

DIFFERENTIATION OF CATEGORIES OF THE PEASANTRY DEPENDING ON THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF PROPERTY RIGHTS: ANALYSIS OF THE STOLYPIN AGRARIAN REFORM (1907-1917)

DIFERENCIAÇÃO DAS CATEGORIAS DO CAMPESINATO, DEPENDENDO DA ATITUDE EM RELAÇÃO À SUA COMPREENSÃO DOS DIREITOS DE PROPRIEDADE: ANÁLISE DA REFORMA AGRÁRIA DE STOLYPIN (1907-1917)*

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Abstract: In this article, the authors aim to differentiate various categories of the peasantry according to the views on property to develop an optimal research approach that will allow for an objective and comprehensive analysis of the attitudes and behavior of the peasant population of Russia during the P.A. Stolypin course of agrarian policy pursued by the autocracy. The study shows the validity of using the peasantry's attitude to property as one of the key criteria for assessing the degree of efficiency of the Stolypin reform. The selected criterion allows one to show the evolution of this attitude depending on the social characteristics of a particular category of peasants. Aimed at creating a stratum of steady owners in the village, Stolypin's reform frees the peasants from the petty fiscal and bureaucratic oversight of the state and introduces new legal practices in relations between peasants. This reform had a huge impact not only on the development of legislation in Russia but also influenced the history of the country's development in the 20th century. The methodology proposed in the article is applicable in modern legal practice to assess the consequences of reforms for society.

Keywords: Capitalist element. Classification. Community. Main categories. Semifeudal ways of exploitation.

Resumo: Neste artigo, os autores pretendem diferenciar várias categorias do campesinato de acordo com os pontos de vista sobre a propriedade para desenvolver uma abordagem de pesquisa ideal que permitirá uma análise objetiva e abrangente das atitudes e comportamento da população camponesa da Rússia durante o curso de P.A. Stolypin da política agrária seguida pela autocracia. O estudo mostra a validade do uso da atitude dos camponeses em relação à propriedade como um dos critérios-chave para avaliar o grau de eficiência da reforma Stolypin. O critério selecionado permite mostrar a evolução desta atitude em função das características sociais de uma categoria particular de camponeses. Com o objetivo de criar um estrato de proprietários estáveis na aldeia, a reforma Stolypin liberta os camponeses do pequeno controle fiscal e burocrático do estado e introduz novas práticas legais nas relações entre os camponeses. Esta reforma teve um enorme impacto não apenas no desenvolvimento da legislação na Rússia, mas também influenciou a história do desenvolvimento do país no século 20. A metodologia proposta no artigo é aplicável na prática jurídica moderna para avaliar as consequências das reformas para a sociedade.

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Palavras-chave: Elemento capitalista. Classificação. Comunidade. Categorias principais. Formas semifeudais de exploração.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Problem statement

The assessment of the role, place, and significance, as well as the consequences of P.A. Stolypin's agrarian reform policy, are still pressing contentious issues, especially in terms of historical implications for the development of property rights. Stolypin, intending to create a stratum of stable prosperous owners in the village, began to implement large-scale changes in the agrarian sector of the Russian economy. However, not all peasants of that time could accept this policy, due to the inconsistency of their psychological and mental attitudes with the emerging life conditions and work in the Russian village. In view of this, it becomes necessary to consider the problem of determining the degree of efficiency of the Stolypin agrarian reform from the standpoint of the attitude to property of various categories of the peasant population of Russia at the beginning of the 20th century.

1.2. Preliminary considerations

Over the last two centuries of Russian history and in earlier times, the agrarian issue was one of the most important and at the same time painful. The fate of the country depended on its solution since most of the population until the middle of the 20th century were peasants. The unresolved agrarian question was the key reason for the three Russian revolutions and the collapse of the monarchy in 1917. The agrarian reform, if successfully completed, could become an alternative to both revolutionary upheavals and the horrors of the Civil War experienced by Russia in the 20th century. Part of Stolypin's agrarian reform was a resettlement policy. The implementation of the latter was not only an attempt to reduce the severity of social tension in the European part of the country, suffering from agrarian overpopulation, or to raise agricultural productivity. It was a possible comprehensive solution to many economic, legal, demographic, and social problems, as well as a way to strengthen the geopolitical security of sparsely populated areas.

New challenges that Russia faces in the 21st century are also associated with the stable development of agriculture and the position of agricultural workers. From a practical standpoint, the experience of the Stolypin reform can become invaluable for modern politicians and lawyers. However, the scientific assessment of its significance and consequences is too ambiguous. To understand the Stolypin agrarian reform, one needs to

turn to the position of various strata of the peasantry through the prism of their attitude to the reform, and the trend of the change in this attitude makes it possible to determine the degree of its success and efficiency. This will undoubtedly expand and enrich the existing ideas about the reform as a whole and its role, place, and significance in the Russian historical and legal processes.

Based on this, we will attempt to present our understanding of the features of the research approach, which must be developed to adequately characterize and objectively assess the degree of efficiency of the Stolypin agrarian reform. This work is important because today when solving practical issues of reforming the agrarian sector of the Russian economy, people increasingly turn to its historical experience, one of the brightest pages of which was Stolypin's agrarian policy (BASHMACHNIKOV et al., 1991; LOYKO, 2006; NIKOLSKII, 2012; PLAKSIN, 2012; POZHIGAILO, 2015; SAZONOV, 1996; SLEPTSOV, 2016; SOSENKOV, 2017, 2018). For example, the agrarian reform significantly influenced the change in legislation, which also contributed to the strengthening of the migration movement of the peasantry and workers to the Far East (ASCHER, 2001). Based on this experience, a law was adopted aimed at developing a resettlement program, under which, since 2017, any resident of the Russian Federation, subject to certain conditions, could receive 1 ha of land in the Far East (FEDERAL LAW, 2016).

Naturally, it is possible (and sometimes even necessary) to turn to the historical experience of Russia in solving modern problems including legal but only if this experience has been studied sufficiently thoroughly, deeply, and comprehensively. A researcher is an analyst, so when trying to compare the situation in any area of modern life, for example, in agriculture, with the past experience of reforming the village, the researcher must not only know this experience well but also understand it correctly. This can be achieved not just by learning the necessary information contained in the relevant sources but also by a detailed, deep, and comprehensive understanding of the subject of research.

In this regard, Stolypin's reforms, in general, and the politician's agrarian policy, in particular, are good examples. Despite the abundance of research papers (ANFIMOV, 1996, 2002; KONOVALOV, 2000; KOVALCHENKO, 1992; KOVALCHENKO; SAKHAROV, 1977; KOZLOV, 2020; KUZNETSOV, 2020; NIKOLSKII, 1993, 2003; ROGALINA, 2010, 2012; SHELOKHAEV, 2009, 2012; TYUKAVKIN, 2001), the reforms remain insufficiently comprehended and therefore not understood to the extent

that it is necessary to provide a sound basis for any serious theoretical generalizations, using them in the future to develop any practical recommendations.

The reason for this situation in the historiography of the Stolypin agrarian reform is that a unified system of generally accepted criteria has not yet been created that would make an objective assessment of Stolypin's agrarian transformations possible and allow one to understand the quintessence that underlies the reformist intentions and actions.

One of these criteria is a criterion using which one could establish the degree of efficiency of the Stolypin agrarian reform in social and legal terms (KAPITONENKOV, 2014, 2020; KUZNETSOV, 2016). It is the correct definition of this efficiency that would make it possible to implement an objective approach and adequately describe and assess this reform as a whole and obtain a specific understanding of the fundamentals of the process that was the basis for the Stolypin course of the agrarian policy of the autocracy.

However, to clearly establish these criteria, it is necessary to clarify exactly how the implementation of the agrarian reform influenced the attitudes of various groups and categories of the peasantry, and how the trend of their behavior changed throughout the entire period of Stolypin's agrarian policy implementation by the autocracy.

2. METHODS

The analytical method makes it possible to single out various groups of the Russian peasantry and decompose them through the prism of the attitude of these groups toward property, considering each of them separately to deeper understand the whole. 2. Through the *socio-psychological* method developed based on the classification of the famous Russian entrepreneur of the early 20th century V.P. Ryabushinsky, who characterized people based on their attitude to property rights with the allocation into five groups, it is possible to extrapolate this characterization, applying it to the entire peasantry of pre-revolutionary Russia and supplementing and specifying it with appropriate historical observations. Consciously or unconsciously, people reproduce the norms and forms of activity that came from the past, transforming the universal human experience, which is the most important evolutionary resource for the development of man and society in relation to new conditions (KOLTSOVA, 2011). 3. *The historical-genetic method* enables the gradual detection of changes in the attitudes and behavior of the peasantry during the Stolypin agrarian transformations, thus getting as close as possible to the reconstruction of the real situation that developed in the Russian village, as well as revealing the cause-and-effect relationships

between the attitude peasants to property rights and the features of their perception of the Stolypin reform. 4. *The historical-comparative method* is used to characterize the degree of heterogeneity of the Russian peasantry at the beginning of the 20th century and compare the positions of its individual categories, as well as in the analysis of phenomena of the same order that occurred in different historical periods but had similar nature and pattern of their occurrence. 5. *The problem-chronological method* allows us to consider the selected categories of the peasantry from the perspective of the trend of changes in its position and attitudes in their progressive development in time. 6. *The historical-typological method* makes it possible to break down the object of study, which in this case is the Russian peasantry, into qualitatively defined types and subtypes based on their inherent common essential features with the identification of intrinsic homogeneous properties. The breakdown is carried out by grouping the categories of the peasantry according to particular characteristics and, in this regard, acts as a means of ordering and systematizing the peasantry.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Relationship between the main categories of the peasantry based on V.P. Ryabushinsky's classification

To obtain a clearer picture characterizing the trend of changes in the positions of various strata of the peasantry in their attitude to the Stolypin agrarian reform, in this case, we believe it is advisable to use the opinion of the historian and publicist known in the first third of the 20th century, one of the eight brothers of the richest Old Believer entrepreneurial clan in pre-revolutionary Russia V.P. Ryabushinsky. The classification characterizes the attitude of people toward property. It was later used in the study of the formation of property rights and the regulation of credit relationships and investment. Ryabushinsky developed the following classification:

All people, according to how they relate to property, can be divided into five groups: four active and one passive.

The first group is the **owners** at heart, hard-working, thrifty, businesslike. These people are organizers of labor, creators of values, accumulators of world wealth.

The second group is **saints**, altruistic, low-maintenance, undemanding. For them, worldly blessings do not matter.

The third group is **envious** people, embittered and sterile, a type that does not require further explanation.

The fourth group is improvident people, careless, devoid of business sense and understanding, mediocre, wasteful, stupid, lazy. This also includes dreamers, theorists far removed from life, and naive dreamers. For discussion, this group shall be called **failures**.

These four basic types in their pure form are rarely found, and usually in life, one has to deal with people of a complex psyche, which is a mixture of these types in different combinations and various proportions.

Take the socialist mood as an example. It comes from a combination of **envy** and **improvidence**; the prevalence of the former results in Social Democrats, the prevalence of the latter yields the Socialist-Revolutionaries.

Very rare but very valuable is the merging of the **saint** and the **owner** in one person. The abbots of the North Russian monasteries are an example of such a combination (RYABUSHINSKY, 1997, p. 22).

One of the most famous and prominent representatives of this type was Metropolitan Philip – a youth friend of the first Russian Tsar Ivan IV Vasilyevich (the Terrible) and later his staunch and consistent critic and opponent.

"The fifth group is a **passive majority**, having neither definite opinions nor definite convictions, completely unstable in their attitudes. This shapeless mass is capable of joining any of the active groups – one today, another tomorrow" (RYABUSHINSKY, 1997, p. 20) depending on the situation.

From Ryabushinsky's characterization, it can be seen that the historian approaches the problem of people's attitude to property not as generally as is customary in historiography (both Russian and foreign), but in a much more differentiated way.

Particularly noteworthy is the first group identified by Ryabushinsky – the "owners". If, when analyzing the attitude of the above three main groups of the peasantry to the individualization of land during the implementation of the Stolypin agrarian reform, one uses the characterization given by Ryabushinsky, then not all peasants could be in this group, and it initially and by definition could not make up the majority of the population. Based on this, it would not be entirely correct to use the degree of popularity or unpopularity of the idea of individualization of land among peasants as a criterion for assessing the Stolypin reform. Indeed, according to the Stolypin decree dated 9 Nov. 1906 (and the law subsequently adopted by the Duma on 14 Jun. 1910), the land was provided not just to the peasant, but to the *owner*, and as one can see from the classification given by Ryabushinsky, not every peasant could be one. It was this category of peasant owners that made up the backbone or the core of the mass that not only left the community but also settled on farms and plots. The total number of such peasant owners who switched to farms and plots was about 10% as of 1 Jan. 1917.

If we use this average figure of 10% as a basis, then we can assume that the rest of the groups at that time also amounted to about 10%. Then the groups characterized by Ryabushinsky as "envious" and "failures" would account for approximately 20%. The same amount (i.e. about 20%) should be allocated to the combination of these groups. Thus, there were about 40% (or slightly more) of the firm opponents of the individualization of land.

It is more difficult to determine the number of those whom Ryabushinsky called "saints". This term does not necessarily mean those who were prominent due to their righteous life or who were canonized by the Church, but above all those for whom wealth and material benefits were not of great and paramount importance. There could hardly be many such peasants at the beginning of the 20th century (from 1 to 3%). This group, due to its small number, could not significantly affect the quantitative indicators of peasants who stood out from the community and participated in the policy of moving to farms. The "saints" could not actively speak out either for or against the individualization of land. Further, one should dwell on two intermediate categories formed from the combination of the properties of "owner" and the "envious", as well as "owner" and "failure".

3.2. Describing key intermediate categories of peasantry according to their description in Russian historiography

3.2.1. Who are "envious owners"?

The first category is "envious owners". This refers to those who were commonly called "kulaks" at that time. Turning to the description of this term, it should be noted that in the pre-revolutionary Russian village, a "kulak" was most often a wealthy peasant who received wealth by "enslaving" fellow villagers and keeping the whole "world" (rural community) "in a fist" (i.e. that is, dependent on themselves). The name "kulak" was given to rural peasants who had an income that their fellow villagers considered ill-gotten, *unearned – usurers, chapmen, and merchants*. The consciousness of peasants has always been based on the idea that hard *physical labor* was the only honest source of wealth. The origin of the wealth of usurers and merchants was associated primarily with their dishonesty – the merchant, for example, was considered a "parasite of society, making a *profit* on objects obtained by other people's labor", since, according to the peasants engaged in direct production, "unless you cheat, you won't sell" (DOBRONozHENKO, 1999, p. 29).

Russian literature of the second half of the 19th century, mainly Narodnik, is characterized by the opposition of the kulak (usurer and merchant) and the well-to-do land

muzhik (peasant farmer), as well as kulak and production-based methods of economic management.

In one of the first monographic studies devoted to the kulaks, the latter is a rural intermediary, a usurer, *"who is not interested in any production" and "does not produce anything"*. *The kulaks "resort to illegal means of gain, even fraud" and "quickly and easily enrich themselves by robbing their neighbors, profit from the impoverishment of the people"* (SAZONOV, 1894, p. 521-522).

An expert on the Russian post-reform peasantry A.N. Engelhardt (1999) described a typical appearance of a village kulak in the 1870s:

a real kulak does not like the land, nor the farm, nor labor, this one loves only money... 'Only fools and horses work'. A kulak thinks that only fools work and the smart ones rack their brain. A kulak is proud of his fat belly and does not work much: 'The debtors will mow everything down, reap it and put it in the barn'. For the kulak, everything is based not on the land, not on the farm, not on labor, but on the capital for which the kulak trades, gives out on loan at interest. The kulak's idol is money and the kulak can only think of multiplying it. The kulak inherited capital, obtained in an unknown but ill way... The kulak lets this capital grow, and this is called 'racking their brain'. The kulak needs for the peasants to be poor so that they would turn to the kulak for a loan (p. 521-522).

As one can see from this characterization, at the beginning of the 20th century, a rich peasant farmer was NOT considered a kulak. The latter lent money at interest to impoverished fellow villagers, which they worked off at the kulak's farm. This form of hiring labor in the form of payment can also be considered capitalist entrepreneurship, but one that is based on usury and not on agricultural labor as such.

It was the ability to engage in trade deals and usury within the rural community that allowed the kulaks to seize the land of the poor, keep them completely in debt, and exploit them. This was one of the main reasons that the repartitioning-equalizing community hindered the development of genuine collectivism, and implanted imaginary collectivism, since the kulaks, giving loans to poor peasants, did not allow them to go completely bankrupt, helped to "stay afloat", i.e. keep them dependent on endless loans, held in debt bondage and at the same time brutally exploited. The kulak, unlike the well-to-do peasant, did not work on the land but used the labor of neighboring farmworkers who borrowed money from the kulak. That is why the kulak did not find it profitable for the peasants to leave the community, as in this case, the number of real and potential client-debtors was reduced and, at the same time, the number of impoverished fellow villagers for exploitation and usurious robbery in the community decreased.

This circumstance explains the conclusion of some authors, the essence of which is that during the years of the Stolypin agrarian reform "the capitalist element preferred to remain in the community and use the intracommunal, semi-feudal method of exploiting the ordinary peasantry" (KIMITAKA, 1992, p. 194). The "capitalist element" here obviously means the kulaks, i.e. that small group of "envious owners" according to Ryabushinsky's classification, who, as noted above, received the main income not from her own labor on the land but usury and labor repayment.

However, the situation could actually be more complicated. In this case, one should refer to the research of Yu.L. Raiskii (1962), who, studying the results of Stolypin land management on allotments in the black-earth center of European Russia, established that the management had dual nature:

First, large farms and plots were formed mainly on the lands of the Peasants' Bank. Those who bought them were, as a rule, kulaks. At the same time, they reserved allotment lands for themselves as members of the rural society, that is, their 'original allotments' often remained in the community (p. 511).

Second, Raiskii (1962, p. 514) established that in addition to the desire of the wealthy peasants to combine their numerous strips bought up from the poor into one plot, i.e. to implement a "correct", capitalist economy on a separate plot in accordance with the requirements of the market – in reality, there was another tendency – unwillingness to part with the old, tested methods of predatory loan exploitation of the community, as well as the desire to use common lands for haymaking, grazing, etc.

Based on these observations, the researcher concluded that the kulaks "were both farmers and community members, and thus 'got the opportunity to simultaneously create a large farm and continue to exploit the increasingly bankrupt community members in the old ways (usury, bondage, various kinds of labor repayment associated with them)" (RAISKII, 1962, p. 515).

However, there were few representatives of such capitalist rural entrepreneurship. Such people not only did not represent any special class but also did not represent any noticeable social stratum and were rather separate small islands of usurious capitalism in the sea of small-scale, semi-subsistence, and patriarchal peasant farms.

'Kulak elements' who robbed their fellow villagers were contrasted in agrarian literature with wealthy peasants who 'worked on the land, attended to the land'. The well-to-do peasant 'builds prosperity not on the needs of others but on their own labor ..., expands their farm not for profit only, works to the point of tiredness, does not sleep enough, does not eat enough. Such a land

muzhik never has a belly like a real kulak (ENGELHARDT, 1999, p. 386-387).

A detailed analysis of the main features of wealthy farms ("the highest group of peasants"), which "run a commercial economy and derive income through the production of agricultural products", is given in the studies of the largest economist-statistician of the late 19th and early 20th centuries V.E. Postnikov (1981, p. 114). *Wealthy households pursue the goal of "not only satisfying the family's own needs but also getting some surplus, income"* (POSTNIKOV, 1891, p. 117). These farms "in addition to their own significant allotment, still rent quite a lot of land on the side, 'buy in the land'" (POSTNIKOV, 1891, p. 17). "On such an area that far exceeds the working capacity of the farms themselves, a wealthy farm "uses hired workers to a large extent" (POSTNIKOV, 1891, p. 144). Postnikov (1891, p. 17) repeatedly emphasizes that *sowing in this group of peasants is a "commercial enterprise", and the surplus obtained "accumulates and serves to expand the farm and improve it". Recognizing the existence of "elements of exploitation" (hiring labor force) in these farms, Postnikov stresses that "there are no kulak features in him [the well-to-do land peasant – D.K.]"*.

Such farmers, while not being kulaks, could also buy bank lands and become sole owners of farms or plots and retain their communal allotments. These farmers were guided by motives of a different kind than those pointed out by Raiskii. The desire to retain their communal lands after the purchase of bank land for the formation of a farm or plot-based household could be due to the desire to avoid the possible risk of bankruptcy.

At first, the sole buyers of bank land avoided selling their allotment shares and estates, holding them with the caution typical of a peasant, just in case. Retaining ties with the allotment gave hope that if the attempt to strengthen the economy in the new conditions was unsuccessful, it would be possible to return to the old place. In three to four years after the start of the reform, having surveyed the acquired plot, the buyers, whenever possible, tried to get rid of the allotment and turn the money received from its sale to an economic establishment in a new place (PROSKURYAKOVA, 2002, p. 343).

An interpretation of the types and methods of economic management of the wealthy peasantry that was different from the one prevailing in Russian post-reform literature is given in the monograph by R. Gvozdev "Usury-Kulaks and the Socio-Economic Significance" (1898). In the author's opinion, "the representatives of Narodnik economy looked at the kulaks incorrectly, seeing in them some kind of 'growth' on the organism of 'people's production'" (GVOZDEV, 1898, p. 148). Considering that "usury-

kulaks" were a necessary consequence of the transition of the natural economy to the money economy, and "the exploiting kulaks are a fatal historical link connecting two opposing periods", the author shows the "objective logic of the appearance of a kulak" ("a kulak is a legitimate creation of the process of initial accumulation") (GVOZDEV, 1898, p. 160). Gvozdev considers kulak-usurious operations as "the most widespread method of capital accumulation in the post-reform village. The peasants who got rich on kulak-usurious activities began to invest in agricultural production". At the same time, "economical peasants" also began to turn to "kulak" methods of economic management due to their profitability". This transition of the "industrious and best owner", that is, an economical man who managed to save money, into a kulak, a buyer, a usurer "was happening only because the owner had capital that his neighbors, poor peasants, needed" (GVOZDEV, 1898, p. 147, 154, 157, 158).

Thus, Gvozdev (1898, p. 159) demonstrates the close coexistence of kulak and production methods of management in the post-reform village and rightly notes that *"it is extremely difficult to distinguish the sphere of kulak-usurious operations from enterprises of a purely economic nature; it is impossible to indicate where the kulak and the exploiter end and the industrious and the best owner begins"*.

A similar observation was made by Engelhardt, who, while noting the exploitative and predatory nature of the commercial and usurious (entrepreneurial) activities of the kulak, the latter's desire for profit in dishonest and "ill" ways, at the same time emphasized that the kulak, despite the hatred of ordinary peasants towards him, at the same time, was the personification of the villager's success.

The kulak's liberation from heavy physical labor and the presence of a certain capital that allowed the kulak to become independent from anyone in the village were a very attractive example for the rest of the peasants, about which Engelhardt (1999) writes:

every peasant, if the circumstances are favorable, will exploit anyone else in the most excellent way ... every peasant possesses a certain dose of the kulak elements... only in a rare one there is no budding kulak... every peasant dreamed of becoming a kulak on occasion (p. 386-387).

The cases of transformation of industrious peasant owners into kulak usurers were particularly common in Siberia. Moreover, there this phenomenon was far from an isolated one. Often, not individuals but entire rural communities were engaged in usurious operations. This is because the peasants in Siberia were famously more prosperous than those in European Russia, and the former had much more opportunities to carry out such operations.

A circular order of the head of the South Kainsky subdistrict, Tomsk region dated September 28, 1909 No. 11 addressed to the volost administrations located on the subordinate territory can serve as solid evidence that clearly illustrates such a transformation. In particular, the order stated:

When checking plots and resettlement villages, it was established that many rural communities had significant sums of money collected from the lease of land, estates, grassland, etc. It was also discovered that the funds collected in this way, constituting social and community capital, were used for an extremely irrational purpose: many rural communities spend such funds on so-called social drinking, some use them for speculative purposes, lending to different persons at interest rates that sometimes reach 20%, which is illegal, acquiring a purely usurious character (STATE ARCHIVES OF THE TOMSK REGION (GATO), n.d., p. 154).

By definition, there could not have been any other prospect of making a life for themselves for a peasant living in a community. **Only the free development of a person on their own land can ensure their proper existence and the formation of a full-fledged and comprehensively developed personality** (a real "owner" – that is, a representative of the first group according to Ryabushinsky's classification) **who does not build her happiness on the misfortunes of others.** That is why Stolypin began to carry out his agrarian reform to enable the hardworking peasants, the "salt of the Russian earth", to apply their labor to the land and create worthy conditions for their existence. This intention can be clearly seen from Stolypin's following statement:

Until now, our one-hundred-million peasantry, always dependent on others, had only one career – the career of a muzhik-kulak. Now other, lighter horizons open up before the peasantry. Becoming an owner, the sole blacksmith of their own happiness, our peasant gets a great opportunity to show their personal will and initiative in the rational arrangement of their life, their economy (BESEDA S PREDSEDATELEM SOVETA MINISTROV P.A. STOLYPINYM, 2006, p. 485).

The aforementioned head of the South Kainsky subregion also acted within this approach, when, in his circular order, instructed all volost administrations to strive to organize a more reasonable and rational use of peasant public funds. In particular, the head pointed out:

It is quite possible to give such funds a purpose that would be aimed at more significant goals, bringing rural societies a certain benefit, in the sense of raising their economic and cultural status. Namely, such funds can be used to build schools, churches, for the

formation of credit savings-and-loan associations (STATE ARCHIVES OF THE TOMSK REGION (GATO), n.d., p. 154).

The head proceeded to present the rules for organizing the receipt and expenditure of communal public capital that all volost administrations in the subordinate subdistrict were obliged to adhere to.

Unfortunately, there were no documents that could provide information on how and to what extent this order was implemented in the archive materials in this case, however, this does not seem to be so significant anymore. The main thing here is to establish the very fact of the situation when, under the existing conditions of communal economic life, the peasants simply did not see any other opportunity to spend the considerable funds received from lease transactions on various agricultural land, other than to either drink them away or invest in usury and other illegal operations and build their own career, thus becoming typical kulaks – exploiters.

Despite the significant spread of trade and usury operations in Siberia, it seems that this type of rural capitalist entrepreneurship was not universal, which means that the kulaks (these "envious owners" according to Ryabushinsky's classification), did not represent a particular class or a noticeable social stratum. According to our assumptions, there were from 5 to 7% of kulaks in a Russian village at the beginning of the 20th century.

3.2.2. Who could be considered an "owner-failure"?

Finally, another group was a combination of "owner" and "failure". Contrary to the expected assertions that such a combination is by definition impossible due to its unnaturalness, such a group also existed, although, like the "envious owners" (kulaks), it was very small. People in this group, as a rule, were endowed with a business sense and had the makings of entrepreneurship and business skills, as well as an adventurous mindset and disposition. These people were attracted by everything unusual and outlandish. Therefore, they were prone to experimentation combined with risk, which, in most cases, failed since these people were too detached from reality and did not bother to calculate the real consequences of their experiments and activities. Nevertheless, although their experiments in the economic and production sphere, as a rule, end in nothing, these people are still very persistent and never stop their attempts, guided by the principle: "what if something does work".

Perhaps one of the most striking examples of people of this type is the second representative of the Romanov dynasty, the father of Peter I, Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich.

Here is the characterization of the economic gimmickry of this tsar described in the study by A.I. Zaozersky:

As already mentioned, in the sovereign's economy a lot of attention was paid to gardening and horticulture. The tsar, having a penchant for experimentation and childishly loving everything 'outlandish', tries to plant many southern plants in the Moscow region, including even grapes and a mulberry tree. Naturally, these ventures failed – such crops as the Shemakha and Astrakhan watermelons, the date tree, the almonds, and the Hungarian pears could not grow in the Moscow region. However, the tsar was extremely stubborn in his undertakings and tormented his subordinates with his 'projects' until the end of his life. All this is very similar to the ventures of a whimsical spoiled young master – 'a minor' who has never been refused. The idea of starting silkworm breeding near Moscow bugs the tsar, and he orders, besides the 'silk' breeders, 'who would be able to feed the worms and make the silk... to find such a master, although it is expensive, who would be able to start and feed the worms with such food that would be like mulberry, or get oil from a mulberry tree and dipping a leaf or grass into the oil of other trees, feed the worms' (ZAOZERSKY, 1937, p. 119).

However, according to Zaozersky (1937), at the end of the reign, it turned out that "local silkworm breeding is more useful for educating the initiator in patience than pleasing him with its results" (p. 121-122).

A similar example of a later time, already in the 20th century, is the activities of the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (1953-1964). N.S. Khrushchev, whose policy of mass introduction of corn in the USSR agriculture in the 1950s-1960s, as well as the experiments of his distant predecessor with planting mulberry trees, watermelons, grapes, etc., did not consider the climatic conditions of the country and, therefore, was generally a failure. Khrushchev's solutions within the framework of measures for the development of virgin and fallow lands in Kazakhstan, the policy of enlarging collective farms with their parallel transformation into state farms, and other experiments were also famous but not very successful.

The characterization and examples of "owner-failures" make it possible to better understand the psychology of this type of people and the nature of their attitudes when studying the issue of attitudes toward property and investment. At the beginning of the 20th century, these people, being by nature inclined to risk, could also take part in the Stolypin agrarian reform – acquired land and settled on farms but due to their adventurous nature and lack of patience, such people could not competently and rationally organize the economy and therefore soon refused the land plots granted to them and sold them.

In this regard, it is appropriate to cite the observation of S. Korolev-Pinyashin, who gives a rather accurate description of this category of the peasantry:

The bid on the strong, despite the apparent discrimination of the weak, has caused an unprecedented moral impulse in the country. The paradox was that the most untalented failures wanted to become 'strong'. For the first time in world practice, the government provided unlimited credit of trust to its subjects, and very many hopelessly degraded, impoverished peasants 'suddenly' began to turn into stable owners. However, Stolypin knew how to really look at the situation and foresaw a significant number of peasants who were not capable of running an independent individual farm. 'One cannot equate a lazy person with a hardworking person, one cannot equate a feeble-minded person with a capable person', Stolypin said. It is not surprising that small people rushed to the Stolypin farms, for whom honest work was simply unbearable, but who were attracted by the 'novelty'. Anyway, it is difficult to become 'strong' while remaining drunk. There were also many simply untalented, those very 'eternally second' who wanted to become 'eternally first' ('and for the letter to be signed by Stolypin!'). All these people made up the often cited percentage of those who were deceived by the reform of the land-poor (KOROLEV-PINASHIN, 1993, p. 11).

According to our estimates, the total number of representatives of these groups – "envious owners" and "owners-failures" – could be from 10 to 15%.

4. THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE "PASSIVE MAJORITY" IN THE EVENTS OF THE EARLY 20th CENTURY

In total, all the groups described and their transitional layers make up approximately 60-65%. There are still about 35-40% of the peasants who made up the "passive majority". This is less than four active groups together with their combinations but more than each active group by itself. Therefore, the name given to this group by Ryabushinsky, the passive majority, can be considered legitimate. The general socio-political situation in Russia depended on the position of this majority, on which of the active groups this very large group would join. The peasants in this category, at first, took a wait-and-see attitude and were in no hurry to enlarge their land allotment and become owners. It was not so easy for them to free themselves from old traditions and embark on an independent path of economic management. The peasants wanted to look at the life of their neighbors who had secured their land as personal property and, through their experience, to be convinced of

the usefulness and profitability of local land use. Having become accustomed to the communal structure, the hesitant peasants said that "one could still endure it".

The attitude of the latter was not static. If at the beginning of the reform, this category of peasants reacted to the reform (as to any new business) cautiously, as if looking closely at how things would go with their more initiative neighbors, then by the beginning of the First World War, an increasing number of these peasants were infected with the energy of their enterprising fellow villagers and showed an intention to arrange their life similarly. This situation gave grounds, for example, to the American historian D. Macey (1993) to assert that "by the beginning of World War I, *about half* [italics are mine – D.K.] of the peasants sought the government's help in reorganizing their farms in one way or another" (p. 16). Together with the farmers and plot owners, the total number of such peasants amounted to about 50-55%.

After the murder of Stolypin, the course for the continuation of reforms went on but this process gradually began to weaken. The reform lost its proponent, its mainspring. Stolypin's successor V.N. Kokovtsov continued the reform but lacking the willpower and energy of his predecessor and could not (or did not want) to overcome the resistance of the conservative part of the ruling elite.

With the continued strong influence of the court and conservative landowners in the political system, the choice of government was predetermined. By this time, with the outbreak of war, for those in the government who still supported a moderate reform program, there really was a very weak opportunity to renew efforts to form a new coalition with an educated society and with the peasantry, although agrarian reforms began to create the necessary social basis for this (MACEY, 1993, p. 17).

During the First World War, and especially during the February Revolution, under the worsening socio-economic situation and the expanding penetration of revolutionary ideas, another tendency began to latently and imperceptibly gain ground in the peasant environment. This was an opposite tendency towards the spread of radical sentiments and demands due to the desire to solve the agrarian question in an easier, accessible way – through essentially the abolition of property rights for individuals, the confiscation of landed estates, and the equalizing distribution of all land. That is why, when, after the assassination of Stolypin, the upper echelons of power began to show the absence of a firm hand capable of conducting the agrarian course with the same confidence and persistence, a gradual "slide down" began. Chaos and confusion in government circles ("ministerial leapfrog") led to radicalization in society and caused the Duma and the State Council

(creation of the Progressist bloc) to sway to the left. The lack of firm and targeted support from the authorities led to the fact that now the "owners" could no longer lead the rest of the masses into the creative channel of land individualization. The steering wheel of history began to turn to the left, and now the atmosphere of public sentiment began to increasingly be determined by the "envious" and "failures". Very soon they would carry the rest of the "passive majority" with them. This circumstance explains the mass return of peasants to the community during the war years, as pointed out by many authors. In total, the "envious" and "failures", together with their different combinations and different proportions, as well as the "passive majority", could make up 75-80% in explicit and implicit form by the fall of 1917. This amount was more than enough for the revolution to become an inevitable *fait accompli* in Russian history and, thereby, for the transition to socialist values, which changed civil relations in the country.

5. CONCLUSION

The analysis carried out allows us to make adjustments to the traditional ideas about the Stolypin agrarian reform, within the framework of which its consequences are seen from political and class positions or abstract significance for the country. The inevitable ambiguity of assessments generated by the traditional approach makes it difficult to see the reform comprehensively. The heterogeneity of classes, the multitude of social groups within the peasantry itself, and the need to consider the time factor, on the one hand, make it even more ambiguous in the eyes of researchers and, on the other, bring novelty to the study of the formation of civil rights in Russia.

As one of the options for overcoming this problematic situation that has developed in the historiography of the Stolypin agrarian reform, we propose the most optimal one: the classification of various categories of the peasantry, based on an analysis of their attitude to property and an assessment of the reform in dynamics from the perspective, first, of the psychological readiness of these groups to accept the very idea of individual property and, second, the ability to preserve and increase this property. We believe that this approach allows one to show what the Stolypin agrarian reform really was for the peasants of Russia, whom the reform tried to endow them with owner rights since it is property as an economic category and a civil legal institution that is not just the basis of a free society but also serves as the main criterion for classifying the bulk of the population of Russia at the beginning of the 20th century – the peasantry. In this case, it is necessary to emphasize

the insufficiency of a simple indication of the degree of the peasants' prosperity. Political preferences or economic wealth are secondary and overshadow the real motives that guide both critics of the Stolypin reform and its apologists. Meanwhile, the assessment of the reform from the standpoint of the attitude of peasants to property allows, on the one hand, to consider the psychological factor and understand the origins of differences in the assessments of the reform and, on the other, to eliminate its excessive politicization. The reforms, as shown by historical events, caused a violation of rural traditions and the understanding of civil law relations that had developed in the peasantry. This refers to the understanding of customs and elementary ideas of justice, at least in the form in which these principles were understood by those who were opponents of these reforms. The practical marginalization due to labor migration and changing gender rights and opportunities for individual owners undoubtedly contributed significantly to the turbulence associated with the revival of the commune after 1917.

In general, the study shows that to solve the problem of the attitude of the Russian peasantry to the Stolypin agrarian reform, and, accordingly, to draw objective conclusions about the degree of its efficiency, it is necessary to abandon the characterization of the peasantry as a kind of "general" and "single" social mass but, on the contrary, to carry out its classification, differentiating it into certain categories that have their characteristic features. The main methodological principle for such differentiation should be a criterion that allows the distribution of peasants into groups (types and subtypes), based on such psychological characteristics that will form a clear idea of the peasantry's perception of the Stolypin agrarian reform policy through the prism of its relationship to property, understanding the functioning of the mechanisms of law and economic views on the possibilities of using. This can more accurately show the evolution of the peasantry's position, as well as the attitudes and behavior throughout the agrarian transformation process. This approach removes many questions that arise in the study of this process and, consequently, contributes to the formation of a more objective system of ideas that reveals the essence of the Stolypin course in the agrarian policy of the autocracy and a more correct understanding of it.

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