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TO WHAT EXTENT COULD THE EMPIRE BE CONSTRUCTED? OBJECTIVE LIMITATION ON AGRARIAN DISCOURSE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY RUSSIA: THE BALTIC PROVINCES, THE RUSSIAN BLACK SOIL REGION, AND RIGHT-BANK UKRAINE

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INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, historians regarded the peasant reform of 1861 as bourgeois, that is, as an attempt to modernize Russia's economy and society.¹ Recently, a new interpretation of the emancipation as a primordial attempt to create an imperial nation, an advocate of which is Mikhail Dolbilov,² is becoming dominant. Unfortunately, both views try to interpret the reform through the reformers' intentions, discourse, and, at most, its technical implementation. Challenging these views, this chapter argues that the peasant reform, by its nature, could not change the basic characteristics of agrarian structures of the three agrarian regions of European Russia, that is, the Baltic Provinces, the Central Black Soil

¹ P. A. Zaionchkovskii, *Otmena krepostnogo prava v Rossii*, 3rd ed. (Moscow, 1968); L. G. Zakharova, *Samoderzhavie i otmena krepostnogo prava v Rossii 1856 – 1861* (Moscow, 1984), p. 233; Abbott Gleason, "The Great Reform and the Historians since Stalin," in *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855-1881*, ed. Ben Eklof, John Bushnell, and Larissa Zakharova (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1994), pp. 4, 6; Valeria A. Nardova, "Municipal Self-Government after the 1870 Reform," *Russia's Great Reforms*, p. 181.

² See Chapter 7 of the collection and also his "The Emancipation Reform of 1861 in Russia and the Nationalism of the Imperial Bureaucracy," Tadayuki Hayashi, ed., *The Construction and Deconstruction of National Histories in Slavic Eurasia* (Sapporo, 2003), p. 205; Larissa G. Zakharova, "Autocracy and the Reforms of 1861- 1874 in Russia: Choosing paths of development," *Russia's Great Reforms*, pp. 19, 26

Region, and Right-Bank Ukraine.³ In other words, the emancipation could not work as a tool for nation-building, even if the reformers wished it.

The traditional view does not question the superiority of free labor over unfree, serf labor, but this premise is arguable.⁴ Moreover, serfdom did not always contradict free labor, and the emancipation did not always promote capitalism. Rather, agricultural production to the market developed strongly in the Baltic Region and in Right-Bank Ukraine under serfdom. Many serfs worked as wage laborers, who moved from one farmstead to another (in the case of Right Bank Ukraine, even from one estate to another)⁵ at will, although they still belonged to the serf estate. In contrast, there were very few hired agricultural laborers and agricultural productivity did not develop in the post-emancipation Black Soil Region. As Peter Gatrell argues, the steady progress of Russian agriculture during the nineteenth century did not necessarily depend on serfdom or its abolition. The portrayal of the emancipation as an economic rupture with the past should be questioned.⁶

As for the new interpretation, it is true that one of the Great Reforms' targets was to integrate various estates into an imperial nation. The zemstvo reform of the 1860s presupposed all-estate participation. The juridical reform established jury courts and even peasants were

³ The Baltic Germans, the Russian and Polish nobilities controlled these regions, respectively. These regions are appropriate for comparative studies because, revealing a sharp contrast in agrarian structures, they have much in common. In all these regions, only a limited peasant cottage industry developed and the main source of peasant living was farming. The dominant form of their feudal obligations was not quit rent (*obrok*) but labor dues (*barshchina*) and estates had already begun to produce grain for the market by the middle of the nineteenth century.

⁴ Richard L. Rudolph argues that the Non-Black Soil ("Industrial") Region of Russia was experiencing a full-fledged proto-industrialization on the basis of serf labor before 1861. See his "Agricultural Structure and Proto-Industrialization in Russia: Economic Development with Unfree Labor," *The Journal of Economic History* XLV: 1 (1985), pp. 55-56. Rudolf argues that industrialization was well underway on a wide scale on the basis of serf labor before 1861 in Russian non-Black Soil Region.

⁵ In the Baltic regions personal subordination under serfdom was stronger than in Right-Bank Ukraine. In the Baltic regions serfs could only shift between farmsteads within a parish, not between estates.

⁶ Peter Gatrell, "The Meaning of the Great Reforms in Russian Economic History," *Russia's Great Reforms*, p. 88.

admitted as jurors.⁷ However, even after these reforms the bureaucratic-aristocratic regime continued to control rural society. The Russian Empire continued to be an estate-based multiethnic empire integrated through ethnic groups' loyalty to the Tsar. This empire incorporated certain ethnic groups as regional elites and others as ruled people. When non-Russian elites demonstrated their loyalty to the Tsar and succeeded in maintaining socio-political stability in their territories, the government guaranteed their privileges.⁸ The Russian government did not try hard to modify spectacular diversities of administrative and agrarian structures among the regions.

The land distribution system among the serfs, combined with features of peasant domestic groups,⁹ determined the agrarian structures in these regions. Not only peasant customary law but also the intensity of landlords' intervention affected the peasant land distribution. Sometimes, landlords even created or reorganized peasant domestic groups. Landlords' intervention, aimed at maintaining the necessary size of peasant domestic groups, became particularly intensive when the peasants fulfilled their feudal obligations not by quit rent (*obrok*) but by labor dues (*barshchina*).¹⁰ The cultivation system in the demesne affected the posses-

⁷ Nardova, "Municipal Self-Government," p. 183; Alexander K. Afanas'ev, "Jurors and Jury Trials in Imperial Russia, 1866-1885," *Russia's Great Reforms*, p. 215.

⁸ Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: a Multiethnic History* (Harlow: England, 2001), pp. 114, 254.

⁹ Andrijs Plakans, "Seigneurial Authority and Peasant Family Life: The Baltic Area in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 5:4 (1975), pp. 635, 641. This chapter relies upon the concept of "domestic groups," instead of "households," because the term "household" refers to a group of people living under the same roof, sharing a number of activities, and linked to each other by blood or marriage. An example for this was *dvor* in the Black Earth Region of Russia. In contrast, many farmsteads in the Baltic region and some of *dvors* in the Right Bank Ukraine contained people who did not have kin-linkage with the houses' heads. This is why the concept of domestic groups (broader than households by meaning) is more appropriate for comparative analyses. See Andrijs Plakans, "Peasant Farmsteads and Households in the Baltic Littoral 1797," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17:1 (1975), pp. 20-21.

¹⁰ Witold Kula, "The Seigneurial and the Peasant Family in Eighteenth-Century Poland," in *Family and Society: Selections from the Annales Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, ed. Robert Forster and Orest Ranum (Baltimore and London, 1976), pp.199-200; V. A. Aleksandrov, I. V. Vlasova, "Semeinyi ukhad i domashnii byt krest'ianstva (seredina XVIII v. – 1860-e gg.)," G. A. Nosov, ed., *Russkie: istoriko-etnograficheskie ocherki* (Moscow, 1997), p. 102.

sion of farming tools and work animals in the peasant domestic groups; if landlords did not have work animals, peasant domestic groups had to provide them,¹¹ and for this purpose these groups needed many members (the Baltic case). In contrast, if landlords had a number of work animals to carry out labor dues, peasant domestic groups could be smaller (the Right Bank Ukrainian case). Moreover, if landlords enjoyed abundant opportunity to intervene in the shaping of peasant domestic groups, they could weaken the domestic groups' patrilineal kin characteristics, and instead make these groups include non-related members and male affines (the Baltic case). The most important category of the latter was sons-in-law or husbands of daughters of the domestic group heads. Therefore, if one frequently finds sons-in-law of the heads in domestic groups in a region, one may suppose that these domestic groups mainly functioned as units of cultivation, rather than patrilineal kin-based units.

Almost forty years ago, A. M. Anfimov compared Germany and Russia and identified the influence of the inheritance system on the emergence of an agricultural proletariat. In Russia, rural proletariat did not take shape because every male member of a domestic group would eventually receive his share of land.¹² Thus, Anfimov limited his argument to the inheritance system and ignored other factors, such as the rules shaping domestic groups and landlords' pressure on this process. This chapter elucidates the "triangle" of the formation of domestic groups, the land distribution system, and the farming system in the demesne.

THE BALTIC PROVINCES

In the Baltic Region, peasant domestic groups were divided into some categories, according to the amounts of feudal obligations that these groups performed; the more land a domestic group held, the higher its rank became and the greater feudal obligations it performed. The Baltic Region did not have peasant communes. Landlords assigned labor dues

¹¹ E. Stashevskii, "Krest'ianskii dvor na Kievshchine i ego drobimost' (1795-1923 g.g.)," *Mestnoe khoziaistvo* 2/20 (1923), p. 87.

¹² A. M. Anfimov, *Krupnoe pomeshchich'e khoziaistvo evropeiskoi Rossii (konets XIX – nachalo XX veka)* (Moscow, 1969), pp. 360-361, 364.

on each peasant farmstead (*Gesinde, khutor*). A farmstead had to maintain a certain-sized labor force, which was organized by farmstead heads (*Wirth, krest'iane-khoziaeva*). They were obliged to satisfy the demand for labor not only of their own farmsteads but also of the manor farms to which they belonged.¹³

In addition to peasants with land holdings, there were landless peasants, whom landlords distributed among farmsteads. A typical farmstead comprised two groups. The first was the head's conjugal family and his relatives. Andrjes Plakans called this group the "core family."¹⁴ The second, adjunct group was constituted of mainly farmhands (*Knecht, krest'iane-batraki*) and lodgers (*Einwohner, bobyli*). One finds a negative correlation between the number of able-bodied people in the core family and in the adjunct group. This implies that landlords added a non-related workforce to the domestic groups suffering a shortage of family workforce. Farmhands worked and lived in the farmstead and received regular remuneration in money or in kind according to the contract with the farmstead head. When farmhands were in their forties, they became lodgers. They lost contractual relations with the farmstead head, but received the landlord's permission to settle on a farmstead, though only temporarily. They earned bread from daily or weekly labor, hired by landlords or farmstead heads. Some of the landless population had been so for several generations, but others continued to be drawn from the heads' families. Relatives of the head frequently worked as farmhands. After the death of a head, one of his sons succeeded to the headship, while the other sons entered the landless category.¹⁵

A landlord was partly an organizer of agricultural production since he assigned headship on one or another peasant and distributed labor force among farmsteads. The landlords carefully oversaw the headship of farmsteads, evicted a head and his family if he could not perform his obligations, and replaced him with someone not related. The landlords

¹³ Andrjes Plakans, "Serf Emancipation and the Changing Structure of Rural Domestic Groups in the Russian Baltic Provinces: Linden Estate, 1798-1858," in *Households: Comparative and Historical Studies of the Domestic Groups*, ed. Robert McC. Netting, Richard R. Wilk and Eric J. Arnould (Berkeley, London, 1984), pp. 260-261.

¹⁴ Plakans, "Peasant Farmsteads," p. 20.

¹⁵ Iu. Kakhk, "Ostzeiskii put'" *perekhoda ot feodalizma k kapitalizmu: Krest'iane i pomeschchiki Estliandii i Lifliandii v XVIII – pervoi polovine XIX veka* (Tallin, 1988), pp. 100-101, 133.

interfered in inheritance practice if they did not appreciate the heirs. Thus, landless peasants could become heads, and heads could be forced to become landless.¹⁶

The mean size of the domestic groups was very large. It was 14.4 people on the Daudzewas Estate in Kurland in 1797. The mean size of the core families was 8.6 people; there were 1.2 male and female farmhands, and 2.8 lodgers and their families. Other members (1.8 people) comprised herders, orphans and foster children.¹⁷ The Baltic peasant domestic groups often included sons-in-law of heads. For example, there were 30 sons-in-law of heads and 100 daughters-in-law of heads in a total of 771 peasant domestic groups in the north-eastern parish of Nerft in 1797.¹⁸ The proportion of sons-in-law to daughters-in-law of heads was 30 percent.

In the Baltic provinces until the mid-nineteenth century landlords owned neither work animals nor farming tools and, therefore, only on a limited scale were they able to use wage labor. Instead, peasant farmsteads provided the demesne with workforce, farming animals and tools.¹⁹ The landlords selected only those with these conditions as farmstead heads, while the others had to become farmhands or lodgers. In other words, the farmstead was a workforce organization, which was sufficiently large, had an abundant labor force, farming animals and tools, and took responsibility for farming the demesne. The patrilineal principle in shaping core families was not very strong, and core families often accepted male members of a different male line. This also suggests that the Baltic peasant farmsteads were, in the first place, units of cultivation, and only in the second place were they patrilineal kin-based units.

Historians divide the Baltic serf emancipation into two stages: granting the serfs personal freedom (1816-1819)²⁰ and permitting the ex-serfs to acquire land (the 1840s-60s). Between these reforms, the law prohibited the ex-serfs to move out of a parish and to own land.

¹⁶ Plakans, "Seigneurial Authority," p. 639.

¹⁷ Plakans, "Peasant Farmsteads," pp. 15, 23

¹⁸ Plakans, "Seigneurial Authority," pp. 630, 646.

¹⁹ Iu. Kakhk, Kh. Uibu, *O sotsial'noi structure i mobil'nosti estonskogo krest'ianstva v pervoi polovine XIX veka* (Tallin, 1980), pp. 15-16.

²⁰ Serfdom was abolished in 1816 in Estland, in 1817 in Kurland, and in 1819 in Livland.

They had to rent their former allotment from the landlord.²¹ Landless emancipation clearly distinguished farmstead heads and landless peasants. The right of heads to farmsteads was strengthened and only they could be the holders of farmsteads. Those who were the heads and their families at the time of emancipation secured headship thereafter, while those who were landless and their families remained so, although a certain mobility between these strata was maintained from the 1820s to the 1840s.²²

Peasant farmsteads continued to be the main working units not only on their allotments, but also on the demesne. At least until the 1860s, landlords had neither work animals nor farming tools, although some landlords began to hire a few workers directly in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.²³ During the 1840s-1860s, landlords still requested farmstead heads to keep a sufficiently large labor force. The heads hired landless peasants to fulfil this demand. Consequently, landless peasants continued to be the main source of the workforce both in the demesne and on peasant allotments after the emancipation. At least until the 1850s, the peasant farmstead with sub-populations of the head, his relatives, and non-related landless members remained the dominant form of rural co-residence. Even in the 1880s, such co-residence had survived in many localities.²⁴

The second stage of serf emancipation in the Baltic Provinces allowed peasants to acquire land. The laws obliged landlords to sell or rent ex-peasant allotments to peasants: in Livland in 1849, in Estland in 1856, and in Kurland in 1863.²⁵ At this stage, it is possible to note several changes in the agrarian structure. The first is the transition of rent from labor to money during the 1840s-50s.²⁶ The second change is the purchase of land by peasants. The Baltic landlords began to sell to the peasants the land on which they worked, that is, their former allotment.

²¹ Plakans, "Serf Emancipation," pp. 253-254; Kakhk, "*Ostzeiskii put'*," p. 261.

²² Kakhk, Uibu, *O sotsial'noi structure*, p. 47; Plakans, "Serf Emancipation," p. 253.

²³ Kakhk, "*Ostzeiskii put'*," p. 344.

²⁴ Plakans, "Serf Emancipation," pp. 254, 267.

²⁵ M. I. Kozin, "Agrarnaia politika tsarizma v Pribaltike v 60-kh godakh XIX v.," *Ezhegodnik po agrarnoi istorii vostochnoi Evropy (AIVE) 1960 g.* (Kiev, 1962), pp. 455, 462.

²⁶ Kakhk, "*Ostzeiskii put'*," p. 270.

For example, by 1885, about 40 percent of the peasant farmsteads in Kurland had become peasant property; and by the end of the nineteenth century, 60.7 percent of all the plowed land belonged to peasants, while only 36.3 percent to landlords.²⁷ Third, landlords began to run their own estates by acquiring their own farming animals and tools and hiring wage laborers. The proportion of land rented to peasants decreased. Fourth, the social mobilization of peasants amongst classes almost disappeared; the barrier between farmstead heads and landless peasants became insurmountable.²⁸

Overall, the landless emancipation only caused partial changes in the agrarian structure of the Baltic Region. Landlords and farmstead heads remained as the main organizers of agricultural production and landless peasants continued to be the main source of labor both on peasant land and manor. The most, almost the only, important change accompanying the emancipation was the fixing of the peasant classes. This took place because the landlords had lost control over land distribution among peasants.

In fact, in 1832, the Russian government proposed that land be given to landless peasants on state-owned estates in the Baltic Provinces. In 1860, the government proposed that some portions of land be cut off from heads of households and that they be given to landless peasants. If these proposals had been carried out, the class of landless peasant would have disappeared, and the agrarian structure of this region would have changed drastically. These proposals, however, remained unrealized.²⁹

In addition, landlords remained holders of juridical, administrative and police authority. After the township (*volost'*) reform in 1866, landlords' direct tutelage of social and economic life in townships was

²⁷ A. Iu. Mierinia, "Podati i povinnosti krest'ian kurlianskoi i lifliandskoi gubernii vo vtoroi polovine XIX veka," *EAIVE 1970 g.* (Riga, 1977), p. 234; Plakans, "Serf Emancipation," p. 268.

²⁸ Kakhk, Uibu, *O sotsial'noi structure*, p. 60; Kakhk, "Ostzeiskii put'," p. 351.

²⁹ Kozin, "Agrarnaia politika tsarizma," p. 458. Kimitaka Matsuzato argues that policy makers' economic consideration hindered the realization of this egalitarian land-distributing system in the Baltic provinces. See his paper, "German Elitism in a Populist Empire: The Ostzei Question in a Comparative Perspective," presented at the Winter International Symposium held at the Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University (January 28-31, 2004). My point is that differences between regional agricultural structures did not allow transplanting a system from a region to another.

abolished. However, this reform passed the former landlords' authority to parish courts, which were controlled by landlords. Only at the end of the 1880s did the Baltic aristocracy lose juridical and police control over the peasants, although they maintained significant power. Generally, until 1914, the Baltic Provinces were ruled by native law, not by imperial common law, despite the government's repeated attempts to overcome this legal separatism.³⁰

THE RUSSIAN BLACK SOIL REGION

In the pre-emancipation Russian Black Soil Region, communes held plowed land and periodically redistributed it. Landholdings per capita were nearly equal, regardless of the number of able-bodied members in a household.³¹ Communes also distributed feudal obligations to households, while the serf owners' intervention in this matter was minimal. The more allotment a peasant household held, the more labor obligations for the manor it bore. To distribute duties, communes considered, above all, households' composition; marriages and deaths immediately affected it. When a young couple married, they formed a new work team and received access to a plot of land.³²

Constant redistribution of land had an egalitarian effect, preventing the emergence of rich and poor peasants.³³ Russian domestic groups were kin-based, with very few non-related members.³⁴ In agriculturally specialized regions at least, even rich peasants relied upon family labor. Not only peasant but also manor farms rarely employed agricultural

³⁰ N. S. Andreeva, "Status nemetskogo dvorianstva v Pribaltike v nachale XIX veka," *Voprosy istorii* 2 (2002), pp. 44-45.

³¹ Steven L. Hoch, *Serfdom and Social Control in Russia: Petrovskoe, a Village in Tambov* (Chicago, London, 1989), pp. 16, 10.

³² Hoch, *Serfdom*, pp. 93, 94, 124, and 151.

³³ I. D. Koval'chenko, *Russkoe krest'ianstvo v pervoi polovine XIX v.* (Moscow, 1967), pp. 95-96.

³⁴ Peter Czap, Jr., "The Perennial Multiple Family Household, Mishino, Russia, 1782-1858," *Journal of Family History* 7:1 (1982), p. 24; Michael Mitterauer and Alexander Kagan, "Russian and Central European Family Structures: A Comparative View," *Journal of Family History* 7:1 (1982), p. 108.

laborers.³⁵ However incapable a head proved to be, he did not need to fear descending to the rank of the landless. Every male peasant could expect to be the head of a domestic group, and every peasant family could hold land.

As we saw above, in the Baltic Region, if the core family within a domestic group fell short of workforce to perform feudal obligations, the landlord added an adjacent workforce to the group. In contrast, in the Russian Black Soil Region, the shaping of domestic groups was a spontaneous process, ignoring excesses or deficiencies of able-bodied workforce. Domestic groups consisted only of patrilineal relatives. Even when a domestic group did not have enough workforce to perform feudal obligations, no one remedied the situation. Instead, the commune decreased the land allotment and feudal obligations for the group. In short, in the Russian Black Soil Region, a family's structure determined its allotment and obligations, while in the Baltic Region the opposite was the case.³⁶

As a rule, male peasants did not leave their paternal households before their fathers' death. When the head of household died, usually the elder son became the new patriarch. But the younger sons and even nephews enjoyed opportunities to alienate themselves from their native households and become patriarchs, if they reached middle age. After marriage, a bride joined her husband's household.³⁷ One finds very few sons-in-law who entered brides' families in the Russian Black Soil Region under serfdom.³⁸ Overall, domestic groups of this region were patrilineal kin-based units, which males from other patrilineal descent groups rarely joined.³⁹ The mean size of domestic groups was between 7.3 and 8.4 people on the Petrovskoe Estate in Tambov Province from 1782 to 1850.⁴⁰ These figures are smaller than those of the Baltic Region,

³⁵ Koval'chenko, *Russkoe krepostnoe krest'ianstvo*, pp. 123-124.

³⁶ Czap, "The Perennial," p. 5.

³⁷ Hoch, *Serfdom*, pp. 79, 90.

³⁸ Peter Czap, Jr., "A Large Family: the Peasant's Greatest Wealth: Serf Households in Mishino, Russia, 1814-1858," in *Family Forms in Historic Europe*, ed. Richard Wall (Cambridge, New York, 1983), pp. 133-135.

³⁹ Mitterauer and Kagan, "Russian and Central European," p. 108.

⁴⁰ Hoch, *Serfdom*, p. 61.

but indicative enough, approximately the same as the figures for its core families.

In the Russian Black Soil Region under serfdom, peasants possessed the farming tools and animals necessary for cultivating the landlords' demesnes.⁴¹ The total number of horses per capita was from 0.43 to 0.57 in the case of Petrovskoe Estate during the first half of the nineteenth century. Employing sources of the General Staff, Steven Hoch remarks that even the poorest peasant household in Tambov Province had two horses.⁴² Under this condition, almost all peasant domestic groups functioned as units of labor dues in the demesne, as was the case with the Baltic Region.

In the Russian Black Soil Region, the emancipation was conducted as follows. First, landlords drafted a land charter (*ustavnaia gramota*) for each commune, and the land charter determined the size of land that the peasant commune would receive and the sum of redemption payment that they would pay. Between the conclusion of the land charter and the beginning of redemption payment, the ex-serfs held the status of temporarily obligated peasants (*vremenno-obiazatel'nye krest'iane*), over whom the landlord still exercised police authority. If the landlord and the peasants agreed in regard to the size of peasant land and the amount of redemption money, the temporarily obligated peasants became peasant-landowners (*krest'iane-sobstvenniki*) and were liberated from the landlord's authority.⁴³

After the emancipation, the government strengthened the commune's economic and administrative function. The commune distributed land allotments to peasant households, according to their labor force or number of able-bodied men, and made them perform the obligations assigned in accordance with this allotment. On the other hand, communes performed the land redistribution much less frequently after the emancipation than before. Thus, more than 59 percent of peasant communes did not carry out a land redistribution during the half century from the emancipation to 1910 in almost all provinces of the Black Soil Region.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Daniel Field, "The Year of Jubilee," *Russia's Great Reforms*, p. 51.

⁴² Hoch, *Serfdom*, pp. 46, 47.

⁴³ Zaionchkovskii, *Otmena krepostnogo prava*, pp. 126-127, 145, 150, and 183.

⁴⁴ V. G. Tiukavkin, *Velikorusskoe krest'ianstvo i stolypinskaia agrarnaia reforma* (Moscow,

Instead of redistribution, peasants tackled the deficiency of allotments (compared with their labor force) by renting land from landlords.⁴⁵ In the Black Soil provinces, from 30 to 50 percent of all peasant domestic groups rented land from landlords. The majority of them were so-called rich (*zazhitochnye*) peasants, but they cultivated about 85 percent of the rented land without hiring workers.⁴⁶ Thus, even rich peasants continued to rely upon family labor, and there was little reason for the emergence of a significant stratum of landless rural proletariat.⁴⁷

In the Russian Black Soil Region, landlords did not run manor farms by themselves unless there was a deficiency of rent-bound peasants.⁴⁸ Having retained most of their former land after the emancipation, landlords lacked farming animals and the tools necessary to cultivate it. They did not have the capital necessary to purchase them or to hire workers. They preferred to avoid investment, tried to minimize risk by exploiting the economic plight of the ex-serfs, whose allotments were so small and whose obligations were so high that they could not live by their own resources. Many landlords resorted to renting the demesne to peasants. This was the only possible way for the former serf owners to maintain their manor farms.⁴⁹ Peasants produced far more grain than landlords.⁵⁰

To sum up, in the post-emancipation Central Black Soil Region, peasants, not landlords, continued to be the main organizer of agricultural production, cultivating both the manor and their own allotments. Moreover, these peasants rarely hired wage laborers and family labor continued to be the main toiling force both for the demesne and the peasant allotment. The number of sons-in-law of the heads of peasant domestic groups did not increase after the emancipation. They remained

2001), p. 173.

⁴⁵ A. M. Anfimov, *Zemel'naia arenda v Rossii v nachale XX veka* (Moscow, 1961), p. 42.

⁴⁶ Anfimov, *Zemel'naia arenda*, pp. 44, 115; Tiukavkin, *Velikorusskoe krest'ianstvo*, p. 111.

⁴⁷ Anfimov, *Krupnoe pomeschich'e khoziaistvo*, p. 364; Christine D. Worobec, *Peasant Russia: Family and Community in the Post Emancipation Period* (Princeton, 1991), p. 22; Field, "The Year of Jubilee," p. 51; Gatrell, "The Meaning of the Great Reforms," p. 94.

⁴⁸ Anfimov, *Krupnoe pomeschich'e khoziaistvo*, p. 88.

⁴⁹ Field, "The Year of Jubilee," p. 52; Tiukavkin, *Velikorusskoe krest'ianstvo*, pp. 111-112.

⁵⁰ Tiukavkin, *Velikorusskoe krest'ianstvo*, p. 96.

as few as they had been before the emancipation.⁵¹ Thus, domestic groups in the Central Black Soil Region remained kin-based units. The only change accompanying the emancipation was the stratification of peasants caused by the waning of communes' land distributing function.

RIGHT-BANK UKRAINE

Right-Bank Ukraine comprised the provinces of Kiev, Volynia, and Podolia. Most of the region belonged to the fertile forested steppe. However, the northern half of Volynia and one and a half districts of Kiev province belonged to Polesie, which was less fertile and less populous.⁵² Here, I focus on the densely populated forest-steppe region, where sugar beet and wheat production thrived.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, many landlords in Right-Bank Ukraine had already begun to produce grain for the West European market.⁵³ Right-Bank Ukraine did not have land-distributing communes. There was a classification of peasant domestic groups according to the numbers of work animals in their possession. Days of labor dues and the standard allotment size of each class differed on each estate.⁵⁴ Land was allocated to a peasant household not by the number of its able-bodied members, but by the number of work animals in its possession.⁵⁵ In Right-Bank Ukraine peasants did not inherit the allotment automatically. Rather, landlords redistributed it to peasant domestic groups, as was the case in the Baltic Region. In these two regions, what stratified peasant domestic groups was not their peasant land-holding systems, but just the landowners' encouragement of stratification. In contrast,

⁵¹ Worobec, *Peasant Russia*, p. 112.

⁵² Robert Edelman, *Proletarian Peasant: the Revolution of 1905 in Russia's Southwest* (Ithaca, London, 1987), p. 35.

⁵³ A. Z. Baraboi, "Rassloenie i nachalo razlozheniia krest'ianstva na Pravoberezhnoi Ukraine v pervoi polovine XIX v.," *EAIIVE* 1960 g., p. 45.

⁵⁴ D. P. Zhuravskii, *Statisticheskoe opisanie Kievskoi gubernii* (St. Petersburg, 1852), vol. 2, pp. 304-305, 307, 335-336.

⁵⁵ N. N. Leshchenko, "Izmeneniia v agrarnykh otnosheniiakh na Ukraine v rezul'tate reform 1861 g.," *EAIIVE* 1958 g. (Tallin, 1959), p. 188.

in the Black Soil Region landlords did not intervene in the land distribution among peasants. This is why peasants remained economically homogeneous there.

The mean size of peasant domestic groups in Right-Bank Ukraine was very small; between 5.60 and 6.00 persons in most provinces (*voevodstva*) in 1775.⁵⁶ It was only 5.91 persons in all the peasant domestic groups working on private estates in Kiev Province in 1845.⁵⁷ It would be very difficult for such small domestic groups to maintain a sufficient number of work animals. The higher the category to which a domestic group belonged, the more members it had. In Right-Bank Ukraine, domestic groups included non-related people, such as lodger (*spulnik*), neighbor (*susid*), foster child (*vospitannik*), and servant (*sluzhitel'*). They were very few and their characteristics have not been studied. The rest of the population comprised relatives or affines of the heads of domestic groups.⁵⁸

In Right-Bank Ukraine, there were many sons-in-law of heads. Even if a head had his own adult son(s) in his domestic group, it was possible that he adopted a youth as his son.⁵⁹ This reminds us of the practice in the Baltic Provinces and suggests that the patrilineal principle of the domestic group was weak. In addition, these sons-in-law were welcomed into the families of their wives as potential successors of heads. In Right-Bank Ukraine, there was no social group corresponding to lodgers in the Baltic Provinces, and every man was able to be a head of a domestic group if he did not die young. Moreover, widows often brought their children by their former marriages to their new homes after remarriage. Sometimes their younger brothers accompanied these wives to become members of the domestic groups.⁶⁰ Hence, the domestic groups were not closed patrilineal kin-based groups at all.

As discussed above, domestic groups of Right-Bank Ukraine included almost no landless peasants who were not relatives of the heads

⁵⁶ A. L. Perkovs'kyi, "Ukrains'ke naseleattia v 60-70-kh rokakh XVIII st.," *Ukrains'kyi istorychnyi zhurnal* (hereafter – *UIZh*) 1 (1968), p. 110.

⁵⁷ Zhuravskii, *Statisticheskoe opisanie*, vol. 1, p. 140; *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 305.

⁵⁸ Kam'ianets-podil's'kyi mis'kyi derzhavnyi arkhiv (hereafter – KPMDA), f. 226, op. 80, spr. 524, ark. 38-41, 51-58, 72-74, 79-86, 143, 152.

⁵⁹ KPMDA, f. 226, op. 80, spr. 524, ark. 38-41, 51-58, 72-74, 79-86, 143, 152.

⁶⁰ KPMDA, f. 241, op. 1, spr. 474, ark. 8-20.

and, in this sense, these groups were more similar to those of the Russian Central Black Soil Region than to their Baltic counterparts. Their characteristic as a cultivation unit was weak. On the other hand, frequent adoptions and inclusion of wives' children from their former marriages shows that these domestic groups were not pure patrilineal, kin-based units and, in this sense, closer to their Baltic counterparts than to those of the Russian Black Soil Region. In short, the small and easy-to-enter domestic groups of Right-Bank Ukraine were weak both as a cultivation unit and as a patrilineal kin-based unit.

One-third of the private landlords' peasants were unable to cultivate their own allotment because of the absence of work animals in Kiev Province in the 1840s.⁶¹ They also lacked farming tools.⁶² Instead, landlords had both tools and animals, which were sometimes used on peasant allotments.⁶³ In this sense, the peasant domestic groups of Right-Bank Ukraine were very different from those of the Russian Black Soil Region and the Baltic Region. Many peasant domestic groups were not independent farming units in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Mainly landlords, rather than prosperous peasants, employed peasants who did not run their own farms. Almost half of all the peasants belonging to private owners earned their bread by employment.⁶⁴

The government implemented the renowned inventory reform of 1847-1848 to prevent landlords from depriving peasants of their allotment and from increasing weekly days of labor dues.⁶⁵ After the inventory reform, however, many peasant domestic groups descended into the lower ranks. This might seem to suggest a decrease of peasants' farmland.

As in the Russian Black Soil Region, in Right-Bank Ukraine the government performed the emancipation via redemption. However, landlords took some portions of peasant land away and added them to their own demesne. After the Polish Rebellion in 1863, the government

⁶¹ Zhuravskii, *Statisticheskoe opisaniie*, vol. 2, pp. 30-31, 306.

⁶² KPMDA, f. 226, op. 80, spr. 545, ark.33-43; spr. 694, ark. 541-552.

⁶³ A. Z. Baraboi, "Obezzelivanie pomeschchikami krest'ian Kievskoi i Podol'skoi gubernii nakanune i v period revoliutsionnoi situatsii," M. V. Nechkina, ed., *Revoliutsionnaia situatsiia v Rossii v 1859-1861 gg.* (Moscow, 1960), pp. 35-36.

⁶⁴ Iu. O. Kurnosov, "Kryza kriposnogo hospodarstva na Pravoberezhnii Ukrainy (40-50-i roki XIX st.)," *UIZh* 3 (1959), pp. 57, 58; Baraboi, "Rassloenie," p. 38.

⁶⁵ Zaionchkovskii, *Otmena krepostnogo prava*, p. 59.

attempted to use peasants in its struggle against Polish landlords and restored the ex-peasant land holdings, which had been deprived by the landlords in 1861. Furthermore, the government decreased the redemption payment by 20 percent. The government ordered the peasants to start redemption payment even without the agreement of the landlords. By this order, all the peasants in Right-Bank Ukraine jumped to the status of peasant landowners.⁶⁶ Overall, the emancipation in Right-Bank Ukraine created more favorable conditions for peasants to run farming units independent of the landlords, than those in the Baltic Provinces and in the Black Soil Region.

The peasant domestic groups in post-emancipation Right-Bank Ukraine had surplus labor power compared with their small allotment, but also did not have sufficient work animals and farming tools to cultivate this allotment. For example, half of all the peasant domestic groups had no farming tools or work animals in the forest-steppe region of Kiev Province at the beginning of the twentieth century, and from one-quarter to one-third of them did not cultivate their own land allotment. In contrast, the landlords possessed abundant farming tools and animals. Most of the demesne was cultivated using the landlords' own tools and animals. Peasants without sufficient land allotment, farming tools and animals made their living by being hired by the demesne. Thus, a considerable number of peasants became farmhands, though possessing a certain portion of land, in post-emancipation Right-Bank Ukraine.⁶⁷ Between the two universal land surveys of 1877 and 1905, landlords throughout Russia lost 30 percent of their lands. In Right-Bank Ukraine, however, landlords relinquished only 16 percent of what they had owned. Peasants were unable to purchase or rent even the limited land made available by landlords.⁶⁸

Peasant land renting developed least in Right-Bank Ukraine of all European Russia. Landlords rented almost no land to peasants in Right-Bank Ukraine, in which only 7.5 percent of all peasant domestic groups rented land at the beginning of the twentieth century. The

⁶⁶ Zaionchkovskii, *Otmena krepostnogo prava*, pp. 214, 215, 225-227.

⁶⁷ A. Ia. Iaroshevich, *Ocherki ekonomicheskoi zhizni, vyp. II, Tipy khoziaistv Kievskoi gubernii* (Kiev, 1911), pp. 5-6, 37-38; Anfimov, *Krupnoe pomeshchich'e khoziaistvo*, pp. 87-88.

⁶⁸ Edelman, *Proletarian Peasant*, pp. 45-46.

entrepreneurial development of manor farms did not allow peasants' land renting to develop. In Right-Bank Ukraine, the predominant form of land renting was that of entire estates or their particular parts (villages). Here, not peasants but Polish gentry and Jewish merchants were the main tenants.⁶⁹

CONCLUSION

In each region analyzed in this chapter, three factors – namely the domestic group structure, land-holding, and cultivation of manor farms – were intertwined and composed an indivisible agrarian complex. Reforms targeted at one of the three factors could not be realized without changing the other two.

Basically, a domestic group was a patrilineal kin-based unit. It tended to be small if possible, and land distribution among domestic groups generally tended to be equalized, according to their consumptive needs. However, if feudal obligation was practiced by labor dues and if peasants, not landlords, owned work animals, domestic groups had to be large enough to have a sufficient workforce for taking care of these animals. Moreover, if landlords, not peasant communes, distributed land, landlords tended to examine carefully the domestic groups' ability to fulfil the labor obligation and distributed more land to the more competent domestic groups, by classifying peasant domestic groups into several categories. In this case, peasant domestic groups tended to abandon the patrilineal principle and to receive male affines, or sons-in-law, from other patrilineal lines. If the peasants owned work animals but the landlords distributed the land, the landlords were not capable of hiring the lowest class of peasants, who found no other way but to be hired by the peasants of a higher class, as landless non-related peasants in domestic groups.

None of these regions' agrarian structures changed dramatically after the emancipation. The most evident change is that the land holding of each domestic group, which was changeable until the emancipation,

⁶⁹ Anfimov, *Krupnoe pomeschich'e khoziaistvo*, pp. 85-86, 168, 171; I. Rudchenko, ed., *Zapiska o zemlevaldenii v iugo-zapadnom krae* (Kiev, 1882), p. 169.

was fixed in the Baltic Region and in Right-Bank Ukraine, where there were no land-distributing communes. Land holding in the Russian Black Soil Region, where communes redistributed land in an egalitarian manner before the emancipation, also became significantly fixed because of the waning of the communes' land redistribution.

In the post-emancipation Baltic Region, some peasants bought portions of the demesne, and landlords began to cultivate it directly. However, the landlord and farmstead head continued to be the basic organizer of production, while landless peasants continued to be the main source of labor. The only important change was that the border between the two classes of peasants, the farmstead heads and landless peasants, became almost insurmountable. This change occurred because the landlords lost the control over the shaping of peasant domestic groups and peasant land distribution.

In the pre-emancipation Russian Black Soil Region, landlords owned the demesne and heads of the peasant domestic groups cultivated the demesne, relying upon their family members but not the farmhands. The emancipation law authorized communes to distribute land, while most landlords did not manage cultivation. Instead, landlords rented land to peasants. Heads of peasant domestic groups continued to be responsible for the cultivation of the demesne and provided labor for it, as was the case before the emancipation. The declining communes' land distribution resulted in the stratification of peasants for demographic reasons.

In Right-Bank Ukraine, landlords organized the cultivation. Peasants worked on the land without responsibility for the work organization but just as workers. After the emancipation, this scheme did not change at all. Similar to the Baltic Region, the only change was that the abolition of lord manorial power made the classification of peasant domestic groups, and accordingly the land holding of each group, unchangeable.

The emancipation tried to make peasants citizens of the Russian Empire, equal to other estates, especially to landlords. At least the landlord monopoly on owning land was abolished, and peasants were allowed to own land. However, these changes were superficial. The emancipation did not create an all-estate concept of landownership.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ M. N. Dolbilov, "Zemel'naia sobstvennost' i osvobozhdenie krest'ian," D. F. Aiatskov,

Indeed, landlords continued to control rural life. As the juridical and zemstvo reforms gave preference to the richest and most trustworthy over other peasants, the emancipation gave preference to upper-class peasants in Right-Bank Ukraine, and to farmstead heads in the Baltic Provinces. Their position and right to the land was reinforced to a greater extent than had been the case before the emancipation. Even in the Russian Black Soil Region, communes suspended land repartition and gave way to social stratification of peasants.

Daniel Field argues that the reformers preserved the land-redistributing commune in the Great Russian provinces to rely upon it as an intermediary, freeing the government from directly taking care of twenty-two million ex-serfs.⁷¹ Then, why did the reformers not create this mechanism in the Baltic Provinces and Right-Bank Ukraine? In regard to the Baltic Region, the government's hesitance seems reasonable, because the Baltic aristocracy, loyal to the regime, rejected this plan. However, why did the imperial government not introduce this egalitarian principle in Right Bank Ukraine, where Ukrainian peasants seemed to support the government's struggle against the Polish nobility?

I believe the reformers could not (or even did not intend to) affect the agrarian structures of any region, including the rebellious Western provinces. The domestic group structure, the system of land holding, and the cultivating system of manor farms composed an indivisible complex. If the emancipation affected the system of land holding, the domestic group structure and the cultivating system of manor farms would also have had to change. It would have caused catastrophe among many landlords. It is true that the decline of manorial power over the peasants fixed the peasant strata. However, this fixation did not threaten, at least not immediately, the continuation of the manor farm cultivating system. A fundamental dilemma that the Great Reform faced was that the government wished to give all the inhabitants of European Russia a certain degree of citizenship and integrate them into an imperial nation, but it did not want to endanger the management of landlord manor farms.

Russia was an estate-based multiethnic empire. The policy of inclusion of non-Russian elites continued until the Polish uprisings.

ed., *Sobstvennost' na zemliu v Rossii: Istoriia i sovremennost'* (Moscow, 2002), p. 152.

⁷¹ Field, "The Year of Jubilee," p. 52.

Evidence of the persistence of this policy is that the government did nothing to incorporate Estonian and Latvian ex-serfs into civic life after their emancipation at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Only after the Polish uprisings did the government realize the danger of this wager on the ruling estates and attempt to mobilize Ukrainian, Lithuanian, and Belarusian peasants as imagined members of the Russian imperial nation. However, what started was not a new course, but rather an endless ambivalence and dilemma between the bets on estates and nations. Pretending to be a protector of oppressed ethnicities and implementing progressive reforms, the regime of bureaucracy and aristocracy survived. In this context, the continuity of the agrarian structure secured the regional hegemony of landlords.