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# THE RUSSIAN PEASANT MOVEMENT IN THE ERA OF IMPERIALISM

— A Socio-Economic Sketch —

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## I. THE ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF RUSSIAN SOCIETY EARLY IN THE 20TH CENTURY

In the latter half of the 19th century, a worldwide imperialism was about to be established in advanced capitalistic nations, while in Russia at the same time a bourgeois reform including "Emancipation of Serfs" was carried out. In about 1880 the capitalization of Russian society was completed. As a result, this belatedly capitalized nation formed a link in the chain of a worldwide capitalistic system, in terms of importation of capital and products of heavy industries from the Western European advanced capitalistic nations and exportation of agricultural products to them. They tried to make large profits on these trades. Therefore, the Russian people, particularly labourers and peasants, could not avoid opposing Western European capitalism.

On the other hand, as "Emancipation of Serfs" was carried out compulsively from above as a counterrevolution to the bourgeois democratic revolutionary movement, the old-fashioned political absolutism of Czarism and the old economic system of landlordism based on the "otrabotki" (pay-off agricultural labour system)<sup>1)</sup> remained. These are called "the remnants of serfdom". This political and economic situation finally forced the Russian people, particularly the peasants, to oppose these "remnants".

The opposition to Western European capitalism (and to Russian capitalism) and the opposition to these inner "remnants" cannot be separated. The root of both the problems was the same; the resistance to exploitation. Russian people's Revolution in 1905, about which I am going to speak here, was such a resistance. Thus, the Revolution in 1905 has the feature that cannot be understood by thinking of the classical bourgeois democratic revolution as one like the French Revolution which lacked the opposition to capital<sup>2)</sup>. The Russian Revolution in 1905 opposed the whole economic structure of Russian capitalistic society which still retained "the

<sup>1)</sup> T. Masuda, *Rosiya Nōson Shakai no Kindaika Katei (The Process of the Modernization of Rural Society in Russia)*, Tokyo, 1958, pp. 22-118.

<sup>2)</sup> Л. М. Иванов (отв. ред.), *История СССР*, т. VI, Москва, 1968, стр. 803-804.

remnants of serfdom". Therefore, let us describe what "the remnants of serfdom" were.

To begin, we must relate the "otrabotki" system in rural Russia to the whole Russian capitalistic reproduction structure<sup>3</sup>. The best method for Czarist Russia, a belatedly capitalized nation, to accumulate capital immediately was to get redemption payments and taxes from peasants who constituted an absolute majority of the whole population (as the result of it, the compulsive policy to regard "mir" as a control or tax collection system was adopted). But, far from bringing about economic independence of many peasants, this policy made them pauperized debtors, that is, "kaba-la". Under such circumstances, most of the peasants were forced not only to work for low wages in the landlord's farms with or without horses or farming tools, but also to pay very high ground rents. Strictly speaking, both the low wages which they earned and high ground rents which they had to pay were different forms of the same and they affected each other. Consequently, a special relation between employment and renting as an offset form of the two was established. For instance, if a peasant rented one desiatina of the land from his landlord, instead of paying for it with money, he had to cultivate two desiatinas of his landlord's land for nothing. This shouldn't be identified with corvée in the serfdom although they are very similar from the formal point of view. The "otrabotki" system was no more than an economic structure based on low wages and high rents which characterized various relationships between landlords and peasants. As this structure spread throughout central rural Russia in the second half of the 19th century, the late blooming capitalists of Russia could draw up all the low-wage labour necessary for their rapid capital accumulation<sup>4</sup>.

But the process through which low-wage labour was pushed to the city or capital under the "otrabotki" system worked great hardships on the people. Especially the periodic famines caused by the stagnation of agricultural productivity under the "otrabotki" system caused great misery. The failure of crops in the summer of 1891 was the most severe. Therefore, it is said 60 per cent of the rural population was on the verge of starvation<sup>5</sup>. We can learn from the following facts how severe it was; in three prefectures of central Russia, Orel, Voronezh and Tambov, during only six years from 1888 to 1893, there was a great change in the rural population.

<sup>3</sup> S. Hinada, *Rosiyā Nōseishi Kenkyū* (*Studies in the Agrarian History of Russia*), Tokyo, 1966, pp. 201-253; С. Хинада, "Русский капитализм и отработочная система в сельском хозяйстве России", *Suravu Kenkyū* (*Slavic Studies*, A Journal of the Slavic Institute of Hokkaido University), No. 18, 1973, pp. 1-52.

<sup>4</sup> С. Ю. Витте, "Докладная записка Витте Николаю II", *Историк-Марксист*, 1935, No. 2-3, стр. 134.

<sup>5</sup> П. Н. Першин, *Аграрная революция в России*, Кн. 1, М., 1966, стр. 48.

Namely, the number of the peasant households with more than three horses overwhelmingly decreased from 30 per cent to 18 per cent, and the number of peasant households with one horse (most of them were worker-peasants) increased from 26 per cent to 31 per cent. In addition, the number of peasant households without any horse (most of them either went for work somewhere or left their homes and worked in factories as peasant-workers) greatly increased, from 23 per cent to 33 per cent. In 1897 a researcher on the peasant economy in Tver prefecture explained the situation as follows; "There was only one way for a poor peasant to survive, namely to leave home and get a job. Poverty forced him to look for work in another part of the country, and such cases as this can be seen all over the country. At first, peasants went out alone to work, but gradually they began to go out to work with their families as they realized it was much better than going out alone<sup>6)</sup>".

By the way, although skilled workers in the heavy industry were isolated from villages earlier in the post-reform era, most of unskilled workers, mainly miners, spinners and odd men and so on continued to come from villages. They endured not only the strain of heavy work but also the ill treatment in the factory and mine, that is, low wage for hours worked. Needless to say, there was a limit to their perseverance. The following fact shows the severity of the situation at that time; the number of deaths per 1,000 miners yearly from 1885 to 1896 was 15.6 in France, 16.7 in England, and to our surprise, 24.7 in Russia<sup>7)</sup>. In such severe circumstances, the revolution was the question of hours.

On the other hand, Russian capitalism had made remarkable progress, particularly in the 1890's as it was ensured cheap labour through the "otrabotki" system of its agrarian structure.

However, such rapid progress brought undesirable results, namely, the stagnation of agricultural productivity, the destitution of workers and peasants and a limited domestic market.

Because of the rapid progress, first of all, the lack of domestic capital accumulation caused the introduction of foreign capital. For instance, as the number of joint-stock companies during the eight years from 1893 to 1900 increased from 414 to 960, and the total amount of capital increased from 500 million rubles to 1,500 million rubles, foreign capital increased from 140 million rubles to 630 million rubles, and therefore the percentage

<sup>6)</sup> Л. М. Иванов, "Преимущество фабрично-заводского труда и формирование пролетариата в России", в Кн.: Л. М. Иванов (отв. ред.), Рабочий класс и рабочее движение в России 1861-1917, М., 1966, стр. 97.

<sup>7)</sup> М. Я. Гефтер, "Экономические предпосылки первой русской революции", Доклады и сообщения института истории АН СССР, вып. 6, 1955, стр. 20.

of the foreign capital of all capital rose rapidly from 27 per cent to 42 per cent<sup>8)</sup>. On the other hand, the percentage of the foreign debt of all national debt rose from 30 to 46 for only nine years from 1895 to 1904<sup>9)</sup>. Thus, Russian capitalism was obviously dependent upon foreign capital.

Secondly, it is worth-while to notice that, taking advantage of the Siberian railway, Russia invaded Eastern Asia and the Middle-East to make up for her limited domestic market. Czarism promoted an imperialistic invasion for Russian capitalism with the Russo-French Alliance in 1891 and the Russo-French Military Agreement in 1894, by which Russian imperialism in the Far-East came into conflict with British imperialism. In 1896, with the help of French capital, the Russo-China Bank was built to raise money for the construction of the Siberian railway. As a group of the big anti-democratic bourgeoisie were brought up under the protection of Czarism, the oppressive policy to the people became stronger than ever. Further, Czarism took an oppressive policy to various races in Caucasus and Central Asia, which were colonies inside the Russian Empire<sup>10)</sup>. Thus oppressing workers, peasants, and minor races in the country, Russian capitalism was developing as the second-class imperialistic one which was dependent upon foreign capital for finance<sup>11)</sup>. The above is the social and economic premise of the Revolution in 1905.

## II. THE PEASANT MOVEMENT IN THE SUMY DISTRICT

In this section I would like to study the features of the peasant movement in 1905 by an analysis of an important but less noticed example: the movement that occurred in the Sumy district of Kharikov prefecture.

### A. The Background

The Sumy district was located in the northern end of Kharikov prefecture and in the western end of the Central Agricultural region. The agrarian structure of this district had the features of both of the "otrabotki" system and of the "Junker" farm system.

In this prefecture, there were five powerful landlords, each of whom owned at least 10,000 desiatinas of land. There were two landlords in the Sumy district: one was Stroganov, who owned 15,000 desiatinas of land

<sup>8)</sup> Л. Е. Шепелев, "Акционерное учредительство в России", в Кн.: М. П. Вяткин (отв. ред.), Из истории империализма в России. Сборник статей, М.-Л., 1959, стр. 152-153.

<sup>9)</sup> L. Pasvolksy and H. G. Moulton, *Russian Debts and Russian Reconstruction*, N. Y., 1924, p. 17; И. Ф. Гиндин, Русские коммерческие банки, М., 1948, стр. 237-239, 431-445.

<sup>10)</sup> B. Eguchi, *Teikokushugi no Jidai (The Era of Imperialism)*, Tokyo, 1969, pp. 39-88.

<sup>11)</sup> H. Wada, "Kindai Rosiya no Hatten Kôzô (*The Developmental Structure of Modern Russian Society*)", *Shakai Kagaku Kenkyû of Tokyo University*, Vol. 17, No. 2-3, 1965.

and the other was Leshchinskaya, who owned 11,500 desiatinas. Since the latter half of the 19th century, nine sugar factories had been built in this district (nineteen in the whole prefecture), and 4,500 labourers had gathered there. This was 40 per cent of all the sugar factory labourers in the whole prefecture. And the sugar factory labourers of the whole Kharikov prefecture constituted half of all factory labourers. Judging from this, it can be said that 10,000 labourers gathered at Kharikov city as urban labourers, while 4,500 labourers were at the Sumy district as rural labourers<sup>12)</sup>.

In the Report of the Committee for Agrarian Problems in the Sumy district, the complicated situation in which there were rural labourers and tenant-peasants was described as follows; Liquor or sugar factory capitalists bought up a great amount of land. Consequently tenant-peasants were suffered from a huge amount of rent more than before. Then they were forced to remove to a city for getting a job. But their wages in factories were unbelievably low, which showed how the city was overcrowded by those peasants<sup>13)</sup>.

From only the agricultural point of view, reproducing the "otrabotki" system, the Sumy district was one of the centers of contradiction of rural Russia. Russian capitalism, dependent upon foreign capital in the era of imperialism early in the twentieth century, produced a large number of peasant-workers with the development of "Junker" agrarian capitalism under the "otrabotki" system. These peasant-workers flowed into factories in the city or to the mines and farms of the south as emigrants, and settled down as various types of labourers. They were farm hands, labourers in the sugar factories and labourers on the landlords' farms under the "otrabotki" system. Now in the Sumy district, the peasant movement was about to break out under the influence of these peasant-workers.

#### B. The Peasant Movement and Shcherbak

##### — In Spring and Summer —

It goes without saying that Russian peasants in 1902 set themselves at last to protest in prefectures of Poltava and Kharikov after forty years' silence. At this time events began to march towards the Revolution of 1905. At the same time, the Russo-Japanese war occurred. Gendarmes reported the attitude of the inhabitants of three districts, Sumy, Akhtyrka, and Lebedin as follows; "The failure to invade the Far East incurred the inhabitants'

<sup>12)</sup> В. П. Семенов (ред.), Россия, т. 7, Малороссия, СПб., 1903, стр. 201, 215-216, 329; Е. К. Живолуп, "Крестьянское движение в Харьковской губернии в 1905 году", Труды кафедры марксизма-ленинизма Харьковского университета, Т. 2, 1956, стр. 206.

<sup>13)</sup> А. М. Анфимов, Земельная аренда в России в начале XX века, М., 1961, стр. 36-37.

strong agitation and they began to seek the cause of the failure. Their dissatisfaction would burst into flame if such a great failure should occur again next year<sup>14)</sup>". In this atmosphere, they say that Gaidburs, a poorest peasant of village Anovka in the Sumy district, who worked in his landlord's farm as he didn't own his land, said as follows; "Who would be the Emperor that cannot deprive the landlords of land and distribute it to the peasants? If he were the Emperor, he should have the right to do so. Unless he carries this out, we will all raise a riot<sup>15)</sup>". Then he was arrested.

In February, 1905, a peasant movement took place in five district about 150 to 200 kilometers away from Sumy city, that is, in the Sevsk district of Orel prefecture, the Dmitrov, Trubchevsk, Dmitriev district of Kursk prefecture, and the Grukhev district of Chernigov prefecture. It is said that the manor houses which belonged to gigantic landlords and capitalists of the large sugar industry, such as Tereshchenko, the grand duke of Mikhail Alexandrovich and so forth, and to the relatives of Czar, were burned down nightly and the trees of their forests were cut down one after another. A certain sugar factory was completely destroyed by about 10,000 peasants and labourers<sup>16)</sup>. This first movement was like an explosive destructive action, giving the existing revolutionary feelings impetus. But the government brought pressure on peasants and labourers to prevent the revolutionary influence from spreading throughout the land.

On May 28th, peasant-workers of village Vasilievka in the Lebedin district, bordering the Sumy district, went on strike demanding daily payment and a wage of 30 kopeiks a day. They demanded even better treatment, the exclusion of stranger-labourers, better rations, the abolition of fines, and reduction of working hours, that is a twelve-hour working day. In addition to this, the peasants demanded that the landlords shouldn't lend their land and meadows to anyone except local peasants. In the Lebedin district, as many as 45 conflicts, 2.5 conflicts a day on the average, occurred continuously from May 28th until the middle of June. Unfortunately, such statistics aren't available for the Sumy district, but there were, to be sure, also many similar conflicts<sup>17)</sup>.

Peasant movements for land and farm labour against landlords and capitalists occurred frequently all over the country. The demand for democratization at the level of national politics, on the other hand, was set for

<sup>14)</sup> Л. М. Иванов, "Дела о привлечении крестьян к ответственности по 103 и 246 статьям", Проблемы Источниковедения, т. 8, 1959, стр. 130.

<sup>15)</sup> Там же, стр. 125.

<sup>16)</sup> Живолуп, Указ. статья, стр. 209.

<sup>17)</sup> Н. Карпов, Крестьянское движение в революции 1905 года в документах, Л., 1926, стр. 227-257.

the democratic land reform. Such a movement reached its first climax at the end of May after an enlightening movement of over four months<sup>18)</sup>.

The leader of the movement in the Sumy district was A. P. Shcherbak, a gray-haired, mustached and stern-looking tall old man, who looked like one of the Cossacks in "The People in Zaporozhe" by Repin slipped out of the canvas. He, who spent twenty years in America and had a well-cultivated farm in California, came back to Russia with the purpose of "the reformation of bureaucratic politics and the salvation of homeland" to live in the suburb of Sumy, having 73 desiatinas of land there<sup>19)</sup>.

He assembled neighbouring peasants in his house from the end of January and talked of the peasants' rights, war, bureaucracy, the land question and so forth. So many people attended this meeting that an official asked with suspicion why they gathered at his house. When a policeman hung round his house, Shcherbak cried aloud as follows; "As you see, the people have been awakened to their own rights. They are sure to regain their rights in the near future. Get ready for the answer by the time that you must decide which side you would take." After this incident, instead of a policeman, many peasants came to him to listen to him speak and to understand each other. But the notion among peasants that the Czar was respectable was believed so firmly that Shcherbak had to work hard to convince them his opinion in terms of God and the Czar<sup>20)</sup>.

A way was found out. It was to present a petition to the Czar under protection of the Imperial Edict of February 18th, which was a product of a revolutionary uprising after January 9th. In spite of peasants' urgent worship of the Czar, Shcherbak petitioned as follows;

"We are deeply obliged to the Emperor for assembling us at your side by the Imperial Edict of February 18, 1905, like a father, the head of a family, assembling his children with the object of restoring the house which is on the brink of ruin. ...Issue the law that allows us to hold a meeting and declare ourselves in time of need without any fine. ...Issue the law that permits us to express our opinions freely in a newspaper and a book. ...The peasants' poverty is extremely serious. ...We, all the peasants cultivate the farms, which bring us only cold, starvation, and scorn, all for the benefit of others. Who can call us robbers? Pass fair judgement on us, Emperor. ...The other defect is the matter of the bureaucracy. Liberate us from the bureaucracy, Emperor. We regret the death of our Russian brethren in the Far East. Examine your officials and think who deceived the people. It is

<sup>18)</sup> И. Г. Дроздов, Аграрные волнения и карательные экспедиции в Черниговской губернии в годы первой революции 1905-1906 гг., М.-Л., 1925, стр. 62-63.

<sup>19)</sup> Л. Троцкий, 1905, 2-е изд., М., стр. 177.

<sup>20)</sup> А. Щербак, "1905 год в Сумском уезде", Пролетарская революция, 1926, No. 7, стр. 122-124.



they who should be blamed. Permit us to elect our officials ourselves who can understand us much better than your officials can<sup>21)</sup>".

Shcherbak and his fellows obtained thousands of peasants' signatures in Sumy and the neighbourhood for the purpose of bringing the petition in the name of the Sumy Agricultural Association. On May 29th, as many as 5,000 peasants (2,000 peasants according to the record of the gendarmerie) gathered to attend the meeting. Association officials were going to close the meeting for fear of them. Facing their strong resistance, the chairman asked Shcherbak to persuade them. As soon as he had been asked, he made a fiery speech as follows ;

"Brothers, we need to ask the Czar so that he may deprive landlords and abbeys of their estates and divide them among us equally. If our demands are refused, in one month we will have to carry them out ourselves. Unless he carries them out immediately, we will refuse to pay taxes and to enter military service. He must conduct his war for himself, not ask for our help. Let's ask him to dismiss Zemskii Nachalnik and the policeman. Let's stand together for the release from jails of political criminals who are fighting for truth. Permit us to have free political assembly".

After selecting the members of a drafting committee for "the petition", the people promised to meet there to listen to Shcherbak's report again on June 12th. They were in such an ecstasy of happiness that nobody left after the meeting was over. Many leaflets were scattered, the audience was absorbed in listening to speeches, and the officials couldn't interfere at all<sup>22)</sup>.

What is interesting is the rumour that "our boss", Shcherbak read aloud an Imperial Edict to confiscate the estates of landlords. This rumour circulated among the peasants who attended at the meeting, and it stimulated the peasants into a more vigorous movement.

Shcherbak arrived at St. Petersburg with "the petition". It is worthwhile to notice that his travelling expenses were defrayed by a fund raising campaign of the poor peasant-workers of the sugar factories of Stepanov. In St. Petersburg, he succeeded in handing "the petition" to Witte and in putting "the petition" in a weekly paper, *Pravo* with the help of Khrustalev-Nosari, a lawyer who became the chairman of the Petersburg Soviet in October. It had been, no doubt, achieved after very persevering efforts just as Shcherbak mentioned. He and Witte spoke as follows ;

Shcherbak said to Witte, "I'll hand this petition to you. Please give it to the authorities concerned. I dare to ask you one more thing: Give up immediately the assault on the peasants". Witte answered, "I'll promise you. Besides I'll protect

<sup>21)</sup> Там же, стр. 125-126.

<sup>22)</sup> Карпов, Указ. соч., стр. 251.

you against danger". Shcherbak replied immediately, "It's none of your business because I know what I'm doing. But I'll gladly take you at your word as to peasants. I'll make our conversation public tomorrow. I needn't worry about peasants' being punished, need I?" Witte said, "I mean so"<sup>23)</sup>.

As soon as Shcherbak had accomplished his purpose, he returned to Sumy to attend the June 12th Meeting. After listening to his report on the progress of "the petition", the peasants, nearly 5,000 of them, decided as follows; "We, the peasants, request a conference to convene immediately which will consist of representatives elected by the people at the rate of one person per 10,000. We have decided to go on strike until this request is granted". Two days hence, Shcherbak was arrested in spite of Witte's assurance.

At that time, the people became aware of the limitations of a legal and "pacific" movement. Shcherbak, however, being aware of this from the beginning, inspired peasants step by step. So at this point the strike in individual landlord's farm and the political struggle at a national level were about to be dramatically combined.

#### C. The Peasant Movement and Shcherbak

##### — In Autumn and Early Winter —

In autumn, the "October Manifesto" was announced and as a result Shcherbak was released on October 21st after four months' imprisonment. A representative meeting of peasants in the Sumy district was held in a revolutionary exciting atmosphere and as a result, the District Committee of Peasant Union in the Sumy district was, for the first time, established. In this meeting the peasants passed a resolution as follows; "Call the Constituent Assembly before January in 1906. Make the whole land common and don't buy the land. Give the factories to the communities concerned. Let's make the factory workers join our Union". The fact that Gor'kii and Tolstoi were elected honorary members<sup>24)</sup> reflects the atmosphere of the meeting.

At that time, 1,800 labourers of a large landlord Kharitonenko's sugar factory, demanded an eight-hour working day and higher wages. At the same time peasants had already been on strike demanding higher wages in the largest landlord of the Sumy district, Stroganov's farms, in the second largest landlord, Leshchinskaya's farms, in Bryashnikov's farm, and in Lorents' farm, and so on. Particularly, in one of Stroganov's farms, it is said that after no less than 20 regular employees in charge of cattle were

<sup>23)</sup> Щербак, Указ статья, стр. 128-129.

<sup>24)</sup> Е. И. Кирюхина, "Местные организации всероссийского крестьянского союза в 1905 году", Ученые записки Кировского гос. пед. института, вып. 10, 1956, стр. 122.

kept away, 20 neighbouring peasants took over the same job and that these peasants milked a cow and sold the milk on their own authority, disregarding manager's order. In the village Yunakovka during a strike, when teachers and doctors told three thousand peasants of constitutions and democratic republican institutions, it is said that some of them proposed the abolition of the police by expelling the policemen<sup>25</sup>). At this stage, the peasant-workers' strike in factories and farms demanding higher wages, which was fundamentally an economic demand, and the peasants' movement demanding villagers' independent management of both landlord's farms and village government effectively combined in a village. Because of the villagers' independent management of their government they came to think of democratic republican institutions in connection with the convocation of the Constituent Assembly. Therefore they passed the resolution in the Allied District Meeting above mentioned, which spread far and wide throughout the nation developing the workers' and peasants' alliance.

It was also Shcherbak who went on a journey in order to meet the local peasants' and workers' expectations. This time, however, he didn't go to Witte with the purpose of fighting against Czarism.

Shcherbak attended the 14th Meeting of Petersburg Workers' Representative Soviet on November 5th. He stated as follows;

"I was sent to ask you, "Don't you think that the peasants in the Sumy district can go on strike with you?" ...Our Sumy District Peasant Union has gone on strike in Countess Stroganova's, Leshchinskaya's, and Kharitonenko's farms. ... Landlords fled to cities and the police and authorities were so confused that they placed us under martial law. They invited us to the County Conference to ask, "What should we do to stop the strike?" We said, "You must, first of all, withdraw troops and leave to us the maintenance of public peace". Let's fight together against them for our own rights. Let us know when you need our help in order to fight a decisive battle against the rulers. We are willing to fight with you for our lives. Our struggle plan is as follows;

1. However highly we may be paid, we shall never work on a landlord's farm.
2. Whatever a tax may be, we'll never pay it.
3. We won't drink vodka at all.
4. We are thinking of the suspending the transportation of agricultural products to city as the most effective struggle method.

But this article 4 won't be put into effect until we obtain the agreement of the city labourers. Comrades, remember those who are fighting for the same purpose as yours at some remote countryside in rural Russia!"<sup>26</sup>).

<sup>25</sup>) Ф. Е. Лось (отв. ред.), Революция 1905-1907 гг. на Украине, Т. 2, Ч. I, Киев, 1955, стр. 91-92, 484-488.

<sup>26</sup>) Н. И. Сидоров (сост.), 1905 год в Петербурге, Л., 1925, стр. 43-44; R. W. Postgate, Revolution from 1789 to 1906, L., 1920, p. 383.

As soon as the Soviet Meeting was over, he started for Moscow to attend the All Russian Peasant Union Congress at ten o'clock that night.

Among the 187 members present at this Congress, 105 of them were representatives-peasants selected by the whole village meeting (sukhod of "mir"). As a result, the Congress was more active than ever. To such a Congress Shcherbak reported all the movements in the Sumy district and concluded by saying that the demand for the convocation of the Constituent Assembly by means of an ordinary, direct, equal and secret election would be encouraged in this Congress. If their demands were turned down they should refuse to pay taxes and serve in the army. On the 9th, in addition to the demand for the abolition of the police, he insisted that organization would be necessary for them to carry out the workers' and peasants' strike<sup>27)</sup>.

In making the text of the resolution of the Congress, he insisted on the invalidity of the national debt including the foreign debt from November 1st to the beginning of the coming Constituent Assembly, and succeeded in inserting an item into the resolutions that the representative of the Peasant Union would make this public in the coming Constituent Assembly. The resolution referred to much more, such as an immediate convocation of the Constituent Assembly by means of the election based on four principles, close cooperation with the labourers of the factory and the railroad, the boycott of landlords, a general farm strike as a part of the national workers' and peasants' general strike, the election of the chief of the county, the boycott of Zemskii Nachalnik, the immediate enforcement of "the whole village agreement" ("prigovor") of sukhod of "mir" without approval, the boycott of the Duma election, the demand for an immediate enactment of the law for the protection of various fundamental human rights according to "October Manifesto" and for the insurance of them by force, the abolition of a standing army, and the establishment of the people's militia, any of which shows that Shcherbak's and his followers' demands were adopted for the most part in this Congress<sup>28)</sup>. Written judgment of the Moscow Court of Appeal says that the item of the resolution declaring the invalidation of a national debt, which was the original of the item concerned in the so-called "Declaration for Public Finance" of the 2nd of December, was insisted upon by Shcherbak himself in this Congress of the Peasant Union<sup>29)</sup>.

The chairman of the Union, Mazurenko (he is a local representative from Don military district and also the leader of "the whole village agreement" ("prigovor") petition movement taking place there since spring),

27) Щербак, Указ. статья, стр. 130; Карпов, Указ. соч., стр. 77.

28) Карпов, Указ. соч., стр. 76-84.

29) Щербак, Указ. статья, стр. 130-131.

attended the Petersburg Soviet Nineteenth Meeting with the objection of the resolution mentioned above on November 27th. Mazurenko exchanged a vigorous handshake with Trotskii. Soon after Nosari was arrested and instead of him, new leaders, such as Trotskii, Sverchikov, Zryidnev were selected. After they spent five days making a draft of this Meeting, "the Declaration for Public Finance" declaring the invalidation of a foreign debt was announced. For the first time, a nation-wide cooperation of workers and peasants had been established, joining the Peasant Union, both factions of Social Democrats, the Social Revolutionaries and the Polish Socialists<sup>30</sup>. It is said that Parvus, Trotskii's famous friend, contributed to making the anti-imperialistic draft. But I would like to call attention again to the fact that fundamentally Shcherbak on behalf of the peasants took the initiative in it.

Behind such a struggle in the metropolis, there was the devotion of Shcherbak to the peasants in the "remote countryside" as follows.

The Allied Sumy District Committee of the Peasant Union kept each County Peasant Committee active, drawing peasants' attention by winning victories in many farm strikes. The County Committees levied taxes on landlords and some of them became a central force in recalling village executives and electing new ones. Militiamen from sukhod in the village Estrebna, where there had been violent movements, were stationed about in Sumy city. A police superintendent couldn't go out because his horse was stolen. Nobody came to visit Zemskii Nachalnik no matter what happened. When Shcherbak returned home and spoke about the resolution of the Peasant Union Congress at sukhod of the county on December 4th, a county chief and a clerk slipped away. The day after next, the county chief was retired because his term of office expired, and Shcherbak's comrade, Ovcharenko was elected instead of him. As soon as he had gotten the position as a county chief, he proposed to abolish the police and to entrust the public peace function to those who were to be elected democratically<sup>31</sup>. Thus "mir" was revolutionalized.

On December 18th, the Third District Peasant Union Meeting took place in a very high-spirited atmosphere. It is said that 350 people from 28 counties were present at this Meeting and that they were all peasants<sup>32</sup>. Therefore, the Russian Revolution is fundamentally due to the activity of peasants who at last became self-reliant.

It is regrettable that the details of this Meeting are not known. As far as we know from their meeting agenda, they intended to solve a lot of

<sup>30</sup> Л. Троцкий, Сочинения, Серия 1, Т. 2, Ч. I, М., 1925, стр. 496-499.

<sup>31</sup> Щербак, Указ. статья, стр. 131-132.

<sup>32</sup> Кирюхина, Указ. статья, стр. 123.

problems, such as the abolition of the police force, the establishment of a militia, the defense for Union members, the security of food, the procedures in a small village, the accurate measuring of land area, the procedures for handing land over to peasants, the finance of the Union, the publication of the *Peasant Newspaper*, the abolition of the old Zemstvo and the establishment of a new one, the exclusion of Zemskii Nachalnik's influence, the funds for strike, the measures to the seeds and horse-robbers, and so on. It is important that they gave their careful consideration to agricultural affairs as well as to the preparation for the agrarian revolution after establishing self-authority<sup>33)</sup>.

The second number of the *Peasant Newspaper* tells us the influence of the establishment of the Allied Sumy Committee for the Peasant Union and Railwaymen Association as follows; As this organization secured the train loaded with the necessities of life, there was no worry about supplies and prices, and beside the organization advised the merchants to stop raising the prices by manipulation. Then, the majority of the merchants declared they would not raise their prices<sup>34)</sup>. The establishment of revolutionary self-authority was, I suppose, promoted by such unity of all the people as above. Towards the end of December, Czarism proclaimed martial law, intending to use military force to repress the revolution. As a result, a very severe atmosphere spread over Russia.

### III. THE FEATURES OF THE PEASANT MOVEMENT IN 1905

#### — A CONCLUSION —

The Russian Revolution in 1905 was a people's revolution. They resisted the capitalistic economic organization of a society which was characterized by Czarism in the first phase of the era of imperialism in the world. Of course, this revolution does not immediately refer to socialism, but the three pillars of the demands of the people, that is, to break down absolutism, to achieve an eight-hour working day, and to confiscate the landlords' land voluntarily (to nationalize the land) —were organically tied to one another, and each of them alone would have totally destroyed capitalistic economic organization of the Russian society. This totality is shown in the following points; workers and peasants changed their demand of daily and individual lives and rights over to wholly economic and political demands as their movement developed. Concerning their method of fighting, at first, revolutionary peasants tried various measures, and gradually they came to take such proletarian methods of fighting as the mass strikes in the

<sup>33)</sup> Щербак, Указ. статья, стр. 134-135.

<sup>34)</sup> Там же, стр. 135.

farms by denying the petit-bourgeois methods of fighting, appeal, petition and so on. Organizations which directed the movement were formed, such as the Workers' Soviets and the local Committees of Peasant Union among the people, and they became the radical organizations of the revolutionary self-authority. Above it, the nation-wide cooperation of workers and peasants appeared in "the Declaration for Public Finance" which declared the invalidation of a national debt including a foreign one. This totality was, as is mentioned above, deeply grounded on the structural characteristics of Russia in the imperialistic world early in the twentieth century.

In this thesis, I investigated, by showing an example, the process through which the peasant movement in the period of the revolution led to the general workers' and peasants' alliance. It developed internally, voluntarily, deeply and widely.

In this case, the peasant movement developed from below and from the inside of "mir"<sup>35)</sup>. It eventually resulted in fighting against imperialism as well as landlordism in Russia, where capitalization from above advanced with "remnants of serfdom", in an imperialistic world where international finance capital tended to strengthen the exploitation of the people, especially of the peasants. Such was typical in the era of imperialism. It was Shcherbak who represented a resisting trend of the peasant movement from the inside of "mir". This is the most remarkable point in this thesis. Therefore, the Russian Revolution in 1905 was the first movement against imperialism in the world in the twentieth century. It was also the herald of an anti-imperialistic, anti-feudalistic revolutions in the more belatedly capitalized nations than Western Europe<sup>36)</sup>.

<sup>35)</sup> In relation to the peasant revolution from the inside of "mir" in the Revolution of 1917, see L. A. Owen, *The Russian Peasant Movement 1906-1917*, N. Y., 1963 (reissued, 1st. ed. 1937), pp. 232-238, 245-247. In connection with a rebellious form of solidarity in Russian "mir" see Barrington Moore, Jr., *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Land and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*, Boston, 1966, pp. 475-476, 502-503. For a special discussion of the Russian peasant and "mir" see T. Shanin, *The Awkward Class*, L., 1972. For more details of the peasant-commune problem in the era of imperialism, see an interesting article, E. R. Wolf, *Peasant Rebellion and Revolution*, in N. Miller and R. Aya (ed.), *National Liberation: Revolution in the Third World* (introduction by E. R. Wolf), N. Y., 1971.

<sup>36)</sup> In relation to a unique position of pre-revolutionary Russia as a belatedly capitalized nation, we can point out the uniqueness of the Populist (Narodnik) thoughts. See the excellent discussion of it in A. Walicki, *The Controversy over Capitalism: Studies in the Social Philosophy of the Russian Populists*, L., 1969, especially, the chapters, "The Privilege of Backwardness" and "Marx and Engels in confrontation with Russian Populism". Also see G. Ionescu and E. Gellner (ed.), *Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics*, L., 1969.