

The World and the Man

There is perhaps no more complex and controversial issue in Russia than the question of land. Not only land, as soil (an economic asset) and the basis of obtaining food and various raw materials of plant and animal origin, but land as the basis of the cultural identity of the peoples inhabiting the expanses of the Fatherland and as a special environment uniting each of us with each other, with the surrounding World of possibilities, and as the basis of the stability and integrity of the country in which we live.

On how and what approaches to unite people living and working the land are found and implemented in practice depends not only the provision of food and raw materials, but also the stability and sustainability of our society and the environment in which we live and expect to live with confidence in its future. The very content of the concept of the future of life and work on Earth has undergone many transformations (and this process seems very far from being complete). This difficult path has been (and continues to be) a movement away from the unconditional priority of food security (which nevertheless retains its significance for a large part of humanity) toward the creation of conditions for an internally rich and positively fulfilled life for each unique individual. In its most general form, the currently known set of characteristics (content) of these conditions is presented as a list known as the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals).

What's critical is not so much the list of goals and its achievement at each stage in the conditions of this or that country, this or that society, as the approach to solving, in the author's opinion, the most important and the most critical problem. Namely, the relationship between the World and the Man. The world in this case is that socium, that social environment in which the man living on and off the land lives and works. It is that person who not only lives in that area where activities both directly related to work on the land and closely related to it prevail (in this case agriculture, the prevailing, but not exhaustive, kind of employment). Operations on the land are so diverse and multifaceted that there is something for everyone to do and how to realize their individuality and move (at least a little)

in the direction of approaching the image schematically presented in the SDGs.

Such a vision, so far, is largely an idealization of the interconnectedness of man and land. But, nevertheless, as it seems to the author, the movement in this direction is both obvious and quite tangible. As the authors of the thematic selection of this issue note (see the paper by V.G. Vinogradsky and O.Y. Vinogradskaya) “such transformations reflect the counter-urbanistic ideas and actions appearing more and more often in the public space”. Such “enlightened, nature-saving agriculturists” are rather small sprouts of the new and as yet unknown. Creating the conditions for their significant increase also requires time to realize and find ways to move in this direction.

The problem of the “World-environment” and the “Man-individual” living for and from the land, unfortunately, has almost never been solved satisfactorily in Russia. Literature and polemics on the agrarian world order are many years old, and the number of thinkers is in the thousands.

One cannot but agree with N.N. Zvorykin's¹ arguments that absence of satisfactory solution of this problem became basis of social cataclysms in Russia in XX century “...the liberation reform (auth. 1861) broke and did nothing to replace the strong connection between the vast land area occupied by Russia and the unequal landed labor force...there was not even laid a solid foundation to preserve the interaction of labor, knowledge and capital...no new combination was created to use large land holdings, uniting interests of the nobility and the peasant masses.”

Further attempts of collectivization and industrialization² (still implemented in the form of agro-industrial holdings), as the leading forms of connecting the World and Man on the Land, have so far allowed to solve the simplest and the most important task – provision of the population with food (and not for everyone and not in the most socially and economically effective way). Steps and measures in this direction have (and had before) more of a “repair and support orientation” (V.G. Vinogradsky and O.Y. Vinogradskaya).

¹ N. N. Zvorykin To the Revival of Russia. 929. 278 c. Paris. 1929. 278 p. [P.33, 34, 38]

² Agro-industrial Combines. On the organization of industrial combines // Siberian Planning Commission and the Regional Research Institute of Economics and Organization of Socialist Agriculture. Novosibirsk.1930.

The state policy in the sphere of regulation of the agro-industrial complex (see the paper of O. P. Fadeeva) is designed to avoid such one-sided orientation. However, this policy is largely based on the understanding of life and land husbandry, which are seen and presented “from above” – from the level of various government institutions and organizations that implement various forms of support for life and activity on the land. At the same time, there is ambiguity and instability in the formation of priorities and directions of state support and development of living and economic conditions, as well as the all-encompassing desire for universality of procedures and approaches of administration, regardless of conditions of a particular locality and conditions of a particular year (climate variability only reinforces the latter circumstance). The desire for universalization of forms of support for land management is supplemented by a reshaping of the system of relations between local and state administration. It would seem that such reshaping is based on good intentions – to expand the revenue base of the created rural-urban territories (V. Y. Uzun’s paper). At the same time, this measure makes the resolution of the conflict between the world and the man on the land even more remote. The difficult financial situation of many rural settlements is related to the difficult situation of those who live and work on the land. Overcoming it is associated not only with increasing the self-governability of rural areas, but also with the creation and expansion of the framework of self-organization of the rural community and those who live and work on the land. Self-organization is the most important prerequisite for the realization of each person’s creative potential. The state in the person of different support institutions as well as different structures for dissemination of experience and advanced knowledge cannot ignore this circumstance. Unfortunately, the situation, when those who live and work on the land act in the role of beggars of help and justification of support is rather a rule and puts them in a knowingly discriminated position. It is not the business of those who live and work on the land to pound the doorsteps of institutions and prove the obvious.

It is impossible, and inexpedient to operate only with the general average resulting indicators of economic activity in the country, in the region and even in a separate district or village (see the paper of M. A. Latysheva and A. M. Alexeev). Life and land husbandry are very concrete and very specific to each locality. Among the

most important, we can say, historically hard-won forms of self-organization in the agrarian sector are cooperative forms of farming. In this connection one cannot help recollecting the outstanding Russian economist M.I. Tugan-Baranowsky, “The cooperation has grown on the capitalistic ground and has the capitalistic form; but in this capitalistic form there’s an absolutely different, non-capitalistic spirit, which attracts mankind to new ways, which creates new social forms, so opposite to the forms of life of the capitalistic society as solidarity and mutual help are opposite³.

At the same time, as our other remarkable compatriot S. Prokopovich⁴ noted “... each economic formation has its own peculiar forms of cooperation. The more complicated the economic relations of a given formation, the more diverse are its peculiar cooperative structures... The more cooperation is powerless in the sphere of economic relations, the more all-powerful it can be under certain conditions in the area of social relations”.

The ideas of sustainable environmental, social and economic development and the need to move along this path shed a new light on many difficult and pressing issues of our life. Without reconciliation of the World (society, state, social environment) and the Man, it is impossible to find an acceptable solution. Among the first and most urgent measures is forming an atmosphere of trust and belonging of all parties involved in the real change for the better of the conditions of life and activity of Man on the Land.

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³ M.I. Tugan-Baranowsky *Toward a Better Future*. St. Petersburg: Typo-Litogr. Energia.1912.230 p.[P. 104]

⁴S. Prokopovich, *The Cooperative Movement in Russia: Theory and Practice*. –Moscow: Publishing House of M. and S. Sabashnikov. 1913. 456 p. [P. 21, P. 30]