

# Land Relations in the Russian Village During the Agrarian Revolution (1917-1921)

Oksana I. Kosykh, Nina N. Badaeva

**Abstract:** *The agrarian revolution that swallowed Russia in 1917-1921, included processes of an economic, social, and political nature, led to a change in the social structure of the village. The article shows how the changes that occurred in land relations became the main ones during the agrarian revolution and in many ways expressed the fate of the Russian village in the XX century. Besides, the great experience of studying this topic in domestic and foreign historiography is shown. This work presents a rethought view of land relations based on a previously unused number of sources, including the regional level, which is rarely attracted by researchers. This allowed the authors to reach a new level of topic development. Today, the agrarian problem in Russia needs to be resolved again. A theoretical understanding of the chosen path cannot be carried out without a history of the made transformations.*

**Keywords:** *land relations, nationalization, socialization, municipalization, equalization distribution, forms of land use, allotment norms.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The agricultural sector plays an important role in the economy of any state. In Russia, where even at the beginning of the XX century, four fifths of the population lived in the countryside and was engaged in agriculture, the agricultural sector formed the basic of the country's economic life. By the beginning of the last century, the industrial system was dominant in most Western countries. Russia continued to be a country behind the time, where "small-scale peasant farming was the most massive economic structure" [1].

Even though agriculture was the dominant sector of the economy, for a long time it was not included in the sphere of state priorities. Therefore, the transformation in the agricultural sector of the country was always late and half-hearted.

Even the liberation of the peasant from serfdom in 1861 did not make him the sovereign master of the land, because the rural inhabitants were united in the village community, especially in Central Russia, which were called "mir".

By the beginning of the XX century, the lefts of feudalism remained in the Russian countryside in the form of putrescent landlord tenure, which had already lost its former progressiveness. The increase in the rural population in the post-reform period created land hunger and led to the crushing of peasant land use and the increase in the number of landless peasants. Russia entered the new century with the strong agrarian question, which for forty years has been expanding and dangerously complicating. It consisted of the availability of the sharpest contradiction in the sphere of land relations that were based on the low land of some peasants and the overflow land from large owners.

The nature of agricultural production and its attachment to the natural basis (the land, the dominance of traditions, and constant "fear of hunger"... ) determined the strange attitude of the peasants to the causes of the agrarian crisis and the ways to get rid of it. The masses did not understand the true causes of their plight and could not come to terms with the slow ways of the crisis overcoming. "The agrarian crisis in the peasantry minds was presented in the form of an elementary fact of low land" [2]. The highest value for rural residents was still the size of land ownership. The peasant, who dreamt of a better life, least of all thought about how to plow and fertilize the land, what to grow on it and what agricultural methods to use. He fully relied on the experience of his father and grandfather, inheriting from them the dream of land abundance. Therefore, the separation of private land seemed to be the shortest path to material well-being and "a panacea for all peasant ills".

In Russia, the peasants who owned the land for the most part of the world did not have a developed sense of private ownership of land. The very concept of ownership in Russia arose in the XVIII century for the first time. "The Russian state, strictly observing only its own interests, recognizing the principle of private property only for an insignificant part of society," by the beginning of the XX century had formed an almost completely privatized people" [3]. The land never belonged to the peasant indeed. Neither as a colonialist, nor as a serf, nor as a community member: the agricultural worker was the master of his own land. Peasants believed that "Mother land, which feeds all people, like the air that everyone breathes, belongs to God by right, should be distributed to those who process it. That is why, the ownership of land by ownerless landowners who most time did not live on their places is not only injustice, but also a sin" [4]. In addition, oppression by the master and his fellow villager, the kulak, led the peasants to deny private property all in all.

**Revised Manuscript Received on April 15, 2020.**

\* Correspondence Author

**Oksana I. Kosykh** \*, PhD in Historical Sciences, Associate Professor, Moscow Aviation Institute (National Research University), Moscow, Russia. Email: oksana.i.k@mail.ru

**Nina N. Badaeva**, PhD in Historical Sciences, Professor, Moscow Aviation Institute (National Research University), Moscow, Russia. Email: kaf002@mai.ru

We should point out that some representatives of prosperous peasants could be respected for their hard work, but this position did not ultimately play a decisive role.

The unpredictability of the size of the crop in conditions of dangerous farming and its independence from the invested labor formed among unsuccessful peasants the conviction that it was necessary to divide the crop equally, since almost each of them considered their work, even small ones, deserving of a fair retribution. The unexplained concept of ownership of the Russian peasant gave occasion to foreigners to observe the ease with which he appropriates someone else's thing. The same applied to the seizure of privately-owned land, which they justified by their poverty.

The requirement to abolish private ownership of land was absolute. The ideas of "God's", "nobody's" land and the leveling distribution between those who cultivate it were the components of the peasant mentality, its morality, and programmatic principles. Equalization is the management of an economy based on equivalent principles, implying obtaining equal results of labor. The idea of equalization was directly embodied in the redistribution of the land. The spiritual sources lay in the ideas of the peasants about kindness and justice.

Due to deeply rooted traditions of rejection of private property and the recognition of usual land rights, the peasantry did not use the opportunity provided by the Stolypin agrarian reform to become the real owner of the land. The villagers tried so hard to resist these transformations, the true content of which was the desire to instill a sense of ownership of the rural producer in relation to their patch of land.

The low profitability of the peasant economy, land hunger, as well as the programs of political parties, which tightened the conviction in society of the existence of low land and the need to seize foreign lands, provoked an increase in discontent among the peasants, who, in return, threatened with social explosions and upheavals. The village had to go on the revolutionary path by the ill-conceived, taking into account neither the interests of the peasant population, nor the agrarian policy of the tsarist and Provisional Government. At the beginning of XX century the peasantry launched a powerful movement with the slogan about the struggle for land, which resulted in two revolutions that were shocking for the whole country. The first Russian revolution of the early XX century only made the agrarian question worse. Whereas the agrarian-peasant revolution, which swept the country in 1917-1921 that included processes of an economic, social, and political nature, caused a radical change in the entire social and economic system of the village. In the course of these agrarian transformations, a new system of land relations was created; it was caused by the abolition of landowner land ownership and the transfer of land for labor use to peasants.

The changes that took place in land relations in 1917-1921 were the main ones during the agrarian revolution and in many respects determined the fate of the Russian village in the XX century.

## II. HISTORIOGRAPHY OF LAND RELATIONS

The experience of studying land relations in our country is very big. The literature of the 1920s is a very complex phenomenon. It cannot be qualified as historical literature. The works of this period remained free from ideological pressure. The works of contemporaries of events have a clear practical orientation and are devoted to the socio-economic shifts that occurred in the village during the agrarian revolution.

A special place in the study of this problem is taken by the work of economists N.D. Kondratyev, A.V. Chayanova and B.D. Brutkus. The works of representatives of this direction have a scientific interest, because they contain important information about the state of land relations in Russia on the eve of and during the agrarian revolution.

The book of Litoshenko "Socialization of the land", which was written in 1922 and was published only in 2001 under the same name, contains an analysis of the practical implementation of the policy of "socialization".

The works of V.I. Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders were dominated mainly by political subjects. The events of the agrarian revolution changes in land relations were interpreted in line with Bolshevik ideological principles.

The result of a ten-year study of land transformations was the collection "Agrarian revolution" [5], that was published in 1927, as well as the work of A. Bolshakov, "The village of 1917 - 1927" [6].

From the 1930s to the mid-1950s historical science came under the huge pressure of the Soviet regime. Most of the works have the propaganda character of the achievements of Soviet power. Among the concrete historical studies are the works of E.A. Lutsky on the implementation of the first Soviet laws: the decree "On the land" and the law "About the socialization of the land". Using a large amount of factual material, the historians analyzed such measures as the confiscation of landlord estates and the separation of land in 1918.

A new stage in the creative development of the topic of agrarian transformations, including changes in land relations, is associated with events that took place in the country in the mid-1950s. In the 1950s and 1980s a number of works appeared, in which the problem of adoption and realization of the law "About the socialization of the land" is detailed and deeply studied [7].

A characteristic feature of the historiography of the 1950s and 1980s became the appearance of monographic works, as well as collective and general works. The book of G.V. Sharapova "Resolution of the agrarian question in Russia after the victory of the October Revolution (1917-1920)", [8] agrarian historian P.N. Pershina "Agrarian revolution in Russia", a study by the famous historian Yu.A. Polyakova "The transition to the New Economic Policy (NEP) and the Soviet peasantry became very famous [9]. A special place in the historiography of land relations is taken by V.P. Danilova "Soviet pre-collective farm village".

However, despite the growth of the field of the studied questions, the saved material is often presented in the spirit of well-established interpretations and judgments.

Unfortunately, in the period 1950 - 1980s. in the local literature, only main aspects of the problem were studied: a large amount of factual material was looked through and systematized, an analysis of the economic condition of the village and land transformations was made. A wide range of sources was introduced into circulation, the outlined directions in the study of land relations and the increased theoretical level of study, prepared the basis for further research.

The modern historiography of land relations that have experienced all historical science, the perestroika fashion for innovations and alternatives, is trying to reconsider and comprehend the problems of the village.

The results of land transformations during the years of the agrarian revolution caused rather uncertain assessments: from the victory of the peasantry in the war with the Bolsheviks, which forced to introduce the NEP later, [9] to the defeat of the peasantry [10]. According to modern researchers, the result of the agrarian revolution was the archaization of social structure, economics, and politics.

In modern research, the peasantry is becoming an active participant of the historical process. Researchers V.P. Danilov and T. Shanin believe that all other political and social revolutions in Russia took place in the sight of the "peasant revolution". The works of several modern historians are involved in the problem of land relations 1917-1921, such as G.A. Gerasimenko, I.E. Dementiev, A.Kh. Burganov, I.I. Froyanov.

Recently, many works by foreign researchers on the history of the peasantry have appeared and that consider issues of land transformations [11].

Thus, the current stage of the study of the problems is characterized by a wide range of analysis of the topic of land relations, the rejection of strict schemes, and the agreement to the research the heritage of domestic agricultural schools.

Summing up the historiographic review, we should notice that the domestic historiography of land relations during the agrarian revolution has undoubted creative achievements and, in addition, unrealized opportunities. All this leaves a wide field for research from the historical and legal positions of such problems as the implementation of Soviet land legislation, its correlation with local rule-making, the interaction of central and local bodies, and the power of the attitude of peasants to the policy of Soviet power.

### III. THE LEGAL BASIS OF LAND RELATIONS IN 1917-1921

The fall of the monarchy in February 1917 and the revolutionary excitement that swallowed society led to an unprecedented increase in the role of the masses in the life of the country. The peasants wanted to rectify the centuries-old injustice immediately; they wanted "land and will". The agrarian-peasant question has grown to a national scale. The fate of the nearly 100 million rural population and the main directions of further socio-economic and political development of Russia depended on his decision. Therefore, the slogan "additional land allotment and the destruction of the landlord economy" became the main shock point of the agrarian programs of all political parties, requiring a land reform. Without this, it was impossible to win the sympathy of the peasantry, and without the support of this most numerous class of the population, it was impossible to wish political domination.

The only accompanied issue was the content of agrarian reform, where political parties constantly made tempting promises. The inevitability of widespread land reform reduced the number of opponents at the same time. Three parties competed mainly: the party of constitutional democrats (cadets) and two socialist parties: the Social Democrats (Bolsheviks) and the Socialist Revolutionaries [12].

The cadets already put forward the requirements of endowing the peasants with land taking into consideration local conditions in 1905. They went towards the forced alienation of private and state lands. But they believed that fair remuneration should be paid for the selected land. Such caution in carrying out land reform by the cadets was caused by the continuing world war and the danger of interruptions in the supply of food to the army.

The socialist parties had another point of view. They demanded the free confiscation of land "unearned" use and the abolition of private ownership of land. All socialist parties agreed about this, and their ideas were opposite to the ideas of bourgeois ones.

In general, the programmatic attitudes of the socialist parties on the land issue are shown in the Table 1.

**Table - I: Programmatic attitudes of the socialist parties on the land issue**

Problems	Socialist Revolutionary Party	Social Democrats (Bolsheviks)	Social Democrats (Mensheviks)
Attitude to private ownership of land	Liquidation	Liquidation	Liquidation
Name of the proposed land planning	Socialization	Nationalization	Municipalization
What to do with private property land?	To take away	To take away	To take away, except small landownership
Who will own the land?	Land is a public property	State	Region, zemstvo, cities

## Land Relations in the Russian Village During the Agrarian Revolution (1917-1921)

Alienate with foreclosure or without it?	Without redemption	From landlords without redemption	Without redemption
<b>Who will manage the land fund? Who will have the land?</b>	The one who processes land with his own labor and not with the hired one (landowner labor)	The one who disposes the elective land. Hired labor is allowed	The same as the Bolsheviks
<b>Who will be the supreme manager of the land fund?</b>	Central electoral institutions common to the whole state	Local elective institutions	Regional elective institutions
<b>Will land lots equalize?</b>	Land lots are equalized by redistribution, resettlement, and taxation of surplus taxes (egalitarian land use)	Against equalization	Against equalization

As we can see from the table, there was no understanding among the socialist parties regarding the fate of the confiscated lands, their distribution and further usage after the abolition of private property. The disagreements came from a different assessment of psychology and the mood of the peasants.

The specifics of land relations in 1917-1921 in Russia was contradictory. From one point of view, this is the movement of peasants for equalizing the distribution of land. The psychology of the peasantry formed by communal land use was more susceptible to political programs involving an egalitarian redistribution of land. The villagers did not react to programs as usual, but reacted to profitable slogans. Why did the peasantry so easily and trustingly fell for calls and persuasions about the transfer of private ownership of land not to personal but to communal ownership? Firstly, the peasants were constrained by the traditional communal order, which created the illusion that communal ownership of land firmly ensures the personal ownership of the community member. In addition, anyone had to pay a communal vice that holded back the economic activity of the most initiative and enterprising workers. However, in a critical situation, when there was a real opportunity to expand communal possessions at the expense of the lords, the personal interest of rural workers receded into the background, giving way to the onslaught of the rural world for owning all the landlord property. Secondly, the slogan of liquidation of private ownership of land was perceived by the peasants as a demand addressed exclusively to the landlords and other large owners, and their personal plots were not completely taken into consideration [13].

From the other hand, there is the bringing in socialists' principles in the villages from the side of the state and the ruling party of the Bolsheviks, who believed that the soul of a typical small proprietor, which is hostile to all socialist ideals, lives in the peasant. The first person who expressed the idea of organizing Soviet farms was V.I. Lenin in the April Theses. There he put forward the task of "creating from every large landowner estate a model farm under the control of the farm laborers and at the public expense". Peasants need to be encouraged to create collective farms. However, at the First All-Russian Congress of Peasant Deputies, the Leninist idea of "model farms" and communes was rejected. The majority of the people on the congress supported 242 peasant orders "About the Land" which contained the provisions of the Social Revolutionary program.

The Bolsheviks understood that their program of nationalization, which was created in the spring and summer of 1917, was something like a perfect one, did not possess

any appeal to the peasants and faded into the background, giving way to tactics (destruction of private property). And this fact, in return, corresponded to the radical moods of the peasantry, as it justified the pogroms of the landlord estates and did not reject the egalitarian psychology of the peasantry. The demand for the transfer of land to the peasants became popular and represented a means of the fight for political power.

These tendencies are reflected in the legislation of the first years of Soviet power. The decree "About the land" and the law "About the socialization of the land" came from populist ideas, according to which all ownership of land was abolished. These acts became a symbiosis of two utopias: peasant (demanding for universal equalization) and proletarian (having task of socialist transformation of agriculture on the basis of state and collective property).

State structures had to make a fair distribution of agricultural land through the working population on an equal basis. However, the declarative "tone" of the first decree and the Socialist Revolutionary vestments of the second one did not hide the main thing in their content: the prohibition of private property rights to land and the nationalization of it. In modern historiography, there is an opinion that the definition of "conversion of land into public property" had a simple nationalization of the land inside of it, and the transformation of peasants into users.

After the strengthening, the Soviet government abandoned the Narodnik program for constructing the agrarian system, and already in the spring of 1918 the Bolsheviks started an attack on the village, intensifying state intervention in the peasant economy and using class division as a special tool. We should recognize that it was the measures of economic coercion that were applied to the prosperous population in 1918 that pushed it into the camp of ardent opponents of the Soviet regime.

The usage of class contradictions began with food policy. Here the most important need was felt for decisive measures, because the threat of hunger had become a reality by the end of the first year of Soviet power. This fact expressed the aggressive mood of Bolshevik politics. The main normative acts should be considered decrees issued one after another during May-June of 1918 on the food dictatorship of local authorities and on the committees of the poor. Decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee "About the granting extraordinary powers to the people's commissariat of food in the struggle against the village bourgeoisie covering the grain stocks and speculating with it" of May 9, 1918.

Two weeks later, on May 27, 1918, there was issued a decree "About the extraordinary powers of the people's commissar of food and local food authorities", which aim was to centralize the procurement and distribution of food. Food committees were established in all provinces and counties [14].

The isolation of the rural bourgeoisie and its subordination to the laws of Soviet power, and the creation of a social base for the continuation of the socialist revolution in the countryside, according to the Bolsheviks, ought to have been carried out by the peasant poor. There was adopted the famous decree "About the organization of the rural poor and the supply of bread, essentials, and agricultural tools" on June 11, 1918.

Food policy led to an equal distribution. Therefore, the Bolsheviks were not agreeing with agitation and incitement of class enmity, they began to realize their main idea of creating a large and very productive economy. It was made of a plan for the wide development of socialist farms, from one point of view, and hopes for voluntary collectivization, from the other.

Most of the first legislative acts of the Soviet government (Decree "About the land", Law "About the socialization of the land") (Article 11), call collective farming as a main form of development of production relations in the countryside and with it the victory of socialism in agriculture occurred. Soviet farms were formed on the basis of former estates that grew special crops, which required technical organization. Peasants formed agricultural communes to cultivate undistributed land. They worked together and shared incomes equally. And in the end, they came up with cooperatives in which the element of collectivism was reduced to the processes of production and trade. But the conditions for the socialization of agriculture in Russia at that time were not suitable comparing to the theoretical ideal of the Bolsheviks. Pre-revolutionary Russia was a country of large land ownership, but small land use [15].

However, it was impossible to pursue a land policy only at the expense of Soviet farms. Therefore, the Bolsheviks found another way, the socialization of dispersed land users and their involvement in the sphere of socialist economy. With the idea to centralize the management of collective farms on May 1918 a department of communes was created under the People's Commissariat of Agriculture. Later, the bureau of communes and groups of communal instructors were established at the regional, provincial, and district land departments, according to the "Instructions for the organization of communal bureaus" on August 17, 1918 and the "Regulations on communal instructors", approved on August 17, 1918. In the end, on December 26, 1918, by the decision of the board of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture, a new collective farm department was created, which included the Bureau of Communes. On February 18, 1919, the department of Soviet farms also entered there.

During the summer of 1918, the Soviet government approved a huge number of legal acts regulating the creation and activities of communes, as well as providing them with financial assistance: "Decree of the council of people's commissars on approval of the draft decree on the release of funds for activities to support agricultural communes" of July 2, 1918; "Decree of the council of people's commissars

"About the allocation of 10 million rubles for activities for the development of agricultural communes" of July 3, 1918 [16].

Legislative acts that were approved in the 1919-1920s continued and even made the trend of encouraging collective forms of management stronger: "Regulation on socialist land management and on measures of transition to socialist agriculture", published on February 14, 1919, but worked out and, indeed, and applied earlier. It was a product of the strengthened Soviet power; it set the task of implementing state disposal of land in connection with the general law, which replaced the local law-making.

The local authorities of the people's commissariat for agriculture that was created in accordance with the regulation on the land departments of provincial, county, and volost executive committees on May 11, 1919, had to implement the instructions of the Soviet government. The "Regulation" envisaged the creation of a network of bodies with significant powers in the field of land management and agricultural regulation.

We should notice that it is not always possible to immediately determine their competence, while creating new organizational structures. Therefore, the departments were usually assigned general tasks, the concretization of which was carried out in the result of practical activity. The creation of land departments as a structural part of the Soviet state apparatus was, indeed, catching up with revolutionary transformations. This system of bodies did not actually have clearly understood functions; they developed with the help of the basis which consisted of the need to solve pressing problems in the construction of a new state: taking estates into account, distributing land, and creating collective and Soviet forms of management. The creation of local land bodies required a lot of workers with experience. A lot of people were politically illiterate, so they were not able to complete the most complex functions of government. They could not nominate experienced organizers and leaders from their midst. It could have been noticed in the land bodies of all levels of government [17].

The implementation of the first Soviet laws brought uncertain results: landlord property was destroyed, and peasants got their land. However, the illusions about the possibility of solving the agrarian question by means of equalization distribution soon scattered. It was impossible to achieve absolute equality of land allotments. During distribution, the problem of the amount of land equalization was solved. With the Bolsheviks coming to power, the efforts of the state were aimed at subordinating the peasant economy to the goals of socialist reorganization of society.

#### IV. RESULTS

Scientific knowledge in the field of history does not boil down to a description of the facts and events of the historical past. It presupposes their conceptual and theoretical understanding and requires the use of the principles of historicism and scientific objectivity. The study of land relations during the agrarian revolution in Russia allows comprehending the complex historical processes that took place in Russia during the

agrarian revolution in the village (1917-1921), which in many respects determined the fate of the Russian village in the XX century. In this study, the importance is given to the analysis of land transformations taking into account specific historical conditions, which made it possible to identify general patterns in the development of land relations in Russia as a whole and in the regions. New sources stored in archival funds of the Kaluga, Smolensk, and Bryansk regions were put into circulation. Sources of a regional level were also involved, in particular, materials from district and volost organs. This led to the conclusion that the specificity of land relations in 1917-1921 in Russia was determined by its inconsistency: on the one hand, the movement of peasants for the equal distribution of land, on the other hand, the introduction of socialist principles into the village by the Bolshevik party. The same trend was reflected in the legislation of the first years of Soviet power: the decree "About the land" in 1917 and the law "About the socialization of the land" in 1918. These acts became a symbiosis of two utopias: peasant with the demand for universal equalization and proletarian with the task of socialist transformation of agriculture on the basis of collectivism. These documents did not hide the main thing, the prohibition of private ownership of land.

The system of land bodies was formed on the basis of the need to solve pressing problems. There was an acute shortage of specialists in the work of these bodies. This was especially felt at the lower county and volost levels. During the years of the agrarian revolution, there was no interaction between land authorities at various levels and independence of not only district, but even volost authorities flourished. The distribution of land took place on the scale of local law-making under the conditions of decentralization of state power and in the absence of a solid technical base. The peasantry relied to a greater extent on the old communal experience of land redistribution, which contributed to the revival of the community. An individual peasant economy did not develop, for which state support was required. The Soviet government preferred Soviet and collective farms, the creation of which met with serious resistance from the peasantry.

The current stage in the study of land relations is characterized by a rejection of rigid class schemes and an appeal to the research heritage of domestic agricultural schools. As for new approaches, problems such as changing property relations, legal status of the peasantry, formation of Soviet legislation in the years of the agrarian revolution in the center and in the regions, and its implementation has a different definition. However, in this subject a wide field for research from historical and legal positions of such problems as the implementation of Soviet land legislation, its correlation with local rule-making, interaction of central and local authorities, and attitude of peasants to the policy of Soviet power remains.

### V. CONCLUSIONS

The agrarian question of the beginning of the XX century was the sharpest question. There was a need of transformations in the Russian countryside: agrarian overpopulation, low standard of living of the rural

population, low agrotechnical level, stability of landlord tenure, and incapable of progressive changes. All of this slowed down the economic development of Russia.

The liberal and socialist parties "spoke" about the need of the movement of land to the working people. Discrepancies arose in determining the meaning of the reform. The liberal circles defended private ownership of the land and demanded that the peasants must be given land, but not a general redistribution. Revolutionary democracy wanted the transfer of all lands to the public domain with the goal to equalize land usage without redemption. By 1917, imbalances in the land system of Russia were growing a lot, so, a revolutionary solution to the whole complex of agrarian problems turned out to be miraculous for the rural population.

During the agrarian revolution of 1917-1921 the greatest breakdown of land relations started: the liquidation of private property and its transfer to the public domain; confiscation of private land; introduction of leveling land use; transfer of large landlords and monasteries to the state; redistribution of the land fund, including land that was owned by peasants as their private property.

The task that was solved by the decree "About the land" was reduced in general to the elimination of remnants of serfdom, and to the destruction of landlord agriculture and the endowment of peasants with land. The peasantry supported the Bolsheviks about the cancelling of private ownership of land and the allocation of land to all working people equally. But it was unlikely that the rights to their land would become "shaky".

The Bolsheviks, having authorized a large-scale redistribution of land, regarded it as a tactical concession to a lot of people. They considered the leveling distribution of land to be absolutely inevitable as a first step towards the socialization of it. With measures to collectivize agriculture, the Bolsheviks tried to change the leveling and distributional trends, directing them to the creation of collective farms. Meanwhile, the small material base of collective and Soviet farms did not allow using all land funds. In the socialist forms of agriculture (especially state and collective farms), the peasant could see a threat, a change from a small master into a worker. Therefore, the creation of Soviet and collective farms often ran into almost irresistible obstacles.

The state, using the laws' help, wanted to limit the rights and possibilities of small-scale farming, both by taking out land for the organization of large-scale farming, and by directly regulating them. However, these measures (no matter how important they seem to be) were not able to really change the direction of agrarian transformations. They remained a political program that was not held all over the world.

The implementation of the first Soviet laws gave uncertain results: from the one point of view, landlord tenure was destroyed. The process of centralizing the village has begun. From the other point of view, the population who joined the privately-owned lands with a big desire could not be satisfied with the amount of land transferred to it. With all the desire, it was impossible to give the land to everybody who needed it, especially for new people who arrived to the village. And even state land management begun in 1919 was not able to do it. The utopian idea of

equalization is endless in implementation, and the natural regulator of the land regime (market) was not active. The endowment of land by peasants at the expense of landowner possessions would be not just more progressive, but a radical reorganization of the economy, and the most important element of which was the struggle against agrarian overpopulation.

The state lost its last sources of income and had to form its budget at the expense of in-kind fees from peasants (surplus appraisal). The agrarian revolution has taken over the more or less developed forms of agrarian capitalism, represented partly by landlord farms, partly by peasant farms.

The community has become alive again. It became the most important instrument for the redistribution of land and led to the leveling of the village amid its impoverishment. The combination of nationalization and communal land use guaranteed to Bolsheviks the chance to maintain, through communal redistribution, the correspondence between family composition and land use. But it was also not possible to equalize the land in a general pot, and then equalize it.

The decrees adopted at the center were implemented very slowly, because in the early years of the agrarian transformations there was no interaction between land authorities at various levels. Volost authorities did not want to execute decisions of higher authorities, believing that all power is in place. Despite constantly taking orders and threats from a revolutionary tribunal, county-level land authorities could not achieve a clear completing decision from lower ones.

The unique system of small producers that came up as the result of the reforms approached the ideal, but nevertheless was not it from the point of view of the peasants. As a result of nationalization, land ceased to be a commodity; it had no value, no monetary value, and was completely withdrawn from civilian circulation. Land has become the private and exclusive property of the state, which has assumed the function of regulator of land relations.

## REFERENCES

1. Danilova L.V., Danilov V.P. (1996) Peasant mentality and community. Collection of materials of the international conference "Mentality and Agricultural Development in the XIX-XX centuries". Moscow: ROSSPEN.
2. Filimonov V.Ya., Zhurov V.Ya., Budaev D.I. (2002) The history of the peasantry of the western region of Russia in 1941. Kaluga: Publisher house of N. Bochkareva.
3. Burganov A.Kh. (2004) Philosophy and sociology of ownership: Russian and Tatar Realities. Moscow: Russian State University for the Humanities.
4. Stepun F.A. (1997) The spirit, face and style of Russian culture. Questions of Philosophy, 1, 19.
5. Milyutin V.P. (1928) Agrarian revolution. Volume 2. Moscow: Kom. Akad.
6. Bolshakov A.M. (1927) The Village in 1917-1927. Moscow: Education Worker.
7. Kabanov V.V. (1977) Development of the law on the socialization of the land. October and the Soviet peasantry. 1917-1927. Moscow: Science.
8. Polyakova Yu.A. (1967) Transition to the NEP and the Soviet peasantry. Moscow: Science.
9. Andreev V.M. (1999) Russian peasantry: towards fate, 1917-1921. Kolomna: Kolomna Pedagogical Institute.
10. Kabanov V.V. (1997) Peasant community and cooperation in Russia of the XX century. Moscow: Institute of Russian history.
11. Frenken M.S. (1987) The tragedy of peasant uprisings in Russia in 1918-1921. Jerusalem: Publishing House "Lexicon".

12. Scott D. (1996) Weapons of the weak: social forms of resistance of peasants. Peasant Studies. Theory. Story. Mod. 26-60.
13. Bairau D. (1992) Janus in bast shoes. Peasants in the Russian revolution of 1905-1917. Questions of history, 1, 19-32.
14. Worthman R.S. (2004) Scenarios of power. Myths and ceremonies of the Russian monarchy. In 2 volumes. From Alexander II to the abdication of Nicholas II. Moscow: United Humanitarian Publishing House.
15. Werth N. (2003) History of the Soviet State. 1900-1991. Moscow: Infra-M.
16. Rabinowitch A. (2007) The Bolsheviks in Power. Indiana: University Press.
17. Kormach I.A. (2002) Ettore Chinella. The tragedy of the Russian revolution (1917-1921). National history, 1, 201-202.

## AUTHORS PROFILE



**Oksana I. Kosykh** – PhD in Historical Sciences, Associate Professor of Department of History, Moscow Aviation Institute (National Research University). Areas of interest: history, history of social work, cultural studies. Total work experience is 17 years.



**Nina N. Badaeva** – PhD in Historical Sciences, Professor of Department of History, Moscow Aviation Institute (National Research University). Areas of interest: history, history of public administration in Russia, religious studies, cultural studies, religious studies. Total teaching experience is 40 years.