

IMPLEMENTATION OF ROMANIAN AGRARIAN REFORM REGULATIONS IN BESSARABIA AND BUCOVINA DURING BETWEEN-WAR PERIOD

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Rezumat: *Articolul vorbește despre realizarea condițiilor reformei agrare din anii 1920-1921 în Bucovina și Basarabia. O bună parte din materialele periodice și documente de arhivă, care se referă la această problemă încă nu sunt folosite pe deplin în literatura științifică. Cercetarea întreprinsă de autor permite oglindirea unor realități concrete în unele județe ale Bucovinei și Basarabiei. Materialul colecționat mărturisește, că în general în regiunea cercetată condițiile reformei se îndeplineau. Suprapopularea agrară n-a permis împroprietărirea țăranilor cu pământ. Rezolvarea acestei probleme în condițiile de atunci a fost imposibilă, deoarece în ținut nu erau destule terenuri agricole. Trebuie menționat și aspectul pozitiv al reformei agrare: după înfăptuirea ei, corelația între moșieri și micii proprietari de pământ se schimbă – zeci de mii de țărani au fost împroprietăriți cu pământ.*

Abstract: *The article talks about achieving conditions of agrarian reform in the years 1920-1921, in Bukovina and Bessarabia. The journals and archival documents, which refer to this problem, are not fully used in the scientific literature. The research proposed by the author allows a reflection of agrarian realities in some counties of Bukovina and Bessarabia. It is an attempt to review the basic stages of this process. The collected material proved that in the region, the conditions for a reform were fulfilled. The agrarian overcrowding did not allow authorities to give land to all peasants. Solving this problem, at that time, was impossible, because of the lack of arable land in a specific region. A positive aspect of land reform must be noticed: after its achievement, the correlation between the landowners and small tenants was changed -tens of thousands of peasants were granted with land.*

Résumé: *L'article parle de la réalisation des conditions de la réforme agraire des années 1920-1921 en Bucovine et en Bessarabie. Une bonne partie des matériaux périodiques et des documents des archives qui font référence à ce problème ne sont pas encore utilisés complètement dans la littérature scientifique. La recherche entreprise par l'auteur permet d'envisager des réalités concrètes de certains départements de la Bucovine et de la Bessarabie. Le matériel collectionné témoigne qu'en général, dans la région recherchée les conditions de la réforme étaient accomplies. La surpopulation agraire n'a pas permis le biens aux paysans avec de la terre. La résolution de ce problème dans les conditions de ces temps-là a été impossible, parce que dans cette région il n'y avait pas de terrains agricoles suffisants. On doit mentionner, aussi, l'aspect positif de la réforme agraire, parce que, après sa mise en pratique, la corrélation entre les fonciers et les petits propriétaires de terre a changé – des dizaines de milliers de paysans ont reçu de la terre.*

Keywords: *Bessarabia, Bukovina, agrarian reform, arable land, scientific literature, peasants, landowners*

The implementation of 1920-1921 Romanian agrarian reform regulations in Bessarabia and Bucovina is still the least studied aspect of this reform (though many attempts were made to study the reform in different periods of time¹). Taking into consideration the available published works, which elucidate minutely the legislative base of the reform and the background period for its implementation, the author's aim in the investigation is to analyze the implementation of the peasant reform regulations on the example of Hotin (Khotyn) district (Bessarabia) and Chernautsi (Chernivtsi) and Storojinets (Storozhynets') districts (Bucovina). Moreover, the work is mainly focused on the recollections of eyewitnesses, not published sources from the state archives of Chernivtsi oblast (Ukraine), National archives of Romania (Suchava department) and the periodicals.

Agrarian reform in Bessarabia and Bucovina was carried out at several stages: foundation of the institutions, which were in charge of lands expropriation from wealthy landowners, churches, monasteries and aliens and parceling them for land-poor or landless peasants; big properties distraintment and buying out of surplus lands; listing the applicants for extra, full, colonization plots of land and parceling this land property for the peasants. Among them the most interesting for the investigators are the procedures of expropriation and parceling of the lands, which soviet historians such as: V. Litvinov², A. Malinskiy³, S. Timov⁴, N. Frolov⁵ and others criticized for a long time. They had not given any example of legal implementation of the Reform regulations. However, the study of new documents revealed, that in most cases everything took place on the contrary exactly to the law. Obviously, those frauds, which had succeeded, depended, upon the local committees and peasants' resolution to assert their legal rights for their lands. We should admit that, sometimes, the committee's members unintentionally would make wrong decisions, however, after

¹ Квітковський Д., Бриндзан Т., Жуковський А. Буковина: її минуле і сучасне. – Париж-Філадельфія-Дітройт: Зелена Буковина, 1956. – 965 с.; Кобилянський С. Д. З історії проведення аграрної реформи на Північній Буковині під час окупації краю буржуазно-поміщицькою Румунією // Минуле і сучасне Північної Буковини. – К.: Наукова думка, 1972. – Вип. 1. – С. 40-51; Литвинов В. К. Аграрная реформа на Буковине во время румынской оккупации 1921-1926//Черновицкий государственный университет. Тезисы докладов XIII отчетной научной сессии профессорско-преподавательского состава. – Черновцы, 1957. – С. 69-70; Піддубний Г. Буковина, її минуле і сучасне. Суспільно-політичний нарис із малюнками і мапою Буковини. – Харків, 1928. – 256 с.; Cardaş A. Aspecte din reforma agrară basarabeană. – Chişinău, 1924. – 132 p.; Doboş F. Zece ani de viaţă agricolă în Bucovina. – Cernauţi: Glasul Bucovinei, 1929. – 36 p.; Şandru D. Reforma agrară din 1921 în România. – Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1975, 359 p.

² Литвинов В. К. Аграрная реформа на Буковине во время румынской оккупации 1921-1926. – С. 69-70.

³ Малинский В. Аграрная реформа 1918-1924 гг. в Бессарабии. – Кишинев, 1949. – 144 с.

⁴ Тимов С. Аграрный вопрос в Румынии. – М., 1928. – 231 с.

⁵ Фролов Н. П. Аграрные отношения в буржуазно-помещичьей Румынии. – Кишинев, 1958. – 251 с.

being inspected, they corrected their decisions afterwards. For confirmation of our thought we would like to give some examples of law expropriation and parceling of the lands in Bucovina and Bessarabia in the years of Romanian agrarian reform, which were concealed many years.

One of the wealthy landlords of the region was Mark Fischer from Ispas who owned lands in Vijnitsa (Vyzhnytsia) and Zastavna districts. His estate included over 1800 hectares of land. Those lands were in the communities: Babin (Babyne) – 131 hectares, Borautsi (Borivtsi) – 49 hectares, Kalineshti (Kalynivka) – 98 hectares, Kiseleu (Kyseliv) – 149 hectares, Ispas – 1134 hectares, Mihova (Myhove) – 11 hectares, Prilipcha (Prylypche) – 298 hectares. The inspection revealed that all those lands belonged to the same owner. After the reform had been carried out, he was expropriated the estates in Babin (Babyne), Borautsi (Borivtsi), Kalineshti (Kalynivka), Kiseleu (Kyseliv) and Mihova (Myhove). The lands in Ispas and Prilipcha (Prylypche) were partially expropriated, with, respectively, 352 hectares and 91 hectares left, out of which plough-lands comprised 250 hectares⁶, according to the Agrarian law for Bucovina⁷. The expropriation of land from a big landowner Oleksandr Fischer from Shtefaneshti (Stefaneshty) was held in accordance with the law too. Before the Reform was carried out, he had had only 327 hectares of plough-land in Babin (Babyne) and Prilipcha (Prylypche) communities. After the Reform had been carried out, he was left 207 hectares (according to the law⁸), and 120 hectares were given to the reform reserves for land-poor or landless peasants⁹.

As Meltzer Koppel from Mihova (Myhove) had not used his lands for agricultural purposes but for the commercial ones, he was expropriated his entire estate, including 8 hectares of plough-land, his house and business utilities¹⁰.

The expropriation of the land from many landowners in Hotin (Khotyn) district, who were permitted to own not more than 100 hectares of plough-land, was held without any violations¹¹. The estate of Olena Yavorovs'ka from Pashkautsi (Pashkivtsi) was reduced from 176 hectares to 100 hectares (by 76 hectares)¹². Initially, the committee had left extra 8 hectares for Yavorovs'ka, but the inspection revealed it and made her leave the plot of land or pay the rent for its use¹³. In Pashkautsi (Pashkivtsi), landlords from Tolburen' and Kaplivka communities owned lands too. They were expropriated over 130 hectares¹⁴. In the same community,

⁶ Державний архів Чернівецької області (далі – ДАЧО). – Ф. 293. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 11. – Арк. 41.

⁷ Hamangiu C. Codul General al României. Legi uzuale. 1913-1919. – Vol. 8. – București: Editura Librăriei Alcalay & Co. – P. 169.

⁸ Ibidem. – P. 169.

⁹ ДАЧО. – Ф. 293. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 11. – Арк. 65, 69.

¹⁰ ДАЧО. – Ф. 687. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 294. – Арк. 1.

¹¹ Alexianu G. Legile agrare. 1917-1936. – București: Editura Librăriei "Universala" Alcalay & Co. – P. 5-12.

¹² ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 350. – Арк. 2.

¹³ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 50. – Арк. 35.

¹⁴ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 350. – Арк. 2.

several wealthy peasants owned 50-60 hectares of plough-land, which could not be expropriated (they had less than 100 hectares), that is why the Reform did not concern them¹⁵. In Shirautsi (Shyriivtsi), no landlord experienced the expropriation for the same reason¹⁶. Let us consider some examples of church lands' expropriation. The state expropriated all church's lands, safe for the priest's plots of land, deacons' (if they had ones)¹⁷. As a rule, they had 18 hectares of plough-land. In Malintsi (Malyntsi)¹⁸ and Silautsi (Shylyivtsi) communities, before the Reform, the church had owned 72 hectares in each community, and after the land was expropriated, they had only 18 hectares in each community¹⁹. In Shirautsi (Shyriivtsi), the church had owned 37 hectares, and left 18 hectares²⁰. In Stalineshti (Stal'niivtsi) – 39 hectares²¹, left – 18 hectares²². In Malineshti (Malynivka) – 35 hectares, 18 hectares were expropriated²³. In Staucheni (Stavchany) – 35 hectares, left – 18 hectares²⁴. In Pashkautsi (Pashkivtsi)²⁵ and Syndzher²⁶ (Zhylyivka) – 36 hectares in each, 18 hectares were expropriated in each community. In Crishchatek (Khreshchatyk) community in Bucovina, the church lost 13 hectares out of 25 hectares of land²⁷.

The Vatopedi Holy Mt. Athos Monastery in Hotin (Khotyn) district used to own big land resources before the reform²⁸. Nevertheless, Romanian agrarian reform was aimed at expropriating all alien monasteries' lands; thus, the estate of the Vatopedi Holy Mt. Athos Monastery in Malineshti (Malynivka) community (402 hectares of plough-land) was parceled for the state land reserves in 1922-1924²⁹.

Commercial company "Zarozhan" (sugar mill in Zarozheni (Zarozhany) community) was one of the biggest owners of plough-land in Hotin (Khotyn) district. In Staucheni (Stavchany), the company owned 582 hectares³⁰, in Livenits (Livyntsi) – 1525 hectares³¹, in Syndzher (Zhylyivka) – 326 hectares³² and in Zarozheni (Zarozhany) – 405 hectares³³. As the company was not engaged in agriculture production, all its lands (except for several hectares) were expropriated for the state

¹⁵ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 350. – Арк. 2.

¹⁶ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 478. – Арк. 1.

¹⁷ Hamangiu C. Codul General al României. Legi uzuale. 1913-1919. – Vol. 8. – P. 1181.

¹⁸ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 480. – Арк. 13.

¹⁹ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 539. – Арк. 3.

²⁰ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 478. – Арк. 1.

²¹ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 357. – Арк. 14.

²² ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 476. – Арк. 2.

²³ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 128. – Арк. 1.

²⁴ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 94. – Арк. 1.

²⁵ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 350. – Арк. 2.

²⁶ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 156. – Арк. 1.

²⁷ ДАЧО. – Ф. 687. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 286. – Арк. 4.

²⁸ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 128. – Арк. 1.

²⁹ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 128. – Арк. 1.

³⁰ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 94. – Арк. 1.

³¹ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 167. – Арк. 31.

³² ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 156. – Арк. 1.

³³ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 95. – Арк. 30.

land reserves. There were cases when the committees of the highest authority would make mistakes in calculations, but later on, district committees corrected them. In particular, David Fischer from Kiseleu (Kyseliv) owned 130 hectares of plough-land, and local committee expropriated only 6 hectares instead of 28 hectares³⁴. District committee, while inspecting, found the mistake and ordered to expropriate 22 hectares more³⁵. The district committee in the same community had to expropriate from Adolf Fischer 34 hectares out of 160 hectares of plough-land, which he owned; and the local committee expropriated only 5 hectares. The mistake was corrected after some time, and the landlord lost 29 hectares more³⁶.

There were also funny cases, when peasants complained that they would bribe committees' members to get "spare" 1-2 hectares of land, but the land was not gained as well as the money was not returned. Such an incident took place in Nousulitsa (Novoselytsia)³⁷ community, Bricheni (Brychany) volost, Hotin (Khotyn) district. Peasant Anatoliy Sardari submitted a complaint to the district agricultural board in 1933, asserting that before lands parceling, he had bribed local agrarian committee's member Ivan Voloshchuk with 750 leus and that he had eyewitnesses of the event. He wanted Ivan Voloshchuk to give him 1 hectare more than it was permitted. However, he did not gain any land, and wanted his money back³⁸. Expropriation as well as parceling could be carried out in a legal way. As an example, we would like to describe the procedure of land parceling in Mahala community, Chernautsi (Chernivtsi) district. The land reserves were parceled: for local school – 6 hectares; to create experimental plot – 2,5 hectares; to make roads – 6,5 hectares; for deacon and sexton – respectively 3 hectares and 1 hectare; for peasants – 0,15-1 hectares plots of land. Peasants' plots of land appeared to be very small because of comparatively poor land resources and overpopulation in the community³⁹.

In Stalineshti (Stal'nivtsi), the land was parceled for 331 persons, moreover, the biggest plot of land was 2,5 hectares⁴⁰. The total area of peasants' plots of land covered 428 hectares. 40 hectares were parceled for agronomic station, 20 hectares – for zootechnics station; school's parcel comprised 2 hectares; woods were planted on 93 hectares; 12 hectares were parceled for community's needs. Totally, 595 hectares were parceled here⁴¹. Most expropriated lands became peasants' property.

Pashkautsi (Pashkivtsi) committee parceled 218 hectares of plough-land for 155 farmers. Like in other villages, the parcels were 0,5-2,5 hectares⁴² in size. In Silautsi (Shylivtsi), 39 persons got two-hectares plots of land, and 8 hectares were

³⁴ ДАЧО. – Ф. 293. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 11. – Арк. 75.

³⁵ ДАЧО. – Ф. 293. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 11. – Арк. 77.

³⁶ ДАЧО. – Ф. 293. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 11. – Арк. 80.

³⁷ Împărțirea administrativă a teritoriilor alipite pe județe, plăși, voloste, notariate și comune. – București: Imprimeria Statului. – 1921. – P. 73.

³⁸ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 572. – Арк. 14.

³⁹ ДАЧО. – Ф. 293. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 12. – Арк. 16.

⁴⁰ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 357. – Арк. 15.

⁴¹ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 476. – Арк. 3.

⁴² ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 350. – Арк. 3.

parceled for other needs from the community lands⁴³. Many peasants agreed to get parceled lands in neighboring communities.

In Shirautsi (Shyriivtsi), the parcels of 2 hectares⁴⁴ were given to 237 possessors. 2 hectares – to school, one-hectare plots of land – for the village headman's office, for roads and cemetery, and several hundreds square metres – for gendarme checkpoint and cemetery for animals. In total, approximately 240 hectares were parceled⁴⁵. In Syndzher (Zhylivka), 179 local peasants got two-hectares plots of land⁴⁶. Staucheni (Stavchany) committee parceled 0,5-2,5-hectares plots of land for 287 persons⁴⁷. In Malintsi (Malyntsi), 322 persons got parceled lands⁴⁸. All peasants got their lands by 1927⁴⁹. We should mention that before the reform started, in Zarozheni (Zarozhany) community, most peasants (261) had had two-hectares plots of land, 119 peasants had been landless at all, and according to the law on agrarian reform, they were able to get parcels, which became, for many peasants, the escape from starvation during a difficult after-war period⁵⁰. Peasants from Livenits (Livyntsi) community got 507 hectares of parceled lands; their plots of land were almost the biggest (approximately 3 hectares). Furthermore, 55 hectares were given for the community needs, for the reserves, for woods planting, and several hectares were not productive enough for cultivation⁵¹.

In Malineshti (Malynivka) community, 438 hectares were to be parceled. 2,5-hectares plots of land were parceled for 205 family heads (in total, 315 hectares)⁵², 32 hectares were parceled for the community's reserves, 11 hectares were not fertile, and some more than 80 hectares were parceled for colonization plots of Nouselitsa (Novoselytsia) inhabitants. We should mention, that colonization plots were considered the plots, situated far from the community's lands, which could be given to other villages' inhabitants, who were lacking lands but only with the permission of the community⁵³. Thus, notwithstanding the acknowledged opinion of Soviet historians⁵⁴, the colonists were not only Romanians from Old Kingdom, as in this case, but also peasants from neighboring communities of Bucovina and Bessarabia. Similarly, during the parceling of land reserves in Livenits (Livyntsi), colonization

⁴³ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 539. – Арк. 4.

⁴⁴ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 478. – Арк. 2.

⁴⁵ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 478. – Арк. 34.

⁴⁶ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 156. – Арк. 2.

⁴⁷ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 94. – Арк. 1, 11.

⁴⁸ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 480. – Арк. 14.

⁴⁹ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 94. – Арк. 489.

⁵⁰ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 95. – Арк. 61.

⁵¹ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 167. – Арк. 32.

⁵² ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 147. – Арк. 1.

⁵³ Namangiu C. Codul General al României. Legi uzuale. 1913-1919. – Vol. 8. – P. 1183.

⁵⁴ Литвинов В. К. Становище селян Буковини в боярській Румунії (1918-1939) // Наукові записки ЧДУ. – Т. 18. – Серія історичних наук. – Львів: Вид-во Львівського державного університету, 1956. – С. 58; Литвинов В. К. Аграрная реформа на Буковине во время румынской оккупации 1921-1926. – С. 69.

plots of land with the total area of 1000 hectares became the property of inhabitants of Malintsi (Malyntsi), Zarozheni (Zarozhany), Shirautsi (Shyriivtsi), Silautsi (Shylyivtsi), Poiana (Poliana), Balkautsi (Balkivtsi), Dankautsi (Dankivtsi)⁵⁵. Colonization plots of land with the area less than 2 hectares were parceled for the inhabitants of Cerstineshti (Kerstentsi) and Dolzhok (Dovzhok) communities from Staucheni (Stavchany) land reseves⁵⁶, and from Syndzher (Zhylyivka) reserves – for peasants of Cruhlic (Kruhlyk) and Bilautsi (Bilivtsi) communities⁵⁷. And farmers from Stalineshti (Stal'nivtsi), who were lacking lands in their community were parceled 291 hectares of colonization plots of land from expropriated lands of landlord Nykodym Krulka from Korestautsi⁵⁸, Bricheni (Brychany) volost (nowadays, Republic of Moldova).

We should mention that the reform in Bessarabia and Bucovina was not always implemented in a lawful way. Although law violations did not have the determinative meaning but the description of the agrarian reform would not be sufficient without them. Therefore, we shall consider the prevailing ones found in the complaints, blaming committees' members to have committed the law violations and preserved in archive papers as well as those, which were published in the local newspapers.

Landlord class, beforehand, tried to sell their estates having a good bargain, to conceal the real area of their land-tenure or to parcel it out among their relatives in order to avoid their estates being expropriated⁵⁹. There are some examples: landlord Liubomyrs'kyi from Putila (Putyla) district concealed more than 160 hectares; landlord Weissler Seide owned 454 hectares⁶⁰, but he reported to the District agrarian committee only 279 hectares⁶¹. The lands of landlords in Doroshautsi (Doroshivtsi)⁶², Maliatinets (Maliatyntsi)⁶³, Mihalcia (Mykhal'cha) and Mamornitsa (Mamornytsia)⁶⁴ were parceled out among immediate relatives. That is why the estates of Bernard Korn, Markus Greyfer, Mark Kurisch had been long time unimpaired⁶⁵.

Court appeals against the activities of different authority committees were the most widespread landlords' counteraction to avoid the expropriation. Similar litigation could last sometimes for years; meanwhile peasants were not able to get plots of land and had to pay rent for using landlords' lands. The family of landlord Vladyslav Ramashkanu (Stalineshti (Stal'nivtsi) community), who owned over 700

⁵⁵ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 167. – Арк. 33.

⁵⁶ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 94. – Арк. 2.

⁵⁷ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 156. – Арк. 2.

⁵⁸ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 397. – Арк. 3.

⁵⁹ Кобилянський С. Д. З історії проведення аграрної реформи на Північній Буковині під час окупації краю буржуазно-поміщицькою Румунією. – С. 42.

⁶⁰ ДАЧО. – Ф. 687. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 157. – Арк. 3, 5, 23.

⁶¹ ДАЧО. – Ф. 687. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 51. – Арк. 1-5.

⁶² ДАЧО. – Ф. 687. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 39. – Арк. 5-6.

⁶³ ДАЧО. – Ф. 687. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 364. – Арк. 68.

⁶⁴ ДАЧО. – Ф. 687. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 131. – Арк. 16.

⁶⁵ Кобилянський С. Д. З історії проведення аграрної реформи на Північній Буковині під час окупації краю буржуазно-поміщицькою Румунією. – С. 43.

hectares⁶⁶ in 1918 was among them. However, after the case had been tried at the court, the suit was settled in 1930, and the Ramashkanu's estate was expropriated in accordance with the law, the estate was not parceled out among the village inhabitants by that time⁶⁷. The litigation on the case had gone on until 1934, but the court decision was not changed⁶⁸.

There were cases of total lawlessness. In particular, in Percautsi (Perkivtsi) (Hotin (Khotyn) district) District agrarian committee expropriated legally 48 hectares of plough-land from landlord Barak and parceled it for peasants, but after they had ploughed it, sowed and grown the harvest, the landlord turned them away of the land and took all the harvest away⁶⁹. District committee in Repujinets (Repuzhyntsi) expropriated 195 hectares of land from landlord Baumann in 1925. 66 hectares out of those 195 hectares were transferred to the state for community needs. The rest of the land was parceled for peasants, but the landlord wouldn't let them use it for 10 years⁷⁰. The inhabitants of Vashkivtsi community, unsatisfied with the reform pace, submitted a complaint to the security service division in Vijnitsa (Vyzhnytsia) in 1921. The complaint contained the facts that the committee suspended the listing of parceled land on purpose, and one of the committee's members (priest Mikitovych) stated, "This matter will take years" and "peasants can wait"⁷¹.

A very unpleasant event took place in Volchinets (Vovchynets') community (Seret district) in 1925; the head of the local agrarian committee of the highest authority, being, at the same time, the head of the village community together with a former district agronomist let many people illegally transfer their plots of (barren) land to the land reserves and get fertile lands instead⁷². There were cases when the lists of parceled lands were cut down, and the land reserves for peasants were reduced. For instance, 278 people from Verbautsi (Verbivtsi) had the right to get plots of land, but they received only 38 hectares (of which 10 hectares were given to those who did not have the right to). The lands of landlords Koppel (191 hectares) and Liskovats'ka (145 hectares) left not expropriated in this community⁷³.

In Onut community, the reserves were "reduced" three times. Before the reform started, peasants had been promised to receive 82 hectares of parceled lands, but in fact, only 25 hectares were parceled out⁷⁴. Peasants of Mamornitsa (Mamornytsia) had been promised 300 hectares of landlord Goldner's plough-land, but they received only 2,5 hectares of land expropriated from church. In Shipinets

⁶⁶ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 49. – Арк. 3.

⁶⁷ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 49. – Арк. 15.

⁶⁸ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 49. – Арк. 32.

⁶⁹ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 32. – Арк. 3.

⁷⁰ Кобилянський С. Д. З історії проведення аграрної реформи на Північній Буковині під час окупації краю буржуазно-поміщицькою Румунією. – С. 43.

⁷¹ ДАЧО. – Ф. 12. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 467. – Арк. 1.

⁷² ДАЧО. – Ф. 1240. – Оп. 1. – Спр. – 227. – Арк. 1.

⁷³ ДАЧО. – Ф. 14. – Оп. 2. – Спр. 16. – Арк. 1-2.

⁷⁴ Боротьба. – 1927. – 10 липня. – Ч. 6. – С. 2.

(Shypyntsi), they had been promised 150 hectares, but they received only 25 hectares⁷⁵.

There were recorded cases, when similar “reduction” of the lists for parceled land, made by local agrarian committees, took place in the committees of the highest authorities. To illustrate this, we can take the case of Coteleu (Kotelevo) community, where, initially, 461 peasants had got right to receive land, but after the list had been approved, only 153 peasants were on the list. In Vladichna (Vladychna), 414 families’ heads had entered in the list to receive lands, and only 335 left⁷⁶.

Other kinds of lists forgery were found too. In particular, wealthier peasants entered in the list in the first place instead of land-poor or landless peasants, who desperately needed land. In Coshuleni (Koshuliany) community, in 1921, the local committee deprived 53 families of invalids and war widows, as well as recruits’ wives of the right to receive plots of land in the first place. They wrote in the complaint, that they were not able to provide for their families because of the lack of the land, and that landlords’ lands are parceled out for “those people, who can work hard and have enough their own land”, therefore “the poor ones have to starve”⁷⁷. In Nousulitsa (Novoselytsia) community (Khotyn district), the families of seven deceased soldiers received their plots of land within difficult reach of their houses (in Lenkautsi (Lenkivtsi), Ataki (Ataky), Kobolchin (Kobolchyn) communities etc)⁷⁸. In Nousulitsa (Novoselytsia), some of the local inhabitants forged the documents on disability and received a plot of fertile land⁷⁹.

Of great consideration is the case of landlord Georgiy Vasyl’ko’s land expropriation and parceling. According to the data of the inspection held in 1933, District agrarian committee adopted the resolution (1922) to expropriate 1997,8 hectares of his estates in Shipot (Shepit) and Berehomet. Of these lands, 937 hectares were to be parceled out for peasants, 292,4 hectares – for the state reserves, 697 hectares – to let. The parceling was held in 1924. Peasants refused to receive 120 hectares, because those lands were not fertile. The inspection report (1933) reveals that “The parceling of the estate of Georgiy Vasyl’ko from Berehomet was held very bad. That is the reason why the parceling in Berehomet has not been completed till present days. Many peasants, who had 3-5 hectares, didn’t enter in the parceling lists (however, they had the right to – O.R.)”⁸⁰. On the other hand, 142 heads of families received extra 185,7 hectares, and 201 peasants received 64,4 hectares less than it was indicated on the list. 205 peasants, who were not on the list, received 150,9 hectares, and only 213 peasants legally received 147 hectares⁸¹.

⁷⁵ Боротьба. – 1928. – 29 квітня. – Ч. 11. – С. 1.

⁷⁶ Кобилянський С. Д. З історії проведення аграрної реформи на Північній Буковині під час окупації краю буржуазно-поміщицькою Румунією. – С. 45.

⁷⁷ Там само. – С. 45.

⁷⁸ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 572. – Арк. 9.

⁷⁹ ДАЧО. – Ф. 854. – Оп. 1. – Спр. 572. – Арк. 3.

⁸⁰ ДАЧО. – Ф. 734. – Оп. 2. – Спр. 4. – Арк. 19, 23.

⁸¹ ДАЧО. – Ф. 734. – Оп. 2. – Спр. 4. – Арк. 28-44.

Religious fund did its best not to keep its lands. At that time “one could hardly mention the district, where the lands of this great – since Austro-Hungarian times – province landowner were not found”⁸². “Any respectable and wealthy landlord couldn’t do without its support. Either the road to his land belonged to the fund or, for example, a wood narrow-gauge railway did”⁸³. Its “lobby”, initially in Vienna, and afterwards in Bucharest, during the Romanian period, particularly in “the Ministries of agriculture, wood industry and even the Ministry of defence”⁸⁴ guaranteed funds’ estates inviolability even at the end of Romanian ruling in the region. Some cases had been tried by 1938, for example, the case on the funds’ lands in Mamaeshti (Mamaivtsi) and Coroviya communities in Chernautsi (Chernivtsi) district⁸⁵.

Before the reform, according to the rough estimate, landlords had owned “about half of all region lands”⁸⁶. H. Piddubnyi asserted that the owners of plots of land with the area of 5-1000 hectares had most lands. They cultivated 81,63% of Bucovina lands. These lands were parceled for eighteen thousand families. 125 biggest owners had in their disposal more than 1000 hectares everyone, an in total, 433000 hectares; that is 40% of all land⁸⁷. In Hotin (Khotyn) district, in 1905, peasants’ farms with the land area of less than 2 hectares comprised 10,9%, 2-5 hectares – 82,5%, 5-10 hectares – 6,4%, 10-20 hectares – 0,1%, 20-50 hectares – 0,1%⁸⁸. Before the World War I, landlords, monasteries, state treasury owned 46% of all land in the district, peasants owned the rest of the land⁸⁹.

In Bucovina, more than 800⁹⁰ estates with the total area of 75,976 hectares⁹¹ were expropriated in 1929. 41,994 of them were expropriated from 235 landlords, 27,572 hectares – from Religious fund, the rest – from churches, schools etc⁹². 42,832 hectares of them were parceled for 76,911 persons. 33,135 were used for pastures, for planting communal woods, for making roads etc. 5, 692 peasants left without plots of land because of the land scarcity and dense population⁹³. In Hotin (Khotyn) district, all peasants were parceled land. All peasants, who had right for land, received plots of

⁸² Кресс В. Моя первая жизнь: Невыдуманная повесть. – Черновцы: Зелена Буковина, 2008. – С. 195.

⁸³ Там само. – С. 195.

⁸⁴ Там само. – С. 195.

⁸⁵ Arhivele Naționale ale României. Direcția Suceava. – Fond 10. – Inventarul 35. – Dosar 28. – Foia 2, 7, 9.

⁸⁶ Грігоровіч Г. Буковинське селянство в ярмі (уришок) / Добржанський О. В., Старик В. П. Бажасмо до України! – Одеса: Маяк, 2008. – С. 1154.

⁸⁷ Піддубний Г. Буковина, її минуле і сучасне. Суспільно-політичний нарис із малюнками і мапою Буковини. – С. 164.

⁸⁸ Буковина: історичний нарис. – Чернівці: Зелена Буковина, 1998. – С. 109.

⁸⁹ Там само. – С. 109.

⁹⁰ Zece ani de viață agricolă în Bucovina // Progresul. – 1929. – №1. – P. – P. 9.

⁹¹ Anuarul statistic al României pe anul 1929. – București: Tipografia Curții Regale, 1930. – P. 86.

⁹² Zece ani de viață agricolă în Bucovina // Progresul. – 1929. – №1. – P. – P. 8.

⁹³ Anuarul statistic al României pe anul 1929. – P. 86.

land; though some gained small plots⁹⁴. 511 estates with the total area of 152,184 hectares⁹⁵ were expropriated (according to the other data, 153,921 hectares⁹⁶). 50104 persons had right for a plot of land, and gained 91,535 hectares⁹⁷. The rest of the land was also provided for different needs like in Bucovina.

Agrarian committees' work resulted in the following situation; in 1930, 97,7% of plough-land were the small owners' property and only 2,24% were owned by landlords out of 303,771 hectares in Hotin (Khotyn) district⁹⁸. In Chernautsi (Chernivtsi) district, where plough-land comprised 119,682 hectares, this proportion was 88,59% to 11,41% in peasants' favor⁹⁹, in Storojinets (Storozhynets') – 87,96% to 12,04% under 80,018 hectares of plough-land¹⁰⁰. Thus, the dominance of peasants' landowning in all districts was impressive, while before the reform, the situation had been vice-versa. Hence, all above-said examples substantiate that, in general, the reform's regulations were observed in the region under study. The concepts of the Soviet era researches, who considered Romanian agrarian reform to be the peasants' land grabbing, and who vigorously criticized it, have no grounds.

On the contrary, peasants of Bucovina and Bessarabia needed more land, than they got after the reform, but thousands of landless and land-poor inhabitants of the region were saved from starvation, when they got still tiny but their own separate plots of land. Very often, we don't appreciate the importance of land for peasants in that time. We should keep in mind that peasants could have hardly earned their "crust" in other way than cultivating their land.

Agrarian overpopulation prevented peasants from getting lands to the full. The scarcity of agricultural lands was the reason why those problems could not be solved in the then situation. We should admit that agrarian reform changed the proportion of landlords and small landowners in the latter's favor. Tens of thousands of peasants were parceled land.

⁹⁴ Ibidem. – P. 86.

⁹⁵ Ambrojevici T., Potlog A. Monografia agricola a județului Hotin. – Cămpina: Tipografia și legătoria de cărți M. S. Gheorghiu. – 1929. – P. 9.

⁹⁶ Ciobanu Ș. Basarabia: Monografie. – Chișinău. – 1926. – P. 352.

⁹⁷ Ambrojevici T., Potlog A. Monografia agricola a județului Hotin. – 1929. – P. 9.

⁹⁸ Enciclopedia României: Țara românească. – Vol. 2. – P. 219.

⁹⁹ Ibidem. – P. 129.

¹⁰⁰ Ibidem. – P. 424.