

the Czar's Government in 1882, with the object of aiding the peasants in the acquisition of land, and thus to avoid the impending agrarian revolution. Up to 1917 the peasants had in this manner purchased about 32,000,000 rubles worth of land, chiefly from feudal holders.

But these additional purchases were no protection to the peasant masses from land-poverty. As a rule only the wealthier peasants could afford to make such purchases, as they had implements and some cash. These better-situated peasants, who purchased lands in this way, frequently developed into real exploiting farmers, who forced the poorer peasants into a mortgaged state and frequently took possession of their lands for debt.

The purchased land, above all, turned many peasants and whole peasant communities into debtors of the Agricultural Bank, of the landed proprietors and usurers. Like leeches, the landed proprietors and usurers sucked the sweat and the blood out of the Russian peasantry, selling their implements for debt, ruining their establishments, and gradually reducing them to the position of a country proletariat.

The picture of the exploitation to which the peasant was subjected by the purchase of land from the big holders is rendered complete when we point out that the land thus purchased meant the payment to the big holders, by the peasants, of more than 2,000,000 rubles (about \$1,000,000). And we add that this sum does not include moneys paid by the peasants for apportioned lands, for which, in the course of 40 years, after the Reform of 1861, they paid the big holders not less than 1,000,000,000 rubles (\$500,000,000).

But this by no means terminates the enrichment of the nobles at the cost of the peasants.

The latter were forced by their land-poverty to *rent* considerable parcels from the feudal holders, particularly meadow and pasture land, of which in many places the peasants had very little, and the feudal holders very much (not less than 9,000,000

dessyatins in 1905). Last year the area of land thus rented out was more than 11,000,000 dessyatins.

This land rent forced the peasant into a position of absolute dependence on the noble holders. The peasants, always poor in moneys, in most cases paid their rent in the form of *work*, by doing, together with their working cattle, the farm-labor of the feudal holders from whom they rented their land. The rate paid for this work on the part of peasant and cattle was fixed at a low figure, much to his detriment, and, owing to his work on the landlord's land, he often had not the time to till his own fields and raise his crop on them. As a consequence, many peasant farms deteriorated; thus this renting system improved the position, not of the poor, but of the richer peasants, who could afford to pay rent in money.

Another instrument in the hands of the feudal landlord for exploiting the Russian peasant was his *forest-land*, of which the landlords held about 20,000,000 dessyatins in 1905.\* The majority of the peasants, having no forests of their own, were continually obliged to purchase building materials and fuel from the noble landlords, at a high price, since in many densely settled governments, with a numerous peasant population, there are no government forests, most of them being situated in the remote governments of the north and east. From the sale of forest-lumber alone the Russian nobles in 1905 made nearly 200,000,000 rubles, and the greater portion of this sum came, of course, from the peasants.

All the above sources of income for the Russian nobility, from the Russian peasants, are really moneys earned with the bloody sweat of the peasants and drenched with peasant tears. In the course of more than half a century which has elapsed since the liberation of the Russian peasants in 1861, from serfdom, the Russian nobility have drawn from them their lifeblood, have plunged them into poverty, in order that the nobility might be

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\* We use the 1905 data, because the most complete material thus far gathered on this subject in Russia is of that date.