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Historical Sciences

THE RUSSIAN PEASANTRY IN THE XIX CENTURY: LIFE AND HOUSEHOLD

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Abstract

The article discusses the peculiarities of the life of peasants in the XIX century. During this period, the peasantry played a significant role in the life of Russian society. At the end of the XIX century, peasants accounted for more than 85 percent of the population of the Empire. The population of the peasants from the end of the XVII-th century to the beginning of the XX-th century increased significantly due to natural growth and the acquisition of new territories.

The XIX century in the history of the development of the Russian peasantry is a time of great changes and hopes for a bright future. The peasants ceased to be serfs. In addition, the peasants received the rights of "free rural residents", that is, full civil legal capacity in all that corresponded to their specific class rights and obligations, in particular, to acquire land.

Keywords: peasantry, state, culture, life, household.

I. INTRODUCTION

By the end of the 17th century, serfdom was finally formed in Russia. Serfdom was introduced on the initiative of state power based for the following reasons:

- For the country's defense,
- For ensuring needs of the nobility.

So, serfdom was the form of dependence of people on their landowners. The power of the landowners was spreading to the person, freedom, labor and property of their peasants.

They were obliged to serve the state duties. The peasants had to pay taxes and sometimes they had performed a military debt. The landowners' peasants lived in the fiefdoms and estates.

The peasants could be subjected to corporal punishment. Their situation was unenviable. Since the end of the 16th century, they had no right to move on to another landowner. And in 1649, the unlimited search of fugitive peasants was introduced. The landlord was entitled to sell any of his peasants as ordinary goods. Unwanted peasants were exiled to Siberia. In 1859, their number reached about 23 million people. As a result, they were powerless in everything, and they had only duties before their landlords.

In Russia until 1861 there were several categories of peasants: state, serf, specific (udel'nyye) peasants.

The landlord's peasants, in turn, were divided into several categories:

- a) Landless. They did not have allotted land for any of the reasons. They existed until 1861.
- b) Domestic (dvorovyie) - they lived at the house of their landowners and they were their servants.
- c) Gornozavodskie. They mostly lived in Siberia and the Urals. They emerged with the development of the mining industry in Russia at the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. They were required to live and work in factories.
- d) Possessional peasants. They appeared in 1721. They were worked to manufactories. They were obliged to work on the factory to which they were assigned. They could not be used in agricultural work. They gradually replaced by hired people. In 1861-63, they ceased to exist.

Specific (udel'nyye) peasants were another class of the population of Russian Empire. Appeared in 1797 and were essentially former palace peasants. They lived on lands belonging to the imperial family. They enjoyed more freedom than the landlords' peasants. The obrok was their main form of duty. Volosts were created for their self-government for the first time in Russia. Volosts were created on the basis of their villages. Peasants selected an elder (starshina) and a court of justice (volostnoy sud). After 1861, this system spread to all peasants. The number of specific peasants for 1857 amounted to 838 thousand male souls. In 1863, the provisions of the 1861 reform were extended to udel'nyye peasants.

State peasants were formed under Peter the Great in the early 18th century. They were peasants of the Northern Pomor'ye, Siberia, and non-Russian peoples of the Volga (Povolzhye) and Ural regions. They lived on state lands, used allotments allocated to them. They were in state administration and were considered personally free people. They were obliged to pay for the needs of the Zemstvo, poll taxes and serve the duties. Their position was much better than the rest. From the beginning of the 19th century, they were allowed to do entrepreneurship, open factories and own unpopulated lands (without serfs). They accounted for about 45 percent of the total number of peasants in the middle of the 19th century.

II. METHODOLOGY

The main aims of this research are theoretical analysis of life and household of Russian peasantry in the 19th century. As well as their traditions and holidays, ways of life, the influence of the Orthodox Church, their aspirations and ideals.

The subject of the study is the peasantry of Russian Empire.

The theoretical and methodological basis for the study was the statistics and the works of Russian and foreign historians and scientists such as Gromyko M. M., Pavlovskaya A.V., Engelhardt, A.N., Lieven D. and others.

III. ROLE OF PEASANTS IN RUSSIAN SOCIETY

The attitude of landowners to serfs and courtyards was different, depending on the development and social status of the nobility. In small manor estates, of course, relations with the serfs were simpler, more humane. Greater simplicity of manners, greater patriarchy made the difference in the surrounding conditions of the serfs and the gentleman less noticeable. In the eyes of the serfs, the landlord is a dear father, although strict, in anger he will not spare anyone, but at the same time he is a kind, good person who is always ready to help the peasant's needs and will not offend anyone for the truth. In the life of the landowner often attended by a faithful servant, known for his devotion, which grew up and grew old in the estate of his owner, enjoyed his favor. Such a faithful servant was assigned to perform more or less important things.

The more differences in social status among of landlords, the more alienation and the less attention was paid to the servants and the courtyards surrounding them. It only external decency was maintained, if only the landowner himself did not encounter any major disorder. Then the reprisal was short: the guilty one was exiled to the village or given to the army; the girl was cut off a scythe, sent to the village to go after the cows, married to the most unsightly peasant. The rich landlords did not enter the household themselves, so as not to disturb themselves, but entrusted all to the manager. If the landowner rarely visited the estate, but lived in the capital, the manager, not forgetting himself, ripped off the peasants and sent money to the capital. And the presence of the landowner in the village did not deter the manager from abuses. Large landlords did not intervene in the household; they didn't care if the domestic servants were fed or hungry, how she was behaving. In a word, the serfs were not people for a landowner, but slaves who performed implicitly will. Therefore, in the eyes of the manager, some order was maintained, for that, in fact, utter licentiousness of morals, drunkenness, and depravity prevailed.

The landowner certainly possessed the fate of his peasants. He could sell, relocate his serfs, give their in recruits, etc. The law required the free consent of serfs. Also the peasant did not dare to marry without the permission of his landowner.

Serfdom did not respond to the new capitalist demands of Russia by the mid-19th century. The development of all kinds of industries led to an increase in the number of people involved in entrepreneurship. It required working hands and enterprising minds, but not slaves. Time itself demanded the abolition of this archaism. Only the majority of landowners and aristocrats opposed this idea. And therefore, the monarchy for a long time could not take this step, since each tsar was afraid of a palace coup by the highest classes of society due to the restriction of their rights.

And only in 1861, Emperor Alexander II issued Manifesto on the abolition of serfdom. He gave hope for a more prosperous free life for the peasants. The 1861 Emancipation Manifesto proclaimed the emancipation of the serfs on private estates and of the domestic (household) serfs. By this edict more than 23 million people received their liberty. Serfs gained the full rights of free citizens, including rights to marry without having to gain consent, to own property and to own a business. The Manifesto prescribed that peasants would be able to buy the land from the landlords. Household serfs were the least affected: they gained only their freedom and no land.

But unfortunately it was an incomplete freedom. But the tsar could not go on a big conflict with the aristocracy and therefore redemption payments were introduced. Peasant communities were formed. Obshchina (communities) began to regulate ways of life of peasants. Free exit from the obshchina was forbidden. In the future, these factors will play a negative role in the life of the country. After all, this agrarian question will be one of the main reasons for the upcoming revolutions of 1905 and 1917. But that's another story.

The obshchina (rural community) was a special and important unit of administrative self-government in the Russian Empire. Several rural communities made up the volost. The main activity of the community was determined by two factors: tradition and common sense. Hence the inevitable divergence in the functioning of each particular community depending on the regional living conditions, its size, composition, and so on.

Community gathering (obshchinnyy skhod) was the main way to solve those or other problems that arose in rural society. The decision of the meeting was unqualified and binding on all members of the community. At the obshchinnyy skhod gathered representatives of all farms, houses. Usually these were men — heads of families, but not everywhere. In some communities, women have also played their part.

The main man was the headman (starosta). Starosta was a representative of the executive branch. They chose the starosta of one of the most respected people in their volost. Starosta had to performed many official duties, so they were chosen with certain reluctance.

The range of issues regulated by the rural community was wide and varied. The first and most important question is land. It was precisely this that in due time caused the most controversy and criticism of the community. All the land cultivated by the peasants was in the possession of the community. In the personal hereditary possession of the peasants were only yard plots. The arable land was shared by the community among the peasants of the congregation. The principle of justice in the form in which it was understood by the peasants was put. All the arable land, which was in general redistribution, the world divided into equal areas. The rural community could have different lands - worse and better, near the village and beyond the river. Each received their stripes in different places, so that everyone got a piece of good and bad, and distant, and near land. On the one hand, it was fair. Everyone had the same conditions and opportunities for work. This is what satisfied the peasants. On the other hand, a situation often arose when each owner had a narrow strip of land in various places and was forced to spend a lot of time just on the transition from one site to another, while productivity naturally fell.

In addition, each family received their own allotment depending on its size. Principles in rural communities were different: in most cases, the section was conducted by "souls", that is, the land was relied on by males, in some cases by workers, that is, capable family members, somewhere by all family members. From time to time, usually every 10–20 years, they were redistributed as needed. The need for redistribution was due to the fact that the composition of the family was changing, which means that it was necessary to take from someone, give more to someone. For the peasants, this was the embodiment of the idea of justice, for the opponents of the obshchina - by equalization, which did not allow strong owners to get ahead.

Of course, this kind of redistribution has always been painful, caused a lot of controversy and quarrels. However, despite all the difficulties and imperfections of such a system, it satisfied the peasant and worked until it came into conflict with the new economic and political development of Russia.

Volost set the dates and procedures for various agricultural activities. So, everyone started to plow on one fixed day, which was often timed to coincide with some church holiday. They proceeded from experience, weather conditions, a specific situation, most often followed the tradition accepted by centuries. Thanks to this, experience was handed down from generation to generation, a sense of collective responsibility appeared, and balanced decisions were taken.

The volost had partly judicial functions. Thefts, fights, land issues, almost all crimes, except criminal ones (in this case, the intervention of the authorities was required), were dismantled, and the punishment was established and carried out by the peasants themselves. At the same time, the village had its own unwritten laws, conditioned by tradition and often contrary to state legislation.

On a scale of such a large country as Russia, with scattered villages, which were sometimes long and difficult to get to from the uезд town, the community system of trials and punishment was certainly important. It maintained order, even though it was often based on the peasant perception of the law itself, and created certain stability in the state.

The obshchina also dealt with administrative matters. Among them were the most important recruitment and collection of taxes. Here the principle of collective responsibility (krugovaya poruka), which was convenient for both the peasant, and the state, and the landlord (if the peasants were serfs) acted. Not every individual peasant was responsible for paying taxes and sending recruits to his superiors, but the whole rural community was collectively responsible. This greatly simplified the solution of the problem and suited everyone.

The peasant felt some social security: in the event of unforeseen circumstances, the community was forced to cover its debts (subject to a subsequent return of debt). The state or landlord received his taxes,

without delving into how they were collected.

A question that is important for community members was about who was allowed to live in the volost, who could be let go away. The community did not allow just to leave, without the consent of its members. After all, if someone left the community, then taxes and various works fell on the shoulders of those who remained. Therefore, the issue was resolved in detail, most often the one who left was taking on monetary obligations, that is, he had to pay the community a certain amount for his "freedom".

Thus, the volost became not just an economic organism aimed at solving certain economic and political tasks, but also fulfilled an important educational function. The community in Russia exercised a kind of moral control, which was extremely important for a peasant country of that size. It taught to respect each other and formed collectivism.

But there were opponents of the obshchina. The rural community was the essence of a new serfdom. After all, it did not allow strong owners to develop in full force, but supported weak ones. A strong member of the community could not choose the timing of the work, harvesting and the use of any new technical means of tillage. It prevented the development of capitalism in Russia. In turn, weak members of the obshchina could only hold on with mutual help from other members of the community. Another thing is that in the form as it was, with all its strengths and weaknesses, it suited the peasantry and corresponded to his ideas about life.

IV. LIFE AND CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE LIFESTYLE OF THE PEASANTS

The main employment of the Russian peasantry throughout the century has been agriculture and breeding. Also, the peasants were engaged in various types of trades and crafts. Especially in those regions of the country where, for one reason or another, agricultural activities were hampered, and the population could not provide themselves with bread.

After the reform of 1861, each household had mainly 6.5-7.5 desetins of land. Farming consisted of crops of rye, wheat, oats, millet, sunflower, and so on. The land was plowed with a horse. It can be concluded that the horse was a valuable unit in every household. The horse could afford only the wealthy peasants. The grain was sown by hand, and harvested with a sickle or scythe.

A large part of the household was a cattle breeding. It was necessary primarily for their own consumption. The rural community bred working cattle (horses, oxen), as well as cows, pigs and sheep. A significant role was played by the poultry. They diluted chickens, ducks, geese and turkeys.

The crafts were mainly represented mainly in small-scale manual production of finished products for everyday life from raw materials using simple technical means. There were crafts for their own needs and for sale. The products were sold primarily in the local market in a nearby settlement or city. Sometimes the goods were sold to merchants, with a view to resale.

The crafts consisted in various occupations of the peasants depending on the territory of their residence: the development and extraction of natural resources (forestry, hunting, fishing and beekeeping).

There was also the definition of "otkhozhii promysel". It meant the temporary departure of peasants from their farms to work: in cities, other agricultural areas, in industry, abroad, etc.

In various sources, characterizing the craft occupation of the peasants, the authors use the terms "vnutrikrayevoy" and "vnekrayevoy" otkhod. By "vnutrikrayevoy otkhod" is meant work in which the peasants were engaged not far from their villages, while "vnekrayevoy otkhod" always meant activities far beyond the borders of the native province, when the peasants left the house for half a year, and often for a period of 1 to 3 or more years.

All “vnutrikrayevoy” crafts were small, artisanal. In artisanal workshops, most often, members of one family could work, passing the secrets of mastery from father to son. There are also examples of the existence of artels. More or less large industrialists were divided between themselves and, as a rule, had no direct relations with consumers. In spite of the fact that during this period there were already loan and savings and loan funds, their capital was insignificant. Lack of working capital often did not allow craftsmen to spend any money on improving production.

“Vnekrayevyye othod” gave farmers a much greater income outside their native province. It always non-agricultural in nature. This means that part of the peasants lived for a long time in the cities, in fact, already being industrial workers, who were connected with the village only by paying taxes and fulfilling obligations, some of which were taken over by their families remaining in the village. From the earliest years, many peasant children fell into the cities for “training”, becoming artisans in the future; others linked their lives with trade.

Some migrant workers, having saved money and returning to their homeland, became the owners of various workshops opened by them, which contributed to the development of intra-edge industries. The pledge of well-being of the peasant economy to a large extent was in the desire to work and the persistence of its members.

Thus, the pledge of well-being of the peasant economy to a large extent was in the desire to work and the perseverance of its members.

The influence of Church. An indispensable feature of a person who meets the moral ideal of the overwhelming majority of the peasants was faith. She was judged by careful visits to the church, by observance of fasting and rituals, by going to church services, but especially by the degree of fulfillment of moral standards in general. Not only the elders in the family ensured that the youth did not miss particularly important services, but the whole community watched this.

They visited the church more often in the winter and autumn, when the peasants were freer from chores. In the summer went a little. If the temple was far away, then the visits were interrupted at the time of snow drifts and mudslides. Of the villages most remote from the church, connected with the village, bad roads went or went there only for the biggest holidays - Easter, Trinity, Christmas, and also to the temple ones (an event or saint's celebration, to which the church of this parish is dedicated).

The sermons that were pronounced in rural churches every Sunday, and on holidays after matins and during the liturgy, had a significant moral influence. By the time of the sermon, everyone moved closer to the lectern in order to hear well. There was complete silence. After the service, they interpreted among themselves the preaching.

The peasants attached great importance to daily prayers. Under the big holidays at night they prayed almost until dawn. There were also such observations: they pray fervently, but deviate from the canons because of ignorance. Of course, the peasants were not theologically educated people, but home prayer, like visiting the church, organically entered into their spiritual and moral life. Not less importance was attached to the observance of posts, the terms of which were known in the village to everyone, young and old.

The family and the community served as an organizing principle in many phenomena of the spiritual life of the peasants. The family not only raised children and led a joint household, being the primary and main production team. She was the bearer of deep traditions, connecting a person with the world around him, the keeper of collective experience. The family - was the most important unit of society. The family united, as a rule, representatives of two generations - parents and their children. Such a family usually represented a large group. Often there were 7-9 children in the family. If among the children there were more than half of the boys, then such families were not considered distressed. On the contrary, they were quite “strong”, as there were many workers in them.

The dwellings of the majority of the Russian peasants' family in the 19th century retained the features of past times. In both the village and most cities, wood remained the main building material. Depending on the wealth of the owners of the house were decorated with carvings, had drainpipes, shutters, etc. Peasants in the quality and every day, and output clothing wore shirts and pants. In winter they wore sheepskin coats

and sheepskin coats, long sheepskin belts, belted with bright cushions.

The caps were mostly felted wool. At the head of the peasant family stood one person - a bolshak. His position as head in moral, economic and even administrative terms was recognized by all members of the family, the community and even the authorities. From such heads of each family, and consequently, from the economic court, there was a gathering of the community.

Bolshak, as a rule, became the right of seniority. The oldest man in the family could transfer his rights to another family member. It was generally accepted that the bolshak would manage the entire economy, and be responsible for the welfare of the family. He solved the issues of buying and selling, care for work, distribution of work in the family. The rational head of the household usually consulted on substantial matters with the whole family or one of the elders.

The owner treats his household strictly, imperatively, and often takes an overbearing tone. Of course, much depended on the nature of the chapter and the general spirit that developed in the family. In the evening, the bolshak distributed work the next day, and his orders were subject to rigorous execution. There was a long-term practice of distribution of economic affairs in a Russian family by sex and age. But in each locality had its own characteristics.

During sowing, men worked in the field. The eldest son was plowing, the father sowed. Married women at this time planted vegetables, and the girls were weaving. After the spring sowing was over and before the haymaking began, the men prepared the fields for winter crops, while the women and girls went to the forest for bark — they harvested for sale. At the same time, the girls got the money they got for new clothes, and for women - for common family needs. During the harvest and hay making, all united. After the harvest, men usually brought bread from the fields, and women were engaged in harvesting vegetables. The care of the girls, as a rule, was cleaning flax. During threshing, the whole family got up at two in the morning and by 10 in the morning was finishing work on the threshing floor. The rest of the day, the men used to amend the hedge, or the blank of smolya, or go hunting. Women spun flax and tended the cattle. Yarn and care for cattle remained female work and winter. Cooking was their concern all year round. In winter, men drove tar, harvested firewood, carried logs from the forest, repaired sledges, carts and harness, wove baskets, and hunted. Children and adolescents helped both.

The traditional scheme of distribution of work required, of course, daily concrete decisions depending on the season, the weather, the real possibilities of the family, etc. The Bolshak dealt with this. The life of each family made many amendments to the general tradition. In particular, temporary care for male wages led to the fact that many men's work had to be done by women.

So, the bolshak is the head of the family, the older man, but if he doesn't have a good business, he loses this right: the family itself or the community shifts it. The peasant social consciousness recognized the hereditary chapter - but only as long as he was fit for this role. The peasant commitment to preserving the inviolable rights of the "court", the family as a whole, to owning the whole economy was condemned by some authors in pre-revolutionary journals, and modern historians sometimes interpret this as a feudal relic, backwardness, hindering capitalist development. But if you take a closer look at the peasant life and think about the problems of the village in the light of the path traveled later, it turns out that in this peasant position there was a lot of reasonable, ensuring the stability of the "yard" as the primary and main economic unit. From this perspective, the mythical "backwardness" turns into valuable social experience that takes into account national, natural, and other features

V. CONCLUSION

From the time of the liberation of the serfs in 1861, the main problem of the Russian peasantry until 1907 was a technical backwardness, low agricultural productivity and general land tenure.

The problems of repayment were finally resolved only in 1906-07 (by writing them off). Thus, by the end of the 19th century, the process of the formation of peasant proprietors, although considerably advanced, had not yet been finally completed.

At the same time, Russia lagged behind the developed countries of the West by about 50 years.

The big problem of the population was crop failure. This led entire provinces to mass starvation. This problem was caused by natural disasters and underdevelopment of railway mobility. Indeed, because of this, the government could not quickly transfer grain stocks to the other end of the country in the worst years. But these problems began to be solved in the reign of Nicholas II. In addition, the peasants had high hopes for the redistribution of land, in case of its expropriation from the landowners. But it was a profound delusion, because at the end of the XIX century, landowners owned about 10-15 percent of the land, and then only in the European part of Russia. These senseless hopes were fueled by opposition parties and forces that sought to organize a revolution in Russia or significant changes in its government. Unfortunately, in the future this will lead to a catastrophe.

Perhaps the most important conclusion that follows from the foregoing does not apply to the culture of the old village, but to us, to modernity. It is time to abandon the arrogant elite approach to the peasant, to people who then and now allegedly grew to nothing. This is the approach of a self-confident "intellectual", for whom a person "not in our own circle" in principle cannot be a complex and interesting person. Criticizing the recent past, it is important to remember that many misfortunes occurred due to the reckless destruction of traditional culture, the rejection of a more ancient past. It is necessary to look at it objectively, without bias.

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