

State of Public Sector of Moscow Region Agriculture in 1940-1942s

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Abstract

For the first time in Russian historiography public economic setup in the Soviet agriculture in 1940-1942s has been analyzed basing on unknown archive materials. Most attention was paid to historiography of this subject, new methods applied by contemporary historians in research of rural economy of this period have been mentioned. Specific challenges that arose in the process and as a result of evacuation of sovkhoz' (state farms) and machine and tractor stations' (MTS) property, preparation to spring sowing in realization of On self-reliance directive of All-Russian party of Bolsheviks have been analyzed. The conclusion about the reasons and consequences of unreadiness of governing bodies to evacuation and spring sowing has been made.

Keywords: property evacuation, self-reliance, sovkhoz, MTS, agriculture, Moscow region

1. Introduction

Assessment of condition of state agricultural objects in 1940-1942s and state policy of their use in conditions that had changed after the beginning of the war has been made in the present research. This topic remained undiscovered until now and objective assessment of events that took place at that time wasn't given. Analysis of records was made on the base of data of Moscow region.

Importance of the research is caused by the work of Russian Government on food security of the country. The lessons of the past may help solving problems of the present.

2. Historiography of the Problem and Scientific Discussion

Interest of historians to changes in agriculture of the country after collectivization is not limited by analysis of life of kolkhoz peasantry. Recent years many historians of agricultural relations give up accepted in Soviet period of ideological cliché of a common kolkhoz and sovkhoz setup that had been formed in rural area in the process of socialism development. According to new opinion structure of agricultural workers was not homogeneous. There were at least two setups - state and kolkhoz in place of existing on the eve of the war kolkhoz and sovkhoz setup that was typical for overwhelming majority of peasants. Actual number of self-employed farmers was not listed at all. As a matter of fact according to some documents, a number of self-employed farmers in southern regions of the USSR, in the Caucasus was not as small as it was declared by Soviet propaganda and collectivization had been conducted formally, just to divert attention. Profitability of farms of self-employed farmers after sheer collectivization carried out in prewar time requires separate research. Some contemporary historians consider the process of emerging and maturing of sovkhozes and MTS in prewar time from the point of view of "state capitalization of agriculture of Russia" (Bensin & Dimoni, 2011, p. 91). They refer to definition of Soviet model of socialism as state capitalism that manifests itself in separation of peasants from land and basic means of production and legislative system of duties together with personal land duty with state in place of pre-revolutionary landlord. These historians also state that state and kolkhoz' sector in agriculture have significant difference. There was also the trend to further transfer into government ownership of kolkhozes and their replacement with sovkhozes (Bensin & Dimoni, 2011). Special situation of state agricultural farms they has from the moment of foundation is stated in the other works too. For example, living and legal conditions of state farms workers and kolkhoz peasants were incomparable. Sovkhozes' and MTSes' workers has trade unions, drawn a salary, had day offs, official holidays and vacations kolkhozes' peasants could hardly dream of (Petrushin, 2012). Soviet historians in their researches and statistical reports also noted that sovkhozes and MTSes had a special place in agriculture of the country in prewar time, although these historians did not opposed kolkhozes and state farms or at least did not do this obviously. It was mentioned that in 1940 there were

eight types of wheel and track-type tractors, combine park had grown from 104.8 thousand vehicles in 1937 to 153.4 thousand (Viylatsan, 1970). MTSes signed contracts with kolkhozes that had no own tractors and combines and played leading role in technical provisioning of kolkhoz economy. Share of sovkhoses in agriculture in this period was relatively low. In 1940 they had 6.9% of area under crop of grain (Zelenin, 1969, p. 21). To the beginning of 1941 there were 456 and 494 grain and fruit and vegetable farms, relatively, of 4159 sovkhoses in the USSR (Agriculture of the USSR, 1960, pp. 42-43).

The rest of sovkhoses were stock-raising. But low number of sovkhoses with less area under crop comparing with kolkhozes was compensated by high ratio of commodity output to the total output and better quality. Besides, sovkhoses were the largest agricultural industrial enterprises with good production base. An average kolkhoz had 12.2 thousands of hectares of land under cultivation in 1940 while one kolkhoz had 1.4 hectares; and 2.8 thousands of hectares and 0.5 thousands of hectares of area under crop, respectively (Agriculture of the USSR, 1960, pp. 49 & 59). Many sovkhoses had the same number of tractors in average that MTSes that made technical provisioning of sovkhoses close to MTSes although some small sovkhoses has limited number of agricultural machinery (conclusion of the author on the base of materials of statistical collections "Agriculture of the USSR", Socialist people economy of collections of Central State Archive of the Moscow region and collection "The USSR in 1933-1940s"). Number of tractors and combines was determined by importance of kolkhoz its share in agricultural production of a region and managerial independence. In this sense the level of technical provisioning of sovkhoses of national standing is revealing. Share of plough cattle in these sovkhoses to the beginning of 1941 was only 6.9% of hauling apparatus power, and 93.1% was motorized vehicles including 49.4% of tractors (Zelenin, 1969, p. 22).

One may be surprised to read from author's abstracts of theses for Doctor of Science degree that there are no special researches of state sector in agriculture, for example of MTSes, conducted from the point of view of contemporary ideas (Soboleva, 2004). There is a number of Doctor of Science thesis and published researches on their basis, separate researches made in 90s - turn of 2000 that directly or indirectly touch this matter. Most of their authors analyzed the matter from new and contemporary position (Androsov, 1993; Androsov, 2000). But scientific community of that time was not ready to some radical assessments. Even now many well-known scientists take obsolete views or are ready to admit only some holes or awkwardness of administrative command system (for example, mistakes of Narkomzem in organizing evacuation and preparation to spring sowing. But they do not mention directives of the Central Committee of All-Russian Communist party of Bolsheviks (CC A-RCPB) and ideological guidelines of obkoms (regional Committee of A-RCPB) and raikoms (district Committee of A-RCPB) that sometimes had brought agricultural production on the brink of collapse (Cherepanov, 2000; To some results of researches..., 2013). For example, what counts widely promoted by party organizations the idea of "self-reliance" in the situation of state decentralization of system of provisioning agriculture with spare parts and fuel! What losses material and technical basis of rural areas suffered from it! To what degree this idea - that was in essence a directive without alternative - was grounded by tense situation in front in 1941-1943s? Did Soviet leaders understand that in case of protracted war self-repayment of agriculture would lead to loss of material and technical base and in combination with the lack of workforce would lead to rapid decrease of agricultural production and provisioning of food to army? Now it is difficult to answer these questions explicitly that forms wide area for scientific discussions. But these authors do not participate in these discussions and share the idea of similarity of agricultural setups existing as a result of collectivization.

Perspective and almost undiscovered direction in the study of functioning of state property forms in war years is revealed in the work of V. Shenin "Soldier's bread" in which he analyzed the history of creation and development of war sovkhoses and part-time farms (Shenin, 2013). Sometimes there are published memorandums of veterans of sovkhoses founded before the war. These works add scientific researches with new facts (Leonov, 2000).

V. T. Aniskov analyses problems of evacuation of agriculture of the USSR basing on a number of interesting and unknown facts on his monograph "Peasantry against fascism" (Aniskov, 2003).

We describe and analyze problems of evacuation of state agricultural objects of the only one but important region - the Moscow agricultural region.

In our research we have been basing on the principle of historical method, objectivity, reliability and new methods that were accepted in historical science in post-Soviet period of development of historical science. Viewing and analysis of pre-war and war agriculture from the point of view of T. M. Dimoni, M. A. Beznin and Yu. A. Petrushin that was stated by them in their works is closer to us from methodological point. They consider state and kolkhoz sectors of agriculture as essentially different in the scope of common people economic complex (Beznin & Dimoni, 2011; Petrushin, 2012). Place and role of part-time farms that was important

element of agriculture that was included on state sector is not analyzed in the present research.

3. Reorganization of State Sector of Agriculture of Moscow Region and Evacuation It for Work in War Situation in 1941-42 and Its Results

3.1 Specifics of Reorganization in Agriculture

Military reorganization in the years of the Great Patriotic War was in essence mobilization of production facilities of the country for defense. Enterprises turned to production of military hardware, armory, ammunition, equipment, outfit; military production was strengthened by passing enterprises of other industries to it. Reorganization of military and civil industry was unified process and presupposed the most strict retrenchment, re-training and training of new workforce, involvement of previously non-working people in production. Reorganization took relatively short time. In last months of the first year of the war decrease in main industries was stopped and then a stable growth started that went on with noticeable irregularities (Kravchenko, 1979, p. 123; Soviet home front in the first period of the Great Patriotic War, 1988, pp. 117&118).

Similar processes in agriculture went on more painfully and upturn appeared only in the final period of the Great Patriotic War. It was caused by specifics of agricultural production and long-term exploitative treatment of it by the state.

Objective and subjective problems that the Moscow region faced after the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, activity of state, soviet, military and party organizations to overcome them were typical for any region or land of the Soviet Union but special state of capital city added importance to these activities going on in this period. Moscow and Moscow region produced agricultural products in sovkhozes joined into four trusts: Mosoblovoshtrest, Mossvinotrest, Miszhivtrest and Mosovoshtrest. Sovkhozes with city state were located in the territory of the region so these production facilities have been analyzed together with regional sovkhozes. Main food products produced by agricultural enterprises of the Moscow region were bread, potatoes and vegetables. That is why we are interested first of all in those sovkhozes that raised grain, potatoes and vegetables. Reorganization of agricultural production of the region was complicated process with its culmination in the period of the battle for Moscow. When the region was in deep rear tasks of agriculture were much easy to solve than during the period of an attack on Moscow.

It explains in particular relatively successful start of reorganization of agriculture in the region in the first month of the war. In August-September 1941 the Moscow regional Soviet of agricultural workers faced the task to gather and save the crop of grain, potatoes and vegetables. Sovkhozes and MTSes were in need for machine operators as most of men were conscribed or worked on building of lines of defense. Authority of the Moscow region organized short-term courses of machine operators and technical workers with MTS and sovkhozes. Terms of study in these courses were four-five times shorter than in pre-war period; twenty days courses were stuffed mainly by young women. As a result to the middle of July more than five hundred women went to work in MTSes (Mat'yas, 1966, p. 20). As a result of measures undertaken on sites by all regional organizations including public, most part of harvest was gathered. But invasion of fascists in the territory of the Moscow region and early frosts did not allow gathering all the harvest and fulfill the plan of state deliveries.

3.2 Problems Related to Evacuation

Evacuation of people, equipment, machinery, live-stock to eastern regions of the country was the main task of Soviet state and public organizations in the period of fascists' attack on Moscow. Evacuation during a war is taking out economy objects, institutions, art and industrial valuables from regions under the risk of occupation by an enemy to remote regions. Evacuation is a part of military reorganization of all economy mechanism. Evacuation went on three months and was almost completed to the beginning of 1942 (Mat'yas, 1966, p. 7). To the middle of November 1941 more than 100 thousand beasts of cattle and 6 thousand sheep were evacuated, 2145 tractors, electric motors, machine tools and other equipment were moved from the Moscow region. Initially to manage and control the way of evacuation of cattle, tractors, motors and spare parts group of 20 top managers of the People Commissariat of Land Management (Narkomzem) of the USSR was founded in Moscow by an order of the Soviet of People Commissars (SPC) of the USSR. This number of people was obviously insufficient for this task and Narkomzem of the USSR applied to Soviet of People Commissars to increase this group to 64 members. This request was satisfied only partially - by 37 people - that was absolutely unreasonable due to the scope of the task (RSAE, f. 7486, sh.223). But situation on the front became worse, Russian forces had been retreating and the task became much more complicated so special evacuation administration was founded on November, 27 as central managing and control body. It was headed by A. S. Poliokhin (RSAE, d. 2873, sh. 29). Three groups of specialists were founded in the body: planning and transportation group, evacuation and metal removal group and operative group on evacuation of tractors, combines, combine motors, machine tools, spare

parts for tractors and agricultural machinery. Administration had to staff these groups by its own, and assign functions and tasks among them. In accordance with the order of Narkomzem of the USSR dated November, 27 an institution of invariable authorized persons of the Administration was founded in one day for the period of evacuation (RSAE, f.7486, list 1, d. 2873, sh. 28). In these days evacuation units were founded to evacuate property of MTSES in front line in the Moscow region. These units had to deliver tractors to railroad stations.

Specifics of evacuation of property of state agricultural enterprises was that tractors, combines and other means of production were moved not to back lands of the country but to neighboring regions of the Moscow region. For example, Kim MTS was evacuated to Ryazan region (CASMM), f.17), tractors of Grigoriev MTS - to Gus-Khrustalni in Vladimir region, tractors of Konstantonovo region - to Kalinin region (CASMM, d.1278). Most of tractors were evacuated from the Moscow region to Ivanovo region (CASMM, f. 88). 224 tractors arrived here from the Moscow agricultural region from the beginning of evacuation till November, 26 and total number of tractors in Ivanovo region was 278. 683 tractors were moving to Ivanovo from the Moscow region. Evacuation units control delivery of tractors that moved from MTSES to railroad stations. From the Moscow region to station Gus-Khrustalni tractors moved over the territory of districts of the Moscow region: Petushinski, Egorievsk, Zagorsk (RSAE, f.7486, sh. 85). Railway platforms had to be prepared for the further transportation of tractors to the east to the time of tractors arrival. The biggest stations of tractors loading in 1941 in the Moscow region were Egorievsk, Krivandino, Petushki, Cherusti (RSAE, f.7486, sh. 88).

Serious mistakes and errors were made in organization of this stage of evacuation. District party organizations were to be blamed for it because they were in charge of coordination of activity of economical and managerial groups engaged in evacuation. Often it was impossible to load tractors arriving to railway stations due to absence of platforms. For example, director of 1st Mikhnevo MTS (leading in the region) prepared equipment of workshops and arrived to the station tractors and combines to loading. Requests for platforms were made at time but platforms were not provided (RSAE, f.7486, sh. 137). Tractors, combines, machine tools and other agricultural property accumulated in stations that created dangerous situation that became worse with arrival of tractors. Plan of evacuation was on the brink of collapse. The worst situation was on December, 1 in the station Rannenburch-Moscow of Donbass railroad where about 400 tractors were accumulated (RSAE, f.7486, sh. 136). Comparing situation on the four mentioned stations in the Moscow region one may make a conclusion that the problem with delivery of agricultural property was not only solved with time but became worse (see Table) (RSAE, f. 7486, sh.134).

Table 1. Number of tractors in station

Station	Number of tractors in station	
	To November, 26	
Cherusti	30	60
Petushki	100	192
Egogievsk	190	182
Krivandino	120	40
Total	440	474

Note: Compiled from data of RSAE

Accumulation of tractors and other means of agricultural production in station due to the absence of wagons and platforms made evacuation less possible. Actually this disastrous process was stopped with the beginning of counter-offensive operation and directive of the Center on termination of evacuation issued December, 17, 1941 (RSAE, f. 7486, sh. 206).

Explaining reasons that might hamper evacuation process it is necessary to take into consideration difficulties of the situation in a whole, lack of understanding of the situation, inability of many managers to change their activity due to changed situation and to reorganize the lower organizations.

Drawing nearer the battlefield and overloaded railroad transportation during all the period of the Moscow battle as well as deficit of freight-cars were objective difficulties. Besides, large industrial objects were evacuated first. Evacuation of agricultural objects was considered less important. Absence of wagons in stations and insufficient efficiency of managerial groups may be explained also by war factor that means breaks of communication both with MTSES in the regions where combat operations were and with stations that did not receive orders issued by

the Center. Situation in the station Kashira is the most vivid example. Industrial region of Kashira along with such towns as Stalinigorsk and Tula was very important for provisioning Moscow with its production. That is why in the order of command of fascist army group "Center" in the period of attack on Moscow Kashira together with mentioned towns was planned to "be captured as fast as possible" (Top Secret! Command only!, 1967). And according to a report of Narkomzem to SPC dated December, 6 Moscow regional procurement unit had no information from loading station Kashira and communication with regional MTS was broken (RSAE, f.7486, sh. 137). Besides, many MTSes were in close proximity to industrial objects and railway stations and so they were targets for bombing by enemy.

Errors made by managers in planning, absence of relevant coordination of actions and efficiency of different managerial structures, sluggishness of decision making that was unforgivable in war situation are subjective reasons of bottlenecks in stations. For example, due to technical error made by the Narkomat (people commissariat) of communication lines 450 wagons were assigned to Narkomat of procurement that wasn't engaged in evacuation of agricultural property (RSAE, f.7486, sh. 135). Wagons arrived at time to the station Serebriani Bor to evacuate the property of the Moscow office of Selkhossnab (Agricultural Procurement). But wagons stayed idle because the property of the office was not prepared for loading while there was not enough wagons on other stations. As a result wagons were withdrawn from Narkomat of Agriculture by administrative order and property of Selkhossnab was evacuated (RSAE, f.7486, sh. 52a). There were also examples of taking the opportunity in somebody's avaricious marauder purposes. For example, director of Schelkovo MTS during evacuation misappropriated money that was provided for echelon (20 thousand of Rubles) (CASMM, sh.115).

General drawback in evacuation (and then re-evacuation) in the first period of the war was unreadiness of most of agricultural enterprises to work in new situation caused due to the war. Many people did not understand the danger and wanted to work in the same way as in peace time. That was typical not for workers and managers of agricultural enterprises but for all areas of production supporting evacuation. For example, many heads of stations in their reports to Narkomat of agriculture were overcautious, did not take the initiative and wrote that it was impossible to load tractors because additional loading was not included in plan for December although there were empty wagons (RSAE, f. 7486, sh. 136).

Evacuation from near front regions including the Moscow region included also sovkhoses that moved to eastern regions together with the workers. In addition to tractors and auto-vehicles cattle was evacuated too. They went by themselves. Serious difficulties arose in moving tractors and cars due to lack of fuel. Analogous difficulties arose in moving MTSes. Tractor park of MTSes was several times greater than tractor park of sovkhoses and the lack of fuel was explained by the fact that bulk plants provided military cars in the first place (RSAE, f. 7803, sh. 50). Besides, after withdrawal of cars by military organizations the most worn own cars were left to MTSes. These cars required thorough repairs or renewal (RSAE, f. 7486, sh. 85). It is hard to imagine what difficulties followed supporting groups.

Many vehicles were left in the road due to the lack of fuel. Some of them were captured by the enemy, some stayed in front line, and some were left in the territory that was not occupied because it was impossible to carry on evacuation (RSAE, d. 2829, sh. 117). People evacuating horses, cows and other cattle faced great difficulties too. A lot of cattle were lost in front line, even greater part perished on the way due to exhaustion and diseases (CASMM, f.119, sh.12). Errors of organizations that participated in evacuating had an impact. Reports about cattle evacuation through the Moscow region were delayed more than for 24 hours due to Narkomzem that hamper urgent decision for centralized management to solve hard situations in sites (RSAE, f. 7803, sh. 50-51). Sometimes district and inter-district organizations made decisions on evacuating of sovkhoses, MTSes and part-time farms too late. In these cases property was captured by enemy. 3 of 10 sovkhoses of Mosovoshtrest were occupied (RSAE, f. 7486, sh. 8). 16 of 39 sovkhoses of Mosvinoest were occupied. Also 7 sovkhoses of Mosoblzhivrest were occupied (CSAMR, f. 8003, sh. 1). Cattle, grain and forage was saved by delivering it to Soviet Army in addition to evacuating from near front territory. This property was not captured by the enemy but it wasn't returned during re-evacuation. Besides mechanical draught force, animal traction, equipment, vehicles and agricultural machinery in MTSes and sovkhoses, cattle, grain, forage in sovkhoses and part-time farms property of state agricultural enterprises included real estate: houses, storehouses and farmstead of MTSes and sovkhoses, farm-yards of sovkhoses. They were partially used by fascists.

3.3 Loss of State Sector of Agriculture Due to Fascists Occupation

Mechanical vehicles, cattle and valuable equipment and means of production were withdrawn by Wehrmacht to the rear of German troops or were used in occupied Soviet territory. 1100 captured tractors were used only from the Moscow region (RSASPH, f. 88, sh. 8). 64 thousand of agricultural machinery and other vehicles of MTSes

were in German rear including more than 47 thousand cultivating and harvesters (RSASPH, f.17, sh. 239). Fascists destroyed or made worthless all these machines. We give an example of 30 sovkhozes of the Moscow region that were occupied. 95 tractors, 446 cars and 4850 items of various agricultural machinery were destroyed by fascists. Cattle breeding was completely eliminated (Mat'yas, 1966, p. 34). Cattle, chickens, food and possessions of workers of sovkhozes that were occupied were plundered or burned. Sometimes fascists did not destroy agricultural means of production but used them as protective shelter from Soviet Army. For example, agricultural machinery was used as antitank shelter. Sometimes territories of sovkhozes and MTSes with agricultural machinery were mined. In this way agricultural machinery was used in Vysokonichi (RSASPH, f.17, sh. 239), Istra, Ugodsko-Zavodsk and Maloyaroslavets regions (CSAMR, f. 2157, sh. 13). Fascists also destroyed agricultural constructions to destroy material and technical base of peasantry. In sovkhoz (Bolshevik) of Istra region all constructions (6 living houses, farm-yard and others) were completely burned. The same situation was in sovkhozes (Ozeretski) of Krasnopolyansk region and (Obschestvennik) of Khimki region. Sovkhos (Berezhki) of Solnechnogorsk region, (Pobeda) of Ugodsko-Zavodsk region and (Protva) of Maloyaroslavets region (RSASPH, f.88, sh. 8). 999 constructions were destroyed in 30 sovkhozes (RSASPH, f.88, sh. 9). Together with MTSes, part-time farms and kolkhozes 46 thousand of agricultural constructions were destroyed (RSASPH, f.17, sh. 239). MTSes suffered in greatest way. 11 of 109 MTSes in the region were completely destroyed (RSASPH, f.17, sh. 238), other bear great material loss (RSASPH, f.88, sh. 1).

The greatest damage was made to the most important agricultural vehicles - tractors. In the beginning of 1941 tractor park of MTSes was 3,600 thousand tractors to the beginning of 1942 there were 2800 tractors (RSASPH, f.17, sh. 239), with 865 requiring maintenance and the rest - thorough repairs and renewal (RSASPH, f.88, sh. 1). Availability of tractors in the Moscow region was only 22.8% (Mat'yas, 1966, p. 34). It was extremely hard to repair equipment of sovkhozes, MTSes and part-time farms in occupied regions only with local resources because 164 of 190 enterprises of local industry were burned or partially destroyed and required renewal (RSASPH, f.17, sh. 60). When evacuation was stopped further orders of Sovs and regional administrations were focused on return of evacuated property, its preservation and repair. Paramount task was return of agricultural machinery.

During re-evacuation of tractors from neighboring regions to the beginning of repair works many MTSes did not get all the amount of evacuated machinery or got it dismantled by horses (RSASPH, f.17, sh. 60). Re-evacuation of tractors and draught force was not completed even to the beginning of spring field work. To the end of January 1942 there were 2300 tractors in MTSes that had not been occupied. It was planned to get 300 tractors in the rest 34 MTSes that had been on occupied territory (RSASPH, f.88, sh. 1). These tractors had been initially planned to be evacuated but did not evacuate at time and left on the front line because they were out of order and fuel was not enough. Captured German army tractors were also repaired (CSAMR, f. 2157, sh. 1). More than 700 tractors was requested and not received in re-evacuation (calculated according materials of Russian keeping and study of documents of contemporary history) (RSASPH, f. 17, sh. 13).

4. Conclusion

The Moscow region started to prepare to the first sowing of the war time with less amount of machinery than it was reckoned on as a result of re-evacuation. In addition to poorly coordinated work of inter-district and inter-region administrations that were responsible for re-evacuation this situation may be explained by the fact that most of MTSes, sovkhozes and part-time farms was not ready to spring sowing due to the lack of machinery.

But despite the problems caused by results of evacuation, re-evacuation of state objects of agricultural production, loss of property the Moscow agricultural region managed to reorganize and work in conditions of changed funding and centralized provisioning. The price of this victory affected further development of material and technical base of a village.

5. Perspective of Research and Practical Value

Present research is actual for Russia in a period of political insulation because it is based on materials of critical for economy of the country period of transition to work in war conditions. Perhaps invalid methods and errors of management to overcome crisis caused by the beginning of the war will be accounted for in solving today problems.

Perspective of the research is related to the search of geopolitical place of Russia on contemporary world, definition of methods of solving problems of food safety of the country orienting on the possibilities of own raw, power and agrotechnical sectors.

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