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Y. Nikolaitis

**LAND REFORM IN UKRAINE IN AN ATMOSPHERE  
OF OCCUPATION REGIME (1941 – 1945)**

*On the basis of the analysis of materials of the former "secret files" of the Central Committee of CP/b/U and documents of occupation authorities the attitude of the peasantry of Ukraine to reforms in the sphere of agricultural production in the beginning of the German-Soviet war is analyzed.*

**Keywords:** *land reform, occupation regime, peasantry, German-Soviet war.*

During centuries in the area of Ukraine there was a problem of distribution and redistribution of land and making agrarian reform according to the problem. Political forces, which came to power had to decide the problems of agriculture, as it was the basic of Ukrainians economy for a long time. Even nowadays many scientists consider, that the solution of this problem is to increase the production of agricultural products and it will help Ukraine to overcome economic crisis.

In Ukraine at the beginning of occupation among other economical problems the problem of making agrarian reform was rather acute. The majority of peasants especially in the western regions of Ukraine, expected immediate liquidation of collective farms and distribution of their lands and property [1]. But Nazi had their own plans concerning Ukrainian lands and people occupied them. Hitler wanted to occupy the best Ukrainian lands. He marked that during cultivation of «Russian space» Nazi must supply «Imperial peasants» with a life of luxury. German's establishments must be arranged at governor's palaces around which they might grow everything necessary for life. In the radius of 30-40 km. from towns it was planned to construct German's villages «impressing by its beauty», which were connected by transport ways. Nazi suggested local people to admit Germans as a ruling class or Hitler will suppress them [2].

Without any doubt, Ukrainians had been aquatinted with the fascists crimes by the means of mass media. But such promotion did not always give result desirable for Soviet Power, as it caused negative feeling at people, who wanted to be evacuated to the east but had not opportunity to go because of the limited possibilities of transport. Quite often Ukrainians believed more to fascist's promises to liquidate collective farms and return property feudal peasants than to Soviet campaigners, that Germans «Blooded cannibals», which wish to suppress Soviet people. The residents of Ukraine thought that the situation would not change for worse after fascist's coming than it was during Soviet Power. The majority of peasants decided to distribute lands without waiting when Germans make it.

So the part of property had been snatched up by peasants before the retreat of Red Army, another part was distributed after German's coming despite of their unwilling.

The question of redistribution of collective farms and its property was rather painful during the first months of occupation. On one hand Germans promised to dissolve collective farms, on another hand-they forbade to steal the property and the property, that had been stolen they tried to return to the collective farms. The report of 197 German field commander's office, describing the situation in Zhitomir region from September 20, 1941, revealed that its population was worried about distribution of collective farms. Only in some cases peasants without permission snatched up the property, which was returned to the collective farms later. Portyanko V.Y., the scout of the Communist Party, in his report from November 1941, outlined that the property of collective farms, which had been snatched before German's coming left to peasants, but people, who continued to steal the property would die [3]. The scout Sheyko N.T. in December 1941 stated, that Germans demanded to return the property of collective farms, snatched up by peasants. Germans threatened to shoot peasants in the case of disagreement [4]. On another hand the command of 6th German army reported, that if there were not collective farms in Germany, they would not exist in Ukraine. This statement increased people's hope for immediate distribution of collective farms. So the command of the army supported the idea of immediate distribution of collective farms, but the rear and occupation administration were against quick distribution of the property.

The peasants, who lost their property during the Soviet Power desired to return lands persistently. But the field commandant's offices marked, that with the revival of private property there was necessity to regulate rights, especially the right for land as the existed Soviet laws did not include notes on this question [5]. One of the most urgent question was connected with the feudal lords' complains as the German's authority promised a lot to these people concerning their property. Germans outlined, that circumstances would not allow to return to return their properties immediately [6]. There are other messages about the return of property to the feudal lords. According to the reports of the scouts of the Communist Party all landlords after the returning of their power received their houses and movables, which was sold by country council [7]. In fact a lot of property was returned to landlords, but it was difficult to receive lands as Germans, despite of their promises, opposed to pass on lands to the private property.

In general Germans at the beginning of their dominion in Ukraine made agrarian policy rather inconsistently. They could not set prices for agricultural products. Subunits, which crossed the lands and rear parts of German's army did not agree their actions with peasants. According to the mandate of chancellor «The using of economy of occupied eastern territories» from July 29, 1941 each field commandant's office had its officer, that managed economical establishment. His task was to satisfy the requests of the part, that situated in the area of field commandant's office and he made preparation to use the economy of the country for military service [8]. But sometimes military services, that moved to the front, tried to get necessary products without the permission of rear service. The report of 197 field commandant's office, from September 1941, indicated that it was difficult

to keep the speed of inflation on the occupied territory as military parts of German's army bought provision at the peasants for the «excessively high prices» [9]. So German tried to regulate prices for provision in the way of confiscation stolen products at the population and further realization of it by German's establishments [10]. They caused the certain feelings from the side of local producers of agricultural products, stealing country population. The report of garrison commandant's office (in Uman') from August 15, 1941 outlined that the problem of agricultural prices had also military shade. As the district authorized persons reported, if the prices for agricultural products were so low, the peasants would not be interested in supply, that would change their mood [11]. The attempts to set prices for agricultural products caused that peasants refused to sell it but exchange products for goods [12]. From the words of one of the scouts of the Communist Party Marchenko M.F. from January 1942 there was not market trade in Kiev as peasants refuse to sell provision for set prices [13]. Soon goods were sold to the peasants on a barter base – for supplied agricultural provision. But exchange was unfair – for 2 foot of wheat or 100 kg. of pork – only 1 meter of fabric. At the end of the war German collective points often «forgot» to produce goods in exchange, the cases of confiscation of agricultural products increased [14].

Agrarian reform was held in some stages. In 1941 German's authority announced, that allotments would pass on to peasants in a private property and would be free from taxes on condition that peasants would gather harvest and make the tilling of land in autumn productively. In case Germans promised to increased the sizes of land private property and to give more livestock. In spite of requests of Soviet propaganda to the peasants not to gather more than their family need and another part of harvest must be destroyed, the population of Ukraine, knowing the dependence of their life from the quantity of provision took part in gathering harvest. In autumn 1941 Ukrainian peasants gathered the most part of harvest by hand, as the majority of machines and tractors was evacuated to the east and those that stayed were not supplied with petrol or worked out. The report of chief command of ground office from August 27, 1941 marked that peasants on occupation territory did not listen to the requests of Moscow to destroy their houses, machinery, harvest. But young people brought up during the existence of Soviet Power expressed their intentions to fire granaries [15]. The report of 454 German's security division about the spirit of population from November 3, 1941 described, that country population began to gather harvest persistently, even in hard conditions [16]. According to the report of 197 field commandant's office from December 15, 1941 of Zhitomir region the harvest of wheat and potatoes was picked without expenses; sugar beet, cabbage, carrot, onion were picked «partly» [17]. The situation during the work in the fields in spring 1942 was better than Germans expected. In general in Ukraine about 80% of land was tilled [18]. After the shock of first days of war passed, people used the traditional forms of public mutual aid. The rebirth of cooperation in presoviet time on occupation lands started just after the front's withdrawal, before the coming of occupation forces. Fascists tried to control

Ukrainian cooperatives because they wanted to make easy centralized procurement of agricultural products [19].

In February occupation power announced about reforms; it was planned to transform collective farms into «public economy» and «state possessions» and they were proclaimed as intermediate form to the privatization of land. During the second stage of reforms Germans promised to make gradual distribution of collective farms and at first to create comities for common tilling of land, but with separate gathering harvest, which were known as «bread communities». The last stage of reforms was planned to divide the «bread communities» into private individual economy. It was proclaimed the recreation of collective farms into public economy; – into land yards; machinery – tractor stations would be pass to complete German' disposal. Germans marked that only those people might pretend to independent house-keeping, who would prove it by his own work. Granting peasants with land depended on fulfillment of supply's plans to Germans making by communities. German's New Order of Land Tenure said, that communities would be in charge of German's agricultural departments and all hard working peasants – the members of communities had to take part in general work. Allotment might be increased only if peasant could till it by his own forces without making damage to communities. The number of livestock, which peasants could have was not limited. Persons who did not follow the German's instructions or «were unable to run economy' had no right to get land» [20]. Agricultural provision was proclaimed to buy in future for set prices, which would be higher than during Soviet time. Occupiers marked, that those, who occupied land without permission would be punished, fascists would confiscate occupied land, personal house – keeping, livestock [21]. According to the information of the secretary of the Communist party of Harkiv region at the beginning of 1942 all landlords received their property and in the first instance were granted with land area and allowances for plowed field due to the certain standards. The heads of the economies, which were cut off from agriculture for 3-5 years lost their rights for land tenure as they were involved in industry or other establishments. The families and relatives of communists and komsomol members, «Soviet collective farms activists», partisans were not granted with land. The families of servicemen which were at that moment in the lines of Red Army were limited with land tenure getting from 25 to 50 hundreds hectares [22].

On occupied lands Germans put «new land aristocracy», that means that they created German caste of feudal lords. In Ukraine during occupation it was created 2215 country estates with the area more than 6,3 mln. hectares. Methods, referring for organization of farmstead economies of «Ukrainians of German's origin» (German colonists) in the village were developed. In general Hitlerite planned to «received» 1,5 mln. German farmstead [23].

At the beginning of 1942 the attitude to agrarian reform in different regions of Ukraine and among different categories was rather differentiated. So German colonists and the most part of Ukrainian peasants according to the recognition of German's analyst T. Roglera were disposed not only against collective farms, but

against grouped running of economy, that was planned by new agrarian law of occupiers [24]. In March 1942 Germans marked, that peasants in Ukraine tried to receive land in their possession [25]. The report of General district of Nikolaiv from May 1942 noted, that agrarian reform, the implement of which was proclaimed at the beginning of April was accepted well. The desire of working has been increased thanks to this reform [26]. The message that collective farms were going to transform into communities and that each peasant would receive land free from taxes at his possession was met with pleasure [27]. But the part of population considered the standard of provision's delivery to Germans very high. According to the confession of the part of statesmen there would not leave necessary quantity of sowing wheat in separate localities if peasants followed the standards of compulsory deliveries [28]. The reports of the scout of the Communist Party from March 1942 has marked that peasants scolded Germans for big taxes [29].

In fact Germans came round to the common running of economy by peasants, that would make easy to them to take taxes. The number live stock was not limited with the purpose of increasing the number of meat, which the peasants had to deliver to Germans. The agrarian reform of occupiers did not correspond to the peasant's desire as the majority of them have not received the possibility of one – personal running of economy. In Ukraine it has been privatized only 10% of land by the end of occupation [30]. In practice the civil economies remained the same collective farms with forced work from morning till night, small salary and big taxes. The borders of land tenure, the organization of work and its payment, the standards of production, sowing shift left from collective farms [31]. Not in vain Nazi wanted to create planned economy, united economical order, which would cover the whole Europe [32]. Officials supported Nazi on occupied territories. In November 1941 the representatives of occupation power in Ukraine considered that during the purposeful and planning administration of district agriculture which would be able to provide not only civil population, but the part of vermaht with provision [33]. In general about 85% of provision deliveries from all occupied territories Germans demanded from Ukraine. According other information this number was equal to 94,5% [34]. Ukraine also provided a number of provision for vermaht. The report of the commander of the 6th German army from September 1941 indicated, that it was necessary to use products of occupied territory for improvement of provision for German forces, which moved deeply to the enemy's territory. In the report it was marked, that the officers of vermaht had to refuse from food products, which they used to and take those products, which Ukraine had at its disposal in enough quantity [35]. Hitler considered, that he should keep from imposing responsibility on military parts for buying agricultural products in unlimited quantity, that why ins transportation to Germany was frustrated. He considered, that if separate parts of vermart tore from their own warehouse they had to think about themselves [36]. The demand in provision for vernaht during the conditions of network development in 1941 was the reason of encouragement of Ukrainian peasants using different methods (even the part of peasants returned home) to gather harvest.

Gradually peasants were set by different taxes. They passed the whole harvest, made deliveries of meat, milk, butter, eggs, wool, furs and pigs. Each peasant had to pay money tax. Besides, land tax, building tax, profit tax, church tax were set. The system of different responsibilities and duties was prospering at the same time. Peasants had to support the security of bridges, enclosures and commands, which occupied this territory, had to pay to foremen, authorities, police officers. General working obedience was proclaimed with the help of fine, imprisonment or exile to working camp [37]. Occupiers took cruel reprisals against peasants for failure to keep deliveries, taxes and obedience using corporal punishments and fines.

The robbery of Ukrainian lands was highly rewarded in Germany. So Hitler considering, that one of the problem of organization of agricultural economy in Ukraine was the absence of secure ways of transportation noted, that they would help to pull out the reminders of provision after using it by vermaht. Hitler thought, that he could solve this problem partly in the way of giving soldiers, that had vacations, the possibility to pull out so much products they could carry [38]. The opinion of some German states men on occupied area of Ukraine was different from the ideas of Hitler. The report of garrison commandant's office in Uman dated from August 1941 told that Russians had not destroyed or evacuated before, often destroy by German's officers without reason. The commanders of submits did not control the actions of their soldiers and even they praised them as they could «organize» something that was against common interests [39].

In November 1941 Germans began to recreate workforce to Germany. In November 1941 Germans began to recruited workforce to Germany. At first the recruited people by force. At the beginning of 1942 mass roundups took place with the purpose worker's departure to Reich. On the 15th of October 1942 the occupation power made an order about eviction of Ukrainians from their lands and that Germans planned to create special villages on occupied area. Occupiers in eight eastern territories banished the population from 357 thousand village yards. Besides Germans took out all agricultural provision including soil. Though rationing was conducted, but it could not provide residents with necessary food products. Ten thousand people died because of hunger and epidemic diseases. Analyzing the lines when the German's attitude to the agricultural production in Ukraine has changed from encouragement of manufacture using economical methods to pumping out a lot of products; two periods are distinguished. During the first period Germans occupied Ukraine gradually, during the second when they occupied the area, they behaved like owners. During the retreat of vermaht occupiers did not think about improvement of agricultural provision. They tried to take a lot from Ukraine.

So the agrarian reform of occupiers was only one of the attempts to transform Ukraine into agrarian – raw material base. The implement of reform was caused not only by desire to improve manufacture for the requests of population on occupied area (as hostile propaganda told), but occupiers wanted to provide vermaht and the whole Reich with food products. That is why the interests and requests of the residents were not paid attention to. Occupiers thought, that local population was defined as workforce of Germany.

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**Ю. О. Ніколаєць**

### **ЗЕМЕЛЬНА РЕФОРМА В УКРАЇНІ В АТМОСФЕРІ ОКУПАЦІЙНОГО РЕЖИМУ (1941–1945)**

*У статті на основі аналізу матеріалів колишніх «секретних папок» ЦК КП/б/У і документів окупаційних властей проаналізовано ставлення селянства України до реформ у сфері сільськогосподарського виробництва на початку німецько-радянської війни.*

**Ключові слова:** земельна реформа, окупаційний режим, селянство, німецько-радянська війна.

**Ю. А. Николаев**

### **ЗЕМЕЛЬНАЯ РЕФОРМА В УКРАИНЕ В АТМОСФЕРЕ ОККУПАЦИОННОГО РЕЖИМА (1941–1945)**

*В статье на основе анализа материалов бывших «секретных папок» ЦК КП/б/У и документов оккупационных властей проанализировано отношение крестьянства Украины к реформам в сфере сельскохозяйственного производства в начале немецко-советской войны.*

**Ключевые слова:** земельная реформа, оккупационный режим, крестьянство, немецко-советская война.