

## THE NOBILITY AND THE OFFICER CORPS IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Walter M. Pintner

Although most aspects of the interrelationship of the Imperial Russian Army and Russian society in general have been little studied, at least until very recently, the officer corps in the last decades of the old regime has received considerable attention.<sup>1</sup> The focus of these studies has been on the officer corps itself: the social strata represented in it, their training, characteristic career patterns, values, and so forth have all been examined. The discussion that follows is partly an attempt to pull together what these various studies have to say. But beyond that it is an effort to assess the impact military service had on the nobility as a group in the last years of the empire.

The first step is to try to sort out the quantitative relationship between the officer corps and nobility. The task is more difficult than it appears. In 1897 there were 885,754 hereditary nobles in the Russian Empire (excluding the Baltic Provinces, Poland, and Finland) according to the first modern census. However 46 percent of these (407,918) were in the nine Western Provinces where the bulk of the nobility were Polish. Because Poles were not heavily represented in the officer corps (see below) it seems reasonable to exclude that area from our calculations, giving a total of 477,836 hereditary nobles in 1897 in the remaining 41 provinces of European Russia (excluding the Baltic Provinces, Poland, and Finland), of whom

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Kenez, "A Profile of the Pre-Revolutionary Russian Officer Corps," *California Slavic Studies* 7 (1973); Matitahu Mayzel, "The Formation of the Russian General Staff, 1880-1917: A Social Study," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 16 (1975); Allan K. Wildman, *The End of the Russian Imperial Army: The Old Army and the Soldier's Revolt (March-April, 1917)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Samoderzhavie i russkaia armia na rubezhe XIX-XX stoletii* (Moscow: Mysl, 1973); Dmitry Ponomareff, *The Political Loyalty and Social Composition of a Military Elite: The Russian Officer Corps, 1861-1903*, The Rand Corporation, Paper No. 6052, November 1977; John Bushnell, "The Tsarist Officer Corps, 1881-1914: Customs, Duties, Inefficiency," *American Historical Review* 4 (1981); Hans-Peter Stein, "Der offizier des russischen Heere im Zeitabschnitt zwischen Reform und Revolution (1861-1905)," *Forschungen zur Osteuropäischen Geschichte* 13 (1967).

223,639 were males.<sup>2</sup> According to A. P. Korelin, there were 21,906 army and navy officers of hereditary noble origin in service in 1897, or 9.8 percent of the total male nobility of European Russia (excluding the nine western provinces, the Baltic Provinces, Poland, Finland and the Caucasus).<sup>3</sup> At the same time, a substantially larger number of hereditary nobles—31,151 (13.9 percent of the total male nobility)—were serving in the civil bureaucracy at rank fourteen or above.

In view of the traditional assumption that the Russian nobility was a predominantly military service class, the relatively low portion of the male nobility in military service is striking. This situation, however, was not new. Even in 1795 only 16 to 20 percent of male nobles were in military service; and by the mid-nineteenth century the figure was down to about eight percent. Civil careers overtook military careers during the first half of the nineteenth century. Ten percent or so in service as officers is not an insignificant fraction, particularly when one considers that it does not include former military officers or youths destined for a military career. Nevertheless it is fair to say that most Russian nobles did something else in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>4</sup>

A somewhat larger portion of the nobility went into the civil service, a body that grew more rapidly than the officer corps over the course of the nineteenth century. But what did the rest of the nobility do? Despite the famous decline in noble land holding in the post-emancipation decades, Korelin estimates that even in 1905 some 30 percent of hereditary noble families had land—a substantial decline from 88 percent in 1861, 56 percent in 1877, and 40 percent in

<sup>2</sup> N. A. Troinitskii (ed.), *Pervaia vseobshchaia perepis naseleniia Rossiiskoi Imperii 1897 g. Obshchii svod imperii rezultatov razrabotki dannykh pervoi vseobshchii perepisi naseleniia proizvedennoi 28 ianvaria 1897 goda*, vol. 1. (St. Petersburg, 1905), Table IIIa (36), Table IIIb (56), Table VII (84–111); A. P. Korelin, *Dvorianstvo v poreformennoi Rossii 1861–1904 gg, sostav, chislennosti, korporativnaia organizatsiia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), 40.

<sup>3</sup> Korelin, *Dvorianstvo*, 86. This figure is probably a bit high because the 21,906 does not exclude the non-Russian officers of noble status. The 223,634 hereditary male nobles excludes not only the nobles of the nine Western Provinces, but the whole of the Baltic Provinces, Finland, Poland, and the Caucasus. Some of the noble officers of these nationalities presumably did not reside in their “home territories” and are therefore included in the 223,639, but how many is uncertain. Seymour Becker, in *Nobility and Privilege in Late Imperial Russia* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1985), 193, gives a somewhat lower estimate (7%) of the nobles in military service in 1897, perhaps because he is counting all adult males.

<sup>4</sup> Walter Pintner, “The Burden of Defense in Imperial Russia, 1725–1914,” *The Russian Review* 43 (1984), 256.

1895.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, this does not mean that even thirty percent of the nobility were exclusively landowners by occupation. Of the total landowning group, 59 percent had under 100 *desiatin* and presumably could not have supported themselves solely from the land, while only eight percent had over 500 *desiatin* and might be expected to have a substantial income.<sup>6</sup>

Unfortunately, information on the actual occupations of the nobility outside of state service is not readily at hand in a satisfactory form. Korelin provides data for the occupations of the nobility in three major cities: St. Petersburg (1869), Tiflis (1876), and Moscow (1882). The largest employment category by far for these three groups of urban hereditary nobles was "state and social service," accounting for 45, 47, and 36 percent respectively, of the total group in the three cities. Those with pensions and private incomes, *rentiers*, were the next largest group: 33, 20, and 31 percent. Employment in all aspects of business amounted to only 6 percent (St. Petersburg), 17 percent (Tiflis), and 21 percent (Moscow). The free professions represented a tiny portion—four, three, and four percent—though it must be remembered that a large proportion of the doctors, lawyers, and other technical specialists probably worked for state agencies of one sort or another and are therefore counted as state servants.<sup>7</sup>

Fragmentary and unsatisfactory though this data is, it helps put into perspective the stark figure of only ten percent of male nobles in military service in 1897. By the end of the century, many of the hereditary nobility were engaged in activities beyond their traditional roles of state servant and landlord. However, the transition was gradual and far from complete, although the 20 percent engaged in business-related activity in Moscow in 1882 can be seen as a harbinger of later more dramatic trends in Moscow and throughout the empire. Pensioners and those living on income from investments were part of the traditional occupational pattern, even if their capital might now be put into securities and urban real estate rather than agricultural land. Certainly almost all pensioners were former state employees. The greatest transformation over time in the nobility's occupational pattern appears to have been a shift from military to civilian service, rather than a shift out of government altogether.

<sup>5</sup> Korelin, *Dvorianstvo*, 61, 67.

<sup>6</sup> Korelin, *Dvorianstvo*, 62.

<sup>7</sup> Korelin, *Dvorianstvo*, 124–25.

The tremendous economic and cultural diversity of the Russian nobility is well-known, but easily forgotten when dealing with summary data. Being a hereditary nobleman could mean a multitude of things. Very few were rich. Most had little or no land and struggled to make a living. Did wealthy landed nobles maintain a tradition of military service? P. A. Zaionchkovskii reports some information for a limited group of generals and lieutenant-generals in the army as a whole, as well as for major-generals and colonels attached to the General Staff in 1903–04. Of the generals and lieutenant-generals (346 in total) some 13 percent (47 men) had hereditary property, of whom ten percent (36 men) had over 1,000 *desiatin* (2,700 acres). Among the General Staff major-generals and colonels (468), 79 percent were of hereditary noble origin, but only seven percent (27 men) owned land. Zaionchkovskii's data is admittedly fragmentary, including only about two-thirds of the generals and lieutenant-generals, but it seems unlikely that more data would dramatically change the picture. D. G. Tselorungo reached similar conclusions for the beginning of the nineteenth century. In a sample of infantry officers in the 1812 period he reports that 73 percent were hereditary nobles without any land, although 20 percent of these would eventually inherit some. Thus it is fair to say that throughout the nineteenth century the bulk of the officer corps was drawn from the "service nobility."<sup>8</sup>

Even at the very top of the military hierarchy in the early twentieth century, although men of hereditary noble origin were an overwhelming majority (79 percent), landowners were few and far between. At lower rank levels it can be assumed that landownership was even less frequent. What proportion of large landowners were involved in the military? The data do not provide an answer. In 1905 there were 8,013 holdings of over 1,000 *desiatin*. Zaionchkovskii reports that ten percent (36 men) of his partial sample of generals and lieu-

<sup>8</sup> Zaionchkovskii, *Samoderzhavie*, 207–11. Zaionchkovskii does not clarify for his General Staff data whether all landowners were nobles. I assume they were: if some were not, the percentage of nobles with land would be lower. With respect to the generals and lieutenant-generals, hereditary property (almost certainly held by hereditary nobles), is specified; D. G. Tselorungo, "Formuliarnye spiski ofiterskogo korpusa russkoi armii epokhi Otechestvennoi voiny 1812 goda," in *Issledovaniia po istochnikovedeniiu istorii SSSR do oktiabr'skogo perioda, sbornik statei*, ed. A. G. Tatarkovskii (Moscow, Institut Istorii SSSR, 1990), 115–31. See also Wildman, *End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 23–24.

tenant-generals had that much land. If even two percent of the total number of the hereditary nobles in the officer corps, which in 1897 was 21,906 men, had over 1,000 *desiatin* that would imply 438 men, or five percent of the total number of such large landholdings. But all such calculations must remain purely speculative given the data currently available.<sup>9</sup> The figures for the General Staff are particularly noteworthy because they describe an unusual elite—one truly based on merit.<sup>10</sup> It was noted above that among the major-generals and colonels of the General Staff only seven percent of the hereditary nobles were landowners. Clearly, among the top professionals of the Imperial Russian Army, a landlord was an exception.

Peter Kenez and Alan Wildman deal with the general social composition of the officer corps and its various sub-groups at length and to good purpose.<sup>11</sup> They cite, however, no data on landholding other than that given above, and we can only assume that there would be more large landlords in the guards regiments and particularly in the cavalry where personal expenses were high. Another small but not unimportant sub-group of hereditary nobles that cannot be isolated with the available data are those with considerable wealth who had converted their rural holdings into securities or urban real estate. Korelin designates a substantial portion of the urban nobility as *rentiers*, but they cannot be separated in his presentation from pensioners. How many such people were really wealthy and chose to follow a military career is impossible to say.

Military education for officers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century has been discussed in some detail by several authors, and there is no need to summarize their discussion here.<sup>12</sup> However, specialization—an aspect of military education that is particularly relevant to the question of bureaucratization—requires some note. The officer in the pre-modern era needed little or no specialized training. In fact, the training given at the famous Corps of Infantry Cadets, for example, was considered sufficient. Established in 1730, this secondary school instructed young nobles in the basic elements

<sup>9</sup> Korelin, *Dvorianstvo*, 62, 86; Zaionchkovskii, *Samoderzhavie*, 206–12.

<sup>10</sup> Kenez, "Profile," 139; Mayzel, "Formation," 297–321.

<sup>11</sup> Kenez, "Profile," 121–58; Wildman, *End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 23–24.

<sup>12</sup> Stein, "Der Offizier des russischen," 392–403; Kenez, "Profile," 123–28; Wildman, *End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 13–19; Zaionchkovskii, *Samoderzhavie*, 294–337; A. G. Beskrovnyi, *Russkaia armia i flot v XIX veke* (Moscow: Nauka, 1973), 97–101.

of the new elite (western) culture and in the social graces. It was designed not to produce highly-trained military officers, but simply to facilitate the entrance of sons of the upper class into service at an advanced level, circumventing the original requirement of Peter's Table of Ranks that everyone start at the bottom.<sup>13</sup> Thus the noble officer of the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth century could engage in literary pursuits, or less elevated forms of diversion, without compromising their professional careers in the least.

Dmitrii Miliutin introduced substantial improvements in military education in the 1870s; and even though they were partly undone in the 1880s, the basic pattern remained unchanged until the end of the empire. There were two types of officer training institutions: the elite cadet corps (briefly called military gymnasiums after the Miliutin reforms) which were secondary schools, and the *iunker* schools which trained non-commissioned officers in a much more compressed curriculum. In the Miliutin era both types of schools were predominantly noble in composition, although the cadet corps certainly had more of the wealthy nobility, whereas by 1915 the *iunker* schools, which provided the bulk of the officer corps, were only 37 percent noble. By that time the quality of the *iunker* schools had greatly improved, and what had once been a most significant difference in quality of preparation had been all but eliminated.<sup>14</sup>

The cadet corps provided basic general education for adolescent boys plus general military instruction, and the *iunker* schools a shorter course for ambitious non-commissioned officers. More advanced training was to be found only in the "military schools," (*voennye uchilishche*, three for infantry officers, one for cavalry, two for artillery, and one for engineers), and at the highest level, in the four military academies: the General Staff Academy, the Engineering Academy, the Artillery Academy, and the Military-Legal Academy.<sup>15</sup> Of these establishments, the infantry and cavalry schools and the General Staff Academy produced generalists, although in the case of the General Staff Academy, generalists who had gone through a very broad and rigorous training program. Only the artillery and engineering schools and the three specialized academies produced technical specialists for the military.

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<sup>13</sup> Pintner, "Burden," 30-33.

<sup>14</sup> Kenez, "Profile," 125-27.

<sup>15</sup> Zaionchkovskii, *Samoderzhavie*, 318-22.

Given these choices, did the nobility tend to stick to its traditional role as non-specialized generalists, leaving the more technical fields to other groups? Is there any evidence the Russian nobility was unable to maintain its position in society because of a failure to adapt to the demands of an increasingly technological world? It is, of course, somewhat problematic to assume that training for artillery and military engineering in the late nineteenth century was representative of an acceptance of advanced technology. But it certainly was the closest thing to it that can be isolated in the available sources. The non-specialized military schools had admissions requirements similar to those of the predominantly noble cadet corps from which the majority of their students came. However, a significant number of students were also accepted "from the side"—primarily from the *iunker* schools—making these non-specialized military schools, in terms of social origin, about half hereditary nobles, a third sons of officers and civil officials, with the rest drawn from other backgrounds. This produced a somewhat more socially diverse (although still predominantly noble) student body than the cadet corps.<sup>16</sup>

Admission to the specialized military schools (artillery and engineering) was not restricted by class, but their social composition was not drastically different from the more traditional schools, where as late as 1904, about half were hereditary nobles and about half were sons of officers and civil servants.<sup>17</sup> The data is not as detailed as one would wish because it is impossible to separate noble landowners from other nobles. One might certainly expect more wealthy noble landowners in the less specialized schools, particularly in the cavalry school, but there is no hard evidence at hand to show that such was the case.<sup>18</sup> Thus the nobility as a group seems to have been holding its own in the specialized schools.

<sup>16</sup> Zaionchkovskii, *Samoderzhavie*, 314–15.

<sup>17</sup> Zaionchkovskii, *Samoderzhavie*, 318–23.

<sup>18</sup> In eighteenth-century Prussia the artillery and engineers were largely commanded by bourgeois officers. During the second half of the nineteenth century general educational standards were raised and the artillery became socially quite reputable, but even in 1920 the percentage of nobles in artillery and engineers was substantially lower than in other branches (12 percent, versus 22 percent for the army overall). The late nineteenth century German navy was similarly the province of the bourgeoisie. (Karl Demeter, *The German Officer Corps in Society and State, 1650–1945* (New York: Praeger, 1965), 7, 19, 46, 268.) In contrast it appears that Russian naval officers were mainly nobles, see N. A. Mashkin, *Vyshaia voennaia shkola Rossiiskoi Imperii XIX—nachala XX veka* (Moscow: Academia, 1997), 143–45.

The most elite segment of the officer corps in the last decade of the monarchy was the group known as the *Genshtabistsy*—graduates of the General Staff Academy who were assigned to duty on the General Staff. The Academy drew its membership from all sections of the officer corps on the basis of comprehensive competitive examinations and a rigorous academic program for those finally admitted. As Mayzel points out, the *Genshtabistsy* replaced the guards officers as the most prestigious element of the officer corps.<sup>19</sup> It was not, however, an elite based on specialized technical knowledge. The aim of the General Staff Academy was to provide a broad general education at a high level: “They were trained as intellectuals to perform intellectual work, to teach, to educate and to spread ideas.”<sup>20</sup> A disproportionately large number of men from the artillery and engineers gained admission, presumably testifying to their superior academic background, but not presumably their specialized skills.<sup>21</sup>

Only 2.5 percent of the officer corps just prior to World War I, the *Genshtabistsy* were a striking departure from imperial Russian tradition. There had always been men of modest or even humble social background in very high positions in Russia, but traditionally they were exceptions—men whose good fortune, talent, or long service had raised them to eminence in a group clearly dominated by those from far more privileged backgrounds. The *Genshtabistsy* had many nobles among its members (48 percent in 1913, how many with land is unknown), but they all got their special status by the same tough academic competition, a situation that never held in the civil service. There, down to the end of the nineteenth century, graduation from special schools (the Lycee at Tsarskoe Selo and the Imperial School of Jurisprudence), which were restricted to nobles and sons of very high ranking civil officials and military officers, gave an immense advantage to anyone hoping to rise to the top in the civil service.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Mayzel, “Formation,” 303. Wildman, *End of the Russian Imperial Army*, 15–17, 21–22, presents a slightly more skeptical portrait of the General Staff Academy.

<sup>20</sup> Mayzel, “Formation,” 309.

<sup>21</sup> Mayzel, “Formation,” 311–12. Among officers assigned to the General Staff, 19 were infantry, and 23 artillery or engineers, despite the fact that the infantry was by far the largest branch. For a discussion of professionalization and the elite staff officers see David Alan Rich, *The Tsar’s Colonels: Professionalism, Strategy, and Subversion in Late Imperial Russia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), chapter 1.

<sup>22</sup> Allen A. Sinel, “The Socialization of the Russian Bureaucratic Elite, 1811–1917:



The final question to be considered in the present discussion is that of nationality. Imperial Russia was, of course, a multi-national empire containing a wide range of national groups, from the most culturally advanced, to the most primitive. The role of foreigners and non-Russians in the development of the modern Russian state in the post-Petrine period was important and has been much discussed, although there has been a tendency toward exaggeration.<sup>23</sup>

In the course of the empire's growth the elites of various non-Russian groups were accepted into the formal legal structure of imperial Russian society with varying degrees of cordiality. The German nobles in the Baltic Provinces and the Swedish nobility in Finland gained full acceptance and even retained special privileges in their home areas. Others, like the very numerous and nationalistic Polish nobility, the Georgians, and other Caucasian groups, were recognized as nobles with restrictions and qualifications which changed in the course of the nineteenth century. But whatever the limitations, these people were classified in the census of 1897 as hereditary nobles, with the following results: Russians 53 percent, Poles 27 percent, Georgians six percent, Turkic groups five percent, Latvian and Lithuanian four percent, Germans two percent, and others three percent. These statistics understate the proportion of the non-Russian element because they are based on the respondent's identification of their native language. Presumably some felt it was best to claim Russian, no matter what it actually was. If any of the assimilated Cossack elite, for example, still spoke Ukrainian, many chose Russian as their native language and thus were listed under the Russian category—in large part because Ukrainian was not a legally recognized language.<sup>24</sup>

The large proportion of Poles in the hereditary nobility is striking. This was the result of the recognition of all members of the numerous Polish *szlachta* as nobles despite the fact that most of them were, de facto, peasants. Without them, the imperial nobility would

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Life at the Tsarskoe Selo Lyceum and the School of Jurisprudence," *Russian History*, vol. 3, Part 1 (1976), 5.

<sup>23</sup> Brenda Meehan-Waters, *Autocracy and Aristocracy: The Russian Service Elite of 1730* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1982), chapters 2 and 3, and pages 115–18; Walter M. Pintner, "The Evolution of Civil Officialdom, 1753–1855," in *Russian Officialdom: The Bureaucratization of Russian Society from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century*, eds. Walter M. Pintner and Don K. Rowney (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 205–09.

<sup>24</sup> Korelin, *Dvorianstvo*, 44–50.

be overwhelmingly Russian. Equally striking is the very small proportion of Germans, given the prominent role frequently assigned to them. In the civil service, at least in the first half of the nineteenth century, Polish and German nobles were about equally represented, at about four percent and five percent respectively which means that the Poles were underrepresented in terms of their overall numbers among the nobility.<sup>25</sup>

The officer corps as a whole at the beginning of the twentieth century had quite a different national composition. According to the data compiled by Zaionchkovskii from army service lists for 1903, 80 percent of the captains and 85 percent of both the colonels and generals were Russian Orthodox. The officer corps as a whole was obviously more Russian than the hereditary nobility (Zaionchkovskii does not separate noble from non-noble officers). Even more interesting are the proportions of the various non-Russian groups in the officer corps. Among captains, Catholics (Poles) amount to 13 percent, or about half their proportion in the nobility as a whole. Lutherans (Germans), on the other hand, at four percent, are exactly double their "share." None of the other national groups reach even two percent. Among the colonels the Polish contingent falls to six percent, and the German rises to seven percent, while the other groups are under one percent. Finally, at the very top, among generals, the pattern holds and the Germans are at 10 percent and the Poles down to four percent, with others under one percent. There are some problems with the data because they are based on religion, while neither nationality nor native language was recorded in the army lists. Therefore, those who professed Orthodoxy are counted as Russians, whatever their actual national background. Possibly the very small number of Georgian officers is partly to be explained by this circumstance. The figure for Russians is therefore a maximum and for non-Russians a minimum.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Pintner, "Evolution," 208.

<sup>26</sup> Zaionchkovskii, *Samoderzhavie*, 196–99. Mashkin, *Vyshaiia voennaia shkola*, 51–54, provides similar data for the higher military schools. In Zaionchkovskii's posthumously published article, "Russkii ofiterskii korpus," in *P. A. Zaionchkovskii, 1904–1983 gg.: stati, publikatsiii vospominaniia o nem*, eds. L. G. Zakharova, et al., 31, he cites data for 1912 based on language data that give essentially the same picture. Professor Eric Lohr has kindly drawn my attention to a secret circular of 1888 setting out complex regulations designed to limit the proportion of non-Russians in the officer corps and the army in general. However, the quota set, 20%, exceeds the actual figures reported above. (RGIVA, f. 2000s, op. 2, d. 324, ll. 92–110.)

Nevertheless, it is quite clear that the Imperial Russian Army officer corps was a Russian show. The numerous Polish nobles were either kept out, or did not choose to try to get in. The Germans, so familiar from literary sources, are grossly over-represented in terms of their share of the total noble population, but they are a small minority, however conspicuous, even at the top. Two percent of the nobility, they provided 10 percent of the generals (15 percent of the full generals) in 1903; but given their long tradition of state service this is not particularly surprising.

### *Conclusion*

In an important article on the mores of the tsarist officer corps, John Bushnell describes an organization that seems unable to define its position in society with confidence. Standards of personal behavior were low, the demands of the job were unsatisfying, pay was so low that officers could not support their families, bureaucratization in the sense of endless paperwork and other non-military activities prevented officers from attending to serious military training—assuming that they would have been inclined to do so in the first place. Even the well-trained men of the General Staff were given unimportant duties and ultimately failed as commanders.<sup>27</sup> The portrayal of the officer and his society in nineteenth century literature becomes increasingly negative over the years and culminates in the devastatingly depressing, if possibly exaggerated, picture in Kuprin's *The Duel (Poedinok)*.<sup>28</sup> It is a picture that perhaps suggests a group very much still in the process of transition from playing a traditional "noble" role, which demanded little special knowledge or skill other than the "habit of command" (social graces, ability to drink, face a man in a duel, and so forth), to a true profession with its own standards of excellence that relate closely to the actual goals of the group.

Our examination of the available statistical data suggests that the close relationship of the officer corps and the nobility was, as one would expect, greatly diluted by the last decades of the empire, and

<sup>27</sup> Bushnell, "Tsarist Officer Corps," 753–80.

<sup>28</sup> Mark S. Simpson, *The Officer in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature* (Washington: University Press of America, 1981), 126–28; Aleksander Ivanovich Kuprin, *The Duel (Poedinok)* (New York: 1916).

that for even the upper strata of the nobility the military career was not nearly as central as it had been in earlier periods. However, in sharp contrast to Imperial Germany, where the bourgeoisie eagerly filled positions as officers when they were permitted to enter, and accepted the ideology of the traditional officer corps, the non-noble Russians who entered either failed to do this, or did not want to try.

Perhaps part of the reason is simply the basic economics of the situation. Russian officers were very poorly paid, and in general, life was unattractive for the ordinary line officer.<sup>29</sup> At the same time, new opportunities in civil service and private enterprise had developed. The Russian state did not, and probably could not, have provided the economic support needed for a comfortable standard of living for its officers. Despite Russian pretensions to the role of a major power, and some serious efforts to keep up with the other great powers in the area of military hardware, other pressing demands, and perhaps a general shift in attitudes about the military, produced a gradual decline in the proportion of the state budget devoted to military expenses during the nineteenth century, virtually down to 1914.<sup>30</sup> The era of the "service state" was clearly at an end.

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<sup>29</sup> Bushnell, "Tsarist Officer Corps," 753-55.

<sup>30</sup> Pintner, "Burden," 15-18, 35.