



Title	<BOOK REVIEW>ROSHIA NOGYOSHISOSHI NO KENKYU [A STUDY ON RUSSIAN AGRICULTURAL THOUGHTS], By Shuichi Kojima, Kyoto : Mineruva Shobo, 1987,xv+338+61pp., 5,500
Author(s)	HINADA, Shizuma
Citation	Acta Slavica Iaponica, 6, 109-112
Issue Date	1988
Doc URL	http://hdl.handle.net/2115/7982
Type	bulletin (article)
File Information	KJ00000034144.pdf



[Instructions for use](#)

BOOK REVIEWS

ROSHIA NŌGYOSHISŌSHI NO KENKYŪ [A STUDY ON RUSSIAN AGRICULTURAL THOUGHTS]. By *Shūichi Kojima*. Kyōto: Mineruva Shobō, 1987, xv + 338 + 61pp. ¥5,500.

This book examines the basic thoughts of Chaianov and other neo-narodniki as represented in their researches on the Russian peasantry and villages. The author selected this topic because of his belief that in order to understand the historical roots of the Soviet Union it is essential to come to grips with the agrarian and peasant question in Russia, and thus to examine in detail the original thoughts of Chaianov and other neo-narodniki on Russian agriculture in the beginning of the 20th century. This is an understandable motif. As it is known, Teodor Shanin presented his original view in his book: *The Awkward Class: Political Sociology of Peasantry in a Developing Society: Russia 1910-1925* (Oxford, 1972), starting from the similar setting of the problem. Kojima is not as ambitious as Shanin, however, limiting himself as modestly as a typical Japanese scholar to understanding of neo-narodniki's theories. One should not suppose, however, that this work is inferior to Shanin's.

Who are neo-narodniki? In the interview in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, on August 5, 1987, A.A.Nikonov, president of the All-Union Agricultural Academy of Sciences, stated: "Fifteen agricultural economists including Chaianov, Kondrat'ev, Chelintsev, Makarov, Iurovskii..., who had perished in the period of Stalin's repression, were rehabilitated.... The supreme court of the Soviet Union found them innocent. A majority of them belonged to the organization-production school that played the leading role in agricultural science in the world. They actively participated in preparations of normative documents at the time of transition from the policy of food requisition to the policy of food tax. They were also consultants before the 1930s for various state organs that dealt with agricultural questions. A.V.Chaianov was the greatest theorist of cooperatives as well as one of the important organizers of the cooperative movement in Russia." History of humiliation that lasted for fifty years would never be restored by mere reference to the "greatest theorist," but the reviewer would like to applaud the beginning of research of the neo-narodniki, who have been repressed so long in the Soviet Union. Incidentally, K.N.Tarnovskii, who was pushed out of the mainstream of the historical profession after having completed a long article on the main currents of researches on Russian agricultural history, including Chaianov, suddenly died one week before the supreme court's decision.

While the Soviet historians with the exceptions of Tarnovskii and A.M.Anfimov were unable to mention "the criminal" Chaianov, in the West one of Chaianov's major works was translated by D.Thorner, B.Kerblay, and R.E.F.Smith in 1966, and for the first time the eight-volume selections of Chaianov's works (*Oeuvres choisies de A. V. Čajanov*, Mouton, 1967) were published. At the same time, J.Nōu, Swedish agricultural economist, devoted one chapter to Russia in his book, *Studies in the Development of Agricultural Economics in Europe* (Uppsala, 1967), and discussed the thoughts of Chelintsev, Chaianov, Studenskii and others. Recently, the following works can be

cited as examples of scholars deeply influenced by Chaianov: M.Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (London, 1976), J.C.Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant* (New Haven, 1976), E.P.Durrenberger, ed., *Chayanov, Peasants, and Economic Anthropology* (Orlando, 1984). Research on Chaianov has become so crowded as to need a traffic control. Kojima's book under review appeared at this crucial juncture, and I believe, it would serve as a guideline for controlling the heavy traffic.

As Kojima states in this book, the first Chaianov's German work, *Die Lehre von der bäuerlichen Wirtschaft* (Berlin, 1923) was first translated into Japanese as *Shōnō keizai no genri* (Tokyo, 1927), translated by Hidetoshi Isobe of Tokyo University. Isobe studied but dissatisfied with German agricultural management (*Landwirtschaftliche Betriebslehre*), and introduced in Japan Chaianov's theory developed in Russia predominated by small peasantry as a model for a country consisting of small peasants like Japan. Before Isobe, his teacher, Tokiyoshi Yokoi of Tokyo University had referred in his work, *Shōnō ni kansuru kenkyū* [*Studies on Small Peasantry*] (1927) in which he advocated the protection of small peasants who were the cornerstone of the Japanese land-ownership to Chaianov's theory. (I would argue that this was an abuse of Chaianov's theory.) In Japan, thus, Chaianov's ideas have been well known for sixty years through the filter of Yokoi-Isobe. But this tended to give a certain biased view on Chaianov, and there was a need for a comprehensive examination of Chaianov. At the annual conference on the Japanese Association of Agricultural Economics in 1968 I read a paper, "Chaianov, a Reflection on the Theory of Small Peasant Management." It was an attempt to illuminate the historical background of socio-economic structure of Russian agriculture, but it was admittedly one-sided, and was not based on the original texts of Chaianov. But now for the first time in the world Kojima has produced a book based on research on the detailed textual analysis of Chaianov and other neo-narodniki.

The subjects of the author's research are not limited to Chaianov, but include chronologically the following figures (the number after the names indicate the number of monographs and articles that Kojima has used for this book): K.R.Kachorovskii (1870-?)-27; N.P.Oganovskii (1874-1930)-69; N.P.Makarov (1887-?)-50; A.N.Chelintsev (1874-1962)-45; Chaianov (1888-1939)-52; and N.D.Kondrat'ev (1892-1938)-63. In addition, the author has read 533 items concerning the neo-narodniki written in Russian, other European languages, and Japanese. The bibliography and the chronological table of researches on Russian agricultural history will become an indispensable research guide for future researchers.

Kojima first examines the agricultural economists represented in the organization-production school to which Chaianov belonged, and next the economists such as Kondrat'ev who were active in the 1920s. They inherited the narodniki tradition of searching for the possibilities of non-Western economic development based on indigenous institutions and innate activities of the masses, but at the same time they differed from the narodniki in their acceptance of the development of Russian industrial capitalism at the beginning of the 20th century. In Kojima's view, their task was to explain the reasons for the resilience of Russian peasant economy based on the peasant communes, as well as to construct the vision of "agrarian Russia" based on the network of small-peasant cooperatives on the extended line of further proliferation of small peasants resulting from population growth.

Among the neo-narodniki, however, there were subtle differences. The first economist examined by Kojima is Kachorovskii, who stood at the pinnacle of comprehensive research of Russian peasant communes at the turn of the century. Accord-

ing to Kojima, Kachorovskii was the first economic historian who, based on his study of the state peasant communes in European Russia as well as those of the Siberian colonists, clarified the process, in which the rules of redistribution of land arose spontaneously out of incessant conflicts stemming from population growth, although they had originally started with the rules of possession of land by households. Redistribution of land resulted from the denial of the individuality of land possession enjoyed as “the right of labor (*pravo truda*),” which was “the right based on the invested labor,” as well as from the affirmation of the collectivity of land possession enjoyed as “the right to labor (*pravo na trud*),” which was the human right to guarantee labor and coexistence by the use of means of production (land).” The latter collectivity was identical with democratic equality, and thus, it led not only to the practice of redistribution of land within the commune, but also to the expectations for the equal redistribution of land at the national scale. According to Kachorovskii, the peasants’ revolution in 1917-18 was the inevitable result of this logic. Kachorovskii’s vision was, thus, after the revolution to develop the peasant communes at the middle level based on the peasants’ “toiling principle” and to construct at the top a comprehensive cooperative.

As for Oganovskii, the solution was sought in the improvement of productivity of land and its intensification so as to support the ever increasing population in agriculture rather than through increase in labor productivity through mechanization. This is what he termed as “the law of agricultural evolution.” The management form most appropriate for intensification would be not large agriculture, but small peasant management as well as the middle-sized cooperatives composed of small peasants. The Russian communes had spontaneously developed the system of land redistribution based on the consumer principle as the population increased, but and the production cooperatives would be more easily established in Russia than in the West on the communal basis that already existed. In the West, since the peasant communes had been deprived of the right to dispose of their land by landlords, their indigenous development did not take place. According to Oganovskii, viewed from the universally applicable “law of agricultural development,” Russia was far more advanced than the West.

Those are the views of the two neo-narodniki, as explained by the author. Kojima refrains from critical comments. But I should point out that their greatest weaknesses lie in the following two points. First, they explain that all social changes were attributed to population growth. Second, they explain that all such social changes could take place only within the agrarian society without its interaction with the capitalist economy as well as with the landlords’ economy (for instance, peasants’ work away home and *otrabotka*).

The main focus of the second part of this book is on “self-exploitation” of labor and “household management by labor,” while the problem of communes recede into the background. Chaianov and Chelintsev were mainly concerned with the mechanism of household management which used family labor to satisfy family’s consumption demand. According to Chaianov, the size of family members defined the size of management, and using the concept of “labor profit” (which is equal to “gross profit” minus “material cost”), the peasant-household management should be an attempt to reach the equilibrium between the marginal labor profit and the marginal labor pain. Herein lay the difference between the peasant-household management without the wage labor and the capitalist economy based on the wage labor; the difference between the family-life economy and profit-seeking economy; and the basis of the resiliency of peasant-household economy (since the peasant economy could continue

even if its profit were reduced to zero, as long as family life were sustained). Kojima sees here Chaianov's approach to "comparative economics." Chaianov tried to construct a model of universal peasant economy in non-Western world on the basis of Russian experience.

As to Chaianov's theories also, the author exercises rigorous self-restraint without engaging in any criticisms. But I would list the same criticisms mentioned above as major weaknesses of Chaianov as well. Chaianov related population change within family entirely with change in the size of agricultural management without considering labor shift outside agriculture. According to Chaianov, while the expansion of management size accompanied by payment of higher rent was not in the real sense its expansion, it was seemingly possible in the repartitional communes. This is wrong. If Chaianov was unable to clarify the conditions outside the peasant households that prevented the expansion of peasant management size, and intended to construct a theory of "self-exploitation" based on small-peasants' maximizing labor and minimizing consumption, it would not be unfair to state that he glorified the small peasants. Kojima does not touch upon these weaknesses, which I consider fundamental.

Supplementary Chapter I, "Kondrat'ev as Agronomist," uncovers a hitherto unknown aspect of this famous neo-narodnik, best known as the discoverer of "Kondrat'ev's wave." In the publication, *Agricultural Problems*, founded in March 1917 by the Association of Agricultural Reforms centered around Chaianov, Kondrat'ev argued that the "peasant-household management" based on equal use of land should be the foundation of agricultural reconstruction of new Russia. In a writing during the NEP period, he insisted that developing free market in the villages would stimulate the growth of "a new group of strong and vital agricultural managers possessing the highest labor productivity and the ability to carry out the most rapid capital accumulation," and that such new managers would contribute to the grain export and grain sales to domestic industrial cities, and thus, to industrialization of Soviet economy. But according to Kojima, such a view was violently criticized as an argument that advocated "agriculturalization" of Soviet economy. It is high time to examine whether Kondrat'ev's opinion was valid. Kojima's findings in this chapter will serve as an important contribution to the examination of this problem.

Supplementary Chapter II, written jointly by Kojima and his teacher, Masaharu Tanaka, introduces the main currents of Japanese researches on Russian history, concentrating on three following problems: Marx's theory on Russia, the debate on the peasant communes, and the neo-narodniki. This chapter should be read together with an excellent introduction of Japanese studies of Russian history, written by Hizen, Suzuki, Kojima, "Japanische Forschungen zur russischen Geschichte in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart," *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 33, H. 3, 4 (1985).

This excellent work consisting of 416 pages is undoubtedly a great contribution Japan can proudly present to the world scholarly community. Regrettably, the author has defined his task too narrowly, refraining from engaging in criticisms. His second book is eagerly awaited.

Shizuma HINADA
Hiroshima University