

MSC 2020**International Scientific and Practical Conference «MAN. SOCIETY.
COMMUNICATION»****TRADITIONS OF THE TOWN SELF-GOVERNANCE IN THE
ACTIVITIES OF THE SWEDISH-NOVGOROD
ADMINISTRATION**

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(a) Yaroslav-the-Wise Novgorod State University, Veliky Novgorod, Russian Federation,
lizzavetapopova@gmail.com**Abstract**

The article is concerned with the nature and elements of Russian town self-governance that existed in Veliky Novgorod under the Swedish rule in the period called the Time of Troubles. The electiveness of local public officials for performing of intertown administrative duties was quite common in Northern Russia and was preserved by the Swedes as an element of a specific management model as part of the Russian-Swedish alliance of the early 17th century. Such practice was not typical for all Russian administrations of that time, as evidenced by the comparison of the Novgorod town government with the order established by False Dmitry II, who significantly downsized the local self-governance in the regions under his control and concentrated overall authority in foreign bailiffs' and decemvirs' holdfast. This study highlights a question of the main local officials in Novgorod under the Swedish rule, especially, pjatikoneckij starostas (five-division-elders) and sworn men, their origin and official duties. Using of the record material from the Novgorod occupation archive from the Swedish state archive (Stockholm) and the collection of S. Solovyov (Collection 124) from the Archive of the Saint Petersburg Institute of History of the Russian Academy of Sciences let us to confirm the election to town lower and middle ranking positions only Novgorodians and determine their duties. Sources allow saying about the effectiveness of the actions of Novgorod self-governance under the Swedes, as well as about the striving of Novgorodians to cooperate with representatives of the higher management.

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Keywords: Jacob De la Gardie, pjatikoneckoj starosta, sworn man, Swedish-Novgorod alliance, Time of Troubles, Velikiy Novgorod



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1. Introduction

Despite of the rich historiography the problem of Swedish rule in Veliky Novgorod of the early 17th century still remains in focus of national and foreign researchers, foremost in connection with the discussion about the nature of the Swedish occupation regime. Its specific nature causes doubt about the validity of applying the definition of “occupation” to it and makes a number of researchers consider this as a variant of the Swedish-Novgorod alliance or a composition of two elements – an alliance that later was replaced by occupation (Boldyrev & Konchakova, 2015). In order to deal with this issue, researchers applied to various aspects of life in Novgorod under the Swedes – military aspect (Kurbatov, 2002), judicial and administrative aspect (Bezus, 2017), tax (Boldyrev, 2016), everyday life aspect (Nordlander & Sundberg, 1995), economic and communication aspect (Selin, 2018), etc. In this context, when studying Novgorod administrative practice, researchers usually gain attention is to the top government echelons and the function of the Government office (Prikaznaya izba) (Selin, 2017). In the meantime, the system of lower and middle administration is of the utmost interest, since it makes to identify the elements of local self-governance, which not only functioned very effectively, but also secured the entire administrative regime. The reliance on the local population and involvement in town governance created the basis of the Swedish-Novgorod direction (Kovalenko, 2012).

2. Problem Statement

Ideas about the “local self-governance” didn’t exist in the early 17th century (Bovykin, 2012), but some individual elements of it can be found in the government models of that time. The system where they appeared significantly was widely used in North-West of Russia, in Novgorod and Pskov; it is connected with their town’s meetings (veche) in the past (Shvejkovskaja, 2017). The Novgorod administrative model of the 13-15th centuries suggested the electiveness of officials from town’s folk and a wide range of their administrative functions for covering all spheres of life on the territory under their jurisdiction. The elements of such system with origins of the local self-governance were quite common in other Russian towns, but in the 16th century and mainly in the Time of Troubles their importance in the Russian administrative system reduced very quickly (Tjumencev, 2017). In this connection, one may wonder about the tradition reception of Novgorod self-governance in the administrative practice of Novgorod occupied by the Swedes, which was not typical for the government regimes in Russian towns in the Time of Troubles. It is also known that False Dmitry II actually wipe it out and replaced local power structures with his appointees - foreign bailiffs (Tjumencev, 1996).

3. Research Questions

In order to understand the reasons that led the Swedish administration to refer to the traditions of Novgorod town self-governance and use them at the lower level of town life management, it is necessary to find out how effectively this system worked and what advantages it gave as a lower link.

1. Obviously, it would be interesting to consider whether there is a compromise nature of management, i.e. whether there is an element of interconnection between the government and the people through the activities of local government representatives.

2. Therefore, it is important to clarify who of officials was the main performers of administrative affairs within the town at the lower level, what was the ethnic composition of local government representatives, whether the Swedes controlled the activities of local government representatives.

3. Also, in connection with the question of the effectiveness and efficiency of the whole system, it is necessary to take note of the main duties and responsibilities of local government representatives.

4. Purpose of the Study

The study extends the array of issues related with the Swedish presence in Novgorod in the early 17th century. In the light of the lack of research on the performance of the local government system during this period, we considered important to pay attention to this aspect, as far as it helps to get closer to resolving of the conversational question about the nature of the Swedish regime in Novgorod. What's more, this study suggests why the Swedes were inclined to use elements of traditional Novgorod self-governance without essential interference from their side, despite the fact that in the history of the Time of Troubles there were other management models marked by the introduction of a foreign element (Tjumencev, 1996).

5. Research Methods

The research was performed by means of a wide range of sources in the historical background that was recreated by the achievements of modern Russian and foreign historiography on this subject. The primary role in the source base formation of this study belongs to the Record material in Novgorod government office stored in the State archives of Sweden (RA) and documental collections of S. Solovyov from the Archive of Saint Petersburg Institute of History. The method of working with these sources assumed the formation of documentary blocks corresponding to specific research tasks. For instance the documents from the category "elections" allow us to deduce the origin of the lower level representatives of the administrative structures, "manuals" or instructions make it possible to outline the scope of their official duties and their relationship with the administration of the top level, while the humble petitions help to determine the level of efficiency of the Novgorod self-governance bodies.

6. Findings

When studying it was possible to deduce that the main place in town self-governance affairs in the period of Swedish rule was taken by Elders of five divisions and sworn men same as before. New positions of foreign origin were not found in the lower management structures. Such positions were taken only by Novgorodians and their duties were not overlaid by the Swedes. Elders of five divisions were "elected" as before and this procedure was recorded with the same name (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. e). It is not clear what exactly it was - an election or just assignment of an official, but it's safe to assume the preservation of the elective tradition. In the records of "elections" is mentioned that the election of the of five-division-elders was conducted by the street elders, and the term for which the five-division-elders were elected, with

minor exceptions (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. c) was one year. A person could be re-elected to the position of a five-division-elder after a while (RA, NOA, n.d. a). Every five-division-elder was a representative from its own division as before, from one of the five districts of Novgorod, and that's why their power was limited only to a territory of a division (RA, NOA, n.d. h). Five-division-elders still played an important role in social life, as they held elections of other officials - sworn men, elders of banyas (Russian sauna), prisons and other public institutions, territorial dyaks (clerks), customs official etc. As to duties of five-division-elders they were very wide and various. Very often they had to search candidates for soldiers' money collectors; that money was used for allowance of Swedish army. However, it was not always possible to find people willing to take such positions, and therefore the elders were sometimes forced to collect forced recovery of a debt by themselves (RA, NOA, n.d. f). One of the duties of five-division-elders was outreach efforts. Five-division-elders had to hold an opinion poll in settlements on certain issues from authorities (DAI, 1846). For this case the elders received "manuals" from the authorities. Those "instructions" determined who they needed to interview and on what issue. After that all received data were to be got to woiwodes (military governor). Also "detections of criminals" and collecting of minutes of interrogation were part of duties of five-division-elders. In this case the elders got instructions from the authorities where were also specified the nature of issue and persons whose "speeches" were to be collected.

The circle of investigation was also limited: stores, streets and divisions. Five-division-elders had to take members of the clergy and search persons who had to "sign" the written information. If the specified streets were outside their legal boundaries, five-division-elders sent instructions to street elders of other divisions seeking help in investigation. Street elders transferred their investigations to five-division-elders, and after that they attached the results to overall minutes of interrogation for onward transmission to woiwodes (RA, NOA, n.d. h). Also, five-division-elders were point of contact between dyaks and inferior representatives of self-governance – sworn men. Sworn men reported to the elders about any situation that seemed suspicious to them, for example, in one of the documents we see the following case: the sworn man noticed that one small landowner was letting the settlement people through the outpost, but that was forbidden to do (DAI, 1846). The sworn man at the gate reported to the elder so as not to be under an accusation of the escape of the citizens from the town. With this information, the five-division-elders went to the dyaks and together with them heard the arguments of the small landowner, who was called on the count of the sworn man. In addition to "election", "searching", evidence gathering, surveys of town people and other duties the five-division-elders controlled the financial and economic life of Novgorod, but their powers were limited by the settlement.

All actions of five-division-elders related with money and other issues also were regulated by "manuals" from boyar Jakob de la Gardie and Ivan Bol'shoj Nikitich Odоеvskij. Five-division-elders were involved in collecting of taxes from the local population, including for "dividing", i.e. sums divided among monastic, settlement and countryside people. Five-division-elders were collecting money from the settlement (RA, NOA, n.d. d). In addition to "dividing money" five-division-elders collected money for the Swedish army's military campaigns against Poles and frauds, (RA, NOA, n.d. e) and also, as we have already noticed, sometimes they collected money for the allowance of mercenaries (RA, NOA, n.d. f). It is worth mentioning the fact that often the five-division-elders were independent in taking decisions and were lightly regulated by the center, which was content only with sending "manuals" and expected good sense

and responsibility of local government. We can conclude that sometimes woiwodes received humble petitions from settlement inhabitants asking them not to give the five-division-elders permission to make a personal judgment. For example, one humble petition contains a complaint that a five-division-elder counted a monastic landless peasant to people paying taxes (RA, NOA, n.d. c). It is worth mentioning that the government reacted to the submitted humble petitions, so we can say that there was a feedback. In this case, the woiwodes warned the elders that their decision was wrong and had to be canceled, but there were no any punishments or fines from the top administration. We noticed that the government did not strive to control five-division-elders. The control element of five-division-elders appeared only in extraordinary circumstances, above all when the case touched to financial duties in order to prevent possible violations and bribery. In this case they were added a Swedish or Russian overseer (RA, NOA, n.d. e).

As we can notice, the five-division-elders had very high responsibility, including financial responsibility, so we suppose that elected candidates were persons with an untarnished reputation and a high level of self-management. Indeed, in case anything happens they could be punished with a money penalty foremost. But it emerged that “the best people” did not always become five-division-elders; also, this position could take persons who used their official position to take an action contrary to law without any fear of punishment. In the sources we found a complaint from sworn men against a five-division-elder, who run a shakedown scheme “*и вором норовит и покрывает, и государеву казну хочет тут красть*” (covers a thief and wants to steal monarchic treasury) (RA, NOA, n.d. g). Unfortunately, the document is not fully preserved, and we do not know how this story ended, and whether the elder received punishment. Besides five-division-elders sworn men performed a vital role in the settlement life whose position was understood more as a duty. Sworn men were elected by five-division-elders for one year (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. g).

It is notable that the elder had to choose a sworn man very responsibly, because sworn men made an oath to perform their duties responsible and without violations, that’s why persons seeking the positions of sworn men had to be honest and reliable (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. f). Sworn men were selected for all important public places (saunas, taverns, wine-vaults, customs, courts, prisons, mills etc.) supposedly two persons for one place, but there is information in some sources about four persons (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. b; Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. a), an exception can be the case when there were 15 sworn men on duty (Arakcheev, 2012). In our view, the question of sworn men quantity for an institution is coming from to degree of complexity of the duties performed: the more responsible the activity, the more sworn men it had. In any case, the elders tried to choose at least two sworn men for performing of their duties on a shift basis, We can make such conclusion based on the account books and bath books, where is mentioned that the sworn men performed their duties for weeks, counted the collected taxes for a week, after that one sworn man was changed by the other one. (RA, NOA, n.d. b). First of all, sworn men were concerned with money matters. Their duties included collecting operating costs, taxes and indirect taxes, dividing them among the tax population, delivering the collected money to the treasury, and other household functions (Popova, 2018). Also sworn men were elected for control over institutions, and they were responsible for financial and administrative aspects of function. Their duties included purchasing equipment, hiring of labors: carpenters, bricklayers, repairmen, and work-flow management of mills, baths, and other public institutions (Sjoberg, 1976). Sworn men at courts had to deliver fairness of judicial actions, help elders. Why the

position of a sworn man was understood more as a duty? Because very often it was attended by a risk to life: when sworn men delivered money, they often fell victims of robberies or even murders (Archiv SPb II RAN, n.d. d). That means that a person who pretended for the role of a sworn man in such a troubled moment, had to understand that his life could be put in danger. However, in disregard of the difficulty and responsibility of the positions of five-division-elders and sworn men both, Novgorodians took those positions by tradition, performed the most important social tasks, and were responsible for various aspects of town life.

This Swedes' non-interference practice into Novgorod self-governance allowed to save the traditional Russian system and provide compromise between society and authorities. Moreover, it should be noted that it was not possible to detect any significant changes of sworn men' image and their activities as compared to the 16th century, public officials did not undergo any transformation. But we noticed an important feature that the activity of five-division-elders essentially increased as compared to the 16th century. Most probably, this happened due to weakening of the central administration and strengthening of local orders at this stage of Russian history (Platonov, 1995). The sources does not stated the degree of impact of five-division-elders on the Novgorod administration during the Swedish rule, but there is no reason to deny it, if for no other reason than they formed the lower-level administrative structure by "elections" to perform a wide-ranging town duties, and acted with the favorable non-interference of the Swedish administration.

7. Conclusion

Summarizing the above, one can conclude as follows. All the representatives of local self-governance were the Russian people of Novgorod, who became five-division-elders or sworn men by election. The scope of their duties was very wide and was not limited only to money matters. It stands to mention that the Swedish administration did not try to exercise tight oversight over the activities of lower lever structures and satisfied with sending them instructions and receiving information from "inquiries". They got information about failures in the function of local government only from the humble petitions sent by settlement people. The effectiveness of the administrative structure at the lower level was dictated by the absence of break with tradition or the introduction of a foreign element into the existing and well-coordinated system. Most probably, the head of the Swedish corps Jakob de la Gardie understood this and sought to use the existing system without destroying it. Such actions of the Swedish administration motivated the society to contact the authorities and communicate with them. Novgorodians were involved into the management of their town as before and that formed the basis of a compromise between the Swedish administration and Novgorod society. Moreover, the Swedes wanted to keep the existing system because they wanted to get in good with the Russians and to invite the Swedish prince to the Russian throne that's why it was unacceptable to act by violence, in contrast to the policy of False Dmitry II, based in central part of Russia, whose course was traced to robbing the population by default. Even after 1614, when the Swedes began to proceed from the compromise model to the occupation regime, we don't observe any changes in the function of the administrative structure; it continued to function in the same way that may indicate the effectiveness of the Novgorod town administration at the lower level.

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