

## ARBITRATORS OF THE KAZAN PROVINCE: PROSOPOGRAPHIC RECONSTRUCTION

Gulshat M. Mustafina<sup>1</sup> and Adeliya I. Khaybulina<sup>2</sup>

---

The importance of the research is caused by the significance of the process of the post-reform modernization of the Russian Empire in general and the reform of peasants particularly, including functioning of its individual institutions, which were of importance in transformation of the Russian country life, in modern historiography. The purpose of the article is to disclose the position and the role of the Institution of arbitrators basing on the material of a specific region which is the Kazan province. The main methodology of the research has become the prosopography method used to identify a specific group of persons with common social features, occupying a certain position (in this case - arbitrators), personifying different processes. In the research, the authors obtained results revealing the staff of the arbitrators of the Kazan province, exposing their activities and role they played in the conducting of the peasant reform in the region. The article results presented in the article may be useful for the studies within the social history, carrying out a policy in the problem both on national and regional level.

**Keywords:** arbitrators; peasants' reform; nobility; the Kazan province.

### INTRODUCTION

The peasants' reform of 1861, despite a rich historiographical tradition, still is one of the actively developing themes. Its political, economic and social aspects are being studied. However, in the overall context of historiography of the subject the institution of arbitrators still remains understudied both on the national, regional level and the understudied both on national and regional level. This fully applies to the Kazan province.

The institution of arbitrators was founded related to the need to establish an institution that, on the one hand, would stand close to the peasantry and the landowner, and on the other hand, would regulate the emerging economic and juridical relations between them (Ribkov, 2010). The unique character of this institution, which has become the key in the first, the most difficult phase of the reform (1861-1874) is largely because through the arbitrators held state and society interaction line. It was connected with old estate legislation as well as the regulations of the new bourgeois law, which are irremovability and publicity (Zakharova, 1984).

Despite the general legal framework, the activities of arbitrators depended on their political views and perception of government policy. They were a part of the educated stratum of Russian society, striving constructively to influence

---

<sup>1</sup> Professor of the Institute of International Relations, History and Oriental Studies, Kazan (Volga Region) Federal University, Kazan, Russia, *E-mail: tggpu\_history\_russia@mail.ru*

<sup>2</sup> Teacher of Municipal budget educational institution «School 111», Kazan, Russia, *E-mail: adelya1984-09-18@mail.ru*

the course of reforms, to carry out the transformation based on social justice (Ribkov, 2009).

The staff of the arbitrators accordingly the nature of their activities depended on regional characteristics. **The territorial scope** of the study is determined by the boundaries of the Kazan province, which was divided into 12 uyezds (Kazansky, Kozmodemyansky, Laishevsky, Mamadyshsky, Sviazhsky Spassky, Tetyushsky, Tsarevokokshaisky, Tsivilsky, Cheboksarsky, Chistopolsky and Yadrinsky) (Mustafina, 2003).

**The chronological scope** of this article is limited to 13 years of activity of the institution - since its introduction in 1861, the State legislative act of “Vysochaishe utverzhdennoe polozheniye o gubernskikh i uездnikh po krestiyanskim delam uchrezhdeniyakh” on February 19, 1861 (Peasants’ reform in Russia in 1861, 1954) till the Decree of June 27, 1874, which stopped the activity of the institution, so all the cases were transmitted by uyezdnoye po krestiyanskim delam prisutstviyey. During the specified time the institution of arbitrators rebuilt the organization, its staff changed. Arbitrators often went beyond the established powers in their activities, but kept its fundamental principles of the institution.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study addressed the following tasks:

- 1) revelation of the documents and materials that reflect the activities of the arbitrators of the Kazan province twelve uyezds;
- 2) identification of personal staff of the Kazan province arbitrators for the period 1871-1874;
- 3) composing and typologizing the information on arbitrators drawn from published and archival sources;
- 4) analysis and generalization of the data to determine the peculiarities of the staff and activities of the Corps of arbitrators.

*Theoretical and methodological basis* of the research is the principle of historicism, allowing to trace the composition and role of arbitrators of the Kazan province miscellaneously and dynamically. To perform the tasks we used such scientific theoretical methods as analysis, synthesis, analogy, as well as the special empirical methods: typologization and statistics and prosopographic reconstruction.

Research objectives were achieved by studying published and archives material. The legislative framework of arbitrators’ activities took place in a complex of documents, carried out by Redaktsionniye kommissii and confirmed on February 19, 1861. The competences of arbitrators, the main directions of their activities and functions are exposed in “Vysochaishe utverzhdennoe polozheniye o gubernskikh i uездnikh po krestiyanskim delam uchrezhdeniyakh”.

To identify the personalities of arbitrators we used such sources as “The memorial book of the Kazan province” and “Address - Calendar of the employees in the Kazan province”, serving as annual official publications containing the list of officials of all state establishments with indicating their ranks. The materials of the provincial and uyezds zemstvo contained estimates, as well as complaints addressed the governor’s, directly or indirectly related to the activities of arbitrators. A separate group consists of the articles of arbitrators which reflect coming-to-be of the institution in the province (Demert, 1869; Krylov, 1892).

The bulk of the borrowed sources consists of unpublished documents. Conducted within the framework of local history, the studying is naturally relied heavily on the documents of the National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan (116 documents).

The main part sources was got from **the Fund № 1** (National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan, 1), consisting of the materials of the Governor’s Office. It contains various kinds of petitions, complaints addressed the local institutions by peasants, rural communities, functionaries of local government, circulars, instructions etc. Working with the Fund we observed the normative rules the peasants’ reform and reconstruct the arbitrators’ activities, including peculiarities and contradictions of their concrete practice. An important information is also presented in the **Fund № 414** of Gubernskoye po krestiyanskim delam prisutstviye (National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan, 414), which reflects the work of the arbitrators for their main destination - the forming and realization of agreements (ustavnaya gramota). Thus, the bulk of borrowed documents are clerical records.

On the basis of these sources we managed to reveal personal structure of arbitrators (86), their educational level, property, marital status, class rank, the period of time and place of arbitrators’ service. This information is supplemented by studies of the Kazan nobility (Dvoenosova, 2001; Mironova, 2013).

## RESULTS

Taking into account the **content** the documents identified in the National Archives of the Republic of Tatarstan, can be divided into three groups. The first is a series of documents defining the general order of the reform, the activities of the provincial and uyezd institutions on Peasant Affairs. The second group includes the documents that came from the governor of Kazan province, Gubernskoe po kreriyanskim delam prisutstviye, provincial and uyezd marshals of the nobility, the provincial committee of the national provision. The third group is made up of reports, accounts, messages, petitions of the arbitrators and other officials at the governor’s name to Kazan gubernskoe pravleniye. The fourth group consists of petitions and complaints addressed to arbitrators.

The documents of the third and fourth groups reflect the attitude of landlords and peasants to reform and demonstrate the village life from the inside. They were

both collective and personal. Each document is an important source of information since it gives an opportunity to evaluate not only on the outside of the event, but also to present the psychological mood of the village population.

The archive documents related to the activities of arbitrators are presented unevenly, mostly the documents came from Laishevsky, Chistopolsky, Spassky, Mamadyshsky and Sviyazhsky uyezds, where there was a significant number of serfs.

The period from 1870 to 1874, (the final phase of the arbitrators' activity) is characterized by the same type of documents related to the petitions of resignation or acceptance of the arbitrators or candidates, as well as cases related to the shipment of arbitrators' documents. Such documents are also presented for the other years, but in the smaller amounts. At the same time during this period there were no cases reflecting the activities of arbitrators, that can be explained by the fact that in 1870, they raised a problem of reorganization of the institution, and therefore, we can speak about a gradual transition of duties performed by the arbitrators, to the jurisdiction of other instances. Judging by the number of documentary evidence, there were not a few people wishing to be an arbitrator in Kazan province. A list of 86 arbitrators we composed which did not include candidates is not exhaustive but still is quite representative.

Commenting the procedure of arbitrators' appointment to the position, we can underline a strict compliance with the general laws: property, educational qualification and the existed record in the family register of the Kazan province. The slightest deviation led to resignations.

Property qualification was determined by land owning and other property (house, mill etc.), as well as by the number of peasants. The largest owners among the identified arbitrators were Sergei Ushakov (Tsvilsky, Yadrinsky uyezds) and Alexander Demidov (Spassky, Mamadyshsky uyezds). The property of wives and children was also taken into account.

Depending on the nature of the last service a class rank or appointment and a military rank are indicated. The range is quite wide - from the collezhskiyi registrator (fourteenth rank) to the tainyi sovetnik (Mikhail Gorlov, Spassky uyezd). As for the retired militaries, then lieutenant-colonel was the highest rank (Alexander Evsevev, Kazan uyezd; Vasilii Zotikov, Mamadyshsky uyezd).

The duration of service for arbitrators varied from 1 year to 10 years; the average duration was, according to our estimates, for 3 years. Among people who served for the longest period (10 years) were:

1. Alexander Demert (1861-1863 - Chistopolsky uyezd; 1864-1865 - Mamadyshsky uyezd; 1866-1871 - Chistopolsky uyezd);
2. Alexander Evseviyev (1861-1871 - Kazansky uyezd);
3. Dmitrii Kolbetsky (1861-1871 - Spassky uyezd).

The main reasons for dismissal were the following: family reasons, illness, transition to another job, dissatisfaction with their work. It is noteworthy that among the arbitrators there were people of different generations – those who were born from 1797 until 1844. The age range at the time of taking office was from 24 (Ignat Goremykin, Yadrinsky uyezd) to 65 years (Ivan Yuferov, Tsarevokokshaisky uyezd). The average age was 38.5 years.

We can also note the presence of two - three people from the same family among the arbitrators. For example, Ivan and Sergey Gerkens; Ignat and Nikolai Goremykins; Alexander, Pavel and Platon Demerts; Alexander and Pavel Evsevevs; Vladimir and Yuri Ermolovs; Mikhail and Alexander Melnikovs; Vladimir and Nikolai Rybushkins; Arkady and Michael Suvorovs.

There were a local historian and a teacher, the future director of public schools in Kazan province - Iliodor Iznoskov (Kozmodemyansky uyezd) and the father of famous revolutionary, one of the leaders of “Narodnaya Volya” Vera Figner Nikolai Figner (Tetyushsky uyezd) among the arbitrators of the Kazan province.

Documentary evidence reflects the hopes and efforts of arbitrators in the course of the peasant reform in the province. Studying its history let us give a proper appreciation to the nobility – the estate, local arbitrators were recruited from. A number of documents trace the arbitrators’ feelings, their inability to assist farmers in the district and sometimes it led to the dismissal of their own will. Not all the issues could be solved within the framework of the existing law, so quite often the arbitrators had to address to higher-level structures to uyezd police officers.

One of the conclusions we came to is that the most of the Kazan arbitrators appeared to be as convinced supporters of the reform and cannot be accused of complicity either with peasants or landowners. They did not try to please either of two parties, but complied with the law and tried to take into account the interests of both parties.

We should not idealize the activities of arbitrators, as there were cases of misconduct of the last (deceit, drunkenness, theft), in particular in relation to peasants. All this, of course, reduced the confidence of the peasants, but in general, the activity of arbitrators was quite complex, often beyond their competence and required personal qualities of compassion for the plight of the peasants and patience, as evidenced by the documents that reflect the fact disobedience peasants.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

According to Soviet historians, the activity of arbitrators was a part of the mechanism of the reform implementation, however, it was not the subject of special consideration and was interpreted in the context of an overall critical assessment of the reform. So, P.A. Zayonchkovsky in his monograph “The implementation of the peasant reform of 1861”, considering the process of agreements composing and the role of the institution of arbitrators in it (Zayonchkovsky, 1958), focuses

on its estate-class character, the impact on peasant self-government and the role in overseeing the implementation of farmers obligations. N.M. Druzhinin treats the institute of arbitrators as a traditional one, though it had a wide competence and depended only upon on the Senate, still was closely associated with the noble estate organs and authorities (Druzhinin, 1978). L.G. Zaharova was the first to investigate the history of the project development of local institutions as the part of the general program of serfdom abolition. It made possible to identify the purpose of the project founders, to understand the most important principles of the institution and the place it takes in the system of local institutions. She also considers that the institution of arbitrators could have been more effective if it was projected and formed with the equal participation of the nobility and the peasantry (Zakharova, 1984). As to more recent studies, we should mention the work of B.G. Litvak. "The overturn of 1861 in Russia: why the reformist alternative was not realized," where the institution is regarded as one of the lower levels, contributing to the preservation of state control over the peasantry (Litvak, 1991).

In the first special work on the topic "The institute of arbitrators in the state system (1861-1863)," the author N.F. Ustyantseva mentions liberal features of arbitrators, characterizes them as impartial and honest executors of their duties (Ustyantseva, 1984). However, in the research made 20 years later (Neelova, 2005) suggests that arbitrators are characterized by such traits as incompetence, injustice and indifference.

The regional studies as exemplified by the work carried out on the material of the Saratov province (Ribkov, 2010) should make for overcoming these contradictions. With regard to the Kazan province, the researches on peasants' reform (Ustyuzhanin, 1947; Wolfson, 1950) in accordance with the historiography practice of the time, they were published, analyzed the class struggle and social movement but not the mechanism of reform.

Thus, the history of formation and development of the institution of arbitrators in the region has not become the subject of any special study.

## **CONCLUSION**

Thus, this study allows to characterize the composition of the Kazan province arbitrators, directly associated with the peasant society and landlords, their authority and competence defining the life of post-reform village.

Out of 86 identified persons there were arbitrators, who served in all uyezds, but mostly they worked in Chistopolsky, Laishevsky, Mamadyshsky, Kazansky, Spassky ones, where the most part of landowners and serves lived.

The analysis of the materials showed a significant range in age, service qualification and property (all were landowners). An interesting phenomenon was the representation of 2-3 members of certain families, some of them later took place in zemstvo institutions.

The documents allow us to make a conclusion about the conscientious fulfillment of their mission by an absolute majority of Kazan province arbitrators, the facts of abuse were quite rare. The above written suggests a worthy contribution of Kazan arbitrators in the socio-economic modernization of the Kazan province village.

### ***Recommendations***

The publication is of interest to specialists in the field of social history of Russia, domestic politics in the post-reform period, especially the researchers of peasants' reform. They can be used when writing scientific papers and textbooks on regional history, as well as teaching such subjects as "The history of Russia", "The history of Tatarstan", "The history of public institutions in Russia."

### ***Acknowledgments***

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.

### ***References***

- Woolfson, G.N. (1950). *The struggle around the reform of 1861 in the Kazan province (1857 – spring of 1861)*: diss. for the degree of PhD in history. Moscow.
- Dvoenoseva, G.A. (2001). *The Kazan nobility 1785-1917. The genealogical dictionary*. Kazan: "Gasyr".
- Demert, N.A. (1869). The new will. *The notes of our country*, 10, 211 - 256.
- Druzhinin, N.M. (1978). *The Russian village at the turn of 1861 -1880*. Moscow: "Nauka" Publishing House.
- Zayonchkovsky, P.A. (1958). *The implementation of the peasant reform of 1861*. Moscow: Socio - Economic Literature Publishing House.
- Zakharova, L.G. (1984). *Autocracy and the abolition of serfdom in Russia*. Moscow: Moscow State University Press.
- Litvak, B.G. (1991). *The revolution in 1861 in Russia: why not realized reformist alternative*. Moscow: Political Literature Publishing House.
- Mironova, E.V. (2013). The noble self-government in Kazan province in 1861-1917. Kazan: Institute of History nm.Sh.Mardzhani AN RT.
- Mustafina G.M., Munkov N.P., Sverdlova L.M. (2003). *The history of Tatarstan. XIX century. Kazan: Magarif*.
- Neelova, M.E. (2005). *Establishment and operation of new local government socio - economic life of the peasantry in Russia in 60-70 - ies. XIX century: materials on Olonetsk province* : diss. for the degree of PhD in history. Petrozavodsk.
- The peasant reform in Russia in 1861. Compilation of legislative acts*. (1954) - Moscow: Gosyurizdat.
- Krylov, N.A. (1892). Arbitrator's memories of the first call and implementation of the regulations on February 19, 1861. *Russian old times*, 1, 81.

National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan. Fund 1. Kazan governor's office.

National Archive of the Republic of Tatarstan. Fund 414. Gubernskoe po krestiyanskim delam prisutstvie.

Ribkov, A.G. (2009). Arbitrators of the Saratov province: the collection of documents and materials. Saratov: Saratov State Socio - Economic University

Ribkov, A.G. (2010). Arbitrators in the peasant reform of 1861 (on materials of the Saratov region). Balakovo: Balakovo Institute of Economics and Business (branch).

Ustyantseva, N.F. (1984). Institute of arbitros in the Russian state system (1861 – 1863): diss. for the degree of PhD in history. Moscow.

Ustyuzhanin, Y.I. (1947). Peasant's actions in the Kazan province according with the reform 1861.: diss. for the degree of PhD in history. Leningrad.