

## HOW OLONETS ZEMSTVO USED THE FINNISH EXPERIENCE IN IMPLEMENTING STOLYPIN'S AGRARIAN REFORM

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In article positive organizational-technical and cultural and educational activity земских establishments of Olonetsky province in carrying out of an agrarian reform of Stolypina in Russia is investigated. With a view of reform propagation Olonetsky zemstvon began to refer actively to achievements of the Finnish landowners. Taking into account the finnish experience the Olonetsky provincial zemstvo has developed the activity plan on agricultural production lifting in edge. Experience of the next Finland owing to the various reasons has not received then a wide circulation, however preconditions for the further advancement by the way of agriculture modernisation then nevertheless have been put. There is no First World War, development of a country economy of farmer type in Kareliya, has gone, most likely, successfully as the most expedient form of agrarian manufacture in the northern it is soil-environmental conditions.

**Keywords:** zemstvo, Finland, agrarian experience, reform of Stolypin, agriculture, modernisation, farmers

Following the revolutionary events of 1905-1907, the cornerstone of the Russian government's economic programme was the agrarian reform launched by the Prime Minister P A Stolypin. Its intention was to accelerate the bourgeois modernisation of Russia's agriculture and to stabilise the social and political situation in the countryside. Its main aim, especially in the initial stages, was to break down the *obshchina*, the village commune, and force the creation of a broad stratum of petty landowners in the countryside.

The legal basis for this new agrarian policy was Nicholas II's decree of 9 November 1906, which acquired the force of law following its approval by the 3rd State Duma on 14 June 1910. The most important measures in this complex reform were: that peasants could leave the commune with an allocation of land and property and establish individual farms on this land, the carrying out of land improvements without leaving the communes, and the organisation of peasant settlements on the periphery of the empire. A great deal of attention was also paid to the technical aspects of agricultural production.

It is well known that Stolypin's agrarian reform went well in some areas of the country, and ran into difficulties in others. It was implemented most actively in areas where there was no agrarian overpopulation (the Lower Volga region, Novorossiia and Siberia), as well as in areas which bordered on territories where private property in land

already predominated (Belorussia, Novgorod, Pskov, Smolensk and certain other Western guberniyas).

Karelia, which had an extensive border with the Grand Duchy of Finland, was also influenced by its neighbour to the West, although, for a variety of reasons, this influence was not decisive. But despite the fact that individual farming did not become widespread in Karelia during the course of the reform, the conditions for its further development were laid in that period. Had World War I not intervened, it seems likely that the process would have succeeded as the most expedient way of practising agriculture, given the soil and climatic conditions of the North.

In Soviet historiography, there was a characteristic bias towards studying the social and political aims of Stolypin's agrarian reform rather than its economic and specifically technical aspects. This meant that researchers overlooked the positive organisational, technical, agronomical and educational activity undertaken by zemstvo institutions in Olonets gubernia. It was these institutions, in effect, which catalysed agriculture's shift to an intensive path of development in this region. The zemstvos did a great deal to help the peasants realise the advantages of farming their own land rationally.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, neighbouring Finland had accumulated a great deal of experience in intensifying agricultural production in natural and climatic

conditions similar to those of Karelia. The first attempt to draw the attention of Olonets gubernia's rulers and zemstvo circles to the achievements of Finnish peasants was made in 1881 by M N Ostrovsky, the newly appointed minister of state properties (and brother of the playwright A N Ostrovsky). Having visited an agricultural exhibition in Turku, he shared his impressions and ideas about what he had seen with G G Grigor'ev, the governor of Olonets guberniya. The Minister had been particularly impressed with the Finns' achievements in raising livestock, and especially in breeding highly productive breeds of cattle. Ostrovsky observed: "The example of Finland shows that livestock-rearing in Northern Russia, with its abundance of meadows, could flourish. At present however, in many Northern guberniyas, including Olonets, livestock-farming is still in a far from satisfactory state." Ostrovsky stressed that "in Northern areas the development of livestock-farming is closely linked with the improvement of agriculture in general."<sup>1</sup> The Minister suggested that the governor got together with zemstvo bodies to plan measures for improving cattle breeds, and specifically, the purchase of pedigree animals to be placed free of charge with reliable farmers.<sup>2</sup>

At that time, however, there was no stable development or growth in livestock-rearing and milk production in Olonets gubernia. This was in contrast to another Northern gubernia, Vologda. There, a very strong butter-producing industry was created between 1870 and 1890, thanks to the efforts of N V Vereshagin, an outstanding lone enthusiast. Its output was not only as good as Finnish products, but on occasion was even superior.<sup>3</sup> Although Olonets governor

Grigor'ev had drawn the attention of the zemstvo bodies to Minister Ostrovsky's suggestions, no noticeable steps were taken towards implementing them. This stemmed firstly from the fact that, at that time, the Olonets zemstvos' financial resources were being directed towards overcoming the consequences of the poor harvest of 1880-81 and towards the extension of primary education and rural medicine. These were seen as priorities by the local political figures. Secondly, at the time the zemstvo lacked the requisite organisation and personnel for intervening in agriculture. It had neither agronomists nor stockbreeding experts, nor did it have the necessary infrastructure.

It was only from the mid-1890s that zemstvo members in Karelia started to budget on a regular basis for agricultural needs, primarily in order to bring in specialist agronomists and vets. This followed the personnel changes in zemstvo institutions as a result of the counterreform of 1890 and was given impetus by the serious food crisis in Central Russia of 1891-92.

Having embarked on a radical reform of Russia's agrarian sector, Prime Minister Stolypin sent out two circular telegrams to zemstvo bodies requesting active support for the government's measures. The first one was immediately after the publication of the decree of 9 November 1906, and the second was sent out in 1910, once the socio-political aspect of the reform was already exhausted, and Russia's rulers had become concerned solely with implementing technical measures. The zemstvos responded favourably to the Prime Minister's request, and took on a significant part of the work not only of publicising the agrarian reform, but also of providing practical assistance to country-dwellers.<sup>4</sup> Zemstvo bodies in Karelia were no exception

<sup>1</sup> National Archive of the Republic of Karelia (NARK) f. 12. op. 2. d. 5/13. l. 230-231

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.* l. 231

<sup>3</sup> Specifically, at the 1st All-Russia Dairy Farming Exhibition in St Petersburg in 1879, Vologda creameries won 45 prizes, beating the Finnish masters who, up to that time, had been considered the best. The Petersburg press remarked that "The exhibits from Vologda were a complete surprise to us, and revealed our total

ignorance of our own production. It is not only the Finns and Germans who can produce to exhibition standard, but also Russians, forest and tundra-dwellers from Vologda to boot". State Archive of Vologda Oblast', f. 18, op. 71, d. 2394, l. 2 ob.; f. 34, op. 1, d. 14/81, l. 2-3

<sup>4</sup> G Gerasimenko, *Zemskoe samoupravlenie v Rossii*, Moscow, 1990, pp. 36-37

Table 1

|  | Expenditure in thousands of rubles |       |       |        |        |        |        |
|--|------------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|  | years                              |       |       |        |        |        |        |
|  | 1900                               | 1905  | 1906  | 1911   | 1912   | 1913   | 1914   |
| Expenditure on agronomists                                   | 5,9                                | 20,2  | 23,6  | 57,2   | 60,7   | 85,1   | 100,4  |
| Expenditures on veterinary surgeons and fel'dshers           | 15,3                               | 26,1  | 31,0  | 35,3   | 36,5   | 37,6   | 42,9   |
| Expenditure on measures to improve agricultural productivity | 15,3                               | 59,9  | 69,9  | 41,8   | 52,3   | 62,7   | 80,7   |
| Grants to agricultural associations                          | 0                                  | 0,40  | 0,70  | 0,95   | 1,47   | 1,95   | 3,22   |
| Expenditure on fostering economic well-being                 | 22,1                               | 83,3  | 97,1  | 111,1  | 118,3  | 153,1  | 187,8  |
| Total expenditure on rural economic needs                    | 58,6                               | 189,9 | 222,3 | 246,35 | 269,27 | 340,45 | 415,02 |

in this regard, and significantly increased their financing of the countryside.

Table 1 shows how Olonets zemstvo institutions' spending developed over the years:<sup>1</sup>

As we can see, zemstvo expenditure on the economic needs of the countryside in Olonets guberniya rose by 7.1 times over the period, and this growth embraced a wide range of productive, personnel and organisational measures.

The Stolypin reforms created the objective conditions for Karelia to make use of the experience of agrarian reform accumulated in Finland. To popularise the reform, zemstvo figures in Olonets began to make frequent reference to the achievements of Finnish farmers. The chairman of the Povenets uezd zemstvo assembly, E A Bogdanovich, reporting in 1906 on measures to improve peasant living standards, laid great stress on the advantages of individual farmsteads and their greater suitability to local conditions. He stated directly that "the Finns can work won-

ders on exactly the same sort of soil as we have".<sup>2</sup> Repeating his report subsequently at a session of the guberniya zemstvo assembly, Bogdanovich added that the law of 9 November 1906 meant that "the way to raising peasant welfare has now been opened". At the same session K K Veber, a guberniya agronomist, argued that the main reason for the wretchedness and backwardness of agriculture in Olonets lay in the conditions of common land tenure, "where the land's temporary occupier's sole concern is that it doesn't lie fallow".<sup>3</sup> One of the zemstvo deputies declared, "In our region, it would take decades and an enormous investment of time and money to get the land into a condition where it would yield big harvests. The landholder will only invest that effort and capital if the land is his property, so that even if he does not see the benefits of his labour, at least his children will."<sup>4</sup> As a result of

<sup>1</sup> Source: *Byudzhet gubernskogo i uezdnykh zemstv Olonetskoj gubernii za 1868-1916 gg.* (Petrozavodsk 1917) pp. 196-199, 206-207, 210-213, 215-219.

<sup>2</sup> 'Obzor postanovleniy ocherednogo gubernskogo zemskogo sobraniya. Vopros ob obshchinnom i podvornom zemlepol'zovanii', *Vestnik Olonetskogo gubernskogo zemstva*, No. 4, 1907, p. 26.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. pp. 28-30.

these debates the guberniya zemstvo assembly passed a resolution which stated: “A move to individual land tenure is the only way to raise the well-being of the peasants”.<sup>1</sup>

The Olonets uезд zemstvo agronomist N A Bodalev also remarked that Finland had played a large part in the local population’s realisation of the need to move over to individual land tenure. Having been there on trade and other business, peasants had seen “that you can raise a flourishing garden on the rocks, so long as ownership is vested in one person”.<sup>2</sup>

Material on the agrarian reform and the Finnish experience of intensifying agricultural production appeared regularly in *Olonets Guberniya Zemstvo Herald*, which began publication in 1907.<sup>3</sup> Between 1908 and 1914 both the guberniya and the uезд zemstvos organised annual special agricultural tours to Finland. The groups would be led by the zemstvo agronomist, and would contain 5 – 6 large-scale peasant farmers and an interpreter (or sometimes a local Finnish specialist who spoke good Russian). The group members would look round the most advanced farms, and get to know how they organised their stockyards, fodder production, and breeding stock selection. They also learned about the activities of Finnish cooperators, visited collective butter-makers, peat and moss-processing enterprises, agricultural equipment hiring stations and land improvement projects. The Finns’ thorough stockbreeding work, their special pedigree books with lists of bulls and productive cows, the associations for verifying breeding bulls, the

constant competitions and exhibitions with prizes for stockbreeders, made a particular impression on the Olonets delegates.<sup>4</sup>

The Olonets visitors even noted the distinctive aspects of the Finnish household farm economy related to the special part played by livestock rearing. One of the Olonets peasants who had been on a visit to Vyborg guberniya in June 1911 later told K K Veber, a zemstvo agronomist: “What surprised us was the fact that there, every farmer knows how much feed each of his cows has eaten, how much it cost, how much milk she gave over the year and even when she calved, whereas here, you can see, not many farmers could even say how many cows they had in the shed without asking the wife.”<sup>5</sup>

Even while the Stolypin reform was being prepared, the Olonets guberniya zemstvo was using the Finnish experience in drawing up its plan, finally approved in 1906, to increase agricultural production. As in Finland, the cornerstone of this modernisation was to be the development of dairy farming. There was special stress on developing fodder production by expanding the planting of grass and land improvements, as well as by improving cattle breeds and organising commercial butter production. Another important task was to raise the standard of cultivation by acquainting peasants with progressive agricultural techniques, new machinery and equipment.

The zemstvo bodies started to encourage the planting of grassland by giving out grass seed to peasants. In 1902-1903 the guberniya zemstvo alone bought and distributed free of charge to peasants 78 puds of clover and timothy-grass. However, by the beginning of the 1910s the zemstvo agronomists had become convinced that this approach was not enough in Olonets guberniya, where, as one of them put it, “the peasants submit to

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> *Trudy VIII agronomicheskogo soveshchaniya pri Olonetskoj gubernskoy zemskoy uprave*, Petrozavodsk, 1913, p. 195.

<sup>3</sup> See e.g. M Komarovskiy, ‘Poezdka v Finlyandiyu’, *Vestnik Olonetskogo gubernskogo zemstva* 1907, Nos. 18-22; K Veber, ‘Pervye shestinedel’nye kursy po molochnomu khozyaystvu, maslodeliyu i skotovodstvu, pri Povenetskoy ferme’, Ibid, 1910, no. 12, p. 25; A Gagman, ‘Proekt premirovaniya obraztsovykh krest’yanskikh khozyaystv’, Ibid. 1911, No. 9, p. 29; G Gul’tman, ‘Deyatel’nost’ kontrol’nykh soyuzov Finlyandii v 1915 g.’, Ibid., 1916, No. 18. pp. 119-120.

<sup>4</sup> K Veber, ‘Osmotr olonchanami khutorskikh khozyaystv v Finlyandii’, Ibid., No. 21, pp. 14-17, No. 22, pp. 23-26; OGV 19 June 1910, 4 July 1914.

<sup>5</sup> K Veber, Osmotr olonchanami khutorskikh khozyaystv v Finlyandii, *Vestnik Olonetskogo gubernskogo zemstva*, No. 22, 1911, p. 24.

fate, and harvest nothing but sedge". They set up model grass fields with seed rotation over several fields. Gradually, the peasants began to show interest in growing grasses as a worthwhile part of farming. By 1917 in the Karelian uyezds there were 154 hectares under grass, or 0.3% of the total sown area of the guberniya.<sup>1</sup>

The zemstvo also tried to strengthen fodder production for livestock by introducing peasants to land improvement measures, widely practised in Finland at that time. In 1903 Olonets guberniya established a special fund for dealing with waterlogged holdings. Resources were made available from that fund for investigating and developing parcels of land which might be suitable for land improvement.<sup>2</sup> In 1908 the Olonets zemstvo officials' initiatives came to the attention of Nicholas II. Governor N V Protas'ev's annual report described the investigations, initiated with treasury and zemstvo resources, into "the numerous lakes and rivers, with the aim of lowering the level of the lakes and draining the land in order to turn the reclaimed land into meadow as done in Finland". The Emperor highlighted this passage with his own hand as "useful".<sup>3</sup>

In 1911 the guberniya zemstvo took on K I Viganda, a specialist on draining marshes and cultivating meadows, and subsequently instructors on farming marshland joined the staff of the uezd zemstvos.<sup>4</sup> By 1914 in the Karelian uyezds of Olonets guberniya some 42 strips of land showing how to work marshland and 45 plots demonstrating how to improve hay yields in dry valleys.<sup>5</sup> The most active response to zemstvo initiatives was among the inhabitants of Povenets uezd, in the very north of the guberniya, where the shortage of hay was particularly severe. In 1905 just 4 peasants had been working

marshland to grow hay in this area, but by 1910 this had risen to 45 peasants.<sup>6</sup> Farmers like I S Gaydin of Shun'ga village and I D Fedotov of Pokrovskaya village in Myandusel'ga volost' became well known in the uezd for their farming practices. By systematically applying land-improvement measures, they were able to supply their livestock with feed even in the years with the worst harvests. Their work received public recognition. The guberniya zemstvo journal noted that "the results they got on their marshes inspired not only the brighter peasants in their own village and neighbouring villages to imitate them, but also peasants from more distant villages in their volost'. Once they had become convinced that harvests that could be gained this sort of reclaimed meadow more than repaid the resources and efforts expended ... they themselves started reclaiming marshland for meadows."<sup>7</sup> On 6 December 1912 Nicholas II decreed that the leading farmers I S Gaydin and I D Fedotov be awarded silver medals "For Diligence" on Stanislav ribbon.<sup>8</sup>

From 1902 onwards, following the example of the neighbouring country, the zemstvos had started to establish breeding stations in the uyezds in order to improve cattle breeds. Activity in this area in particular increased during the agrarian reform period. Zemstvo specialists were sent on trips to Finland, paid for by the Main Administration for Land Usage and Agriculture of Russia, in order to purchase stud bulls of Eastern Finnish breeds, as the breeds best suited for Olonets guberniya. Particular preference was given to regions of Eastern and Northern Karelia and Kuopio guberniya, as their climatic and soil conditions, landscapes, and abundance of lakes and marshes were very similar to those of Olonets. For example, in 1912 the livestock specialist S A Vinogradov was sent

<sup>1</sup> Sotsialisticheskaya industrializatsiya Karel'skoy ASSR, Leningrad 1935, p. 22

<sup>2</sup> NARK f. 12, op. 1, d. 4/53, p. 8

<sup>3</sup> NARK f. 1, op. 1, d. 106/1, p. 191

<sup>4</sup> NARK f. 12, op. 1, d. 2/13, p. 37

<sup>5</sup> Olonetskaya guberniya. Statisticheskiy spravochnik. Petrozavodsk 1913, pp. 334-335

<sup>6</sup> Otchet gubernskogo zemskogo agronoma za 1911 g., g., Petrozavodsk, 1912, pp. 66-67

<sup>7</sup> Zemskaya agronomicheskaya pomoshch' v Olonetskoj gubernii, Vestnik Olonetskogo gubernskogo zemstva, 1910, No. 1, p. 8

<sup>8</sup> OGV 1912, 26 December

to the agricultural fair at Joensuu to get a consignment of bulls, needed in order to open new breeding stations in areas of individual household farming. By 1913, in the Karelian uyezds of Olonets guberniya there were 43 breeding stations with 46 bulls, 35 of which were Eastern Finnish and 11 of which were cross-breeds. There were around 2.5 thousand cattle in the dairy herds around these stations.<sup>1</sup> The zemstvos began to organise regular exhibitions of dairy and draught animals, with prizes for those farmers who exhibited the best specimens of cattle and horses. However, this was just the beginning of a painstaking process of selection, since a special zemstvo study showed that elite bulls of Eastern Finnish stock only comprised 7% of all the breeding bulls in the region by 1913.<sup>2</sup>

On zemstvo initiative, certain advanced farms were used as the basis for creating special control points on the Finnish model for thoroughbred cattle, which laid down the external appearance, the quantities and types of feed they required (crude, fresh, concentrated and so on) over a given period of time, increases in live weight and milk yields. It is interesting to note that one of the first such points in Olonets uezd was opened in 1911, by Andrey Ivanovich Zakonov, a Karelian peasant from Spiridon Navolok village in Vedlozerskaya volost', immediately on his return from a visit to Finland.<sup>3</sup> He also asked that the uezd uprava take his nephew, to whom he intended to leave his farm, on a visit to the neighbouring country. Zakonov stated that "this will mean that we understand each other on the farm and what I am now bringing in will develop on a firm basis".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Olonetskaya guberniya. Statisticheskii spravochnik. Petrozavodsk 1913, p. 336

<sup>2</sup> Olonetskaya guberniya. Statisticheskii spravochnik. Petrozavodsk 1913, p. 238

<sup>3</sup> Ob agronomicheskikh meropriyatiyakh Olonetskogo uездnogo zemstva, Vestnik Olonetskogo gubernskogo zemstva, No. 24, 1911, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup> K. Veber, Osmotr olonchanami khutorskikh khozyaystv v Finlyandii, Vestnik Olonetskogo gubernskogo zemstva, No. 22, 1911, p. 26.

The zemstvo creameries were one of the most successful ways in which the Finnish experience was inculcated. The story of one of the first of these creameries, in Veshkelitsy village, Syamozerskaya volost', Petrozavodsk uezd, is typical. In 1901 the zemstvo sent the village a mobile workshop, equipped with a separator. It was headed by V Popova, trained by the well-known butter manufacturer N V Vereshagin. By June 1901 a butter-making farmers' association, involving 32 individual farmers, had formed around the workshop, and by the end of the first summer season more than 43 puds of butter had been produced at the creamery. The produce was sold through the uezd zemstvo stores in Petrozavodsk, and some of it even reached St Petersburg. Thanks to the creamery, the income of the 32 association members from livestock farming almost tripled. By 1902 the association had grown to 65 permanent members, with a further 40 occasionally selling excess milk to the creamery. Having played an important role in spreading the idea of butter-manufacturing, the association in Veshkelitsy broke up in 1907 as private creameries began to appear. By that time there were already 6 separators in the village and its surrounding area and butter-making had gained a firm foothold.<sup>5</sup>

Another zemstvo creamery, opened in 1903 in Spiridon-Navolok village, Olonets uezd, eventually provided the basis for founding the Kroshnozerskoe agricultural association, which by 1913 had 30 separators producing 260 puds of butter.<sup>6</sup> Using these separators, the creameries were able to produce batches of high quality butter - "Parisian", "Holstein" and "sweet cream", which sold well in Petrozavodsk and St Petersburg. It was reported that in the capital Olonets

<sup>5</sup> OGV 10 May, 28 July, 23 October 1901; 19 October 1902; I S Molosovkin, Soobshcheniya iz uездov. Veshkelitsy, Vestnik Olonetskogo gubernskogo zemstva, No. 16, 1908, p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> NARK, f. 12, op. 1, d. 4/48, p. 51

butter would fetch “a very high price” (up to 20 rubles for “Parisian” butter).<sup>1</sup>

Thanks to help from the zemstvos, commercial butter production became firmly established in the economy of the Karelian village, as the data show. In 1902 there were only 5 separators in Olonets guberniya, in 1905 there were 17, and by 1912 there were already 268.<sup>2</sup> It is notable that it was Povenets uezd, which bordered on Finland, which led the way here by a large margin. By 1912 it had 143 creameries – more than half the total for the guberniya.<sup>3</sup> The zemstvo agronomist K K Veber remarked that the Povenets uezd dairy industry “has reached a scale where it is starting to get noticed”.<sup>4</sup>

In order to acquaint peasants with the latest developments in agricultural technique as practised in Finland, special exhibitions were set up to demonstrate improved agricultural equipment and machinery. By 1912 winnowing trains had been established in every uezd, with a total of 53 machines (winnowers, separators, screening machines). The guberniya zemstvo and the Olonets and Povenets uezd zemstvos also had points where agricultural equipment could be rented.<sup>5</sup>

Many peasants began to follow the example of Finnish farmers, and gathered moss to use as warm bedding for their cattle in the winter. On 19 December 1912 a general meeting of the Kroshnozerskoe agricultural association (Vedlozerskaya volost', Olonets uezd) applied to the Main Administration for Land Usage and Agriculture for assistance in setting up a turf and moss processing plant

for making bedding. The uezd zemstvo assembly immediately granted 50 rubles for setting up the plant.

In 1911 a local activist, assessing the results of the measures taken by the Petrozavodsk uezd zemstvo to promote agrarian techniques, wrote: “Previously we had to foist grass seed onto peasants free of charge, now they will buy it at the going rate... Previously nobody wanted to use ploughs which were given away for nothing, but now 30 to 50 of them are sold each year, and most of the inhabitants of certain villages (Iviny, Besovets) have gone over to working the ground with ploughs. The same can be said about winnowing machines, of which 20 are now sold each year. A particularly important step forward has taken place in butter-making. Since the appointment of the travelling butter-making instructor, the number of peasant creameries (if we may call them thus) has grown rapidly, and there are now 70 separators in use in the uezd, bringing their owners a very tangible income. But butter-making is not only important from that point of view; it also inculcates in the peasant the desire to improve the whole farm, by planting grass for feed, by improving livestock and its feeding and so on. If someone were to follow the development of the countryside attentively and compare the countryside now with how it was 15 years ago, I think he would find massive changes.”<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, despite some tangible results in the development of peasant farming, the main aim of the Stolypin reforms, which was to create a broad stratum of individual farmers, was not achieved in Olonets guberniya in the short period of time history granted this new agricultural policy. The official statistical data for 1914 in Table 2 below bear this out:<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Obzor Olonetskoy gubernii za 1901 g. Petrozavodsk, 1902, p. 6; OGV 23 June 1901; III agronomicheskoe soveshchanie, Vestnik Olonetskoy gubernskogo zemstva, No. 12, 1910, p. 19.

<sup>2</sup> V Buzin, S Vinogradov, Materialy po issledovaniyu zhivotnovodstva v Olonetskoy gubernii, Petrozavodsk, 1914, p. 24

<sup>3</sup> Olonetskaya guberniya: Statisticheskii spravochnik, p. 336.

<sup>4</sup> K Veber, Pervye shestinedel'nye kursy po molochnomu khozyaystvu, maslodeliyu i skotovodstvu, pri Povenetskoy ferme, Vestnik Olonetskogo gubernskogo zemstva, No. 12, 1910, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup> Olonetskaya guberniya. Statisticheskii spravochnik, pp. 335-336.

<sup>6</sup> F.I. Ziadyan', Neskol'ko slov o 15-letney deyatelnosti agronomii v Petrozavodskom uезде, Vestnik Olonetskogo gubernskogo zemstva, No. 20, 1911, p. 32.

<sup>7</sup> I. Naymark, Obzor agronomicheskoy pomoshchi khozyaystvam edinolichnogo vladeniya Olonetskoy gubernii za 1914 g., Petrozavodsk, 1915, p. 7.

Table 2

| Uezds                      | Total land area<br>(000 desyatins) | Total area under<br>cultivation (000<br>desyatins) | Total number of<br>peasant house-<br>holds | Of which total<br>number re-<br>formed |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Petrozavodsk               | 1438                               | 814  | 11393                                      | 8                                      |
| Povenets                   | 3721                               | 604  | 4559                                       | 176                                    |
| Pudozh                     | 1853                               | 683  | 6562                                       | 12                                     |
| Kargopol                   | 1955                               | 956  | 15185                                      | 193                                    |
| Vytegra                    | 1049                               | 446  | 10185                                      | 153                                    |
| Lodeynoe Pole              | 885                                | 338  | 9388                                       | 107                                    |
| Olonets                    | 853                                | 411  | 7768                                       | 318                                    |
| Total for<br>the guberniya | 11754                              | 4252   | 65040                                      | 967                                    |

Thus, across Olonets guberniya as a whole in 1914 individual farmers and peasants who had separated from the commune comprised just 1.5% of total peasant households (members of communes and individual farmers). This was about eight times lower than the average for European Russia as a whole.<sup>1</sup> However, we should not fail to notice that the highest proportion of individual farmsteads in the region was to be found in the two western, Karelian uezds of the guberniya, Olonets (4.1%) and Povenets (3.9%), where Finnish methods of farming were best known.

The process of creating individual peasant farms in Olonets guberniya was hindered by several factors. The almost complete absence of a landowning nobility meant that the agrarian question was basically a question of the relationship between peasants and the state, and was therefore less acute than in regions with landowners. Another important factor was the fact that the peasants' main money incomes were not gained from the land at all, but from various handicrafts. In Karelia, with its severe weather conditions, agrarian capitalism was little developed, and communal traditions, which enabled peasant households to survive extreme

situations, were well entrenched. To the local peasants, the commune retained a psychological, philosophical and even religious significance as a kind of basic value given from above.

Communal landholding itself in Karelia had a rather complicated and confused character, because of the predominance of group agriculture at the time when the land reform was carried out in 1866. Around 90% of the settlements formerly attached to state or mining enterprises were lumped together with other villages to receive their recorded land allotments.<sup>2</sup> At the same time there was frequent discord about apportioning the parts of the holding suitable for pasture, hay-making, and clearance, and the parts under forest. Distributing land under such circumstances was very difficult, and demanded significant expenditure on the state's part. On this question N V Protas'ev, the Olonets governor, wrote to Prime Minister Stolypin on 16 August 1910 as follows: "The unsatisfactory nature of the way land was apportioned to former state peasants in the past acts as a huge brake on peasant aspirations in this regard. It is by no means rare in Olonets guberniya to find between 40 and 100 hamlets lumped to-

<sup>1</sup> See: *Krizis samoderzhaviya v Rossii, 1895-1917*, Leningrad, 1984, pp. 367-368

<sup>2</sup> See P. N. Pershin, *Zemel'noe ustroystvo v dorevolutsionnoy derevne, Voronezh, 1928*, vol. 1, p. 302.

gether in a single set of deeds as the owners of a land allocation. Moreover, this allocation will contain land which is held by just one hamlet, land which is held in common by several hamlets, as well as land jointly owned by all the hamlets mentioned in the deeds. Struggling against this form of land holding is one of the most pressing tasks of the peasant institutions of Olonets guberniya.”<sup>1</sup>

The complex situation of Russo-Finnish relations during this period also had its effect on the process of moving Karelian agriculture over to a system of individual farmers. On the one hand, in the wake of the revolution of 1905-1907, Russia's governing circles led an assault on Finland's autonomy, whilst in the Grand Duchy, aggressively nationalistic circles became more active under the banner of pan-Finnism.<sup>2</sup> This situation gave rise to mutual mistrust and hindered the development of firm and close relationships between the farmers of the two countries. Even in zemstvo circles, which overall had a positive view of Finnish farming practices, there were dissenting voices raised. For example, one zemstvo figure, hiding behind the initials A.G., wrote in the official guberniya zemstvo journal in 1910: “We are presented with the example of Finland: everything is fine there, the country is prospering, everything is in exemplary order, the farmsteads are unparalleled and so on. But is there many of them? Are there not also completely landless people there? How much flour is Finland buying from us, and then selling back to us as if it was their own?... But even if everything is fine there, it cannot serve as an ex-

ample for Olonets guberniya. It may be next to us, but the climate is moderated by the sea, cherries and plums will grow there whereas we cannot even grow decent apples in Olonets. In butter production only Vologda guberniya can compare with Finland. Olonets is not going to become a granary.”<sup>3</sup> At the same time, the author did not recommend any practical steps for improving the agricultural sector. The situation which had emerged was clearly not conducive to Russian Karelia adopting the positive agricultural experience of neighbouring Finland.

<sup>1</sup> NARK, f. 1. op. 1, d. 106/1, pp. 217 ob.-218

<sup>2</sup> See E. Yu. Dubrovskaya, *Protivoborstvo panfinnizma i russkogo velikoderzhaviya v Karelii (po materialam istochnikov kontsa XIX – nachala XX vv)*, *Voprosy istorii Evropeyskogo Severa*, Petrozavodsk, 1991, pp. 55-64; V. I. Musaev (compiler and introduction), “Finnizatory” i “obrusiteli”, *Dokumenty po istorii bor'by za vliyanie v Karelii (konetz XIX – nachalo XX vv)*, Nestor. Zhurnal istorii i kul'tury Rossii i Vostochnoy Evropy No. 12. *Finno-ugorskie narody Rossii. Problemy istorii i kul'tury*. St. Petersburg, 2007, pp. 47-71.

<sup>3</sup> A. G. Kogda chto budet? *Vestnik Olonetskogo gubernskogo zemstva*, No. 22, 1910, p. 16.