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## ARTICLES

### Civil Status of Members of Ethnolocal Groups in Western Siberia in the 19th and early 20th centuries

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#### Abstract

Siberia's integration in the late 16th and first half of the 18th century proceeded in parallel with its settlement and economic development. First Poles and Jews took up residence here already in the second half of the 17th century. In the first half of the 18th century, Western Siberia witnessed Germans turning up as mining engineers and military personnel and first Gypsy caravans came. Over the 18th and 19th century, Western Siberia continued to be an environment for dynamic formation of various ethnolocal groups. Jews, Germans, Poles, Gypsies, Finns and others found themselves in the region as part of state migration campaigns or as convicts and political offenders sent here for penal servitude or exile. The diverse population mix required for the government to introduce and enforce legal regulations for rights and obligations. This gradually resulted in the formalized civil status of members of certain ethnolocal groups, which had an ethnic focus and was predominantly restrictive in nature. The outcome of the ongoing class policy was the registration of members representing ethnolocal groups under review mainly in the non-privileged social estates (*sosloviye*) (state peasants and townspeople (*meshchane*)). With the acquisition of a clearly defined legal status, Jews, Poles, Gypsies and others were able to engage in various types of economic activities, and this determined their economic “niches”. The scholarly paper is based on the materials of regulatory legal acts and documents collected in central and regional archives (Moscow, St. Petersburg and Tomsk).

**Keywords:** civil status, estate, Jews, Germans, Poles, Gypsies, Western Siberia.

#### 1. Introduction

Over the 18 and 19 centuries, a variety of ethnolocal communities was established in Siberia (Jewish, Polish, German, Gypsy, etc.). The primary source supplying new members for the groups was migration flows from the European part of the country. The ratio of voluntary and forced migration varied from group to group.

For example, major contributors to the German community were officials and military personnel, who came to Siberia, and their descendants. At the turn of the 20th century, its size showed dramatic increase following the voluntary resettlement of former colonists. At the same time, the Polish community emerged in the first half of the 19th century through the relocation of political and ordinary criminals to Siberia. The Poles who came here on duty had a small proportion. It was not until the 1890s that the Polish community began predominated by labor migrants from the governorates in the Privislinsky krai (workers, clerks, peasants). The Gypsy community in Siberia was founded as several caravans, whose members settled in small groups from Tobolsk to Irkutsk, arrived in the region. The number of Gypsy exiles and convicts was small.

The state had to regulate the situation of different population groups in Siberia using preventive

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methods or without prior arrangement, on the spur of the moment. These steps took into account ethnic, confessional and other factors. The result of the activities implemented by the central authorities (the Senate, the Committee of Ministers, the ministries) was the formalization of the civil status that members of different ethnolocal groups enjoyed, and its transformation in later periods.

## 2. Materials and methods

The paper is aimed to explore the civil status of individual ethnolocal groups in Western Siberia in the 19th and early 20th century. These include the Jewish, German, Polish and Gypsy communities. Reconstructing this aspect of the ethnic history is critical, since the civil status not only determined a group's position in society, but also regulated the engagement and role of specific ethnic communities in the regional economy.

Such a study tracing the evolution of the civil status implies not only the review of legislative acts collected in three editions of the "Complete Code of Laws of the Russian Empire". We should take into consideration an important fact that some departmental documents, which actually became laws, were not included in this collection. Considering various categories of subjects who were deprived of rights and were present in ethnolocal groups, it is necessary to turn to different regulatory and legal collections and here we should highlight the "Exile Statute" and the "Statute of Estates". To understand the practice of enforcement, we should look at archival documents. We used materials from the fonds of the State Archive of the Russian Federation, Russian State Historical Archive and State Archive of the Tomsk Region.

The work with regulatory acts and documents of management and record keeping identified the tool kit of methods used, such as historical and comparative analysis, historical and chronological analysis, historical and legal analysis and historical and geographical analysis, which allowed us to achieve the goal.

So far, the Siberian history of the ethnic groups under review has only received a very inconsistent coverage, and the issue has been repeatedly pointed out by many researchers (Smirnova, 2008; Nam, 2009; Larina, Shaidurov, 2015). An analysis of the extensive historiography of the Siberian Judaica suggests that the key areas of interest included problems of demographic development (Goncharov, 2013), economic activity (Galashova, 2004; Shaidurov, 2014a; Kalmina, 2016) and intracommunal life (Kalmina, 2002; Rabinovich, 2002). Rare works raise the question of the legal status of Siberian Jews and its impact on their everyday life (Shaidurov, 2014b; Shaidurov, Norkina, 2015). The history of Siberian Germans is mainly viewed through the lens of the economic activities they carried on (Vibe, 2007; Krott, 2010; Skubnevsky, 2010; Shaidurov, 2017a). The historical past of the Siberian Polonia in the second half of the 19th and 20th century was mainly highlighted using a martyrological approach, which was typical of the Polish-language historiography (Shaidurov, 2017b). Soviet and Russian historians have focused on the repressive policies of the tsarist regime towards Poles who were involved in the national liberation movement in the 1830s and 1860s (Mitina, 1963), and on their adaptation to new conditions in Siberia (Mulina, 2012; Nedzeliuk, 2018; Nikulina, 2018). At the beginning of the 21st century historians study different aspects of life of poles in Siberia (Skubnevsky, 2009; Ostrovsky, 2016). With the growing interest in the history of ethnic minorities in Siberia, the lack of research on the Gypsy topic becomes particularly visible (Smirnova-Seslavinskaya, 2013; Naumenko, Naumenko, 2018; Shaidurov, 2018a). This distinctive feature is not only characteristic of historical Siberian studies, but also pertaining to Russian gypsology in general. On the other hand, we should give a more careful look to the publication by V. Sanarov, which came out in 1970 (Sanarov, 1970), but ideas it expressed did not go any further.

## 3. Results

The civil status of the non-titular population in the Russian Empire was built on two essential inherently connected aspects – inclusion into a social estate and type of economic activity undertaken. In the context of the estates hierarchy, which was in place in Russia in the 19th and early 20th centuries, belonging to a certain social class set forth eligible spheres of economic activity. The estate policy, which was put into practice at the time towards the Jewish, German, Gypsy and Polish population, had rather conservative and restrictive contents (Shchukina, Egorenkova, 2017: 377).

The economic activity that a Jew could take up in imperial Russia depended, first and foremost, on their estate. However, registration of exiled, settlers and their descendants in certain estates in the first half of the 19th century was a labyrinth of confusingly elaborate regulations that resulted from the peculiarities of their situation.

In 1804, the first Regulation "On the settlement of Jews" was published where one of the sections was entitled "On different estates and trades of Jews and their benefits" (PSZ – I. Vol. 28. No 21547). It defined and legislated the classes under which Jews could be registered, such as farmers, artisans, merchants or townspeople (*meshchane*). As we can see, they could not have nobility and clergy in their midst, and the group did not have any. However, there was a question in which social category rabbis should be ranked. The Regulation was legally binding both inside the Pale of Settlement and throughout Russia. Consequently, free Jews who resided in Western Siberia, could be registered with one of the above estates in the 19th and early 20th centuries. This Statute should be admitted to have been one of the most liberal documents in its class over the existence of the issue related to the Jewish situation in the Russian Empire. For example,

Jewish farmers, who were listed in the category of state peasants, might not be reduced to serfdom, and they had the right to purchase land and hire laborers under a contract. Artisans and merchants received the same rights as “other Russian subjects”, and their activities were regulated by laws common to all Russians. The general meaning of the document was totally free from any traces of segregation.

In Siberia, the population was divided into free subjects and those deprived of part of rights. The latter included various categories of exiles, convict settler and convict laborers. The legal status of these categories was often determined by special legislative acts. The position of exiles and their descendants was formalized only in 1822 by the “Exile Statute”. Jews were referred to in Article 195 of the Statute, which specified the classification into the categories of “exiles, deported for penal settlement”. Jews were assigned to the fourth category and were listed along with “house serfs” and “people with limited capacity for work”. Like other subjects, they were required to “remain in this estate for 8 years, and on expiry of which they were allowed to enter the class of townspeople and join guilds on general grounds” (Article 340); “Jews who have served their term without blame are granted, along with others, the freedom to register, wherever they wish, in all Siberian governorates and regions, both in towns and in villages, with the knowledge and consent of the authorities” (Article 401) (GARF. F. 102. D-2. Op. 76a. D. 2025. L. 4).

However, the law-enforcement practice that was effective at the time provided for significantly reduced times of stay in settlements in the guild class. This applied, above all, to Jews who converted to Christianity. For example, according to the definition of the Fifth Department of the Governing Senate, it was ordered in 1827 to send Jews to Siberia with no permission to register in any estate throughout their travel to the destination. As they arrived in Siberia, they were still registered as guildsmen, but they were installed in towns to ease living conditions; in addition, the term of the guildsmen status was reduced to four years for them (RGIA. F. 1149. Op. 1. 1827. D. 76. L.4).

Concerning the descendants of those exiled to Siberia, the children of convict settlers were to be registered in the census records (*revizia*), and children of convict laborers were to be listed as peasants in communities (*volosts*) near penal labor sites (Article 262) (GARF. F. 102. D-2. Op. 76a. D. 2025. L. 4).

In 1834, Jews were granted the right to be accepted in merchant guilds. The grounds that lay foundation for considering this matter were offered by the requests of Berkovich and Kaminer, submitted to the Siberian Committee that forged a corresponding provision. According to the document, the right was given to Jews why were convict settlers after their exile term ended, as well as their children who voluntarily came to Siberia with their parents. On the other hand, the provision stipulated a rule that restricted the progress of Jewish trade in Siberia – the final decision on whether to include a Jew into a Siberian merchant guild or not remained with the Ministry of Finance (Shaidurov, 2015a: 209). In 1840, the practice was prohibited. But by the time, according to the records of the Jewish Committee, this basis facilitated the merchantry categorization for 19 Jews in Siberian governorates (RGIA. F. 383. Op. 18. D. 23388. L. 50). At the same time, a ban was imposed on registering convict settlers in urban estates, including townspeople and artisans. Therefore, the overwhelming majority of the Jewish community in Siberia had only a possibility of joining the category of state peasants. Such a prohibitive measure was taken in line with the general spirit of the efforts to address the Jewish situation in Siberia. Still, it did not affect those, who lived in the region until 1837, and their descendants.

In the second half of the 1840s, the Jews who had served their settlement terms, as well as their children, sought to be registered in town communities and by this obtain the right to live in towns and engage in crafts. The authority to include new members in any communities was assigned to Governorate Treasury Chambers. However, the Tomsk and Tobolsk Treasury Chambers had different interpretations for a number of statutory requirements, which accordingly enabled or prevented the move of Jews from the category of state peasants to urban classes. For example, officials at the Tobolsk Treasury Chamber held the opinion that “peasants from the Jews, who, according to Article 1736, Volume XIV of the Exile Statute, are allowed to remain in Siberia, may not, by virtue of the Regulation of the Committee of Ministers, approved by His Imperial Majesty on November 11, 1847 (PSZ-II. Vol. 22. No 21701), be listed with town estates” (RGIA. F. 383. Op. 18. D. 23388. L. 4 ob.). On the other hand, officials at the Tomsk Treasury Chamber believed that “the aforementioned Regulation of the Committee of Ministers only prohibits the promotion of Jews to the merchants estate, but that re-registering them from one locality to another, or from peasants to townspeople is permissible under general laws” (RGIA. F. 383. Op. 18. D. 23388. L. 4 ob.).

These interpretations of the legislative acts were polar opposites, and this led to a series of petitions by Jews to the Council of the General Directorate of Western Siberia. Their petitions indicated that they planned to engage not in trade, but in crafts in the towns (Tomsk, Tyumen, etc.). The council preferred to avoid taking responsibility in handling these cases and re-directed them to capital officials. Eventually, decisions on various problems were made by the Ministries of Finance, State Property and the Interior, each of which had its own view of the situation. It should be noted that the first two ministries continued to regard Jews in Siberia as economic entities, while the latter adopted the already traditional restrictive position.

A similar situation persisted until 1855, when the manifesto “On the most gracious granting of favors and reliefs to the people” was published, and its Clause XV (2) stipulated a possibility of including convict settlers into the state peasant category and upper urban estates. The prerequisite for this was the consent of the Dispatch Office of Exiled Persons.

Therefore, initially no legal restrictions existed in regard to the rights of Jews exiled to Siberia; they fell within the scope of the general law applied to the entire convict population. On this basis, they could be registered either as state peasants or as merchants. Further on, the situation began to evolve in the highly unfavorable direction for the Jewish population in the region, and the trend was associated with the general policy intended to reduce the size of the community ([Shaidurov, 2014a: 21-35](#)).

In the second half of the 1850s, the issue of the Jewish situation in Siberia remained unaddressed. Central institutions located in the country's capital city (departments of the Senate, at the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Finance and in other) continued to work on the interpretation of the law enforcement practices with regard to the Jewish population in the region. These efforts were driven by the need to streamline the legal sphere, and the goal was propelled by both provincial officials and Jews themselves who sent numerous enquiries and petitions to St. Petersburg ([Shaidurov, Norkina, 2015: 626](#)).

We should note that at that time the authorities turned out to be a prisoner of the situation: on the one hand, they were committed to following the letter and the spirit of the law effective in the late 1830s and devised to remove the Jewish population from Siberia; on the other hand, the administrative exile of Jews retained its significance in this period and was one of the key sources replenishing the community. The situation became even more complicated with the formal division of Jews into three categories in the region: 1) those, who resided in Siberia until 1837, and their descendants, 2) convict settlers and 3) descendants of convict settlers. This classification was expressed in the rights of various groups to be listed in different estates in the second half of the 1850s and early 1860s.

As it was noted above, by the middle of the 19th century, Siberian Jews were most often registered in the category of state peasants. Already the first years of Alexander II's reign demonstrated a certain liberalization of the estate policy towards this group of the population. For example, February 23, 1857, saw a Senate decree ratified, regulating the procedure for including Jews into the Siberian merchant category ([Shaidurov, 2014b: 242](#)). From this point on, only Jews listed in the tax registers of Siberian governorates were entitled to join merchant guilds on general grounds. The merchant state extended to all family members, including sons. However, the regulation contained one essential reservation – it did not apply to convict settlers. This document significantly broadened the range of subjects who had the right to be listed in the merchantry.

In any way, this regulation was revised to become tougher already in 1858. In 1858, the Siberian Committee examined the case of Jews Zakhеров and Zerkovich, who requested permission to sign up to the urban (*meshchanskiye*) communities of Tomsk and Tyumen, respectively ([RGIA. F. 1265. Op. 13. D. 17. Stlb. 534](#)). By the time, they had already de facto lived in these towns and practiced crafts, but were de jure classified as state peasants. Their inclusion in the township would not be a problem unless they were descendants of convict settlers, who were prohibited to enter this estate by the Exile Statute and other regulatory acts. The General Directorate of Western Siberia and the Ministers of the Interior and Finance found that such re-classification could be done. As a result, a precedent was set finalized the form of the Regulation approved by His Imperial Majesty ([PSZ-II. Vol. 33. Is. 2. No 33702](#)). From this point on, the descendants of Jewish convict settlers were granted the right to be listed in the townspeople estate of Siberian cities, engage in crafts and carry on trade permitted to townspeople. However, merchant guilds were still inaccessible for them ([PSZ-II. Vol. 33. Is. 2. No 33702](#)). Still, this document helped legalize the position of those of the Siberian Jews, who by that time had lived in towns and cities and were engaged in crafts and petty trade.

Until the end of 1858, Jews had access to another social category the Cossacks, which implied military service.

As conscription was extended to them in the second half of the 1820s, Jews appeared among the enlisted military personnel and as lower ranks in the army and navy. Part of them had to be baptized, but some continued to follow Judaism.

Violations of the Military or Naval Regulations entailed various punishments ranging from corporal punishments to dispatching to units of the Special Corps of the Internal Guard and transportation to Siberia. According to statistics, a substantial group of “the vicious from the lower ranks” were annually dispatched to Western and Eastern Siberia. For example, in 1858 alone, around 5 thousand people were sent in several parties to the areas beyond the Urals ([RGIA. F. 1265. Op. 13. D. 17. Stlb. 748](#)). As they arrived at the new place of service, they were conscripted in the Siberian Cossack units.

This measure was also fully applied to the Jews dispatched to the region. In the same 1858, according to the Minister of War, all parties were composed of up to 400 people ([RGIA. F. 1265. Op. 13. D. 17. Stlb. 748](#)). As a consequence, Jews serving in the army became Cossacks and acquired all the rights and duties assigned to the Siberian Cossack Host. Importantly, the latter featured wide ethnic diversity in the middle of the 19th century. This had a link to the legislation that was in force at the time and that allowed to register their members of various faiths, including Pagans ([RGIA. F. 1265. Op. 13. D. 17. Stlb. 749](#)).

Governor General of Eastern Siberia N.N. Muravyov-Amursky in his report, addressed to the Siberian Committee, objected to this practice, arguing that the authorities had always sought to “reduce as much as possible the Jewish population in that region, which is already quite sizeable due to Jews sentenced to exile for crimes” ([RGIA. F. 1265. Op. 7. D. 274. L. 2](#)).

Initially, the Ministry of War, represented by Minister N.O. Sukhozanet opposed the introduction of this measure. The basis for this resistance was derived from His Imperial Majesty's edict dated August 26, 1856, which specified that "in the administration of conscription duty [Jews] are set equal with other estates" (RGIA. F. 1265. Op. 7. D. 274. L. 7). The Personnel Schedule, which was approved by His Imperial Majesty and attached to the ordinance for the military ministry, dated April 22, 1857, stipulated that the Jews were to be conscripted into the army in all types of troops, except for the guard, as well as training and exemplary troops (RGIA. F. 1265. Op. 7. D. 274. L. 7). In addition, the ministry also pointed to the fact that the Cossacks of Eastern Siberia, along with the Christians, also consisted of Muslims and pagans, and "proceeding from this, there is no sufficient reason to cancel the appointment of the vicious lower ranks of the Jewish origin to Eastern Siberia to turn into the Cossack estate" (RGIA. F. 1265. Op. 7. D. 274. L. 7). As a result, the military had no legal grounds to deny Jews the right to serve in Cossack units. In addition, some of the Jews sent to Siberia were already on the march. Some combined teams, as noted by the documents of the Ministry of War, not only passed Perm, but already left Tobolsk.

In this context, Governor-General Muravyov-Amursky continued to insist on the introduction of prohibitive instruments. Being aware that returning the Jews to the European part would prove a costly affair, he proposed to include them in the Western Siberian military units and register in the Cossack estate only those of them "who will receive baptism; as for those who remain in their faith, they would be either engaged in services or settled in any unit of the Cossack troops, where this will be most suitable given local circumstances" (RGIA. F. 1265. Op. 7. D. 274. L. 2).

Thus, the prohibitive approach, promoted by the representative of the Siberian administration, turned out to contradict the legal regulation in force at the time. However, his actions were quite consistent regarding his own views on the Jewish situation as applied to Siberia: Eastern Siberia should not be transformed into a region with a high concentration of Jewish offenders. This concerned, as we could see above, the issue of the balanced distribution of convict settlers between the two parts of Siberia. This was also reflected in the aspect of the estate structure. We should note that Muraviev-Amursky promoted the interests of the region and in line with them supported the idea of settling in Siberia and the Far East the Jews who belonged to the industrialist and merchant categories to boost economic colonization of the territory.

The final decision was made by the Siberian Committee which banned in 1859 to send lower rank Jews from the units of Special Corps of the Internal Guard to Siberia with their inclusion in the Cossack estate (PSZ-II. Vol. 33. Is. 2. No 33970).

The prohibitive measures had no impact on those Jews who by that time had already been registered as part of in the Siberian Cossacks. And as a result, between the second half of the 19th and early 20th century, Western and Eastern Siberia was home to a sufficient number of Jews and converts to Christianity, recorded in this estate. They had appropriate rights and obligations. According to the Statute of the Siberian Cossack Host (1846), "persons who once were conscripted for the military estate and their offspring, remain in the host for evermore" (PSZ-II. Vol. 21. Is. 1. No 21671). Separately, the Statute detailed the rights and benefits granted to Cossacks. For example, they had the right "to carry on trade and manufacturing activities inside and outside military units in their free time" (§ 103). They, like other Cossacks, also had responsibilities that in essence implied maintaining the roads, bridges, towers and ferries on the military lands; fulfilling local duties in the passage of troops, repairs and state transports across military lands; escorting prisoners (§ 321).

This Regulation was legally binding beyond the Urals until the early 1850s. In March 1851, the initiative of Muravyov-Amursky prompted the development and ratification of the Regulation on the Trans-Baikal Cossack Host (PSZ-II. Vol. 26. Is. 1. No 25039). It also enshrined that persons, once listed in the military estate, remained there together with their descendants forever (§ 12). It means that the Jews, who were sent to Siberia for penal settlement before 1859 and were recorded in the Cossack Host, further remained in this class and could not leave it.

In 1863, the government simplified the access to the ranks of hereditary honorary citizens for Jews, including those living in Siberia. Before this point, according to the Statute of Estates (1857 version), they could be included in this class only "in particularly notable cases, when they brought special benefit to the state" (Ustav o sostoyaniyach, 1857. St. 597) or after serving at least 15 years as an erudite Jew (*ucheniy yevrey*) under Governor Generals (Ustav 1857. St. 598). Now, based on the proposal by the Jewish Committee, hereditary honorary citizenship could be available to those Jews who had been in the first merchant guild for 10 years and in the second guild for 20 years (PSZ-II. Vol. 38. Is. 1. No 39158). Certainly, the regulation could be above all exercised by the Jewish merchants who lived in the European part of Russia, since none of the categories resided in Siberian governorates in the mid 1860s. But the introduction of the legal norm became a good incentive for some of the merchants to change their status by engaging in business.

As before, one of the most sizeable classes of the Siberian Jewry was formed by the descendants of convict settlers. In the middle of the 19th century, these were already those who came with their parents to live in penal settlements, and those who were born in Siberia. As we wrote above, they were deprived of certain rights as compared to the children of the Jews who lived freely in the region. But a gradual process streamlined the differences between them. The trend was probably engendered by the efforts made by

officials to unify the legal status of Jews, so as not to worsen complexity of the enforcement process.

April 1866 saw the release of the Opinion of the State Council as Approved by His Imperial Majesty (PSZ-II. Vol. 41. Is. 1. No 43169), which amended the rights of children of convict Jewish settlers and the Jews who were sentenced to penal settlement retaining their social rights, i.e. were left in their corresponding estates. This document, adopted on the basis of the opinion issued by the Minister of Finance, allowed the said persons to register in tax-paying classes and merchant estate. As it was previously the case, the regulation was not extended to convict settlers.

Thus, by the mid 1860s, a significant part of the Jewish population in Siberia received access to tax-paying classes (peasants, townspeople), as well as to the merchant estate. In addition, the government made it relatively easier to obtain hereditary honorary citizenship. The legal incapacitation affected only those who were sent to the region for penal settlement. But even the latter contingent received equal rights with other sub-groups after the term of penal settlement.

The dominating share of exiles in the Polish community in Siberia pre-determined their class status in new places of residence. In this period, the civil status of Polish convict laborers and settlers was specified in the Exile Statute (the 1822 edition) and their situation was similar to that of other subjects.

The position of Polish convict laborers and settlers after 1830 was defined not only by the severity of their punishment but by their previous social background as well. Nearly 2/3 of people exiled for political offences represented the nobility (Shaidurov, 2014c: 246). For example, a small group of insurgents were sentenced to 5 years or more of Siberian exile but were not deprived of their social ranks and property. After the term of exile ended, they had a right to settle down in Russia's European governorates. This measure was beneficial, first of all, to the aristocratic Polish gentry (shliakhetstvo). But the size of the group was not large.

A more sizeable group included another category of the exiled: settlers, who earlier belonged to various social classes (e.g. the nobility (shliakhetstvo), townspeople (meshchanstvo) and peasantry) but were deprived of their social estate and sentenced to the forfeiture of property. The category had the most under-privileged civil status. Hence settlers in this group faced with the most desperate situation in Western Siberia where "by law, they were required to remain within 10 versts (10.67 km or 6.6 miles) of a village or a town, in which they were ordered to be settled", Maksimov wrote (Maksimov, 1900: 342). Still, former aristocrats (shliakhtichi) were in more favorable circumstances in these masses. Their benefits helped them receive a yearly allowance of 57 rubles from the government and elderly and disable people were entitled to 114 rubles a year (Shaidurov, 2014c: 247). In fact, however, Poles had to go to great pains to receive the money due to them. They were at all times dependent on the goodwill of the local authorities who decided whether to pay the allowance or not, and this circumstance negated their nominal advantage over former townspeople (meshchane) and peasants who were not granted the allowance privilege.

The Exile Statute and its numerous revised editions regulated all specifics of the social position of convict settlers. For example, it ordained they should be settled either in already existing villages together with native inhabitants or in newly established localities (Ustav o ssyl'nykh, 1857. Art. 673). The situation was more beneficial for those exiled Poles who were sent to existing peasant communities. Old inhabitants had a right to house a convict settler and receive half of their monetary allowance for four months (Ustav o ssyl'nykh, 1857. Art. 677). The amount of the daily monetary allowance, paid to an arrested person (*arestantskaya dacha*), was revised by the Finance Ministry every year (Shaidurov, 2018c: 645) and thus was not a fixed sum.

Local administrations were interested in binding convict settlers to new places at any cost. For example, a local inhabitant who got married to a convict woman was to be paid 15 rubles in silver to set up a household without the need to repay the money and another 15 rubles as a loan on general terms (Ustav o ssyl'nykh, 1857. Art. 766). Local women of the free estate in case of marriage with convict settlers were given 50 rubles in silver as a monetary reward (Ustav o ssyl'nykh, 1857. Art. 766).

The term of being categorized as a convict settler was set at 10 years (Ustav o ssyl'nykh, 1857. Art. 682). Those stripped of rights established in their social estate and exiled under administrative procedures were offered an opportunity to enter the class of state peasants after serving part of their exile term. Nevertheless, it was prohibited for former convict settlers to return to European Russia. The Exile Statute (1857 edition) determined that persons who previously belonged to the estate of convict settlers "are free to settle down in places of their choice, namely, in all Siberian governorates and regions both in towns and in villages with the knowledge and consent of the local authorities except in the so called Siberian Line, in the Semipalatinsk region as well as in the region of Siberian Kirghizes" (Ustav o ssyl'nykh, 1857. Art. 728).

The end of the term did not automatically change the civil status of convict settlers. The Section "On the maintenance of convict settlers in their assigned places" of the Exile Statute defined the legally permissible number of convict settlers that could be registered in a peasant community. The state of affairs was only natural since the released person again moved to a tax-paying class and, as a result, was obliged to pay in full national and local taxes and carry out compulsory services. It was necessary to receive a written consent from a particular peasant community to become a state peasant (Ustav o ssyl'nykh, 1857. Art. 734). Later on, the acceptance resolution was registered in the local administration and was then sent to the provincial Treasury Chamber to put the newly joined member of the peasant community on the list of taxpayers (*rasklad podatei*). Nevertheless, candidates had also to pay a significant sum for the acceptance

certificate. Some Siberian historians wrote that “the acceptance certificates were exceedingly expensive” (Solov’eva, 1981: 72).

Besides, those who finished serving their exile term but did not receive a right to return to their previous place of residence had an opportunity either to join the townspeople estate or carry on trade. Yet, a permit for any of these opportunities was often a favor from the local government as over 10 years convict settlers should “remain loyal and do no wrong to the authorities” (Ustav o ssylnykh, 1857. Art. 735; Maksimov, 1900: 342).

Exclusion of Polish former aristocrats, townspeople and peasants from their estates changed their fiscal relations with the government. When they arrived in Siberia and settled down in a new place they became liable for specific tax provisions. For example, they were totally exempt from any taxation in the first three years, and in the following seven years, they were to pay half of poll and quit-rent (*obrok* – a rent payable to one’s lord or the government instead of services that might otherwise have been required) tax money. Still, local provincial and district taxes (*zemskie podati*) as well as peasant community taxes (*volostnye podati*) did not apply to them. Other specific feature in the taxation policies towards convict settlers was levying annual 15 kopecks in silver on them into the so called economic fund for exiled persons, aimed to support elderly and disabled exiles (Ustav o ssylnykh, 1857. Art. 751).

In general, the civil status of Poles sentenced for exile in Siberia by court or under administrative proceedings in the second half of the 19th century corresponded to that in the pre-reform period. The bulk of the Poles were sent there for penal labor or penal settlement. This meant that they were deprived of their classes by court. Further on, their status was regulated by the articles of the “Code of Penalties” and the “Exile Statute” in later versions.

As before, the law opened only two categories to convict settlers – the peasant and townspeople estates. As early as in 1866, Poles, along with other convict settlers, were allowed to be registered in local peasant communities after they lived in exile for at least five years, and in communities of Siberian cities after ten years of exile (PSZ-II. Vol. 41. Is. 1. No 43784). On the other hand, the prohibition to register in merchant societies also persisted. Subsequently (1868), the time criterion, related to the requirement for political offenders convicted before January 1, 1866 to stay in Siberia, was abolished. This measure fully covered Poles sentenced to penal settlement in Siberian governorates. Clause 2 of the Edict “On granting relief to political offenders convicted before January 1, 1866”, made Poles, like other settlers who met the above requirement, automatically eligible for the “state settler category” and gave them the right, in accordance with Article 735 of the Exile Statute, to reside in cities and engage in craft and manufacturing. Despite this, they still remained stripped of civil rights and had no opportunity to vote and be elected to public service (PSZ-II. Vol. 43. Is. 1. No 45898).

This kind of indulgences did not mean the onset of a massive change-over from the settler class to state peasants or townspeople. Such a transition was associated not only with alternations in the legal status, but also with different fiscal relations between subjects and the government. As soon as the term of their settler status ended, the new peasant or townsman or townswoman was charged with the appropriate taxes and duties, which were higher comparing to other classes. In another case, when a settler early moved to a higher social category, they were not only subject to the corresponding taxes, but were also obliged to pay a kind of compensation in the amount of 15 kopecks in silver per year over a certain period as a contribution to the economic fund for exiled persons (Ustav o ssylnykh, 1857. Art. 743). Not everyone settler wishing to change their estate could afford the increased poll tax and assessed levies.

The paternalistic policy towards foreign migrants of the second half of the 18th and early 19th century led to the birth of a special category – the “colonists”, whose position was legally defined by the regulations ratified in the time of Catherine II, Paul I and Alexander I. By their civil status, they were close to state peasants. However, there were a number of privileges that differentiated them. For example, as farmers, they were protected from being moved to the serf estate. The conscript obligation did not apply to them. To manage the group, special offices were established in Saratov and Odessa. In the era of Alexander II, their status was amended to become even closer to that of state peasants. The Statute of 1871 reserved some privileges and benefits for them (Svod, 1871). For example, a special version of the general conscription was implemented for the Mennonites – they were to serve in sanitary and forestry teams, rather than in units of the regular army. This affected those Germans who moved to Siberia and founded their settlements here beginning in the late 19th century (Shaidurov, 2018b: 290).

The civil status of Siberian Gypsies was shaped within the framework of efforts to identify the place of Gypsies in the structure of the Russian Empire beginning in the second half of the 18th century, when the first regulatory acts were adopted. Being personally free, Gypsies roamed throughout the empire, despite prohibitive laws that the government ratified. In the 1780s, Gypsies were first registered in the state peasant estate (Shaidurov, 2017b: 1210). This practice was also introduced in Siberia. For example, in 1804, the Tobolsk Governorate recorded 81 Gypsies of both genders assigned to rural communities in Kurgan (4 males), Omsk (15 males and females) and Tomsk (57 males) districts (RGIA. F. 1285. Op. 3. D. 41. L. 133).

Year 1809 saw steps taken to sedentarize Gypsies and make them urban inhabitants (PSZ-I. Vol. 30. No 23597). However, activities to put the published edict into operation ran over time. While Russia’s European governorates commenced the edict already in 1810-1811, the Siberian authorities began to register

the detained Gypsies urban communities only from 1814 (Shaidurov, 2018a: 207). However, only a small group of Siberian Gypsies was recorded as townspeople.

In the first half of the 19th century, the number of Siberian Gypsies increased through criminal and administrative exile. In 1840, Tomsk Governor Fedor Beger communicated to St. Petersburg that “the report of the Economic Department [Treasury Chamber] regarding the Gypsies registered in state volosts revealed that their number was 407 males, but only 5 of them, who belong to the communities of state peasants, have robust sedentary roots..., and the rest 402 people are convict settlers managed by the Dispatch Office of Exiled Persons” (RGIA. F. 383. Op. 2. D. 1413. Vol. 14. L. 3). The situation of the latter was governed by the norms set forth by the “Exile Statute”.

The diverse social blend of the Gypsy community can be illustrated by the example of the Tobolsk governorate at the turn the 1840s. For example, according to the Tobolsk Treasury Chamber, several Gypsy families, who were recorded as guild merchants (3d guild), resided in Tyumen and Yalutorovsk, 9 townspeople families were registered in Kurgan and Yalutorovsk, and Gypsies classified as state peasants lived in various rural localities (RGIA. F. 383. Op. 2. D. 1413. Vol. 26. L. 4-21).

#### 4. Conclusion

Thus, the period between the end of the 18th and 19th century brought about the formalization of the civil status for the ethnocultural groups under review. The analysis conducted of regulatory acts enables several conclusions. It is possible to sum up that all the cases considered here demonstrated the presence of dedicated lawmaking efforts related to a specific ethnocultural group. It could have either a prohibitive or permissive nature. Based on the then effective legislation, the government allowed social mobility within certain limits. However, moving from one estate category to another was fraught with numerous problems and required the mandatory consent of the authorities. Despite this, personally free Jewish, German, Polish and Gypsy populations of Western Siberia had been predominantly registered as peasants, townspeople and merchants by the beginning of the 20th century. This social categorization pre-determined the range of economic activities that were available to them.

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