

History

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SMALL LANDHOLDINGS AS AN INSTRUMENT OF POWER: HOW THE IMPERIAL ADMINISTRATION DELIBERATELY PRESERVED PEASANT DEPENDENCY IN THE SOUTHWEST (1860s–1880s)

Summary. *The article offers a comprehensive historical-legal, economic-statistical, and discourse-analytic study of Russian Empire's land policy in the Southwestern Krai (Kyiv, Podillia, Volhynia governorates) during the post-reform period of the 1860s–1880s. Drawing on 19th-century primary sources—imperial decrees, government instructions, lustration commission materials, and statistical reports—it demonstrates that Ukrainian peasants' land shortage was not an accidental outcome of the 1861 reform but a deliberately engineered instrument of power to preserve structural dependency.*

Through normative restrictions (notably the Decree of May 16, 1867, and Rules of June 8, 1884), the administration deformed land relations, financially depleting the Polish gentry via "Russification" of landownership and imposing debt burdens on peasant communities. It reveals the financial mechanics of redemption payments as a means of capitalizing a loyal elite and the ideological discourse of "state tutelage" to legitimize the region's colonial status. Artificial land shortage underpinned imperial stability, rendering peasantry a passive object of social engineering.

Key words: *land shortage, Southwestern Krai, peasant reform of 1861, imperial policy, Russification of landownership, redemption payments, lustration commissions, structural dependence, paternalism, agrarian history of Ukraine.*

Problem Statement. The study focuses on the contradiction: why did the "mandatory redemption" after 1863, introduced to detach peasants from Polish influence, leave landholdings below the physiological minimum? Analysis of the activities of peace mediators and lustration commissions indicates a strategic calculation: land shortage ensured dependence on landowners and the treasury through redemption payments and credit isolation.

The ideological discourse of "state tutelage" legitimized restrictions, interpreting peasant incapacity as "social immaturity" [1, p. 2]. The normative framework of the 1860s–1880s reveals the colonial essence of the policy, where land shortage guaranteed rural passivity and financing of the "Russified" elite [12, p. 201]. The problem requires analysis of the political architecture of land shortage as a product of power for border stabilization via socio-economic depletion.

Methodological Basis. The research is based on the principles of objectivism, historicism, and systems analysis, treating land shortage as an institutional product of policy. The interdisciplinary approach synthesizes historical methods, legal studies, economic statistics, and discourse analysis of 19th-century documentation.

The methodology goes beyond the descriptive approach, presenting land shortage as an element of governance that ensured stability through managed poverty and stagnation.

Article Objective. The objective is to reveal the systemic nature of land shortage as an instrument of conserving archaism and colonial control in the second half of the 19th century. The study deconstructs the myth of the

"objectivity" of the deficit, identifying normative-legal, financial, and ideological mechanisms of dependency.

Research Review. The problem of land shortage in the Southwestern Krai has stages of comprehension: from P. Zaionchkovsky (mechanism of charter documents and "mandatory redemption") [12, p. 183] to modern works by M. Orlyk (credit monopoly and capital extraction) [24, p. 109].

Eyewitnesses (Ye. Kartavtsov) reveal "Russification" as ethnopolitical control [10, p. 15]; 1898 criticism records farm degradation [9, p. 26]. Gaps: ignoring 1884 normative acts and the administration's role in artificial deficit [1, p. 129]. International historiography underestimates the colonial character (J. Pallot, A. Srebrakowski).

Main Research Material. In the discourse of the imperial administration of the 1860s–1880s, land shortage in the Southwestern Krai appears not as a consequence of managerial chaos or administrative inertia, but as a systemic result of a deliberate norm-creating strategy. The goal of this policy was not so much to "civilize" the agrarian sector of the region as to conserve it in the status of a stable source of fiscal revenues and social immobility. The fundamental layer of this strategy was the retrospective legitimization of the 1847 "inventories" as the sole legal reality, effectively nullifying any economic gains of the peasantry over the previous two decades.

Table 1

Normative Layers of Institutionalizing Land Shortage in the Southwestern Krai (1862–1865)

Normative Layer (1862–1865)	Key Norm	Consequence for Peasantry
Legal	"The boundaries of communal land are determined as of 1847" (Rules on the procedure for demarcating peasant lands from landlord lands, 1865)	Conservation of minimal allotments, ignoring self-seizures of the 1850s–1860s, blocking land expansion

Normative Layer (1862–1865)	Key Norm	Consequence for Peasantry
Financial (1863–1864)	Mandatory redemption with 20% discount for cut-offs ("On the procedure for compensating landlords... of January 30, 1864")	Transforming justice into debt burden, capitalizing the "Russified" elite at peasants' expense
Administrative	Yard-by-yard measurement of homesteads, ban on collective decisions without "presence" consent	Community fragmentation, asymmetry with landlords, social atomization

Source: Primary normative acts of the Russian Empire (1862–1865) and statistical reports of lustration commissions

A critical stage in the institutionalization of land shortage was the approval in 1862 of the act on the procedure for expropriating "free peasant allotments" from communal land. This concerned plots actually cultivated (lands of former tenants, settlers, etc.) but lacking official status in previous registers [2, p. 3]. This norm formally legitimized the alienation of lands that peasants considered theirs, immediately terminating their use and declaring the supremacy of formal law over actual land use justice.

The next step in creating the "legal trap" was the "Rules on the procedure for demarcating peasant lands from landlord lands" (1865), which imperatively fixed: "The boundaries of communal land are determined as of 1847" [1, p. 1]. Such formulation deliberately ignored the dynamics of land use in the 1850s–1860s—the era of intensive self-seizures on wastelands, fallows, and forests [9, p. 16].

The second conceptual layer of the imperial strategy was the introduction of the "non-zero price of justice," enshrined in the act "On the Procedure for Compensating Landlords of the Southwestern Krai for Lands Transferring to Peasant Ownership" dated January 30, 1864. The document transformed the return of lawful allotments into a commercial operation: "the obligation for

returning communal land plots... is added to the total amount of redemption payments" with a 20% discount from the appraised value [4, p. 3, 5].

This norm radically influenced the social psychology of the village, converting historical justice into a paid service. The peasant, receiving land of generational cultivation, had to acknowledge the landlord's right through compensation, where the 20% discount underscored the hierarchy: the state as arbiter, the peasant as debtor with limited autonomy. Any "benefit" (discovery of hidden plots during lustration) was converted into a financial burden, blocking the sense of full ownership.

The institutionalization of peasant helplessness was reinforced by the "Rules on the Procedure for Making Redemption Payments by Peasants..." dated October 8, 1863, which established a preclusive term: "six years prior to the inventories... are not considered" [5, p. 114]. This norm cut off appeals to actual land use in 1841–1847—the period of the most intense landlord arbitrariness and forced evictions.

Table 2

Administrative-Financial Barriers of Land Shortage (1863–1865):

Normative Act	Key Norm	Consequence for Peasantry
Rules of 1863 [5, p. 114]	Preclusion of appeals for 6 years prior to inventories	Ignoring evictions of 1841–1847, attachment to treasury via debt [12, p. 201]
Rules of 1865 [3, pp. 22–23]	Yard-by-yard measurement of homesteads	Community fragmentation, asymmetry with landlords as the sole institution

Justice in the region was determined not by the peasant's actual connection to the allotment, but by normative immobility beneficial to landlords and the apparatus. According to P. Zaionchkovsky, the financial mechanics of redemption, ignoring pre-inventory rights, created "mandatory" attachment to the treasury stronger than serfdom [12, p. 201]. Financial exhaustion and

administrative blocking of rights formed alienation from the land, conserving tension and turning the community into an object of manipulation.

The third layer of the strategy was deliberate administrative opacity and blocking of collective decisions to destroy solidarity, making opposition to landlords and authorities impossible. A vivid example is the "Rules on the Procedure for Demarcating Peasant Lands from Landlord Lands" (1865), which required "yard-by-yard measurement of homestead settlements" for homesteads [3, pp. 22–23]. This fragmented the community into small payers, forcing each to prove rights and appeal individually, while the landlord acted as a cohesive institution, creating an asymmetry of power in land conflicts.

The effect of social atomization was intensified by the norms of the act "On the Expropriation from Communal Land of Free Peasant Plots..." (1862), which allowed disposal of plots "not otherwise than with the consent of the village society... and only if the plots are not in peasant use" [2, p. 3]. The community's right was limited to cases without conflict of landowner interests; disputed lands were decided by the "presence"—an organ prioritizing imperial loyalty over local justice.

Special attention deserves the evolution of the 1865 Instruction (ed. 1875): Article 22 provided for the return of land to the treasury for non-payment of contributions, prohibiting sales to communities or small producers [7, p. 49]. This blocked the marginal stratum of independent peasant owners—the potential core of Ukrainian village mobilization. 19th-century sources acknowledged: such a model conserved a "social disease," where legal uncertainty and prohibition of collective protection made peasants hostages of the apparatus [9, p. 26].

Table 3

Mechanisms of Peasant Community Disintegration (1862–1875)

Normative Act	Key Norm	Consequence for Community
Act of 1862 [2, p. 3]	Society consent only without peasant use	Limitation of self-determination, arbitration by "presence"
Instruction 1865/1875 [7, p. 49]	Return of land to treasury for non-payment	Blocking independent owners, prohibition of sales to communities

Administrative opacity and fragmentation were the architecture of the reform, ensuring governability through social disintegration.

The final level of dependency was the embedding of the peasantry into financial stability through "offsetting": by the act of October 8, 1863, payments were credited "towards redemption loans... and 5.5% income to the landlord" [5, p. 114]. The resolution of November 2, 1863, directed funds "to repay landlords' debts to Credit Institutions" [6, p. 22]. The community lost agency, becoming guarantor of landlords' debts to the state.

The redemption agreement was transformed not into emancipation from serfdom, but into integration of the peasant into the imperial mortgage structure: he became guarantor of the landlord's solvency to state banks, securing credits with his alternative-less labor. Every payment delay threatened the stability of Credit Institutions and the imperial financial system, legitimizing harsh collections as protection of "state security".

Table 4

Consequences of the Administrative-Financial System of Land Shortage

Consequence	Mechanism	Effect on Peasantry
Economic Determinism	Redemption payments + debt offsetting [5, p. 114]	Conservation at survival level
Psychological Inertia	Proving rights per 1847 inventories	Exhaustion of social energy

Consequence	Mechanism	Effect on Peasantry
Social Atomization	Yard-by-yard measurement [3, pp. 22–23]	Blocking solidarity
Political Passivity	Debt integration into banking system	Involuntary participant in imperial order

The analyzed acts formed a holistic system where land shortage was the cornerstone ensuring elite capitalization at the expense of peasant survival. The artificial design of land shortage became a condition of colonial stability, where "freedom" masked institutional bondage.

The system was not concealed: the administration proclaimed it as a path to preserving integrity. The anonymous work "Note and Personal Opinion on Our Southwestern Krai" articulated the fear: "excess land breeds too much independence" [11, p. 2]. Allotments beyond the physiological minimum were viewed as a threat to authority and the emancipation of the Ukrainian village.

The authorities recognized the threat of the peasant community as a collective subject. The analytical essay "On the Peasant Question..." (1898) frankly stated: the empire feared the "community—the great man" (velikiy chelovek), capable of "joint plunder"—organized defense of interests—more than the Polish nobility [9, pp. 12–13]. Land shortage disintegrated the "mir," dissipating energy on survival.

Table 5

Consequences of Land Shortage as a Control System

Consequence	Mechanism	Effect
Economic Determinism	Deficit of investment reserve	Survival without development
Psychological Inertia	Verification of rights per 1847 inventories	Exhaustion of community energy
Social Disunity	Fragmentation into payers	Disintegration of solidarity

Consequence	Mechanism	Effect
Political Passivity	Debt integration into financial system	Preservation of imperial order

Land shortage was not a defect but an institutionalized form of domination: land was transformed from a resource of development into a disciplinary instrument. Norms and discourses formed a system of preserving dependency.

Traditional historiography treats land shortage as a demographic-economic process (overpopulation, fund deficit). Analysis of acts from the 1860s–1880s in Kyiv, Podillia, and Volhynia governorates reveals it as a constructed mechanism of dependency in post-serfdom conditions. Modern studies demonstrate an epistemological gap: statistics without political analysis perceives the deficit as a calamity, not an element of imperial governance.

Table 6

Historiographical Approaches to Land Shortage in the Southwestern Krai

Researcher(s)	Key Interpretation	Limitations of Analysis
A. A. Kris'kov [13, p. 324]	Consequence of exploitation and capital deficit	Ignores institutional fixation of deficit by authorities
O. I. Hurzhiy [14, p. 365]	Fiscal-institutional "special regime"	Does not analyze land shortage as instrument of determinism
V. Shevchuk, O. Pavlenko [15, pp. 78–89; 16, pp. 45–62]	Objective factor of tension	Authorities "fought" the crisis, without state agency
O. P. Reient [17, p. 142; 18, p. 88]	Control over transformation, passive means against Poles	Support for communes for inertia (correlates with thesis)

A. A. Kris'kov's monograph reconstructs allotments and redemption operations but interprets land shortage as historical exploitation, ignoring: why the state fixed the deficit after 1861 [13, p. 324]. O. I. Hurzhiy analyzes the

"special regime" of Right-Bank Ukraine fiscally, without raising the question of conscious instrument of determinism [14, p. 365].

Recent studies by V. Shevchuk and O. Pavlenko treat tightness as an "objective factor," where authorities "fought" the problem, bypassing state agency in the crisis [15, pp. 78–89; 16, pp. 45–62]. O. P. Reient views reforms as control of transformation: limiting individualization through communalism to avoid proletarianization, turning peasants into a passive means against Polish influence [17, p. 142; 18, p. 88]. This approach correlates with the thesis on land shortage as an instrument of inertia.

Table 7

Modern Studies on Land Shortage: Key Authors and Correlations with the Thesis:

Researcher(s)	Key Thesis	Correlation with Research
O. P. Reient	Aggression from land shortage → 20th c. peasant revolts	"Tutelage" postponed inevitable explosion
V. Shandra [19, p. 156]	Governor-generalship as vertical of "tutelage" for reliability	Administrative intervention in land relations
V. Molchanov [20, p. 84]	Capitalization of landlords via conservation of peasant poverty	Financial exhaustion of communities
N. Temirova [21, p. 112]	"Russification" through peasant rights restrictions	Direct expropriation of disputed lands
S. Svystunova [22, p. 45]	Peace mediators as conductors of "excess" expropriation	Anomalous powers for state will
M. Herasymenko [23, p. 210]	1847–1848 inventories as legalization of exploitation	Conservation of feudalism in post-reform era

O. P. Reient was the first to analyze the transformation of aggression from artificial land shortage of the 1860s–1880s into 20th-century revolts, confirming: "tutelage" merely postponed the explosion. V. Shandra reveals the governor-generalship as a vertical of "tutelage" for political reliability through intervention in land relations [19, p. 156].

V. Molchanov proves the capitalization of landlords at the expense of conserving peasant poverty, correlating with financial exhaustion [20, p. 84]. N. Temirova shows "Russification" as restriction of peasant rights in favor of Russian officials/officers [21, p. 112]. S. Svystunova emphasizes the anomalous powers of peace mediators as conductors of "excess" expropriation [22, p. 45]. M. Herasymenko provides material on 1847–1848 inventories as preserved feudal legalization [23, p. 210].

Table 8

International Historiographical Gaps Regarding Land Shortage

Tradition	Representatives	Focus of Interpretation	Research Gap
Western (centrist)	J. Pallot [25, p. 138]	Stolypin reform, decollectivization of center	Ignores colonial land shortage of Right-Bank as dependency
Polish (elitocentric)	A. Srebrakowski, Y. Gross [26, pp. 23–24]	Repressions against nobility after 1863	Land shortage as side effect, victim—elite, not peasants
19th c. sources [9, p. 12]	Anonymous authors	"Managed poverty" for manipulations	Confirms technology of "Russian element"

Western historiography (J. Pallot) focuses on the Stolypin reform of central governorates, where decollectivization is key, ignoring the specificity of Right-Bank Ukraine: artificial land shortage as institutional dependency, not communalism [25, p. 138]. The "Western Krai" peasant merges with the imperial image, nullifying colonial pressure on Ukrainian lands.

The Polish tradition (Srebrakowski, Gross) emphasizes repressions of the nobility after 1863, treating peasant land shortage as a side effect of confiscations, where the victim is the elite [26, pp. 23–24]. The strategy goes unnoticed: mass land-poor peasants as technology of space for the "Russian element" through rental and boundary interventions. 19th-century authors rightly note: "managed poverty" made peasants malleable material for manipulations [9, p. 12].

The international context confirms novelty: departure from centrism/elitocentrism toward land shortage as an independent instrument of domination that stabilized the "Russian cause" through restriction of Ukrainian peasantry's economic freedom.

Table 9

Three Key Gaps in Land Shortage Research:

Gap	Traditional Interpretation	Novelty of This Research
1. Strategic Nature	Resource deficit/inactivity [12, p. 201]	Conscious imperial resource for governability
2. Norm vs. Fact	No comparison of 1847 with 1870s–1880s [8, p. XXXV]	Artificial deficit stability (1877→1887)
3. Authorities' Self-Awareness	Ignoring "Russification" discourse [10, p. 10; 9, p. 12]	"Great man" of community, "cleansing like in England"

Despite statistical data, the gap persists: land shortage as fact vs. instrument of domination. Tradition sees the deficit as an unresolved problem, ignoring the targeted intent of authorities [12, p. 201].

The norm of 1847 has not been compared with the reality of the 1870s–1880s: deficit stability (1877→1887) proves blocking of allotment expansion [8, p. XXXV]. Beyond attention is the authorities' discourse: "Russification" as "cleansing like in England" for loyalty [10, p. 10]; fear of the "great man" (community) required destruction through land shortage [9, p. 12].

The research fills these gaps: comprehensive analysis of norms/statistics proves land shortage as architecture, not error. The mechanism of bondage avoided village mobilization, preserving passivity without revolts: colonial law of archaism conservation for imperial security.

Table 10

Demographic-Agrarian Dynamics of Right-Bank Ukraine (1861–1885)

Governorate	Allotment per capita (des., 1861) [29, p. 145]	Population 1863 (mln) [30, p. 78]	Population 1885 (mln) [30, p. 78]	Allotment Reduction (%)
Kyiv	2.9 (norm: 5–6 des.) [29, p. 145]	1.8	2.5	~28
Podillia	2.9	1.6	2.2	~27
Volhynia	2.9	1.4	2.0	~30

Modern historiography treats land shortage not as managerial failure, but as an institutional strategy of control: allotments reduced by 20–30% through "cut-offs," creating dependency on landlords [24, p. 50]. Demographic growth (Kyiv: 1.8→2.5 mln) without allotment expansion (2.9 des. at norm 5–6) fragmented land and reduced productivity [29, p. 145; 30, p. 78].

The 1861 reform acquired a repressive character after the 1863 uprising: redemption payments (capitalized at 6%) exceeded market value, dependency on landlords'/banks' credits [24, p. 102]. The document "On Peasants Making Redemption Payments..." regulated payments to treasury (15-day grace, forced collection), while "On the Procedure for Converting Charter Documents..." involved mediators [1, pp. 10; 15]. Russification and control were implemented through reduced allotments and payments.

Table 11

Statistical Stability of Land Shortage in Governorates (1861–1885) [31, p. 34; 30, p. 85]:

Governorate	Allotment per capita (des., 1861)	Population 1863 (mln)	Population 1885 (mln)	Allotment Reduction (%)
Kyiv	3.2 [31, p. 34]	1.8 [30, p. 85]	2.5 [30, p. 85]	~28
Podillia	2.8 [31, p. 34]	1.6 [30, p. 85]	2.2 [30, p. 85]	~27
Volhynia	2.9 [31, p. 34]	1.4 [30, p. 85]	2.0 [30, p. 85]	~30

Statistics confirm the trend: population growth without allotment expansion made peasants vulnerable to famine and debts [31, p. 34; 30, p. 85]. Russification after 1863 transferred land to "Russian peasants" with minimal allotments for loyalty through dependency. Land shortage blocked a strong Ukrainian peasant class [33, p. 20].

The "communal allotment" of the 1861 reform was fixed according to 1847 inventories (minimal landlord allotments), prioritizing stability over justice and historical rights. High payments + demographic pressure slowed development, ensuring control over Right-Bank Ukraine [24, p. 154].

Table 12

Normative Fixation of Land Shortage: 1847 Inventories vs. 1861 Reform

Normative Act	Key Norm	Consequence for Peasants
Inventories 1847–1848 (D.G. Bibikov) [27, pp. 61–88]	"Actual use" at inventory moment, ban on reduction	Minimal allotments for isolation from Poles
Local Statute 1861, Art. 3	Lands per inventories—unchanged and protected	Fixation of 1847 landlord pressure
Art. 132 (homesteads), 186 (communal land) [1, p. 114]	Support of structures without compensation	Ignoring rights 6 years prior to inventories
Peasant petitions	Evidence + testimonies for appeals	Frequent rejections, legalization of shortage

The Local Statute of 1861 for Kyiv, Podillia, and Volhynia governorates established a direct link with the 1847–1848 inventory rules. Article 3 of the Statute obligated landlords to leave peasants lands as of the inventory moment, making them unchanged and protected. This fixed allotments at the 1847 level, when landlords had already minimized them to prevent peasant independence.

Peasant petitions about allotment reductions after 1847 required not only discrepancies between records and actual use, but also additional testimonies, leading to mass rejections of complaints. D.G. Bibikov's inventory rules,

introduced after the 1830–1831 uprising, isolated peasants from Polish influences through mandatory descriptions of estates, peasant lists, and obligations [27, pp. 61–88]. The ban on allotment reduction formally preserved the status quo but allowed landlords to reclaim "excesses" for renunciation of corvée, conserving the "Prussian path" of development.

Articles 132 (homesteads) and 186 (communal land) of the Statute supported existing structures without compensation, ignoring land use six years prior to inventories [1, p. 114]. Allotments averaged 2.9 desyatins per capita (at norm 5–6 des.) fragmented land and reduced productivity [29, p. 145]. The reform legalized landlord pressure: exchanges, plot reprofiling, ensuring economic domination through temporary obligations.

Table 13

Allotment Sizes per 1861 Statute (desyatins per capita)

Governorate	Norm per Statute	Actual Average	Cut-offs (%)
Kyiv	4.5–9.5	1.9–4.5	18–28.9
Podillia	4.5–9.5	2.0–4.0	26.4
Volhynia	4.5–9.5	2.5–5.0	21.2

The 1847–1848 inventory rules formally prohibited allotment reductions but allowed landlords to reclaim "excesses" in exchange for renunciation of corvée, creating land shortage as an instrument of power [27, pp. 61–88]. This facilitated the "Prussian path": reduction of draft farms in Podillia Governorate from 58,626 (1848) to 37,027 (1861). Articles 132 and 186 of the 1861 Statute fixed homesteads and communal land, ignoring rights six years prior to inventories [1, p. 114].

Table 14

Population and Land Dynamics (1860s–1880s)

Indicator	1860s	1880s	Change (%)
Population (mln)	~6.5	~8.5–9.0	+28–30
Allotted land (mln des.)	~4.0	~4.3	+8

Demographic pressure (Kyiv Governorate: 1.8→2.5 mln) without allotment expansion + 6% redemption payments intensified dependency. Land shortage fulfilled the law, serving Russification and control after 1863.

The Southwestern Krai was perceived by the empire through a security discourse: ethnic rift between Polish landowners and Ukrainian peasantry as "Polish dominance." Peasantry was seen as the sole loyal force that needed control through land shortage to prevent ethnopolitical mobilization.

Peasantry was perceived as a loyal force only under complete dependency on "state tutelage." According to Ye. Kartavtsov, landownership was an instrument of "political domination": the Polish element controlled 90% of private land [10, p. 6].

The 1863 uprising transformed the reform: gradual emancipation in the center, political expropriation in the Southwestern Krai. Mandatory redemption (unlike voluntary) aimed to "detach" peasants from Poles but was accompanied by resource restrictions. Land shortage ensured the paradox: freedom from the "master," but poverty for the "Tsar-Father" [10, p. 10].

The strategic contradiction was the "non-competitive peasant." According to the "Statistical Yearbook," in Podillia Governorate the allotment per male soul was 1.1–1.4 desyatins of arable land—the lowest in the empire, making commodity production impossible [8, p. XXXI]. The commune and circular liability facilitated fiscal control, blocking mobility. M. Orlyk proves: peasants were excluded from mortgage loans available to nobility [24, p. 4].

Market deformation began with ethno-religious censorship: acts of 1864–1865 prohibited Poles from buying land, narrowing demand and collapsing prices [10, p. 6]. The land fund became accessible to "Russian buyers" (officials, military) without capital. The market turned into a distributor where price depended on loyalty, not fertility.

Market deformation deepened through selective credit support: Russian buyers received state loans on preferential terms, subsidizing the new elite at treasury expense. M. Orlyk proves: the mortgage system supported large (Russian) landownership, excluding Ukrainian peasantry from credits [24, p. 4].

The structural trap isolated the old elite (Poles) from expansion, the new (Russians) from farming, peasantry from land purchase. Land shortage stabilized the system: independent peasant-owner threatened political agency. "Russification" was limited to minimal allotments for survival without capitalization.

Statistics of 1877–1878 record: confiscated/state land was reserved for "persons of Russian origin," not peasants [8, p. XXXI]. Land became an electoral census: zemstvos were not introduced until dominance of "Russian landownership" [10, p. 10]. The Ukrainian majority remained marginalized in local governance.

Land shortage was an architectural element of the 1861 reform, stabilizer of loyalty: deficit blocked peasant autonomy, leaving the state as sole arbiter and "savior," eroding Polish influence.

The 1861 land reform and Decree of August 30, 1863 formally ensured "full allotment," but norms did not meet subsistence minimum or autonomy. The state targeted the critical threshold forcing peasants into corvée rental.

Statistics of 1877–1878 record catastrophe: in Kyiv Governorate—2.9 desyatins per male soul, in Podillia—2.6 des.—lowest indicators in European Russia [8, p. XXXV]. State peasants had 3.9 and 3.7 desyatins respectively,

emphasizing selective harshness toward landlord peasants in the Polish zone [8, p. XLVIII].

Economic insolvency is evident: 5–7 desyatins needed for payments/taxes coverage, while "full allotment" meant mere survival. Ye. Kartavtsov notes: the government kept peasants in "economic tension," where crop failure accumulated arrears [10, p. 5]. Lack of mortgage credit (closed to large owners) blocked land purchases [24, p. 4].

The legal "allotment" became bondage to the latifundium: shortage forced acceptance of any rental terms for grazing/haymaking. The 1870s land hunger deintensified production: allotments of 2.6–2.9 desyatins made crop rotations and commodity production impossible, eroding capital and primitivizing cultivation [8, p. XXXV].

Economic degradation intensified through alienation of pastures and meadows during lustration and "Russification" to state funds or new owners. Lack of fodder base reduced livestock, fertilizers, and exhausted allotment soils. Low yields forced peasants to day labor in estates on "corvée" or "zdolshchyna," turning owners into "eternal tenants" without time/resources for modernization [10, p. 8].

Social erosion of the community was provoked by strip farming and unclear boundaries, causing conflicts and litigation over "encroachments" or grazing. Legal exhaustion in peace courts exceeded plot profits, blocking solidarity and individual farm success through administrative restrictions on rental/purchase [9, p. 772].

M. Orlyk proves absence of reclamation/circulating credit for small producers: the system extracted product through payments/taxes without investing in agrarian sector [24, p. 4]. Post-harvest dumping sales for settlements prevented accumulation for expansion. Degradation was a consequence of "artificial land shortage" as an instrument of pacification through depletion.

Administration activity of 1860s–1880s in the Southwestern Krai targeted not free land market but regulation within "political reliability." Kyiv governor-general and peace mediators blocked peasant landownership expansion, viewing community purchases as threat of "Polish influence" or peasant agency. Administration vetoed deals, favoring "persons of Russian origin"—officials and officers [10, p. 10].

Bureaucratic barriers included the requirement of "proven reliability" of the community—a legally vague but effective instrument of refusal. State lands did not go toward eliminating land shortage (Kyiv Governorate: 2.9 des./soul), but were reserved for Russian landlords on preferential terms [8, p. XXXV]. Peasant petitions for cut-offs awaited negative responses for years due to "inexpediency."

Credit isolation intensified control: absence of small credit institutions made market competition impossible. M. Orlyk notes: the mortgage system served large owners, while communities were mere payers [24, p. 4]. Control over rural banks directed funds to taxes, not land, ensuring financial exhaustion and obedience [24, p. 492].

Administration preemptively suppressed peasant cooperation: joint funds for land purchase were treated as "prohibited assemblies," activists fell under surveillance or deportation. Economic independence threatened the myth of the "peasant-servant of the throne." Policy conserved the structure where land-poor peasants served as cheap resource for "Russified" estates [9, p. 5].

The state fund after 1863 was used for ethnic engineering: priority to "Russians" by loyalty, not peasants [1, p. 115]. Free plots bordering allotments were transferred to officials/officers as reward. P. Zaionchkovsky emphasizes: restricting peasant access to state lands prevented emancipation [12, p. 195].

The "cut-off" mechanism was sabotaged by peace institutions: refusals under pretext of "lack of areas," despite landlord surpluses. According to P.

Zaionchkovsky, the government feared "uncontrollable" peasants with overly large allotments [12, p. 201]. The reform changed the form of dependency, not ensuring liberation.

Redemption act statistics confirm: allotments formally met the minimum, ignoring real farm needs. Peace mediators blocked cut-offs with secret instructions to "restrain peasant appetites," freezing land hunger as the basis of exploitation [9, p. 5].

The land relations system acquired neo-feudal traits: land shortage forced peasants into bondage relations with owners. Corvée became hidden quitrent—cultivation of landlord land with peasant implements for grazing/watering rights. M. Orlyk proves: lack of credit made monetary rent impossible, leaving natural corvée as the sole payment [24, p. 4].

Balance of power conserved backwardness: large owners did not intensify production, having cheap forced labor. "Middle relations" blocked farming, creating a hybrid of freedom with economic subordination under administrative oversight [12, p. 232].

The 1861 reform and 1863 acts created a gap: legal freedom vs. allotments of 2.6–2.9 des./soul (1870s), stimulating extra-economic forced labor [8, p. XXXV]. Rental turned into survival, not capitalization.

A characteristic feature of the post-reform period was dominance of bondage rental: payment in kind or labor due to lack of circulating capital and credits. M. Orlyk notes: corvée with implements and livestock restored quitrent under contractual guise [24, p. 109]. Common "corvée" for pastures, meadows, servitudes alienated during lustration.

Bondage intensified due to shortage of land uses and unclear boundaries: landlords provoked "encroachments" for fines, which peasants worked off or accepted onerous terms [9, p. 772]. "Zdolshchyna" (half to two-thirds of harvest) conserved archaism: owner received income without investments, peasant—without resources for fertilizers/seed [12, p. 232].

Forced rental stabilized the imperial order: debt burden blocked independent farmers. Land shortage + bondage created a dependency cycle stronger than serfdom [9, p. 5].

Economic reality of the post-reform period was characterized by transition from legal serfdom to structural dependency, centered on the corvée system— transformation of quitrent for "free" labor market conditions. P. Zaionchkovsky notes: in Right-Bank Ukraine, where peasantry had least land, corvée acquired mass stagnant character, hindering agrarian sector capitalization [12, p. 232].

The mechanism was based on monopoly of landlords (Polish and Russian) on pastures, watering places, forests. Allotment of 2.6–2.9 desyatins (1877 statistics) made livestock keeping impossible without access to landlord lands [8, p. XXXV]. Financial system, per M. Orlyk, extracted capital through payments, excluding peasants from small credit, making labor the sole rental currency [24, p. 109].

The corvée system regenerated pre-reform exploitation: peasants cultivated landlord land "gratefully" for pastures or borrowed grain. 1890s sources describe "sad reality": best time went to the estate, degrading own allotment and conserving archaism, since landowner did not invest in technology with free labor available [9, p. 5]

The administration through peace mediators and Lustration Commissions maintained this state: demarcation created strip farming, making corvée inevitable for plot access. The "Collection of Government Orders" of 1865 intensified community control, depriving peasants of employer choice [1, p. 115].

Corvée became a conserved instrument of power, ensuring stability through total poverty and dependency.

Migration of 1860s–1880s in the Southwestern Krai was a reaction to land shortage (Podillia/Kyiv governorates: 2.6–2.9 desyatins) insufficient for reproduction [8, p. XXXV]. Resettlement to the East (Siberia, Caucasus) was seen as survival path, but administration created institutional barriers.

Passport system and circular liability restrained mobility: per "Collection of Government Orders" 1865, peasants could not leave without passport, issuance requiring payment of dues/taxes [1, p. 115]. M. Orlyk notes: chronic indebtedness due to credit absence turned peasants into "debt-attached" [24, p. 109].

Restrictions benefited landowners: surplus labor ensured cheap corvée.

The ethnopolitical aspect of migration in the Southwestern Krai lay in using Ukrainian peasantry as instrument of "Russification" against Polish nobility. Ye. Kartavtsov notes: mass peasant outflow to the East weakened the "Russian element," so community petitions were rejected by peace mediators per governor-general's order under pretext of "strengthening land relations" [10, p. 10].

The "sad reality" of illegal "otkhodnichestvo" (1890s)—earnings without passports to the South or cities due to debts, dependency on police arbitrariness [9, p. 5]. P. Zaionchkovsky emphasizes: migration blockade conserved poverty, driving land hunger deeper [12, p. 232].

Migration restrictions kept peasantry in structural dependency as demographic resource of "Russification."

Financial architecture of the post-1863 redemption operation transformed agrarian conflict into managed flow: state guaranteed landlords (especially "Russian elite") 5% bank notes and certificates immediately [1, p. 2].

Redemption mechanics was based on disbursing sums to landlords after "clearing" estates from debts to state banks, making treasury the main beneficiary [1, p. 115]. Peasantry became "financially serfed": payments (redemption + 6% annual) calculated on inflated land valuation. P. Zaionchkovsky proves: mandatory redemption broke ties with Polish nobility, attaching peasants to treasury [12, p. 201].

"Interest collection" from estates funded peace mediators and Lustration Commissions—architects of land shortage [1, p. 129]. Allotments of 2.6–2.9 desyatins (1877) extracted surplus product through taxes/payments [8, p.

XXXV]. Chronic cash deficit forced bondage rental/c corvée, since credit system, per M. Orlyk, served only large landownership [24, p. 109].

Debt burden served as police instrument: redemption arrears blocked passport issuance, restricting migration and ensuring cheap labor for "Russified" economies [9, p. 5]. State financially guaranteed colonial policy: land shortage ensured treasury revenues and capitalization of loyal elite. 1890s sources call this "sad reality"—financial insolvency as basis of political passivity [9, p. 26]. The ideological construction relied on myths of "state tutelage" and peasant "social immaturity," legitimizing land shortage restrictions. Imperial power positioned itself as guarantor of the "Russian" peasant against "Polish influence," transforming oppression into "monarchic mercy" [1, p. 2].

Paternalism served as screen for preventing economic agency of Ukrainian peasantry: official rhetoric depicted it in "eternal childhood" needing oversight. Ye. Kartavtsov notes: administration granted "legal independence," detaching peasants from Polish landlords but subordinating to stricter tutelage of peace institutions [10, p. 8].

Peace mediators in the region had broader powers than in internal governorates: P. Zaionchkovsky proves they acted as political overseers under pretext of "protecting interests" [12, p. 183]. Land purchase initiative was treated as "imprudence" requiring prohibition "for peasants' benefit."

Thirty years after the reform (1898), the "sad reality" was noted: artificial land shortage and lack of boundaries created poverty, which ideology proclaimed "moral fall" needing "doctors"-officials [9, p. 26]. "Immaturity" discourse blocked zemstvos, justifying credit isolation described by M. Orlyk [24, p. 109].

The vicious circle closed: land shortage made peasants poor, poverty—"immature," requiring regime preservation. Result—"weakened organism," bound by corvée and debts as object of "Russification" social engineering [9, p. 26].

Land shortage in the Southwestern Krai (1860s–1880s) was a product of

systematic imperial policy of political control and ethnosocial engineering, not demographic pressure or objective factors.

First thesis: Normative framework (Decree of 1867, Instructions of 1865) created barriers to landownership expansion: state/confiscated lands were reserved for "Russian persons," Lustration Commissions designed strip farming, regenerating exploitation [10, p. 15; 1, p. 129].

Second thesis: Redemption operation ensured "debt serfdom": state capitalized loyal landowners at peasants' expense, credit system supported estate landownership [24, p. 109]. Allotment norms (2.6–2.9 desyatins in Podillia/Kyiv governorates) guaranteed bondage rental and corvée [8, p. XXXV].

The study proves the colonial nature of the reform: land subjugated the region, undermining Polish elite and keeping Ukrainian peasantry in non-autonomy. "Tutelage" and "immaturity" discourse justified lack of self-governance [9, p. 26].

Land shortage was not reformers' error but successfully implemented architectural element of imperial power. It blocked formation of independent farmer-owners, conserving archaic structures and ensuring political passivity of population.

The research proves policy systematicity: from normative barriers and debt serfdom to ideological "tutelage" subjugating the region colonially. Prospects for further research—transformation of peasant protest into national-liberation movements of early 20th century as consequence of artificial development restraint in imperial interests.

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