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DEVELOPMENT OF RUSSIAN AGRICULTURE IN THE POST-REFORM PERIOD

Ershov, Bogdan Anatolyevich¹, Berenov, Alexander Rashidovich²

¹Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor, Academician of RAE, Voronezh State Technical University, 84, 20-letiya Oktyabrya Street, Voronezh, Russia, E-mail: bogdan.ershov@yandex.ru

²Candidate of Historical Sciences, Associate Professor of the Department of Social-Humanitarian and State-Legal Disciplines, Voronezh Institute of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia, 1a, Irkutskaya Street, Voronezh, Russia, E-mail: berenov.sasha@yandex.ru

Abstract

The article considers the development of agriculture in Russia in the post-reform period in which the level of agricultural development largely determined the state of the economy as a whole. In the Russian village of the 60-90-s of the XIX century there was a process of decomposition of the peasantry (in the pre-reform period it was possible to speak confidently about social inequality among the peasants) or, as it was called by the peasants themselves - "raskrezhjanization". In the villages, the economic and social position of the emerging rural bourgeoisie - the kulaks, on the one hand, was strengthening, and the poorest layer - the rural proletariat, a significant part of which could no longer exist under the new conditions and left for the cities - was increasingly expanding.

Keywords: peasant, village, city, bourgeoisie, land, allotment.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the process of implementation of the peasant reform of 1861 the main blow was inflicted on the poorest strata of the peasantry. The loss of 20 % of land, the increase in payments per tithe, and redemption payments, which sucked money out of peasant societies, had a severe impact on their economic situation. Some of these peasants were forced to sell their labor both in the village (to kulaks) and in the city (by entering industrial enterprises). In a particularly difficult situation were former backyard peasants (who did not receive land allotments) and peasants-"donators" who had minimal allotments insufficient for their subsistence. Under the new conditions, the landlords had to reorganize the ways of running their own farms. However, this reorganization was very slow, especially in the first post-reform years. Lack of funds, equipment and experience hindered the creation of capitalist farms. Under conditions in which the economic ties between peasant and landlord farms were not broken (peasants had to agree on the terms of using the sections, to pay duties, the lands of peasants and landlords were in inter-settlement ownership), the so-called slave system emerged, which for a long time existed in parallel with the capitalist system, or even together with it (in a mixed form).



The essence of the slave system consisted in the fact that peasants (for a certain payment, and most often in the account of grain payments or for the right to rent sections) continued to work for the landlord, using their inventory. In capitalist farms, hired laborers used the landlord's inventory. The working system, because of the low productivity of economically disinterested workers, could not compete with capitalist forms of farm organization for a long time. Gradually, by the 80s of the XIX century, it began to be replaced by other more progressive forms.

II. METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

In order to comprehensively study the traditions of rural everyday life, the article applied the general scientific principles of dialectics, system and structural analysis, historicism and objectivity. On their basis, the research problem was formulated and historical facts were classified. The combination of micro- and macro-historical approaches made it possible to identify the main trends in the evolution of rural traditions in the period of modernization.

A significant number of Russian landlords in the middle of the XIX century failed to rebuild their farms at all. By the mid-90s, about 40% of noble lands were mortgaged, during the same period several thousand noble estates were sold for debts per year. The government tried to help the nobility by creating a special Noble Bank, where land could be mortgaged on favorable terms. The purchase of land (mainly by the wealthy part of the peasantry) was carried out through a special Peasant Bank.

In modern Russian historiography, when studying agrarian relations in post-reform Russia, it is customary to distinguish two ways of bourgeois development in agriculture.

The first path is of the "Prussian" type (characteristic of Prussia and widespread east of the Elbe), in which, as V.I. Lenin wrote, "the serfdom of the landlord slowly grows into a bourgeois, junker economy, condemning the peasants to decades of the most painful expropriation and bondage."

"In the second case, the landed economy does not exist or is smashed by the revolution, which confiscates and fragments the feudal estates." In this process the peasant is transformed into a capitalist farmer. Such a path found its most vivid expression in the United States and was called the "American" path.

It is important to note that in modern historiography there is no unanimity in the question of the correlation of types of bourgeois agrarian evolution in Russia. The question of the reality or only potential possibility of the "American" way of development of capitalism in the countryside is debatable. Today, the thesis that the bourgeois-democratic, farmer way of capitalism development was a historical reality where the level of landownership development was low (Siberia, the North, the peripheral regions of the empire) looks convincing. At the same time, in the "old", serfdom areas of the country, the "Prussian" way of development undoubtedly prevailed.

The struggle of the peasantry and landlords for the realization of one or another way of agrarian evolution goes through the entire post-reform history of Russia. The main obstacle to the development of the agrarian sector of the economy was landlord land ownership, which largely determined the lack of land for millions of peasants. Historical practice demonstrated the futility of the conservative path of development, but due to the dominance of landlordism and vestiges in the Russian village, the farmer's path could not prevail. The reforms failed to resolve this acute conflict, which eventually led to the emergence of new social upheavals.

However, despite all the difficulties, in Russia's agriculture in the post-reform period clearly visible and new, progressive phenomena. It is gradually taking a commercial, entrepreneurial character, overcomes the stagnation formed in previous years.

An important factor is the constant expansion of cultivated areas (in the Black Earth provinces, in the east and south-east of the country). At the same time, in some regions (North-West) these areas slightly decreased. The structure of crops gradually changed (the share of grain crops decreased, while the share of industrial and fodder crops increased, etc.).



Agrotechnical methods also changed. The three-field system of farming prevailed in the country (at that, in the marginal northern and north-western lands the slash-and-burn system was practiced, and in the steppe zone - the swidden system). However, in a number of landowners' farms, in the Baltic and western provinces, the more promising four-field system with grass sowing was increasingly applied. In general, Russian agriculture was extensive. According to P.A. Khromov, the grain yield in the 60-70s was 3.74 in the "samy" (i.e. 3.74 grains per one grain of sowing). By the mid-1990s, it had risen to 4.9. This indicator was several times inferior to yields in developed European countries (England, France, Germany), but was close to the American one, where agriculture in this period also developed extensively.

In general, grain production in the country increased significantly. If in 1864-1866 on average about 1.9 billion poods were harvested, in 1896-1900 it was 3.3 billion poods. - However, this increase was achieved mainly due to the expansion of cultivated areas. There was no stability in the agrarian sector either. Constantly recurring crop failures led to mass starvation (1891 and 1892 were especially bad years).

The development of market relations in the country was facilitated by the deepening specialization of certain regions in the post-reform period: the Black Earth center, the south, and southeastern provinces of Russia (Voronezh, Tambov, Simbirsk, Samara, Yekaterinoslavskaya, Kherson, etc.) became part of a vast area of trade grain production.

Trade cattle breeding developed in the provinces of the North, North-West, Baltic and in a number of central inland provinces (Vologda, St. Petersburg, Estland, Livonia, Courland, Moscow, Yaroslavl, etc.).

Pskov and Novgorod provinces became the centers of commercial flax production, beet sugar production - a number of Ukrainian and western provinces. Districts of viticulture, tobacco growing, hemp growing, etc. emerged.

The specialization of individual regions of the country contributed to the establishment of strong economic ties between them, increased crop yields, livestock productivity, and labor productivity.

In 1877, the Central Statistical Committee conducted the first census of land ownership in European Russia: 150 million dessiatins belonged to the treasury, 93 million were privately owned, 131 million were peasant land, and 7 million dessiatins were appanage lands, the income from which went to support the royal family. The average per capita allotment in 1878 ranged from 2.9 to 5.1 dessiatinas. If by the beginning of the reform of 1861 a significant part of private land was owned by the nobility, after the reform they sold more land than they bought.

Three farming systems were mainly used: slash-and-burn in the north, perelog in the steppe south, and the three-field system (fallow) in the Eastern European forest-steppe. In Western Europe and the United States, by this time, the transition to a more efficient horticultural system had already been completed, in which rational crop rotation was introduced instead of the fallow field. It is not surprising that at the end of the XIX century, grain yields on peasant fields in Russia were almost twice as high as in Holland, Denmark and Germany. Under the three-field system, which prevailed in most of the country, the area allocated for fallow and was empty during the year, occupied more than 1/3 of the arable land.

By the end of the XIX century, most of the marketable bread was produced by wealthy and middle peasantry. Only in the western regions of the country the leading role in the agrarian market belonged to the landlord's farm.

Large landlords and prosperous peasant farms replaced the three-field system with the fruit-transfer system, used agricultural machines (reapers, threshers) and mineral fertilizers.

The majority of peasants had no opportunity to improve their farming system and tools. The land was still plowed with a plow or plow, a sickle or scythe was used for harvesting, threshing was done manually with chains, grain was cleaned of debris with a large sieve, and flour was ground with hand or small water mills.



The post-reform period saw the gradual decomposition of the community: in many places the redistribution of communal land ceased; wealthy peasants "went out to the brigades" (plots of one family united into a single land wedge) and appropriated communal lands. A new stratum appeared in the community: the wastrels, the beavers, who were exploited by the kulaks. The concentration of land in the hands of the kulak led to the decay of the communal foundations of the Russian village.

In the economic sphere, the vestiges of feudalism included the existence of large landlord landholdings and, as a consequence, small or landless peasants, which led to the preservation of archaic, serfdom methods of exploitation of peasants by landlords. Russia's industrial backwardness in the post-reform period also hindered the development of agriculture. All this significantly hindered the growth of productive forces.

In the northern provinces - Arkhangelsk, Olonets (Karelia), Vologda - the slash-and-burn system of agriculture was preserved. The structure of cultivated areas was quite archaic. In the northern and middle belt oats occupied up to 75% of the spring field. In 1870-1871 the average grain yield was only CAM-3.6.

Under such conditions cattle breeding expanded slowly: in 1861 there were 15,063 thousand horses, and in 1871 - 15,542 thousand; the number of cattle increased during this time from 20,708 to 21,604 thousand heads.

But in the next period (1880-1890) agriculture experienced a considerable boom. This was promoted by active colonization of the Southern Ukraine, the North Caucasus, and the Lower Volga region. At the very end of the XIX century the colonization of Siberia intensified. There was a serious increase in agricultural production. In 1864-1866 the sown areas under grain crops and potatoes in the territory of 50 provinces of European Russia did not exceed 72.2 million dessiatinas, in 1885-1894 it already reached 92.6 million dessiatinas. This growth was ensured by the plowing of lands in the black earth zone, especially in the south of Ukraine, the North Caucasus, and the Lower Volga.

The situation with livestock breeding was worse - in 1861-1898 the number of horses per 100 inhabitants decreased from 26.5 to 17.6; the number of cattle per 100 dessiatins of convenient land - from 36.7 to 25.2. The reason for this was the rapid growth of population during this period, which was not provided by the corresponding increase in agricultural efficiency and the area of cultivated land.

Progressive changes took place in Russian agri-culture of the post-reform period: machines and mineral fertilizers were more widely used, more complex crop rotations were introduced. The marketability of agriculture was growing, and bread was delivered to the market in increasing quantities. Specialized branches of agriculture were even more closely connected with the market: commercial cattle breeding, distilling.

The abolition of serfdom did not compensate for all the unfavorable conditions of the development of the peasant economy in the post-reform period. Underpayments grew, for example, in Kazan province in 1871-1875 they averaged 4% of annual payments, and a quarter of a century later - already 418%. The peasants could pay taxes, redemption debt and zemstvo dues faithfully only where there were non-agricultural trades and third-party earnings. Livestock supply decreased, and the share of horseless peasants increased.

III. CONCLUSION

The evolution of the peasant economy on capitalist principles became the most important factor in the development of post-reform Russia and first attracted the attention of Marxist theorists. A detailed analysis of the decomposition of the peasantry and the capitalist evolution of the Russian village was given by V.I. Lenin in his work "The Development of Capitalism in Russia" (1899) [Lenin, vol. 3]. On the outskirts of Russia, the development of agrarian capitalism had a special character. In the southern Ukraine, the North Caucasus, the Lower Volga, Siberia, the Far East were not vestiges of serfdom, there was a lot of free land, there was an active process of colonization. From the very beginning colonists conducted their farming as a private one, created detached farms and farmsteads. Thus, capitalist farming was formed, the most developed, mature forms of capitalism in agriculture - with the use of large capital and mass hired labor - emerged.



Overall, the development of agrarian capitalism was a progressive phenomenon. "A few decades of capitalist withdrawal," Lenin emphasized, "have done more in this respect than whole centuries of previous history. The monotony of routine subsistence farming has been replaced by a variety of forms of commercial agriculture; primitive farming implements have begun to give way to improved implements and machines; the immobility of ancient systems of field cultivation has been undermined by the techniques of culture."

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РАЗВИТИЕ СЕЛЬСКОГО ХОЗЯЙСТВА РОССИИ В ПОРЕФОРМЕННЫЙ ПЕРИОД

Ершов Богдан Анатольевич¹, Беренов Александр Рашидович²

¹Доктор исторических наук, профессор, академик РАН, Воронежский государственный технический университет, ул. 20-летия Октября 84, Воронеж, Россия,
E-mail: bogdan.erшов@yandex.ru

²Кандидат исторических наук, доцент кафедры социально-гуманитарных и государственно-правовых дисциплин, Воронежский институт ФСИН России, ул. Иркутская 1а, Воронеж, Россия,
E-mail: berenov.sasha@yandex.ru

Аннотация

В статье рассматривается развитие сельского хозяйства в России в пореформенный период, когда уровень развития сельского хозяйства во многом определял состояние экономики в целом. В российской деревне 60-90-х годов XIX века шел процесс разложения крестьянства (в пореформенный период можно было уверенно говорить о социальном неравенстве среди крестьян) или, как его называли сами крестьяне, - "раскрестьянивания". В деревнях укреплялись экономические и социальные позиции формирующейся сельской буржуазии - кулачества, с одной стороны, и все более расширялся беднейший слой - сельский пролетариат, значительная часть которого не могла больше существовать в новых условиях и уходила в города.

Ключевые слова: крестьянин, деревня, город, буржуазия, земля, надел.

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