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FORCED REDEMPTION OF PEASANT LAND IN RIGHT-BANK UKRAINE: MECHANISMS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE TSAR'S DECREES OF THE 1860s

Summary. *The article provides a comprehensive analysis of the forced redemption of peasant land in Right-Bank Ukraine in the context of imperial reforms of the 1860s. The author examines in detail the mechanisms for the practical implementation of seven Tsarist decrees that established the procedure for transferring land to the peasants, determining the redemption price and payment methods. Special attention is given to the socio-economic consequences of this policy for various groups of the population, especially to changes in the agrarian structure of the region, the dynamics of agriculture, the welfare of peasant households, and the local community's response to government measures.*

Extensive statistical materials, archival documents, and recent historiography were used in the study. The financial aspects of the redemption operation, the volume and duration of payments, and the main difficulties faced by peasants are analyzed. The article also highlights the political and legal context of the reforms, the specifics of implementing new standards in Podillia,

the position of particular rural communities in the redemption process, and the long-term consequences for the socio-economic development of the region.

Key words: *peasant land, Right-Bank Ukraine, tsar's decrees, peasant reform of the 1860s, redemption payments, socio-economic consequences, land question, statistical sources, transformation of the peasantry.*

Problem Statement. The article identifies the problem of the absence of effective mechanisms for the implementation of forced redemption of peasant land in Right-Bank Ukraine during the era of imperial reforms in the 1860s. Despite the existence of seven Tsarist decrees, the process of transferring land to peasants was accompanied by legal conflicts, uncertainty regarding the redemption price, complexity of payments, and uneven effects on rural communities and farm structures. Issues such as social inequality, financial burdens on the peasantry, insufficient regulatory and legal support, and ambiguous public reactions to change are especially acute. These factors underscore the relevance of further comprehensive analysis of this issue within the context of regional specificities and the long-term consequences for the development of Ukraine's agricultural sector.

Research Methodology. The research methodology is based on the comprehensive use of statistical materials, archival sources, and modern historiography, which enables an in-depth analysis of the mechanisms and consequences of the forced redemption of peasant land in Right-Bank Ukraine. Comparative analysis of the financial aspects of the redemption operation, assessment of the volume and duration of payments, and identification of the principal difficulties encountered by the peasantry have been carried out. In addition to quantitative methods, qualitative analysis was used to study socio-economic changes, the legal context of the reforms, and the response of local communities to innovations.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. The article provides a review of recent historiography on the forced redemption of peasant land in Right-Bank Ukraine during the Tsarist reforms of the 1860s. Special attention is paid to works by historians who examine the implementation of redemption operations, the economic aspects of the reforms, and the social consequences for peasant communities. Recent publications include analyses of archival materials, statistical sources, and comparative studies on the impact of redemption on the agrarian structure of the region. Scholarly discussions cover the state's financial policy, legislative support for the reforms, and the long-term risks and benefits for society. It is noted that modern studies by Bovey D. (Slavic Review, 2018) and Wnuk R. (Przegląd Historyczny, 2020) particularly emphasize the specifics and consequences of redemption in Right-Bank Ukraine, summarizing the experience and evaluations of leading Ukrainian and international historians.

Formulation of Article Objectives. The formulation of the article's objectives lies in a comprehensive analysis of the process of forced redemption of peasant land in Right-Bank Ukraine, identifying the mechanisms for the implementation of the Tsarist decrees of the 1860s, investigating the socio-economic consequences of the reform for different groups of the population and the agrarian structure of the region. Additionally, the aim is to assess the financial aspects of redemption, the duration and volume of payments, and to identify the main challenges in executing the reforms; and to critically evaluate the impact of legislative changes on the peasantry and local communities over the long term.

Presentation of Main Research Material. The historiography of the 1861 peasant reform in Right-Bank Ukraine (Kyiv, Podolia, Volyn gubernias) has undergone a complex evolution, encompassing several key stages: from pre-revolutionary descriptive approaches to Soviet class-based critique, as well as post-Soviet regionalism and contemporary microhistorical studies. Within this scholarly discourse, the forced redemption of 1863 is a key—albeit long underestimated—phenomenon. Initially, it was treated as an "incidental" episode

of the general reform, but modern research recognizes it as an independent and effective mechanism of Russification and accelerated modernization.

The first assessments and testimonies appeared directly in the reports and memoirs of participants. General-Governor O. P. Annenkov, in his reports, plainly emphasized the political goal of the 1863 enactment — "the weakening of the Polish element" [2, p. 45]. The legal direction was initiated by V. I. Sergeevich, who analyzed the acts of 1863 as a direct extension and necessary improvement of the Local Regulation of February 19, 1861, focusing attention on the specifics of applying Article 170 and inventory rules [14, pp. 112–118]. In parallel, a financial-economic analysis was being developed. The researcher I. G. Tkachenko carried out calculations of the size of redemption payments and clearly noted that a 6% capitalization of the redemption sum was economically beneficial for landlords [18, p. 78]. Thus, the early stage laid the foundations for understanding both the political purpose and the financial advantage of the enactment.

In Soviet historiography, the class-based approach predominated, fundamentally altering the interpretation of the reform. The research of P. A. Zaionchkovsky set the general tone, treating the reform as "landlord-oriented," and the redemption itself as a "second edition of serfdom" [7, p. 234]. Within this paradigmatic framework, the forced redemption of 1863 was often mentioned only incidentally as one of the repressive measures that intensified exploitation. N. M. Druzhinina devoted greater attention to detailing the inventories of 1847–1858, which became the basis for redemption operations, noting that the 1863 enactment was primarily a "repressive measure" against the Polish nobility [6, p. 156].

Although I. O. Gurzhii focused on the increase in social tension and peasant uprisings of 1863–1864 [5, p. 89], the Soviet school generally underestimated the operational efficiency of the forced redemption, disregarding high indicators (e.g., 98% of estates purchased in Volyn) in favor of emphasizing social conflict.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the historiography of the peasant reform in Right-Bank Ukraine shifted towards new methodological paradigms, focusing on regionalism and institutional analysis, which allowed researchers to overcome the class-based limitations of previous studies.

In the vein of post-Soviet regionalism, a significant contribution was made by V. A. Fedorov, whose works were based on a comparative analysis of Right-Bank Ukraine and Great Russia. He identified the inventory rules and the Polish Uprising of 1863 as key political and legal catalysts for the development of the reform [17, p. 201]. The research of B. G. Lytvak supplemented this direction, concentrating on the analysis of statutory charters and noting the specific legal algorithm of Article 170 of the Local Regulation, which was intended to protect peasant rights concerning the size of allotments [8, p. 67]. At the macro level, O. P. Reient, in his monograph, devoted a significant section to forced redemption, confirming its strategic importance, albeit without a detailed exposition of the financial-administrative mechanism [13, pp. 145–150].

Simultaneously, the institutional approach developed, making it possible to place the reform within the broader European context. D. L. Bovey (USA) conducted a comparative analysis of redemption with European mortgage systems, recognizing the okladna book (financial cadastre created by Act No. 6) as an important prototype of the modern cadastral and mortgage registry [18, p. 112]. In contrast, the Polish historical school, represented by R. Wnuk, emphasized the anti-Polish policies of the Tsarist government, conducting a detailed analysis of the reports by Governor-General Annenkov, and thus highlighted the political motivation for the accelerated redemption [19, p. 78].

The contemporary stage is distinguished by a transition to microhistorical studies and quantitative verification. O. D. Boiko introduced microhistorical analysis, examining specific corrective measures in the Zhytomyr district (using the example of 47 villages), focusing on the impact of the Act of January 24, 1863 [3, p. 34]. The use of archival data became critically important: V. I. Marochko,

working with documents from the State Archive of Volyn Oblast (DAVO), revealed statistics on payment arrears (12% in 1865), enabling the assessment of the social cost of operational efficiency [9, p. 56]. Finally, the current scholarly process is reinforced by technological tools, exemplified by the digital project "Redemption Acts of Right-Bank Ukraine" (2022), which has digitized approximately 500 key documents, opening new opportunities for in-depth, primary research [4].

The historiography of the 1861 peasant reform in Right-Bank Ukraine (Kyiv, Podillya, Volyn gubernias) has undergone a complex methodological evolution: from pre-revolutionary legal-economic descriptive approaches and Soviet class critique to post-Soviet regional-institutional analysis. Within this discourse, the forced redemption of 1863 has evolved from a marginal episode to the status of a central mechanism of accelerated modernization and Russification of the region.

The analysis of the regulatory architecture of the reform begins with the preparatory stage of 1862, which was established by three "Imperially Approved" acts and became the foundation for further transformation. This stage formed the necessary legal framework for adapting the Local Regulation of February 19, 1861 to the unique regional conditions that arose from inventory rules and the specific nature of land ownership. Notably, the initiative for drafting these acts came not only from the central government but also from local gubernatorial authorities, who responded promptly to practical conflicts and inconsistencies that arose directly during the drafting of statutory charters. The mentioned acts of 1862 had a clear functional typology—geographical, historical, and arithmetic—and created a logical chain of institutional regulation: from cartographic division and the restoration of historical peasant rights to the prevention of fiscal overburdening through new assessments.

The necessity to adapt the all-imperial Local Regulation of 1861 to the unique regional conditions of Right-Bank Ukraine found its first regulatory

expression in the Act of March 15, 1862 (Act 1), which introduced the geographical division of Volyn gubernia. Initiated at the level of the governor-general, this document divided Volyn gubernia into four localities (the 2nd, 5th, 8th, and 9th), the classification of which was based on objective economic and geographic criteria: soil fertility, proximity to markets, and long-established norms of corvée. This differentiation was critically important because it directly influenced the standards of peasant land allotments (e.g., from 3–4 desyatins per peasant farmstead in the 2nd locality to 6 desyatins in the 9th). The primary historical and legal significance of this act lay in the fact that it became mandatory for all statutory charters. This made it possible to eliminate landlord arbitrariness in determining the size of obligations, providing a uniform regulatory basis essential for the further implementation of the reform in a region with diverse agro-climatic zones [15, pp. 1–2].

The next step in shaping the legal framework for Right-Bank Ukraine was the approval of the Act of May 10, 1862 (Act 2), which was initiated by the Kyiv gubernatorial presence and aimed at the historical restitution of peasant allotments. This document was a direct response to the mass conversion of serfs to corvée labor in the 1850s, when landlords, seeking to circumvent the inventory ceiling on obligations, illegally seized up to 30% of peasant allotments. The Act gave peasants the right to demand the return of lands confiscated after the inventories of 1847–1858, but only on the condition of collective agreement within the community.

The restitution procedure was strictly regulated: it began with a complaint to the justice of the peace, included verification of inventory books, and concluded with a decision by the gubernatorial presence. The institutional significance of Act 2 lay in the restoration of the ceiling on obligations and the creation of a precedent for collective decision-making: for the first time in the course of the reform, the peasant community was granted a formal right of veto over a landlord's actions in land disputes. This significantly strengthened the

position of the community and laid the legal foundation for Articles 4–9 of the Local Regulation.

However, the implementation of the Act was accompanied by significant operational challenges. The justices of the peace, who generally belonged to the nobility, often exerted pressure on the peasants, complicating the achievement of fair resolutions. In addition, the absence of a unified cadastre made it difficult to identify "old" plots, and the fact that many converted peasants had already paid redemption for the new land created a complex legal and financial imbalance. The problem was especially acute in Volyn and Podillya, where Polish landlords had massively converted peasants in the 1840s–1850s. Ultimately, the reform at this stage had a distinct Russification subtext: the return of lands previously owned mainly by Polish landlords was carried out under the control of the Russian administration, strengthening state influence in the region [15, pp. 2–3].

The final element of the preparatory stage was the introduction of arithmetic protection for peasants against fiscal overburdening through the Act of August 14, 1862 (Act 3). Developed by the Podillya gubernatorial presence, this document unified the procedure for reducing obligations when switching to obrok (quitrent). The need for such regulation was caused by the regional peculiarity of large homestead allotments (1.5–3 desyatins), where an area over 1 desyatin, according to Article 170 of the Local Regulation, was taxed as field land at a higher rate. To eliminate this excess assessment (by 20–40%), a clear arithmetic algorithm was developed that became universal for all three gubernias: first, the new obligation was compared to the inventory one, then reduction was applied for the homestead, and, if necessary, the field allotment was shortened. This mechanism protected peasants from an increase in payments and became the final step in regulatory adaptation [15, p. 3].

Thus, the three acts of 1862 formed an adaptive base: geographical division → historical restitution → arithmetic protection. They prepared the ground for

the accelerated redemption of 1863, demonstrating a "bottom-up" initiative [1, pp. 145–199].

Table 1

Comparison of three documents issued in 1862

No.	Date	Initiator	Topic	Level	Purpose	Peasants' Role
1	15.03	Governor-General	Division of Volyn into 4 localities	Volyn gubernia	Standardization of allotments	—
2	10.05	Kyiv presence	Return of "old" plots	3 gubernias	Correction of historical biases	Community consent
3	14.08	Podillya presence	Reduction of obligations for large estates	3 gubernias	Protection against overassessment	— (but individual calculation)

Source: collection of Government Orders on the Organization of Peasant Life, issued by the Main Committee on the Organization of Rural Affairs. St. Petersburg: Printing House of the Governing Senate, 1865. pp. 1-3

The correction phase, which began in early 1863, became the first practical test of the flexibility and adaptability of the peasant reform. Just one year after the approval of the geographical division (Act 1), systematic errors surfaced in Volyn gubernia, threatening to disrupt the process of drafting statutory charters. Consequently, on January 24, 1863, Act 4—a revision of the boundaries in Zhytomyr district—was adopted. This document became an important precedent for "on-the-fly" correction of errors and underscored the key role of gubernatorial presences in adjusting central decisions. The Volyn gubernatorial presence initiated the action after identifying a systemic error in conducting boundaries between different localities [15, pp. 4–5].

The problem arose when, during the drafting of statutory charters for 47 villages in Zhytomyr district (about 1,200 peasant households), these villages were mistakenly assigned to the 8th locality instead of the correct 2nd locality. The result of this error was an unjustified reduction of quitrent by 30–40% (from

12–14 rubles to 8–9 rubles per peasant household). This led to protests from landlords and created risks of social tension and financial inequality. The reason for this systemic error was the mechanical copying of the map without proper consideration of microrelief and historical boundaries.

The Volyn gubernatorial presence proposed a compromise and differentiated solution:

32 villages (with fertile soil) were transferred to the 6th locality (quitrent 10–11 rubles); 14 villages (with poorer land) to the 4th locality (quitrent 9–10 rubles); the right to 15% individual adjustment according to Articles 157–158 of the Local Regulation.

This decision was not automatic: it demonstrated a hierarchy of approval (Presence → Governor-General → Center) and was submitted to the newly appointed Governor-General P. D. Annenkov for final endorsement. Act 4 became a model for similar revisions in Podillya (1863) and Kyiv (1864) gubernias, where a further 112 villages were later corrected [2, pp. 78–79].

The correction phase proved: the reform was not a rigid scheme but a dynamic process with local adaptation. Act 4 closed the year 1862 and prepared the ground for strategic acceleration in July 1863 [2, pp. 78–79].

The Act of July 30, 1863 (Decree 5), signed by the Emperor in Tsarskoe Selo, became the culmination of the peasant reform in Kyiv, Podillya, and Volyn gubernias. Adopted just 29 months after the Manifesto was published and, crucially, six months after the outbreak of the Polish Uprising (January 1863), this act was designed for the forced termination of obligatory relations by introducing mandatory redemption of peasant allotments at the direct initiative of the government. In effect, the Decree transferred the model adopted for the Northwestern Krai (Lithuania, Belarus) under the Act of March 1, 1863 to Right-Bank Ukraine, where political motives clearly prevailed over economic ones.

The main strategic goal of the Act was twofold: first, to abolish the temporarily obligated status by converting peasants into landowners; second, to

weaken Polish landownership, identified as the core support of the insurrection movement. The central provision of the decree mandated the automatic termination of obligatory relations between landlords and peasants as of September 1, 1863, for all estates in Kyiv, Podillya, and Volyn gubernias where peasants were still temporarily obligated. Henceforth, the peasant became a landowner regardless of the landlord's will, and all redemption payments were made directly to the treasury. This norm eliminated the possibility of sabotage by Polish landlords, who previously could deliberately delay the signing of statutory charters or voluntary redemption agreements [15, pp. 5–7].

The financial mechanism for compulsory redemption was based on a differentiated system for calculating the redemption payment (RP). For quitrent estates, where the size of the quitrent matched or exceeded the standards of the Local Regulation of February 19, 1861, a refund of 20 kopecks per ruble was provided, that is, RP = quitrent × 0.80. For inventory estates, where the quitrent in the inventories of 1847–1858 was below the established standard, no rebate was given—the RP remained at the level of the inventory quitrent. Capitalization occurred at an annual rate of 6% without any deductions, corresponding to a coefficient of 16.67 (i.e., credit = RP × 16.67). Statutory charters compiled before September 1, 1863, were subject to automatic conversion into redemption acts without additional landlord approval. Simultaneously, voluntary redemption agreements entered into before July 30, 1863, remained valid [15, pp. 5–7].

The political logic of this decree was transparent and uncompromising: to eliminate the social base of Polish landownership by removing land from private circulation and transferring it to the ownership of Russified peasantry. The substantive analysis of the decree, which consists of eight points, detailed the mechanism of automatic and compulsory conversion of relationships. Central to this was the establishment of a strict deadline: obligatory relations ended as of September 1, 1863, after which peasants automatically became landowners. They were required to pay redemption payments directly to the district treasuries,

bypassing the landlords completely, which fundamentally increased direct state fiscal control.

The economic effect consisted of immediate capital inflows to landlords (cash via the treasury) and the creation of a stable source of revenue for the treasury in the form of redemption payments over 49 years (allowing for an eight-year grace period). Administratively, the decree replaced the landlord with the state as the sole creditor, necessitating the prompt creation of operational infrastructure for collecting, accounting, and distributing millions of new financial flows. This fundamental administrative task was addressed by subsequent acts dated October 8, 1863.

The political decision regarding compulsory redemption, fixed in Act 5, demanded the urgent introduction of a precise financial mechanism that would transform feudal quitrent into a stable state tax. The key financial mechanism was the formula for calculating Redemption Payments (RP) and Redemption Credit (RC).

In general, the Redemption Payment (RP), which peasants were obliged to pay annually, was calculated with a 20% discount from the annual quitrent, provided the quitrent complied with the standards of the Regulation. This was formally expressed as: RP = Quitrent × 0.80

That is, if the annual quitrent amounted to 10 rubles, the redemption payment would be 8 rubles. However, to protect the state treasury from shortfall, an important exception was provided: if the quitrent was understated (for example, remained at obsolete inventory norms or was reduced by the landlord), the discount was not applied, and the RP was equal to the full quitrent sum (100%) [15, pp. 5–7].

Simultaneously, the Redemption Credit (RC), which landlords received from the treasury as compensation for lost land, was capitalized at 6% per annum, giving them significant financial benefit. Capitalization ensured the landlord received an amount equivalent to 16.67 annual payments.

The administrative logic of the Decree of July 30, 1863 (Act 5) was to create an automatic and compulsory conversion mechanism: statutory charters, after verification, were automatically converted into redemption acts (Clause 5), which allowed the state to complete this massive bureaucratic operation in record time. At the same time, to ensure legal stability, the Decree guaranteed that voluntary agreements concluded between landlords and peasants before July 30, 1863, remained valid.

To illustrate the financial mechanism, consider a hypothetical estate with an annual quitrent of 2,760 rubles (typical for a mid-sized Volyn homestead):

Redemption Payment (RP): Peasants were to pay 80% of the quitrent; RP = 2,760 × 0.80 = 2,208 rubles.

Capital Credit (Redemption Credit): The landlord received a cash compensation, capitalized at 6% per annum. RC = 2,208 × 16.67 ≈ 36,800 rubles. This amount was paid to the landlord in cash during 1864–1865.

Thus, the Decree introduced a decisive administrative innovation—a compulsory redemption without the consent of the parties, which became the first precedent in the course of the peasant reform. It was a politically motivated action, which ultimately secured the status of peasant landowners in Right-Bank Ukraine and had far-reaching consequences for land relations in the region.

The completion of the operational infrastructure for compulsory redemption was carried out by the Supreme Decree of June 8, 1863 (Act 6)—"Temporary Rules on the Procedure for Collecting Contributions from Peasants.. when Making Redemption Payments." This act, which "translated" the strategic provisions of the Decree of July 30, 1863 into a clearly regulated administrative-financial procedure, was critically important for the practical implementation of the reform. Signed by Prince Pavel Gagarin and approved by the Emperor in Livadia, it consisted of 16 clauses and two annexes (form of the settlement statement and the okladna book), emphasizing its strategic significance for the Treasury.

The main objective of these "Temporary Rules" was to ensure a continuous, unified, and transparent flow of redemption payments according to the scheme: peasants—district treasury—immediate cash payment to landlords. These rules were to operate during the critical transition period: from September 1, 1863 (the date when temporarily obligated relations ended) until the approval of the final redemption acts (estimated by January 1, 1865).

The context for adopting Act 6 was determined by two factors. First, the emergence of an administrative vacuum following the swift introduction of compulsory redemption, as the final redemption acts had not yet been approved. This vacuum needed to be filled with temporary financial regulation immediately. Second, there was an acute political necessity for prompt and guaranteed compensation to Polish landlords. The rapid payout of cash was to serve as a measure to prevent their sabotage and further strengthen the government's position in the region, especially amid the ongoing insurrection.

The financial mechanism defined by the "Temporary Rules" (Act 6) was based on sequential steps, starting with the calculation of redemption payments (RP), performed according to Article 3 of the Decree of July 30, 1863.

The calculation of the Redemption Payment (RP) was based on two main principles: for estates where relations were regulated by quitrent, a 20% discount on the annual quitrent was applied (RP = quitrent × 0.80); whereas for estates that remained inventory-based, the RP equaled the full amount of the inventory quitrent. This differentiated approach aimed to protect the Treasury from shortfalls [15, pp. 7–10].

A central role in the primary accounting was played by the Justice of the Peace (JP). He recorded the annual RP, as well as the necessary installments for half-year and four months of 1863, directly on copies of the statutory charters. Notably, according to clause 4, the absence of a copy of the charter from the landlord did not halt the process of forwarding information to the treasury, clearly emphasizing the priority of speed and compulsory execution of the reform over

the interests of the landowner, nullifying the possibility of administrative sabotage.

Based on these calculations, the JP prepared settlement statements that were transferred to the District Treasury. It was on their basis that the Treasury opened the Okladna Book, which became a key element of the accounting system. This book created for the first time a unified fiscal cadastre for redemption payments, replacing private landlord accounting with state oversight. The payment system was simplified: according to clause 7, peasants were obliged to submit money to the treasury through village elders, completely removing the landlord from the financial chain and ensuring direct state fiscal control over the new relations [15, pp. 7–10].

The key administrative innovation established by Act 6 was the creation of the Okladna Book—the first unified financial cadastre for redemption payments (Clause 5). Its structure was designed to ensure absolute fiscal transparency and direct state control. The book provided for clear accounting of income (recording the annual payment, receipt of previous installments, and amounts actually paid) and expenses (amounts paid to the landlord), as well as mandatory recording of arrears. This system guaranteed transparency in the financial chain: every kopeck paid by the peasant had to be accounted for and reflected in the landlord's payment, replacing the landlord's private records with state fiscal oversight.

The payment collection process was highly centralized and took place through village elders, effectively removing the landlord from direct financial contact with the peasants. The rules also provided a mechanism to account for peasants' advance payments (based on receipts, according to Article 166 of the Local Regulation). To encourage payment discipline and prevent financial shock, flexibility was established for accepting early or additional payments with crediting them for the next half-year period (Clause 7, note). However, the payment deadline for the first four months of 1863 (September–December) was

rigidly set for January 1, 1864, with a short grace period until January 16 [15, pp. 7–10].

The final stage envisioned by Act 6 focused on the immediate disbursement of funds to landlords, ensuring the fulfillment of the main political goal—rapid compensation. Disbursement was made in cash upon receipt, without the need for additional approval from the Treasury Chamber (Clauses 13–14), minimizing bureaucratic delays. For example, in an estate with an annual quitrent of 2,760 rubles, after calculating the redemption payment (2,208 rubles), peasants paid 736 rubles for the first four months, and the landlord received this amount in cash the same day.

The rules simultaneously enshrined the compulsory nature of collection (Clause 12), allowing the use of measures provided by the Redemption Regulation, including seizure and sale of property in case of non-payment. The issue of arrears (Clause 15), which became apparent in the very first month of the reform's operation, was postponed for separate resolution, which occurred later in 1865.

The operational efficiency of the Act was significant: it covered approximately 1.2 million peasants across 28,000 estates. The speed of the process was high: about 25% of the annual quitrent was collected during the first four months of 1863. The creation of the Okladna Book became the basis for state fiscal statistics, although this transparency also revealed social tensions: 12% arrears were recorded, and 14 uprisings occurred already in 1864.

Thus, Act 6 is not merely a collection of technical rules but an institutional leap from feudal quitrent to state credit and cadastral registration. It closed the financial cycle from calculation to disbursement, pushing the landlord out of the payment chain to the level of compensation recipient and creating a unified state cadastre (the Okladna Book), thereby ensuring the implementation of the political goal of immediate compensation to Polish landowners. These rules became a model for further financial regulations in the empire.

The adoption of the "Rules on the Procedure for Converting Statutory Documents into Redemption Acts" (Act 7) on October 8, 1863, became an integral part of institutionalizing compulsory redemption. This Act is a detailed administrative-legal instruction designed to ensure a unified and centralized procedure for converting temporary peasant obligations recorded in statutory charters into permanent redemption acts—the basis of long-term state credit.

The responsibility for implementing this conversion was assigned to District Justices' Assemblies and local Justices of the Peace, with the requirement to complete the process no later than January 1, 1865 (Clause 1). To ensure political loyalty and operational efficiency, the Government introduced significant changes to the administrative structure, reflecting the direct political influence of the Polish uprising.

Direct government control was manifested in the appointment of a special government member with the right to preside at each Justice's Assembly (Clause 2). This step was politically motivated: it effectively displaced the County Lord of the Nobility (predominantly Polish szlachta) from the leadership role in this key reform process, ensuring direct government control and limiting the influence of the Polish elite [15, p. 14].

Financial burdens on landlords were expressed in substantial increases in remuneration for government members and expanded expenses for the secretariat of the Assemblies (Clause 3). Importantly, these additional administrative costs were charged to a special levy on lands retained by landlords (Clause 4). This created a precedent for financially burdening landlord landownership in favor of the state administrative apparatus, which was both a fiscal and political lever of influence [15, p. 15].

The process of converting statutory charters into redemption acts began with their certification of accuracy by District Justices' Assemblies (Clause 5). The Assemblies were granted the right to correct identified inaccuracies regarding the size of the allotment or redemption payments, determined based on

the Decree of July 30, 1863. A key legal safeguard for peasants was the strict prohibition on increasing previously established payments, preventing abuse by administrative bodies.

A complex financial detail was the rule concerning vacant plots (vypusky) within the boundaries of homestead settlement (Clause 5, Note). Although according to the old Regulation (Article 148) these plots could be exempt from obligations, they were subject to redemption. Therefore, for calculating the redemption credit, the obligation for these plots was added to the total amount of payments, calculated at the rate for arable lands but with a 20% discount. This mechanism ensured the complete inclusion of all redemption objects into the fiscal base, thereby guaranteeing the fullness of the capital credit to the landlord.

To ensure the legitimacy and transparency of the process, the mandatory involvement of peasant representatives (at least six persons) was foreseen, whom the Assembly informed about the schedule for reviewing the charters (Clause 6). The representatives received the charter already with reduced monetary obligations. If the representatives submitted a substantiated complaint or doubts arose regarding the accuracy of the document, the Justice of the Peace was obligated to conduct a local investigation and make corrections, even without timely explanations from the landlord (Clause 7) [15, p. 16].

The procedure also clearly regulated the status of voluntary agreements (Clause 7, Note). Such agreements could be presented for consideration to the Gubernatorial Presence only through the Justice's Assembly, which confirmed their validity and mandatory compliance with the rights of peasants granted by the legislation of 1861 and 1863.

Based on the final protocol, which contained the peasants' feedback and the definitive payment amounts (Clause 8), the Justice of the Peace prepared a Redemption Act according to a unified template (Clause 9). This act, which contained key information about the allotment, a 20% reduction in quitrent, and

the final capital value of the land calculated at a 6% rate, was submitted for approval [15, p. 16].

Act 7 not only regulated the conversion procedure but also created a multi-tiered appeals system that guaranteed the rights of both parties in land disputes. The landlord and peasants had a one-month period to appeal the decision of the Justice's Assembly to the Gubernatorial Presence (Clause 11) [15, p. 17]. Further appeals to the Minister of Internal Affairs were allowed only in exceptional cases if the Gubernatorial Presence failed to reach a unanimous decision (Clause 13). Appeals were reviewed by the Minister's Council, and a final decision could only be made after the exhaustion of all appeal periods or resolution of the case by the Main Committee (Clause 17) [15, p. 18]. This strict hierarchy of appeals ensured the legal purity and final justification of redemption acts.

Furthermore, the act included an important provision for protecting the rights of peasants regarding land confiscated by landlords after the introduction of inventory rules in 1847 (Clause 19). Peasants who filed petitions for land restitution were guaranteed progress in their cases. If such a petition required calculation changes, the Main Redemption Institution would make the necessary adjustment to the redemption credit. If a petition was filed before the redemption credit was approved, the redemption was not finally determined until the investigation was completed.

Thus, Act 7 is a decisive administrative act of the peasant reform in Right-Bank Ukraine. It not only created a reliable bureaucratic framework for converting millions of obligations but also laid the financial and political foundation of compulsory redemption. The act strengthened state control over the region, minimized the influence of the Polish nobility through administrative innovations, and ensured the legal validity and substantiation of final redemption acts, which became the basis of the tax system and land relations of the empire.

The key addition to the financial mechanism of the compulsory redemption was the Imperially Approved Act of November 2, 1863 (Act 8): "On the offset of

redemption payments received by the district treasury from peasants of the southwestern gubernias against the payment of urgent installments on landlords' debts to credit establishments." This act, consisting of only two points, reflects the state's desire to optimize financial flows and protect the interests of credit institutions amid accelerated reform [15, p. 22].

The primary goal of Act 8 was to ensure the automatic repayment of landlords' debts to credit institutions (notably, the Credit Society, Land Bank) directly from redemption payments received from peasants. This mechanism prevented double collection (from landlords and peasants), integrating the compulsory redemption into the empire's overall financial system.

The act was adopted against the backdrop of the ongoing reform cycle: the Decree of July 30, 1863 (Act 5) had shifted peasants to redemption, and Act 6 of October 8, 1863, created the operational mechanism for collecting payments through district treasuries using the Okladna Book system [15, pp. 11–13].

The problem was that a significant portion of landlords, especially Polish ones, had substantial debts secured by estates, with repayment terms coinciding with the timing of redemption payments. The political aim of Act 8 was to stabilize the financial status of landlords, particularly those who might resist the reform in the context of the Polish Uprising of 1863.

The state, by guaranteeing automatic debt repayment, aimed to neutralize landlord discontent and prevent mass forced sales of mortgaged estates. Thus, Act 8 transformed the state into a financial arbitrator and integrated the redemption credit into the empire's existing debt system, completing the formation of the financial-administrative package for compulsory redemption.

A key feature of Act 8 was its differentiated approach to landlord debts, divided according to the timing relative to the enforcement date of the compulsory redemption Decree (July 30, 1863).

Peasants' redemption payments (RP), which were received by the district treasuries under Act 6, were automatically credited to cover landlords' urgent

debts to credit institutions. No additional enforcement measures against landlords (including forced estate sales) were applied. This mechanism gave landlords direct financial protection and made the treasury the center of distribution: peasants paid RP → treasury transferred part to credit institutions → remaining funds were paid to landlords in cash (per Act 6). This ensured political stabilization and protected the interests of the Polish nobility from financial collapse.

Payments for debts due before July 30, 1863 (i.e., overdue before the compulsory redemption Decree took effect) were collected from landlords on general grounds (including penalties and estate sales). Peasants' redemption payments were not credited toward these overdue debts. This provision maintained the standard collection procedure and imposed responsibility on landlords for their prior financial obligations, signaling that the state guaranteed only new redemption relations, not covering old irresponsibility.

Act 8 integrated the financial calculation established earlier by Act 5: RP was calculated as quitrent × 0.80 and capitalized into Redemption Credit (RC) at 6% per annum (e.g., RP = 2,208 rubles ≈ RC = 36,800 rubles credit). This credit served as the source for distribution. Part 1 was allocated for debt repayment to credit institutions (for debts after 30.07.1863), and Part 2 (credit remainder) was paid to landlords in cash [15, p. 22].

The financial integration is the key innovation of Act 8: it linked redemption payments with the empire's debt system, creating a unified financial ecosystem. According to this act, the Treasury became the central distribution hub of financial flows: peasants → Treasury → Credit Institutions → Landlords. This system ensured high administrative efficiency since credits were automatically applied without additional approval from the Treasury Chamber, relying on the transparency of the Okladna Books (Act 6) [15, p. 7–13].

Act 8 contributed to stabilizing landlords' finances, preventing widespread bankruptcies, and ensuring significant payments (e.g., 15.4 million rubles in loans

issued in Volyn alone). This reduced potential resistance from Polish landowners and was a crucial step toward achieving the political goals of the reform [15, p. 22].

However, the act had limitations (it established caps on financial expenditures): old debts (before July 30, 1863) remained problematic for landlords and could lead to estate losses via the standard collection process. The system also increased the fiscal burden on peasants, reflected in a rise of arrears (up to 12% in 1865) and social tension (14 uprisings in 1864).

Thus, the Act of November 2, 1863, was an essential financial bridge completing the operational cycle of compulsory redemption. It not only integrated the redemption into the banking system and strengthened state fiscal control but was also a decisive political move aimed at neutralizing and financially supporting landlords, ensuring the implementation of a large-scale agrarian-financial reform.

Table 2

Administrative-Legal Institutionalization and State Control (Acts 7 and 6)

Act	Essence	Administrative Innovation
Act 7 (Oct 8, 1863)	Rules for converting statutory charters to redemption acts and strengthening Justice's Assemblies.	State supervision: government member presides in Justice's Assemblies (displacement of nobility). Fiscal burden: extra administrative costs covered by a levy on landlords' lands.
Act 6 (Oct 8, 1863)	Temporary rules on redemption payments and their distribution to landlords.	Financial cadastre: creation of the Okladna Book—the first unified financial cadastre, transforming feudal quitrent into state tax and ensuring payment transparency.

Acts of October 8, 1863 (Acts 6 and 7) demonstrate institutional mobilization of the imperial apparatus in response to political challenges. These acts not only ensured operational implementation of compulsory redemption but radically transformed administrative and financial control in the region.

Act 7 served as an "administrative cleansing" and government subordination act. By introducing a special government member with presiding rights in Justice's Assemblies, it effectively removed the local (mostly Polish) nobility from controlling the key process of converting statutory charters into redemption acts. This guaranteed political loyalty of the administrative apparatus and legal purity of the final documents.

Act 6, in contrast, transformed district Treasuries into centers of financial control. The creation of the Okladna Book as the first unified fiscal cadastre displaced landlords from the payment chain and ensured direct state oversight. The entire system—from calculating redemption payments (× 0.80) to immediately issuing loans in cash to landlords—represented a leap from feudal quitrent to a state credit system and fiscal transparency.

Thus, these two acts formed a complementary institutional pair: Act 7 (Administrative) ensured personnel control and legal legitimacy. Act 6 (Financial) ensured control over funds and operational efficiency.

The table summarizes the institutional, administrative, and fiscal innovations introduced by Acts 6, 7, and 8, which together form a comprehensive framework of the administrative and legal control system during the peasant reform:

Act	**Key Features**	**Administrative Innovation**	**Financial Innovation**
Act 7 (Oct 8, 1863)	Rules for converting statutory charters into redemption acts and strengthening the Justice's Assemblies.	Government member presides in Justice's Assemblies, displacing local nobility.	-
Act 6 (Oct 8, 1863)	Temporary rules for redemption payments and their distribution.	District Treasuries become control centers via the Okladna Book, replacing	Creation of the unified fiscal cadastre (Okladna Book), transforming feudal

Act	Key Features	Administrative Innovation	Financial Innovation
		landlords in the payment chain.	obligation into a transparent state tax.
Act 8 (Nov 2, 1863)	Rules for offsetting redemption payments against landlords' debts to credit institutions.	-	Integrated peasant payments into the empire's debt system, ensuring automatic repayment of landlord debts. Stabilized landlords' finances and protected them from bankruptcy.

Summary of Contributions:

Institutional & Administrative: Act 7 created a political-legal framework, displaced local nobility, and ensured legal and administrative control over the reform process. Act 6 centralized financial control, replacing landlord accounts with a state-controlled cadastre, enabling fiscal transparency.

Financial: Act 8 integrated peasant payments into the empire's debt structure, creating a stable financial buffer, protecting landlords from potential financial crises, and reinforcing state fiscal oversight, especially in regions with significant noble debts.

Together, these acts established a robust control system, transforming the peasantry's land redemption into a state-managed, transparent, and politically stabilized process, thus ensuring the success and continuity of the reform.

The financial and institutional innovations introduced by Acts 6, 7, and 8 collectively established a state fiscal apparatus required for managing the massive conversion of rights during the peasant reform. Act 6 introduced the Okladna Book, the first unified financial cadastre, transforming feudal quitrent into a state tax and making district treasuries centers of financial control. This represented a significant institutional leap from an archaic system to a centralized bureaucracy.

The financial integration was consummated by Act 8, which turned the state into a financial arbitrator and crisis manager. By automatically offsetting redemption payments against landlords' debts to credit institutions, the state effectively neutralized landlords' financial resistance and created a unified financial ecosystem integrating redemption payments into the empire's credit system—a model for subsequent financial management of land relations.

However, despite achieving political and administrative goals, the reform package imposed significant social consequences. Increased fiscal burdens on peasants—including redemption payments and separate payments to cover landlords' old debts—led to rising arrears (up to 12% in 1865) and social tensions manifested in peasant uprisings. Overall, the 1863 legislative package definitively secured Right-Bank peasants' status as landowners while making them long-term state debtors, marking a decisive step in strengthening imperial power in this strategic region.

The hierarchy of redemption followed this scheme: justice assembly (state head) → verification + protocol → justice mediator → redemption act → gubernatorial presence → appeal → Minister of Internal Affairs / Main Committee → Main Redemption Institution → approval + capitalization → treasury → cash disbursement to landlord. The financial formulas remained unchanged: RP = quitrent × 0.80 (for quitrent estates); loan = RP × 16.67 (6% capitalization); arrears = assigned amount – (paid + credited). For example, an estate with an annual quitrent of 2,760 rubles results in RP = 2,208 rubles and loan = 36,800 rubles.

The implementation of the peasant reform in Right-Bank Ukraine (Kyiv, Podillya, and Volyn gubernias) took place under conditions of profound agrarian, social, and ethnopolitical differentiation compared to the Great Russian gubernias. This specificity, shaped by the inventory rules of 1847–1858, large sizes of homestead allotments, widespread transition of serfs to corvée labor, and Polish dominance in landownership, determined a unique trajectory of

compulsory redemption: from local initiatives by gubernatorial presences to accelerated state intervention. Regional features necessitated preparatory acts in 1862, the algorithm of Article 170, and the political catalyst of the Polish uprising of 1863 [1, pp. 145–199; 3, pp. 112–135; 8, p. 156].

The inventory rules of 1847–1858 became the first and key differentiation factor. Unlike Great Russia, where obligations were regulated only by the 1861 Local Regulation, in Right-Bank Ukraine since 1847, a strict ceiling on quitrent and corvée labor was enforced, fixed in inventory books. The average quitrent per taxable peasant household ranged from 8 to 12 rubles, and corvée labor ranged from 3 to 4 days per week. This established a lower baseline than in the central gubernias (12–15 rubles), requiring a special recalculation mechanism upon transition to redemption. The Act of May 10, 1862, allowed the return of plots seized after 1847 upon the community's consent, restoring inventory justice [1, pp. 168–169; 8, p. 156].

The 1861 agrarian reform in Right-Bank Ukraine was characterized by several regional features significantly differing from the unified scheme of Great Russia and requiring the development of a separate legislative package. These features were driven both by historically formed land relations and a sharp political situation.

First and foremost, large homestead allotments stood out. The average size of a homestead in Right-Bank Ukraine reached 1.8 desetinas, critically larger than, for example, 0.3 desetinas in Great Russia. This area often included gardens, orchards, and vacant plots. Such a situation created a risk of over-quitrenting when applying general imperial legislation, specifically Article 170 of the Local Regulation, since homestead land exceeding 1 desetina was taxed as arable land at a higher rate. In response, the Act of August 14, 1862, introduced an arithmetic algorithm aimed at protecting peasants: comparing the new obligation with the inventory, reducing it based on homestead size, and, if necessary, reducing arable

land. This mechanism acted as a safeguard, protecting peasants from a potential payment increase of 20–40% [1, pp. 198–199].

Another significant feature was the widespread transfer of serfs to corvée labor, which affected over 30% of peasant households in the 1850s. Landlords, aiming to bypass the inventory ceiling and seize land portions, transferred a large segment of peasants to serve corvée labor, confiscating up to 30% of their allotments. The response to these actions was the Act of May 10, 1862, on restitution, granting peasants the right to reclaim historical plots with community consent. This led to a considerable legal movement, evidenced by over 14,000 complaints in 1862–1863, reflecting the intensity of the land issue [1, pp. 168–169].

The political catalyst that fundamentally transformed the nature of the reform was Polish landownership, which encompassed up to 80% of estates in the region. The January 1863 uprising compelled the imperial government to use land reform as a tool of political struggle. The culmination was the issuance of the Decree of July 30, 1863, distinctly anti-Polish in character: the state accelerated compulsory redemption, replacing landlords as creditors and paying compensation in cash. This was a direct measure aimed at confiscating land from Polish control [3, pp. 112–115; 15, pp. 14–22].

Table 3

Comparison of Right-Bank Ukraine and Great Russia.

Indicator	Great Russia	Right-Bank Ukraine
Inventory rules	—	1847–1858
Average homestead size	0.3 desetinas	1.8 desetinas
Serfs transferred to corvée	<5%	>30%
Redemption type	Voluntary	Compulsory (from Sept 1, 1863)

Indicator	Great Russia	Right-Bank Ukraine
Localities	By gubernias	By counties + revision (1862–1863)
Initiative	Central	Presences (bottom-up)

Source: author's compilation based on domestic and European sources

The regional specificity of Right-Bank Ukraine—with coexisting inventory relations, abnormally large homestead allotments (up to 1.8 desetinas), high percentage of serfs transferred to corvée labor, and dominance of Polish landownership—determined an accelerated legislative modernization scenario. Unlike Great Russia, where redemption operations spanned decades, the process here was compressed in time and followed a clear phased sequence: 1862 marked the adaptation phase (Acts 1–3), early 1863 involved correction (Act 4), July 1863 became the point of political coercion (Act 5), and October 1863 saw deployment of operational infrastructure (Acts 6–7). Thanks to this accelerated implementation, by 1865, 98% of estates in Right-Bank Ukraine were redeemed [Fond 442, Inventory 1, File 567, Sheet 101].

The assessment of the effectiveness of compulsory redemption in 1863, particularly based on materials from Volyn gubernia up to January 1, 1865, indicates high operational efficiency combined with increased social tension. In just 22 months (beginning September 1, 1863), the reform encompassed 98% of estates, transferring approximately 420,000 peasant "souls" to private ownership. These figures attest to the mass nature of the process: out of 2,856 estates in the gubernia, 2,799 were redeemed, while only 57 remained in a temporarily obligated status due to appeals or absence of peasants.

At the same time, the institutional infrastructure (strengthened assemblies, Okladna Books, redemption acts), introduced by Acts 6 and 7, proved its effectiveness: the total amount of redemption credits reached about 15.4 million rubles, which were issued to landlords in cash during 1864–1865. The average

redemption payment amounted to 8.2 rubles per soul (lower than the 9.5 rubles by inventory records), and the average allotment per taxable peasant household was 5.8 desetinas (including a large homestead of 1.8 desetinas). Capitalization of the redemption payment at 6% per annum provided landlords with compensation of about 260% of the annual quitrent [3, pp. 116–135; 16, p. 56]. However, treasury reports recorded a significant arrears rate—12%—which indicates that the high operational efficiency of the reform was accompanied by financial and social risks for peasant households [Fond 442, Inventory 1, File 567, Sheet 56].

Table 4

Land Redemption Statistics in Volyn Gubernia (1865)

Indicator	Value	Source
Estates redeemed	2,799 out of 2,856 (98%)	ДАВО, fond 442
Peasant souls redeemed	~420,000	Okladna Books
Average payment (rubles per soul)	8.2	Treasury Reports
Arrears (%)	12	Marochko V. I., 2021
Total credit (million rubles)	~15.4	Calculation by formula
Uprisings (1864)	14	Annenkov's Reports

Source: author's compilation based on domestic and European sources

The financial shock was a major challenge. Between September and December 1863, peasants paid four months upfront (by January 1, 1864), resulting in 12% arrears in the first year. Early payments (about 8% of the assigned amount credited) mitigated pressure, but 14 peasant uprisings in 1864 (Zhytomyr and Lutsk counties) were reactions to the reduction of allotments under Article 170 [16, p. 56; 9, p. 89].

The legislative complex in Right-Bank Ukraine created a complete reform cycle that, due to regional specifics such as the inventory of 1847–1858, large homesteads of 1.8 desetinas, mass transfer of serfs to corvée labor, and Polish landownership, followed an accelerated scenario. The reform phases were clearly separated: 1862 was devoted to preparation and adaptation (Acts 1–3 on geographic division, restitution, and arithmetic protection), early 1863 to correction (Act 4), July 1863 to strategic coercion (Act 5), and October 1863 to the deployment of operational infrastructure (Acts 6–7) [3, pp. 116–135]. The political catalyst—the 1863 Uprising—transformed the reform into a tool of Russification.

The assessment of the compulsory redemption's effectiveness in Volyn gubernia until January 1, 1865, shows high operational efficiency. In just 22 months (from September 1, 1863), the reform covered 98% of estates in Volyn, transferring around 1.2 million peasants in three gubernias to ownership [3, pp. 116–135].

This success was ensured by institutional innovations and the creation of a clear infrastructure. Assemblies (Acts 7, 8) were strengthened as effective arbitrators, approving 92% of redemption acts without appeals. Okladna Books (Act 6) became a full-fledged financial cadastre ensuring transparency by recording every kopeck of payments. Redemption acts (7-point form) became a unified ownership document.

By replacing the landlord as creditor, the state conducted a mass-scale financial operation: the total credit issued to landlords in cash during 1864–1865 reached 15.4 million rubles. The average redemption payment was 8.2 rubles per soul, and capitalization at 6% provided landlords with compensation close to 260% of the annual quitrent [16, p. 56].

However, operational efficiency came at the price of financial shock for peasants. The demand to pay four months of redemption payments upfront (for September–December 1863) by January 1, 1864, led to 12% arrears in the first

year of the reform's operation. Although early payments (about 8% of the assigned amount credited) somewhat eased the pressure, the financial burden and reduction of allotments (due to applying Article 170 to large homesteads) caused growing social tension. The response to these factors was 14 peasant uprisings in 1864 in Zhytomyr and Lutsk counties. By 1867, arrears reached 18%, forcing the government to extend concessions, recognizing the structural financial risks [Fond 442, Inventory 1, File 567, Sheet 101].

The comprehensive analysis of compulsory peasant land redemption in Right-Bank Ukraine within the framework of the imperial reforms of the 1860s revealed the complexity and multi-layered nature of the process. It was established that despite the normative regulation by seven imperial decrees, the mechanisms of executing redemption operations remained complicated for rural communities, accompanied by legal collisions, financial burdens on peasants, and prolonged and uneven payment schedules. Redemption became a significant catalyst for transforming the agrarian structure, initiating the transition to new forms of land ownership while simultaneously deepening socio-economic differentiation and inequality in the region.

The analysis of statistical data, archival documents, and contemporary studies confirms that the reforms implemented in Ukraine had a significant but not always positive impact on the peasantry: a considerable portion of rural households faced debt obligations, lacked sufficient resources for effective management of their farms, and obtained only conditional freedom in land disposition. The implementation of imperial decrees laid the groundwork for the gradual development of market relations but requires critical reflection on the links between normative changes and long-term social consequences.

The obtained results allow not only a deeper understanding of the mechanisms and problems of peasant reform but also the identification of promising directions for further research, including the relationship between legislative innovations and real changes in rural communities, analysis of the

impact of redemption on different social groups of the rural population, as well as studying the long-term effects of land redemption on the economic development of the region and the formation of contemporary agrarian policy in Ukraine.

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