

enabled to lead the wasteful, brilliant, empty life of a landed aristocracy.

This the Russian nobility was able to do because it had altogether too much land, while the peasant mass suffered from land poverty. The agrarian statistics of 1905 show a total of 53,000,000 dessyatins of land belonging to the nobility, in European-Russia, distributed among 107,000 noble landholders. At the same epoch, 124,000,000 dessyatins of peasant *apportioned* land was, as we have previously pointed out in this article, held by 12,000,000 proprietors in the form of peasant farms. Thus, every holder of feudal lands had, on an average, 459½ dessyatins, and each peasant farmholder only 10 dessyatins. These figures show all too clearly the outrageous inequality in the distribution of land between these two classes of land owners.

And the great feudal landholders also had, within their class, a special landed aristocracy, who controlled vast properties. In 1905 there were in Russia 527 nobles of whom each held more than 10,000 dessyatins of land! Of these, Prince V. Vassilchikov had 49,500 dessyatins; Count A. Sheremetyeff, 126,250; a noble, J. P. Balashov, 300,500; N. P. Balashov, 387,250; Prince Galitzin, 1,067,300 dessyatins. And, by the side of these gigantic land holdings, most of which lay barren, millions of Russian peasants were damned to a half-starved existence for *lack of land!*

At the time of the Russian Revolution in March, 1917, the total area of the noble landlords had of course been going down, as the nobles, after 1905, were obliged each year to sell land to the peasants, fearing, as they did, the impending agrarian revolution, which threatened to take away all their land. Yet the total of the land sold in this period (1905-1917) did not exceed some 9,000,000 dessyatins (unfortunately, precise data are not obtainable). Therefore the inequality in the distribution of land, which has been previously described, was not lessened in any serious proportion before the beginning of the Revolution of 1917.

All the relations, above described, between the Russian peasantry and the Russian nobility, together with the resulting desire

of the peasants to wipe out the great system of landholding agriculture, were the motive forces of the Russian agrarian movement. The latter aimed at increasing the holdings of the peasants at the expense of the nobles, and to free them from the debts with which their lands were burdened.

It should be noted that the *Cossack* conditions are different from those of the Russian peasantry as a whole, for the Cossacks are economically much better situated than the rest of the peasantry. The Cossacks have never been under the oppression of the great landed gentry, and have had much more land. The 340,000 Cossack parcels had an area of 14,670,000 dessyatins of apportioned land, or an average of 43 dessyatins to each Cossack farm. On this account the Cossacks were more conservative than the rest of the peasantry, and, in the present Revolution, assumed a much more moderate position than the latter. Fearing lest the Revolution might diminish their holdings also, they became opponents of the plan to abolish private ownership of land, and of the "levelling down" division of the great estates, which is the hope of the great majority of the Russian peasantry. However, the attitude of the Cossacks, which is due to their relative numerical weakness, has little significance in the general agrarian movement of Russia.

Leaving out the Cossacks, the conditions of the many millions of peasants in Russia cannot conceivably be bettered without lessening their land-poverty, and this could be done only at the expense of the great landholders. But the total amount of land that can be applied to increase the peasants' holdings included not only the noble estates, but also other great areas under other forms of agricultural administration, which are also suitable for peasant cultivation. These lands are chiefly state lands, cabinet lands,* appanage lands, church and monastery lands. These forms of great proprietorship also cover a great portion of Russia's area.

* Cabinet lands are the former private property of the Russian Czars, consequently, of Nicholas Romanov.