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Economic and legal problems of divorce in the late XIX– early XX centuries (based on the materials of the Tver Spiritual Consistory)

Olesya V. Vanyushina, Candidate of Historical Sciences, Nizhnevartovsk State University
Address: Lenin, 56, 16a microdistrict, 628605, Nizhnevartovsk,
Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug, Russia
Email: vanyushina_olesy@mail.ru

Abstract. This article examines the practical implementation of the institution of divorce in the Tver province in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, using the preserved divorce cases from the Tver Spiritual Consistory. Special attention is given to the difficulties faced by spouses who wished to terminate their official relationships. The "legal" grounds for divorce are considered, and statistical data on the number of divorces in the Tver province from 1884 to 1914 are provided. The analysis of the dynamics of divorce processes shows that the number of divorces in the Tver province, as well as in the entire empire, was insignificant. However, it is worth noting a gradual increase in the number of divorce cases starting from 1909. By the early 20th century, both in the Tver province and in the empire, the reasons for divorces had radically changed. While in the pre-20th century period, a significant number of divorces were due to exile to Siberia or the unknown absence of one spouse, starting from 1905, adultery became the main cause of divorces. It can be concluded that the divorce procedure was quite complex, did not meet the demands of the time, and demonstrated the necessity for prompt modernization of divorce legislation. The article shows that in addition to the legal difficulties in the dissolution of marriage associated with the patriarchy of society, significant difficulties were caused by economic consequences. Since the possibilities of the spouses will continue to maintain the level of economic well-being, it will either decrease or may change uncontrollably. The authors note that this determines a significant proportion of informal divorces or serves as an obstacle to marriage.

Keywords: spiritual consistory; Tver province; petitions; economic dependence; spouses' budget; economic well-being.

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**Экономические и правовые проблемы расторжения брака в конце XIX– начале XX вв.
(по материалам Тверской духовной консистории)**

Ванюшина Олеся Викторовна, кандидат исторических наук,
Нижевартовский государственный университет.
Адрес: Ленина, 56, 16а микрорайон, 628605, Нижневартовск, Ханты-Мансийский автономный округ, Россия
E-mail: vanyushina_olesy@mail.ru

Аннотация. В статье на примере бракоразводных дел, сохранившихся в фонде Тверской духовной консистории, рассматривается проблема практической реализации института расторжения брака в Тверской губернии в конце XIX – начале XX вв. Особое внимание уделено сложностям, с которыми сталкивались супруги, пожелавшие прекратить официальные отношения. Рассмотрены «законные» основания для расторжения брака. Приведены статистические данные о количестве разводов в Тверской губернии в 1884-1914 гг. Анализ динамики бракоразводных процессов показал, что количество разводов в

Тверской губернии, как в целом по империи, было незначительным. Между тем можно отметить постепенный рост числа дел о расторжении брака начиная с 1909 г. В начале XX в. в Тверской губернии, как и в целом по империи, состав оснований для расторжения браков радикально изменился. Если до начала XX в. большая часть браков расторгалась по причине ссылки в Сибирь или неизвестного отсутствия одного из супругов, то начиная с 1905 г. прелюбодеяние становится основной причиной разводов. Делается вывод, что процедура бракоразводного процесса была достаточно сложной, не отвечала жизненным требованиям времени и демонстрировала необходимость скорейшей модернизации бракоразводного законодательства. В статье показано, что в дополнение к юридическим трудностям при расторжении брака, связанным с патриархатом общества, значительные трудности были вызваны экономическими последствиями. Поскольку возможности супругов будут продолжать поддерживать уровень экономического благосостояния, он либо снизится, либо может бесконтрольно измениться. Авторы отмечают, что это определяет значительную долю неофициальных разводов или служит препятствием для вступления в брак.

Ключевые слова: духовная консистория; Тверская губерния; прошения; экономическая зависимость; бюджет супругов; экономическое благосостояние.

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Introduction

In the study of family and marriage, one of the contentious and relevant issues is the question of divorce. Divorce in the Russian Empire was a rarity. In the pre-revolutionary period, the question of jurisdiction over divorce cases and the grounds or reasons for dissolution of marriages continuously attracted public attention. The problem of divorce was addressed in the works of S.P. Grigorovsky, V.Ya. Maximov, and V.V. Bykhovsky. These were the first collections published to aid in preparing petition documentation for such cases, primarily targeting the officials of the spiritual consistory as a practical guide to conducting divorce proceedings. The works extensively described the legislative framework regarding divorce and the procedure of divorce processes based on all the main and permissible grounds. Analysis of the legislation of that period allowed the authors to conclude that the reasons provided for divorce did not meet the demands of life. For example, Maximov wrote: «Representatives of various parties and movements agree that it is undoubtedly necessary to remove the divorce process from the jurisdiction of spiritual courts and that the reasons provided in the modern legislation for divorce are insufficient and do not meet the demands of life».

The financial consequences of divorce in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were significant and encompassed various aspects of the family budget, property, and financial stability of the spouses. During that time, the family budget was typically based on the joint income of both spouses. When a marriage was dissolved, there was a division of financial resources, which could lead to substantial changes in the incomes and expenses of each spouse. One of them could become fully or partially dependent on the other financially.

Materials and methods

The issue of divorce and the topic of established divorce practices are of significant interest to contemporary Russian scholarship in the study of family history. Works by contemporary Russian authors such as Z.Z. Mukhina (2013), V.B. Bezgin (2017), N.V. Pushkareva (2009), V.V. Belosludtseva (2020), A.V. Spichak (2022), among others, have explored this subject.

The study of divorce issues based on materials from the Tver province is predominantly examined within the framework of family history among specific population categories. For example, the history of the bureaucratic family (Y.V. Bodrova (2009), T.I. Lyubina (2015)), or the history of female domestic crime (V.B. Bogomaz (2015)). Therefore, the history of marital conflicts and the peculiarities of the divorce process in the Tver province in the second half of the 19th and

early 20th centuries remain understudied, and the source base requires expansion. Without considering such an important historical source as primary documents from the spiritual consistory, which played a decisive role in people's lives, where divorce petitions were submitted and requests for assistance in family matters were kept, we lack a complete picture of the history of family relationships, particularly marital conflicts.

The purpose of this article is to examine, based on preserved divorce cases from the archival collection of the Tver Spiritual Consistory, what motivated people to resort to such an extreme and non-traditional measure as ending their marriage. The article aims to explore the practical implementation of the institution of divorce in the Tver province in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, analyze the difficulties faced by spouses who wished to terminate their official relationships.

In the pre-revolutionary period, divorce was the prerogative of the ecclesiastical court. Divorce as a means of resolving intra-family conflicts was not encouraged, and legislation imposed numerous restrictions on divorce. The conservatism of the church regarding divorces and the complexity of the divorce process led to official divorces being rare occurrences. In the 19th century, divorce became almost impossible: the number of legal grounds for divorce decreased, and the divorce procedure became more complicated. Data presented by B.N. Mironov confirms the rarity of official divorces. For example, in the 20-year period from 1867 to 1886, there were 16,945 divorces, averaging 847 divorces per year. From 1905 to 1913, within 8 years, there were 23,087 divorces (averaging 2,565 divorces per year). The divorce rate per 1,000 population was 0.0014 from 1867 to 1886 and increased to 0.029 from 1905 to 1913 (Mironov, 2000).

Results

Furthermore, divorce often involved the division of property, including real estate, financial investments, valuables, and businesses. In the absence of clear legal mechanisms and fair distribution of property, one party could lose a significant portion of their assets or receive compensation below its actual value. For women, especially those who did not have their own income or property, divorce could result in financial dependence and loss of social status. At that time, women had limited employment opportunities and earning potential, making them economically vulnerable after divorce. The financial consequences of divorce could also affect issues of alimony or spousal support. One spouse could be obligated to provide a certain amount of financial support to the other, especially if the latter was in an economically disadvantaged position. Over time, with the development of the legal system and changes in social norms, laws and regulations were introduced to regulate the financial aspects of divorce. They aimed to ensure a fair division of property, protect the economically disadvantaged party, and provide financial stability after divorce. Thus, the financial consequences of divorce in the late 19th and early 20th centuries encompassed changes in the family budget, division of property, financial dependence, and social status of the spouses. Progressive changes in legislation sought to achieve a more equitable resolution of financial aspects of divorce and protect economically vulnerable parties.

The «legal» grounds for divorce were proven adultery by one of the spouses, physical incapacity for marital relations that existed before the marriage, unknown absence of a spouse for five years, or a sentence of exile with deprivation of all civil rights. Cruel treatment and attempted murder were not considered grounds for divorce. Divorces by mutual consent of the spouses were not allowed. Analysis of the All-Submissive Reports of the Chief Prosecutor of the Holy Synod on the jurisdiction of the Orthodox confession provided information on the reasons for divorces and annulment of marriages among the population of the Tver province from 1884 to 1914 (Table 1).

Table 1

Number of divorces and marriages declared unlawful and invalid among the population of the Tver province from 1884 to 1914

Period	The number of marriages declared unlawful and invalid due to entering marriage						The number of dissolved marriages				Together
	during the life of one of the spouses	in close relationship	with the insanity of one of the spouses	after being condemned to celibacy	for conversion from Judaism to Orthodoxy	according to forged documents	by inability to marry	by adultery	by unknown absence	for exile in Siberia	
1884-1889	2	5					2	25	40	25	99
1890-1894	5	1					5	18	27	31	87
1895-1899	1						7	18	19	44	89
1900-1904	1	3			1		3	31	6	13	58
1905-1909				2			6	56		14	78
1910-1914		1	3	1		1	14	100	5	15	140
Total, abs.	9	10	3	3	1	1	37	248	97	142	551
Total, %	1,6	1,8	0,5	0,5	0,2	0,2	6,7	45,0	17,6	25,8	100,0

The presented data shows that the number of divorces in the Tver province, as well as in the entire empire, was insignificant. From 1884 to 1914, a total of 551 marriages were dissolved and declared unlawful and invalid in the province (including 524 divorces and 27 marriages declared unlawful and invalid), averaging 18 marriages per year. However, it is worth noting a gradual increase in the number of divorce cases starting from 1909.

The dominant reason for divorce in the Tver province from 1884 to 1914 was adultery, accounting for 248 cases or 45%. Approximately 25.8% (142 cases) were divorce cases due to one spouse being sentenced to hard labor or exile, while 17.6% (97 cases) were due to unknown absence. A less common reason was "incapacity for marital life," accounting for 6.7% (37 cases).

Analysis of the reports revealed that in the early 20th century, both in the Tver province and in the entire empire, the grounds for divorce underwent a radical change. While prior to the 20th century, a significant number of marriages were dissolved due to exile to Siberia or the unknown absence of one spouse, starting from 1905, there was a consistent trend of adultery dominating as the main reason for divorces. For instance, if the number of couples divorcing due to proven adultery was 18 in 1895-1899, it increased to 100 in 1910-1914. The number of divorces due to marital infidelity during the period from 1900 to 1914 tripled compared to the previous period from 1884 to 1899, reaching 187 cases or 71.1% of the total divorces (compared to 61 cases or 23.4% in 1884-1899). Conversely, the number of divorces due to exile to Siberia, which was the main reason for dissolution of marriages before 1900, decreased by more than half (from 100 cases to 42, or from 38.3% to 16%), and divorces due to unknown absence decreased by 7.8 times (from 86 to 11, or from 33% to 4.2%) (Table 2).

Table 2

Dynamics of Marriage Dissolution among the Population of the Tver Province, 1884-1914,
%

Grounds for divorce	1884-1899 abs.	1900-1914 abs.	1884-1899, %	1900-1914, %
Inability to marry	14	23	5,4	8,7
Adultery	61	187	23,4	71,1
By unknown absence	86	11	33	4,2
For exile to hard labor or settlement	100	42	38,3	16
Total	261	263	100	100

Divorce processes in the Tver province in the late 19th and early 20th centuries were similar in many ways to those among the population of European Russia but had their own peculiarities. According to B.N. Mironov, in 1905-1912, marital infidelity accounted for 97.4% of divorces in Russia (Mironov, 2000), while in the Tver province, this figure was slightly lower at 74.8%. Conversely, unknown absence and exile to hard labor or settlement were grounds for divorce in only 0.3% of cases in European Russia, while in the Tver province, this figure significantly exceeded the nationwide rate, reaching 16.8%. Divorce cases due to incapacity for marital life accounted for 8.4% in the Tver province during 1905-1912, compared to only 2.3% in Russia as a whole.

It is noted that adultery was the most common reason for filing petitions for the termination of marriage during the studied period. Interestingly, women were less likely to approach the consistory with this issue compared to men. Divorcing on the grounds of adultery was challenging. The fact of adultery had to be proven by the testimonies of several witnesses, eyewitnesses to the events (Article 249 of the Statute of Spiritual Consistories) ((Charter of the Ecclesiastical Consistories (1883)). The spiritual consistory paid close attention to the testimonies of witnesses and would not dissolve a marriage without convincing evidence. Moreover, even the acknowledgment of guilt by the respondent and long-term separate living of the spouses was not a formal basis for divorce.

For example, in 1912, the Tver Spiritual Consistory rejected the lawsuit of N. Sugrovov, a peasant from Staritsky Uyezd, seeking divorce due to lack of evidence. The consistory explained that N. Sugrovov did not provide any witnesses, and although the certification from the Volost Administration indicated separate living arrangements, there was no exact data indicating that the plaintiff lived separately from the defendant during the period of conception of their son, Mikhail, and had no contact. Furthermore, the self-admission of Praskovya Mikhailova regarding her involvement with an unrelated son, Mikhail, did not carry weight under Article 250 of the Statute of Spiritual Consistories (State Archive of Tver Oblast (GATO)).

However, analysis of archival documents shows that cases where the "illegitimate birth" of a child was supported by the personal admission of guilt by the defendant and testimonies of witnesses, even if the latter were not eyewitnesses, had a chance of receiving a positive decision. However, these were rather exceptions. In such cases, the Spiritual Consistory independently decided on the extent to which the testimonies of witnesses could be considered sufficient for the dissolution of the marriage.

If the spouses could not be reconciled through the procedure of admonition by the local priest, the spiritual consistory proceeded with the case: witnesses were interrogated, and a process of judicial agreement took place. The divorce process was complex and lasted for a considerable period. According to the law, until 1904, in cases of proven adultery, the guilty party was prohibited from entering a new marriage. The punishment was mitigated by the law of May 28, 1904, which made amendments to Article 253 of the Statute of Spiritual Consistories and abolished the condemnation to celibacy for those guilty of violating marital fidelity. According to the new version of Article 253, entering a new marriage was allowed after undergoing church penance, the duration

of which depended on the degree of guilt and repentance. In the case of repeated adultery, the guilty party was sentenced to permanent celibacy (Church Gazette, 1904).

Discussion

Petitions for divorce from women on the grounds of their husbands' adultery were much less frequent in the Spiritual Consistory, but such cases did occur. The plaintiffs in the selected cases for analysis were noblewomen, wives of officers and officials, and peasant women. In all cases, except for the peasant woman's case, the marriage was dissolved because two or more witnesses were able to confirm the fact of adultery. The plaintiffs were educated and knowledgeable about the specifics of divorce legislation, so they prepared diligently to defend their interests, which cannot be said for peasant women.

In divorce proceedings, except for the case of a peasant woman, the interests of the plaintiffs were represented by attorneys (for this, it was necessary to provide a medical certificate stating the reason for the illness preventing the plaintiff from attending the judicial agreement). It is likely that for a woman of higher social status, it was morally unacceptable to openly discuss such a situation.

The cases provide detailed descriptions of witness testimonies regarding the act of adultery itself. The defendants consented to the questioning of the witnesses identified by their wives. The defendants did not deny their guilt in committing adultery. In response to pastoral admonitions, they refused to reconcile with their spouses (except for the case of Wolff). Witnesses were interrogated on specific questions by the police under oath and in the presence of a representative from the spiritual side.

As a rule, at the time of filing the petitions, the spouses were living separately. In some cases, they lived apart for a considerable period (up to 7 years) and in different cities. Women filed petitions for divorce due to repeated cases of adultery by their husbands, the husband's long-lasting dissolute lifestyle, and encounters with women of loose morals.

For example, in 1898, the wife of hereditary nobleman V.V. Wolff filed a petition with the Tver Spiritual Consistory for the dissolution of her marriage due to her husband's adultery. The plaintiff presented two witnesses with whom her husband, Alexander Gavrilovich Wolff, spent time in March 1897, and in their presence, Alexander Wolff engaged in sexual intercourse with one of the invited women of loose morals, which they confirmed under oath. In this case, the marriage was dissolved "on the basis of Article 253 of the Statute of Spiritual Consistories, with permission for Vera Wolff, as a person of still young age, to enter into a second marriage, and with the condemnation of Alexander Wolff to perpetual celibacy and the imposition on him, based on Rule 77 of St. Basil the Great, of a seven-year church penance" (Bodrova, 2009).

Another significant case regarding divorce is that of a noblewoman, the wife of Titular Councillor Mikhailina-Klementina Anastasievna Shatskaya, who filed for divorce from her husband, Nikolai Nikolaevich Shatsky, in 1899 due to his infidelity. At the time of filing the lawsuit, the spouses had been living separately for 7 years. The witnesses were colleagues of the defendant in the Moscow police who had witnessed the act of sexual intercourse between N.N. Shatsky and an unknown woman, described as a brunette, in late August or early September 1893 at the defendant's apartment in Moscow, which they detailed in the case. The witnesses confirmed that N.N. Shatsky was known to them as a person "fond of pleasures and a merry life, a constant admirer of women, and a person who disregards marital obligations," and that he "was characterized by a cheerful carefree nature, loved to live for his own pleasure, was passionate, lacking in self-restraint, and constantly surrounded by women, which is why he could not be a good family man" [15]. Such a marriage was subject to dissolution with the formulation: "the marriage is dissolved based on Article 253 of the Statute of Spiritual Consistories, with permission for Mikhailina Shatskaya, as a person of still young age, to enter into a second marriage, and with the condemnation of Nikolai Shatsky to perpetual celibacy and the imposition on him, based on Rule 77 of St. Basil the Great, of a seven-year church penance" (Belosludtseva, 2020).

Divorce cases based on adultery took a considerable amount of time. The Spiritual Consistory did not dissolve marriages without convincing evidence. The procedure for divorce was

complex and required a certain level of literacy from the plaintiff. However, there were cases where the lawsuit was decided in favor of the plaintiff.

The second most common reason for divorce in the Tver Governorate from 1884 to 1914 was exile to Siberia with the deprivation of all civil rights due to the commission of a crime (142 divorces). In this case, not only the innocent spouse who refused to accompany the exiled partner could appeal to the Spiritual Consistory, but even the exiled person themselves (Pushkareva, 2009).

Inability to consummate the marriage rarely became an official reason for divorce. In the Tver Governorate during the period from 1884 to 1914, there were only 37 such cases, accounting for 6.7% of the total number of divorces. V.Ya. Maksimov commented on the legislation regarding divorce, stating that the term "inability to marital cohabitation" only referred to physical incapacity to engage in sexual intercourse, "and therefore any other physical and moral deficiencies," such as insanity or venereal diseases, "that make marital cohabitation impossible, are not considered grounds for divorce" (Bezgin, 2017), i.e., they are not included in this concept. According to Article 242 of the Statute of Spiritual Consistories, such cases could be initiated only three years after the conclusion of the marriage, and if the incapacity occurred before the marriage, not during the marriage (Article 243 of the Statute of Spiritual Consistories). These circumstances had to be indicated in the petition.

After the spouses filed their petition, a pastoral admonition was given to them regarding whether they desired reconciliation. As archival documents from the Tver Governorate show, the respondents usually expressed a desire for reconciliation and denied their incapacity, thereby attempting to avoid being condemned to lifelong celibacy and the loss of a household worker. On the other hand, the plaintiffs insisted on divorce. For example, a statement from a peasant named I. Aleksandrov from Novotorzhsky Uyezd in 1908 regarding pastoral admonitions stated: "I entered into a lawful marriage with my wife Lyubov Vasilyeva by mutual consent, and I have never wished to separate from her; she voluntarily left me and does not want to live with me; however, if she wishes to return to me, I am ready to accept her and live with her in marital union until the end of my existence" (Mukhina, 2013). "I must inform you that I wish to remain in marriage with my wife, and I consider myself capable of marital relations," stated a peasant named A. Arkhipov in his response to pastoral admonitions from Bezhetsky Uyezd.

If the spouses did not wish to reconcile, according to Article 244 of the Statute of Spiritual Consistories, the plaintiff had to be examined at the Medical Department of the Provincial Administration, to which the Consistory made a request. Analysis of archival documents showed that the divorce procedure based on incapacity had its own peculiarities in the Tver Governorate. It was permissible to conduct the examination at the defendant's place of residence, with subsequent confirmation of the diagnosis by the Consultative Presence of the Medical Department of the Tver Provincial Administration.

For example, the examination of a peasant from Kashinsky Uyezd, M.N. Orlova (Kobysova), was conducted at the Kashinsky Uyezd Police Department in 1912, as ordered by the Tver Provincial Administration through the invitation of Kashinsky Uyezd and city physicians to the local police department in the presence of an assistant warden. The Consultative Presence of the Medical Department of the Tver Provincial Administration, after reviewing the results of the examination, "concluded that the said act was correctly composed from a scientific standpoint, and at present, there is no data to consider Orlov incapable of marital cohabitation." Subsequently, in accordance with the legislative procedure, the divorce case of the Orlov-Kobysov spouses was sent to the Medical Council of the Ministry of Internal Affairs for a decision on the issue of Mikhail Kobysov's premarital incapacity.

The examination of the peasant I. Aleksandrov from Novotorzhsky Uyezd in 1908 was conducted by the district doctor of Novotorzhsky Uyezd in the presence of an assistant warden, as prescribed by the Tver Provincial Administration (pages 22-23).

Until 1904, decisions in such cases were approved by the Holy Synod, and thereafter, by the episcopal authorities based on the opinion of the Medical Council. Depending on the circumstances of the case, the wife could also be subjected to examination. If the wife refused to be examined, the

case was closed. This occurred in the cases of Arkhipov and Kobysova. "The Medical Council of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, having considered the divorce case of the Kobysovs, found it necessary to examine Maria Kobysova regarding her virginity or non-virginity. Maria Kobysova refused the examination and added that she lost her virginity three years ago while being married and currently does not wish to undergo examination."

Thus, the analysis of archival documents revealed that divorcing on the grounds of incapacity was easier than divorcing based on the most common cause, adultery. This was because the results of the medical examination were the only evidence required, witness testimonies were not necessary, and the procedure of court consultation was not conducted.

Another legal reason for divorce was the prolonged unexplained absence of a spouse. In the Tver Governorate from 1884 to 1914, 97 marriages were dissolved on this ground. Petitions regarding this cause were considered if the spouse had been missing for five years. The Consistory had to verify that the spouse was truly absent for more than five years (thus, intentionally, and knowingly absent for many years was not a reason to open a case). For this purpose, summonses were sent through the police departments to the parents and relatives of the missing spouse, as well as to anyone who might have information about them. Inquiries were made administratively. Announcements about the filed lawsuit were published in "Church Gazette," issued by the Holy Synod and distributed to all parishes. If, after a year from the publication of the announcement, no information about the missing person was received, the Consistory proceeded with the consideration of the case and, in the absence of doubts about the unexplained absence, decided to dissolve the marriage.

Cruel treatment and attempted murder were not considered grounds for divorce. For example, there is a case from 1899 in the archive of the Tver Consistory concerning the petition of a peasant woman, Melaniya Ulyanova from Rzhevsky Uyezd, to dissolve her marriage due to her husband's cruel treatment. In her petition, she stated: "The reason that prompted me to request the dissolution of the marriage is the violent behavior of my husband, Aleksey Grigoriev. After living with him for three weeks, he beat me, which I could not endure... After five days, Grigoriev beat me again, even more severely, and I was ill for two weeks... After recovering from the beatings, I had to separate from my husband, as I did not want to endure more beatings that could either kill me or leave me permanently disabled and without a piece of bread."

Interestingly, Melaniya Ulyanova provided positive evidence from the Rzhevsky Uyezd Assembly confirming the accusations against her husband. The case of M. Ulyanova was sent to the Rzhevsky Uyezd Assembly as an appeal against the verdict of the Pavlyukovskaya volost court.

In 1898, the peasant woman Melaniya Ulyanova was severely beaten by her husband, Aleksey Grigoriev. She sought refuge in the home of Vasily Spiridonov. During the volost court hearing, her husband, Aleksey Grigoriev, did not admit guilt. The Pavlyukovskaya volost court, considering the accusation unproven, acquitted Aleksey Grigoriev. Melaniya Ulyanova then appealed to the Rzhevsky Uyezd Assembly, stating that the volost court did not record the testimony of the second witness, Vasily Spiridonov. The witness confirmed that Melaniya had indeed arrived at his place beaten, with a swollen head and dried blood in her left ear. Although he did not witness who had beaten her, Melaniya claimed that it was her husband. She stayed with him for about a week or so, being sick. Based on this testimony, the Rzhevsky Uyezd Assembly found Aleksey Grigoriev guilty under Article 112 of the Criminal Code and sentenced him to two weeks of arrest. However, the Tver Consistory, after reviewing all the facts, did not grant Melaniya Ulyanova's request for the dissolution of her marriage based on her husband's cruel treatment.

It is worth noting that cases of peasant women turning to volost courts and uyezd assemblies for family matters indicate a gradual emancipation of women and a change in their traditional self-perception, including the self-perception of peasant women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Thus, the absence of easy divorce procedures provided ample opportunity for domestic violence within families. Discussions in society revolved around the need to liberalize the divorce process, at least by expanding the grounds for divorce. The main demand of contemporaries was to include cruel treatment and attempted murder as valid reasons for divorce. Crimes within the family,

suicides, poisonings, and injuries were facts of Russian reality, resulting from the family legislation and the de facto lack of women's rights.

To some extent, the complexity of the divorce procedure led to the practice of bigamy (entering a second marriage while the first one still existed).

Serious punishment was imposed for such offenses. For example, in 1902, the Tver Consistory considered a case of a peasant named Pyotr Vasilyev Zuyev from Rzhevsky Uyezd who entered a second marriage while the first one was still valid. The circumstances of the case showed that Pyotr Zuyev married a peasant woman named Anastasiya Petrova in 1898 while his first marriage to a peasant woman named Fekla Petrova remained legally unresolved. According to the decision of the Tver diocesan authorities, approved by the Holy Synod, Pyotr Zuyev's marriage to Anastasiya Petrova was deemed illegal and invalid. Anastasiya Petrova was allowed to enter a new marriage after confessing to purify her conscience, while Pyotr Vasilyev Zuyev was subjected to a seven-year church penance. His first marriage with Fekla Petrova, who expressed her unwillingness to continue marital cohabitation, was dissolved, and Fekla Petrova was granted permission to enter a new marriage. Pyotr Zuyev was condemned to lifelong celibacy. The Holy Synod reduced his church penance by half "due to his conviction and punishment in a criminal court for entering into an illegal marriage" (he was deprived of all special personal rights and advantages).

Thus, the harshness of the sentence in such cases drew the attention of the judges themselves. Polygamy carried criminal liability under Article 1554 of the "Code of Criminal and Correctional Penalties" (Charter of the Ecclesiastical Consistories (1883)). It is noteworthy that the judicial investigator, D.A. Skulsky, in his memoirs "Nine Years in the Judicial Department," characterizes cases of bigamy and polygamy (Article 1554) as follows: "One can unequivocally say that in such cases, the most moral and family-oriented people were subjected to exile to Siberia or sent to correctional labor units. - After all, what prevented these bigamists and polygamists who violated the formal norms of canon law from 'cohabiting' instead of subjecting themselves to the risk of losing their rights through exile to Siberia or several years in labor battalions?" D.A. Skulsky well describes a famous Moscow case of polygamy. A midwife working at a factory identified her drowned husband's body and, assuming the appearance of a widow, remarried a factory accountant. After some time, her first husband reappeared, and when he needed a passport, he reported his existence to the police, mentioning that his wife had previously conspired with him to leave his belongings and passport at the ice hole, creating the appearance of his death. The unfortunate woman and her first husband were tried, deprived of their rights, and exiled to Siberia. "How I wanted to say to the judges at that time," recalls D.A. Skulsky, "why did you give her such a harsh sentence? Was it because this poor working woman respected family values too much to prefer them over free love...". "The jury, of course, would have acquitted her," writes Skulsky, "because the severity of the punishment does not correspond to life's logic, but the 'victorious' side hastened to hand over Article 1554 to the Court of Special Presence Chambers, where verdicts are written with motives, and if there are formal signs of crimes, it is not permissible for judges-officials to issue acquittals."

Thus, the period from the second half of the 19th century to the early 20th century marked significant transformations in family-marriage relations due to the crisis of the patriarchal family and the emergence of nuclear and transitional families. This process involved changes in the moral, psychological, religious, social, and economic foundations of family and marriage. These changes manifested in the increasing frequency of marital and intra-family conflicts and, as a result, a gradual increase in the number of divorces, especially after 1909.

Conclusion

In general, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, official divorces in the Tver Governorate, as well as in the Russian Empire as a whole, were rare occurrences. During the pre-revolutionary period, divorces as a means of resolving intra-family conflicts were not encouraged, and legislation imposed numerous restrictions on the dissolution of marriage, which allowed for a proliferation of violence within families. The divorce procedure was quite complex, lengthy, and required a certain level of literacy. In this situation, the practice of "informal divorces" emerged. Contemporary

discussions focused on the necessity of liberalizing the divorce process and increasing the grounds for divorce. Crimes within the family were a reality in Russia, resulting from family legislation and the practical powerlessness of women. The financial consequences of divorce in the late 19th to early 20th centuries had a significant impact on spouses and the family budget. During that time, the family income was usually based on the joint efforts of both spouses, and divorce led to serious changes in the financial situation of each individual.

Divorce not only involved the division of financial resources but also the separation of property. This could lead to disputes and conflicts, especially if one party sought to retain a larger share of the common property. Consequently, spouses could lose some income and assets, which in turn resulted in financial instability and limitations in managing their finances. The financial consequences of divorce were particularly pronounced for women. During that time, women were generally financially dependent on their husbands and did not have their own means of support. Therefore, divorce resulted in the loss of financial assistance and created economic instability. Women who lacked specialized skills or education often faced difficulties in finding employment and earning income, further exacerbating their financial dependence. Additionally, the divorce process itself required significant financial expenses for legal representation and court costs. This could significantly deplete the financial resources of both spouses and increase the financial burden on the family budget. However, it is worth noting that over time, legislation began to consider the financial aspects of divorce and ensure a fair division of property and financial support for both parties. These changes were driven by societal demands and progressive ideas of equality and justice. Overall, the financial consequences of divorce in the late 19th to early 20th centuries included the loss of income and assets, financial dependence, limitations in managing finances, and increased financial obligations. These consequences had a significant impact on spouses and the family budget, necessitating appropriate measures to ensure financial stability and fairness in divorce proceedings.

However, the reform of divorce legislation, which did not meet the needs of the population, did not find a resolution in tsarist Russia.

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