

COUNTRY COMMUNITY OF RUSSIA IN A. I. CHUPROV'S WORKS

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Abstract

Purpose: The relevance of the studied problem is caused by the need for deep studying of the history of Russian economic science at the end of XIX – the beginning of the 20th century. It is possible to reach a result only through research of certain representatives' heritage. A.I. Chuprov's activity was aimed at studying a number of questions of economic and social development of Russia. The important place was given to issues of country community reforming. A.I. Chuprov belonged to a number of consecutive opponents of the agrarian reform undertaken by P.A. Stolypin. The concept of country community development presented in the works of A.I. Chuprov is explained in the paper.

Methodology: The leading methods of the research are the system analysis that has allowed submitting A.I. Chuprov's communal concept and also the dialectic method opening his logic of interrelation of economic views and public beliefs.

Result: The main results of the article allow presenting A.I. Chuprov's views of agrarian reform at the beginning of the 20th century and a way of modernization of social and economic situation in a village. Materials of the article can be used during the formation of lecture courses for students studying a wide range of socio-humanistic educational programs.

Applications: This research can be used for universities, teachers, and students.

Novelty/Originality: In this research, the model of Country Community of Russia in A.I. Chuprov's Works are presented in a comprehensive and complete manner.

Keywords: *Community, country land tenure, private property, artel, collective farm.*

INTRODUCTION

Alexander Ivanovich Chuprov is an outstanding Russian economist at the end of XIX - the beginning of the 20th century. His activity was during one of the brightest periods in the history of Russian economic science. The English scientist Barnett Vincent connects it with the fact that in 1890-1913 and in the 1920th years, agrarian, planned and methodological questions of economy were put in the forefront and gave a new shape to economic science. "Both peaks have been connected among themselves because without the important work done during the pre-revolutionary period in such spheres as the analysis of business cycles and agrarian development, the efforts made during the post-revolutionary period in such areas as economic forecasting and industrial development would hardly be so successful ... Therefore, the period of 1890-1930 should be characterized as "Golden Age" in development of Russian economic science" ([Barnett, 2005](#)).

A. I. Chuprov's works on political economy, railway economy and statistics made a great influence on development of economic science of Russia. The research of communal country economy presents a big part in them. During the Soviet period of A. I. Chuprov's work was forgotten. In 1990 and at the beginning of 2000 N. K. Figurovskaya and L. I. Abalkin were the first who paid attention to the contribution of this scientist and public figure to economic theory and practice of Russia ([Figurovskaya, 1992](#), [Abalkin, 2002](#)). Later appeared Russian and foreign researches who studied various aspects of preparation and carrying out agrarian reform, assessment of its results by economists and public figures ([Avrekh, 1991](#); [Borodin, 2004](#); [Ascher, 2001](#); [Bartlett, 1990](#); [Antúnez, 2016](#); [Dower & Markevich, 2017](#); [Nisawa, 2018](#)). A number of special works – scientific works and theses – were devoted to scientific and public work of A. I. Chuprov ([Vasilyev, 2000](#); [Dudina, 2002](#); [Myasoedov, 2014](#); [Ameen et al, 2018](#); [Fujo et al, 2019](#)).

Russia's country community is not only a Russian history phenomenon but world history too. This social institute possessing numerous and various functions have shown surprising resilience, ability to adapt to the most different changes happening over centuries in the history of Russian state.

The discussion about the fate of community in the second half of XIX and the beginning of the 20th centuries constantly arose on pages of the press, in works of economists, philosophers, and eminent public figures. The necessity of carrying out agrarian reform was realized by scientists-economists, many state, and public figures. Moreover, at the same time inevitably there was a question of the place and the role of country community as economic and social institutions. The attitude towards community in political and scientific community was ambiguous, and assessment of the role of community had various positions.

By many state and public figures among whom were both emperors Alexander III, and Nicholas II, community, first of all, was perceived as one of the main support of the monarchy in Russia as a certain "storage" of traditional values of the state ideology. Therefore, they estimated any attempt to reform community as an attempt at foundations of the state. The economic efficiency and expediency of transformation of community just were not considered. Some erudite economists, such as A. I. Vasilchikov and Ue. E. Jansson appreciated this position to a greater or lesser extent.

At the same time, the number of opponents of the preservation of community grew. They took into account both economic feasibility of community's preservation and significance of its social role. Such approach united the people belonging to different political views. Political opponents as S. Yu. Witte and P. A. Stolypin, the expert economist N. N. Kutler, scientists and public figures A. N. Engelgardt and M. I. Tugan-Baranovsky wanted to reform country community radically, they could even destroy them.

The argument of opponents of the country community differed in the variety of arguments. It is characteristic that many of them, first, paid attention to the role of the state in the course of formation of country community. Works of the uncle of future creator of reform D. A. Stolypin, the philosopher, and the public figure can be an example of that. He emphasized the fact that the community has gained development in agriculture of Russia not because of its economic feasibility, but due to strengthening of the serfdom. "In the 16th century, – he specified, – there were villages from 1, 2, 3 yards where other, more natural land system worked" ([Stolypin, 1891](#)).

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

A. I. Chuprov's works, issues of communal land use, changes in agriculture and the peasantry caused by Stolypin's agrarian reform, analysis and prediction of the consequences became the theoretical and methodical basis of this research. The system method made it possible to present A. I. Chuprov's communal concept. The dialectic method has allowed understanding the logic of interrelation of economic views of A. I. Chuprov and his public beliefs.

RESULTS

The position, which was taken by the prominent economist, the statistician, and the public figure A. I. Chuprov in the discussion about community was noted. The theme of country community of Russia constantly was in a circle of his scientific interests. He studied this issue much and wrote about it as the publicist on the pages of The Russian magazine for 35 years. Unlike other supporters of community, A. I. Chuprov, first, emphasized practical advantages of communal land use to country economy.

Not accidentally during reform preparation one of the officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs publicly criticized A. I. Chuprov and A. S. Posnikov as famous supporters of a communal system ([Russia, 1905](#)). It was talked of the opinion expressed by these authors in the principal two-volume work "Influence of Harvests and Low Prices of Some Parties of the Russian National Economy" (1897). Authors warned against temptation to shift fault for slow development of agriculture entirely because of a community. The data on the level of development of large land tenure provided by them demonstrated that it, possessing high potential, only for 15% overtook country on productivity. A. I. Chuprov and A. S. Posnikov noted as well unrealized opportunities of an economic part of community.

The begun preparation, and then and carrying out agrarian reform has forced A. I. Chuprov to address this subject again. The last work that was published after the death of the author in 1908 is entirely devoted to criticism of actions of the government and the analysis of the processes, which have begun in community owing to reform ([Chuprov. Country question, 1909](#)). In fact, it is the first serious economic research devoted to the transformations begun by P. A. Stolypin in agriculture. A. I. Chuprov's good knowledge of conditions, preparation and carrying out agrarian reforms in other countries, in particular, in Germany and Italy, has allowed him to consider rather objectively the possibilities of reform in Russia and to foresee its results. Assessment of economic and social consequences of destruction of community given in 1907 when reform only began to be carried out in many respects was confirmed in the next years.

A. I. Chuprov's position concerning the country community remained invariable. His opinion relied on profound knowledge of an economic mechanism of community and including experience of the changes happening in it under the influence of time. "In the community we deal with an organism flexible, plastic, capable to adapt to living conditions and to requirements of a crop", – the scientist wrote.

Developing this thought, he stopped on the changes, which have happened in communal land use after the reform of 1861. The most important of them the scientist called transition from an old system to three-field, and in a number of areas and to many-field, distribution of fertilizers, improvement of the equipment in-country farms. At the same time, he emphasized that in the conditions of community there is a fast loan of useful experience, and thus it extends much quicker. It is interesting that the high degree of "adaptability" of community to changes noted by A. I. Chuprov continued to prove this fact also in the next years of reforms. Therefore, the community fully seized the new opportunities given by reform. It is known that country communities and peasants' owners actively bought the land from government funds. Through 1907-1915, they acquired about 5 million tithes of the earth ([Anfimov, 2002](#)).

Skeptically A. I. Chuprov estimated the idea of mass creation of farms in Russia. Authors of the reform saw a universal panacea in such farms. "Thirst of the earth, agrarian disorders in itself specifies necessary measures ... A natural counterbalance to the communal beginning is the individual property. It serves as pledge of an order as the small owner is that cell upon which the steady order in the state is based". ([Stolypin, 1926](#)). These words of Stolypin stated during his position of the Saratov governor as well as possible characterize a two-aimed task that he set, beginning the reform.

A. I. Chuprov considered that the simultaneous solution of these tasks is impossible. This point of view was confirmed also by the conclusions of other researchers. Relying on calculations of Dolgorukov's data, Chuprov provides the information

confirming strong divergences between data on investment of peasants with the earth with which the government and the real situation operated. So, in 1905 12277335 country farms, i.e. 23%, owned earth plots of less than 5 tithes. Besides, in the village there were about 500000 landless yards. According to the new legislation when leaving the community, the peasant had to receive a plot on the highest norm established for this area under the decree of 1861. Investment of country farms with the missing earth required 50 million tithes. At the same time inland fund of the government, there were about 10 million tithes. In addition, these lands were placed across the territory of Russia extremely unevenly (generally in east and southeast areas).

Thus, there was catastrophically not enough government funds even for elimination and furthermore for creation of system of farms. According to A. A. Kofoda, the existing level of country economy norm of the farm site hesitated from 7-8 tithes in fertile provinces up to 10 tithes in non- fertile ones and considerably big in steppe provinces ([Kofod, 1906](#)). Meanwhile the government placed emphasis on creation of independent country farms in size from 6 to 10 – 12 tithes.

The way, which was offered for the solution of this question by A. I. Chuprov is interesting. He recognized that the government fund needed to be used first for increase in plots of land-poor peasants. According to him, it would calm peasants' revolts as for "national soul" the justice celebration is important. The vulnerability of this position, first of all that the economic feasibility is substituted for arguments of a moral order here. In the conditions of difficult interlacing in the village of feudal and capitalist ways, fast stratification of peasantry the opinion on existence of uniform "national soul" is rather disputable.

A. I. Chuprov repeatedly emphasized the need for an "evolutionary character" of reform that should not destroy the developed traditional way of country life. Criticizing P.A. Stolypin's policy, he wrote that the prime minister "drove peasants to fortune with a lash».

It is necessary to mention the fact of how A. I. Chuprov perceived destruction of the traditional communal world. He wrote that a century order of the agricultural relations of peasantry had closely intertwined with family life, family way, views, feelings and habits in community. He equated reforming of community to elimination of this unique way, in fact, equating this to a concept of the Russian country culture in general. According to him, not accidentally immigrant peasants lodged in Siberia not by the certain yards, but villages, seeking to keep habitual forms of communal life. It is fair to notice at the same time that A. I. Chuprov laid aside a question of forms of land tenure of immigrants that were not communal anymore.

Thinking of means that would facilitate peasant community members' transition to new forms of managing, A. I. Chuprov calls the main of them the organizations of artels and development of crafts in the village. The community, according to A. I. Chuprov, had to evolve, turning not into the individual economy founded on private property (P.A. Stolypin's position), but into the economy organized on the principles of artel. The artel granted the right of a free exit with preservation for the peasant of his land share. Development of traditional crafts, on the one hand, promoted preservation of traditional economic way, and on the other hand, stimulated development of business and the market relations. The scientist was convinced that from connection of trade business, the collective beginning and land community could be expected mighty scope of the Russian national life ([Gerasimov, Gurova, Drobysheva, 2004](#)).

Speaking about crudity of reform, A. I. Chuprov especially stopped on the relationship between community and country owners leaving it. The main complexity during the reform represented the relations between members of community and the peasants who were leaving it. The decree of November 9, 1906 gave to a peasant an opportunity to demand all his land from community. In practice, it led country economy to deadlock situation. Carrying out repositions of the land at each new exit from community in practice was impossible. The subsequent course of reform has confirmed justice of this thought. Only the one-fourth part of peasants received consent to an exit of the lands from communities, and the others only strengthened the plots in property. ([Anfimov, 2002](#)). Besides, line strengthening of the land ingenerated the additional conflicts of community the next years.

A. I. Chuprov was one of the first economists who provided calculations of the expenses that were planning the peasant decided an exit from community. He noted that these expenses would not have a single character, and would become a constant point in the budget of country family. The first expenses would be connected with transfer of the estate on the new place that by the calculations that were carried out by the scientist would be not less than 1000 rubles ([Chuprov concerning the decree on November 9, 1906, 1908](#)). For the budget of country economy with a plot in 6-10 tithes, similar expenses are excessive. Supporters of the reform emphasized that data of the land to one site would give peasants big saving of time, which they spend on movement from one strip on another. However, the existing level of country economy saving of time did not cover financial expenses.

The maintenance of the cattle became another serious problem for natives of the community, which was marked out by A .I. Chuprov. Less part of peasants' land created serious problems in livestock production. The shortage of land generated lack of pastures. It led to the fact that at the end of 19th - the beginning of 20th centuries the quantity of the cattle in Russia was constantly reduced. In community, the problem of pastures was solved due to use of the steam field and fields after removal of harvest under pastures. Peasant community members employed general shepherd. At the peasant's exit from community the problem of pasture and pasturage became much more difficult. The stall maintenance of cattle was the most real way but it demanded big expenses.

The future of the carried-over peasants 'plots caused serious concerns to A. I. Chuprov. He saw two dangers in it. On the one hand, there was no tradition of a male entail of country farms in Russia. At each alternation of generations, it led to the crushing of hereditary sites and promoted a constant increase small part of the land. In community, this process restrained by peaceful repartitions. In the stood apart farms, there was no such opportunity, and the number of strips of land for peasant individualist constantly increased.

On the other hand, the reform created opportunities for the sale of the country's land. At the communal system of land use, the land could not be a subject of transactions, and 120 million tithes of communal lands had no mortgage debts. The peasants involved in reform had no experience of independent housekeeping. According to A .I. Chuprov, peasants "were driven" first by landowners, then world intermediaries and, at last, territorial chiefs during the previous centuries. Deprived of this constant guardianship, the peasant, unfamiliar with laws of the market, was not able to use possibilities of the market competently. The need for receiving the credits led him to opportunities for mortgage use, and thus he could lose the land received in property very quickly.

For the authors of reform, it was the quite expected result. The peasants who lost the land had to join ranks of hired urban and country people. The government considered them as the inevitable victim of reforms. For A. I. Chuprov the fate of these peasants whose opportunities to find new places in life were strongly limited was in first place. Agrarian reforms in Western Europe led to mass emigration of peasants or to their transformation into hired workers. In Russia, the first way was impossible, and the second led to impoverishment and unemployment. Such price of the reform, according to A. I. Chuprov was too big.

CONCLUSION

The government, beginning the reform, set the purpose to achieve serious economic and social changes in the country's economy. Creating a new type of peasant owner, reform led to ruin and change of the social status of many community members, to basic change of traditional village image. The insufficient development of many sides of the reform resulted in those, which were predicted by A. I. Chuprov. Estimating the first results of the reform, he tried to connect criteria of economic, social and moral order. Ambiguity and vulnerability of similar approach made it possible for criticism of his views. Nevertheless, the position of the economist, the public figure who is sincerely caring for the fate of peasantry, certainly, deserves respect.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The materials of the article can be used for the creation of lecture courses for students studying a wide range of socio-humanistic educational programs.

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