the 20th century, noble entrepreneurship proved the readiness of the upper class to adapt to the new and rapidly changing socio-economic conditions starting in 1861. This would help the entire class-based empire to survive, whose main supporter was considered the nobility.

Keywords: Nobles-owned enterprise, Estates, Determination methods, Data pool

Introduction

Before K.N. Kurkov's studies [1-9], there were no special works concerned with noble entrepreneurship in Russia as a phenomenon. Previously, there had been only A.P. Korelin's article included in an abridged form in his monograph on the post-reform nobility [10] and a chapter in M.K. Shatsillo's

monograph [11], as well as several provisions in the book of the American researcher S. Becker [12] published in the Russian translation.

It is worth mentioning that there were no statistics and records of noble entrepreneurs, whose activities reflected various aspects of their inclusion into the adaptation process, as well as general data on individual branches of trade and industry. This fact should be considered when selecting research sources.

Many selected materials were used in the works of A.P. Korelin, B.V. Ananich, A.N. Bokhanov, and M.K. Shatsillo. The First Russian Imperial Census of 1897 provides no information on our research topic since it is impossible to generalize any data on noble entrepreneurship as a means of adapting the upper class to the modernization process. We should also consider address books of the Russian cities presenting information about the owners of warehouses and

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enterprises but they require comprehensive and time-consuming statistical studies.

While studying reference books, we have found the relevant information in the "Illustrated Bulletin of Cultural, Commercial and Industrial Progress..." published between 1898 and 1914 (intermittently) [13]. Its content demonstrates the ratio of the nobility and other estates among the owners of large enterprises: Issue 1 (1898) mentions only the Beloselsky-Belozersky princes (the owners of the Ural factories) out of dozens of breeders and manufacturers (a special role was played by horse breeding). (This is justified by the following fact: "The Beloselsky-Belozersky family belonged to the country's highest aristocracy and the richest tycoons associated with capitalist entrepreneurship. They owned, in particular, a metallurgical plant in the Urals and shares of other enterprises") [14]. In 1899, Issue 2 paid even less attention to the Poklevsky-Kozell family; the remaining merchants and industrialists belonged mainly to the merchant class.

A.N. Bokhanov made the first attempt to create a "data pool" about the so-called "captains" of the Russian business in his reference book-monograph "The Russian Business Elite. 1914". In total, the book listed 1,469 business leaders, 143 of them were foreign citizens, nine people belonged to the nobility, three people bore the title of counts and one person had the title of baron. The situation with the Russian subjects was more difficult. "Their class was challenging to determine" since "this feature was randomly recorded in all indexes of commercial and industrial enterprises". The list comprised eight princes (including V.N. Tenishev, a "Tatar" prince, whose title was considered lower than that of baron) [15], 15 counts, 23 barons (including V.N. Gunzburgs, whom the right to use a foreign title did not give the rights of hereditary nobility), one khan and 270 untitled nobles. Six more people had the prefix "von" which usually meant they belonged to the Baltic nobility (enshrined in the legislation in 1910) [16, 17].

In addition, it is known that A.I. Vyshnegradsky, A.K. von Dreyer, S.A. Erdeli, V.P. Verkhovsky, V.N. Evreinov, and A.K. Kaufmann belonged to the nobility. Two more people had the ranks of privy counselor and 53 people had the ranks of actual state counselor (including Verkhovsky, Vyshnegradsky, and von Dreyer) that provided the right of hereditary nobility [18].

It is interesting to compare this list containing the names of the "Russian business elite" and the list of members of the Central Committee of the "Union of October 17" in 1905-1907 published by V.V. Shelokhaev in his book about the Octobrist Party of this period [19]. 11 people were mentioned in both lists out of 66 members of the Central Committee (the Octobrists) and 317 nobles cited by A.N. Bokhanov. The small ratio of their kind in comparison with the rest of the people confirms A.N. Bokhanov's conclusion on the separation of the Cadets and Octobrists. In fact, "intellectual-lordly" circles turned to be detached from those whose interests should have been close to them. The most prominent noble entrepreneurs did not influence political processes even in one of the largest

bourgeois-liberal parties (as history has shown, the situation did not change over the following seven years).

According to I.A. Sokolov, there was a small number of noble tea merchants [20]. He directly indicated the class, serving, and social affiliation of "tea merchants" in 1900-1914, which allows to immediately isolate those who belonged to various categories of the nobility.

Using the sources already analyzed in whole or in part by other researchers, and comparing the obtained data with the further ones [21], we can not only supplement and revise the results provided by previous authors but also propose different methods for developing the issue of noble entrepreneurship.

Materials and Methods

The formalized approach to statistics is needed to obtain the most accurate data and is justified by the fact that any estate is a non-economic category (this was typical of special conditions in the Russian Empire). The greatest legal certainty concerning the nobility facilitates the study and generalization of information both about its specific representatives and the estate as a whole. The most valuable are such sources as publications of mass statistical materials. The following reference books laid the basis for this study: "The list of factories and plants of European Russia" (Saint Petersburg, 1903) and "Factories and plants of the Russian Empire" [21]. They were used to consider certain individuals, and then generalize and analyze the degree of noble adaptation and its general mechanisms. From the viewpoint of studying noble adaptation concerning Russian modernization, the above-mentioned materials have not been studied.

The starting point for studying noble entrepreneurship is the work of A.P. Korelin. At the same time, the generalizing nature of its chapter concerned with noble "businessmen" and the time frame (up to 1900-1903) do not allow a closer study of this phenomenon and do not cover the last decades of the empire's existence.

Other authors did not aim at studying noble entrepreneurship as a phenomenon, uniting business representatives of the upper class with similar people from other strata under the same concept of "bourgeoisie". None of them investigated noble commercial and industrial entrepreneurship. Providing detailed information about noble shareholders and traders [18] or assessing their activities in the context of the bourgeoisie as a whole (as of the beginning of the 1900s – M.K. Shatsillo [11], scholars did not compare reference books of different years for their general analysis and did not use the opportunities that personal archives provide for covering individuals and groups of entrepreneurs. "The scientific study of the history of the Russian industry is restrained by the limited use of various mass sources and, most importantly, the insufficient development of research methods. This is due to the general level of source study" [22]. The old [11] or new [23] methods of studying the bourgeoisie do not take into account class division in general and the nobility in particular. Therefore, they cannot be applied

without changes or significant additions, which provides opportunities for the development of new methods concerning certain estates.

S.V. Voronkova analyzed the reference books that served as a base for this article and dwelled on lists of the Russian industrial enterprises as a massive historical source. Considering these and similar sources, the scholar highlighted the "integrity of the main elements arising from the same origin of their parts, as well as unified methods for conducting statistical surveys and processing the information obtained". These features make it not only possible but also necessary to use these sources in a complex, despite differences in the completeness of information about some industrial facilities, various initiators and compilers of reference books not related to each other, etc. "Both the territorial and sectoral systematization of materials, and the unified approach to determining rules and principles of calculating the main production indicators of an industrial enterprise prove that the entire complex of mass sources can be regarded as a single database about any given industry" [22].

S.V. Voronkova offered to record industrial enterprises with the help of coding such characteristics as the name of provinces, the affiliation to a particular industry, and production. However, "when coding some features, it becomes necessary to analyze and then systematize them to avoid disintegration and the loss of their significance, namely while coding such a feature as "class affiliation". When real social groups were listed, it was quite common to use concepts that did not directly determine the social status of a person: court councilor, collegiate secretary, provincial secretary", a retired officer, chemical engineer, mechanical engineer, dentist or pharmacist's wife. In this case, we need to *correlate these features with the existing class division* [22] (italicized by the authors). Proceeding with the study of the statistics of noble entrepreneurship, we should dwell on the work of M.K. Shatsillo. His book also addresses methods for studying one of our sources – "The list of factories and plants of European Russia". M.K. Shatsillo provided the actual results of processing this reference book, including in the context of the "social belonging" of enterprise owners.

Methods for studying noble entrepreneurship have not been developed yet. We became the first in historical science to account for and analyze this phenomenon by compiling and processing data from the card index of nobles-owned enterprises. Nowadays it is the best method that allows considering the maximum number of parameters concerning each person [1]. The reason for difficulties that scholars can face is the lack of study or insufficient study of important aspects of the class history and no generalized data on the "business activity" of the nobility [24].

According to our calculations and S.V. Voronkova's conclusions, the increase in the number of enterprises and the number of their owners in the reference book of 1914 if compared with the book of 1903 is explained not so much by industrial growth as by the expansion of accounting possibilities. Industrial censuses had covered a larger number of enterprises by 1914. The reference book of 1914 is larger in volume than that of 1903 but this circumstance does not reflect the growth

of commercial and industrial activity. The possibilities of class identification were significantly limited because "Factories and plants..." of 1914 did not indicate the ranks and titles of plant owners (except for hereditary titles) in contrast to the "List of factories and plants" of 1903.

Based on the above-mentioned reference books, we have managed to create an independent mass source forming the most comprehensive basis for the study of socio-economic modernization and adaptation of the Russian nobility to new historical realities. The source is crucial because it contains data on the most progressive and dynamically developing industrial sectors: machine-building, metallurgical, metalworking, chemical, etc. These constitute the backbone of the modernization process (the transition from traditional society to industrial one).

Results and Discussion

Speaking about the need for a comprehensive study of the entrepreneurial stratum of society, historians interested in the Russian bourgeoisie draw attention to the fact that the idea of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs "is based on studying not the entire object, but its part distinguished according to the criteria of "power", "influence" and "typicality". When drawing "global conclusions about the "business world" as a whole, one should bear in mind not only the top of the social pyramid but also its foundation. Along with the "elite" represented by owners of the largest commercial and industrial companies, heads of capitalist corporations, and top managers in powerful financial groups, entrepreneurship also consisted of a fairly extensive "middle" stratum of sole owners of factories and plants, urban infrastructure enterprises engaged in trade, service, transport, etc. However, the relevant literature contains the most general ideas about the "middle" class of the business world, including the share of various social components" [11]. We fill this gap with due regard to representatives of all noble groups, without distinction of their nobility, position on the career ladder, the volume of production, and the level of profit.

However, it is unacceptable to neglect associated owners as opposed to sole proprietors (1900-1903). The comparison of the data from the reference book (1900-1903) with the data of 1914 [21] shows that enterprises having two or more owners, including "Partnership" and "Association", sometimes became the sole property of nobles or class officials, and vice versa passed into the possession of a whole group of people. We cannot agree with the division of nobles and officials as completely different social groups since the notion "service is honor" that had been introduced and diligently cultivated in the minds of all the population for centuries forced to indicate not a class but rather bureaucratic and hierarchical affiliation as one's "title" even on the onset of capitalism. There was a large number of 100% hereditary nobles among collegiate and provincial secretaries, captains, and lieutenants. It is not entirely correct to classify the scientific intelligentsia as persons

of "free professions" (apart from nobles and officials) since doctors, holders of a Master's degree, and Candidates of various sciences either had a class rank or were potential owners of it. Earlier scientific works substantiated the same formal-legal approach to the research subject that we have chosen. "Until 1917, the Russian society had been based on classes but a rigid structure was typical of two main social groups that formed the hierarchical system: the nobility and the peasantry" [11]. This fact facilitates our task, which would be significantly complicated by the analysis of the "bourgeoisization" of other estates and social groups.

It is inappropriate to define the category of honorary citizens as "closely related to the merchants" but "estate-inclusive in nature". This approach does not consider the specifics of the Russian class structure that was purposefully supported and developed by the autocracy. Firstly, honorary citizenship was conceived by the supreme power as the "second nobility" [16, 17], and stood above the merchants and even the rest of "taxable estates" on the estate ladder, i.e. the "estate-inclusive" character of this category is incorrect. This was a certain social group. Secondly, this group was "closely connected" not so much with the merchants as with the bureaucracy and the petty nobility. Thus, holders of class ranks and their descendants received honorary citizenship if they did not have the rights of hereditary or personal nobility.

An approach to the history of the bourgeoisie of the early 20th century as a single social community is common to the compilers of the reference book entitled "The Russian entrepreneurs at the early 20th century" [25]. This edition is of some interest for the history of entrepreneurship as a phenomenon. Its fragmentary data are insufficient for the study of noble commercial and industrial entrepreneurship at the beginning of the 20th century. The reference book is based on the questionnaires sent by organizers of the emigrant Russian Commercial, Industrial, and Financial Union (Torgprom) and contains data on 315 people (mainly "captains of the Russian business"). These questionnaires rarely contained any indications of class affiliation. Only several undoubted signs (for example, the hereditary title, the prefix "von" or "de" added to one's surname, or the corresponding rank) could be used to attribute one or another entrepreneur to the nobility. However, there is a "biographical commentary" at the end of the book stating the following compilers: E.P. Kovalevsky, M.S. Margulies, A.P. Meshchersky, Vice Admiral I.F. Bostrem, Major General A.A. Gulevich, actual state councilors A.A. Davidov, E.E. Kartavtsov, G.G. Lerche and State Secretary A.V. Krivoshein. It also provides information about the baronial title of A.L. Knop absent in the text of the questionnaire [25]. This "biographical commentary" does not provide details on all 315 individuals listed in the reference book.

Thus, the collection contains more or less detailed information about 26 people who can be attributed to the nobility. Actual State Councilor V.V. Andreev was a member of the Management Board and Director of the Siberian Trade Bank with a capital of about 120 million rubles. Count E.P.

Bennigsen was a shareholder of the Moscow-Ryazan-Kazan railway (45 million rubles) and a member of the Council of the Volzhsko-Kamsky Commercial Bank. Count A.A. Bobrinsky was a co-owner of five sugar and sugar-refinery factories (Balakleisky, Grushevsky, Kashtanovsky, and Smelyansky), whose total capital was estimated at 8 million rubles. Count A.A. Buxhöwden owned a house in Petrograd and the Fursovo estate in Tula province, where the Fursovsky distillery and rectification factories were located. There is only one indication of a "hereditary nobleman" – A.V. Danilov, an owner of the ninth distillery and rectification plant, glass plant, and "real estate" in Krasnoyarsk and Minusinsk, as well as a shareholder of the South Siberian mining and metallurgical plants and two gold-mining joint-stock companies in the Yenisey province. A.A. de Sèvres was the Chairman of the Management Board of the United Bank in Moscow with a capital of 50 million rubles and the administrator of the United French Bank (55 million francs). B.A. von Dehn called himself the "sole heir" of his father's peat processing enterprise (near the town of Revel) and a forest estate in Finland. Prince D.A. Obolensky claimed to be "the owner's son" in the questionnaire but he indicated only one enterprise (the glass factory "Berezichi") and two estates (forestry and agricultural), with a total area of 45 thousand dessiatines. Colonel of the General Staff A.A. Izmailov was the owner of a seed farm, a stud farm, and "mineral deposits" in the estate of Druzhkovka in the Yekaterinoslavskaya province, as well as the Druzhkovsky coalmine with a total cost of about 3 million rubles. Baron A.A. Kister was the co-owner of a house in Petrograd, the Kobrino estate in the Kostroma province, as well as the main shareholder and member of the Management Board of the joint-stock company of the "Slon" starch plant belonging to the heirs of M.K. Nepokoichitskaya for a total of 1,385 thousand rubles. Count M.M. Tolstoy was the owner of seven estates with a total value of 22,400 thousand rubles, but ruled only two sugar-beet factories and kept interest-bearing securities of the Kherson, Bessarabsky, and Tavrichesky banks in the amount of 6 million rubles. V.G. von Schlippe was the co-owner of four estates (8,400 dessiatines) and a plywood factory "Chernyshino" in the Kaluga province with a capital of approximately 100 thousand rubles. According to the reference book, the richest of the titled entrepreneurs was Prince A.D. Golitsyn. He owned the estate "Old Vodolaga" in the Kharkiv province with a steam mill and a distillery (800 thousand rubles) and was the chairman of the Board of Executive Directors and a shareholder of many banks and companies.

There were also smaller entrepreneurs and even so-called "specialists" mentioned in the reference book. A.K. von Hoeltzke was involved in the wholesale wine trade in Moscow with a capital of 500,000 rubles. In 1915, he was expelled from the country and his property was sequestered. Former Chairman of the Committee of Ministers and well-known emigrant, Count V.N. Kokovtsov positioned himself as the Chairman of the Council of the Petrograd International Commercial Bank but owned capital of only 750 rubles. Finally, Colonel N.T. Belov worked in the "mill industry" as a

consultant [25]. However, the questionnaires did not indicate the class of such well-known people as Knopp, Krusenstern, Rakusa-Sushevsky, Tarnovsky, etc. [25]. Without this information, we cannot attribute them to the Russian nobility, if not their rare surnames untypical of representatives of the lower classes. Due to these specific features, the reference book could not provide proper information for the study of noble entrepreneurship.

Considering the above, we used the sources already analyzed in whole or in part by other researchers and compared the obtained data with the further ones [21]. As a result, we were able not only to revise the results provided by the previous authors but also apply different methods for developing the issue of noble entrepreneurship. The formalized approach to statistics is needed to obtain the most accurate data and is justified by the fact that any estate is a non-economic category (this situation was more typical of the Russian Empire than other countries). The greatest legal certainty concerning the nobility facilitates the study and generalization of information both about its specific representatives and the estate as a whole. Within the period under consideration, the first reference book was the "List of factories and plants of European Russia" of 1903 published as a continuation of the "Index of Factories and Plants of European Russia" (edited by P.A. Orlov and S.G. Budagov) of 1894 and the "List of factories and plants" (edited by N.P. Langovoy and V.I. Mikhailovsky) of 1897. The preface to the later issue of the "List" of 1912 explained that the data of 1903 referred to the "general survey of the state of the industry" in 1900.

In 1914, the publishing house "L.P. Kandaurov and Son" issued the second edition of the reference book "Factories and plants of the Russian Empire" [21] (the first edition by L.K. Ezioransky was published in 1909). Among older publications, we should note the "Address book of factory and craft industry" edited by Pogozhev (Saint Petersburg, 1905). Thus, we have a sufficiently representative source base to form an idea about changes and the state of noble enterprises for the entire period up to 1917.

In this regard, we will mention two designations that do not identify the estate of enterprise owners, therefore cannot be used to determine noble entrepreneurs according to the "List of factories and plants" without additional information. These concepts are "landlord" and "landowner". Unfortunately, the abolition of restrictions or direct prohibitions on the purchase of peasants without land or land without peasants (especially with the abolition of serfdom) made both of these concepts apply to any owner of a large rural landed property. Only a few nuances reminded me of the local landowning nobles. "In our region, there has long been no antagonism between peasants and noble landowners. The "landowner" term generally went out of use after the abolition of serfdom and was replaced by the "landowner" word. Only after 1917, the definition of "landowner" firmly came back into use", a witness to the collapse of the local nobility wrote about this difference [26]. Therefore, when we came across the "landowner" term in reference books along with the "landowner" term, we did not

include persons called "landowners" in the number of noble entrepreneurs.

The "List of factories and plants" did not always show the nobility of persons of a truly noble rank. For example, Aleksandr Dmitrievich Protopopov (the future minister) was called a "staff captain" and the estate of Fyodor Vasilievich Bezpachev (a nobleman of the Poltava province) was not named at all [9].

There were probably other inaccuracies in the "List of factories and plants". I.K. Balinsky, the owner of a mill in the town of Yashuny (the Vilensk province), had been "deprived" of the noble title and was called a "landowner". Owning a tile factory (in the same town of Vilensk province), he was called a "nobleman". There are many similar cases. Even a representative of the noblest Naryshkin family, the chamberlain Georgy Dmitrievich, was not described in terms of his class according to the 11th group of enterprises and his court rank was indicated only in one case. At the same time, all three of his enterprises were located in the Kovensky province.

E.A. Pokorskaya-Zhoravko, an owner of a mill and butter churn in the Konotop district of the Chernigov province, lost her two-hundred-year noble title. The Little Russian book of heraldry [27] restored the owner of the family coat of arms with a "silver overturned horseshoe burdened with a golden key" in her class rights but could not trace the nobility of all Russians, whose considerable part remains unaccounted.

Conclusion

The materials within the newly created data pool highlight the essence of the 'modernization' phenomenon concerning forming the specific model of nobility adaptation.

The reference books used to create the new source did not always indicate the status of persons who belonged to the nobility. While creating this source and achieving the goals set, we compared the "List of factories and plants" of 1903 and "Factories and plants" of 1914 to make sure that the persons already mentioned remained in the second book. The data of 1914 was compared with the information about factory and plant owners in 1903, without using data on entrepreneurs who appeared in 1914, since there was practically no information about their class affiliation.

In such conditions, we have selected the only option for registering the nobility (the owners of factories and plants) and determining changes in their structure. As a result, we compiled a card index of persons belonging to various strata of the nobility based on the reference book of 1903 and compared the data of each card with the data of the reference book of 1914. We also considered the transfer of enterprises to heirs or other noble people. The data on enterprises that became the property of organizations and persons of unknown social status was withdrawn from the resulting data pool. Difficulties in comparing the absolute number of nobles-owned enterprises in the beginning and at the end of the period under review (1900-1914) were fully compensated by the analysis of changes in the

environment of noble owners in different regions and those industries preferred by different groups of a particular estate. M.K. Shatsillo [11] had one of the best approaches that covered estimates of all plant owners. The specifics of his position were that he considered it possible to identify industrial facilities rather than industrialists. "If we count manufacturers instead of factories, there is the risk of repeated counting since some capitalists could have several enterprises in various industries and provinces. Thus, information about them was scattered throughout the reference book". M.K. Shatsillo [11] referred to "several difficulties" (not indicated), including the difficulty of attributing a capitalist to one industrial region, for example, the owner of enterprises in various provinces (although the scholar did not study industries but industrialists). He also claimed that "the identification of industry owners based on the class and social characteristics was not formal".

We have managed to fill this gap by examining the "List of factories and plants of European Russia" from the standpoint of studying individual personalities because the nobility (small- and medium-sized entrepreneurs, as well as the largest capitalists) are of particular interest for the topic under consideration. Our approach to historical sources on noble entrepreneurship was initially based on identifying similar features for creating a data pool. It allows us to fully investigate this phenomenon.

When selecting methods for studying noble entrepreneurship at the beginning of the 20th century, we should consider those formal features of the social status of the owners of factories and plants in the Russian Empire that are indicated in the lists of commercial and industrial enterprises. The plurality of these features represents the structure of class-related entrepreneurship in its completeness and diversity.

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