Proletarian Peasants

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Proletarian Peasants: The Revolution of 1905 in Russia's Southwest.

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The southwest (after 1917, the right-bank Ukraine) comprised the prerevolutionary provinces of Kiev, Volynia, and Podol’e, all of which became part of the Russian Empire after the third partition of Poland in 1795. Most of the region was in the northern reaches of the “black earth” zone, in the fertile open steppe. The northern half of Volynia (the westernmost province), however, was in the forested steppe, which is geographically more like central Russia than the rest of the southwest. Podol’e was south of Kiev and Volynia. Situated between Russian Poland and the west bank of the Dnieper, these three provinces were highly fertile. Their climate was milder than that of central Russia, with an average temperature of −3.3 degrees centigrade in January and +20 degrees in July. As a result, the growing season in the right bank was usually a month longer than in the Central Black Earth region. Rainfall was often insufficient in Russia’s fertile provinces, but the south-

1 Istoria selianstva Ukrainskoi RSR (Kiev, 1970), 1:300 (hereafter Istoria selianstva).

2 K. Voblyi, Ekonomichna geografiia ukraini (Kiev, 1925), p. 60.

3 A. I. Skvortsov, Khoziaistvennye raiony evropeiskoi Rossii, vyp. I (St. Petersburg, 1914), p. 84.

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west had extensive precipitation. This combination of fertility and good rainfall was rare. It meant that a lot more than grain could be raised in the region. Specifically, the southwest was also well suited for the production of sugar beets, an important cash crop that played little role in the peasant diet. Instead, landlords, following the example of Prussian Junkers, organized and profited from sugar beet production and refining.

The flat, fertile plains of the right bank covered nearly 150,000 square kilometers. The three provinces contained 36 districts (uezdy), more than 500 cantons, and over 20,000 villages. In all the southwest, there were more than 13 million desiatiny (one desiatin = 2.7 acres) of forest and arable land. By virtue of its size, fertility, location, and climate, this region was a significant, productive, and distinctive center of agricultural activity.

Population

After the emancipation of 1861, the population of Russia began to increase dramatically. Although the new institutional and economic structures constituted only partial steps toward the emergence of capitalist relations of production, peasant expectations about the future changed. So too did their needs. Under new conditions peasants made different decisions about expanding their families. These new attitudes, combined with limited but significant improvements in the quality and availability of health care, produced the same kind of population boom that western European nations had experienced earlier. Between 1858 and the first universal census in 1897, the peasant population of the empire increased from 50 million to 79 million, about 60 percent. This growth placed an obvious strain on available resources, most significantly the land itself. The resulting land hunger has been well documented. On the eve of the Revolution of 1905, these profound demographic changes were undermining all of Russia’s social, political, and economic relationships.

As swift as the growth of population had been throughout Rus-

5N. P. Oganovskii, Sel’skoe khoziaistvo Rossii v xx veke (Moscow, 1923), p. 12.
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Table 1. Increase in Southwest Peasant Population, 1858–1897

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>1858</th>
<th>1897</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kiev</td>
<td>1,474,437</td>
<td>2,768,542</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podol’e</td>
<td>1,360,503</td>
<td>2,437,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volynia</td>
<td>1,045,732</td>
<td>2,241,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3,880,672</td>
<td>7,447,340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The increase was even faster in the southwest. In 1897, 9.6 million people lived in Kiev, Podol’e, and Volynia. By 1905 the Ministry of Interior would estimate the figure had grown to over 11 million. At the time of the 1897 census, almost 7.5 million of the residents of the right bank were members of the peasant estate (soslavie). That figure had increased nearly 90 percent since 1858 (see Table 1).

Of all the regions of Russia, only the Ukrainian steppe, known earlier as Novorossiia, increased at a faster pace. Population density in the southwest was greater than anywhere else in Russia.

Population growth in the right bank did not result from large-scale migration. Not many people moved away from Kiev, Podol’e, and Volynia (only 76,300 between 1863 and 1897). Some peasants from the left bank and the Central Black Earth region had moved into the southwest, but the overwhelming majority of residents of the region lived where they had been born. Over 95 percent...
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cent of right-bank peasants lived in the province of their birth, and 90 percent lived in the district in which they had been born.11

Almost 150,000 nobles dominated the lives of the region's 7,447,340 peasants.12 There were nearly 25,000 merchants (kuptsy) along with 1,806,253 members of that social estate known as the meshchanstvo (best understood as the petty bourgeoisie).13 The city of Kiev dominated the entire area. In 1897, it had 2,477,723 residents. By 1905, estimates would place the population of the city above 400,000.

Yet the growth of Kiev did not change the overwhelmingly agricultural character of these three provinces. As in the rest of the Russian Empire, nearly the entire peasantry engaged in agricultural pursuits. In Kiev, 2,495,673 persons were so engaged; in Podol' e, 2,255,491, and in Volynia, 2,219,097, according to the 1897 census. The same census counted 377,157 individuals engaged in what was called "industrial work of a supplementary character."14 This category included a variety of activities, ranging from handicrafts to sugar refinery work. In no case did any of this work tear peasants completely away from the countryside. Kiev may have been growing rapidly, but much of its expansion came with industries such as railroads and food processing which were closely tied to agriculture. The economy of the southwest was in a rapid state of flux, but in 1905, the region was still overwhelmingly rural.

Peasants in the southwest were not especially mobile. Some did go to Novorossiia for seasonal labor, while others would sign contracts to work several months in the region's sugar refineries. Most peasants, however, remained in their native villages. The kind of seasonal oscillations that Robert Johnson and others have noted for Moscow were not characteristic of the southwest.15 This situation meant that the traditional structures of the village showed continuing strength. The growth of commercial agriculture in Kiev,

12 1897 census, Kiev, p. xi, Podol' e, p. 42, Volynia, p. xvi.
Podol’e, and somewhat less so in Volynia obviously affected the region’s communal structures. Nevertheless, traditional patterns persisted. Marriage was every bit as universal in the countryside of the southwest as it was in the rest of Russia. Both men and women began marrying at the age of fifteen. As elsewhere, a man did not consider himself complete until he had an allotment and a family. Kinship, therefore, was still an essential element of the intravillage power structure.

The persistence of traditional family structures meant that the villages of the right-bank Ukraine were as patriarchal as those of central Russia. Differences in the literacy rates of men and women indirectly reflected the position of females in the village. With 20 percent of men and 7 percent of women able to read some language, the level of literacy was roughly the same in the southwest as in the rest of Russia. Similarly, the rural parts of Kiev province were little different from central Russia, but it is worth noting that 40 percent of women in the city of Kiev could read.

Literacy among young men between twenty and twenty-nine was fairly high (about 35 percent) in the right bank. During the disturbances, these men, the most mobile element of the rural population, would play highly visible and militant roles. Yet, for the most part, the figures on marriage and literacy reveal that for all the changes the southwest was undergoing, it remained primarily a rural region in which the village and the household were still significant forces.

National divisions in the right bank corresponded closely to class divisions. Nearly the entire peasantry was Ukrainian. According to the 1897 census, the population included 7,357,543 Ukrainians, along with 413,000 Great Russians, 322,108 Poles, and 1,194,569 Jews. There were also smaller numbers of Czechs and Germans. Landlords were usually Polish or Russian, but fully a third of those the census described as nobles listed Ukrainian as their native language (the official indicator of nationality).
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ertheless, there was no sense of national solidarity between the Ukrainian peasantry and that segment of the gentry that spoke Ukrainian. Landlords with Ukrainian names publicly described themselves as Russian and identified with the Russian elite. For decades, the most powerful landowners had been Polish, but by 1905 Russians were approaching Poles in wealth. During the disturbances, however, national distinctions proved meaningless to the peasants who attacked all large landowners (and large-scale renters) regardless of nationality, political persuasion, or personal qualities.

Jews, who comprised about 12 percent of the population of the right bank, were, for the most part, confined to the towns. Their contact with peasants was limited, and their ownership of large blocs of land was rare. Some very few Jews did own sugar refineries and as a result rented large amounts of land. They did not escape the peasants’ wrath, nor were they singled out.19 Right-bank peasants demonstrated comparatively less open anti-Semitic feeling than Ukrainians and Russians in the towns, but this attitude was the result of lack of contact with Jews rather than enlightenment. Peasants might attack a Jewish trader they felt had cheated them. At the same time, many of the political agitators welcomed into the villages were Jewish, and Ukrainian peasants proved willing to listen to and work with these outsiders. As we shall see later, pogroms, a common part of the urban scene in southern and western Russia, occurred relatively infrequently in the countryside of the southwest.

Noble Landholding and Commercial Agriculture

As late as 1800, a considerable portion of the Ukraine was still virgin land. Even at that late date, agriculture in many of its regions could still be quite primitive. By comparison, the right bank was a more developed region dominated by educated and agriculturally

sophisticated Polish landlords whose families had been engaged in farming for many years. Before the peasant emancipation, many landlords throughout the Ukraine tried to adapt their estates to the production of grain surpluses for an expanding European market. Right-bank nobles also experienced some success in responding to the new circumstances, but a more profound transformation of agriculture had to await tsar Alexander II’s edicts of 1861 and 1863, which dictated the ways the newly emancipated serfs would receive land. These reforms were not intended to allow the complete capitalist transformation of the Russian and Ukrainian countrysides. Nevertheless, significant possibilities were created, and in the last decades of the century, change was swift.

By 1905, the Ukraine had attained its well-known status as the breadbasket of Europe. Ninety percent of its arable land was devoted to winter and summer grains which were exported in massive quantities along Russia’s quickly expanding railroad network and through the thriving port cities on the Black Sea. The steppe provinces of Kherson and Ekaterinoslav were the main suppliers of this trade. Chernigov, Poltava, and Kharkov, on the left bank of the Dnieper, also produced extensively for export. Of the three regions of the Ukraine, the right bank, in fact, was the least oriented toward the raising of grain for the external market. Rather, the combination of soil and climate found in the southwest created possibilities for more diversified agriculture. Cash crops, which were of little use to peasants but which were raised by landlords, became increasingly significant.

These trends toward specialization should not obscure the immense importance of the raising of grain for the agrarian life of these provinces. The right bank may have trailed the rest of the Ukraine as an exporter of grain, but most of the energies of the region’s cultivators were still devoted to meeting the basic nutritional needs of local peasants, the city of Kiev, and the internal

20Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv Ukrainskoi SSR (hereafter TsGIAU), fond 442, opis 855, delo 109, list 83 (hereafter abbreviated f., o., d., and l.).

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market. Winter grains were far more common than summer grains in the southwest. Winter rye and wheat, in particular, occupied 45 percent of the region’s sown area as of 1900.22 In 1905, almost 1 million desiatiny were sown with winter rye and more than 450,000 desiatiny were under winter wheat.23 Little summer wheat, the most desirable export crop, was raised in the southwest. The raising of grain was in no way specific to the right bank. Nevertheless, its significance must be stressed. The distinctive characteristics of this region played a crucial role in explaining the peasant movement in these provinces. Yet it is essential to make clear the considerable concern still devoted there to the most common and familiar agrarian activities.

Landlords and peasants of the southwest also raised specialized crops. Tobacco was farmed in Podol’e, as it was throughout Novorossiia.24 Hops were raised in Volynia, and many noble landowners in Podol’e and Volynia enjoyed some success with dairy farming.25 In addition, the right bank experienced an enormous increase in the production of potatoes, output tripling between 1861 and 1905.26 As a result, many distilleries were built on gentry estates as landlords sought to exploit their holdings in new and profitable ways.27 These sorts of small factories were characteristic of the southwest. Heavy manufacturing, even in the city of Kiev, was not extensive. Food processing firms were the most significant enterprises in the right bank’s largest urban center. Kiev also became a major transit point, with railroad playing a major role in the life of the city. By 1900 over 10,000 verst (one verst = 1.06 kilometers) of railroad crisscrossed the southwest.

None of these activities gave the southwest its special dynamism. The raising and refining of sugar beets was the distinctive characteristic of agriculture in the right bank Ukraine. Kiev and Podol’e, in particular, were the centers of the Russian sugar industry, ac-

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22Confino, p. 254.
25Leshchenko, 1955, p. 28.
26Telichuk, p. 12.
27D. P. Poida, Krestianskoe dvizhenie na privoberezhnoi Ukraine v poreformennoi period, 1866-1900 (Dnepropetrovsk, 1960), p. 53.
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counting for almost 90 percent of national production in 1900. Although some sugar beets were raised in the left-bank Ukraine and in the central Russian province of Kursk, no region could compete with the southwest. In large measure the importance of sugar in the right bank was the result of fortuitous natural circumstances. But the particular attitudes and experiences of the region’s landlords also made them able to adapt to the demands and opportunities posed by this new kind of crop.

Absenteeism was one of the chronic problems caused by the demands of state service on the Russian landowning nobility. Polish landlords were under no such service obligation. Until the turn of the century, they dominated gentry agriculture in the southwest. In the 1880s and 1890s, as Russian landlords came to retire from bureaucratic and military careers, they found a ready model in their Polish counterparts. With the burgeoning of both the internal and external markets, Russian nobles saw opportunities in returning to this fertile region to try to become gentleman farmers. By 1905, Russian landlords owned more land than Polish landlords, and both groups were engaged in the exploitation of their holdings through the active pursuit of commercial agriculture. Large landholders in Kiev, Podol’e, and Volynia had ceased to view their estates as static sources of relatively fixed rents and instead came to think of them as expanding producers of profit.

Faced with the necessity of adapting to the modern world, right-bank landlords were taking what Lenin and subsequent historians have come to call the “Prussian path” to capitalism.28 Their conscious model was the East Prussian Junker who had adapted his ancestral lands to production for the market. These erstwhile soldiers had forsaken their traditional social and economic roles in order to maintain their political dominance in a swiftly changing Germany. Significantly, one of the most important crops on the Junker estates was sugar beets. The cultivation of sugar beets was organized by landlords with the labor of massive numbers of wage workers who were often peasants unable to draw a sufficient living from their own lands. This politically conservative approach to the

problem of the transition to capitalism was contrasted with what Lenin and others called the "American path." In that particular situation, peasants, not lords, adapted their lands to changed conditions and worked as profit-oriented family farmers producing for a commodity market. This small-scale agrarian capitalism was often difficult to detect, and it differed sharply from landlord capitalism. Nevertheless, there is evidence that this particular path toward modern agriculture had emerged in the left-bank Ukraine and Novorossiia where peasants had acquired large amounts of land and were producing for the market. Right-bank peasants, by contrast, had made little such progress.

The weakness of peasant agriculture in Kiev, Podol'e, and Volynia was the direct result of landlord success. The combination of high fertility, natural circumstances, and institutional peculiarities gave the nobles of the southwest special opportunities. They capitalized on these advantages despite certain initial handicaps. At the time of the 1861 emancipation, the autocracy sought to penalize Polish landlords and aid what the government chose to call Russian peasants. Throughout Russia, peasants received less land than they had previously tilled, and they were forced to compensate the gentry for it at rates above the market value. In the southwest, just the opposite occurred. Peasants were given generous allotments at reasonable rates.

These advantages soon disappeared under the impact of agrarian progress and demographic expansion. In most parts of Russia, the emancipation marked the beginning of the steady decline of noble landowning. By 1905, members of the nobility (dvorianstvo) had lost half their lands. This pattern of failure was not repeated in the southwest. Between the two universal land surveys of 1877 and 1905, aristocrats throughout Russia lost 30 percent of their lands. In the southwest, nobles relinquished just 16 percent of what they owned. In the left-bank Ukraine and the steppe region, moreover, noble land loss was nearly twice as high as in the right

30 Kingston-Mann, 1983, pp. 50–53.
31 Skvortsov, p. 120. Telichuk, p. 27.
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bank. Peasants acquired most of the land given up by the nobility. This was especially true in the left bank and Novorossiia. Yet, in Kiev, Podol’e, and Volynia, peasants were unable to purchase or rent even the limited amounts of land made available by nobles. Merchants and members of the meshchansvo proved better equipped to compete in the land market of the southwest.

By 1905, nobles possessed almost 75 percent of the privately owned land in the right bank (this does not include allotment lands). Southwest peasants had only 13 percent of such lands. The contrast between the right bank and the rest of the Ukraine was stark. In the left bank, nobles owned 50 percent of private land, close to the national average of 52 percent. In Novorossiia, nobles owned only 40 percent of private land. Right-bank nobles also possessed far greater portions of the available arable and forest land than did their counterparts in the rest of Russia.

Soviet scholars are fond of contrasting the sharp size differences of landlord and peasant holdings. This practice has usually been considered a crude way of demonstrating the character of what all observers knew was a thoroughly exploitive relationship. Nevertheless, the difference in the right bank is worth noting precisely because the contrast was so stark. In Kiev, Podol’e, and Volynia, 8,535 landlord estates averaged nearly 900 desiatiny, while 452,417 peasant households occupied an average of almost 9 desiatiny. In Kiev, the most advanced of the three gubernii (provinces), the contrast was even sharper. In other parts of the empire, both nobles and peasants had been able to take advantage of changing conditions in the countryside. In the southwest, agricultural advancement was almost exclusively a noble enterprise.

33Leshchenko, 1955, p. 38.
34M. Rubach, “Sotsial’naia struktura agrarnykh otnoshenii i rassloenie krestianstva v ukrainskoi derevne v 1917 g.,” in Osobennosti agrarnogo stroia Rossi v period imperializma, p. 47.
35V. P. Teplytskii, Reforma 1861 roku i agrarni vidnosini na Ukraini (Kiev, 1959), p. 159. Skvortsov, p. 120.
There can be little question that the right bank was the scene of extensive agrarian development. The amount of land under cultivation had grown steadily over the course of the nineteenth century. Grains and potatoes were planted in increasingly larger amounts during these decades, and productivity rose steadily. Peasants played some role in this expansion but, cash crops, such as winter wheat and sugar beets, were produced almost entirely by landlords or by large agricultural firms, renting from landlords.

By the turn of the century the gentry estates of the right-bank Ukraine were evolving into capitalist enterprises. The traditional lord-peasant relationship with its paternalism and mutual obligations, was becoming a dead letter. Landlords in the southwest were coming to treat those who worked their lands as employees. Responding to the growing internal and external markets required a new set of organizational practices. This did not involve the massive introduction of agricultural machinery. As late as the 1890s, sophisticated farm tools were still relatively rare in the southwest. Mechanical innovations were far more common in Kerson and Ekaterinoslav. Instead, right-bank landlords came to produce cash crops for expanding markets through the increasing use of wage labor, especially day labor. Estate owners abandoned old obligations. As elsewhere, estate owners took away common pastureland from peasants and restricted the use of forests and water supplies. In the southwest, unlike the rest of Russia, peasants did not confront a class in decline. Landlords in the right bank were not leaving their lands, nor were they selling their estates to peasants. Gentry success made peasant lives all the more difficult in this region.

Beyond these economic handicaps, peasants were also victimized by the major institutional peculiarity of the southwest. In 1864, tsar Alexander II created a network of local government bodies on the provincial and district levels. These semi-autonomous organs, called zemstvos, were given the task of performing such important services as health care, primary education, road building, insur-

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ance, and agronomic assistance. The zemstvos were given their own powers of taxation but were subject to a number of controls from the central government. During the late nineteenth century, the zemstvos undoubtedly improved the lives of peasants throughout Russia, but these bodies did not exist in the southwest until 1911.40

Membership in the zemstvos was elective, but participation was based on a series of property requirements that gave large landholders dominance. Noble landlords came to see the service they performed for the zemstvo as an important part of their own adaptation to the modern world, but this process could not go on in the southwest. There, the majority of landlords in 1864 were Polish. In the wake of the Polish rebellion of 1863, the Russian autocracy was not about to deliver local government in a borderland into the hands of those it deemed unreliable. As a result, peasants in Kiev, Podol’e, and Volynia were denied a number of social services that their central Russian counterparts had long taken for granted. At no time during the disturbances of 1905–7 did the peasants express a desire for zemstvos. Yet there can be little doubt that the absence of these institutions made their lives more difficult.

Circumstances of soil and climate plus the weakness of state and zemstvo service traditions combined to create special opportunities for right-bank landlords. Large numbers of them adapted their estates to changing conditions, using modern agronomic techniques, sophisticated multifield systems of crop rotation, and rigorous business practices. This change occurred throughout the region and was not restricted to the larger and more efficient sugar plantations. Many middle-sized estates (500 to 5,000 desiatiny) planted the more familiar crops. Landlords usually ran these holdings themselves, utilizing multifield rotations for a wide variety of grains, fruits, and vegetables. Nevertheless, grains in general, and winter wheat and rye in particular, occupied most of the area of these estates. Landlords raised a variety of grasses for fodder, and planted potatoes, most of which were distilled in small factories.

40 Terence Emmons and Wayne S. Vucinich, eds., The Zemstvo in Russia (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 423–45.
built by landlords on the estates. Even on the nonsugar estates, less land was left fallow than under the three-field system, and those areas that were not planted received extensive natural and chemical fertilization.

As was common on most modernized estates, a comparatively small skilled regular staff worked on an annual basis. Unskilled and semi-skilled laborers then supplemented their efforts. These laborers usually came from among the local peasant population. Goliaki, the Podol’e farm of Count Alexander Feodorovich Geiden, was in many ways typical of the right bank’s nonsugar-producing estates. Geiden owned 1,200 desiatiny in Vinnitsa district. Of his land, 850 desiatiny were planted with a wide variety of crops in a nine-field system. Most attention was devoted to potatoes which were converted to alcohol in a distillery on the premises. Atypically, the count lived in Petersburg and hired a Danish administrator who was paid 1,200 rubles a year plus 6 percent of the profits. Between fifteen and twenty yearly (godovy) workers were hired for forty rubles a year (in 1905) plus sixty pud (one pud = 36.11 pounds) of grain, the use of a house (izba), and sufficient feed for one cow. Day laborers, both men and women, were taken on, when needed, at whatever the going rate might have been. Geiden’s estate was successful. Between 1894 and 1907 he averaged a profit of over 9,000 rubles a year. Compared to sugar plantation owners, however, Geiden’s profits were modest. Labor comprised almost half of his total costs, and his outlays per desiatin were considerably higher than those on the estates producing sugar beets.

Wide varieties of crops were raised in the right bank. Even those

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41 Ministerstvo zemledelia i godnurstvennykh imushchestv, Kratkie spravochnye svedenii o nekotorykh russkich kholziaisvakh (St. Petersburg, 1897), pp. 170–71 (hereafter KS).
43 Liubanskiy, 1911, p. 20.
44 Ibid., p. 3.
46 Ibid., p. 16.
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who had not converted to raising sugar beets could easily be successful. But it was the southwest’s sugar plantations, many of them quite vast, that were the distinctive feature of land husbandry in these three provinces. These farms achieved enormous profits in the years of Russia’s rapid industrialization. Their practices and organization require close attention, as the character of the peasant movement in the southwest was fundamentally determined by conditions on these plantations.

Sugar Beets, Workers, and Refineries

Sugar beets were first raised in the right bank during the 1820s, although few landlords planted beets until the 1850s. At that time, many of the leading nobles of the region, including the Bobrinskii, Pototskii, Brannitskii, Sangushko, Bezrobodko, and later the Tereshchenko families began planting and refining this crop. They were following the example of their Prussian counterparts who had also begun the conversion of portions of their estates to sugar. In fact, the first beet strains were German, and German varieties continued to be predominant even after 1917. These first steps, however, were halting. Raising sugar beets required the heavy use of labor at certain key moments in the life cycle of the crop. Wage workers, rather than peasants, were more productive at this sort of labor. Thus, the full-scale production of Russian sugar had to await the emancipation.

Starting with the 1860s, output rose dramatically. As Russian industrialization quickened and the cities grew, so did the demand for sugar. The growth of production was extremely swift (see Table 2). The expansion of land sown with sugar beets was equally swift. In 1850, 21,000 desiatiny were planted with this crop; by 1900, over 300,000 desiatiny were under beets. Even during the disturbances, between 1905 and 1907, 50,000 new desiatiny came

48 Perkins, p. 20.
under cultivation. By 1912, a half million desiatiny would be devoted to sugar.\textsuperscript{50}

Half the southwest’s sugar came from Kiev, which was first among all provinces as a producer and refiner.\textsuperscript{51} Podol’e ranked a close second. Much less sugar was raised in Volynia (9 percent of the region’s total), and agriculture in this province more closely resembled practices in central Russia. As mentioned earlier, Volynia’s northern half was largely forested, and sugar beets grew only in its southeastern districts, bordering on Kiev. The left-bank Ukraine and Kursk produced some sugar, but no region could challenge the right bank in the production of this cash crop.

Cash was, in fact, the primary attraction of sugar beet production for the landlords of the southwest. In Kiev during 1905, one pud of beets fetched five times the amount that could be earned from a similar amount of wheat, and six times the price of a pud of rye.\textsuperscript{52} Costs were not that much greater than those entailed in the raising of other crops. As a result, profits were enormous.\textsuperscript{53} Inevitably, larger numbers of landlords were attracted to raising sugar

\textsuperscript{50}Leshchenko, 1955, p. 30.

\textsuperscript{51}Vestnik sakharnoi promyshlennosti (hereafter VSP) 23 (1906), 986.

\textsuperscript{52}Agronomicheskii otdel Kievskoi gubernskoi upravy po delam zemskogo khoziaistva, Obzor sostoiannia sel’skogo khoziaistva Kievskoi gubernii v 1905 i 1906 gg. (Kiev, 1906), p. 21.

\textsuperscript{53}A. Iaroshevich, Opis maetkiv po ekonomiti pivdennozakhidnogo kraiu (Kiev, 1909), p. 150.
beets, which had the added advantage of being a much more reliable crop than the most common grains.\textsuperscript{54} Sharp variations in harvests, so common an element in the Russian countryside, were not typical for sugar beets.

Sugar raised and refined in the southwest was largely sold domestically. Russian landlords were not able to compete with their Prussian counterparts on the world market. The leading foreign customers for Russian sugar were Turkey and Persia, each of which purchased approximately half a million \textit{pudy} per year. Austria-Hungary was the largest European buyer with annual purchases between 130,000 and 140,000 \textit{pudy}.\textsuperscript{55} In the years before the Revolution of 1905, international prices dropped and exports fell.\textsuperscript{56} Domestic prices, however, rose slightly, and production did not fall off drastically. On the eve of the revolutionary turmoil, the Russian sugar industry, despite problems, was in a rather healthy state. Conditions were not quite as rosy as they had been in 1900, but sugar producers felt comfortable and economically unthreatened.\textsuperscript{57}

The raising and refining of sugar beets was primarily a gentry enterprise. Those that did not participate in it directly profited from the sugar trade by renting their estates to joint-stock companies or directly to sugar refineries not owned by nobles. By contrast, peasants were less involved in raising this crop. Nevertheless, the fact that they had any interest in growing something that was not part of their normal diets is worth noting. Given the well-advertised peasant aversion to innovation, their willingness to plant any sugar beets at all may be considered surprising. Still, their efficiency and productivity were considerably lower than that of the large estates which remained the centers of Russian sugar production.\textsuperscript{58} In 1905, 56 percent of the area sown with sugar beets was on large, noble-owned plantations. Firms renting estates accounted for 29 percent of the land under sugar, while peasants accounted for less than 15 percent.\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{54}Liubanskii, \textit{Opisanie imenii Podol’skoi gubernii} (Vinnitsa, 1908), p. 28.
\textsuperscript{55}VSP 40 (1907), 451.
\textsuperscript{57}Volokhov, table 2.
\textsuperscript{58}Ibid., table 7.
The conduct of operations on both landlord-run and privately rented estates was largely the same. Peasants, in particular, paid little attention to the distinction. There is no evidence to suggest that either kind of farm was a more desirable place for peasants to work. Although some few peasants raised a relatively small crop of sugar beets, their primary role in the southwest’s sugar industry was the provision of manual labor on the larger estates.

None of the nobility’s plantations were devoted entirely to raising sugar beet, but nearly all of them were organized along what for Russian agriculture would have been called modern lines. The largest holdings were primarily controlled by the gentry, but medium-sized and smaller estates were oriented to the market as well. The retention of primitive methods did not always preclude the production of sugar in the right bank, however. A significant number of farms had kept the three-field system, but instead of sowing rye as a summer crop, planted beets. A few of these apparently traditional operations even had refineries.\textsuperscript{60} Nevertheless, sugar production in the right bank was centered in well-organized estates, practicing advanced farming methods and new, but not always benign, approaches to labor relations.

By any European standard all the estates of the right-bank nobility were immense. The typical holding of the East Prussian Junker was 200 hectares (one hectare = 2.2 acres).\textsuperscript{61} These dimensions were small compared to even the mid-sized holding in Russia’s southwest, where such estates ranged from 500 to 5,000 desiatiny. They were advanced, multifield operations producing a variety of corps of which sugar beet was the most profitable but not always the most widely sown. In the relatively simple five-field system of the Ustinov estate in Podol’e, sugar beets occupied 15 percent of the arable land; winter wheat 26 percent.\textsuperscript{62} On the more complex eight-field rotation of the Zagrebel’nyi estate, also in Podol’e, sugar beet, winter wheat, and clover each covered 22 percent of arable.\textsuperscript{63} Ten and twelve-field rotations were also quite common in the southwest. The estate of Elena Petrovna Demidova

\textsuperscript{61}Perkins, p. 20.
\textsuperscript{62}Jaroshevich, 1909, p. 148.
\textsuperscript{63}Liubanskii, 1908, p. 10.
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in Kiev (Lipovets district) employed a twelve-field system on its 2,535 desiatiny of arable (she owned 5,277 in all). Three of these fields were planted with sugar beets. All of these holdings made extensive use of fertilizers, especially chemical ones; few estates, however, had made large investments in agricultural machinery.

The famous Russian suprematist painter Kazimir Malevich grew up on a sugar estate in Podol’e during the 1890s. He later described work on one plantation:

The sugar-beet plantations were large. A lot of manpower, provided by peasants, mostly, was needed to run these plantations. Peasants, young and old, worked on these plantations all summer and fall. As a future artist, I feasted my eyes upon the fields and the “colored” workers who weeded and dug up the beetroot. Platoons of girls in colorful clothes moved in rows across the whole field. It was a war. The troops in colorful dresses struggled with weeds, liberating the beetroot from unwanted overgrowths... The sugar plantations stretched as far as the eye could see, blending into the distant horizon, sloping down to the small cornfields, or running up the hills, engulfing towns and villages in their fields, covered with the monotonous texture of green plants.

A small number of the operators of middle-sized estates had constructed refineries, but most landlords had to ship their beets to neighboring plantations for processing. Many of these holdings were of gargantuan proportions. In many parts of Russia, the owners of latifundia such as these had made no attempt to improve their lands, preferring simply to collect rents from peasants who were in no position to engage in significant agrarian advancement. The sugar plantations of the southwest did not follow this pattern. They were owned by the oldest and most respected noble families of the region. As already noted, the Bobrinskii, Pototskii, Brannitskii, Balashev, and other families had been the pioneers of the

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64KS, p. 154.
65VSP 1 (1907), 7. KS, pp. 149, 152, 153, 158, 159, 163, 166, 167, 168, 169, 172, 180, 185, 186.
66Kazimir Malevich, “Chapters from an Artist’s Autobiography,” October, no. 34 (Fall 1985), 25 (translated by Alan Upchurch).
Russian sugar trade. They had proven extremely successful in adapting their lands for the production of commodities for the market. Many of their estates were models of modern commercial agriculture. They merit close attention for two reasons. They were the most distinctive feature of the right bank’s agriculture, and, significantly, they were all centers of intense peasant agitation between 1905 and 1907.

The immensity of the southwest’s sugar plantations cannot be overstressed. The four Kiev estates of Mar'ia Brannitskaia covered almost 97,000 desiatiny. Only one of those units (ekonomii) was a true farming center. More than 15,000 of its 31,158 desiatiny were planted in multifield systems which included many fruits, vegetables, and grasses, along with improved grains and sugar beets. Each of the four estates had a sugar refinery. Brannitskaia also operated two distilleries.67 The Volynia estates of Roman Sangushko were nearly as large as Brannitskaia’s holdings. Similarly, Moshnogorodishchenskoe, the Kiev estate of Ekaterina Andreevna Balasheva, covered 43,586 desiatiny, 11,000 of it arable. This immense, modern plantation was divided into several subunits, all of which were studded with new brick buildings, including stables, barns, distilleries, breweries, dormitories, and, of course, refineries. Balasheva and her staff of administrators used eight-field rotations, raising a broad variety of crops, fertilizing extensively, and processing the estate’s produce in a number of different plants (zavody) on the plantation itself.68 The Kiev estate of the Bobrinski family was almost as large as Balasheva’s and was similarly organized.69 Various members of the Tereshchenko family owned and operated sugar plantations throughout the southwest. These ranged from 11,000 to 15,000 desiatiny. All were efficiently run and all had sugar refineries on their premises.70

Given the fact that estates of this size occupied so much land and controlled so many resources, it is only logical that they were not particularly numerous. Yet there were more of these latifundia in

67KS, p. 149.
69KS, p. 160.
70TsGIAU, f. 318, o. 1, d. 364, l. 130. KS, pp. 175–77.
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the right bank (forty-nine of more than 10,000 desiatiny) than in most other regions. Moreover, it would be wrong to see them as exceptional or unusual given their central role in the economy of the southwest. They generated tremendous wealth for their owners and provided work for vast numbers of peasants.

As was the case with most estates oriented toward farming, the southwest's sugar plantations employed small full-time staffs of administrators and managers, many of whom were foreign. These men were usually paid a sizable fixed sum, plus a percentage (5 or 6 percent) of profits. The administrators then hired a year-round staff of skilled workers who were paid a small amount (between twenty and thirty rubles) and provided with housing, grain, and fuel.71 Stablehands, blacksmiths, house servants, and others made up this group which was supplemented by other workers, usually local peasants, who were taken on for a period of months. This segment of the work force (srokovye rabochie) was hired just before sowing and stayed on several weeks after harvest. Like the annual workers, this group too was relatively small.72

The great majority of those who worked the sugar plantations of the right bank were day laborers, recruited for the most part from the local peasantry. Although there are no precise figures on the number of such laborers, all sources do make clear that their use was widespread. Wage work made up a decisive portion of the income of those thousands of peasant households whose allotments were insufficient to sustain life. Very often the women and children went to work in the landlord's fields while the men stayed home. In fact, it was the general wisdom among landlords, following the Prussian example, that women and children were better workers.73 Women, in particular, could work as long and hard as men but were paid a good deal less.

Wages varied from season to season, year to year, and estate to estate, but in no time or place could payment for work on the sugar plantations be described as anything but minimal. In fact, Bal-

71Kievskoe Agronomicheskoe Obshchestvo, Trudy, vyp. IV (Kiev, 1915), pp. 36-37. Slezkin, 1913, p. 84.
72Tsental'nyi gosudarstvennyi istoricheskii arkhiv v Leningrade (hereafter TsGIAL), f. 1405, o. 107, d. 7932, l. 2.
73Perkins, pp. 19-21.
asheva's accountants estimated that paying a day laborer cost far less than keeping a horse (twenty-six as opposed to forty-one kopecks a day in 1905). More precise wage levels will be treated in detail when the strike movement is examined. At this point it is sufficient to stress that while landlords employed very sizable numbers of day workers, they did not pay dearly for this labor. Wages represented a comparatively small and manageable portion (one fourth to one third) of the costs of those who operated all of the region’s sugar estates, not simply the largest plantations. The demand for labor on the sugar plantations was considerable, but the general poverty of the local peasantry was so acute that a large number of job seekers was guaranteed every year.

The central factor determining the sizable demand for wage workers was the labor-intensive character of sugar beet raising. The average person had to work almost twice as many days to raise a desiatin of sugar beets as opposed to a desiatin of most grains. In addition, the cycle of the sugar beet created a number of crucial moments that demanded the immediate and careful attention of large numbers of working hands. The fragility of the sugar beet at certain points in its development created opportunities for those engaged in its actual cultivation, giving peasants a limited and transitory power in their relationship with their employers. As a result, the contours of the peasant movement were very much influenced by the demands of sugar beet cultivation.

Great care had to be taken in deciding where and when to sow the beets. The readiness of each field had to be measured before proceeding. Temperatures had to reach sufficient levels (9 to 10 degrees centigrade), a point reached between late March and early May depending on the place and year. Plowing had to be deep given the sugar beets' long roots—metal plows were a necessity.
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The beets themselves had to be sown carefully, in neat rows, at sufficient distances from each other.

Sowing was a simple process compared to the next phase of the beets' development. The soil had to be constantly aerated and watered. When the first shoots appeared, it became necessary to begin an intense daily search for pests. Children usually performed this work. Weeding went on constantly in these early phases as did extensive fertilizing. This phase lasted through May and June. Without this intense early attention, the crop would be ruined. After a rest of a week to ten days in late June, a new period of weeding, watering, and fertilizing began, lasting three weeks to a month. At this point, less attention was required until the harvest in late August or early September. Workers pulled the mature beets out of the ground with their hands, a literally back-breaking task. They then trimmed off the leaves and roots with a knife and carried the beets to waiting wagons or carts provided by the plantation owners. All of the work, from sowing to harvest, was strictly supervised by foremen. The crucial fact to keep in mind for present purposes is that the sowing and harvesting of the sugar beet were not the times of the year requiring the largest amount of labor. Instead, that moment came in May and June when the beets had to be watched over almost hourly.

Once the beets had been harvested, they had to be refined. By and large, this task was performed on the plantations in refineries that had been built either by landlords or their renters, some of which, later on, were joint-stock companies owned by Jewish merchants. In 1830, there had been 6 sugar refineries in all of Russia. By 1900 there were 159 such establishments, 117 of which were in the southwest. That year, these 117 refineries employed 68,435 workers, a figure that varied little in the years leading up to the

In contrast to those who worked the fields, only 10 percent of refinery workers were women. The total number of sugar refinery workers may not seem large when compared to the total peasant population of the region, yet they represented a significant proportion (29 percent) of industrial workers in the Ukraine.

Sugar refinery workers were hired for six-month periods, beginning in mid-August. As no special skills were required, mill owners sent teams into neighboring villages to recruit peasants. Agents paid elders as much as a ruble a head for each worker hired. Contracts were signed. Workers then appeared in groups from their villages and were placed under the authority of a foreman (podviadchik) who controlled their wages, along with their food and lodging, both of which were provided by the refinery. In the 1870s and 1880s, mills found it difficult to recruit peasants who were suspicious of industrial work. Once they began working in the refineries, many peasants simply ran out on their contracts rather than subject themselves to the new and difficult industrial conditions. As a result, foremen took to keeping their workers’ passports (needed to travel between provinces). This practice also served to restrain acts of insubordination and labor unrest. Unions were clearly illegal, and the only protection afforded mill workers was provided by the government’s factory inspectors, who, after the 1890s, succeeded in forcing considerable improvements on mill owners.

Initially, conditions in the refineries had been quite harsh. Extremely hot boilers and distilling devices reached high temperatures and produced steamy, humid air. The heat inside would clash with cold outside air to produce a health hazard for the workers. Pneumonia and typhus were common, but medical care, provided by the landlords, was minimal. The accident rate among the largely

82Leshchenko, 1955, p. 23.
83K. Voblyi, Narisi z isotrii rosiis’ko-ukrainskoi tsukro-buriakovoi prom-

islovosti (Kiev, 1931), p. 6.
84Ibid., p. 9.
86Ibid., p. 20.
unskilled workers was particularly high, as much as 25 percent in one plant. Clinics provided by owners were rarely if ever staffed by doctors. This would change under government pressure by 1900, but there were few changes in the danger and difficulty of the labor process itself. Unsanitary conditions in the factories were matched by the filth characteristic of the housing provided workers. Food, however, was plentiful if not always nourishing, as workers required the energy for two twelve-hour shifts. The factories worked around the clock during their busy season, and as one worker labored another was occupying his bed.

Malevich's father had worked in a sugar refinery which was described in the following way:

The other part of the factory recalled some fortress in which people worked day and night, obeying the merciless summons of factory whistles. People stood in the factories, bound by time to some apparatus or machine: twelve hours in the steam, the stench of gas and filth. I remember my father standing in front of a large apparatus. It was beautiful with many pieces of glass of various sizes. . . . All the workers there carefully followed the movements of their machine, as though following the movements of a predatory animal. And in the same time, they had to keep a sharp eye on themselves and their own movements. A false move threatened either death or being crippled for life.87

Difficult conditions did produce some strikes and disturbances. Usually an accident provoked a disorder. But sugar workers were handicapped by the seasonal character of their work and by their general industrial inexperience. Given the fact that they were still, by definition, peasants, it often proved simpler for them to return home if unpleasantness occurred in the refinery. Later on when peasants would confront landlords in different and more massive ways, it became possible for refinery workers to join forces. Until 1905, however, they provided, for the most part, a source of cheap labor to the owners of sugar refineries. Landlords and renters had proven highly efficient in processing the output of the estates. The

ability of the right-bank gentry to survive and prosper was not
typical of the landed nobility throughout Russia. Their success,
however, made life all the more difficult for the peasantry of Kiev,
Podol’e, and Volynia.

Peasant Landholding and Peasant Agriculture

In February 1906, N. Kleigels, the governor-general of the
southwest, wrote to the Council of Ministers: “The mass of the
people here is poor. In some places they have been reduced to
begging. Despite the great wealth of the region, the vast mass of the
population can provide for itself only at a comparatively low mate­
rial level.” News of this sort could hardly have been deemed
earth-shattering, even in St. Petersburg. Nevertheless, the poverty
of the right bank’s peasantry was especially acute. To make mat­
ters worse, their ability to improve their situations was very con­
strained. Landlord success was one obstacle. Another was the char­
acter of the commune in this part of the empire. Throughout most
of Russia, peasants with small allotments could hope to improve
their positions in forthcoming repartitions. In the Ukraine and
parts of Bielorussia, villages practiced hereditary tenure (podvor­
noe vladenie). In the southwest, 97 percent of households were in
hereditary communes. It is easy enough to imagine that the existence of hereditary
rather than repartitional tenure might have created the potential
for private peasant property and sharp divergences of wealth. So
much had been made for so long of the special powers of central
Russia’s communal villages that it may be surprising to learn that
the Ukrainian gromada (commune) did not differ very much in its
daily operation from the more celebrated Russian mir. The secre­
tary of the Kiev Agricultural Society, T. I. Osadchii, noted this fact
in 1899: “The land, despite the hereditary form of its use, is ex­
ploited in common. It has not been divided up among the peasants
once and for all. Rather, its location and situation changes from

88Butsik, 1949, p. 76.
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year to year.”90 In addition, Shanin has been able to demonstrate that the “substantive changes” that worked between repartitions in central Russia also operated in hereditary communes, blurring the distinction even further.91

Perhaps more significant, the practice of agriculture in the hereditary commune was not notably different from the central Russian experience. Both kinds of settlements demonstrated the primary characteristics of the historic open-field village seen throughout feudal Europe. Hereditary peasants had the same problems taking care of their own allotments as did repartitional peasants. Land was divided into the same complex and inefficient system of scattered strips seen in the Russian village.92 Sowing, harvesting, and the entire panoply of agricultural tasks were performed together under the guidance of the assembly of heads of households (the skhod) which operated according to well-understood traditions. Common grazing, manuring, and building were practiced in the right bank as elsewhere.93 The practices that brought peasants together were still vital in the southwest. The practices that divided them were still constrained. It was difficult to sell even a hereditary allotment. Enclosures were rare until the land reform of 1906 enacted by the prime minister, Peter Stolypin, who sought to eliminate the commune and institute individual private property for the peasants.

The communal traditions of the peasantry were not identical throughout all parts of the Ukraine. Villages in the left bank were more like those in central Russia. Private peasant landholding had made considerable strides in Kherson and Ekaterinoslav, while Kiev, Podol’e, and Volynia exhibited comparatively weak communal structures because they had only recently been part of Poland. Recent research on patterns of property inheritance in Kiev and Kharkov, however, did not reveal sharply divergent practices despite the wider dispersal of the hereditary commune in the right bank.94 Novorossiia, the left bank, and the right bank, however,
Economy and Society in the Southwest

were all Ukrainian. Peasants, with obvious regional variations, all
spoke Ukrainian. Hereditary tenure, with some differences, was
practiced throughout the entire Ukraine.

Culture played the same unifying role in the right-bank Ukraine
as it did in other peasant societies. The traditional assembly of
heads of households organized the agricultural and social life of the
village. The *skhod* was, however, more oligarchical than it was
democratic. Its members were nearly always male, and more
powerful households were most often able to manipulate decisions
for their own benefit. All of the rules and rituals of peasant life
were enforced informally by the *skhod* with the added power of
highly conformist village social pressure. There can be no question
that cultural forms of this sort played an enormous role in the daily
life of all peasants, Ukrainians and Russians included. Any broader
understanding of peasant life that would exclude these phenomena
would surely be incomplete. Yet these considerations are not par­
ticularly helpful in answering the more specific questions raised by
the peasant movement in the right-bank Ukraine during the Revo­
lution of 1905. Events in the southwest were sharply different from
those encountered in the other parts of the Ukraine, but similar
cultural and communal forms could be found throughout the
Ukraine. The peasant movement in 1905 displayed striking region­
al variations. The Ukraine was no exception. Distinctions of
culture and ritual, though important in many ways, were not near­
ly so acute, nor was their dispersal so geographically precise.
Important as they are to any understanding of peasant lives in this
part of the world, these considerations do not provide answers to
our more immediate questions.

Demographic pressures, themselves the product of changing vil­
lage family norms, played a crucial role in the difficulties facing the
right bank’s peasants. Population growth had been swifter in the
southwest than in any other region (90 percent between 1858, and
1897). The size of the average household (between five and six

ants in Kiev and Kharkiv Provinces, 1861–1900,″ paper for Conference on the
Peasantry of European Russia, 1800–1917, University of Massachusetts, Boston,

20.

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Proletarian Peasants

Table 3. Average Allotment per Peasant Household, 1905

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Desiatiny</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kiev</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podol'e</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volynia</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Ukraine</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Russia</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


members) changed little over time and hardly differed from the households of central Russia. The number of households, however, increased dramatically. This growth in population combined with the gentry’s ability to retain their lands, sharply reducing the average peasant holding. In 1861 the amount of land per peasant “soul” averaged 2.9 desiatiny; in 1880 it was 2.1; by 1906 it had declined to 1.4.

Population was especially dense in the southwest. To compensate for the great increase in numbers, peasants had to supplement their allotments with purchases of private land. In most regions such lands were bought from nobles, but the landlords of the right bank had made little land available to buy or rent. As a result, peasant holdings in Kiev, Podol’e, and Volynia were among the smallest in the Russian Empire (see Table 3).

Not only was the average allotment in the southwest comparatively small, but the great majority of peasants had holdings

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97 Anfimov, 1980, p. 151. For decline in peasant landholdings, see Leshchenko, 1955, p. 54.
98 Butsik, 1949, p. 78.
Economy and Society in the Southwest

considerably below the average. Large allotments were rather rare in the southwest. Even what might be called middle-sized holdings were less numerous in the right bank than in other parts of Russia and the Ukraine (see Table 4). The size divisions used in Table 4 should not necessarily be seen as corresponding to the standard Leninist class divisions of "poor," "middle," and "rich." Allotment size, by itself, did not include all the land a peasant household might control, and regional differences did not make 5 desiatiny in one part of the empire equivalent to 5 desiatiny in another. Nevertheless, these figures should make clear that land hunger, so central a peasant grievance throughout Russia, was especially acute in the southwest. Small and insufficient holdings were the norm in this region, and the ability of the peasantry to change this situation was severely limited.

Since the emancipation, peasants had been able to alleviate some portion of their land hunger through purchase and rental. The decline of the landowning nobility had made sizable tracts available, and the State Peasant Bank, founded in 1883, had aided some better-off peasants in making purchases. Fertility and climate, however, conspired against the southwest's peasantry. The success of landlords meant that a minimum of surplus land could be

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province or Region</th>
<th>Up to 5</th>
<th>5–10</th>
<th>Over 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volynia</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiev</td>
<td>55.5</td>
<td>35.4</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podol'ë</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire right bank</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left-bank Ukraine</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>43.1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novorossiia</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bielorussia</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>63.8</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Black Earth region</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>30.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Tsentral'nyi statisticheskii komitet Ministerstvo vnuten­nykh del, Statistiki zemlevладения v Rossii 1905 g. (St. Petersburg, 1907).*
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bought, and high prices made the little available land unattainable for most peasants. In 1905, land in the southwest sold for just over 200 rubles a desiatin, compared to the national average of 107 rubles.\textsuperscript{99} Since 1889, land in the right bank had increased 108 percent in value. Variations from district to district made the pattern even more obvious. Where land was comparatively less fertile, peasants were able to make purchases. In the more desirable districts, they made little progress. In the sugar beet uezd of Vasilkovsk (Kiev), nobles owned 90 percent of private land. In less fertile Radomyansk (also in Kiev), they owned only 57 percent.\textsuperscript{100} In fact, peasants bought less land in the right bank than in any other region, and the land that was purchased was bought by individuals rather than by communes as was common in the rest of the empire.\textsuperscript{101}

Between the two universal surveys of 1877 and 1905, the right-bank peasantry added over 620,000 desiatiny of land to their holdings. In 1877, they had controlled almost 3 percent of private land. By 1905, they had 13 percent, but this amount was far less than peasants in the left bank and steppe had acquired. In these regions, peasants owned roughly one third of the available private, that is, nonallotment, land.\textsuperscript{102} Merchants proved especially keen competitors for the private lands of the right bank, precisely because the sugar beet industry made speculative purchasing more viable than in other regions.\textsuperscript{103} Quite simply, little land was put up for sale. Peasants begged landlords to sell them even small parcels, but large landowners, regardless of their nationalities or political feelings, were unresponsive to these pleas.\textsuperscript{104}

Peasants in the southwest were even less successful in renting land. They were outbid by sugar companies who paid as high as twenty-six rubles a year per desiatin.\textsuperscript{105} These firms also supplied

\textsuperscript{99}Pershin, p. 85.

\textsuperscript{100}Butsik, 1949, pp. 78–86.

\textsuperscript{101}Telichuk, pp. 51–53.


\textsuperscript{103}Skvortsov, pp. 133–35.

\textsuperscript{104}Russkie Vedemosti, April 25, 1905.

their own seed, fertilizer, and tools, leaving the landlord to collect a handsome royalty without any significant investments. The success of capitalist agriculture in the region turned land into a full-fledged commodity. Given the new economic assumptions, there was no reason to rent to peasants who could not possibly pay the going rate. During 1905, 13 percent of the land sown by peasants in the left-bank Ukraine was rented. In Novorossiia, the figure was as high as 20 percent. By contrast, right-bank peasants rented little more than 5 percent of their land.

Right-bank peasants had proven ill-equipped to combat their acute land hunger. Dire poverty, even starvation, could be escaped only through labor for others. In most cases, survival included work for landlords, as wealthy peasants were very few. A pre-revolutionary study by the agronomist A. I. Iaroshevich found that the less land a household controlled, the more likely one of its members would be working for someone else. No one would argue that Russian peasants in 1905 were either wealthy or comfortable, but it should be clear that peasants in the southwest were especially poor. Large numbers of households held extremely small allotments. Western and Soviet scholars are in broad agreement that the largest segment of the peasantry in central Russia fit into the so-called middle peasant group. Soviet specialists, using familiar terminology and basing their judgments on size of allotment, have described the majority of the right bank’s peasantry as “poor.” Employing a variety of censuses and land surveys, P. P. Telichuk, a Ukrainian economic historian, divided the southwest’s peasantry along the lines shown in Table 5. M. N. Leshchenko, the leading Soviet authority on the Ukrainian peasant movement, using similar sources, came up with a slightly less stark picture of the size of the poor peasantry in the right bank. Leshchenko, look-

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106 For useful definitions of agrarian capitalism see Kaplan, p. 39. See also Galeski, p. 39.
108 Teplytskii, p. 172.
109 Telichuk, p. 149.
110 A. Iaroshevich, Ocherki ekonomicheskoi zhizni iugo-zapadnogo kraia (Kiev, 1911), vyp. 2, p. 2.
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Table 5. Right-Bank Peasant Stratification, 1905

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>No. of households</th>
<th>Poor number</th>
<th>Poor %</th>
<th>Middle number</th>
<th>Middle %</th>
<th>Rich number</th>
<th>Rich %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volynia</td>
<td>439,811</td>
<td>282,803</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>84,557</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>72,451</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiev</td>
<td>539,141</td>
<td>372,724</td>
<td>69.1</td>
<td>115,310</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>51,107</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podol'e</td>
<td>524,669</td>
<td>399,187</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>88,746</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>36,736</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


ing at the entire Ukraine, was able to demonstrate that a similar portion of the peasantry in the rest of the Ukraine also could be classified as “poor.” So-called middle peasants were slightly more numerous in the left bank and Novorossiia, and wealthy peasants were considerably more common in Kherson and Kharkov.112

The picture in individual right-bank villages is virtually impossible to determine. Precise information is available only on one Volynia commune, Zemlitsy in Vladimirvolynsk district. Some 289 souls lived in Zemlitsy (130 men and 159 women). They made up forty-eight households, occupying 200 desiatiny. The poorest families were landless (eight households), while the wealthiest peasant had 10 desiatiny. Only six households had more than 6 desiatiny. The remaining thirty-four households had some land but could be said to fall into the “poor” category, if we use the admittedly crude criterion of allotment size. There was, however, a positive correlation between family size and landholding. The eight landless families averaged 4.25 members, while the four wealthiest households averaged 6.25. The picture given by the peasants of Zemlitsy corresponds to commonly accepted general patterns, but it should be clear that this single example proves little by itself.113

The standard Soviet categories, derived as they are from Lenin, have been correctly criticized in both the West and the Soviet Union. It has not always been possible to assume the political

113Zhitomirskii oblast’nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv (hereafter ZhOGA), f. 115, o. 2, d. 2521, l. 6.
behavior of the various subgroups no matter how acute or vulgar the criteria used in delineating them. If most right-bank peasants fell into the category of “poor,” this can be seen first and foremost as proof of the overall poverty of the entire peasantry of the region. By itself, it does not signify the existence of a politically unified social class of poor peasants who acted in predictable ways. By itself, it does not mean that intravillage tensions were acutely perceived by the peasants themselves.

Nevertheless, if most peasants in central Russia could be included in the middle group, most rural cultivators in the southwest can properly be described as poor. The poverty of the right bank’s peasants was even more desperate than that of their counterparts elsewhere in Russia and the Ukraine. These conditions, in turn, greatly constrained not only their political choices but their economic activities as well. Peasants in the southwest were not simply poor versions of central Russia’s middle peasants. They confronted a specific set of circumstances, and their responses to those circumstances were equally specific.

The transformation of landlord agriculture in the right bank did not contribute to similar changes in peasant agriculture. Big, successful estates existed alongside small villages with tiny allotments. If anything, the existence of the capitalist farm made peasant progress even more difficult.114 On the peasant allotments, little had changed. The three-field system was nearly universal.115 Holdings consisted of garden plots (usad'ba) and small amounts of arable, usually devoted to grains, especially winter rye and wheat. Tools and livestock were minimal. A 1910 survey of Uman district would reveal that 35 percent of households lacked tools and 26 percent had no livestock. One half of the families surveyed lacked the means to be even minimally successful.116 Right-bank peasants tilled the soil with a slightly more advanced type of plow called a plug as opposed to the more traditional sokha of central Russia. Metal plows were common but hardly widespread.117 Technical

114Iaroshevich, 1911, p. 44.
115Telichuk, p. 152. Kolomiets, Polozhenie krestian, p. 95. TsGIAU, f. 442, o. 635, d. 20, l. 61.
116Iaroshevich, 1911, p. 5.
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progress was minimal, and peasants planted and sowed according to the same traditional schedules that had been practiced for centuries. In fact, a team of zemstvo agronomists who toured Kiev in 1910 would describe peasant agriculture there as something out of the "middle ages."118

One element of feudalism the right-bank peasantry very much wanted to preserve was the servitutnye prava, preemancipation rights to the use of the landlord’s forest and pasture. Throughout Russia, enterprising landlords had restricted peasants’ ability to graze their livestock, often charging for what had once been a right. With agrarian progress came an abandonment of traditional obligations. Servitutnye prava were especially threatened in the right bank.119 Disputes over the use of grazing lands were common throughout the decades before 1905, and many early disturbances were caused by arguments concerning these matters. Landlord unwillingness to allow peasant access eventually reduced the number of livestock that peasant households could maintain. The predictable result was greater poverty and dependency.

Peasant productivity was a great deal lower than that of landlords. In the left-bank Ukraine and the Central Black Earth region, landlords generally produced two thirds again the amount of grain raised by peasants. In the right bank, landlords raised 86 percent more than peasants did in 1904.120 This figure is all the more striking given the gentry’s considerable involvement in the cultivation of crops other than grain.

A few well-meaning agronomists and landlords sought to alleviate the problem by introducing peasants to the raising of sugar beets. Expanding rail networks had improved the transport of the beets to the refineries. It was now less necessary for the processing to take place right next to the fields.121 This change created possibilities for peasants, but they were unable to adapt to the new conditions. As already noted, almost 15 percent of the region’s land under sugar beets was planted by peasants. Their productivi-

120Tsentral’nyi statisticheskii komitet Ministerstva vnuitenynykh del, Urozhai na 1904 g. (St. Petersburg, 1904), pp. 12–13, 30–31, 6–7, 64–67.
121Kievskoe Agronomicheskoe Obshchestvo, Trudy, vyp. III (Kiev, 1915), p. 5.
ty, however, was lower than that of landlord estates, and the quality of their beets was considerably poorer. Peasants were ill-equipped to provide the constant fertilizing, watering, and weeding required by this crop. They lacked proper storage facilities, making spoilage a problem. Often peasants who received advances from sugar companies simply spent the money and never delivered what was promised. Most significantly, peasants were not always willing to plant sugar beets because doing so required an abandoning of the traditional three-field system. A few landlords had planted sugar beets and retained the three-field on their estates, but this proved impossible for peasants.

Despite the obstacles, a sizable number of peasants were willing to innovate along these lines, but the vast majority (over 90 percent) practiced primitive agriculture according to traditional methods. Landlord estates in the right bank were not like those elsewhere in Russia and the Ukraine. Peasant farms in the southwest, however, were much like those of central Russia. If capitalism had come to the fields of Kiev, Podol’e, Volynia, it was a gentry enterprise. Peasants in these provinces cultivated their own lands in much the same way as their central Russian counterparts. Rather, it was wage work that most sharply distinguished their lives from those of others in Russia and the Ukraine who worked the land.

**Agricultural Workers—a True Rural Proletariat?**

A rural proletariat was a sign of capitalist development and, appropriately, the commercial estates of the southwest employed large numbers of day laborers. One might then logically conclude that the right bank was home to a large body of landless wage earners. The poverty of the region’s peasantry and the primitive character of its agriculture would seem even more likely to create conditions conducive to the emergence of this class. If a strictly defined rural proletariat were part of the rural scene anywhere in Russia, the right bank would seem to be a most likely place to find it.

122Ibid., p. 6.
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The literature on the Russian and Ukrainian countrysides makes a consistent distinction between “peasants” who were members of village communities and “agricultural workers” (agrarnye or sel’skokhoziaistvennye rabochie) who were not members of the communities in which they worked. Agricultural workers sold their labor on large, agriculturally advanced estates, and wages, according to certain definitions, were their sole source of income. In reality, this distinction between the peasant (the complete insider) and the agricultural worker (the complete outsider) often broke down. Many poor peasants throughout Russia, owners of little land, were forced to take wage work. As already noted, this was most common in the southwest. On the other hand, there were landless individual members of peasant households and communes. Often these were youths who had not yet succeeded to their allotments. These landless villagers have been described in the literature as “batraks.” They did not move around from place to place, as did agricultural workers, and they did not always receive wages for the work they performed within the traditional context of the family.

It is difficult to identify a rural proletariat of the sort defined by Sidney Mintz (landless and wage earning) because, like so many other social groups in prerevolutionary Russia, the rural proletariat was very much a transitional phenomenon. Logically, peasants rendered landless might be expected to go to industrially expanding cities. This was very much the case in Prussia in the second half of the nineteenth century. Junker landlords experienced a chronic labor shortage. Seasonal oscillations between town and country were still quite common in Russia, however, and the cities began to absorb the surplus rural population only after 1905. Until the beginning of the revolutionary turmoil, a huge reserve army of labor could be found throughout the Russian countryside. The mem-

126 Knipovich, p. 12.
bers of this army, the landless and the nearly landless, had to leave their native villages each spring in search of work to support themselves and their families. By 1906, industry revived from a depression and the laws concerning the commune were changed. Those who wished to leave the land and migrate to the cities could now do so more easily. Soon thereafter the number of those wandering the Russian and Ukrainian countryside each spring and summer began to decrease.127

Not all those who labored for wages were landless, nor were all those without land necessarily wage workers. As a result, this potential rural proletariat was not as large a social group as might be expected. Its numbers were limited, especially when compared to the rest of the peasant population. Despite these caveats, this phenomenon of migrant labor (known as otkhod) was a significant element of rural life throughout the Russian Empire. Each spring a massive movement of agricultural workers began throughout the countryside. If they had no land or not enough land, if there were too many working hands in the household, or if the previous harvest had been poor, peasants had to abandon their native villages to find employment on large, commercially organized estates.128

Most of these workers moved from the infertile central provinces to the booming borderlands, but migration within provinces and even within districts was also common. Strangely enough, estates in a particular region might recruit from outside, despite the existence of a local labor surplus. This irrational situation existed in the southwest, where a considerable number of migrants (otkhodniki) were hired to work on the sugar estates. Local agricultural conditions and individual landlord attitudes usually accounted for these anomalies. At the same time, so sizable was the surplus agricultural population of the right bank that many had to leave the region to find work.129

Conditions faced by otkhodniki throughout the empire had many similarities. To leave their homes and go to another prov-

129Volyn', July 26, 1905.
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ince, peasants had to obtain a passport from the local authorities. This process was the full extent to which peasant migration was in any way registered or counted. Many peasants left without gaining permission, and no one seriously checked them thereafter.\textsuperscript{130} Those who migrated in search of employment had no guarantee of finding it. Previously arranged contracts were extremely rare for migrating peasants. There were no formal labor exchanges, no advertisements. Migrants, most of whom were male, would go where they had found work in the past or where a friend or relative had experienced success in another year. The growth of railroads sped this process, and each spring the Ministry of Communications was forced to lay on extra trains. The majority of \textit{otkhodniki}, however, still made the journey on foot, usually in groups of ten or fifteen from the same village.\textsuperscript{131} Trips in search of work could last as long as a month but the typical peasant journeyed for one or two weeks. Travel in the spring meant wading through rivers of mud as the winter snows melted.

The journey was completed when the group arrived at an informal labor market, usually a fair, bazaar, or railway station. There were twenty such points in Kiev and Podol’e, all in close proximity to large sugar plantations.\textsuperscript{132} Workers then negotiated contracts in groups for the entire growing season which varied from region to region. Although they had little choice, workers preferred not to sign such contracts. The terms of one such document from the estates of the Pototskii family make this reluctance fully understandable:

I, a peasant of the village of—enter into an agreement of my own free will to do wage work on the estate of Count Pototskii in whatever way I am instructed. In all I will work 144 days and receive 34 rubles of which 10 rubles will be given in advance and the remainder to be given as I work.

1. I will go out to work with the rising of the sun and work until it sets.

\textsuperscript{131}Maslov, 1908, 1:420. Dubrovskii, 1975, p. 344.
\textsuperscript{132}Leshchenko, 1977, p. 90.
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2. If I quit work without a legal reason, I shall return two times the advance and receive no wages for any other work.
3. I must appear for work as soon as I am called.
4. If the estate calls me to work on a holiday or Sunday, I do not have the right to refuse.
5. If I go on a holiday without permission, I must make up double the work missed.
6. If I fall sick or die, a member of my family must fulfill this contract.
7. Under no circumstances may I quit work before the agreed upon period.¹³³

Contracts of this sort were often broken, and disputes were common. Workers would depart if they learned of better wages elsewhere. On the other hand, groups of laborers were often summarily dismissed. In such instances they received nothing, not even for the work they had already performed.¹³⁴ Labor discipline was severe, and corporal punishment was common.¹³⁵ Employers really had no choice but to beat workers, given working conditions on the estates. Arrest meant nothing to agricultural workers. So wretched was the housing provided by the landlords (when it was provided at all) that a night in prison guaranteed a roof over one’s head and better rations. Workers often had to sleep in the open.¹³⁶ Sometimes they dug trenches and slept in them. Others were allowed to live in barns; a few were housed in dormitories that were, by most descriptions, worse than the barns.¹³⁷ These problems were less acute in the right bank where much of the labor force came from neighboring villages, lived in their own homes, and ate their food. Landlords did provide meals to those workers living on

¹³³G. I. Moiseevich, Sel’skokhoziaistvennye rabochie vo vremia pervoi revoliutsii 1905–1907 gg. (Moscow, 1925), pp. 18–19.
¹³⁴Polferov, p. 24.
¹³⁵Maslov, 1908, 1:425.
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the plantations. Breakfasts were usually bread, hot water, and potato broth. Lunches were the largest meals, consisting most often of borshch and a bit of meat or dried fish. Dinners were small versions of lunch, with soup, bread, and potatoes the usual fare.\textsuperscript{138}

Agricultural workers throughout Russia labored from dawn until dusk. Between two and three hours were taken out by meals. During harvests, it was common for workers to continue into the night under torches or electric lights. Machines, when employed, were as much a hazard as a help, and landlords complained about the low "mental and moral level" of the workers who "resisted" efforts to modernize the estates.\textsuperscript{139} Where machines were introduced, long workdays and unfamiliar equipment led to a high accident rate, but landlords, who had no legal responsibility for the medical care of their employees, argued that these men and women simply did not know "how to walk near machines."\textsuperscript{140}

It is not easy to exaggerate the difficulty of agricultural wage work. Not all these conditions prevailed in the southwest: Novorossiia and the Baltic provinces were larger importers of migrant labor. Yet the long days, hard work, harsh discipline, and low wages were the same in the right bank as elsewhere. In some ways the situation of the wage worker was worse in the southwest than in other parts of the empire. Rural cultivators in the region received a good deal less for a day's work than their counterparts elsewhere. Because households supported their wage-earning members through the normal slack periods of the agrarian cycle, it was possible for landlords to pay less than subsistence wages. The pre-revolutionary Marxist scholar G. Drozdov found significant differences between the right bank and other regions (see Table 6).\textsuperscript{141}

Sixty years later, the Soviet specialist on the rural economy I. D. Kovalchenko came up with roughly similar findings.\textsuperscript{142} Somewhat surprisingly, official government figures, based on reports from landlords, were actually lower than these more sympathetic re-

\textsuperscript{138}Istoria selianstva, 1:400. Telichuk, p. 110, Shestakov, 1907, pp. 17-18.
\textsuperscript{139}Zemledelie, April 28, 1905. This was the official organ of the Kiev Agronomic Society, a group dominated by landlords.
\textsuperscript{140}Polferov, p. 96.
Table 6. Average Daily Wage in Agriculture, 1902–1904

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Kopecks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Right bank</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Left bank</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novorossia</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Black Earth region</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Russia</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


searches. In 1904, according to the Ministry of Interior, men in the right bank earned from twenty-five kopecks a day in the spring to forty-five kopecks a day in the fall. Women’s wages ranged from twenty kopecks in the spring to thirty kopecks in the fall.¹⁴² Although the demand for wage work on the sugar plantations was considerable, the supply of willing hands was tremendous. The excess working population of the right bank has been counted as high as 3 million.¹⁴³ Landlessness was one possible explanation for the abundant supply of those seeking work in Kiev, Podol’e, and, to a lesser extent, Volynia. Lack of land was one of the characteristics of a rural proletariat, and the number of households without allotments was higher in the right bank than in other regions (see Table 7).

Migrant workers were not the majority of laborers on the estates of Kiev, Podol’e, and Volynia. Instead, local peasants, including large numbers of women and children, composed the sugar plantation labor force. Female laborers tended to be the younger members of local households.¹⁴⁴ As noted, most landlords thought women were as productive as men but paid them considerably less. Nevertheless, right-bank women received a higher percentage of

¹⁴²Ministerstvo zemledel’ia i gosudarstvennykh imushchestv, 1904 god v sel’skokhoziaistvennykh otnoshenii (St. Petersburg, 1904), pp. 78–79.
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Table 7. Landless Households in 1893

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kiev</td>
<td>44,995</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Podol'e</td>
<td>25,367</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volynia</td>
<td>14,035</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Ukraine</td>
<td>196,862</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Russia</td>
<td>726,338</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: P. Lokhtin, Bezzemel'nyi proletariat vRossii (Moscow, 1905), p. 176.

the wage paid to men (69 percent) than in any other region. The wage paid to men (69 percent) than in any other region. Most of these women were members of local households and, unlike agricultural workers in other parts of Russia, they were not entirely dependent on their wage for survival. As a result, they were able to play a highly militant role during the revolutionary period. The activism of right-bank women contrasted with the moderating, even conservative, role played by women everywhere else in Russia during 1905. The combativeness of right-bank women also conflicts with common assumptions about the political and social passivity of peasant women in general.

Agricultural laborers (landless, wage-earning rural proletarians) only constituted a small portion of the workers on the estates of the right bank; no one could claim that these men and women made up a large percentage of the rural population throughout Russia. Precision about the size of this strictly defined rural proletariat is difficult to obtain. Similarly, the numbers of those engaged in wage work on the southwest’s plantations can only be estimated. Using the 1897 census, Lenin, in the 1908 edition of The Development of Capitalism in Russia, came up with a figure of approximately 3 million agricultural workers out of a peasant population of nearly 80 million. At about the same time, Drozdov and the leading Menshevik authority on agriculture, Peter Maslov,

145Lenin, The Development of Capitalism in Russia, p. 241.
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arrived at roughly similar numbers.\textsuperscript{147} S. M. Dubrovskii repeated this figure in his 1975 book.\textsuperscript{148} The more thorough researches of Kovalchenko and his colleagues (published in 1974) revealed the number of those who fit the strict definition of the rural proletarian to be something less than 2 million.\textsuperscript{149} Maslov, Kovalchenko, and Leshchenko all estimated the number of agricultural workers in the right bank, subsisting entirely on their wages, to be around 150,000.\textsuperscript{150} Looked at either nationally or regionally, it is apparent that men and women who could properly be called rural proletarians were simply too few in number to dominate either agrarian labor in general or a peasant movement in particular.

Constructing an estimate of the size of the wage-labor force in the right bank is an even more slippery proposition. No universal data of any sort exist. Given the oft-noted importance of women workers on the sugar estates, information on the gender of the southwest's rural cultivators would be of decisive significance. Yet no statistical materials answer this question. Estimates vary wildly. Telichuk claimed more than a million workers were required to work the sugar plantations of the entire Ukraine.\textsuperscript{151} Given the preponderance of the right bank in the sugar trade it would not be an exaggeration to guess there were as many as 900,000 such workers in the southwest. Leshchenko, ever alert for even the slightest sign of a rural proletariat, has placed the number of sugar workers as low as 300,000.\textsuperscript{152} We do know that as many as 1,000 day workers were employed on each of the several estates belonging to the Tereshchenko family.\textsuperscript{153} A 1913 study of eight estates in Kiev found that these estates provided 393,150 workdays to day laborers. If we take the Pototskii contract as typical of a season (144 days)—and other sources make this likely—then these eight Kiev estates (of varying sizes) employed 2,730 people in 1913.\textsuperscript{154}

\textsuperscript{147}Maslov, 1908, 2:98. Drozdov, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{148}Dubrovskii, 1975, p. 312.
\textsuperscript{149}Kovalchenko and Milov, 1974, p. 320.
\textsuperscript{151}Telichuk, p. 105.
\textsuperscript{152}Leshchenko, 1977, p. 68.
\textsuperscript{153}Telichuk, p. 106.
\textsuperscript{154}AD, 2:106.
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Whatever the precise figures, it is obvious that there were not enough rural proletarians, strictly defined, for this group to dominate the peasant movement in the right bank. Nevertheless, it was still possible that this most distressed of elements could have played a classical Leninist vanguard role. At the same time, it was altogether possible that peasant wage workers, whose households held some land, might behave in ways that could be characterized as classically proletarian.

One can only guess how many of these cultivators were women. Landlords' descriptions of their estates give considerable attention to the role of the female labor. Government reports paint a similar picture, as does the scientific literature on agriculture in the region. Given the fact that women left household work in order to supply day labor on the sugar estates, it is reasonable to assume they were a sizable share, even a majority, of the wage labor force. One report from Podol’e stated that women from both poor and prosperous families predominated in the labor force on local sugar plantations.\(^{155}\) This set of circumstances made the southwest highly exceptional in the context of Russian agriculture. In other regions where agrarian workers received wages, most notably Novorossiia and the Baltic, men performed these tasks.\(^{156}\) The impact of such extensive female wage work on the patriarchal structure of right bank households has not been studied, but it is safe to assume that traditional patterns were undermined, and the exceptionally prominent role of right-bank women in the strikes and disturbances of 1905 would seem to attest to a disequilibrium of the old structures.

Agriculture in the southwest had followed many contours of the Prussian path toward capitalist development. The right bank was clearly an advanced region with extensive production for expanding markets. Many landlords, along with numerous entrepreneurs, had been able to benefit from these swift changes. Peasants, on the other hand, paid the price for this transition. Their allotments were reduced, and their opportunities for agrarian innovation remained

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\(^{156}\)Lugova, p. 11. Maslov, 2:98.
limited. Even the most energetic and ambitious peasants had been unable to rent or buy large amounts of land. They farmed the southwest's fertile soil, using methods that differed little from those encountered in the most backward areas outside of the black earth zones. To survive, members of their families had been forced to accept poorly paid, arduous work on estates that produced commodities rarely found in peasant homes. These conditions differed greatly from those found in central Russia, but they contained much the same potential for unrest that would soon sweep the rest of the empire.