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A "FORMER NOBLEMAN": SURVIVAL IN SOVIET REALITIES

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ABSTRACT

The issues addressed in the article are of particular relevance for the contemporary historiography due to the absence of systematic studies on the history of the "Soviet nobility" and their adaptation to the Soviet realities. An especially interesting aspect of this topic is the transformation of values and worldview of the nobility in the conditions of the dominant communist ideology.

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The article presents a comprehensive analysis of the nobility survival in the period of establishment of a totalitarian political regime and destruction of the traditional Russian system of values and religious traditions. The primary research method used to address the topic is the micro-historical analysis, which allowed the authors to obtain the following results: a typology of this social group was developed (involuntary or deported emigrants, open or hidden oppositionists, and those who were forced to adapt), based on characterization of beliefs, values and patterns of behaviour of individual representatives of the "former" nobility; oppressive measures used by the Soviet power against the "exploiters" were classified into several types: economic oppression, legal restrictions, ideological pressure and direct terror; and specific features of their adaptation to the Soviet realities, including its ethno-confessional aspect, were identified. The main conclusion drawn from the research is that the nobiliary culture and system of values proved extremely resistant to various challenges and threats of the Soviet epoch. Materials of this article have both theoretical and practical implications in the context of actualisation of the culture of mansions, nobiliary traditions and the cadet education in today´s Russia.

Keywords: "Soviet nobility", system of values, emigration, opposition, terror, adaptation

INTRODUCTION

The study is dedicated to a comprehensive analysis of the nobility survival in the period of establishment of the Soviet power with the dominant communist ideology, accompanied by destruction of the traditional Russian system of values and religious traditions. The research into specifics and ways of preserving the cultural and historical legacy of the nobility during the Soviet period, in the conditions of massive destruction of the "exploiters´ culture", has theoretical and practical implications in the context of actualisation of the nobiliary culture in today´s Russia.

The issues addressed in the study are of particular relevance due to the fact that this topic is at an early stage of consideration in the contemporary historiography. There are two groups of studies on the topic. The first of them considers the phenomenon of "former people" in the USSR in general. V.A. Ivanov was among the first to raise this historiographic issue (11). A number of fundamental works on this problem were written by T.M. Smirnova (18; 19), reconstructing the policy of the Soviet government towards the "former people" on the basis of a wide range of archival materials. Her main conclusion is that in the 1920–1930s "the principle of classification of the population departed from the idea of origin to the idea of political loyalty" (19, p. 295).

The second group of studies describes certain aspects of the nobility survival in Soviet conditions: abolition of the estates of the nobility in post-revolutionary Russia (L.V. Rasskazova) (22), housing policy as an effective way of managing people (M. Meerovich) (20), survival of the "former people" in the conditions of a Soviet city, "daily routine in times of emergency" in the context of relationships between the citizen and the state (S.A. Chuykina (25), Sh. Fitzpatrick (27)) or the contribution of the "Soviet nobility" to the development of culture, economy and science of the USSR (A.S. Kopyak) (17). The specific features of social and cultural life of a noble family in the conditions of Soviet Russia and the USSR after 1917 and till the 1930s were analysed by S.I. Efremov (13). In particular, he showed that, despite various forms of oppression against the nobility by the new government and availability of resources for the emigration, representatives of the majority of famous aristocratic families stayed in Russia. The issues related to the identity of a "Soviet nobleman" are considered in the works by J. Hellbeck, who is considered to be the founder of a new direction in the studies of Soviet history – "Soviet subjectivity". Based on the diaries of the 1930s, the scholar describes the process of the formation of "new people" and a complex mechanism of "embedding oneself" in the project of building communism (29–31).

Research hypothesis: the Soviet power used various oppressive measures against the "former nobility" – from the legal, ideological, socio-political ones to ethnic restrictions and direct terror. Accordingly, there were various types of the "Soviet nobility": protesting or hidden oppositionists, emigrants (forced or deported) and those who had to adapt. However, the efforts of the new government to destroy the class of "exploiters" were ineffective, and the system of values, culture, customs and traditions of the nobility were preserved in all possible ways.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The preferred methodological framework for the study is the civilizational approach, the theoretical and methodological foundation for which was laid in the philosophical and historical works of N.Ya. Danilevsky, O. Spengler and A. Toynbee. Within the frameworks of this approach, the Russian nobiliary culture is considered as a unique phenomenon, the characteristic features of which have been preserved to this day, despite the efforts made by the Soviet power to destroy all the achievements of the "exploiter class".

The research complies with the principles of historicism, objectivity and systemic analysis. The primary method of the study is a micro-historical analysis, the theoretical foundation for which was laid by historians C. Ginzburg and G. Levi. For these Italian scholars, of particular

importance for the historical research are private, individual and accidental aspects – even isolated facts and events and particular characteristics later help to reveal specific features of the entire social organism.

The analysis of legal, ideological, social and political oppressive measures against the nobility taken by the new government requires the use of comparative, hermeneutic and dialectical methods. Research into a number of aspects (behavioural reactions of the nobility to the arbitrariness of the authorities, the governmental "anti-nobility" policy in this area, and transformation of the worldview of the nobility in the new conditions) involves the use of interdisciplinary approaches – in particular, the theory of elites and anthropological and gender approaches.

Among the sources of the research, there are "anti-nobility" legislative acts of the Soviet power (9–12), private documents (memoirs, diaries, letters) (3; 5–7) and materials of the Soviet periodical press.

RESULTS

In spite of the fact that the 1917 Revolution, followed by a drastic change in the socio-political formation and reorientation to a new Communist ideology, set the task of destroying the former nobility as a class of "exploiters", the priority values, behavioural practices and achievements of the nobiliary culture were not destroyed. It is generally believed that the process of adaptation to the new conditions lasted approximately two decades, and by the mid-1940s it ended with the disappearance of the former nobility from the social scene. However, the process of revival of the nobiliary culture (for example, the creation of the Russian Nobility Assembly and its regional units) proves the opposite.

The dictatorship of the proletariat proclaimed the tasks of suppressing the resistance of the overthrown classes and their re-education, and defined a new scale of the social hierarchy, in which the "former people" – in contrast with their exclusive privileges in tsarist Russia – were theoretically destined to become social outcasts.

Economic oppression against former nobility was, first of all, expressed in the expropriation of their land holdings, mansions, libraries, art collections and other expensive property. The first heavy blow to the nobility was the Decree on Land of 26 October 1917, which proclaimed an abolition of landed proprietorship without any compensation, depriving many noble families of their main source of existence. All "the landed estates, as also all crown, monastery and church lands, with all their livestock, implements, buildings and everything pertaining thereto" were placed at the disposal of the volost land committees and the uyezd

Soviets of Peasants' Deputies until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly (10).

In spite of the fact that the decree provided for the responsibility to the revolutionary courts for the damage to "confiscated property, which henceforth belongs to the whole people", the revolutionary detachments, nevertheless, began massive destruction of the mansions, paying no regard to their historical value: they were destroying unique architectural monuments and burning family archives. Many mansions were literally sawn for firewood; the iron from their roofs was used for making buckets; etc. (22, p. 43). Moreover, Soviet historians often stated that pillaging of the estates was initiated by peasants, who took revenge on former "exploiters" on the basis of their "class hatred" and under the slogan "Rob the robbers!" However, many contemporary scholars, including L.V. Rasskazova, consider that the main culprit of massive looting and pillaging of the estates was the Bolshevik party (22, p. 45). This scholarly position is confirmed by many private documentary sources, casting doubt on the official documents of the provincial departments of agriculture. Such documents often state that the "manor house was burned down by peasants", as it was the case with S.N. Sazonov's mansion in the village of Beketovka, Penza Gubernia, while the descendants of the estate owners testify to the directly opposite situation and quite different attitude to their great-grandfather: "When the mansions were destroyed during the 1917 Revolution, he was warned by the peasants and managed to hide his family. They also did not allow burning his empty house, saying that their landlord was not an enemy of ordinary people, but a faithful assistant. Unfortunately, a bit later Sergey Nikiforovich was killed during another night raid by a revolutionary detachment." (22, p. 45)

On 03 November 1918, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars issued a decree on the one-time extraordinary revolutionary ten-billion tax imposed on the property-owing groups of urban and rural population. The decree stated that during the years of the imperialist war the privileged classes managed to accumulate enormous wealth, which now "must be immediately and completely taken from the parasitic counter-revolutionary elements of the population and turned to the urgent needs of revolutionary construction and struggle.

Therefore, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of Soviets resolves: to impose a one-time ubiquitous tax in the amount of 10,000,000,000 (ten billion) roubles on the propertied groups of urban and rural population." That tax also affected part of the nobility (11).

That decree was followed by the decrees on obligation of "former exploiters" to transfer all money and property for the urgent needs of revolutionary construction (11). Baroness M.D.

Wrangel felt the effects of all those decrees, but she still emphasized the mass character of the impoverishment of noble families, "All the horrors of my life did not represent anything exceptional, as three-quarters of the bourgeoisie lived in the same way, except that they were younger and not so lonely... In the beginning of 1918, my husband, seeing that the life in Petrograd was becoming increasingly difficult, began selling all our property: paintings, porcelain, furniture, carpets and silver. The money was gradually stored, as before, in the bank accounts. Nothing foreboded a tragic turn of events, as it was only forbidden to transfer the capital abroad. Then they banned the issuance of money from current accounts, the banks were nationalized, gold and diamonds stored in the safes were confiscated, and we, like everyone else, were left with nothing" (5, p. 119).

Legal restrictions were introduced by the Soviet power within the frames of the so-called "anti-nobility laws" (17, p. 13). The Decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR of 10 November 1917 "On the Abolition of Estates and Civil Ranks" abolished all the estates and class divisions of citizens existing earlier in Russia, class privileges and restrictions, as well as titles, including the status of a *dvoryanin* ("nobleman") and the titles of princes, counts, etc., and the civil ranks (privy councillor, state councillor and so on). The decree established a common name for the entire population of Russia – citizens of the Russian Republic. Thus, the Russian nobility lost all their class privileges (9).

The main provisions of the first decrees of the Soviet power were further developed and specified in the first Soviet constitution – Constitution of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic adopted by the 5th All-Russian Congress of Soviets on 10 July 1918.It formally recognized the dominant position of the working class in alliance with the working peasantry. This principle was reflected in the system of government bodies and the procedures of their formation (the electoral system), as well as in the legal status of citizens.

The constitution explicitly denied electoral rights to "exploiters", including the following groups of population: persons employing hired labour in order to obtain profits; persons with an income without doing any work (such as interest from capital), private merchants and commercial brokers; clergy of all denominations; employees and agents of the police and gendarme corps, as well as higher court ranks, officers, generals, etc.

According to some reports, the number of disenfranchised people amounted to 5 million, and the significant part of them belonged to the nobility (16).

Ideological pressure on "former exploiters" rose on an unprecedented scale. Former noblemen were prevented from taking high official posts or continuing their scientific and

creative activities; they were evicted from their landed estates and mansions and suffered from ostracism in mass media. In this respect, the fate of the once wealthy, landowning Gallsky family is quite indicative: "after eviction of the family from their estate in 1922 they wandered around the city apartments" in Cherepovets (5, p. 286). There were also occupational restrictions. After the revolution, Prince N.V. Golitsyn, former director of St. Petersburg Main Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and one of the most educated people of his time, who knew 11 languages, was forced to live on a beggarly salary of a railway clerk, "alternating posts as a clerk, record keeper and a senior statistician" (7, p. 16). The former nobles that became "Bolshevik bureaucrats" received beggarly salaries for such work. In particular, Z.N. Gippius testified in her "Petersburg Diaries", "They pay for it just enough to starve to death slowly rather than quickly. By the spring of 1919, almost all our acquaintances had changed beyond recognition, as if they became different people. Those swollen with hunger – there were a lot of them – were recommended to eat unpeeled potatoes, but by the spring all potatoes had disappeared, even our delicacy – cakes of potato skins. That was a tsardom of *vobla* [Caspian roach] – it seems to me that to my dying day I won't forget its pungent, suffocating smell, raising its head from every bowl of soup, from every passer-by's sack" (6, p. 13).

One of the most telling examples is the fate of Maria Aleksandrovna Hartung, the eldest daughter of A.S. Pushkin. She died in Moscow on 7 March 1919 at the age of 86. Natalya Sergeevna Shepeleva, a granddaughter of the great Russian writer, remembered, "As a teenager, I met with Maria Aleksandrovna here in Moscow where our family moved from Petersburg. I have preserved recollections of her as a person who was surprisingly resistant to the misfortunes that befell her. Maria Aleksandrovna lived near the Donskoy Monastery, where she was buried in 1919." N.S. Mezentseva wrote with indignation, "Well, in which another country could there be such a minister of culture that would give a luxurious mansion to barefoot dancer Duncan and let Pushkin's daughter live in poverty at the same time?" According to the recollections of one of her relatives, "she died in 1919 in poverty, as she was deprived of her pension and had no possessions for sale; her pension was returned to her by the Bolsheviks, and the first instalment was used for her funeral" (19).

The family of famous writer M. Bulgakov was literally starving in the hard 1920s. In particular, on 9 February 1922 the writer recorded in his diary, "This is the blackest period of my life. My wife and I are starving. I have had to fetch some flour, vegetable oil and potatoes from my uncle. Boris has a million. I've run all over Moscow, but could not find any job" (3, p. 3).

Social and political oppression by the Soviet power against the nobility manifested itself in the form of a forced emigration, coercion to emigrate or direct terror. The terror was used against the representatives of the nobility who clearly or implicitly expressed dissatisfaction with the new regime. This type of a "former exploiter" can be called a protesting or hidden oppositionist. Such nobleman either did not internally accept the new regime, remaining outwardly neutral to it, or did not hide the attitude, openly criticising the Soviet power. The noblemen, brought up with the values of nobiliary culture, could not renounce them even in the new environment under the Soviet power. Noble's honour, as an inner measure of noble morals, did not allow them to behave differently. A "protesting oppositionist" was the most vulnerable due to a generally negative attitude of the new government to the opposition. Such nobles a priori could not survive in the conditions of a totalitarian political regime. Most of them were repressed and executed. In this regard, it is worth mentioning the fate of Nikolay Gumilyov, a poet of noble origin, who "openly crossed himself in front of churches" and regarded himself "a convinced monarchist". As early as 3 August 1921 he was arrested and soon executed (3, p. 109). His fate was shared by thousands of other "dissenters" opposing the new regime and participants in the White movement.

In such situation, emigration was the only way out for many "dissenters". At the same time, opportunities for legal emigration were limited, and the illegal border crossing was associated with numerous risks. Emigration from Russia was a very difficult choice for many noble families. In particular, S.A. Chuykina stated, "During the Civil War, the issue of possibility and necessity of emigration was discussed in virtually every noble family... In some families, the suitcases had been packed and unpacked several times before the final decision was made (or not made). The stories about how the future was seen during the Civil War differ a lot. The interviewed emigrants described their decision to go abroad as a step of desperation caused by a sense of catastrophe, as an escape, 'saving our own skins' or as a temporary retreat" (25, p. 116).

However, the new regime by all means contributed to the growth of the involuntary emigration of the nobility. That was especially obvious during the period of the "Red Terror" in the years of the Civil War, when the decree issued on 5 September 1918 by the Council of People's Commissars directly stated, "[I]t is necessary to secure the Soviet Republic from the class enemies by way of isolating them in concentration camps, ... all people connected with the White Guard organizations, conspiracies and mutinies are to be executed by fire squads, ... it is necessary to publicize the names of the executed as well as the reasons for executing them" (26). In fact, the document officially formalized the "Red Terror", and in practice, that

policy "against persons accused of counter-revolutionary activities" was aimed at intimidating not only the anti-Bolshevik camp, but the entire population of the country as a whole, even those who did not take part in the Civil War.

F.E. Dzerzhinsky, who is considered the initiator and leader of the Red Terror, defined that policy as "terrorization, arrests and extermination of enemies of the revolution on the basis of their class affiliation" (26). Many leaders of the Bolshevik Party explained the need for the introduction of such harsh measures by the instinct of self-preservation. Thus, V.I. Lenin, in response to accusations of "barbaric" reprisals against the "undesirable", retorted, "I argue soberly and categorically: what is better – to imprison several dozens or hundreds of instigators, guilty or innocent, conscious or unconscious, or lose thousands of Red Army soldiers and workers? The first is better. And let them accuse me of any mortal sins and violations of freedom – I plead guilty, but the interests of workers will win" (11, p. 70). He was echoed by G. Zinoviev, "If we do not expand our armed forces, our bourgeoisie will slaughter us. After all, they have no other way out. We cannot live with them on the same planet. We need our own socialist militarism to overcome our enemies. We must win over 90 million out of one hundred [million people] living in Soviet Russia. The rest should not be talked to – they must be eliminated" (13, p. 9).

Historians consider the largest action of the Red Terror to be the shooting of 512 representatives of the elite, mostly of noble origin – outstanding professors, dignitaries and ministers, in Petrograd in September 1918. In the *Izvestia* newspaper of 3 September 1918, the Bolsheviks presented this event as the shooting of over 500 hostages (26). Italian historian G. Boffa gives such statistical data, "only in response to Lenin's wounding, about 1000 so-called 'counter-revolutionaries' were shot in Petrograd and Kronstadt" (4, p. 95).

The findings of the Special Investigative Commission for Investigating Bolshevik Atrocities, established in April 1919 by the order of Lieutenant-General A.I. Denikin, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces in the South of Russia, show the scale of the Bolshevik terror. The Commission was headed by G.A. Meinhardt, a hereditary nobleman and Kadet Party member, who used to be a well-known Moscow lawyer and public figure. It should be noted that the Commission relied on the pre-revolutionary legal norms, opposing itself to the supporters of Soviet statehood, who were guided in their activities by class instinct and revolutionary consciousness. One of the crimes identified by the Commission was the massacre of hostages in Pyatigorsk in the autumn of 1918, when among the victims there were not only White Guardsmen but also the civilians, mostly noblemen, who did not even participate in the White movement. The event, which went down in history as the "Pyatigorsk massacre", occurred on

3 November 1918, when "by virtue of the order No. 3 dated 8 October this year and under the decision of the Extraordinary Commission, in response to diabolical killing of our best comrades, members of the Central Executive Committee and others,... hostages and persons belonging to counter-revolutionary organizations were executed" in the amount of 59 persons. Later it was decided to shoot 47 more people (26). The Commission members were struck by the cruelty of the murders: they were committed with cold steel in the city cemetery, and in some cases the victims were buried alive or cut down with axes. The hostages had to endure the most severe moral suffering before they were killed: the elderly honoured generals were forced to do the dirtiest manual work and serve the young Chekists. Among the killed hostages there were princes Sergei, Fyodor and Nikolai Urusovs, princes Leonid and Vladimir Shakhovskoys, Prince G.A. Tumanov, Count A.P. Kapnist, Count G.A. Bobrinsky, ministers S.V. Rukhlov and Dobrovolsky, as well as renowned participants of the First World War generals N.V. Ruzsky and R.D. Radio-Dmitriev.

For representatives of the intelligentsia of noble origin, who had been the political elite and the backbone of the throne for centuries, being the most educated part of the Russian society with exclusive privileges, the attitude of the new regime was extremely humiliating, and the terror unleashed by the Bolsheviks was simply life-threatening. In the situation when the majority of the nobility did not accept the new regime and denied its ideological platform, part of them could not withstand such pressure and had to emigrate. Thus, the first type of nobleman of the Soviet era was formed – a noble emigrant.

In addition to those who had to leave, there were also such nobles who were "helped" by the Soviet government to do this. They also can be considered involuntary emigrants. It is well known that a significant part of the intelligentsia of noble origin was expelled from the country. As early as February 1922 V.I. Lenin ordered, "You must dismiss 20-40 professors. They're fooling us. Think it over, prepare and hit hard" (8, p. 17). The leader of the Bolsheviks was outraged by the protest campaign that was organised by the professors of the Moscow Higher Technical School against the 1921 reforms of the new government in the sphere of higher education.

The decision taken by the Soviet government on 31 August 1922 was made public in the media. Thus, in the newspaper Pravda the action was covered up with the notorious struggle against the counter-revolution, "The expulsion of active counter-revolutionary elements and the bourgeois intelligentsia is the first warning of Soviet power to these population layers." Moreover, in order to intimidate the remaining "counter-revolutionaries", they were warned, "The Soviet government will continue ... to stop any attempt to use the Soviet opportunities

for an open or secret struggle against the power of workers and peasants for the restoration of the regime of bourgeoisie and landlords" (8, p. 16).

The cited article marked the beginning of the most extensive exile of the Soviet intelligentsia, which went down in history as the "Philosophy Steamer", or the Philosophers' ships. That was a general name for the German steamships that were used for transporting the expelled intellectuals. A number of such steamer passages were organised from Petrograd, Odessa and Sevastopol to Germany; other "undesirables" were transported by train to Poland.

The original plan was to expel 195 persons, including outstanding doctors, professors, teachers, economists, agronomists, writers, lawyers, engineers, political and religious figures and some students 35 names were later removed from those lists as a result of all sorts of patronage.

Among those who got the "one-way ticket" there were famous noblemen. One of the most interesting figures was religious and political philosopher N.A. Berdyaev, who was nominated seven times for the Nobel Prize in Literature. He was an active participant in the social life of the Silver Age and a frequent visitor to the literary associations of Petersburg; he published his works in magazines and collections of articles together with A. Blok, A. Bely, D. Merezhkovsky, V. Ivanov, L. Shestov and V. Bryusov. His famous "existential evenings" gathered a lot of like-minded people, and his philosophical works sparked a massive public outcry – V. Rozanov published 14 articles in response to only one of them. In the first years of Soviet power, N. Berdyaev's career developed very promisingly owing to the patronage of L. Kamenev: he was among the leaders of the Moscow Writers' Union and even its head for some time; he founded the Free Academy of Spiritual Culture and was elected professor at Moscow University. But at the same time, N.A. Berdyaev never accepted the new regime, for which he was finally persecuted. He wrote, "Bolshevism is rationalized lunacy, a mania for the final regulation of life, resting on the elemental irrationality of the people." In the summer of 1922, he was arrested. Like many other noblemen, he painfully perceived his separation from the Motherland, "When I was told that I would be expelled, I was overcome with grief. I did not want to emigrate, and I detested the idea of merging with the émigré world. At the same time, there was a feeling that I would get into a freer world and would be able to breathe some freer air. I did not think that my banishment would last 25 years. The departure was very painful for me..." (8, p. 21).

Actually, life in emigration was not easy for many nobles. For example, each of the passengers of the "Philosophy Steamer" was only allowed to take minimum of personal

belongings on board: two pairs of pants, two pairs of socks, two pairs of shoes, a jacket, trousers, a coat and a hat. They were forbidden to take money, jewellery or any securities (8, p. 17).

A considerable part of the émigré nobility, in fact, led a beggarly life. One of the most telling examples in this respect is the fate of Sofya Fyodorovna, the wife of Admiral A.V. Kolchak, who was an aristocratic graduate of the Smolny Institute, speaking seven languages. After emigration to France, 42-year-old Sofya Fyodorovna was destined to live the usual life of a White Army officer's widow – without a husband, without homeland and without money. But all her life she sought to preserve the noble traditions, ideals and values. She cherished the memory of her husband and loyalty to him for many years, despite their complicated relationship when he was alive. She was doing needlework, sewing and embroidering to earn at least something. She did her best to give her son Rostislav a good education, for which she was ready to sacrifice everything. In the archives of famous Polar explorer Fridtjof Nansen there is a letter from the widow of Admiral Kolchak, which was written after her husband's death and contained a plea for financial assistance, "Dear Sir, still hoping without hope, I took the liberty of addressing you because I do not see anyone who would like to help us in our troubles... Until now we have been assisted by a few modest friends, often desiring to remain unknown, but much more numerous enemies, merciless and cruel, whose machinations broke the life of my brave husband, led me through apoplexy to the charity house. But I have my boy, whose life and future are now at stake... Young Kolchak is studying at the Sorbonne... with hope to get his start in life and take his sick mother home. He has been studying for two years, there are still two or three years left before he gets his diploma and go into greater life. In May he'll take his exams, which will be completed by August. But how to live up to this moment? We just would like to borrow some money for a short period of time" (1, p. 26).

Despite the hard trials and often miserable life, the nobles in exile sought to preserve the values and traditions of the Russian nobiliary culture. In particular, during the Civil War some cadet corps (Crimean Cadet Corps, Emperor Alexander III Don Cadet Corps, etc.) were evacuated abroad, where they continued the tradition of civic, patriotic, military and Orthodox upbringing of the younger generation (21, p. 54). The nobles communicated with each other, arranged balls and musical and literary parties, published memoirs.

Now we still do not have exact statistical data on the number of emigrants and the remaining nobles. The motives of those nobles who decided to remain in their homeland were diverse – from the hope of a near collapse of the Soviet power to the desire to serve their country even under the Bolshevik regime. S.I. Efremov mentions that, despite the various forms of

oppression against the nobility and availability of resources for the emigration, some representatives of all main aristocratic families – the Rurikids, Gediminids, Tatar princes and nobles of foreign origin – stayed in post-revolutionary Russia, though the share of those who stayed varied between the families. Among those who stayed in Russia there were princes Golitsyns, princes Trubetskoys, counts Sheremetevs, princes Lvovs, Naryshkins, princes Gagarins, princes Meshcherskys, Tatishchevs, counts Tolstoys, Bobrinskys, princes Shakhovskoys, etc. (13, p. 8).

Deciding to stay in Russia, a nobleman faced a task of adjusting to the new surroundings. This type of a "Soviet nobleman" can be characterised as "forced to adapt". The nationalization of property, bloody Civil war, mass repressions of the 1930s and the ideological pressure forced such nobles to seek ways of cooperating with the new government. We should not rush to condemn them – their behaviour was motivated by the instinct of self-preservation. For many of them, that was the most difficult decision in their lives, but it was taken under the influence of extraordinary circumstances: deaths of the loved ones, impoverishment and the bureaucratic obstacles preventing them from developing their careers. Part of the nobility sincerely believed in communist ideals and achieved great success in various spheres of Soviet life.

In particular, some scholars today criticize the well-known thesis that the Bolsheviks forced the nobles to join the Red Army, threatening their families with reprisals. This statement is refuted by the enthusiasm of the nobleman M.N. Tukhachevsky, who suppressed the anti-Bolshevik peasant uprisings in the Tambov region, and by the loyalty of famous General A.A. Brusilov to the Red Army. Brusilov's son, later executed by White Guardsmen, also remained faithful to the ideals of Communism. The post of Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Republic, established in the end of 1918, was also entrusted to a hereditary nobleman – former Imperial Army colonel S.S. Kamenev. Today, we know with certainty that 62,000 Red Army officers out of the total amount of 75,000 were of noble origin (24, p. 187). Many representatives of Soviet culture and science were "former nobles" who continued working under the conditions of the Soviet epoch: outstanding designers M.A. Beklemishev and M.F. von Rosenberg, famous scientists I.V. Michurin, K.A. Timiryazev, K.E. Tsiolkovsky, G.O. Graftio, A.L. Chizhevsky, poets and writers V.V. Mayakovsky, V.D. Bonch-Bruyevich, P.S. Romanov, Yu.K. Olesha, M.M. Zoshchenko, A.S. Grin (Grinevsky), K.M. Simonov, heroes of the Great Patriotic War Marshal K.K. Rokossovsky, General D.M. Karbyshev, pilot V.S. Grizodubova.

But some nobles failed to adjust to the new environment. After all the previous deportations and repressions, they practically never openly opposed the new regime. However, they were still persecuted, often only because of their origin. In the end of the 1920s and in the 30s, many notable cases (in particular, the "Academic Case" of 1929–1931 and the "Former People" operation of 1935–1936) were directed, among others, against the intelligentsia of noble origin (29, p. 18). Thus, according V.A. Ivanov, during the "Former People" operation in the wave of repressions in Leningrad after the assassination of Sergey Kirov, "over the month during the operation, the Directorate of State Security (NKVD) submitted over 11,000 cases of "former people" (5,000 of which were household heads) to the Special Council of the NKVD of the USSR. Only 1484 of them belonged once to nobility and upper-class aristocracy. Practically all "former people", the cases of which were considered by the Special Council, were deported from Leningrad to remote parts of the USSR, where part of them were executed in 1937–1938. Thus, 4393 of 4692 family heads (93.6%) were executed by fire squads in the period from the end of 1937 to the middle of 1938" (15, p. 402). Moreover, it was obvious that those people did not represent any real threat for the authorities. The arrested heads of families were mostly elderly or very old people, far from being able to struggle with the regime. Almost 70% of them were over 50 years old when they were arrested (15, p. 404). The "resistance" on their part was limited to writing complaints, appeals and statements that were related, as a rule, to domestic problems.

The ethnic aspect of the problem is also very interesting. It is well known that the Russian Empire was declared a "prison of peoples", as defined by V.I. Lenin. The young Soviet state counterposed that definition to the thesis about the "friendship and unity" of the Soviet sister republics. Did that affect the position of the nobility of different nationalities? The fate of the noble families of the Muslim Tatars (murzas), who pretty much shared the fate of the entire Russian nobility, is worth special attention. Many of them did not accept the Bolshevik revolution and joined the protesting or hidden opposition, left the country like other voluntary or involuntary emigrants or died in the heat of the Russian Civil War.

Other representatives of noble Tatar families became part of the Soviet society, adjusting to the new political, social and cultural realities and joining the group of nobility that had to adapt. Thus, some descendants of Tatar militant aristocracy took part in World War II, heroically defending the country against the aggressor. As an example, we can mention Veniamin Valeevich Albetkov (1917–1984), whose ancestors belonged to the ancient Tatar family associated with the Qasim Khanate. In 1939 V.V. Albetkov was drafted into the Red Army, and in 1941 he graduated from the Moscow Military School of Infantry Training. From

the first days of war he was fighting at the front, where he commanded a battalion in the rank of major. In the autumn of 1943, V.V. Albetkov distinguished himself in the battle that unfolded during the Dnepr crossing, for which he was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union (28, p. 65].

Many representatives of the Tatar nobility, who did not leave the country after 1917, generally "dissolved" in the Soviet society, for obvious reasons hiding their origin. For example, many members of the princely Akchurin family worked in the sphere of education, health care and in the armed forces. Two representatives of this family are rather well known today: Soviet military commander Rasim Suleymanovich Akchurin (born in 1932), now Head of the National and Cultural Autonomy of the Tatars of Moscow, and his brother, cardiac surgeon Academician Renat Suleymanovich Akchurin (born in 1946) (2, p. 108).

DISCUSSION

Setting a course for creating a "new breed" of people oriented to the new communist ideology, the Soviet authorities used any tools – from restrictions in professional and creative sphere to direct terror and immediate deportation. However, culture of the nobility proved to be extremely resistant to external influences. The majority of scholars believe that the process of adaptation of the "former exploiters" to the new conditions lasted approximately two decades, and by the mid-1940s it ended with the disappearance of the former nobility from the social scene. However, the process of revival of the nobiliary culture (for example, creation of the Russian Nobility Assembly and its regional units, activities of the Society for the Study of the Russian Mansions aimed at restoration of noble manor houses and the revival of cadet corps in Russia) proves the opposite. We are witnessing a revival of the ballroom, musical, manorial and educational traditions of the nobility and its eternal values, with great difficulty preserved by the descendants in the conditions of Soviet realities and in emigration. The actualization of cultural values of the nobility in today's Russia has a huge educational, axiological and ethical potential.

CONCLUSION

The micro-historical analysis, within the frames of which the individual characteristics of the worldview, culture and daily routines of a particular "Soviet nobleman" acquire special significance as characteristics of the social group as a whole, allows us to identify several types of "former nobles" in the period from 1917 to the late 1930s, formed under the influence of the system of legal, ideological and economic oppressive measures and the direct terror by

the Bolsheviks. The prevailing type can be characterised as "forced to adapt", including those who were forced to accept the new regime or voluntarily chose the path of serving the new power. A considerable share of the nobility had to emigrate or was subject to the forced deportation, forming the type of noble emigrants. That particular group played a special role in preserving the culture, education system and value priorities of the Russian nobility while living abroad. Others were not able to accept the Soviet regime, becoming open or hidden oppositionists. That last group was the most vulnerable, being subjected to direct terror by the totalitarian Bolshevik regime. But the nobles of that type also demonstrated the maximum loyalty to their ideals and the stability of their traditions in spite of external impacts.

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