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Grazing or Ploughing for Empire? The Politics of Livestock Production in the Imperial Russian Peripheries of Livland and Ufa, 1861-1905¹

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Historians often understand the economic modernisation of the Russian empire in terms of industrialisation, but for contemporaries the modernisation of agriculture was at least as important.² The nineteenth-century connections between changing imperialism, the environment and farming shaped Russia's path to become one of the world's largest agricultural producers. In order to understand what role livestock played in the imperial Russian conception of agricultural modernisation between 1861 and 1905, I will compare the agrarian transformation in two peripheral regions: Livland on the Baltic coast and Ufa (Bashkiria) near the Kazakh steppe. The agrarian transformations in these regions have been discussed from classic political, legal and economic perspectives.³ But drawing on New Political and New Imperial Histories, I see land use itself as political and argue that the politics of livestock production were not equal across the empire. These depended on local political constellations, socioeconomic differences and the position of those handling livestock in imperial cultural hierarchies.

The governorates of Ufa and Livland had always been in the margins of the imperial core, one 'Eastern' and the other 'European' from a Russian point of view; and each province had served as 'testing grounds' for imperial rule. By the middle of the nineteenth century, both provinces were in the process of significant political-administrative changes, the outcomes of which were by no means clear. Unlike many other groups within the Russian empire, the traditional non-Russian landowners in both Ufa and Livland had acquired a strong position with regard to landholding. But when the empire sought to integrate the rule and economies of its various territories and increase control over its subjects, the landholding elites of Ufa and Livland were not equally able to engage with Russia's modernising policies, leading to very different results for agriculture and livestock production between these regions. Using statistical reports, scientific publications and journals of societies for agricultural modernisation and for animal welfare, I illustrate how Livland and Ufa, while both

¹ I would like to thank the reviewers for their help in making my argument stronger and I would also like to thank the editors especially for being so patient with me as I was writing this text for over two years as part of my ongoing recovery from long COVID.

² K. Bruisch, K. Gestwa & B. Templer, 'Introduction: Expertise and the Quest for Rural Modernization in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union', *Cahiers du monde russe* 57 1 (2016) 7-10; for example, the *Cambridge History of Russia* on the imperial period devoted merely one or two sentences to 'agrarian' or 'agricultural' modernisation, only in the context of ideology and administration, whereas 'industry' received its own section in the chapter on the Russian economy and had an impressive presence in the index. See B. Ananich, 'The Russian economy and banking system', in: D. Lieven (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Russia*. Vol. 2, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp.408-17.

³ A.I. Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnosheniia v Bashkortostane i bashkirshkoe zemlevladienie vo vtoroi polovine XVI-nachale XX v.*, Ufa: Kitap, 2007; C. Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire. Loyalty and Tsarist Authority in Bashkiria, 1552-1917*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016; M. I. Kozin, *Latyshkaia derevnia v 50-70e gody XIX veka*, Riga: Zinatne, 1976; G. von Pistohlkors, *Ritterschaftliche Reformpolitik zwischen Russifizierung und Revolution*, Frankfurt & Zurich: Musterschmidt, 1978, pp.43-114; G. von Pistohlkors, 'Die Ostseeprovinzen unter russischer Herrschaft (1710/95-1914)', in G. von Pistohlkors (ed.), *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas: Baltische Länder*, Berlin: Siedler, 1994, pp.353-9, 389-95 & 414-16.

experiencing similar ‘rationalising’ interventions of the imperial centre, displayed opposite trends in livestock production as a result of the reshuffling of the empire’s order and which simultaneously further impacted the direction of these political changes.

In Ufa, the semi-nomadic and Muslim Bashkirs, who had possessed a hereditary right to the land for over two centuries, were pressured by Russian officials and experts to settle and learn agriculture from Russian colonists on small-scale, ideally private farms. This would protect them against famines and poverty. By ‘taming’ the ‘wild’ Bashkirs and their horses, the steppe region was supposed to turn from a grand pasture for herding into a grain production centre, with new railway infrastructure to facilitate this.

By contrast, in Livland, competition with cheaper grain from the empire’s interior led agricultural societies, mostly headed by noble Baltic German landlords, to experiment with foreign sheep and cattle breeds on their manors – not on the land owned or leased by Latvian and Estonian-speaking peasants – to tap imperial and European markets. Paradoxically, new Baltic animal-protection societies, criticising ‘inhumane’ animal transport and slaughter, were considered economically useful and helped to continue noble tutelage over the Baltic peasantries. Such regional differences in livestock production between Ufa and Livland indicate that even the seemingly ‘rational’ agrarian modernisation project was intertwined with and also produced new imperial diversities.

Bashkiria

Bashkiria more or less comprised of two main governorates, Ufa and Orenburg. The region took its name from the ‘Bashkir’ tribes. Since as early as the sixteenth century, these tribes had been living near the foothills of the Southern Urals, where the taiga forests slowly gave way to the vast steppe. Before the Russian Tsar Ivan the Terrible had conquered the city of Kazan in 1552, the tribes living to the east of the city had been subject to the Khan of Kazan. But now Tsar Ivan had offered them the right to own the land they lived on in exchange for military service and payment of taxes in kind (*yasak*). To the Muslim Bashkirs, the promise not to try to convert them was sacrosanct. Importantly, this deal applied not only to the tribal leaders who had visited the Tsar to pledge their loyalty, but to their relatives as well. Therefore the responsibility to guard the borders between Muscovy and the greater Kazakh steppe, and to collect the furs for the Russians, was a collective one. But this also meant that a great number of people could claim landownership – and because of its benefits many non-Bashkirs tried to marry or bluff their way into the Bashkir status.⁴ The collective element of Bashkir landholding proved crucial to the way the Russian authorities approached the place of Bashkirs and their animals within the framework of agricultural ‘development’ in Ufa province especially, since Ufa would be integrated into Russia’s new civil administrative order, unlike Orenburg. While the economic changes among the Bashkir tribes and their resulting political integration into the Russian empire have been studied from the perspective of landownership,⁵ their handling of livestock has not yet been analysed as a factor in the reshuffling of their status.

⁴ Steinwedel (2016), pp.35 & 142; X. Le Torrivellec, ‘Entre steppes et stèles. Territoires et identités au Bachkortostan’, *Cahiers du monde russe* 41:2-3 (2000), pp.389-90.

⁵ See in English Steinwedel (2016).

Until roughly the end of the nineteenth century, 'Bashkir' carried a legal meaning in the Russian system instead of an ethnic one. Identifying primarily as Muslims, the Bashkirs did not consider themselves 'a people' either. This makes sense, because despite the fact that Soviet historians tried to locate the ethnogenesis of the 'Bashkir people' somewhere before their oath of loyalty to the Tsar, these tribes were hardly the same. There were distinct variations of their Turkic language, for example, and each had their own tribal signs and histories.⁶ The most significant difference between the Bashkir tribes was that some mainly in the more forested north-eastern part of the region were sedentary while others were nomadic or semi-nomadic, roaming the hills and steppe for most of the year, but retreating to immovable homes during the winter.⁷

The sedentary Bashkirs utilised animals in ways similar to farmers around the world and used mostly cattle for meat, dairy and ploughing. The (semi-)nomadic tribes raised cattle too and also camels, but the largest herds (*tabun*) consisted of sheep and horses. The latter were especially important. Traditionally, the Bashkir tribes used horses as pack animals and for battle, regularly fighting other tribes. Although they had fought more than a dozen uprisings against the Russian overlords in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Bashkir and his horse saw their most famous action during the campaign against Napoleon in 1812-1814, when they travelled as far as Paris.⁸

Soldiers also had to eat and drink, and so Bashkir horses and sheep were used for their meat during religious holidays. But milk, especially cow milk, formed the basis of the Bashkir diet and their trade. Virtually all tribes produced various dairy products like butter and cheese. Mare's milk was fermented to produce *kumis*, a drink said to have healing qualities.⁹ For obvious reasons, horses and sheep were not only used for food. Horse skins were dried in the sun and then used to ferment cheese. Sheep were also used for their wool and skin. Instead of tanning these animal skins using a vegetable process, Bashkirs would smoke them and make shoes and belts out of the leather. Sheep wool was woven into decorative rugs and clothing, like felt headcaps.¹⁰

⁶ These histories were passed down orally, until the increased importance of landownership regulation by the Russians stimulated putting these in writing. R. G. Kuzeev, 'Bashkirskie shezhere', in *Sobranie nauchnykh trudov v 7 tomakh*, Vol.2, Ufa: Kitap, 2015, pp.29-47; Le Torrivellec (2000), pp.371-2; X. Le Torrivellec, 'Tatary i bashkiry: Istorija v zerkal'nom otrazhenii. Etnicheskaja kompozitsija, istoriograficheskie debaty i politicheskaja vlast' v respublike Bashkortostan', *Ab Imperio* 2 (2007), pp.261-2; C. Noack, 'The Tataro-Bashkir Feud Revisited: Zaki Validi and the Bashkir Autonomy in Western Historiography', in I. M. Gvozdikova et al. (eds), *Istorija v litsakh i lichnost' v istorii. Materialy Vtorykh Mezhdunarodnykh Usmanovskikh chtenij, posvjashchennykh 90-letiju so dnja rozhdenija vidnogo istorika-agrarnika Bashkortostana, professora Khamzy Fatykhovicha Usmanova*, Ufa: IYaL UNTs RAN, 2013, pp.168-94. For an analysis of how the changing landscape and the resulting political conflicts stimulated a situational ethnic identity among Bashkirs, see P. van Dijk, 'A Land to Call Their Own: Colonization of the Bashkir Steppe, Land Conflicts and Situational Identities in the Russian Empire, 1861-1917', in L. Bellia, F. Casales & E. Ciappi (eds), *Conflicting subjects. Between clash and recognition*, Pavia: Pavia University Press, 2022, pp.29-44.

⁷ The influential Soviet ethnographer Rail' G. Kuzeev considered 'the Bashkirs' a people or nationality by the time they had sworn loyalty to the Russian Tsar, but did differentiate between individual tribes and their specific ways of life. See among others R. G. Kuzeev & S. Shitova, 'Bashkiry. Istoriko-etnograficheskii ocherk', in *Sobranie nauchnykh trudov v 7 tomakh*. Vol.2, Ufa: Kitap, 2015, p.535.

⁸ See I. T. Radozhitskij, *Pokhodnye zapiski artillerista, s 1812 po 1816 god. Chast' 3: 1814-j god. Vojna vo Frantsii*, Moscow, 1835, p.135; and I. I. Lazhechnikov, *Pokhodnye zapiski russkogo ofitsera*, St Petersburg, 1820, p.245, both cited in A. Z. Asfandiarov et al. (eds), *Dokumenty i materialy po istorii bashkirskogo naroda (1790-1912)*, Ufa: IYaL UNTs RAN, 2012, p.173.

⁹ D. P. Nikol'ski, *Bashkiry. Etnograficheskoe i sanitarno-antropologicheskoe izsledovanie*, St Petersburg: P.P. Soikina, 1899, p.69.

¹⁰ Kuzeev & Shitova (2015), p.549.

There were many small fairs at which live horses were sold, but the December fairs at Buzdiak in Belebei, to the west of Ufa city, were almost entirely dedicated to selling Bashkir horses. Herds of Bashkir horses were also sold at fairs outside of Bashkiria, typically at very high prices. Major buyers of horses included mining plants, the Orenburg, Ural and the Bashkir-Meshcheriak Cossack Hosts as well as regular troops stationed along the empire's borders.¹¹ From the first half of the nineteenth century onward, however, an influx of animals from the newly incorporated Kyrgyz and Kazakh territories to Bashkiria's south challenged local livestock production in the border regions of Ufa province.¹²

Yet the greatest transformation of livestock farming, which truly affected Bashkiria's heartland, took place in the second half of the nineteenth century. Already in the eighteenth century, under pressure from colonists from neighbouring regions and from central Russia, a significant number of Bashkirs had been forced to reduce their herds or even settle.¹³ But after 1850, there emerged strong ideas among Russian officials about developing Ufa's agricultural 'potential'. This heralded dramatic interventions in Bashkir landholding, resulting practically in their expropriation, which meant that the great herds of the Bashkir steppe were soon a thing of the past.¹⁴

In 1887, one contemporary observer, Nikolai Remezov, who had worked as a land surveyor with the Bashkirs, lamented that the large herds of horses he had seen when he had first laid eyes on the "endless steppe" in 1873 had gone. In less than ten years "the entire steppe has been sown with grain and instead of the waving silver feather grass [typical of the steppe], there flow the waves of golden wheat". In the place of the "nomads", the steppe was now dotted with dozens of villages, towns and private peasant homesteads. "[Here] rules the kulak, rude and ignorant, who wears out the forests and enslaves the population. This public ulcer will be felt for a long time to come!"¹⁵ The transformation of Bashkiria's agrarian constellation accelerated in this period because several urgent 'questions' in late imperial Russian politics came together here.

Firstly, roughly from the early eighteenth century onward, Russia's steppe was involved in a long reform process that Charles Maier aptly described as territorialisation: delimitating and stabilising borders and consolidating political power within that space to bring control over property.¹⁶ This reform process sped up after 1856, when the empire lost the Crimean War.¹⁷ Although the final results of the so-called Great Reforms, which started with the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, hardly fulfilled the original intentions and (Russian nationalist) expectations, the point was to achieve further integration of rule within European Russia. This would make the empire stronger on the international stage and facilitate its economic development. To this end a form of rural self-government was

¹¹ M.I. Rodnov & L.F. Tagirova, 'Formirovanie predprinimatel'skogo khoziastva v zhivotnovodstve (Yuzhnyi Ural, seredina XIX - nachalo XX vv.)', *Iz istorii i kul'tury narodov Srednego Povolzh'ia* 13:3 (2023), p.79.

¹² Rodnov & Tagirova (2023), p.80.

¹³ M. Tepeyurt, *Bashkirs between Two Worlds, 1552-1824*, PhD thesis, University of West Virginia, 2011, pp.36-40 & 174-216.

¹⁴ Kuzeev & Shitova (2015), pp.535-7.

¹⁵ N. V. Remezov, *Ocherki iz zhizni dikoi Bashkirii. Byl' v skazochnoi strane*. [Sketches from Wild Bashkiria: A True Story in a Fairy-tale Land], second edition, Moscow: I.N. Kushnerev, 1889, pp.98-101.

¹⁶ C. S. Maier, *Leviathan 2.0. Inventing Modern Statehood*, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012, pp.1-14; C. S. Maier, *Once Within Borders. Territories of Power, Wealth, and Belonging since 1500*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016, pp.1-13.

¹⁷ W. B. Lincoln, *The Great Reforms. Autocracy, Bureaucracy, and the Politics of Change in Imperial Russia*, DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1990, pp.61-4 & 90.

introduced in 1864, the *zemstvo*. But this happened only in ‘cultured’ regions, meaning those provinces where there were enough (Russian) noble landowners to keep an eye on the peasant delegates during the *zemstvo* meetings.¹⁸

Bashkiria’s largest province of Ufa did not have many of these noble landowners yet, but the provincial government found a way to attract them. Alexander Bezak, the Governor General of the Greater Orenburg-Samara Region (roughly Bashkiria), had been quite unhappy about the “underdeveloped” state of his region and blamed the Bashkirs and their “Asiatic laziness and irresponsibility” for this.¹⁹ Bezak would not be the last one to join reformism and nationalism together. In any case, his plan was to measure the vast lands of the Bashkir tribes and construct a market for land to attract peasant colonists and nobles (which is why land surveyors like Nikolai Remezov came here). Proper land surveys promised to solve land disputes between Bashkirs *votchinniki* (patrimonial landowners) and their renters, the so-called *pripushchenniki* (whose leased lands were the first to be measured in 1869). They would also make identifying and selling plots of land easier. Soon it became clear, however, that others were to benefit from the emerging land market in Bashkiria. Governor-general Kryzhanovski promised Alexander II in 1870 “to increase the educated agricultural estate in the region” by allowing land sales to officials and people “who are of more use.” Finally, under the aegis of Minister of State Domains Piotr A. Valuev (r. 1872-1879), Kryzhanovski used the land sales to “divide the united mass of Muslim landowners by settling purely Russian people among them.”²⁰

Although imperial authorities and experts must have known from historical experience how difficult it was to plough the Russian steppe in comparison to livestock farming,²¹ the official vision to revitalise Bashkiria’s forests and plains through agriculture was supported by the provincial statisticians. They claimed in 1879 that “the natural and productive forces of the province lie mainly in agriculture”, and saw it as their task to identify the path of development and measure the progress.²² Their ideas about turning the steppe into a granary using were corroborated in the 1880s by the establishment of the Peasant Land Bank by Minister of Finance Nikolai von Bunge and the export policies of his successor Ivan A. Vyshnegradski, who believed that even if “we might not eat enough, we will export [grain]” to improve Russia’s balance of trade amidst a global agricultural crisis.²³

Secondly, in the eyes of such advocates of strong economic interventions, developing Bashkiria’s agriculture by way of colonisation could also relieve the peasants in Central Russia from their land shortages. Even after 1861, when an enormous number of former serfs were allowed to acquire property, many of them were hardly better off than before if their former landlords would not sell them enough land. Due to the standardisation of land allotments, many peasants suddenly had

¹⁸ Steinwedel (2016), p.130.

¹⁹ Steinwedel (2016), pp.120-5.

²⁰ I.M. Gvozdnikova a.o. (eds.), *Istorija Bashkortostana vo vtoroj polovine XIX- nachale XX veka. V 2 tomakh. Vol. I*, Ufa: IYAL UNTs RAN, 2006, pp.164-165; F.Kh. Gumerov, *Zakony Rossiiskoi imperii o bashkirakh, misharakh, teptiarakh i bobyliakh*, Ufa: Kitap, 1999, pp.479-480; Akmanov (2007), p.325.

²¹ D. Moon, *The Plough that Broke the Steppes. Agriculture and Environment on Russia’s Grasslands, 1700-1914*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

²² *Obzor Ufimskoi gubernii za 1879 god* (Ufa: Tipografiia gubernskago pravleniia, 1880), p.2. Similar statements contrasting poor Bashkir performance in agriculture with good results by Russian peasants can be found throughout the series of annual reports (*obzory*) compiled by the Ufa Statistical Committee in the following decades.

²³ T.H. von Laue, *Sergei Witte and the Industrialization of Russia*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1963, pp.21 & 26-27.

less land than before the emancipation and had to pay more for it. The so-called land or agrarian question would never go away completely under tsarist rule. It generated persistent concerns among rulers and experts about peasant land sufficiency and subsistence levels, and the state could not meet the expectations of providing the peasants with more land without harming their village neighbours.²⁴ It is hardly surprising that when rumours about Bashkiria reached villages, telling of “immeasurable space of lands, ...the unspeakable abundance of game and fish and all the fruits of the earth, about the easy way to acquire whole regions for the most petty sums of money”, many thousands packed their belongings and sought a better future.²⁵ Although colonists did not always settle legally and the great influx led to administrative chaos, Ufa’s provincial government welcomed them, because the peasant farmers could develop the region.²⁶ The statistical records used varying categories to count (and miscount) people and therefore remain inconclusive, but it is likely that in twenty years, the number of Russian Orthodox colonists increased by approximately 150 percent, from a little under 750 thousand in 1882 to nearly 1.1 million in 1902, compared to 1.15 million Bashkirs in the same year.²⁷

The construction of a land market that could absorb these newcomers required not only surveys of the land, but also the reworking of the Bashkir status. This happened in 1863 and 1865, when the tribes were first transferred from military to civil administration and then their territorial organisation – the military cantonal system (in place since 1798) – was abolished. Despite the fact that the Bashkirs would remain under a form of special regulations (*Polozhenie o bashkirakh*, drafted under governor-general Bezak),²⁸ these administrative changes would bring more uniform control of subjects in the area and, more importantly given the envisioned agricultural flourish, the Bashkirs could now also enter into contracts with the Russian immigrants. Needless to say, the Bashkir tribes felt that colonisation threatened their landownership and livelihood, especially when their special military service, their old guarantee of privilege, also came into question in the early 1870s.²⁹

Finally, the agricultural changes in Bashkiria picked up pace after 1850, because of the emerging ‘national question.’ This was not merely an administrative problem of bridging different religions and languages, because the stronger ethnic or national thinking in intellectual and political circles changed their perception of the empire’s subjects.³⁰ Educated Russians and officials were starting to worry about the fate of ‘the Bashkirs’ and attributed specific cultural or mental characteristics to this estate group, treating this legal construct as a coherent people with a distinct way of life. For example, after having served in Turkestan, Governor General Kryzhanovski assumed office in 1865 and found the Bashkirs suffering from a famine and a typhoid epidemic. A few years

²⁴ See D. W. Darrow, *Tsardom of Sufficiency, Empire of Norms. Statistics, Land Allotments, and Agrarian Reform in Russia, 1700-1921*, Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2018, pp.3-17.

²⁵ S. T. Aksakov, *Semeinaia khronika, Detskie gody Bagrova-vnuka, Vospominaniia*, Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia Literatura, 1973, p.33.

²⁶ Steinwedel (2016), p.225n54.

²⁷ *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1882 god* (Ufa, 1884), p.15 ; *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1902 god* (Ufa, 1903), p.3.

²⁸ Steinwedel (2016), p.122.

²⁹ R. F. Baumann, ‘Subject Nationalities in the Military Service of Imperial Russia: The Case of the Bashkirs’, *Slavic Review* 46:3-4 (1987), pp.489-502; Steinwedel (2016), p.294n44.

³⁰ See for example T.R. Weeks, *Nationality, Empire, and Politics in the Russian Empire and USSR: An Overview of Recent Publications*, in: H-Soz-Kult, 29.10.2012 (<http://www.hsozkult.de/literaturereview/id/fdl-136819>); J. Leonhard & U. von Hirschhausen, ‘Beyond Rise, Decline and Fall – Comparing Multi-Ethnic Empires in the Long Nineteenth Century’, in J. Leonhard, & U. von Hirschhausen (eds.), *Comparing Empires. Encounters and Transfers in the Long Nineteenth Century*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011, pp.31-32.

before, most of the crops as well as many horses, sheep and cattle had died during dry and hot summers, which had caused hunger among the Bashkirs and made them vulnerable to disease when typhoid plagued Russia around 1865. But instead of treating this situation as an unfortunate coincidence, Kryzhanovski believed he had to change the nature of the Bashkir people. The rise of Russian nationalism after the defeat in the Crimean War tied in with Kryzhanovski's ideas that the Bashkirs would benefit from a stronger Russian presence, so that they would be protected from hunger. And later on, Russian officials in Ufa and St Petersburg also blamed Islam for the misery of the Bashkirs.³¹

In short, prejudice against the non-Russian Bashkirs strengthened their on-going integration into the imperial core and supported the arrival of Russian colonists to develop Ufa. These converging 'questions' in imperial politics ultimately completely changed how the Bashkir horses were raised in the area. From the 1860s and 1870s, many in (local) educated society equated Bashkirs with nomads. And as far as the government was concerned, which felt itself backed by statistical studies, the nomadic way of life had no place in the Russia of the future.³² In 1874, the doctor-ethnographer Vasili Florinski argued that the Bashkirs were "doomed to die out" due to their "Asiatic habits" and "ethnicity". Simply put, the Russian peasants had better chances of survival.³³

A few years later, Ufa's provincial statisticians, led by Nikolai A. Gurvich, who was a physician and factotum in local civil society, concluded that the situation of the Bashkirs had not improved:

Given the abundance of black earth lands, the natural and productive forces of the governorate lie mainly in agriculture, which is predominantly occupied by the Russian population; whereas local Bashkirs and Tatars are on the whole not very inclined to farming and sow crops in insignificant amounts for their own consumption.³⁴

In fact, "this disinclination for farming by Bashkir-*votchinniki* [patrimonial landowners] is almost proportional to the amount of owned land. Namely, the larger these sizes, the more perverse the *votchinniki*'s disdain for labour in general and for agriculture in particular."³⁵ Therefore, in the eyes of such experts and the officials they advised, 'the Bashkirs' had to be taught to take care of themselves, and the provincial statisticians of Ufa in particular considered the Russian colonists a crucial guide for the Bashkirs to transfer from raising large horse herds on their extensive patrimonial lands to more small-scale, ideally private agricultural farming.

The plan to attract 'cultured elements' at the expense of Bashkir landowners eventually paid off for the provincial administration of Ufa. The first wave of land surveys in 1869 led to the so-called 'plundering of the Bashkir land'³⁶ by perfidious and greedy nobles, merchants, officials and peasants, who often cheated cash-hungry Bashkirs or simply forced them off of their land. Despite the chaos and upheaval caused by these questionable purveyors of 'culture', the *zemstvo* was introduced to Ufa province in 1875 (but, crucially, not to Bashkiria's second-largest province, Orenburg). This allowed

³¹ Steinwedel (2016), pp.118-27 & 172.

³² W. Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field. Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006, p.147.

³³ V. M. Florinski, 'Bashkiria i bashkirtsy', *Vestnik Evropy* 9:6 (December 1874), cited in Steinwedel (2016), p.118.

³⁴ *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1879 god* (Ufa, 1880), p.2.

³⁵ *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1882 god* (Ufa, 1884), p.1.

³⁶ See for example Gvozdnikova a.o. (2006), p.162.

the authorities to draw in more expertise at the village level to develop agriculture, healthcare, education and so on. The idea was that peasants with private land had a greater interest in organising these affairs, making them responsible and entrepreneurial citizens.³⁷

The Bashkirs were supposed to follow the example of the Russian peasant, and several times the authorities happily noted that where the “land crisis” had blown over, “the Bashkir population does not differ much from the Russian peasant-agriculturalists”.³⁸ But in general both friend and foe concluded that the Bashkir was but a shadow of their former selves.³⁹ No longer the proud and privileged warrior-landowners who had rebelled numerous times, the Bashkir had fallen. As late as 1899, even after most tribes had settled under Russian pressure, another physician-ethnographer, Dmitri Nikolski, evaluated urgent discussions about Bashkir eating habits, whether they ate too little or too much, “bordering on gluttony”, but then concluded that Bashkir calorie intake compared unfavourably with that of other ‘nationalities’ in the region.⁴⁰ So while the transition to sedentary agriculture was without a doubt welcomed by Russian observers, they were not certain whether the Bashkirs could actually handle modern agriculture.

In light of such strong ideas about who actually handled animals, contemporary analyses of the use of livestock were by no means neutral, and instead intertwined with imperial hierarchies. The integration of the empire’s administration and economies, as well as rising Russian nationalism and islamophobia (personified by governor-general Kryzhanovski), made the previously ‘privileged’ Bashkir landowners even less ‘equal’ than before. This, in turn, further coloured the official view of how bad Bashkirs were at farming, apart from understandable concerns about famines and epidemics. Like today, nineteenth-century analysts noted how livestock production was inextricably linked to agriculture. While this link is perhaps not self-evident or natural, the official and scientific reports believed, on the one hand, that animals were crucial for farm work like ploughing and dairy production and, on the other hand, that rich crop harvests were crucial to feed farm animals.⁴¹ Because of the agriculture-livestock tandem, the Russian authorities (including academics) could only value and appreciate the handling of animals if it led to better agricultural performance. If the Bashkirs were bad at farming, it was only logical that they could no longer maintain their large herds like they did in the past. Ultimately, the sight of hungry horses reassured the Russians that the displacement of the Bashkirs by Slavic colonists was justified.

When Nikolski covered the topic of livestock in his 1899 ethnographical study of the Bashkirs, he first established that the number of horses per household had decreased so dramatically within a generation that what would have been the poorest Bashkir before, was the richest now. This was not only due to a loss of land, but mainly because the animals did not have enough fodder. It was

³⁷ *Obzor Ufimskoi gubernii za 1900 god* (Ufa, 1901), p.7. Amir M. Yuldashbaev confirms that in 1912 most of the purchased land in Ufa governorate belonged to Russian peasants, *Zemel'nyj vopros i natsional'nye otnoshenija v Bashkortostane v nachale XX veka*, Ufa: Gilem, 2007, pp.16-19.

³⁸ *Obzor Ufimskoi gubernii za 1899 god* (Ufa, 1900), p.8; *Obzor Ufimskoi gubernii za 1900 god* (Ufa, 1901), p.7.

³⁹ A 1911 (nationalist) Muslim newspaper from Kazan’ was appalled by the lack of interest among Tatar peasants in the fate of the Bashkirs and their refusal to purchase Bashkir lands: “How far has it come with the Bashkirs and what will become of our Kazan’ peasants, given that they consider the Ufa governorate to be the end of the world?” C. Noack, *Muslimischer Nationalismus im Russischen Reich. Nationsbildung und Nationalbewegung bei Tataren und Baschkiren, 1861-1917*, Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 2000, p.399.

⁴⁰ Even if the Bashkirs were believed to overeat (“eating three portions”), some experts stated that the Bashkirs did not eat enough grains, causing fragile health, Nikol’ski, 1899, pp.57-61.

⁴¹ See for example *Obzor Ufimskoi gubernii za 1890 god* (Ufa, 1891), p.13.

purportedly because the Bashkirs were such poor and indifferent farmers that their animals starved and got sick, or as Nikolski cited one “researcher”: “[their] ploughed fields are a mockery of agriculture. They are a kind of children’s toy plantations, with here and there glimpses of [small patches of land] along the hills and valleys.”⁴²

Nikolski added that the Bashkir horse breed had “degenerated” (“she is short and ugly”) as a result of the poor adjustment to sedentary life of the tribes and under pressure of colonisation.⁴³ The provincial statisticians, who compiled the materials for the governor’s reports to the Ministry of the Interior, also noted around the same time that the Bashkir horse breed had been degenerating, but did not seem to consider this a major problem.⁴⁴ The statisticians were part of the provincial administration, people like secretary Gurvich moved in Ufa’s highest circles, and it is therefore not very surprising that they shared the view that the peasant colonist and his plough were more important than the Bashkir and his horse.

The Russian authorities and local horse breeders (Muslim and Russian nobles or merchants) did not seem very interested in improving and revitalizing the ‘degenerated’ Bashkir horse breed. In 1896, the Bashkir nobleman and landowner Shaikhadar Syrtlanov, then a member of the provincial *zemstvo* executive board, actually warned the elected provincial assembly that the Bashkir horse would lose its original sturdy characteristics at the current stud farms within the province.⁴⁵ Yet his call to protect the Bashkir horse was aimed at preserving, not improving.

Others did not really pursue perfecting the breed either. The provincial *zemstvo* economic council, founded by the *zemstvo* agronomist Filipp F. Shtumpf,⁴⁶ had advised establishing a breeding ground for Bashkir horses in 1895 to improve local stock raising. The process of actually building it and acquiring subsidies from the Minister of Agriculture, which never came, dragged on for years, though, until 1902, when it was finally built at the Belebei agricultural school. As early as 1906, however, the *zemstvo* audit committee and agronomists questioned the “expediency” of breeding Bashkir horses and wanted the *zemstvo* to negotiate with the Minister of Agriculture, Alexei S. Yermolov, to select other breeds instead. A special committee consisting mostly of Russian veterinarians in service of the provincial authorities or the *zemstvo* concluded a year later that the Bashkir horse was perhaps not best suited for local circumstances, but the *zemstvo* breeding grounds in Belebei should now primarily take care to preserve the breed as it was. Nothing more. Experimentation with new breeds ready for a new environment was the domain of the State Stud Farm.⁴⁷

⁴² Nikol’ski (1899), pp.88-90.

⁴³ Nikol’ski (1899), p.90. Nikolski might not have had an accurate view of the Bashkir horse’s development. In any case, almost thirty years before, in 1871, a number of Baltic horse breeders were interested in importing Bashkir horses from the Orenburg region. The Baltic German veterinarian working there informed them that the trip could be difficult: “Except for Bashkirs only the devil would risk a journey from Orenburg to Livland!”, ‘Ankauf von Baschkiren-Pferden’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 9:11 (1871), pp.167-168.

⁴⁴ *Obzor Ufimskoi gubernii za 1899 god* (Ufa, 1900), p.16.

⁴⁵ P.N. Grigor’ev (ed.), *Sistematicheskii svodnyi sbornik postanovlenii Ufimskago Gubernskago Zemskago Sobraniia za 35-letie 1875-1909 g.g. v trekh tomakh. Tom III-i*, Ufa: Gubernskaia tipografiia, 1915, p.154.

⁴⁶ *Sistematicheskii svodnyi sbornik. Tom III-i* (1915), pp.229-230; G.B. Azamatova, *Zemskoe samoupravlenie v mnogonatsional’nom regione Rossii (na primere Ufimskoi gubernii, 1874-1917 gg.)*, PhD thesis, IYal UFITs RAN, 2018, p.247.

⁴⁷ Another significant committee member was the Chingissid land captain and later Muslim nationalist Salimgirai S. Dzhantiurin (1864-1926), *Sistematicheskii svodnyi sbornik. Tom III-i* (1915), pp.153-158.

In fact, annual surveys from the 1880s and 1890s indicate that many noble estates failed to produce horses for the local peasants or failed to maintain their own stud farms altogether.⁴⁸ That is why Ufa governor Shramchenko sought the cooperation of the Ufa *zemstvo* in 1881 to invest in a state-run stud farm. Its board tried to replace the Bashkir horse by importing and producing new horse breeds, and distributing the covered mares among the peasant populations to secure agricultural output.⁴⁹ Despite its continued work on Ufa's farms and fields, the Bashkir horse had fallen victim to imperial politics. Much like how the Chillingham cattle represented an old British identity to their human compatriots,⁵⁰ the 'degenerated' Bashkir horse carried with it a symbolic meaning too, but this symbolism was connected to a rather negative image of its human handlers. One senior Russian official from Ufa, Alexander A. Malleev, bought two dark-grey horses in 1893, stating quite tellingly that "their mother was a Bashkir horse – their father, of a good breed."⁵¹ Due to its poor reputation, if it were up to the Russian provincial government, it would not be the Bashkir horse pulling the plough. As the forest-steppe ecology of Ufa province changed by the hand of the colonists, other horse breeds could be tested there.⁵²

The state stud farm held fifteen trotters (*rysisty sort* or *rysak*) in 1889, including an Anglo-Norman Trotter, several work horses, four draft horses, five Voronezhers (*bitiug*), two Percherons, nine Ardennes-Percherons, two Norfolk Trotters, two Finnhorses, two Estonian Klepper horses, three Bashkir horses and three Bashkir-Don horses. These breeds were supplied annually by government stud farms elsewhere in Russia, including the Khrenovski farm near Voronezh and the Derkul'ski farm near Lugansk, Ukraine.⁵³ The provincial statisticians started counting in 1887 how many horses and other animals (disregarding the specific breeds) were owned by each peasant household, in order to effectively measure agricultural progress and for the state stud farm to help local breeders.⁵⁴ Finally, towards the close of the century, the provincial administration had managed to set up a small network of veterinarians to support the new farmers.⁵⁵ The old livestock breeding infrastructure in the region was slowly, but surely being replaced by new players and new methods, all for new purposes.

The large herds of horses had been one of the greatest symbols of the 'Bashkir lifestyle', which they had now largely lost.⁵⁶ The various Russian authorities believed that nomads were economically inferior. Therefore, their large herds, which produced meat and dairy, were no longer considered

⁴⁸ See also Rodnov & Tagirova (2023), p.86.

⁴⁹ In 1864-1865, with the abolition of the Bashkir military status, the existing military stud farm was transferred to the civil administration, but this had apparently closed before 1875. Gumerov (1999), pp.309 & 502-503; P.N. Grigor'ev (ed.), *Sistematicheskii svodnyi sbornik postanovlenii Ufimskago Gubernskago Zemskago Sobraniia za 35-letie 1875-1909 g.g. v trekh tomakh. Tom I-i*, Ufa: Gubernskaia tipografiia, 1915, p.454; *Sistematicheskii svodnyi sbornik. Tom III-i* (1915), pp.137-142.

⁵⁰ H. Ritvo, 'Race, Breed, and Myths of Origin: Chillingham Cattle as Ancient Britons', *Representations* 39 (1992), pp.2 & 14.

⁵¹ Rodnov & Tagirova (2023), p.87.

⁵² See the connection between ecology, imperial colonization and animal breeding made by Rebecca Woods, *The Herds Shot Round the World. Native Breeds and the British Empire, 1800-1900*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017, pp.109-111.

⁵³ *Obzor Ufimskoi gubernii za 1889 god* (Ufa, 1890), pp.14-15.

⁵⁴ In 1890, the State Stud Farm mainly serviced the peasant population around the city of Ufa itself, *Obzor Ufimskoi gubernii za 1890 god* (Ufa, 1891), pp.13-14; *Obzor Ufimskoi gubernii za 1887 god* (Ufa, 1888), p.12; *Obzor Ufimskoi gubernii za 1899 god* (Ufa, 1900), pp.15-18; *Obzor Ufimskoi gubernii za 1900 god* (Ufa, 1901), pp.15-16.

⁵⁵ Rodnov & Tagirova (2023), p.81.

⁵⁶ Of course, there were the exceptions of very wealthy owners, Rodnov & Tagirova (2023), p.90; Remezov (1889), pp.99-100.

valuable enough. The future of the horse was to pull the Russian plough across the steppe. While I cannot go into discussions of all different kinds of livestock here, historians Mikhail I. Rodnov and Leyla F. Tagirova have argued that because the position of the horse had changed, cattle and especially sheep farming became more important in Ufa province. Wealthy nobles and merchants acquired flocks of sheep numbering in the hundreds if not thousands.⁵⁷ And the provincial statisticians happily noted that Ufa “presents the best conditions to raise cattle. Productive cattle farming undoubtedly has a future here. In the last few years, the population has grown ever more interested in this branch of agriculture, especially the private [land] owners.”⁵⁸ But judging from the same statistical reports, even these animals would never become as important for the imperial authorities as rye, buckwheat, barley, oats and of course the waves of golden wheat flowing on the steppe, grown by those same private landowning peasants.⁵⁹ On the threshold of the new century, the Russian political-civic and economic project in Bashkiria, which had started decades earlier, now appeared almost finished.

This did not mean that Bashkirs had lost all of their horses or had completely given up on horse breeding. They continued breeding, albeit with smaller herds. The market had changed, however, as the remaining small-scale breeders had to compete with noble and merchant stud farms and, importantly, Bashkir work horses were hardly sold outside Ufa province anymore (there were even Bashkirs who switched to non-Bashkir breeds). The New Year’s fair at Menzelinsk remained one of the most important specialized horse markets in the Russian empire, though.⁶⁰ From here, the region’s new horse breeds were exported to surrounding provinces, although Ufa’s best breeders (Russian nobles and merchants) sold their horses in nearby Kazan.⁶¹

The voice of the Bashkir landowners themselves might appear silent in this history of Bashkiria’s livestock production. Using agriculture and breeding skills as an argument to protect their position was rare to say the least. Some Bashkir and Tatar nobles served in the imperial administration, even though they would not go against the official Russian position on efficient land use and the restructuring of animal farming. Bashkiria’s Muslim elites also sought to work for the prestigious Orenburg Muslim Ecclesiastical Assembly (OMEA), whose leader, the mufti, nominally ruled over all of Russia’s Muslims from the city of Ufa.⁶² Yet however influential these men were, the OMEA was not concerned with agricultural policies, which were firmly in the hands of the provincial authorities. After 1875, the *zemstvo* self-government was responsible for developing agriculture at the local level, but their elected assemblies and executive boards did not represent the Bashkir landowners alone. At the provincial level, the *zemstvo* assemblies were typically headed by Russian nobles and the Bashkirs who did serve as presidents in the local *zemstvos*, did not consider

⁵⁷ Rodnov & Tagirova (2023), p.91; for an idea of the breeds of cattle (Angeln, Simmentaler, Brown Swiss, Yaroslavl, Kalmyk, Tagil), sheep (Oxford Down, Romanov, Tsigai, Cherkasy) and pigs (Berkshire white and black) that the *zemstvo* veterinarians would have liked to promote in Ufa province after 1897, if the *zemstvo* had not lacked the funds, see *Sistematicheskii svodnyi sbornik. Tom III-i* (1915), p.158.

⁵⁸ *Obzor Ufimskoi gubernii za 1899 god* (Ufa, 1900), p.16; see also the difficulties the *zemstvo* actually experienced organizing cattle farming in the years after 1905, *Sbornik zhurnalov Ufimskago Gubernskago Zemskago Sobraniia XL ocherednoi sessii 1914 goda (1-18 dekabria 1914 goda)*, Ufa: Solov’ev, 1915, pp.226-235.

⁵⁹ See for example *Obzor Ufimskoi gubernii za 1899 god* (Ufa, 1900), pp.5-14.

⁶⁰ Rodnov & Tagirova (2023), pp.80 & 88-92.

⁶¹ *Obzor Ufimskoi gubernii za 1889 god* (Ufa, 1890), p.14.

⁶² Steinwedel (2016), pp. 104-105 & 115-118.

them effective enough to use them as a political platform.⁶³ The *zemstvo* was not used to fight to preserve their herds or prove their general agricultural usefulness. In any case, as a form of self-government, the *zemstvos* were nothing like the Baltic noble corporations, called the *Ritterschaften*, which, as we shall see, had a more narrow social base and had much more administrative powers. This gave the Baltic nobles a louder voice in managing their agricultural affairs, leaving countless traces in the archives.

Changing the empire's course would not happen from within the Ufa *zemstvo*. If anything, the *zemstvo* activities seemed to have facilitated the land and colonisation policies of the provincial government. On the advice of agronomists like Shtumpf, it likewise emphasised grain production, including the required irrigation and afforestation of sandy soils, it built grain storages for food security, and stimulated small-scale animal farming at the cost of extensive livestock raising.⁶⁴ To achieve this, immediately after the *zemstvo*'s installation in 1875, the chairman of the provincial assembly, marshal of the nobility A. V. Novikov "proposed to buy Bashkir lands and sell these to Russian landowners and peasants, with the aim of colonisation of the region and the exploitation of its natural riches." A few years later, the assembly wanted to attract major funding from the central government to support further colonisation and, if that failed, build railroads and survey more Bashkir lands.⁶⁵

And in 1882, local *zemstvo* committees, consisting of Russians like land surveyor Nikolai Remezov and some Bashkirs like nobleman Shaikhadar Syrtlanov (in Belebei),⁶⁶ conducted the taxations of lands and forests. To increase tax revenue they also stimulated land sales to colonists whose purchase of "abundant meadow steppes" in Sterlitamak county would "undoubtedly increase the [taxable] profitability of [that] land, which the Yurmat *votchinniki* currently sow with [less profitable] Kuban wheat... and would prevent [its] exhaustion and spoiling by the [illegal] predatory ploughing by tenants".⁶⁷ Even a Bashkir landowning nobleman like Syrtlanov did not protest his committee's findings that his own Belebei county should be colonised more by non-Bashkirs to boost agricultural productivity. Muslim *zemstvo* members who were part of the elite such as Syrtlanov were, judging by his later demands for reparations in the State Duma for the state's mistreatment of the Bashkirs,⁶⁸ probably more concerned with land value and tax burdens than with sowing one type of wheat or the other. Also his 1896 attempts at preserving the Bashkir horse on dedicated *zemstvo* breeding grounds were not aimed at restoring the horse's once-dominant position in Ufa's breeding

⁶³ Steinwedel (2016), pp.167-168.

⁶⁴ *Sistematičeskii svodnyi sbornik. Tom III-i* (1915), pp.41-43; 56-58, 116-117, 306-307 & 310-311; in times of bad harvests and famines, especially the production of rye was important, since it was the main food of Russian peasants. Instead of rye, Bashkirs (in the south) mostly ate cheaper millet products. See *Sbornik XVI chrezvychainago Ufmskago gubernskago zemskago sobraniia 1891 g.*, Ufa: Blokhin, 1891, pp.17-32, esp. p.22. Nikolski more or less confirmed this, Nikol'ski (1899), pp.60-61. In the north and west, Bashkir tribes ate barley, emmer wheat or farro and other types of wheat products. Kuzeev & Shitova (2015), pp.567-568.

⁶⁵ *Sistematičeskii svodnyi sbornik. Tom III-i* (1915), pp.240-242 & 260.

⁶⁶ In the Zlatoust committee, what was most likely Akhmetzian Basimov expressed his disapproval of the committee's wish to increase the value of land more than in other counties, *Vestnik Ufmskago zemstva 1882 g. God 4-i, vypusk 3-i. Tom XX: Otdel III. Raznyia svedeniia i izvestiia*, Ufa: Blokhin, 1882, pp.32-33, 34-35 & 64-65.

⁶⁷ *Vestnik Ufmskago zemstvo: Otdel III. Raznyia svedeniia i izvestiia* (1882), pp.2-95, quote on p.83, and see for example the unanimous decision by the provincial assembly to take funds designated for Bashkirs to support peasant colonists, *Vestnik Ufmskago zemstva 1880 g. God 2-i, vypusk 1-i. Tom VII: Zasedaniia chrezvychainago gubernskago zemskago sobraniia*, Ufa: Blokhin, 1880, pp.23-25.

⁶⁸ L.A. Yamaeva, *Musul'manskie deputaty Gosudarstvennoj dумы Rossii 1906-1917 gg. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, Ufa: Kitap, 1998, pp.20-23.

programmes, nor that of its eponymous handlers. Arguments involving agriculture and animal farming apparently did not form his primary line of defence against the political and economic upheaval brought about by colonisation.

But, more important, even in the face of Russians focusing on their supposed lack of skills in livestock and arable farming, neither did ‘ordinary’ Bashkir landowners appeal to their value as agriculturalists or livestock producers to retain their position within the imperial hierarchy – unlike the Baltic noble landlords in the same period. When peasant colonists in court supported their claims to Bashkir lands by for example accusing the local Bashkir landowners of being useless, because they ruined meadows or hayfields by ploughing them, those landowners would merely argue that it was their legal property.⁶⁹ As opposed to the colonists, they did not emphasise their agricultural expertise and usefulness to defend their property.

Likewise, in petitions to local and central authorities and later in the national State Duma, (representatives of) Bashkir landowners, like Shaikhadar Syrtlanov, mainly stressed their historical military service to the empire and the tsar in order to condemn the recent fraudulent and partisan behaviour of the state. And besides the legal matter of ownership, freedom of religion and language in schools were very important to the Turkic speaking Muslim Bashkirs, especially when Russian nationalism was on the rise. For that reason, the relatively new idea of equal civil or even human rights also spread among Bashkir intellectuals and landowners. Some political actors from Bashkiria certainly connected the reduced herds to the misery of “their people”. But even for them landownership itself, and not what to do with or on the land, understandably remained the crucial factor in the on-going conflict with the Russian state.⁷⁰

In all fairness, this was probably the best strategy, since the carving up of the land had made it quite difficult anyway to rebuild large herds of animals that had to move around. Even if they had tried to take a different approach, agricultural skills must have seemed a less powerful rhetorical tool to Bashkirs than imperial service or constitutionalism to get their land back. Men of science and power simply no longer took Bashkir agriculture seriously. This exactly underlines the point that amidst Russia’s fundamental economic and political ‘modernisation’, the imperial mechanism rendered the (former) Bashkir landowners less effective than the Baltic nobility in securing their position using agriculture. The resulting environmental and economic changes in Ufa were therefore more dramatic than in Livland, where the agrarian remodelling certainly was no less historic.

The fate of the Bashkirs and their animals probably sounds familiar to anyone acquainted with the histories of nomadic peoples in the Americas or on the African continent. Charles Maier for example described how all over the world the ‘nomad alternative’ was closed off by the territorial state.⁷¹ Indeed, a high demand for commodities like grain and livestock threatened the livelihoods of the Bashkirs. By the middle of the nineteenth century, thousands of colonists from central Russia and Ukraine, captivated by the promise of the steppe, laid claims to Bashkir lands. And yes, the nomadic type of land use was considered inefficient by Russian authorities and experts, who equated ‘the Bashkirs’ with nomads (even though many had already settled and taken up agriculture) and therefore

⁶⁹ See for example TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 1v-2v & 10-13v.

⁷⁰ Yamaeva (1998), pp.76-79; for the various arguments and rhetorical strategies used by Bashkirs, see especially Van Dijk (2022), pp.36-40.

⁷¹ Maier (2016), pp.133-134.

saw them as counterproductive. From a bird's eye perspective, the 'ploughing of the Bashkir steppe' is yet another example of the displacement of non-Europeans and their type of agriculture by European colonists that took place in many parts of the world.⁷²

But of course their histories were not exactly the same. While the Bashkir rights to the land were trampled on, the Bashkir subjects themselves were incorporated into the new representative organs of the empire: the *zemstvo* in Ufa in 1875 and the national State Duma after 1905. There were even government officials who feared that the Bashkirs might go extinct and needed protection.⁷³ In other words, the Bashkirs suffered from the same ruthless drive for commodities as numerous nomadic peoples in the rest of the world, but it would go too far to say that they suffered as much from racism and prejudice as for example the Plains Indians in North America or the Herero and Nama in German South West Africa, who fell victim to genocide.⁷⁴ The Bashkirs were probably spared this fate of extreme violence, because the imperial frontier had already moved further south and also due to their centuries-old ties with the Russian rulers and the Russian legal system, which would have made it difficult for the government to outright deny the Bashkirs their rights to the land and, by extension, to their very existence.

Ironically, precisely their proximity to the imperial core also made the Bashkirs into a kind of test subjects for further development of Russian steppe agriculture.⁷⁵ Unlike earlier instances of steppe colonisation and cultivation, Bashkiria formed one of the first regions in the empire where, next to the Slavic colonists, the non-Russian populations of the steppe were drawn into a sort of economic citizenship project. This was reflected by how for example the Ufa provincial statisticians stressed the importance of private ownership for creating a group of efficient and responsible agriculturalists. This was long before Prime Minister Piotr Stolypin and the earlier reformers of the peasant commune did so after 1901.⁷⁶ The experiment on the Bashkir steppe both reflected and contributed to the ongoing economic-environmental, social, political-administrative and cultural transformations within the Russian empire. And as such, the experiment settled in the minds of imperial administrators. The memory of the disastrous land transfers of the 1870s still cautioned central government planners many years later, when they tried to reform local private property rights in Siberia.⁷⁷

Despite the mistakes that had been made in Bashkiria, around 1900, various government agencies were convinced that colonisation or 'resettlement' (*pereselenie*) was useful or even

⁷² For comparative global perspectives on the changing steppes from an environmental point of view, see Moon (2013), pp.21-24.

⁷³ C. Steinwedel, 'Tribe, Estate, Nationality? Changing Conceptions of Bashkir Particularity within the Tsar's Empire', *Ab Imperio* 2 (2002), pp.266-267.

⁷⁴ M. Häussler, *The Herero Genocide: War, Emotion, and Extreme Violence in Colonial Namibia*, New York: Berghahn, 2021, p.153 & 258-267; J. Ostler, *Surviving Genocide. Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019; Hämäläinen sketches an ambiguous view of North American colonisation and genocide, P. Hämäläinen, *Indigenous Continent. The Epic Contest for North America*, New York: Liveright, 2022.

⁷⁵ Moon (2013), pp.16-21.

⁷⁶ F.W. Weislo, *Reforming Rural Russia. State, Local Society, and National Politics*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990, chapters 5 & 6.

⁷⁷ A. Masoero, 'Layers of property in the tsar's settlement colony: projects of land privatization in Siberia in the late nineteenth century', *Central Asian Survey* 29:1 (2010) p.12.

necessary:⁷⁸ it contributed to the cultivation of ‘unused’ land across the empire and made it easier to fit non-Russians into this political-economic model. The Kazakh nomads, for example, were brought under more direct control in the 1860s (thus creating space for Bashkiria’s more definite transition into the imperial core). While local officials in the Kazakh territories saw colonisation as a way to develop agriculture too, it was not implemented at the same time nor at the same speed as in Bashkiria. Really only after the 1890s the number of settlements on the Kazakh steppe increased, which made it (too) difficult for many nomads to move their herds around.⁷⁹ But government pressure on the Kazakh nomads to settle and integrate into the Russian core would not be as strong as it had been in Bashkiria. That is, until the Bolsheviks took it a step further in the early 1930s.

Like the tsarist officials and experts in Bashkiria, the Soviet authorities (incorrectly) worried about food shortages among the Kazakh nomads and sought to redistribute their land to prevent this. This prompted a ‘plundering’ of Kazakh lands quite reminiscent of Bashkiria sixty years earlier. Yet, unlike the Bashkirs, the Kazakhs were brutally forced by Communist Party cadres to settle and enter the collectivised farm system in order to increase grain production. These violent methods to achieve food security ended up creating precisely a famine that cost the lives of 1.5 million people and displaced almost as many. Ultimately, the disappearance of the animal herds and the ‘birth of the Kazakh working class’ were celebrated as a victory of Soviet modernisation, bringing the Kazakhs under economic and political control of the state.⁸⁰

The Bolsheviks’ jubilation echoed the cheers of their tsarist predecessors. Circa 1900, the Ufa statisticians were happy to report that “historical progress, legislative efforts and the influx of newcomers” had done their job: the Bashkir had “entered the next cultural stage” when he “finally lost the mindset of a nomad, having settled in his former winter camps.”⁸¹ The modernisation of the Russian empire brought together political, social and cultural forces that in the end changed the face of Bashkiria. The Russian peasant had displaced the Bashkir landowners as state beneficiaries and tilled the soils of the steppe. And the large roaming herds of animals were reduced and put to work on farms. Writing in 1883, Nikolai Gurvich, longtime secretary of the Ufa Statistical Committee, breathed a sigh of relief when he considered how far his province had come: “In the 1850s, Ufa was considered a backwater, *Siberia* even.” But since then, it had livened up significantly, he said, due to a permanent steamboat service and by the railway that had crossed the endless steppe since the 1870s.⁸² Trains now carried grain from the new fields to the western port cities of the empire and, from there, to the rest of the world.

⁷⁸ See for example W. Sunderland, ‘The Ministry of Asiatic Russia: The Colonial Office That Never Was but Might Have Been’, *Slavic Review* 69:1 (2010) pp.140-143; P. Holquist, “‘In Accord with State Interests and the People’s Wishes’: The Technocratic Ideology of Imperial Russia’s Resettlement Administration”, *Slavic Review* 69:1 (2010) p.152.

⁷⁹ N. Pianciola, ‘Famine in the steppe. The collectivization of agriculture and the Kazakh herdsmen, 1928-1934’, *Cahiers du monde russe*, 45:1-2 (2004) p.138; M.B. Olcott, ‘The Settlement of the Kazakh Nomads’, *Nomadic Peoples*, 8 (1981) p.14.

⁸⁰ Pianciola (2004), pp.137, 149 & 190-191.

⁸¹ *Obzor Ufimskoi gubernii za 1900 god* (Ufa, 1902), p.7. These specific sentences were also used in previous and later reports.

⁸² N. A. Gurvich, *Spravochnaia knizhka ufimskoi gubernii*, Ufa: N.K. Blokhin, 1883, p.241; Von Laue (1963), pp.80-81.

Livland

The construction of railroads in the Russian interior greatly impacted agriculture in the Baltic provinces (Estland, Livland and Kurland). Riga and other ports in Livland province turned into some of the largest of the empire.⁸³ While the cities were booming, the Baltic German landowners had to face the challenge of lower grain prices and of reinventing their estates and themselves as livestock entrepreneurs.⁸⁴ Although in the preceding centuries the Baltic soil had not been considered particularly favourable for raising cattle, sheep and other animals, on the eve of the First World War, many noble landowners prided themselves as the champions of cattle breeding and agricultural modernisation. The nineteenth century had uprooted the political and social-economic structures of the largest Baltic province, Livland. This greatly affected how the farming of German nobles and of Livland's Estonian and Latvian-speaking peasants was organised and represented.

Historians have long noted the general conservatism of a rather self-serving landowning Baltic nobility.⁸⁵ While they have also studied the modernisation of agriculture and development of livestock farming by those nobles, it remains unclear how the broader imperial reconfigurations of power impacted the interpretation of 'agricultural modernisation' in Livland and influenced the noble landowners' turn to livestock production. Animal farming in fact helped them to reshape their traditional dominant position and redefine their relationship to the peasantries and Russian authorities.

Since the German crusaders conquered the region in the Middle Ages, the Baltic nobility had held the privilege to own manors while the Estonian and Latvian-speaking peasantries had to work on these estates. With the emancipations of the Baltic peasants in 1816-1819 (completed only in 1827 in Livland), the 'manorial peasants' (distinct from 'state peasants')⁸⁶ were allowed to enter into nominally 'free' contracts with landlords. However, since the landlords had not been forced to sell any land to the peasants and the freedom of movement of the latter remained limited, the number of landless peasants grew enormously in the first half of the nineteenth century because the landlords did not allow families to divide farmsteads as an inheritance to their children.⁸⁷

⁸³ A. Henriksson, *Vassals and Citizens. The Baltic Germans in Constitutional Russia, 1905-1914*, Marburg: Herder-Institut, 2009, pp.6-7; U. von Hirschhausen, *Die Grenzen der Gemeinsamkeit. Deutsche, Letten, Russen und Juden in Riga, 1860-1914*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006, p.68.

⁸⁴ H. W. Whelan, *Adapting to Modernity. Family, Caste and Capitalism among the Baltic German Nobility*, Cologne: Böhlau, 1999, pp.283-308.

⁸⁵ Pistohlkors (1978), pp.112-114; Whelan (1999), pp.214-220, 297-298 & 308-309; K. Lust, 'Das lange 19. Jahrhundert: Der Wandel der Agrarordnung', in K. Bruggemann, D. Henning & R. Tuchtenhagen (eds.), *Das Baltikum. Geschichte einer europäischen Region*. vol. 2, Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 2021, p.422; J. Hackmann, *Geselligkeit in Nordosteuropa. Studien zur Vereinskultur, Zivilgesellschaft und Nationalisierungsprozessen in einer polykulturellen Region (1770-1950)*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2020, p.285; the overview of Baltic German achievements by Andrzej Topij offers less analysis and is perhaps somewhat one-sided, but is quite useful. A. Topij, 'The Role of the *Deutschbalten* in the Cultural and Economic Development of Russia's Baltic Provinces in the 19th Century', *Zapiski historyczne* 76:4 (2011) pp.78-84.

⁸⁶ K. Lust, 'Kiselev's Reforms of State Peasants: The Baltic Perspective', *Journal of Baltic Studies* 39:1 (2008), p.59.

⁸⁷ K. Lust, 'The Impact of the Baltic Emancipation Reforms on Peasant-Landlord Relations: A Historiographical Survey', *Journal of Baltic Studies* 44:1 (2013), pp.2-3; A. Plakans, 'The Latvians', in E. C. Thaden (ed.), *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, p.217; A. Plakans, 'Serf Emancipation (1816-1819)', *Historical Dictionary of Latvia*, Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2008, p.234; see also A. Plakans, *The Latvians. A Short History*, Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1995, pp.87-89; it might be that the emancipation reforms improved the landlords' position compared to the 1804 Laws because Alexander I was convinced he had to reward Baltic nobilities after the Napoleonic Wars, see W. Sunderland, 'The Imperial Emancipations: Ending

By the middle of the century, after some rural violence, the central Russian government had become dissatisfied with the state of affairs and pushed the provincial *Ritterschaften* to introduce further reforms.⁸⁸ Only thanks to the efforts of liberal-minded members of the nobility did Livland become the first Baltic province in 1849 where peasants were allowed to purchase lands. Although the idea of the liberal noble landowners was to create a class of peasant smallholders, most noble landowners remained hesitant to sell.⁸⁹ Crucially, these mid-century peasant reforms divided the agrarian lands into three parts: the manor land (*Hofsland*), fully under landlord control and taxed at a lower rate than the other land categories; peasant land (*Bauernland*), which landowners could rent or sell to peasants; and ‘quota land’ (*Quotenland*), which amounted to a portion of peasant land under lordly control although it could be worked by peasants, who had to pay tax rates equal to those for peasant land.⁹⁰

In the 1860s, the Great Reform era, St Petersburg was happy to see that the peasant corvée labour was abolished (1868) and that even the more conservative landowning nobles started to sell some land to the peasants.⁹¹ Still, the 1849 division of land between nobles and peasants left its mark. According to the 1897 census, for each Latvian landed peasant there were 1.5 without land.⁹² Even those who were able to buy their peasant land had to take over a disproportionate part of the total debt of the manor mortgage.⁹³ And because many of southern Livland’s peasants still rented their land from landlords in the 1860s, the landlords were able to demand that they switch from three-field farming to crop rotation, in order to increase productivity and ensure rent payments.⁹⁴ The 1849 reform greatly impacted how agriculture was developed and what was understood by its ‘rationalisation’ in the second half of the century, and how imperial hierarchies were reorientated accordingly.

The size and outlook of noble manors differed. Some were relatively small, others were enormous. There were noble families with multiple manors in their possession, bringing their total number of owned hectares into the tens of thousands.⁹⁵ Despite such big numbers, the total cultivated surface and amount of cattle owned by peasants was actually higher than that of the noble estates

Non-Russian Serfdoms in Nineteenth-Century Russia’, in D. Schorkowitz, J.R. Chávez & I.W. Schröder (eds.), *Shifting Forms of Continental Colonialism. Unfinished Struggles and Tensions*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020, p.453.

⁸⁸ Technically speaking, Livland province had two distinct *Ritterschaften*: the (continental) Livland *Ritterschaft* and the *Ritterschaft* of the island Oesel (Estonian: Saaremaa), both under one Russian provincial administration. The much larger continental part of Livland was politically and economically more important to contemporaries.

⁸⁹ H. von Engelhardt, *Zur Geschichte der Livländischen adeligen Güterkreditsozietät*, Riga: Häcker, 1902, pp.125-126; Pistohlkors (1994), p.353; Lust (2013), pp.13-14; Lust (2021), p.414; Henriksson (2009), p.2; S. Kivimäe, ‘Die Agrarreform Stolypins in den baltischen Gouvernements’, in A. Ezergailis & G. von Pistohlkors (eds.), *Die baltischen Provinzen Russlands zwischen den Revolutionen von 1907 und 1917*, Cologne: Böhlau, 1982, p.94; Plakans (1995), pp.86-87.

⁹⁰ A. von Transehe-Roseneck, ‘Agrarverhältnisse in Livland’, in C. Schilling (ed.), *Baltische Bürgerkunde: Versuch einer gemeinverständlichen Darstellung der Grundlagen des politischen und sozialen Lebens in den Ostseeprovinzen Russlands*, Riga: Löffler, 1908, p.302; *Baltisches Rechtswörterbuch 1710-1940*, at https://www.balt-hiko.de/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Baltisches_Rechtsworterbuch.pdf.

⁹¹ Engelhardt (1902), p.128; Lust (2021), pp.422-423; Whelan (1998), pp.286-287.

⁹² Plakans (1995), p.102. For the uneven distribution of estates between matriculated nobles and urban citizens and peasants, see G. von Pistohlkors, ‘Großgrundbesitz und Selbstverwaltung. Die besondere Rolle der Livländischen Ritterschaft im Russischen Reich’, *Landscape, Architecture and Art 7:7* (2015), p.62.

⁹³ Lust (2021), p.424; E. von der Brüggen, *Die agraren Verhältnisse in den russischen Ostseeprovinzen*, Berlin: Deubner, 1883, pp.14-18 & 32; Engelhardt (1902), pp.215-216.

⁹⁴ Kozin (1976), p.298.

⁹⁵ Henriksson (2009), p.3, fn.6.

(although peasant productivity per square metre was not necessarily higher).⁹⁶ Before the second quarter of the nineteenth century, Livland manors and peasants' cattle and sheep herding remained rather limited, because the province lacked natural quality meadows. In 1803, the president of the Baltic German *Kaiserliche Livländische Gemeinnützige und Ökonomische Sozietät*, had complained that because of this, Baltic cattle was "small, malnourished and is therefore hardly beneficial economically". So, in comparison to Bashkiria, the soil-livestock situation was reversed, until the manors increased the cultivation of clover, a plant that contains a lot of nutrients, making it ideal fodder and fertiliser.⁹⁷

Then, between the 1820s and 1840s, the manors started experimenting with sheep races, much like the rest of Northern Europe in that period.⁹⁸ Later the noble landlords, organised in the *Ökonomische Sozietät* (ÖS), imported Dutch and English cows to create breeds that were able to thrive in the Baltic region.⁹⁹ Despite an increase in the number of beer breweries, lumber mills and brick factories, Livland remained an agricultural economy. Precisely because of the later turn towards livestock production, apart from clover, various grains like wheat, buckwheat, rye and oats were crucial, although other (commercial) crops like potatoes were introduced and market gardening emerged too. Besides its use for animal farming, grain was used by a booming liquor industry on the noble estates. Historian Kersti Lust aptly classified cattle-sheep-alcohol as the 'trinity' of Baltic agriculture throughout most of the century, although dairy production increased significantly in the century's last two decades.¹⁰⁰

The re-orientation of Baltic agriculture towards animal farming after 1850 had political and economic reasons, which for the Baltic noble landowners were intertwined. The case of Bashkiria has already shown that the Russian government sought to integrate parts of the imperial peripheries administratively and economically. The same impulse affected the Baltics, although here it played out quite differently.

Ever since their foundation in the Middle Ages, the Baltic port cities had always been quite profitable to whomever ruled them. The Russian imperial government now sought to consolidate income and expand the exports from cities like Riga and Tallinn (Reval) by connecting the Baltic provinces to the empire's interior from the late 1860s onward. At the same time, standardising the administration of the Baltic provinces based on the Russian model was supposed to make imperial governance easier and, in the mind of senator Nikolai A. Manasein, who inspected the Baltics in 1882, it was supposed to prevent further social unrest stemming from German complacency.¹⁰¹ For Russian

⁹⁶ Lust (2021), pp.419-21.

⁹⁷ H. D. von Engelhardt & H. Neuschaffer, *Die Livländische Gemeinnützige und Ökonomische Sozietät (1792-1939)*, Cologne: Böhlau, 1983, pp.71-4.

⁹⁸ Engelhardt & Neuschaffer (1983), p.73.

⁹⁹ Lust (2021), p.421; J. Eellend, *Cultivating the Rural Citizen. Modernity, Agrarianism and Citizenship in Late Tsarist Estonia*, Stockholm: Department of History, Stockholm University, 2007, p.103.

¹⁰⁰ Whelan (1999), p.284; Henriksson (2009), p.4; Lust (2021), p.421. See also the annual surveys of Livland province by the Statistical Committee of the Provincial Administration. These opened with a section on the harvest of all the grains mentioned here as well as of a 'miscellaneous' group. For example, *Obzor Ljfljandskoi gubernii za 1895* (Riga, 1896), pp.1-2; Topij (2011), pp.80-81.

¹⁰¹ E. C. Thaden, 'Introduction', in E. C. Thaden (ed.), *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, pp.8-10; Lincoln (1990), pp.90-105; A. Henriksson, *The Tsar's Loyal Germans. The Riga German Community: Social Change and the Nationality Question, 1855-1905*, Boulder: East European Monographs, 1983, pp.46-7.

nationalist-liberals, standardisation was a step towards national (imperial) unity and countered what they considered Baltic particularism or even Germanisation of the native peasantries.¹⁰²

Integration generally meant a transfer of the initiative and responsibilities from the *Ritterschaft* authorities (the executive *Landrathskollegium*) to the Russian provincial administration, but eventually also involved the introduction of Russian as the main language of administration. Unsurprisingly, the Baltic German saw the on-going attempts at ‘Russification’ as increased control of St Petersburg over local affairs, which undermined their privileged position.¹⁰³ At a time when the Dorpat university professor Carl Schirren famously preached “standing firm” and “perseverance” to defend Baltic autonomy,¹⁰⁴ many noble landlords realised that in order for everything to stay the same, everything had to change – or at least in the way they managed their rural estates.

Fortunately, despite the political pressure they entailed, the Russian railroads also presented the Baltic German landlords with new opportunities. Yes, the abundance of grain coming from places like Bashkiria made it difficult for all local farmers to compete due to price drops, but if the noble landlords were able to transition to animal farming, they could supply the entire empire with meat and dairy.¹⁰⁵ Their increased economic importance would translate into more bargaining power when the Russian government threatened to take away their privileges of rule (usually the nobility had negotiated their position at the expense of the Estonian and Latvian-speaking peasantries).¹⁰⁶

The *Ökonomische Sozietät* (ÖS), which had already been established in 1792, became even more important than it had been in facilitating knowledge exchange about agricultural techniques and animal breeding between German-speaking landowners in the Est-, Liv- and Kurland provinces. The Riga Polytechnical Institute (est. 1862), and after 1880 especially professor Woldemar von Knieriem (ÖS member from 1876),¹⁰⁷ played an important role too in advancing agriculture by combining cameralia, chemistry and the practical experience of Baltic landlords in its curriculum. Despite its entanglements with the landed nobility, however, the Agriculture Department of the *Polytechnikum* did not have the same political influence as the ÖS.¹⁰⁸ Although ÖS membership was limited to the nobility, its idea of *noblesse oblige* inspired the society to work for the ‘common good’, even if it did not always succeed in actually doing so. From 1849 onward it joined forces with the *Ritterschaft* to

¹⁰² A. Renner, *Russischer Nationalismus und Öffentlichkeit im Zarenreich 1855-1875*, Cologne: Böhlau, 2000, pp.293-374; M. Haltzel, ‘The Baltic Germans’, in Thaden (1981), pp.134-45.

¹⁰³ Lust (2008), p.65; Pistohlkors (1994), pp.397-416.

¹⁰⁴ K. Brüggemann & B. D. Woodworth, ‘Entangled Pasts – Russia and the Baltic Region’, in K. Brüggemann & B. D. Woodworth (eds), *Russland an der Ostsee. Imperiale Strategien der Macht und kulturelle Wahrnehmungsmuster (16. bis 20. Jahrhundert)*, Vienna: Böhlau Wien, 2012, p.5.

¹⁰⁵ A division of international and Russian markets was noted by, for example, G. Rosenpflanzler, ‘Zuchtzwecke und Zuchtziele’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 25:1 (1887), p.1. See also Rosenpflanzler-Lobenstein, ‘Zur Züchtungsfrage’, 2 parts, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 14:33 & 34 (1876), pp.413-419 & pp.431-437; E. Hollander, ‘Zur diesjährigen baltischen Ausstellung’, *Baltische Monatschrift* 20:5-6 (1871), pp.285-6 & 289.

¹⁰⁶ Whelan (1999); Haltzel (1981), pp.180-1.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Knieriem, Johann Karl Woldemar v. (1849-1935)’ at BBLd – Baltisches Biografisches Lexikon digital (<https://bbld.de/0000000018735989>).

¹⁰⁸ E. Järvesoo, ‘Agricultural Program at the Riga Polytechnic Institute, 1863-1919’, *Journal of Baltic Studies* 11:3 (1980), pp.238 & 245-248.

promote (dairy) cattle breeding and it also collaborated with various local agricultural associations, although partnership with national Estonian and Latvian organisations remained relatively limited.¹⁰⁹

Next to internal political and economic pressures, the international commercial situation in the last quarter of the century further stimulated a transition towards cattle breeding. The Livland sheep farmers found it difficult to compete with wool from abroad and after the 1885 German import ban on sheep from Russia and Austria-Hungary (out of fear of spreading diseases), more Baltic nobles turned to beef and dairy cattle instead. Their new dairies were staffed by (foreign) experts and disposed of the newest equipment to create the best breeds, which were sold throughout the Russian empire. Soon the cows on the manorial estates gave on average over a third more milk than peasant-owned cows (but of course the success of individual manor economies depended on their location, size, management and so on). Livland, and to a lesser extent Estland and Kurland, quickly grew into dairy exporters as a result.¹¹⁰ Especially the dairy farm on the Caster estate near Dorpat, which was run by nobleman Nikolai von Essen, became a model enterprise for foreigners and admirers from within Russia alike.¹¹¹

Although Baltic German nobles and Estonian and Latvian nationalists had published instruction materials to the Livland peasantries before the mid-century peasant reforms, the efforts to develop the peasantry really took off after the manor peasants were allowed to own land in 1849.¹¹² But new machines, animal breeds and techniques were almost as a rule introduced first on noble estates before they found their way to the peasant farms.¹¹³ The uneven development and distribution of wealth between noble landlords and peasants were not merely an outcome of capitalist logic. The blueprints of development, so to speak, were provided by imperial hierarchies.

As in Bashkiria, cultural hierarchies in the Baltics shaped official and public perceptions of who handled animals, thereby impacting agricultural politics. Rationality truly was the catchword of nineteenth-century agriculture. Heide Whelan has illustrated how the landowning nobility adopted ‘modern’ notions such as ‘making money’ and ‘hard work’ to transform their estates into thriving businesses.¹¹⁴ In the words of the Crown Forester of Alt-Rahden, Frey von Löwenthal, “There was a time when among us there were some large landowners, the pioneers of rational agriculture and animal husbandry, [who were successful] only through their personal intervention and by sacrificing time and money.”¹¹⁵ In the same vein, historian Esa Ruuskanen has shown how dozens of articles on *Moorkultur* (draining swamps for cultivation) in the *Baltische Wochenschrift* (BW), which was the

¹⁰⁹ Engelhardt & Neuschaffer (1983), pp.58-60, 73 & 75-84; Whelan (1999), p.297-298n50; Hackmann (2020), pp.112-15; ‘Protocoll der öffentlichen Sitzung der Kaiserl. Livländischen Oeconomischen und Gemeinnützigen Societät am 17., 18. u 19. Jan. 1874’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 12:3 (1874), p.34.

¹¹⁰ Riga was an important port city for Kurland province too, adding to Livland’s large share in Baltic economy. For a comparison of dairy production in the three provinces, see the appendix tables of goods produced or processed in the *Obzory*. Engelhardt & Neuschaffer (1983), p.74; Lust (2021), pp.421-2.

¹¹¹ ‘Inland: Nikolai v. Essen-Caster †’, *Diina-Zeitung* 13:255 (9 November 1900), p.1.

¹¹² Johan Eellend (2007) has described this in great detail for the Estonian areas of Livland province, currently part of Estonia (Chapter 3, esp. p.53). See also Ü. Tarkiainen, ‘Estland and Livland as Test Areas for Agricultural Innovation in the Russian Empire in the 19th Century’, in K. Brüggemann & B. D. Woodworth (eds), *Russland an der Ostsee. Imperiale Strategien der Macht und kulturelle Wahrnehmungsmuster (16. bis 20. Jahrhundert)*, Vienna: Böhlau Wien, pp.360-1.

¹¹³ Lust (2021), p.419.

¹¹⁴ Whelan (1999), pp.296-301.

¹¹⁵ F. v. Löwenthal-Alt-Rahden, ‘Die Bildung eines Prämienfonds für die baltischen Centralausstellungen’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 16:36 (1878), p.554.

main journal of the ÖS since the 1860s, strengthened Baltic German ideas about social control through technology and rationalisation.¹¹⁶ The BW journal was full of specialist advertisements and discussions of all aspects of agriculture. Animal farming was no exception. Technology and innovation of livestock production were important to those landowners willing to put in the time and energy, but (agricultural) rationality also became a way for the Baltic German nobles to distinguish themselves further from Livland's peasants.

Even though the Livland nobility had lost some of its political power to the Russian imperial government in the 1870s and 1880s, they did not seek to break away from the empire, despite whatever the emerging Russian nationalists claimed. The nobles became part of 'the Tsar's loyal Germans'.¹¹⁷ Nevertheless, they did attempt to carve out a specific niche for their activities within the imperial framework to maintain influence. It becomes clear when reading their agriculture-related journals and reports that the Baltic German landowners considered themselves the leading force in the provinces and, in the field of animal farming, quite possibly a beacon for the entire empire.

For example, horse breeding in Livland should have been more "rational", according to ÖS member Ernst von Blanckenhagen. He believed "it is too much to ask from a peasant to breed horses methodically [*planmäßig*]. That's a matter for the experts!" Therefore he suggested to use the *Ritterschaft* stud farm at Torgel to set up a "unified" breeding program to improve Livland's agricultural output and increase export of local horses.¹¹⁸ And in an 1887 BW article on the "purposes and aims of breeding", a Livland dairy producer named Gustav Rosenpflanzler wrote that the Baltic dairy industry was actually not yet rational enough. He did not like previous "experimentation", because in his eyes it betrayed a lack of purpose. Instead, he urged his readers, whom he constantly addressed with "we", "us" and "ours", to join a dedicated association for cattle breeding (Rosenpflanzler had recently co-founded the Union of Baltic Cattle Breeders)¹¹⁹ to make sure that "our Baltics" (*unseres Balticum*) would have the best cattle breeding possible. Also, by importing promising races like German Black Pied (*Holländer-Friesen*), but especially Angeln dairy cows from northern Germany or Denmark, the Baltic provinces could then serve as the imperial hub for cattle breeding.¹²⁰ Frommhold von Sivers-Randen, an ÖS member and cattle-breeding instructor, believed that "these are no empty phantasies, these ideas can be realised. It is in our power, if only we truly want it".¹²¹

Even if such projects took some time to materialise, the Baltic aristocrats had quickly managed to take the initiative to modernise agriculture in 'their' corner of the empire. The Russian authorities

¹¹⁶ E. Ruuskanen, 'The emergence of Baltic *Moorkultur*: visions of scientific-technological mastery of peatlands in the age of great social change, 1850-1914', *History and Technology* 34:3-4 (2018), p.218.

¹¹⁷ Henriksson (1983), pp.59-61.

¹¹⁸ E. von Blanckenhagen, 'Vorschlag zur Begründung einer einheitlichen Landespferdezucht in Livland', *Baltische Wochenschrift* 28:39 (1890) pp.454 & 456-457.

¹¹⁹ 'Aus den Vereinen: Verband baltischer Rindviehzüchter', *Baltische Wochenschrift* 30:9 (1892), p.119; Rosenpflanzler had also attended the public session of the Ökonomische Sozietät in January 1880, discussing the (un)reliability of cattle pedigree in the absence of herdbooks, see 'Aus den Vereinen: Die öffentlichen Sitzungen der K. livländischen gemeinnützigen u. ökonomischen Societät', *Baltische Wochenschrift* 18:6 (1880) p.95.

¹²⁰ Rosenpflanzler (1887), pp.1-5; Lust (2021), p.421; see also for example *Baltisches Stammbuch edlen Rindviehs, herausgegeben von der Kaiserlichen Livländischen gemeinnützigen und ökonomischen Societät, 16. Jahrgang*, Berlin: Puttkammer & Mühlbrecht, 1900.

¹²¹ F. von Sivers-Randen, 'Kurze Anleitung zur Behandlung und Zucht des Rindviehs', *Baltische Wochenschrift* 37:42 (1899), p.527.

more or less accepted the transformation of Baltic German dominance in Livland, because ‘agricultural modernisation’ was an all-imperial project and the Baltic experts simply achieved results. The provincial statistical committee for example, though much less vocal than its counterpart in Ufa, still showed great interest in the landownership situation of the Livland peasantries, but acknowledged the well-funded landlords’ efficient production rates virtually every year after its first survey in 1878.¹²² Moreover, despite on-going land sales by nobles to the peasantries since the 1860s, which also burdened peasants with disproportionate debts,¹²³ the Ministry of State Domains (after 1894: Agriculture)¹²⁴ feared that peasants remained vulnerable due to fluctuations of economics and natural forces,¹²⁵ which did not make them the most obvious leaders of Baltic agriculture. And, finally, after the peasants’ revolutionary violence against the dominance of the landlords in 1905-1906, the Ministry of the Interior and Prime Minister Stolypin quite paradoxically tended to rely on traditional *Ritterschaft* authority to maintain rural order. They feared that the *Ritterschaft* proposals for broader political participation would lead to further unrest, so they accepted more inequalities in the countryside than they probably would have liked.¹²⁶

Noble repression of the Baltic peasants was not a given, however. There had in fact been liberalminded landowners throughout the nineteenth century, who, like the Russian authorities, believed that agricultural modernisation had to go hand in hand with social change. Former ÖS secretary and critic of the Livland *Ritterschaft*, Hermann von Samson-Himmelstjerna, argued in 1881 for using the agricultural associations to help the peasants, but not in what he called a socialist or communist way. He basically concluded that it was necessary to solve political tensions in the countryside for the sake of the agricultural economy. The agricultural associations had to make membership open to everyone and provide peasants with credit for drainage or pedigree cattle. The most important task of the associations, however, was to help the peasant breed purebred cattle. Only when this transition was complete and Livland functioned as the empire’s distributor of cattle breeds, this task would be complete. “Only then the agricultural future of Livland will be completely secure.”¹²⁷

Expanding and improving peasant livestock production might have been merely a means to an end for Samson, but at least the peasants were not neglected. Even the more conservative Baltic German landowners were not completely blind to the fate of the peasantries towards the end of the century. But they still used ‘rationalisation’ of agriculture to distinguish themselves from the peasants as experts, seeking to transfer knowledge and means to them, ideally in a master-student relationship.

¹²² See, for example, one of the first surveys (1878) and one of the last (1906): *Obzor Lifliandskoi gubernii za 1878* (Riga, 1879), pp.1-4 & 7-8; *Obzor Lifliandskoi gubernii za 1906* (Riga, 1907), pp.1-31.

¹²³ See note 93.

¹²⁴ I.I. Voronov, *Ministerstvo zemledeliia Rossiiskoi imperii: XIX - nachalo XX v.*, Saint Petersburg: Saint Petersburg State University, 2016, pp.30 & 198ff.

¹²⁵ Y. Kotsonis, *Making Peasants Backward. Agricultural Cooperatives and the Agrarian Question in Russia, 1861-1914*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999, pp.40-42; ‘Die landwirtschaftliche Enquete des Domainen-Ministers’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 11:31, 32 & 33 (1873) pp.365-373; 383-390; 397-401; J. von Keutzler, ‘Zur Pflege der Landwirtschaft im Jahre 1891’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 30:11 (1892), pp.141-149.

¹²⁶ Whelan (1999), pp.309-15; Pistolh Kors (1978), pp.254-256.

¹²⁷ H. von Samson, ‘Die Aufgabe der landwirtschaftlichen Vereine’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 19:47 & 48 (1881), pp.946, 948-949 & 973-976; Engelhardt & Neuschäffer (1983), pp.99-108; see also the editorial criticism of the *Ritterschaft* by ‘E.B.’ (Baron Ernst von der Brüggen) following Hollander (1871), pp.291-297.

Closely collaborating with the Livland *Ritterschaft*, other agricultural associations and the Russian ministries, the *Ökonomische Sozietät* organised the Baltic central agricultural exhibitions in Riga to display and stimulate ‘rational’ agriculture.¹²⁸ In Ufa, agronomist Shtumpf had also tried to convince the provincial *zemstvo* since 1893 to organise a central agricultural-handicraft exhibition to improve the economic situation of farmers. The *zemstvo* found it difficult, however, to allocate crucial funds to an exhibition amidst Russia’s agricultural crisis, especially since the region had been hit by extreme famines in 1891-1892.¹²⁹ The *zemstvo* board then mixed up the flows of funds from the Ministries of Finance and Agriculture, missing out on subsidies, and when some preparations were finally underway, it struggled with increased material costs. Therefore, and because there would soon be a large exhibition in neighbouring Kazan anyway, the project was cancelled in 1898 under “heated” protest of the Bashkir nobleman Syrtlanov and others, in favour of local county exhibitions.¹³⁰

In Livland, on the other hand, the political will proved stronger. Especially under the longtime leadership of president Eduard von Oettingen (r. 1882-1900) and secretary Gustav von Stryk (r. 1876-1927), the exhibition organisers sought to unify Baltic agriculture in order to lead Russia’s agriculture and compete on the global markets.¹³¹ This did not go unnoticed in St Petersburg.¹³² Minister Alexei Yermolov, who had transformed the Russian Ministry of State Domains into the Ministry of Agriculture in 1894 in the wake of the major famines, visited the fourth central exhibition in June 1899 in person. At a feast thrown in his honour, he raised his glass to compliment the “knowledge, energy and dedicated work” of the Baltic *Landwirte* (which included noble farmers) and especially the Baltic agricultural associations, because “despite the existing historical conditions and despite the necessity for a constant struggle with nature and the economic crisis that agriculture is going through, agriculture in the Baltic region has nevertheless advanced”.¹³³

Similar to the Moscow Agricultural Society and its small branch in Ufa, the ÖS had close ties to the (local) authorities, but probably due to its limited geographical scope and relative control over the economic agenda in Livland, which was still more of an imperial periphery, the ÖS had proven (even) more successful than agricultural associations in central Russia in implementing its plans in

¹²⁸ Various Baltic German evaluations of the 1899 Riga exhibition spoke of ‘rational’ agriculture, including fishing. See G. Armitstead-Neu-Mocken & A. Tobien (eds), *IV. Baltische Landwirtschaftliche Zentralausstellung zu Riga 1899. Ergebnisse und Kritik*, Riga: W.F. Häcker, 1900; and A. Tobien, ‘Zur Geschichte der baltischen landwirtschaftlichen Ausstellung’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 35:22 (1897), pp.325-8; *Baltische Chronik 1898/1899*, Riga: Jonck & Poliewsky, 1899, pp.5, 47 & 239-248.

¹²⁹ R.G. Robbins, Jr., *Famine in Russia, 1891-1892. The Imperial Government Responds to a Crisis*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1975, p.188; see also the analysis of the famine in the entire Black Earth region by future Minister of Agriculture A.S. Yermolov, *Neurozhai i narodnoe bedstvie*, St Petersburg: V. Kirshbaum, 1892.

¹³⁰ *Sistematicheskii svodnyi sbornik. Tom III-i* (1915), pp.249-256.

¹³¹ ‘Ueber die Northwendigkeit einer zentralen baltischen Ausstellung und deren Folgen für unsere fernere wirtschaftliche Entwickelung mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Rindviehzucht’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 35:23 (1897), p.352; ‘Zur IV. baltischen landwirtschaftlichen Zentralausstellung 1899. Schlußverhandlungen des Ausstellungsathes am 5. Juni 1900 im Ritterhause zu Riga’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 38:25 (1900), pp.279-280; in 1871, the promise of progress was also meant to quell local nationalism, Hollander (1871), pp.282-283.

¹³² *Obozrenie deiatel'nosti Ministerstva gosudarstvennykh imushchestv po sel'sko-khoziaistvennoi chasti v 1881 godu*, St Petersburg, 1882, p.36.

¹³³ ‘Toaste des Herrn Ministers der Landwirtschaft, gesprochen aus Anlaß der IV. Baltischen landwirtschaftlichen Zentral-Ausstellung’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 37:26 (1899), p.333; see also more critical reviews in Russian (nationalist) newspapers, e.g. ‘Na sel'sko-khoziaistvennoi vystavke’, *Rizhskii vestnik* 31:131 (18 June 1899), p.2-3.

the long term. It managed to remain relevant, beyond mere money-lending, as a networker, a policy consultant, or lobbyist, and as an educator.¹³⁴

Like at the local provincial exhibitions, peasants at the Riga exhibition were supposed to learn from the barons here.¹³⁵ They did not really compete with the landlords, however, and in 1899 peasants participating with their livestock were not only placed in their own categories, but their cattle was quite likely even displayed physically separate from the other contestants.¹³⁶ The ÖS deplored the relatively low turnout of “smallholders” (peasants) at the 1899 exhibition, but was convinced that their visit to the exhibitions proved the “healthy agricultural production relations” in the Baltic. During the evaluation of the exhibition, ÖS board members stated that the peasant products were not suitable for large exhibitions anyway and that the peasant still lacked an association mentality (*Genossenschaftsgedanke*). But they hoped that active peasant participation in local exhibitions satisfied their desire for progress (*Vorwärtsstreben*) and that the next central agricultural exhibition would above all benefit peasant livestock production.¹³⁷ Perhaps a comparison with colonial exhibitions is too strong, but this way, despite their similar agricultural activities and their physical proximity at such events, the mental separation between the nobles and peasants remained intact. It speaks volumes that landowners visiting the 1880 central exhibition would under no circumstances let peasants raise their calves, fearing for disastrous end results.¹³⁸

Baltic German arrogance never disappeared completely, but some things did change, of course. The large landowners set up a committee in 1899 that specially awarded peasants’ livestock at local fairs (*Schauen*) to improve their cattle breeding, something many commercializing peasants welcomed because, despite the rise of rural credit cooperations, they often lacked money and access to good cattle (although peasants sometimes mistrusted the objectivity of the committee judges and the ÖS did not have unlimited funds).¹³⁹ And under the influence of the Estonian and Latvian national activists, the ÖS and *Ritterschaft* started to see the “practical grounds” to educate the peasantries in Latvian and Estonian.¹⁴⁰ The ÖS had tried to establish a German-language school for some decades,

¹³⁴ Engelhardt & Neuschaffer (1983), pp.141-144; Hackmann (2020), p.115; S. Smith-Peter, ‘Sweet Development: The sugar beet industry, agricultural societies and agrarian transformations in the Russian empire, 1818-1913’, *Cahiers du monde russe* 57:1 (2016), pp.103-105, 111 & 116-118; J. Bradley, *Voluntary Association in Tsarist Russia. Science, Patriotism, and Civil Society*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009, pp.58-61 & 80-85.

¹³⁵ ‘Die Dorpater Thierschau, August 1895’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 33:37 (1895), p.480; R. Wolff-Riga, ‘IV. Versammlung baltischer Land- und Forstwirthe, 2. Sitzung der Section für Thierzucht: 1. Thema: Wie soll das landwirtschaftliche Ausstellungswesen, und namentlich die Thierschau, in den baltischen Provinzen organisirt werden?’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 18:30 (1880), p.513; ‘Verhandlungen des Exekutivkomitês für die 4. baltische landwirthschaftliche Centralausstellung im Ritterhause zu Riga am 15. und 16. (27. und 28.) November 1897’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 35:49 (1897), p.695; ‘Oeffentliche Jahressitzungen der Kaiserlichen, Livländischen gemeinnützigen und ökonomischen Sozietät 1899. Mittwoch den 13. (25.) Januar.’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 37:4 & 5 (1899), pp.42 & 51.

¹³⁶ ‘Wirtschaftliche Chronik. Zur III. baltischen landwirthschaftlichen Centralausstellung’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 18:7 (1880), pp.121-122; A.v.z.M., ‘Zur dritten Baltischen Centralausstellung’, *Baltische Monatschrift* 27 (1880), pp.428-9 & 431; *Katalog der dritten baltischen landwirthschaftlichen Ausstellung zu Riga im Jahre 1880*, Riga: Müller, 1880, pp.iii-vii. See the map accompanying the 1899 catalogue, which incidentally lists only six individual peasants in the cattle section and four in the horse section, *Catalog der IV. baltischen landwirthschaftlichen Central-Ausstellung*, Riga: Häcker, 1899, pp.6, 9, xiv, l-li, lx-lxii, lxxviii-lxxix, 23 & 104-106.

¹³⁷ *Bericht über die Verhandlungen der Kaiserlichen Livländischen Gemeinnützigen und Ökonomischen Sozietät im Jahre 1900*, (Jurjew [Dorpat] 1901) pp.76-86, for the comments on peasants p.86.

¹³⁸ M., ‘Zur dritten Baltischen Centralausstellung’, p.435.

¹³⁹ *Bericht ÖS 1902*, p.103; *Bericht ÖS 1898 und 1899*, p.142; *Bericht ÖS 1900*, pp.61-64; Lust (2021), pp.424-425; Topij (2011), pp.82-83.

¹⁴⁰ *Bericht ÖS 1898 und 1899*, p.111.

resisting Russian language demands and likely also not confident that the local languages could convey complex subject matters.¹⁴¹ But according to its report of 1898-1899, the Latvian agricultural population had expressed the wish that the ÖS would establish a Latvian agricultural school (*Ackerbauschule*). Latvian rural delegates then helped design the plans for the school, and the Society's connections with the Livland governor helped it to get permission from the Ministers of the Interior and Agriculture to start raising the funds necessary to "prepare the sons of ... especially farm owners for their future economic profession."¹⁴² The courses the peasant sons were to take were Russian, Latvian and German (optional), next to physics, chemistry, botany and such, as well as agricultural arithmetic, animal breeding, dairy farming, veterinary medicine, bookkeeping and other sciences that would make for a rational peasant enterprise.¹⁴³ Plans for an Estonian school were also made, but the negotiations between the ÖS and the Ministry of Agriculture about both schools ultimately failed because of the formal requirement that even practical agricultural courses had to be taught in Russian.¹⁴⁴

Rational farming naturally involved learning more about animals.¹⁴⁵ Yet teaching peasants how to handle animals seems to have been urgent for another reason too. Starting a few decades earlier, a growing group of Baltic Germans called for proper or even 'humane' animal treatment. Joseph Baron Wolff-Lindenberg, for example, urged his fellow ÖS members in 1901 to focus less on body measurements and instead breed "normal shaped", "unmistakeably healthy" Baltic cattle and, crucially, provide them with "rational and loving care" to increase their performance.¹⁴⁶ Not only landowners raised their voice. Writing to the *Baltische Wochenschrift* in 1878, future veterinary professor Casimir von Raupach blamed the poor health of animals coming to his clinic in Dorpat on the "irrational cattle husbandry of the peasants," which left cows and horses without sufficient fodder, and it would require "patience, perseverance and intelligence to gain the trust of the superstitious boor [*Rusticis*]" to better their ways.¹⁴⁷

Although advocates of 'better treatment of animals' had various understandings of its precise meaning and purpose, they shared the idea that peasants somehow had to learn this from them. The animal protection societies of Livland played an interesting role here. Their insistence on humane treatment of animals could have been seen as 'bad for business', but instead the agricultural associations saw animal protection activism as an ally in the fight against peasant 'ignorance'. In fact, the efforts to improve animal welfare went beyond a mere economic rationale and turned into a genuine, although perhaps limited civilizing mission that made animal rights activists part of a wider imperial and transnational network. In that sense, proper and humane treatment of animals became a

¹⁴¹ Engelhardt & Neuschäffer (1983), pp.108-109; in 1880, the BW reviewed Estonian agricultural works, because this "still undeveloped language" needed "well-meaning, but nevertheless ruthless" criticism coming from the "broader perspective of the educated", i.e. Baltic Germans, 'Zur estnischen landwirtschaftlichen Litteratur', *Baltische Wochenschrift* 18:8 (1880), pp.149-152.

¹⁴² *Bericht ÖS 1898 und 1899*, pp.110-112.

¹⁴³ *Bericht ÖS 1898 und 1899*, p.113.

¹⁴⁴ *Bericht ÖS 1901*, pp.67-71; *Bericht ÖS 1902*, pp.5-6; cf. the emperor's approval of reforming the Estonian Alexander high school to stimulate rational and profitable native agriculture, *Bericht ÖS 1898 und 1899*, p.108-109.

¹⁴⁵ 'Ueber die Aufgaben der modernen Thierproduktionslehre', *Baltische Wochenschrift* 39:48 (1901), p.535.

¹⁴⁶ J. Baron Wolff-Lindenberg, 'Der Formalismus in der landwirthschaftlichen Thierzucht', 39:8 (1901), p.90.

¹⁴⁷ C. Raupach, 'Statistik der in der Klinik des Dorpater Veterinair-Instituts behandelten Haustihere (Schluss)', *Baltische Wochenschrift* 16:6 (1878), pp.81-4.

cultural trait that set the Baltic nobles, among many others, apart from the lower classes, including the peasants.

Concern for animal welfare appears to have been a reaction to the mid-century expansion of livestock in the Baltics and to the emergence of animal rights societies in the rest of Europe.¹⁴⁸ The call to organise animal protection found fertile ground in the public optimism accompanying Russia's Great Reforms around 1860.¹⁴⁹ Livland's two main animal protection societies were the *Livländische Thierschutzverein* (LTV, founded in 1861 as the *Rigasche Verein gegen das Quälen der Thiere*, even before the founding of the All-Russian one in 1865)¹⁵⁰ and the 1886 break-away association called the 'Ladies' Committee of the Riga animal shelter' (LC). While I have not found any direct evidence of noble agrarian entrepreneurs supporting the message of these associations explicitly, there is much indirect evidence that they in fact did support the narratives of animal protection.

In 1869, eight years after the LTV's foundation, the ÖS invited veterinary professor and honorary member of the ÖS Peter Jessen to give a lecture on rabies at the Dorpat Craftmen's Association. He opened his talk by painting a picture of thousands of years of human development leading to humane treatment of animals among the "civilised peoples". In short, this would ultimately lead to better professional veterinary care to protect humans from dangerous zoonoses, the importance of which Jessen could not stress enough to his audience, if they liked to stay healthy and fulfil their "duties as humans and therefore as members of the Craftmen's Association". But Jessen used his introduction mainly to build up an emancipatory narrative and emphasise that "increased knowledge among humankind also benefits the fate of the animals!" And now that the number and influence of animal protection associations steadily grew, the legal protection of animals would not be long in coming, according to Jessen.¹⁵¹

Jessen's ideas about the edifying nature of animal protection were not uncommon. Both the LTV and the LC cooperated with animal protection associations within Russia to stop animal suffering there, but they took their inspiration primarily from the broader European movement. They visited international animal protection congresses, corresponded with their new networks and distributed relevant literature from abroad (mostly from Germany and Austria-Hungary) and from within the Russian empire, when possible translating these works into Latvian, Estonian or Russian.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ 'Wirtschaftliche Chronik. 2, Der livländische Thierschutzverein', *Baltische Wochenschrift* 15:20-21 (1877), p.337; *Jahresbericht des Livländischen Thierschutz-Vereins für das Jahr 1894* (Riga, 1895) 3-4, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 16.

¹⁴⁹ *Rigasche Stadtblätter* 52:1, 24, 25, 40 & 46 (1861), pp.4-5, 212, appendix preceding p.219, pp.358-359 & 428; G.D. Hernmarck, *Erinnerungen aus dem öffentlichen Leben eines Rigaschen Kaufmanns, 1849-1869. Hinterlassene Niederschrift des weil. Rigaschen Bürgermeisters G.D. Hernmarck*, Berlin: Guttentag, 1899, p.44, fn.1; see also B. Bonhomme, 'Russian Compassion: The Russian Society for the Protection of Animals – Founding and Contexts, 1865-1875', *Canadian Journal of History* 45:2 (2010), pp.277-278.

¹⁵⁰ A. Nelson, 'The Body of the Beast. Animal Protection and Anticruelty Legislation in Imperial Russia', in J. Costlow & A. Nelson (eds), *Other Animals. Beyond the Human in Russian Culture and History*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010, p.100.

¹⁵¹ P. Jessen, [*Mittheilungen der Kaiserlichen Livländischen Gemeinnützigen und Oeconomischen Societät*] *Populaire Vorträge über Krankheiten, die von den Hausthieren auf den Menschen übergehen können. I-II Die Hundwuth*, Dorpat: Laakman, 1869, pp.4-6 & 9-11.

¹⁵² For example *Jahresbericht LTV 1883*, pp.27-30 in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 14; 'Jahresbericht des Damen-Comités des Rigaeer Thierasyls pro 1884', *Der Anwalt der Thiere. Organ für Thierschutz* 1:3 (1885), pp.48-49; 'Bericht über die öffentliche Jahresfeier des Rigaeer Thierschutz-Vereins am 22. Januar 1867 (Fortsetzung)', *Lifliandskie gubernskie vedomosti = Livländische Gouvernements-Zeitung* 15:20 (17 February 1867), p.94; LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 35, pp.63-74 & 146.

At first, the LTV considered its activities as a religious task, but, probably under the influence of German animal protection activists,¹⁵³ soon believed them to be part of humanity's "progress",¹⁵⁴ "education" or "ennoblement" (*Veredelung*),¹⁵⁵ (and, not to mention, as "manly", as opposed to the Ladies' Committee).¹⁵⁶ In the words of the Society's longtime president, pastor Magnus Daniel Werbatus, "humanity's ennoblement and animal protection are in close interaction with each other".¹⁵⁷ He later added that "the awakened legal consciousness within us, which must also apply to the animals, is the motivation for our activity. Animal protection is thus not a matter of useless exuberance, but a sign of advanced civilisation".¹⁵⁸

The Ladies' Committee typically employed an even stronger language of civilisation than the LTV.¹⁵⁹ Discussing the need to reform animal slaughter, for example, the *Anwalt der Thiere*, the journal published by the LC since 1885, compared the current slaughter practices of the "civilised *Kulturmensch* in Europe" to that of the "wild Australian Negro". It was "astonished, and no less ashamed...[that] we Europeans have not progressed one step further than the savage in Australia".¹⁶⁰ The LC was also more focused on news and materials on animal protection from around the world than the LTV. Vivisection, for example, became a major international issue in the 1870s and the LC joined the campaign against it (and fought Louis Pasteur's vaccination experiments too),¹⁶¹ but the LTV took up a different position in these moral matters. The LTV believed experimentation on animals was justified from a medical and scientific perspective.¹⁶² Therefore, it rather invested its time and means into establishing connections with the provincial and imperial authorities in St Petersburg to influence legislation, as well as gaining a foothold in the Livland countryside.¹⁶³ It was here that the interests of Baltic livestock production and animal protection met.

¹⁵³ For a comparison with the ideas and languages of other European activists, see among others W. Schlenker, *Tierschutz und Tierrechte im Königreich Württemberg. Die erste deutsche Tierschutz- und Tierrechtsbewegung 1837, die drei württembergischen Tierschutzvereine ab 1862 und ihre Tiere*, Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2022, pp.191-254; H.S. Salt, *Animals' Rights Considered in Relation to Social Progress*. Revised Edition, London: Bell and Sons, 1922, pp.23-24; H. Ritvo, *The Animal Estate. The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987, pp.130-135; L. Kalof, *Looking at Animals in Human History*, London: Reaktion, 2007, pp.137-140; the Dutch Animal Protection Society also described their goals terms of the ennoblement of humankind, A. Kluvelde, *Mensendier, verbonden sinds de zesde dag: cultuurgeschiedenis van een wonderlijke relatie*, Amsterdam: Arbeiderspers, 2009, cited in: M. Reesink, *Dier en mens: de band tussen ons en andere dieren*, Amsterdam: Boom, 2021, chapter 9.1.

¹⁵⁴ J., 'Was wollen und sollen die Thierschutz-Vereine?', *Baltische Wochenschrift* 9:52 (1871), pp.739-740.

¹⁵⁵ 'Der Rigasche Thierschutzverein', *Rigasche Stadtblätter* 40 (5 October 1861), pp.358-359; *Jahresbericht LTV 1867*, pp.3-6, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 5; J., 'Thierschützung im Conflict mit der Thiernützung', *Baltische Wochenschrift* 12:10-11 (1874) pp.143-144; *Jahresbericht LTV 1894*, pp.3-4, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 16; *Jahresbericht LTV 1896*, pp.3-4, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 17.

¹⁵⁶ *Jahresbericht LTV 1900*, p.3, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 21.

¹⁵⁷ *Jahresbericht LTV 1875-1876*, pp.4-5, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 10.

¹⁵⁸ *Jahresbericht LTV 1883*, p.5 in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 14.

¹⁵⁹ 'An die geehrten Leser', *Anwalt der Thiere* 1:1-2 (1885), pp.1-3.

¹⁶⁰ 'Zur Reform des Schlachtwesens', *Anwalt der Thiere* 1:10 (1885), pp.145-146.

¹⁶¹ N. Rupke, 'Introduction', in N. Rupke (ed.), *Vivisection in Historical Perspective*, London: Croom Helm, 1987, p.2; among the many writings in the 1885 issues of the *Anwalt* that drew on international sources, see C.Fr. Glasenapp, 'Darwin und die Vivisektion', *Anwalt der Thiere* 1:10 (1885), pp.149-158; M. Schilling, 'Die Pasteur'sche Todtenliste', *Anwalt der Thiere* 4:11-12 (1888), pp.375-378.

¹⁶² *Jahresbericht LTV 1897*, p.11, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 18.

¹⁶³ For example, *Jahresbericht LTV 1867*, p.23, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 5; *Jahresbericht LTV 1869/1870*, pp.6-7 in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 7; 'Zur Tages-Chronik', *Rigasche Stadtblätter* 39 (25 September 1869) p.297; 'Bericht über die öffentliche Jahresfeier des Rigaer Thierschutz-Vereins am 22. Januar 1867', *Lifländskie gubernskie vedomosti = Livländische Gouvernements-Zeitung* 15:19 (15 February 1867) p.90.

Until his death in 1875, veterinary professor Jessen published articles in the ÖS-journal *Baltische Wochenschrift* to emphasise how animal protection can happen in all walks of life, in cities and on the countryside, and that the animal protection societies merely seek to join all these forces of “true *Bildung* and culture” together “for Good, and to burn and destroy Evil”.¹⁶⁴ Admittedly, after 1875, no contribution to the BW about animal protection was ever worded as strongly as these articles. But other authors also wrote about good animal treatment, not merely to guarantee quality products, but because it was good for the animal itself. Discussing proper animal care seemed important especially in the 1890s, when the noble agricultural entrepreneurs sought to stimulate peasant cattle farming after grain and flax prices had dropped after Russian and American grain, as well as US cotton, had flooded the global markets. Frommhold von Sivers-Randen was a nobleman and influential instructor of cattle breeding whose 1899 handbook for cattle rearing was quickly translated into Latvian and Estonian. He advised local peasants to switch to rational dairy production in order to survive in those difficult times, but stressed that they never hit or yell at their cattle, for “the cow is the most gentle and most patient of all of our animals [*Hausthiere*]”.¹⁶⁵

Around 1900, the *Baltische Wochenschrift* published more (international) materials on proper animal care than in the decades before.¹⁶⁶ Although such writings did not explicitly underscore the civilisational rhetoric of the animal protection societies, the idea of animal health and well-being was no longer strange to the noble agrarian entrepreneurs. In fact, animal protection supporters were mostly urban professionals and merchants, and many of them women,¹⁶⁷ but they did include many (female) members of the Baltic and Russian nobility, like LC founder Mary Schilling (née Douglas). Lesser and more prominent Baltic nobles joined the cause. They were either landlords themselves (typically in the LTV’s rural branches, but not necessarily ÖS members) or members of these important landowning families. Honorary LTV members included two former Livland governors: August von Oettingen (who was also the brother and uncle of two ÖS presidents, namely Eduard and Arved)¹⁶⁸ and Baron Alexander Uexküll von Güldenband. Russian noble connections were no less impressive. Grand Prince Nikolai Nikolaevich Romanov had been the LTV’s patron until his death in 1891,¹⁶⁹ while the LC sought the patronage of Prince Aleksandr A. Suvorov, who was the former president of the All-Russian Animal Protection Society and had been Governor-General of the Baltics until 1861. It also had the support of later governors of Livland, including Zinov’ev and Surovtsev (an ÖS member until his death in 1900).¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁴ J. (1871), p.741; J. (1874), p.144.

¹⁶⁵ F. von Sivers-Randen, ‘Kurze Anleitung zur Behandlung und Zucht des Rindviehs’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 37:39 & 40 (1899) pp.496 & 506; see also for example A. von Stryk (-Kibbijerw), ‘Intensiv und Extensiv’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 35:24 (1897) pp.366-368.

¹⁶⁶ For example ‘Ueber Weidegang und die Behandlung des Viehes vor und während der Weideperiode’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 38:19 (1900), pp.220-221; ‘Tierpflege im Sommer’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 42:31 (1904), pp.305-307.

¹⁶⁷ See also M.A. Elston, ‘Women and Anti-vivisection in Victorian England, 1870-1900’, N. Rupke (ed.), *Vivisection in Historical Perspective*, London: Croom Helm, 1987, pp.259-294; D. Donald, *Women against cruelty. Protection of animals in nineteenth-century Britain*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020.

¹⁶⁸ See the entry for August’s father ‘Oettingen, Alexander v. (1798-1846)’ at BBLd – Baltisches Biografisches Lexikon digital (<https://bbld.de/GND138340730>).

¹⁶⁹ *Jahresbericht LTV 1891*, p.3, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 15.

¹⁷⁰ M. von Schilling, *Istoricheskii ocherk deiatel’nosti obshchestva pokrovitel’sva zhitotnym pod imenem Damskii komitet rizhskago priiuta dlia zhitotnykh c 6 Oktabria 1874 g. po 1 Ianvaria 1890 g.*, Riga: Müller, 1891, pp.4-6; *Godovoi otchet deiatel’nosti Obshchestva pokrovitel’sva zhitotnym pod imenem Damskii Komitet Rizhskago priiuta dlia zhitotnykh za 1890 god*, Riga: Müller, 1891, p.19-21; *Jahres-Bericht des Thierschutz-Vereins unter dem Namen*

It is difficult to say how much of the civilisational narratives of the *Livländische Thierschutzverein* and the Ladies' Committee was supported by their noble members. Some historians have questioned the sincerity and dedication of most of the association's members and patrons, suggesting they could have merely sought prestige.¹⁷¹ But regardless of the ridicule early animal protectors faced, which must have made personal membership and affiliation a significant decision, a network emerged. The fact that the civilizing messages of the Baltic animal protection movement apparently offered its (noble) members prestige among their peers within the empire and abroad is quite telling. Animal protection for the rural nobles must have been both an economic strategy and a sign of culturedness, which could only strengthen their position as political leaders in the Baltics. More importantly, the cooperation between especially the LTV and Baltic agricultural societies, including the ÖS, indicates that animal protection became integrated with developing 'rational' livestock production in Livland – particularly among the different peasantries.¹⁷²

What the associations called 'practical animal protection' varied from urban dog control, pain-free slaughter and sufficient food and rest for livestock during train transport (especially because the number of long distance animal exports from the steppe to Eastern Europe greatly increased in the late 1860s) to ensuring strict compliance with the game law and prohibiting cart drivers from hitting horses with a whip.¹⁷³ Animal protection in the countryside proved more difficult when the "countryfolk" (*Landmann*) seemed indifferent to the fate of their animals as long as they could earn their daily bread.¹⁷⁴ The LTV did have plans to reach the countryside, however, and exhibitions played an important role there.

The LTV itself had participated earlier at the 1880 Central Baltic Agricultural Exhibition in Riga, handing out pamphlets and giving lectures, and at the 1883 Industry Exhibition (not organised by the ÖS, but financed heavily by the *Ritterschaften*)¹⁷⁵ with animal-friendly instruments and stable plans, for which it was awarded a silver medal.¹⁷⁶ Although it could not participate at the 1899 Central Exhibition because the LTV did not produce the instruments and plans itself,¹⁷⁷ it had been invited to exhibitions in the preceding years by large and small agricultural associations to award medals to animals that were properly taken care of. In 1895, secretary Theodor Kottkowitz said that collaboration with the rural agricultural associations to inspect farm stables and visiting their exhibitions was the way to spread animal protection to the countryside and open new branches

Damen-Comité des Rigaer Thierasyls für das Jahr 1900, Riga: Müller, 1901, p. 19; *Bericht ÖS 1899*, p.159; *Bericht ÖS 1900*, p.6.

¹⁷¹ Bonhomme, 'Russian Compassion', p.277; Bradley (2009), p.54.

¹⁷² *Jahresbericht LTV 1879*, p.35, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 11.

¹⁷³ *Jahresbericht LTV 1875-1876*, p.5, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 10; 'Viehtransport per Eisenbahn', *Baltische Wochenschrift* 8:44-45 (1870), pp.567-570; *Jahresbericht LTV 1894*, p.7, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 16; LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 2, lietas 8, 14; 'Bericht über die öffentliche Jahresfeier des Rigaer Thierschutz-Vereins am 22. Januar 1867 (Fortsetzung)', *Lifliandskie gubernskie vedomosti = Livländische Gouvernements-Zeitung* 15:20 (17 February 1867) p.94; *Die Kutscherschule*, Riga: Ernst Plates, 1870, p.16.

¹⁷⁴ J. (1871), pp.739-40.

¹⁷⁵ *Gewerbe-Ausstellung zu Riga 1883. Geschichte und Organisation*, Riga: Müller, 1883, pp.21-22, 31 & 36-38.

¹⁷⁶ *Jahresbericht LTV 1883*, pp.8-19, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 14.

¹⁷⁷ *Jahresbericht LTV 1898*, pp.8-9, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 19.

there.¹⁷⁸ These animal protection activists thus employed the same logic of exhibitions as the ÖS, trying to ‘lead the peasants by example’.¹⁷⁹

The agricultural associations on their part likely requested and welcomed the awards of the LTV in order to keep farm animals healthy and productive.¹⁸⁰ But perhaps there had grown some genuine concern for animal welfare too, even if this was never made explicit. According to manor owner Bernhard Uexküll, prizes and awards would incentivise (Estonian) peasants to learn “rational feeding and breeding” and treat their horses and young cattle not so “miserably” during the winter.¹⁸¹ Here, the interests of the agricultural modernisers and animal protection activists to instruct the peasants overlapped. Activists wrote in the *Baltische Wochenschrift* that “humane treatment of animals” was a sign of “cultural progress”.¹⁸² Defending animal rights therefore amounted to a civilising mission of sorts.¹⁸³ Addressing the LTV general meeting in 1878, *Oberpastor* Alexander Jentsch indeed claimed that the Society carried out the same “moral tasks” as the Lutheran Church (which was a major Baltic landowning institution itself): the LTV worked to “fill a gap in the development [*Heranbildung*] of our youth and countryfolk”.¹⁸⁴ Slowly, a trinity of agricultural modernisation, animal protection and peasant tutelage emerged in the Livland countryside.

New agricultural entrepreneurship for the Baltic noble landowner was not just cold, calculated business, but, importantly, required knowledge of proper and sometimes even ‘humane’ treatment of the animals. The complex relations between preaching and teaching about animal welfare and agricultural progress indicated the changing imperial hierarchy in the Baltic. No longer the political hegemony of the past, by 1900 the Livland noble landowners had become agricultural ‘experts’ who were responsible for the development of ‘their’ province and ‘their’ peasantries. As opposed to the Bashkir landowners, the Baltic nobles had successfully used animal farming and breeding to manoeuvre themselves into a rather comfortable position where the Russian centre still relied on them to manage rural affairs in Livland. Yet even the new power of ‘expertise’ did not completely eclipse the importance of (noble) culturedness in maintaining some distance to the Baltic peasants, uniting old paternalism and new ideas about animal care. In 1903, at St Peterburg’s request to improve peasant farming, the ÖS president mused over an even better future of animal breeding in Livland, in which

¹⁷⁸ *Jahresbericht LTV 1894*, p.9, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 16; the LTV also collaborated with the urban sanitary committees, especially in dealing with stray dogs. *Jahresbericht des Livländischen Thierschutz-Vereins für das Jahre 1878*, Riga: Häcker, 1879, pp.11-12; *Jahresbericht LTV 1897*, p.6, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 18; ‘Locales: Vom Vorstand des Livländischen Thierschutzvereins’, *Düna-Zeitung* 12:235 (18 October 1899), p.5.

¹⁷⁹ For a critical (financial) evaluation of the exhibitions, see ‘Haben Thierschauen einen Werth oder nicht?’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 34:22 (1896), pp.314-16; for criticism of the (expensive) awards, see especially G. von Stryk, ‘Die Bedeutung der Medaille für das Ausstellungswesen’, 21:9 (1883), pp.170-174.

¹⁸⁰ *Jahresbericht LTV 1894*, p.9, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 16; *Jahresbericht LTV 1897*, p.8, in LVVA, fond 4169, apraksta 1, lietas 18; The LTV sent silver medals to agricultural associations in the other provinces as well, if these made the request. See ‘Inland: Doblen’, *Libausche Zeitung* 70:234 (15 October 1893), p.2;

¹⁸¹ B. Uexküll, ‘Die Kirchspielsausstellung – eine Pflicht der Selbsterhaltung’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 23:16 (1895), pp.210-11 & 213; see also Von Boetticher-Kukschen, ‘Ueber Prämierung ganzer bäuerlicher Wirtschaften’, *Baltische Wochenschrift* 18:32-33 (1880), p.584.

¹⁸² J. (1871), p.740.

¹⁸³ ‘Jahresfeier des Rigaer Thierschutz-Vereins [first part]’ (15 February 1867), p.90.

¹⁸⁴ Jentsch (1879), pp.3, 7 & 12. The conservative Riga-based *Düna-Zeitung* mentioned in 1895 that the *Kurländische Thierschutzverein* had sent booklets with stories and fables about animal welfare to rural pastors, who had to sell these to peasants. The KTV wished to raise money from peasants in order to build an animal shelter. While I have not found evidence that the *Livländische Thierschutzverein* did the same, similar contacts with pastors to reach the peasantry are not unthinkable. ‘Inland: Libau, 7. Juni’, *Düna-Zeitung* 8:128 (9 June 1895), p.2; on Estland province, see ‘Inland: Das erste estnische Flugblatt des Thierschutzvereins’ *Düna-Zeitung* 4:223 (2 October 1891), p.2.

landowners and peasants would select the same animal races to preserve breed purity and would also share the responsibility for raising the animals. Not to invest in peasant know-how as such, however, but “because training [of the animal] requires [its] individualisation”.¹⁸⁵ All in all, this vision of future collaboration was almost, but not quite a world apart from the agricultural entrepreneurs’ contempt of peasant breeding skills from a few decades earlier.

The lives of the Estonian and Latvian-speaking peasants surely improved due to agricultural modernisation in the region, but they, and especially the peasants who had profited the least, increasingly sought a political voice. The rural violence of 1905-1906 proved that many Baltic peasants remained unsatisfied and did not allow the transformed hierarchy to go unchallenged.¹⁸⁶

Conclusion

Agricultural modernisation in the Russian empire was not a straightforward affair. Of course, differences in climate and soil shaped the direction and it mattered which techniques and machines were introduced, but for the final form of modernizing reforms, it was just as important who was actually working on the land and handling animals. The imperial hierarchies – whether political, social-economic or cultural – worked together to influence how different areas developed in the second half of the nineteenth century. The very understanding of what agricultural rationalisation or modernisation should entail, was intertwined with these imperial hierarchies, making a ‘modernizing’ Russia not necessarily less ‘imperial’ indeed. While there was a general development within the empire towards more food security and economic competitiveness on the global markets, it really depended on the area and specific population group what this drive meant in practice. Livestock producers and animal farming as such became an important factor in these ongoing political transformations.

In comparison to the Bashkirs, who fell victim to prejudice against Islam and nomadism and as a result lost much of their land and herds, the Baltic German nobility in Livland had it quite easy. The landowning nobles had to sell some land, swallow a few limitations on their power and avoid suspicions of German nationalism, but were otherwise free to pursue their agricultural dreams. The Livland *Ritterschaft* and the ÖS had stronger ties to the imperial government than most Bashkir landowners and enjoyed a higher cultural status. This impacted how the changes to the production of livestock were perceived by the Russian authorities. Even though the natural environment of the Baltics had not been found optimal for animal farming before, raising animals there instead of more crops was supported because it was ‘rational’ when the noble landowners were involved – all the more so when these landlords actually achieved success, and despite the fact that the Baltic peasants did not share proportionally in that success. The new identity of livestock experts finally also had a notable cultural dimension, supported by the animal protection societies, which served the landlords well in their role as guides and instructors of “their” peasants.

¹⁸⁵ *Bericht ÖS 1902*, pp.1, 4 & 21.

¹⁸⁶ Ellend (2007), pp.100-52 and subsequent chapters; Plakans (1995), p.104; T. U. Raun, ‘The Revolution of 1905 in the Baltic Provinces and Finland’, *Slavic Review* 43:4 (1984), p.460. For a more detailed analysis of the debates in the Baltic press on the Estonian land question after 1905, see M. Roasto, ‘The political debate about the land question in the Estonian area of the Baltic provinces, 1905-1914’, *Journal of Baltic Studies* 51:4 (2020), pp.611-30.

The Bashkirs did not have the same voice in deciding the future of their homeland. The agricultural transformation in the southern Urals had practically deprived them of their old privileges and turned the rural order in Bashkiria upside down. For centuries both sedentary and semi-nomadic tribes had used animals for labour and food with great success, but their efforts were no longer taken seriously. The problem was not the product, but the producer. In the eyes of the empire, the Bashkir was nomadic and therefore unfit, period. Instead of building on Bashkir expertise on livestock, Russian officials preferred importing new animal breeds and breeders, believing the old Bashkir landowners were better off learning arable farming from Russian colonists – this would benefit the empire as a whole. Once free and proud servants of the tsar, the Bashkirs were now rather ordinary subjects, and relatively marginalised at that. In contrast, the Livland landlords were encouraged to raise large herds of sheep, cattle and horses, and were often the ones writing the rules themselves, quite successfully re-inventing their dominance over the Baltic peasantries. The distribution of power within Russia had never been equal, but the uneven weight of Baltic and Bashkir animal farming shifted the power imbalances in the empire even further. Therefore, the question whether to plough or graze for the empire could only be answered by knowing where and *who* you were within the empire.

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- 3) The impact of agents in the periphery on the establishment and development of commodity networks: as instigators and promoters; through their social, cultural and technological resistance; or through the production of anti-commodities;
- 4) The impact of commodity circulation both on the periphery, and on the economic, social and cultural life of the metropolises;
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