Land Reform in Russia
1906–1917

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Peasant Responses to Stolypin's Project of Rural Transformation

JUDITH PALLOT

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To My Parents

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The following archives were used for this work:

GARF Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Russkoi Federatsii

RGIA Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv

TsGIA SPb Tsentral'nyi Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv Sankt-Petersburga

TsMAM Tsentral'nyi Munitsipal'nyi Arkhiv Moskvy

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

arshin	measurement of land equal to 71 cms
desyatina	measurement of land equal to 1.09 hectares or 2.7 acres
gruppovoe zemleustroistvo	group land settlement
guberniia	province (subdivided into *uezdy* and *volosti*)
khutor	unitary farm in which total consolidation achieved
nadel	peasant allotment land
obshchina	peasant land commune
otrub	unitary farm in which partial consolidation achieved
peredel	land repartition
razverstanie	enclosure of the land of all the members of a commune
sazhen'	measurement of length equivalent to 2.13 ms.
sel'skoe obshchestvo	rural society
skod	village or commune assembly of heads of households
uezd	administrative subdivision of a province
uchastkovoe zemleustroistvo	unitary enclosure or land settlement
versta	measurement of distance equivalent to 0.66 miles
volost'	administrative subdivision of a *uezd*
vydelenie	separation of one or more members from a commune
zemleustroistvo	land settlement or reorganization
zemstvo	elected assembly of local government

I
INTRODUCTION

During a brief period between 1906 and 1914 the tsarist state attempted to transform rural Russia and to implant in the countryside a new type of husbandman. Petr Stolypin described the new peasant and how he would emerge in the Russian countryside thus:

> if we were to provide the diligent farmer . . . with a separate plot of land taken from the state domains or the land fund of the Peasant Land Bank, making sure that there was adequate water and that it satisfied all the other requirements for proper cultivation, then . . . there would arise an independent, prosperous husbandman, a stable citizen of the land.[1]

This statement of hope encapsulates the essence of the ambitious project of social engineering known as the Stolypin Land Reform. Its central thesis was that 'diligent farmers' would be able to realize their full potential only when they were granted independence from the commune and a separate plot of land on which to farm. Once this had been achieved, all else would follow as a matter of course—a prosperous agriculture and the social integration of the Russian peasant.

The image of Stolypin's husbandman was radical and contrasted strongly with society's existing understanding of the peasantry. In the nineteenth century the peasant had been the subject of a succession of different social constructions which have been described in Cathy Frierson's pioneering book.[2] The peasant appeared as a primordial being and the carrier of a 'great truth', as 'judge', as 'man of the land', and, in the last decades of the nineteenth century, as a 'grey mass'. It was in opposition to the last of these constructions—the grey peasant—that the independent husbandman began to enter the imaginative universe of some of Russia's agrarian and social reformers. They shared with their contemporaries the belief that the peasants' current state was one of backwardness and 'benightedness', but they were convinced that these deficiencies could be transcended under appropriate conditions. However, the peasants would need guidance;

[1] Quoted in G. L. Yaney, 'The Imperial Russian Government and the Stolypin Land Reform', Ph.D. thesis (Princeton, 1961), 132.

[2] C. A. Frierson, *Peasant Icons: Representations of Rural People in Late Nineteenth-Century Russia* (New York, 1993).

they would have to be coaxed into sharing the reformers' vision of themselves as independent husbandmen and persuaded that it was possible to live outside the womb of village society and *mir*. With this aim in view, the state set about the task of educating Russian peasants in the need to become independent and of providing them with the means to realize this vision. This book is an exploration of how, nearly one hundred years on and at a time when a Russian government is again trying to create an 'independent peasantry' in rural Russia, we can understand the peasants' response to this invitation.

Modernization from above

The legislation that bears the name of the Stolypin Land Reform was introduced in response to the immediate crisis for the tsarist state of the 1905 Revolution and the longer-term crisis in rural Russia of poverty, famines, agrarian backwardness, and political instability.[3] It was one of a series of measures introduced during the first decade of the century which in different ways addressed these problems, but for a while it was dominant. The purpose for which it became known was the creation of a new agrarian structure for Russia based upon individual ownership of land and enclosure. Under the terms of the reform, peasant households were given the right to leave their communes, taking their land with them, and to set up their own physically enclosed farms. The law allowed for this change to be effected in a variety of different ways, individually or collectively, and on the basis of existing peasant allotment land or on land made available for purchase through the Peasant Land Bank. The process of change envisioned in the laws was bound to be prolonged and difficult because a majority of peasant households in Russia belonged to communities in which land

[3] There is an unresolved debate among historians about the extent of peasant poverty. The conventional view, that the nineteenth century was witness to a decline in peasant living standards, has been challenged in J. Y. Simms, 'The Crisis in Russian Agriculture at the End of the Nineteenth Century. A Different View', *Slavic Review*, 36 (1977), 377–98. There is support for the thesis that the peasants' standard of living was on an upward curve in R. E. Smith and D. Christian, *Bread and Salt: A Social and Economic History of Food and Drink in Russia* (Cambridge, 1985) and P. Gregory, *Russian National Income, 1885–1913* (Cambridge, 1982). But other scholars have drawn attention to regional differences in peasant standards of living. See S. Wheatcroft, 'Crisis and the Condition of the Peasantry in Late Imperial Russia', in E. Kingston-Mann and T. Mixter (eds.), *Peasant Economy, Culture, and Politics of European Russia, 1800–1921* (Princeton, 1991), 128–72; E. Wilbur, 'Peasant Poverty in Theory and Practice: A View from the Impoverished Center at the end of the Nineteenth Century'. in Kingston-Mann and Mixter (eds.), *Peasant Economy*, 101–27. The debate is discussed in J. Bushnell, 'Peasant Economy and Peasant Revolution at the Turn of the Century. Neither Immizeration nor Autonomy', *Russian Review*, 47 (1988), 75–88.

was held in communal tenure (*obshchinnoe zemlevladenie*). These communities were characterized by a complex mixture of land use rights and often by intense land fragmentation. The land commune, or *obshchina*, the name given in the nineteenth century by educated Russians to such communities, was analogous to the European open field village but, in Russia, it had been vested by the state with additional fiscal and administrative functions. The replacement of the commune would require far-reaching changes to be made in existing land-holding regimes in the countryside. The legal and physical aspects of these changes were provided for in the Imperial Edict of 9 November 1906, and laws of 14 June 1910 and 29 May 1911.[4] The Ministry of Agriculture was restructured to become the Chief Administration for Land Settlement and Agriculture (*Glavnoe Upravlenie Zemleustroistva i Zemledeliia*) and, within it, an inter-collegial committee was established to head the land reform, the Committee for Land Settlement Affairs (*Komitet po Zemleustroitel'nym Delam*). A network of provincial and county land settlement commissions, subordinate to the Committee for Land Settlement Affairs, was formed to administer the reform at the local level and a centralized inspectorate was set up to oversee their work.[5]

The land reform described above existed within the context of other legislative and organizational measures that Nicholas II's government introduced in the first decade of the century, aiming to solve the agrarian problem. Those that most obviously supported the land reform were the abolition of joint responsibility for paying taxes (12 March 1903), the reduction and cancellation of the redemption debt (3 November 1905), and reforms to the administration of the Peasant Land Bank and the Ministry of Agriculture (4 March 1906) but there were also other measures, such as the resettlement programme in Siberia and the funding of agricultural extension services, which were aimed more generally at relieving peasant

[4] For the politics surrounding the introduction of the reform and the debates about it in the Duma, see M. S. Conroy, *Peter Arkad'evich Stolypin: Practical Politics in Late Tsarist Russia* (Boulder, Colo., 1976); R. Hennessy, *The Agrarian Question in Russia, 1905–1907: The Inception of the Stolypin Reform*, Marburger Abhandlungen zur Geschichte und Kultur Osteuropas, Band 16 (Giessen, 1977); G. A. Hosking, *The Russian Constitutional Experiment. Government and Duma 1907–1914* (Cambridge, 1973); R. T. Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order in Russia. Gentry and Government* (Princeton, 1982), G. Tokmakoff, *P. A. Stolypin and the Third Duma: An Appraisal of Three Major Issues* (Lanham, 1981), P. Waldron, *Between Two Revolutions: Stolypin and the Politics of Renewal in Russia* (London, 1998).

[5] The most exhaustive account of the land reform administration and some discussion of the laws is to be found in G. Yaney, *The Urge to Mobilize: Agrarian Reform in Russia 1861–1930* (Urbana, Ill., 1982). The Ministry of Internal Affairs journal, *Izvestiia Zemskogo Otdela*, for the period 1906 to 1917 contains commentaries on the laws.

poverty.[6] The land reform itself was the quintessence of a modernizing reform and it possessed many similarities with other state-directed attempts in the twentieth century to introduce private, 'enclosed' farming into pre-industrial societies.[7] It derived its rationale from an opposition that was supposed by its authors to exist between two land-holding systems. One, the 'communal system', was held to be backward because of its traditional association with extensive rotations, simple technologies, and subsistence production, and the other, 'individualized farming', was held to be progressive because of its association with intensive rotations, modern technologies, and commercially oriented production. These ideas, which one historian of English agriculture has termed 'agrarian fundamentalism', had first entered Russia from Europe during the reign of Catherine the Great.[8] From that time on there was a steadily growing conviction among some educated Russians of the superiority of private over communal property as a stimulant to achievement. By the first decade of the twentieth century, and spurred on by events in 1905, a sufficient number of officials in Nicholas II's government shared this conviction for it to find its way into official state policy.

Theorists of the land reform believed that the transition from communal to individual farming would have taken place in Russia in the normal course of events had it not been for Russia's special circumstances (most notably the provisions of the 1861 Emancipation) which had kept peasants bound to communal forms of land-holding. But it was the Russian peasantry's destiny to move along the same path towards farm individualization as its West European counterpart. The main problem for the state in setting peasants off along this path was overcoming their ignorance of more rational alternatives to the traditional land-holding systems. Thus, the new bureaucracy created to administer the reform was charged with the task of 'familiarizing' the peasants with the advantages of enclosed farming and with helping any progressive individuals who came forward to make the legal and physical changes needed to become

[6] The various legislative acts supporting and complementing the reform are discussed in Yaney, *The Urge to Mobilize*, and J. T. Robinson, *Rural Russia Under the Old Regime: A Study of the Landlord Peasant World and a Prologue to the Peasant Revolution of 1917* (Berkeley, Calif., 1967). On the migration policy see D. W. Treadgold, *The Great Siberian Migration* (Princeton, 1957).

[7] T. Shanin, *Defining Peasants: Essays Concerning Rural Societies, Expolar Economies, and Learning from them in the Contemporary World* (Oxford, 1990), 126–36.

[8] C. Allen, *Enclosure and the Yeoman* (Oxford, 1992). On the introduction of concepts of private property into Russia, see O. Crisp, 'Peasant Land Tenure and Civil Rights Implications before 1906', in O. Crisp and L. Edmondson (eds.), *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia* (Oxford, 1989) and W. G. Wagner, *Marriage, Property and Law in Late Imperial Russia* (Oxford, 1994).

individual farmers. Once enlightened through education and example to the possibilities of organizing their farms differently, it was thought that the majority of Russia's peasants would greet the reform enthusiastically. It followed from the reform's underlying assumptions that to make the conceptual leap needed to appreciate the superior rationality of individual farms the peasants had to turn their backs on the commune. The language of the Stolypin Land Reform was thus of peasants 'escaping' or 'withdrawing' from their communes.

The initial expectation of the reform administration was that its local agents would be working primarily with small numbers of peasants. The reform allowed for the head of a peasant household to petition for sole ownership of the land to which the household was entitled in the commune (the procedure termed *ukreplenie v lichnuiu sobstvennost'*) and, in a separate act, to request that this land be consolidated into a single parcel to create a unitary farm. There was also provision for whole communities of peasants holding land in communal tenure to transfer their land into the private ownership of individual households and to enclose the strips belonging to each member, although in 1906 it was not expected that there would be many instances of such communal take-up of the reform. The legislators did not underestimate the difficulties individual peasants would have in persuading their parent communes to let them enclose land and they expected that a majority of requests for an enclosed farm would have to be satisfied by resettling the peasants on land purchased from the Peasant Land Bank with the proceeds from the sale of private strips.[9] The initial provisions of the Stolypin Reform contained in the 9 November 1906 Edict were extended in the laws of 14 June 1910 and 29 May 1911 to reflect the experience of the previous years.[10] Under these, tenure changes in some communes were made automatic, new provisions were introduced compelling communities to enclose their members' land, and the types of physical land reorganization for which peasants could request help from land settlement commissions were clearly laid out and categorized. Group land settlement (*gruppovoe zemleustroistvo*), which rearranged land at the intercommunal level without changing its legal status, made its appearance in the 1911 Law on Land Settlement, carefully differentiated from unitary land settlement (*uchastkovoe zemleustroistvo*) which enclosed and changed title to individual households' land. The different measures made possible

[9] Yaney, *The Urge to Mobilize*, 281–7.

[10] Key sections from the law are to be found in S. M. Sidelnikov, *Agrarnia reforma Stolypina* (Moscow, 1973).

in the land reform laws were intended to be interlinked; title changes were a preliminary step towards the consolidation of land into unitary farms, as was group land settlement, and individual separations where small groups of households or individuals enclosed land were supposed, through example, to lead on to village-wide enclosures. Preliminary stages could be skipped as the law provided for whole communities to change title to their land and enclose as a single act. Thus it was that individualized peasant farms could be arrived at by following a variety of different routes, but the legislators were convinced that whichever route was chosen the end result of engagement with the reform would always be same.

In summary, the thinking behind the land reform was that Russian peasant farming was on a linear course of development taking it towards the type of farming system based upon private property and enclosure that existed in the West. It is not surprising that such a reform should have been the chosen solution to the agrarian crisis in Russia since the view that the country was a 'backward version of the West' had become the dominant paradigm among the educated elite by the turn of the century.[11] This paradigm provided the analytical framework for the interpretation of the reform's results by Nicholas II's government and also by the majority of historians commenting on it during the next half-century.

Reform Theory and Practice

The officials charged with administering the Stolypin Reform had to call upon all their resources of imagination to explain the reform's results, because events unfolded in a manner at odds with their initial expectations. Most significantly, the sequence of individual separations leading on to village-wide enclosures did not take place. Instead, almost immediately its operations got under way, the land reform administration found itself having to deal with communes which voted *en masse* to form unitary farms without any apparent need for more progressive individuals to show the way. As a result, the enclosures that land settlement commissions were called upon to supervise far exceeded the number that had been planned for, and the administration had to respond by expanding its qualified agents in the field.[12] Furthermore, enclosures did not cluster in obvious 'diffusion centres' as had been expected. Beyond a general tendency for above

[11] E. Kingston-Mann, 'Breaking the Silence: An Introduction', in Kingston-Mann and Mixter, *Peasant Economy*, 3–19.

[12] The recruitment and training of land reform agents is described in Yaney, *The Urge to Mobilize*, 339.

average numbers of petitions to originate in a broad belt of provinces in the north-west and an arc of provinces in the south and east of European Russia, there was no clear geographical pattern to enclosure and tenure change. At the local level, villages in which consolidation had taken place could be surrounded by other villages in which no moves had been made in that direction and this apparent randomness was repeated at the level of the county, or *uezd*.[13] There were other respects in which the reform failed to perform to plan; the majority of households claiming title to land in the commune showed little inclination to request reorganization and enclosure of their now private strips into unitary farms, whilst the households that did petition for enclosure seemed content with an only partial gathering in of the land to which they were entitled. There was also a near universal failure in village-led enclosures for farmsteads physically to be dispersed and there was a tendency for resources in common use, such as pastures and meadows, to remain in common. In short, the reform did not realize its promise of creating fully individualized farms which had severed their ties with all elements of the traditional communal organization of land-holding.

The departure of the reform from its predicted course did not cause those involved in its implementation to question the assumptions upon which the land reform policy was based or the belief that the legislative changes had unlocked a natural 'evolutionary' tendency away from communal towards independent husbandry. Village-wide enclosures were welcomed as evidence of the reform's mass appeal and of the peasants' readiness to quit the commune, even though these claims were contradicted by many of the other features of the peasants' response. The official record of the reform did not encourage detailed interrogation of the discrepancies between 'theory' and 'practice'. Numerous statistical tables were produced in the period between 1906 and 1917 which carefully recorded the stages involved in processing applications for various types of land reorganization, but no systematic collection of socio-economic data relating to applicants for consolidation or their post-enclosure histories was made. It is unlikely that the administration was consciously seeking to conceal a difficult truth from the public; it was simply that, given its linear view of agrarian development, it seemed reasonable to count any engagement with the reform as evidence of a peasant having set out on the path leading towards individualization, even if many insisted on taking some

[13] J. Pallot and D. J. B. Shaw, *Landscape and Settlement in Romanov Russia* (Oxford, 1990), ch. 7.

of the baggage of the old order along with them. By the time the outbreak of World War I effectively brought the organization's work to a halt, the land reform's achievements could be presented in a positive light. With between a quarter and a half of all Russian peasant farms now holding their land in some form of individual tenure, serious inroads seem to have been made into the commune, and enclosure, albeit developing more slowly, had rearranged the land of some 8 to 10 per cent of all households. Considerably greater numbers had been exposed to the reform through group land settlement projects. All this had been achieved during an effective period of operation of about nine years between 1907 and 1915.[14]

The conclusions the administration reached about the achievements of the Stolypin Reform have been shared by historians of Russia working within a similar 'modernization paradigm'. The most enthusiastic commentators have been émigré historians, who sought to demonstrate that Russia prior to the outbreak of war was indeed on a 'Western' path of development.[15] Their assessments found favour with other historians.[16] Latterly, post-Soviet Russia has also provided receptive ground for positive evaluations of the reform's achievement, although this has been largely in the popular rather than the scholarly literature.[17] Other historians have been critical of the reform or have doubted its ability to transform Russian agriculture in the twenty years Stolypin said it would require. However, as in

[14] From the outbreak of the war the reform organization suspended much of its work in forming enclosed farms to concentrate instead on group land settlement projects.

[15] Among the first generation of commentators who made a very positive assessment of the reform's achievements were: A. D. Bilimovich, 'The Land Settlement in Russia and the War', in N. Antsiferov, et al. (eds.), *Russian Agriculture during the War* (New Haven, 1930; New York, 1968); B. Pares, 'The New Land Settlement in Russia', *Russian Review*, 1 (1912), 56–74; G. Pavlovsky, *Agricultural Russia on the Eve of Revolution* (London, 1930; New York, 1968); W. D. Preyer, *Die Russische Agrarreform* (Jena, 1914). The Soviet historian P. N. Pershin's first book on the reform was also positive: P. N. Pershin, *Uchastkovoe zemlepol'zovanie v Rossii. Khutora i otruba, ikh rasprostranenie za desiatiletie 1907–1916. Sud'by vo vremiia revoliutsii (1917–1920 gg.)* (Moscow, 1922).

[16] Positive assessments of the reform's achievements are to be found in the following general histories: R. Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime* (London, 1974), 169; H. Seton-Watson, *The Decline of Imperial Russia* (Frome, 1964), 277; R. Charques, *The Twilight of Imperial Russia* (Oxford, 1965); N. V. Ryazanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 4th ed. (Oxford, 1984), 433; H. Willets, 'The Agrarian Question', in G. Katkov (ed.), *Russia Enters the Twentieth Century 1894–1917* (London, 1971).

[17] Since the collapse of the USSR Stolypin's historiographic fortunes have changed. Under the Soviet regime Stolypin was castigated for his repressive policies; now he is heralded as the politician who could have saved Russia from Revolution. David Macey has analysed post-Soviet works on Stolypin in D. Macey, 'Stolypin is Risen! The Ideology of Agrarian Reform in Contemporary Russia', in D. Van Atta (ed.), *The Farmer Threat* (Boulder, Colo., 1993),

the works supportive of the reform's aims and achievements, critics of the reform have not challenged its underlying assumptions. Soviet historians, for example, were critical of the reform, but their criticism was of the type of agrarian modernization it sought to impose on Russia. Following Lenin, they identified in the reform a conscious attempt on the part of Nicholas II's government to protect the interests of the large landowners by propelling Russia along a Prussian path of agrarian capitalism.[18] Soviet historians did not doubt that the reform was 'progressive', but they maintained that preferable alternatives were available which would have caused less pain to Russia's poorest peasants. Much of the Soviet intellectual effort was devoted to analysing the impact of the reform on the evolving class structure of the Russian village. The conclusions reached were predictable; the reform accelerated the process of socio-economic differentiation in the village and intensified the class conflict that was finally to erupt in 1917.[19] Unlike those writing exclusively for a popular audience, post-Soviet professional historians are still broadly critical of the Stolypin Reform, whilst

97–120. This includes a bibliography of recent works on Stolypin in the post-Soviet press. Among the Stolypin hagiographies are: M. P. Bok, P. A. Stolypin: vospominaniia o moem ottse (Moscow, 1992); I. Dia'kov, 'Stolypin', *Literaturnaia rossiia*, 14 July 1989, and subsequent correspondence on 8 September 1989; A. Stolypin, *P. A. Stolypin 1862–1911* (Paris, 1991) and 'Stolypinskaia reforma', in V. Zheliagin and N. Rutych (eds.), *Rossiia v epokhu reform. Sbornik statei* (Posev, 1981), 236–57; A. V. Zenkovsky, *Stolypin. Russia's Last Great Reformer* (Princeton, 1986); 'Stolypin mezhdu levymi i pravami', *Rossiiskie Vesti*, 18 (1991), 8–9. As Macey observes, much of the comment on the land reform is linked to debates about the future of post-Soviet agriculture. See, for example, Yu. M. Borodai, 'Komu byt' vladel'tsem zemli?' *Nash Sovremennik*, 3 (1990), 113–23, and D. Macey, 'Gorbachev and Stolypin: Soviet Agrarian Reform in Historical Perspective', *Comparative Economic Studies*, 32 (1990), 7–28.

[18] There are several discussions of Lenin's concept of agrarian development in Russia. The most accessible are in E. Kingston-Mann, *Lenin and the Problem of Marxist Peasant Revolution* (New York, 1983), and A. Hussein and K. Tribe, *Marxism and the Agrarian Question: Russian Marxism and the Peasantry 1861–1930*, vol. 2 (London, 1981). Theodor Shanin has also written at length on this topic. See T. Shanin, *Russia as Developing Society: The Roots of Otherness: Russia's Turn of Century*, vol. 1 (Basingstoke, 1985) and T. Shanin, *Late Marx and the Russian Road* (New York, 1983).

[19] The 'classic' Soviet texts on the Stolypin Land Reform are S. M. Dubrovskii, *Stolypinskaia zemel'naia reforma. Iz istorii sel'skogo khoziaistva i krest'ianstva Rossii v nachale xx veka* (Moscow, 1963); S. M. Dubrovskii, 'K voprosu ob urovne razvitiia kapitalizma v sel'skom khoziaistve v Rossii i klassovoi bor'be v derevne v periode imperializma (dve sotsial'nye voini)', in S. M. Dubrovskii, et al. (eds.), *Osobennosti agrarnogo stroia Rossii v periode imperializma* (Moscow, 1962); P. N. Efremov, *Stolypinskaia agrarnaia politika* (Moscow, 1941); G. A. Gerasimenko, 'Vliianie posledstvii Stolypinskoi agrarnoi reformy na krest'ianskie organizatsiia 1917 g.', *Istoriia SSSR*, 1 (1981), 37–54; G. A. Gerasimenko, 'Obostrenie bor'by v derevne v gody Stolypinskoi reformy', *Voprosi Istorii*, 4 (1983), 20–34; G. A. Gerasimenko, *Bor'ba krest'ian protiv Stolypinskoi agrarnoi politiki* (Saratov, 1985); S. M. Sidel'nikov, *Agrarnaia politika samoderzhaviia v periode imperializma* (Moscow, 1980).

acknowledging its historically progressive character, and they continue to approach the analysis of its results from a class perspective.[20] Some authors have taken issue with the Leninist identification of the reform as the 'Prussian path' and have suggested that, on the contrary, it represented an attempt to propel Russia to capitalism along the 'American path'. Thus, a post-Soviet school text reads as follows: 'In objective-historical terms, the Stolypin Land Reform was progressive. It was begun "from above" but it accorded with the natural processes taking place in the Russian village. The reform was designed to create efficient farms along American lines.'[21] P. N. Zyrianov, the leading historian of the reform, on the other hand, maintains that its purpose was to create a class of cheap labourers for landowner estates in the latifundia/minifundia model of dependent capitalist countries.[22] To this end, he maintains, it set out to destroy the land commune, the creation of the independent husbandman remaining a secondary concern.

Needless to say, liberal Western historians have not been in sympathy with the strictly materialist approach of Soviet historians, but nor have they challenged the modernization tenets of the reform's original theorists. Indeed, among historians in the West there has been a broad acceptance that the sort of transformations the Stolypin Reform sought to make in Russian peasant farming were needed. Their critique has principally consisted of doubting whether the measures introduced were sufficient to overcome the severity of the problems that existed in rural Russia, especially in the central farming regions where poverty and land-hunger were most acute. To the extent that it has addressed the question of the peasant reception of the reform, the Western critique has concentrated on identifying the structural, physical, and legal obstacles standing in the way of

[20] A. M. Anfimov, 'Ten' Stolypina nad Rossii', *Istoriia SSSR*, 4 (1991), 112–21; A. M. Anfimov, 'On the History of the Russian Peasantry at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century', *Russian Review*, 51 (1992), 396–407; V. V. Kabanov, 'Puti i bezdorozhie agrarnogo razvitiia Rossii v xx veke', *Voprosi istorii*, 2 (1993), 34–46; A. P. Korelin, 'The Social Problem in Russia, 1906–1914: The Stolypin Agrarian Reform', in T. Taranovski, *Reform in Russian History: Progress or Cycle?* (New York, 1995), 139–62; I. D. Kovalchenko, '*Stolypinskaia agrarnaia reforma. Mify i real'nost'*', *Istoriia SSSR,* 2 (1991); P. N. Zyrianov, *Stolypin bez legend (Moscow, 1991)*. See also David Macey's discussion of recent Russian works: D. Meisi, 'Zemel'naia reforma i politicheskie peremeny; fenomen Stolypina' *Voprosi Istorii*, 4 (1993), 3–18.

[21] S. V. Kuleshov (ed.), *Nashe otechestvo. Opyt' politicheskoi istorii* (Moscow, 1991), 224. V. S. Dia'kin was among the few Soviet historians who prior to the USSR's collapse contested Lenin's analysis of the reform as the 'Prussian path': V. S. Diakin, *Krizis samoderzhaviia v Rossii 1895–1917* (Leningrad, 1984) and 'Byl li shans u Stolypina?', *Zvezda*, 12 (1990).

[22] See P. N. Zyrianov, '*Petr Arkad'evich Stolypin*', *Voprosi Istorii*, 6 (1990).

the peasants enclosing their land.[23] This focus has left little room for serious discussion of the balance of advantage and disadvantage for households contemplating adopting the reform; enclosure, it has been assumed, was obviously desirable if only the tsarist government had moved to eliminate the obstacles frustrating its development. Another strand in the Western critique of the reform has questioned the reliability of the official statistics and concluded that less serious inroads were made into Russia's traditional agrarian structure than previously thought.[24] This finding has added grist to the mill of those who have preferred to sit on the fence where the reform's results are concerned and to argue that it operated for too short a period for any reliable evaluation to be made of its potential for transforming rural Russia.[25]

There are two historians who, whilst not questioning the linear assumptions of the Stolypin Reform's theorists, have taken the analysis of its results further than others and have not been content simply to overlook the divergence between the reform's theory and practice. On the contrary, they have maintained that it is necessary to focus attention on these divergences in order properly to understand the evolving relationship between the state and peasants during the period of the reform. Their work serves as an important reminder that land reform is a social process involving complex interactions between people and agencies, each with agendas that might or might not coincide. Land reform, in other words, cannot be understood simply as a series of legislative acts which the intended recipients either accept or reject. Excluding situations in which coercion is used to impose measures on an unwilling population, there is usually room for negotiation, accommodation, and changing priorities on the part of those involved. This is exactly what David Macey and George Yaney, though

[23] A. Moritsch, *Landwirtschaft und agrarpolitik in Russland vor der revolution* (Vienna, 1986); W. E. Mosse, 'Stolypin's Villages', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 43 (1965), 257–74; J. Pallot, 'Open Fields and Individual Farms: Land Reform in Pre-revolutionary Russia,' *Tidschrift voor ekonomische en socialie geografie*, 75 (1984), 46–60; J. T. Robinson, *Rural Russia Under the Old Regime*.

[24] D. Atkinson, 'The Statistics on the Russian Land Commune, 1905–1917', *Slavic Review*, 32 (1973), 773–87; D. Atkinson, *The End of the Russian Land Commune, 1905–1930* (Stanford, Calif., 1983); A. Jones, *Late-Imperial Russia. An Interpretation: Three Visions, Two Cultures, One Peasantry* (Berne, 1997).

[25] Moritsch, *Landwirtschaft und agrarpolitik*. The majority of recent economic and political histories of the Russian Revolution give a cautious assessment of the reform's achievements. See, for example, S. Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* (Oxford, 1994), 36; P. W. Gattrell, *The Tsarist Economy, 1850–1917* (London, 1986), 124; G. Hosking, *Russia. People and Empire 1552–1917* (London, 1997), 434–56.; R. Pipes, *The Russian Revolution. 1899–1919* (London, 1992), 175–7; H. Rogger, *Russia in the Age of Modernization and Revolution 1881–1917* (London, 1983); R. Service, *The Russian Revolution 1900–1927* (Basingstoke, 1986), 21.

arguing from different standpoints, maintain happened during the course of the Stolypin Reform's implementation in rural Russia.

David Macey is principally known for his discussion of the intellectual history of the Stolypin Land Reform. In *Government and Peasant in Russia 1861–1906: The Pre-History of the Stolypin Reforms*, he charts the gestation of the idea of enclosure in discussions about the fate of the commune in the closing decades of the nineteenth century.[26] This leads him to contest the view that it was the events of 1905 that convinced the government of the necessity of reform in the countryside.[27] Macey contends that already in the decades preceding 1905 a 'perceptual revolution' had taken place among a critical number of government officials which had led them to reject the commune in favour of private peasant farms on grounds of economic efficiency and the needs of scientific agronomy. The 1905 Revolution, he argues, far from accelerating the adoption of enclosure in Russia, put the project back because it forced the government to elevate political over economic considerations in its response to the agrarian crisis. The pressure for speedy results meant that the land reform measures, rushed through in the 1906 Imperial Edict, lacked coherence and clear direction. A result of the ensuing confusion was that fertile ground was created for local anomalies to emerge in the reform's development. Loopholes in the laws allowed peasants to exploit the land-reform legislation to prosecute long-standing disputes which had little to do with the original ideas of the agrarian modernizers. In the articles Macey has written since the publication of his major work, he has speculated about the nature of these disputes.[28] He disagrees with Soviet authors that divisions in the village

[26] D. J. Macey, *Government and Peasant in Russia 1861–1906: The Prehistory of the Stolypin Reforms* (De Kalb, Ill., 1987). The ideas in the book are also explored in: D. J. Macey, 'Bureaucratic Solutions to the Peasant Problem: Before and After Stolypin', *Russian and East European History: Selected Papers from the Second World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies* (Berkeley, Calif., 1984), 73–95. A recent restatement of the thesis is in D. J. Macey, 'Agricultural Reform and Political Change: the Case of Stolypin', in T. Taranovski (ed.), *Reform in Modern Russian History. Progress or Cycle* (Cambridge, 1995), 163–89.

[27] Statements of this view are to be found in: R. Hennessy, *The Agrarian Question in Russia 1905–1907: The Inception of the Stolypin Reform* (Giessen, 1977), 155; T. Shanin, *Russia as a 'Developing Society'. The Roots of Otherness: Russia's Turn of the Century*, vol. 1 (Basingstoke, 1985), 81; L. Volin, 'The Russian Peasant: From Emancipation to Kolkhoz', in C. Black (ed.), *The Transformation of Russian Society* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 292–311.

[28] D. J. Macey, 'Government Actions and Peasant Reactions during the Stolypin Reforms', in R. B. McKean (ed.), *New Perspectives in Modern Russian History. Selected Papers from the Fourth World Congress for Soviet and East European Studies, Harrogate, 1990* (Basingstoke, 1992), 133–73; D. J. Macey, 'The Peasant Commune and the Stolypin Reforms: Peasant Attitudes, 1906–1914', in R. Bartlett (ed.), *Land Commune and Peasant Community in Russia. Communal Forms in Imperial and Early Soviet Society* (Basingstoke, 1990), 219–36.