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Land reforms in Soviet Russia and the peasant uprisings of the 1920s in the context of the concept of Theodor Shanin (regional aspect).

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Abstract: The article is devoted to peculiarities of land reforms at South of Russia in the 1920s in the context of the concept of “moral peasant economy” by Theodor Shanin. Land reforms are associated with long-term factors of specificity: territorial location, multi-ethnicity, increased role of industry and trade in the plural economy. Ruling Communist regime could hardly adapt to the peculiarities of the market economy region owing to the weakness of power resources. The objectives of land reforms were: the confiscation of private land, the creation of large state-owned enterprises, promote co-operation, containment of social polarization of the peasantry. In wealthy regions (South of Russia, Ukraine, Siberia) land reforms have encouraged a sharp conflict between the old residents and migrants. NEP began to wealthy regions later than in the whole country – in 1922 and ended earlier – in 1928. Stronghold of peasant self-organization was land commune. Played a significant role Cossack rebel groups in the South of Russia. They demanded to restore the autonomy of their areas and land privileges. Peasants successfully resisted the power, spend their representatives in local government, cooperatives. It was a “force of weaks”, in the words of T. Shanin. But their military organization was weak, and the demands – contradictory. This facilitated the suppression of peasant uprisings in 1922–24 and 1929–30.



1. Introduction

In the early 1920-s, Russia was in a severe social and political crisis. A study on land reforms and farmers' uprisings in the Southern Russia will allow to identify reasons and factors of the conflict. A concept of "moral peasant economy" by T. Shanin (Shanin, 1972, 21) gives an opportunity to reveal motives of Cossacks' and peasants' activity and to determine how they protected their interests and put pressure on the authorities.

Contemporary researchers grounded the point that peasants' and Cossacks' uprisings were one of the civil war forms no less important than a confrontation between the "Reds" and "Whites" regular armies. They commonly use the notions "peasants' war" (V.P. Danilov) (Danilov, 1995, 4-23) and "small civil war" (S.A. Pavlyuchenkov) (Pavlyuchenkov, 1996, 76-78), V.N. Brovkin (Brovkin, 1994, 24-39) as synonyms for the events of the early 1920-s. V.P. Danilov grounded a hypothesis of the peasant revolution in Russia (1902–1922) (Danilov, 1995, 5-6). Having sustained a defeat in the war, the peasants gained a political victory, i.e. they disrupted the communist experiment and enshrined their rights in the Land Code. We consider that the "historical - anthropological approach" for studies is fruitful. They are interprets farmers' movements as a phenomenon of mass culture and customary law. A rebellion is considered as a way to express a local solidarity against "strangers", as a response of the community village to aggressions of the external (modernized) world. The rebellions were based on ideas about fair distribution of goods, social welfare role of the government and farmers' "ethics of survival" (Shanin, 1972, 24). Popular movements compensate loss or weakness of the government influence on the society during crises.

Purpose of the article – to determine the influence of cossack and peasant uprisings on the particularities of land reform in Southern Russia (1920–1927). Region includes the cossack territories: Don, Kuban, Terek and peasant provinces: the Black Sea and Stavropol.

2. Land reforms and the peasant uprisings in the Southern Russia, 1920s

Specificity of land possession in the south of Russia is as follows: 75% of the land area belonged to the Cossack communities. The Cossacks were 2-4 times more land per capita than the migrants – peasants. During 1917–1926 more than 470 thousand migrants came to the region (Baranov, 1996, 92-93). The regional features were the same: great development of land rent, manpower, estate privileges of the Cossacks: to have a military self-government, does not pay direct taxes, use of weapons. Rich stratum was 12.5% of rural residents, and they were mostly the Cossacks (Kozlov, 1977, 114, 132). As a result, the Cossacks were in the Civil War on the side of the White movement or moderate socialists – the autonomists and separatists. Peasant migrants and peoples of the Caucasus mountains, on the contrary, became supporters of the Bolsheviks.

They provided for the elimination of the Cossacks as estate and ethnic group, the prohibition of their autonomy. In 1920, the authorities established a schedule of food is almost at the level of the total crop in the region. Started redistribution of land in favor of inefficient "communes" – state-owned farms. This has led to widespread discontent of the Cossacks and the rich peasants. In 1921–1922 famine gripped 2/3 of the population of Southern Russia (Polyakov, 1975, 14-20).

In 1920–1924, armed opposition in Southern Russia was a heterogeneous variety of political forces (from monarchists to anarchists) being in conflict with each other. Rebels' movements can be defined according to their political orientation. Firstly, the Cossack movement of independence – vital and deep-seated in the public opinion. Unlike the leaders, the main part of ordinary rebels dissociated from Russia against their will with a desire to save their native

land from the “commune”. Secondly, the monarchist movement of officers and a part of wealthy Cossacks which did not have a social support. It was fed from the outside by the emigrants. Thirdly, peasants’ actions in favor of “Soviets (power institutions) without the communists”. Fourthly, the anarchist movement. It was not developed in the Southern Russia except the raids of the Mahno gangs across the Don region.

“Whites-and-Greens” insurgent detachments were usually headed by “White” officers or Cossacks. There were a lot of participants of the White movement, refugees from the Central Russia and native peasants.

Leaflets and operational war documents identified by us allow to draw a conclusion that the movement main slogans were not estate-limited but in the spirit of the democratic “third revolution”. In this documents we can mark out a core of slogans. It is the inviolability of “labor” property and parceling of landlords’ lands; equality of estates (except new migrants of 1914–1920); power of freely elected Soviets without the communists and the “Cheka” (state security organ); end of the war; calling of the Constituent Assembly; forgiveness of the surrendered Red Army soldiers and Soviet officers; anti-Semitism. The leaflets reflect contradictions between the “Whites-and-Greens” movements. The Terek and Line Cossacks did not call for autonomy. On the contrary, the Black Sea and Don Cossacks intended to proclaim the Cossack Republics. A peasant version of separatism was presented in appeals of the Black Sea rebels written by social-revolutionaries Voronovich and Roshchenko (Baranov, 1999, 232-233).

The war actions had a seasonal rhythm dying down during sowing and harvest and flaring up in autumn and early spring. The uprising peaks fell at February, March and September 1921 which coincides with the food crisis aggravation and crucial situations in the agrarian policy of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks).

In November 1920, the “White” Crimea downfall resulted in a totally new balance of power. Now the opposition’s hopes on victory in the struggle of the regular armies were broken. Now the Bolsheviks fought not against the armies but against separate rebel groups of different orientations. However, Wrangel’s defeat did not lead to the civil war ending. It passed into a bloody stage on the “home fronts”.

Why did the war drag on in the Russian main grain regions till 1922 and in some areas (Kuban, Terek) – till autumn 1924? The main reason is excessive toughening of the “War Communism” after establishing control over the country which was aggravated by the lack of knowledge of the wealthy regions specificity and unwillingness to take it into consideration. A. Beloborodov, a member of the Caucasus Bureau of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) Central Committee, asserted: “The only reasonable measure for the North Caucasus is occupation of this area by the Soviet troops” (Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History – abbreviated RSASPH. Foundation 17. Case 1. Inventory 182. Page 87). The plan targets of the food requisitioning system and removal of products exhausted the territory agriculture and caused grain growers’ rallying against the government.

Farmers’ displeasure increased rapidly. In winter 1920/1921, Russia was on the verge of a full-scale war between the government and farmers. By the beginning of 1921, the Operations Division of the Russian Interior Troops Headquarters accounted 19,640 rebels in the Southern Russia (Russian State Military Archive – abbreviated RSMA. Foundation 217. Case 2. Inventory 38. Page 7).

For instance, on December 17, 1920, the uprising in Mikhaylovskaya village on Upper Don was supported by the battalion of the registration of Red army commanded by K. Vakulin. He called for protecting “real freedom, equality and brotherhood”. The rebels demanded free trade. A socialistic rhetoric was typical: to form cossack unions; authorize all parties except the

monarchists ones: “Long live the Soviet power without the communists and monarchists!” The rebels gathered almost 5 thousand bayonets and 440 sabres but were defeated in March 1921.

In January of 1921, the 19th regiment of the 1st Cavalry Army commanded by G. Maslakov came over to the Mahno’s rebels. Maslakov declared the establishment of the “Caucasus Rebel Army”. His supporters stood out for “true Soviet regime without communists and food requisitioning”. The “army” size reached 5 thousand people (Danilov (ed.), 1997, 613-614).

A comparison of the rebel documents allows to draw a conclusion that in 1921, there was a prevalence of socialist calls which were adapted to the Cossacks’ needs. The following demands were typical: the Soviet regime without communists and the “Cheka”; abolition of food requisitioning and introduction of free trade; war against “all traitors and commissars”, autonomy or independence of cossack regions.

A severe crisis of the “War Communism” system threatened the RCP (B) power in the Southern Russia. On March 10, the Don “Cheka” chairman M. Burov wrote: “The Don oblast is one of the counter-revolution bases... It must be cleaned out with iron hands. The army was demoralized and in case of rebellion, the Soviet regime on in the Don area (and probably in the whole territory) will not have a significant reliable military forces; that is proved with the whole army units coming over to the gangs” (Danilov (ed.), 1997, 612-613, 632).

By the end of March of 1921, the first news about a tax on food production reached the Southern Russia. The rebellion wave went down and the threat of all dissatisfied people union was postponed. However, the tax on food production was approved more guardedly than in Central Russia because Cossacks had been free of any direct taxes for centuries. The faith to the innovation fell because of the food requisitioning order which was interpreted as “communists’ new ruse” and it aggravated doubts in the power strength.

The political situation of 1921 can be assessed only under the complex analysis of such factors as public opinion, social base and slogans of the “Whites-and-Greens”, territory control degree, enemies’ strategies and tactics. The “Review of the Russian Communist party organizations as of October 5, 1921” contains the assessment: “The major part of Cossacks has a distinctly negative attitude towards the Communist party and they definitely separate the Soviet power from communists.... Cossacks are suspicious of the new economic policy” (RSASPH. Foundation 17. Case 3. Inventory 1180. Page 11). On the contrary, “non-cossacks” considered the RCP (B) as a protector and they often substituted class interests by estate ones.

The rebels’ political orientation was characterized by the prevalence of moderate socialist slogans of “labor power” and Cossack “independence”. The Kuban Rebel Army leaflets composed by M. Pilyuk and P. Savitsky were quite typical. In the leaflets, the “Kuban people” (all residents of the territory before 1914) was opposed to “parasitizing newcomers”. Among the demands there was Kuban independence, government of the people, personal freedom “with no torture basements and the Cheka”, land for all working people with no need to but it from landowners and capitalists, inviolability of labor property. The authors tried to assure that “the power of “new Russian nobles” who are communists having received Khan’s label in the Kuban area” has nothing in common with the needs of the Red Army and working people. A call for establishment of “true Soviet power of workers and peasants” was combined with a rude separatist slogan “we need neither monarchists nor communists, Kuban is for its citizens” (State Archive of the Krasnodar Territory – abbreviated SAKT. Foundation R-102. Case 1. Inventory 32. Page 168-169). The opposite monarchist tendency is known as well. Let us mark out the “Russian Army Assistance Headquarters” commanded by Colonel M. Zhukov. He tried to involve non-cossacks because “they are also oppressed by the Commune” (Ibid. P. 60; F. P-411. C. 2. I. 198. P. 1-9). However, his leaflets were notable for ideas of the Orthodoxy protection and implacability towards non-Russian ethnic groups.

The Red Army documents confirm the civil war breadth. Till the end of 1922, the defense situation remained in 36 governorates, oblasts and autonomies of the Russia. According to the Red Army Statistical Service, in 1921 9,338 Red Army fighters were irreparably lost in the battles against “counter-revolutionary and anti-Soviet riots” at the Caucasus front (Krivosheev, Andronicus (eds.), 1993, 48-50).

In early February 1921, the Kuban Socialist-oriented rebel government was established in the Trans-Kuban mountains. It began to form an army headed by General M.A. Przhhevsky. The Batalpashinsk district became a center for the North Caucasus People’s Army commanded by Colonel Serebryakov. The Cis-Azov overflow lands were a base for detachments of V.F. Ryabokon’ and M.N. Zhukov. The movement decline which began to show after the announcement of the tax on food production was replaced by new outbreak as soon as one-time food requisitioning order was announced. By May 1, the number of the Kuban and Black Sea Coast rebels was 1,756 bayonets and 2,774 sabres in 50 detachments. These calculations made by the Intelligence Division of the 9th Red Army included only detachments of more than 15 people (SAKT, F. R-102. C. 1. I. 138. P. 35-36, 62, 456). In the Terek area, the number of “Greens” increased from 700 sabres on the eve of the announcement of the tax on food production to 3,520 sabres and 365 bayonets by June (History..., 1923, 1, 132). Even in the drained Don area the detachments of 200-300 people grew 3-5 times (Chernopitsky, 1998, 8).

The Upper Don military district remained the main rebellion center in the Don area where on March 14, Ya. Fomin’s battalion rose against cruel removal of food. Local communists took part in the mutiny. As the RCP (B) okrug committee reported, the authority preserved its powers only in the cossack villages, while farms got under control of the “bandits”; a passage was possible only with armed forces. The number of the Upper Don rebels reached 4,600 people. By summer, they were finally defeated and dispersed (RSMA. F. 28087. C. 5. I. 59. P. 15; I. 140. P. 140-148, 174).

The situation remained unstable. In May 1921, the Caucasus front command reported to Chief of the armed forces of the Republic: “it will take Cossacks much time to agree with requirements set by the proletariat power” (RSMA. F. 109. C. 3. I. 214. P. 1). The reasons were disclosed in the Cheka reports. The farmers were not sure of the power strength, they were requisitioned additional cattle and paid the tax of food production under compulsion. Starting on the food requisitioning order introduction, “the attitude of all segments and groups of the population towards the Soviet power became noticeably worse” (Documentation Centre on the Contemporary History of the Krasnodar Territory – abbreviated DCCHK. F. 1. C. 1. I. 120. P. 4-5).

The authorities mostly used power-based methods to pacify the region. Special “groups of three” of the RCP (B) bodies which were created on territorial and local levels became a stronghold for the regional power system. A hostage system was provided for villages. In order to suppress mutinies, the North-Caucasus Military District’s management was strengthened. On July 9, the District Revolutionary Military Council originated territory, area and local military counter-banditry commands. The commands received a supreme power in the region. Along with violation, there was the amnesty for “gangs” leaders who will return to peaceful life and bring all fighters given up with arms and equipment. The amnesty covered deserters from the Red Army and escapees from the concentration camps. Order No 1 of the Territory Military Command promised them a guard list, and in case of complete contrition and reliability their civil rights would be restored. All surrendered fighters were to be accounted in the “Cheka” and military registration and enlistment offices.

As a response, the rebels consolidated. In summer 1921, the Kuban rebels revived using the Red Army demobilization and rejection of the tax on food production. Kuban rebel army’s calls and plans were worked out by Colonel P.A. Savitsky, a former comrade of the Territory Council

(Rada) chairman. On July, 18-19 he held a congress of the detachments leaders. General Przhevalsky was elected by a commander of the army. By autumn 1921, 105 detachments (2,400 bayonets and 4,800 sabres) were operated in the Trans-Kuban area (Sheideman, 1929, 122-123).

After the seizure of Krasnodar city, Savitsky was going to arm draftees with the armory weapons, to proclaim the Kuban Republic and to conduct negotiations on its recognition with the Soviet Russia. The Kuban rebel army ideologists Pilyuk and Savitsky incorrectly considered that the amnesty was a sign of the authorities' weakness and that Cossacks would mutiny far and wide. But really, being exhausted and intimidated, the Cossacks yearned for peace. Amnesties gradually weakened the rebels. The Red Army could increase its presence in the territory while the "Whites-and-Greens" resources ran out. Therefore, a raid on Krasnodar could only have a temporary tactical success.

On the night of September 18, 1921, the Kuban Rebel Army took an offensive baseline succeeding in the Cossack recruitment. Przhevalsky had up to 1 thousand people in total. On the night of September 20, the Kuban Rebel Army surrounded Krasnodar. The city storm failed because of a hasty breakthrough of S.M. Budenny who headed the area military command. The 1st Chevalry Army units surrounded the rebels with an external ring. Kuban rebel army at dawn of September 23 was defeated (Sheideman, 1929, 122-123). Pilyuk and Savitsky were caught and condemned.

In summer and autumn of 1921, a difficult situation persisted in the Terek area. According to the August report of the governorate police head, small detachments of the Whites-and-Greens united in larger ones "which committed impudent and cruel attacks on certain residents, farms, villages and even trains". In October 1921, detachments of 1300 sabres operated in the Terek area (History..., 1924, 1, 133). They carried out frequent raids on the foothill Cossack villages and railway. The Cossack core of the rebels was supplemented with the Kabardians, Ossetians and Russian peasants.

The rebels' bursts of activity were less in the Don area. By 1922, only 215 bayonets were still in the Lower Don area (Documentation Center on Contemporary History of Rostov Area – abbreviated DCCHRA. F. 4. C. 1. I. 109. P. 115). On the contrary, in the Upper Don and Donets districts, the movement broadened due to compulsory payments of the tax on food production. The strength of the detachment commanded by Fomin and Kondratyev reached 220 people (Short Periodic Review..., 1921, 3). Cossacks tried to wreck a tax campaign by killing food requisitioning workers and destroying documents in executive committees as well as by holding local drafting for military service in detachments. On October 6, 1921 on behalf of the "Revolt forces of the military revolutionary times" Fomin called the residents for unity: "the Commune will lead to starvation death, to slavery of the serfdom law" (State Archive of the Rostov Area – abbreviated SARA. F. 1174. C. 1. I. 277. P. 66; I. 276. P. 103). On October 13-16, his detachment occupied the Veshenskaya Cossack village but did not win Cossacks' support. On October 30, Kondratyev was defeated and seized. Others degenerated into criminals.

From winter 1921, the tactics of military struggle changed radically. The Soviet forces strengthened significantly and gained experience of fights in the local conditions. The rebels could not control the situation anymore and switched to fast-moving raids in small detachments. From October 1 to December 31, 1921 their number went down from 6,180 to 1,210 people in the North Caucasus Military District (Short Periodic Review..., 1921, 10-11). The cases when tired-of-war peasants and Cossacks refused provisions to the rebels and formed self-defense detachments with the support of the Red Army and the "Cheka", became more frequent.

Why did the rebel centers remain in the North Caucasus till autumn 1924? The main reason is contradictoriness and inconsistency of the early New Economic Policy (NEP). The compulsory imposing of the tax on the food production and the rural market constraint were among the main economic elements. By the beginning of 1922, the fiscal pressure reached the limits, and the Southern Russia regions fulfilled only 43% of the food production tax plan (Polyakov, 1975, 14-20). The food reserve exhaustion caused widespread hunger, such as later in 1924.

In spring 1922, the rebel movement centers strengthened in the Cis-Azov overflow lands and the Caucasus foothills. Having replaced the slogan "Soviets without the communists" by a monarchist slogan "One and Undivided Russia", Colonel M.N. Zhukov coordinated operations on the major part of the Kuban area. By spring, the strength of contacting groups reached 665 people (SAKT. F. R-147. C. 1. I. 37. P. 345, 80, 340, 349).

The territory and local authorities conducted more flexible and successful new tactics sending the best workers to uneasy areas and holding non-party agitation conferences. The "Cheka" successfully sent agents to the rebels breaking down detachments from the inside. By April, they succeeded to stop the displeasure growth.

The results of the spring military operations are definite. As of May and June of 1922, the number of rebels in the North Caucasus Military District decreased from 2,708 to 1,567 people (Short Periodic Review..., 1922, 3, 18-19). The reasons of the movement decline are explained in a confidential letter of the RCP (B) Central Committee's South-Eastern Bureau. "If early on a great part of the village felt sympathy towards the banditry and supported them in every way, now the village which looks for the order is mostly hostile towards bandits because they rob the population as well. During the mass operations, even Cossacks actively fought against the gangs. Only the rich peasants top... continue supporting the banditry" (RSASPH. F. 85. C. 24. I. 202. P. 2). Noted all-round unprecedented eagerness to work peacefully; that gradually forced isolated rebels to surrender.

The strengthened authority structures let them use more flexible and advanced tactics of struggle. A significant role in the territory appeasement was played by the All-Russian laws on facilitation of tax imposition, on termination of oppressive mortgage contracts. The Land Code which came into effect in autumn 1922 confirmed a formed order of allotment use in the Cossack areas.

We have systematized statistical data from the brief periodical reviews of the North Caucasus Military District and the enemy forces tables based on the data from the intelligence (1921–1924). They allow to trace changes of rebels' number and deployment. Let us note consistency of the "Greens" main centers in the Caucasus foothills and Cis-Azov overflow lands. The most large-scale and well-organized protests were fixed in the Kuban and Black Sea areas (44-64% of participants; an average number of fighters per detachment is 19-58 people), in the Terek area (20-30% of participants and 12-120 fighters per detachment). The lowest activity was noted in the Stavropol territory (5-10% of participants and 18-42 fighters per detachment). From autumn 1921 till summer 1923, the rebels' concentration lowered steadily (from 70 to 15 fighters per detachment) (Short Periodic Review..., 1921, 16; 1922, 14-15; SAKT. F. R-147. C. 1. I. 105. P. 45, 100-101, 125, 149-151, 165-167).

The United State Political Directorate bodies (security organs of Soviet state) successfully applied selective amnesties using contradictions between the monarchists and supporters of the Cossack independence, sent agitators and spies to detachments. In September 1923, M.N. Zhukov, the head of the monarchist underground, was caught in the Baturinskaya cossack village outskirts. On March 15, 1924, Kovalev's detachment was eliminated in the Besstrashnaya cossack village.

The last manifestations of the armed opposition were eliminated in autumn 1924–spring 1925. According to the report of the Unified State Political Department Commissioner in the

Slavyansky district, on October 31, they managed to catch V.F. Ryabokon that was hiding with 5-7 Cossacks in overflow lands of the Grivenskaya village (SAKT. F. R-580. C. 1. I. 12 b. P. 67). By May 1925, small groups were hiding near the Temnolesskaya village and in the Terek area where they were defeated quite soon.

The next stage of land reform in the Soviet Russia became the policy of “face to the countryside” (1924–1926). It included the resolution of long-term lease of land, promotion of voluntary cooperative organizations, the introduction of a single agricultural tax. The authorities recognized the “military communism” fallacious. The Cossacks were amnestied, many immigrants returned to the Southern Russia. In local elections of 1925–1927 opposition groups of Cossacks and peasants often won. But the continued surge redistribution of land. Up to 1928 the Cossacks and peasants yet have equal size of land holdings.

3. Conclusion

The rebel movement of the “Whites-and-Greens” in the Don, Kuban, Terek and Stavropol areas is of one the examples of peasants’ conservative response to the authority’s modernizing attempts which were unintelligible and hostile for their traditional way of life. One can find the similarity of Cossacks’ and peasants’ protests and the Vendée experience. In a narrow sense, the “Whites-and-Greens” movement was a singular part of the Russian farmers’ protest against the “War Communism”; it reflected a search and deadlocks of “the third way” in the Russian revolution.

The rebel actions of Cossacks and, to a far lesser extent, peasants of the Southern Russia were caused by a complex set of reasons, such as long-term estate, ethnic and class contradictions, unsettled land issue, the bloody experience of participation in the 1917–1922 Civil War. The main factor of the armed struggle continuation was the “War Communism” practice, main essential features of which were preserved in the North Caucasus up to 1925, even longer that countrywide.

The “Whites-and-Greens” social support was average peasant mass and wealthy Cossack elites. In the Stavropol and Black Sea governorates, these social functions were fulfilled by the same masses of “native” peasants. Regional peculiarities of political orientations were determined. For example, the Terek and Don residents as well as the Kuban Line Cossacks stood for the One and Undivided Russia and for conservative values. The Black Sea Cossacks and peasants showed separatist moods and moderate Socialist sympathies. It is related to ethnic and culture affiliation and circumstances of the Civil War. We condemn separatism in all its forms, by assuming a constructive compromise between state authorities and public organizations.

Farmers’ desire for peace, devastating consequences of the wars, efficient combination of repressions with encouragement of loyalty to the Soviet regime led to rebels’ gradual isolation and collapse. At the same time, their doomed struggle forced the RCP (B) to pass to the NEP, to make a set of long-term radical concessions to the peasants, such as the Land Code adoption, legalization of village communities and temporary refusal of the commune propagation.

Land reforms are associated with long-term factors of specificity: territorial location, multi-ethnicity, increased role of industry and trade in the plural economy. Ruling Communist regime could hardly adapt to the peculiarities of the market economy region owing to the weakness of power resources. The objectives of land reforms were: the confiscation of private land, the creation of large state-owned enterprises, promote co-operation, containment of social polarization of the peasantry. In wealthy regions (South of Russia, Ukraine, Siberia) land reforms have encouraged a sharp conflict between the old residents and migrants. The

reforms had three stages: “occupation policy” (1920–24) in order to maximize removal of products of farms; course “face to the countryside” (1924–26) – the maximum democratization of Soviet policy; and the restriction of market relations in 1927–29. NEP began to wealthy regions later than in the whole country – in 1922 and ended earlier – in 1928.

Stronghold of peasant self-organization was land commune. Played a significant role Cossack rebel groups in the South of Russia. They demanded to restore the autonomy of their areas and land privileges. Peasants successfully resisted the power, send their representatives in local government, cooperatives. It was a “force of weaks”, in the words of T. Shanin. But their military organization was weak, and the demands – contradictory. This facilitated the suppression of peasant uprisings in 1922–24 and 1929–30.

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