

A Land to Call Their Own

Russian peasants, the question of modern citizenship and land disputes
in the Ufa governorate, 1861-1917



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Voor Emma

&

Voor Ian

Diep in de tijd. Het kalme ademen van miljoenen jaren...

... We waden al haast door de schaduwen.

— Tommy Wieringa

Preface

Finally! The work is done. I cannot believe it's over. The sudden freedom feels strange after so much hardship this thesis imposed on me. Maybe the fact that today is Liberation Day in the Netherlands has to do with it. The tears in my eyes remind me of my dear friend Ian. Losing him made me doubt whether I could even finish this thesis. I had lost my ability to write and to analyse. Now, after all this time, I feel proud that I persevered. I did it and I cannot believe it's finally over.

At the same time, they are the tears of a tremendous joy. My topic was not always easy, but my choice brought me to Ufa in Russia, where it was great meeting people who were eager to show their city and country. It was also fantastic to speak to Russian scholars and students who had different and interesting perspectives on what I considered to be certainties of Russian history and perhaps of life in general. Working in the Ufa archive was an amazing experience that made me especially appreciate the digitization of the Dutch archives. Ploughing through paper catalogues and waiting hours for a limited number of files was an indispensable experience for my development as a researcher. The study of the archival materials itself reminded me why I love history so much: I have become addicted to the gratification of getting to know the smallest villages, even those far up the tiny rivers into the mountains, and solving the little 'puzzles' that were the weal and woe of people long gone. It is also the pleasure of finding out what was *really* going on in their lives and discerning larger developments that relate to what I have already learned – or not, of course. A sigh. I actually cannot believe it's already over.

Writing this thesis has been a great personal journey and I would like to use the opportunity here to thank those who guided and inspired me along the way – as is only natural for a student of *history*. First and foremost, I would have never been able to finish my work without Ido de Haan, whose infinite patience and keen ability to know very well what to say to keep me motivated were of vital importance. Obviously, his academic expertise was important too. It feels only right to recognize the help Liesbeth van de Grift provided me in the early stages of writing my thesis. Unfortunately, she could not prevent me and my thesis from falling apart.

Marsil' N. Farkshatov has been absolutely instrumental for the successful conclusion of this thesis. His kindness and friendliness truly made me quickly feel at home when I first arrived in Ufa and he introduced me to the Bashkir academia, provided me with crucial Russian-language books on my topic and arranged for all the documents necessary to work in the archives and libraries of Ufa. He also made me realize that in the Soviet Union, the alphabet started with M of Marx. The fact that indexes in Soviet works literally started with Marx or Lenin meant that I had to explore Marxist theory in order to properly understand the

Soviet approaches to the agrarian relations between Bashkirs and Russian peasants, but also the work of post-Soviet historians who base themselves on their Marxist predecessors. I would like to thank the Ufa archive director Julaj Kh. Juldashbaev for his assistance during my work in his archive and the pleasant small-talk during the quiet hours in the afternoon.

At Utrecht University, I really appreciated the work and effort of the director of my programme, Oscar Gelderblom. Not only did he write at a moment's notice several official letters required for archival access in Russia, but he also helped me to set up the Working group for Russian history at the UU in 2016-2017. I am very proud of the group's research manual on Russian history for Dutch students as well as the conference on revolutions we managed to organize. Oscar also introduced a much needed sense of humanity to our study that helped me start dealing with my grief. For the same reason, I would like to single out Guido de Bruin, whose compassion and patience with my dear Emma allowed her to resume her study in 2012. For that, I am forever grateful. Maarten Prak was always kind and really helped me develop my writing. Arch Getty and Carla de Glopper both have been pivotal for me, because they have taught me essential archival and palaeographical skills as well as the joy of letting history itself run through your fingers. The same goes for Remco Raben, to whom I owe my desire to look beyond the borders of the familiar. Thanks to him, today I implore everyone to learn languages and get to know different cultures, because in his words, 'every language has a word for work and love.' He truly broadened my horizon.

At the University of Amsterdam, Alla V. Podgaevskaja and Eric Metz gave me what I desired for so long. Here I learned Russian, which is still far from perfect, but has at least allowed me to talk to Russians, read books and most importantly, to make sense of the archival materials. In Amsterdam, I also met Michael Kemper (and his Ph.D. students Alfrid, Danis and Gulnaz), Sudha Rajagopalan and Christian Noack, who were all terrific teachers and provided me with invaluable knowledge of Russian imperial history, Russian peasant studies and Bashkir history respectively. Jeroen van Zanten and Jan Hein Furnée were equally inspiring and have only deepened my love for the historical profession.

Finally, I really appreciate the warm conversations with Chinggis Zendedel at his kitchen table about Russian history and Persian poetry. I also love the discussions about history and current affairs with my dear friend Genji Yasuhira, who has also helped me a lot by listening to and commenting on my stories about Russians and Bashkirs. Finally, I cannot even begin to express how important the support of my beloved Emma Spijkerman has been the last years. I have been there for her, but she certainly has been there for me too through all my ups and downs, reading and discussing my findings. On more than one occasion, she was the one that helped me structure my thoughts and lifted my spirits when I needed it the most. I also like to think that I have learned a lot from my fellow students in Amsterdam and Utrecht, I will miss you. I still cannot believe it's already over.

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Map 1.1. Location of Bashkiriya in the Russian empire (c. 1900).¹

¹ Map taken from C. Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire: Loyalty and Tsarist Authority in Bashkiriya, 1552-1917* (Bloomington 2016) 204 (map 7.1).

Longing for a home: an introduction

“The land lies near a river, and the whole prairie is virgin soil.”
Pakhom plied him with questions, and the tradesman said:
“There is more land there than you could cover if you walked a
year, and it all belongs to the Bashkirs. They are as simple as
sheep, and land can be got almost for nothing.” — Leo N.
Tolstoy, *How Much Land Does a Man Need?* (1886).

In 1649, the tsar of Muscovy Aleksei Michailovich Romanov gave his blessing to a new law code, the *Ulozhenie*, which among many other things reasserted several non-Russian peoples' right to own and work the land they inhabited. This included the Muslim Bashkirs, a Turkic semi-nomadic people that inhabited the region between the Volga-Kama rivers and the southern Urals and who had received the right to their land when they pledged their allegiance to tsar Ivan the Terrible in the years after his conquest of Kazan in 1552. In an effort to regulate the empire's land relations, it was laid down in the *Ulozhenie* that neither greater and lesser boyars nor people of any other rank were allowed to 'take, lease or buy, mortgage or rent for many years' the Bashkirs' lands, under pain of losing the gained lands to the tsar and even worse: the perpetrator would fall into the 'Sovereign's disgrace'.²

However, some 250 years later it had become clear that the Bashkir lands had not been safe from Russian peasant immigrants who had travelled there in search of a land to call their own, defying the sovereign's disgrace. Reviewing the year 1911, the provincial statistics committee of the Ufa governorate, the largest of Bashkiria's provinces, was pleased to report that in the span of a few decades since the 1860s, with the help of government loans an enormous share of Bashkir land had been transferred into the hands of Russian peasants, who had recently received their personal freedom and the right to own land during the Great Reforms which had started in 1861.³

The purchase of Bashkir lands involved many parties, including merchants, peasants and even imperial officials who bought enormous portions of land for ridiculously low prices and resold them at huge profits. The episode was such a blatant display of exploitation, fraud and self-enrichment that the period between 1869 and 1879 became known in Bashkiria as the 'hunting' or 'plundering of the land'.⁴ None other than Leo Tolstoy wrote his 1886 short

² *Polnoe sobranie zakonov Rossijskoj imperii* (PSZRI), Series I, vol. 1 (1649-1675), no. 1 (January 1649) 80-81; R.S. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy from Peter the Great to the Abdication of Nicholas II* (New Jersey 2006) 12-13.

³ *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1911 god* (Ufa 1914) 88-89 & 102.

⁴ N.V. Remezov, *Očerki iz zhizni dikoj Bashkirii. Byl' v skazochnoj strane* (Moscow 1889) 63-70; W. Barthold, 'Basdjirt', in: M. Th. Houtsma a.o. (eds.), *Enzyklopaedie des Islam. Band I: A-D* (Leiden

story *How Much Land Does a Man Need?* as a reaction to mass land purchases in Bashkiria, attacking the greed and colonial attitudes of the Russian officials, merchants and peasants alike.

Before 1850, Russian peasants had pursued landownership with a sense of entitlement and considered it their 'natural right' to settle anywhere. Even if they moved beyond Russia's borders, in their mind the land they found and cultivated had automatically become Russia due to their presence.⁵ The traditional peasant 'philosophy' may also have entailed that land belonged to nobody, except to those who worked the land since they depended on it for their survival.⁶ It was not uncommon, however, for Russian peasants to try to take advantage of their agrarian usefulness and social position to negotiate better land deals with the state.⁷ Their migration to the Ufa governorate and the eventual 'plundering of the land' may simply have been another expression of this traditional social-agrarian worldview.

However, after 1850 Russian peasants may also have utilized the colonial policies of the Russian state by playing on ethnic and cultural hierarchies. They would have made use of their Russianness to acquire Bashkir lands from the state, but also discredit the Muslim and semi-nomadic Bashkirs with the authorities. This would imply that the Russian peasantry had adopted the attitudes of the state. After all, the second half of the nineteenth century was a time when the imperial officials and intellectuals were increasingly concerned with economic development in relation to ethnicity (connected to religion and language).⁸ The

1913) 697; Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 126-128 & 141; I.M. Gvozdnikova a.o. (eds.), *Istorija Bashkortostana vo vtoroj polovine XIX- nachale XX veka. V 2 tomakh. Vol. I* (Ufa 2006) 162; A.Z. Asfandijarov a.o. (eds.), *Istorija Bashkirskogo naroda v semi tomakh. Vol. IV* (Saint Petersburg 2011) 262.

⁵ W. Sunderland, 'An Empire of Peasants: Empire-Building, Interethnic Interaction, and Ethnic Stereotyping in the Rural World of the Russian Empire, 1800-1850s', in: J. Burbank & D.L. Ransel, *Imperial Russia. New Histories for the Empire* (Bloomington 1998) 181.

⁶ A. Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905. Russia in Disarray* (Stanford 1988) 163; S.A. Smith, "'Moral economy" and Peasant Revolution in Russia: 1861-1918', *Revolutionary Russia* 24 2 (2011) 154; M. Lewin, 'Customary Law and Russian Rural Society in the Post-Reform Era', *Russian Review* 44 1 (1985) 18; B.N. Mironov, 'The Peasant Commune after the Reforms of the 1860s', in: B. Eklof & S.P. Frank (eds.), *The World of the Russian Peasant. Post-Emancipation Culture and Society* (London 1990) 26-27 & 31-33; D. Macey, 'Reflections on Peasant Adaptation in Rural Russia at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century: The Stolypin Agrarian Reforms', *Journal of Peasant Studies* 31 3-4 (2004) 417.

⁷ Sunderland, 'An Empire of Peasants', 179.

⁸ R.D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar. Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* (Cambridge, MA 2006) 7-8, 22-23 & 205-208; Y. Abdouline & S.A. Dudoignon, 'Histoire et interprétations contemporaines du second réformisme musulman (Ou djadidisme) chez les Tatars de la Volga et de Crimée', *Cahiers du Monde russe* 37 1-2 (1996) 75; N. Knight, 'Ethnicity, Nationality and the Masses: *Narodnost* and Modernity in Imperial Russia', in: D.L. Hoffman & Y. Kotsonis (eds.), *Russian Modernity. Politics, Knowledge, Practices* (Basingstoke 2000) 54-60; P. Holquist, 'To Count, to Extract, and to Exterminate. Population Statistics and Population Politics in Late Imperial and Soviet Russia', in: R.G. Suny & T. Martin (eds.), *A State of Nations. Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford 2001) 111-116; M.N. Farchšatov, 'Volksaufklärung oder Islam? Verstaatlichung des Schulwesen und Bittschriftenkampagnen von Muslimen im Wolga-Ural-Gebiet, 1860-1900', in: W.

practical expropriation of the Bashkirs was the direct result of such colonial attitudes among the local officials. From this perspective, the enormous amounts of Bashkir lands the Russian peasants acquired after 1861 may just as well have been the result of their new modern colonial attitudes.

Historians, however, disagree to what extent the Russian peasantry after 1861 was inclined to adopt state mentalities. Some claim that the majority of the peasants did not significantly change despite (or in some cases because of) increased contact with state representatives. Others emphasize the influences of the modernizing state in different spheres of peasant society after 1850, which undermined traditional attitudes and for some even suggest the development of modern citizenship. In the latter case, identification with the modern state may also have entailed an analogous development of modern colonial attitudes.

To what extent then did Russian peasants abandon traditional social-agrarian attitudes to go along with modern colonial policies of the state when they acquired land in the Ufa governorate between 1861 and 1917? This study takes as its starting point the abolition of serfdom, which granted peasants the right to acquire property which in turn formed the necessary condition for the subsequent land purchases in Bashkiria; its conclusion lies in 1917, when the First World War had severely disrupted peasant communities across Russia and the February revolution cut short any elaborate form of experimentation with land policies by the tsarist government.⁹

By highlighting the question of Russian peasantry and colonialism, I aim to fill a gap in the historiography on the late imperial Russian peasantry in which colonialism as a potential spectrum of 'modern citizenship' has not been sufficiently studied thus far. Modernity is a complex concept and scholars have different interpretations of it.¹⁰ The debate on Russian peasant citizenship is actually concerned in the first place with the question to what extent the peasantry accepted or appreciated relations (without coercion) with the state in order to measure peasant modern attitudes.¹¹ The specific contents of this modernity are of

Sperling (ed.) *Jenseits der Zarenmacht. Dimensionen des Politischen im Russischen Reich 1800-1917* (Frankfurt 2008) 223-253.

⁹ A.I. Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnosheniia v Bashkortostane i bashkirskoe zemlevladienie vo vtoroj polovine XVI-nachale XX v.* (Ufa 2007) 351-352.

¹⁰ See for example the balanced view on modernity by F. Cooper, *Colonialism in Question. Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley 2005) 113-149.

¹¹ B. Eklof, 'Ways of Seeing: Recent Anglo-American Studies of the Russian Peasant (1861-1914)', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 36 1 (1988) 61-64, 66-68 & 72-79; M. Confino, 'Russian Customary Law and the Study of Peasant *Mentalités*', *Russian Review* 44 1 (1985) 35-43; Lewin, 'Customary Law', 1-19; C.D. Worobec, 'Reflections on Customary Law and Post-Reform Peasant Russia', *Russian Review* 44 1 (1985) 21-25; W. Sperling, 'Jenseits von "Autokratie und "Gesellschaft": Zur Einleitung', in: W. Sperling (ed.), *Jenseits der Zarenmacht. Dimensionen des Politischen im Russischen Reich 1800-1917* (Frankfurt & New York 2008) 18; other references to the binary of acceptance and rejection of the state may be found in N.V. Riasanovsky, 'Afterword: The Problem of

secondary importance, but for the sake of analysis we do need some points of reference to determine whether Russian peasants in Ufa had modern colonial attitudes. Since state attitudes play a pivotal role for the rise of a modern peasantry, a short analysis of the historiography of this topic will serve simultaneously to present examples of modern and traditional attitudes in peasant societies after 1850.

The historiographical debate on the Russian peasantry is summarized neatly by David Moon's 1997 survey article, in which he compared the Russian and French peasantries of the late nineteenth-century. For this he used Eugen Weber's thesis that through national institutions, so-called 'agencies of change' such as improved roads and railways, education, military and justice, the state's national culture was able to penetrate the rural world and transform the peasants into national citizens. Moon himself took the view that in fin-de-siècle Russia these institutions had not provided results similar to nineteenth century France and that Russian peasants had in fact been able to make these 'sites of cultural contact' their own.¹² He referred to what has come to be known as 'peasantization,' which came down to the 'preservation and strengthening of a distinctive peasant culture' in the respective fields of the state institutions.¹³ Therefore, despite repeated state attempts, in the end peasant traditional ideas and actions did not change. According to Moon, this explained the weakness of the tsarist regime and its eventual collapse. Others, like Scott Seregny, have questioned the supposed lack of a national identity among peasants and its relation to the collapse of the tsarist empire.¹⁴

Discussions about peasantization versus modernization focus on several 'agencies of change' Eugen Weber identified, such as military and army (the effects of conscription, training and campaigns)¹⁵ or political participation (the existence of substantial involvement in local, regional and national politics as well as the significance of petitions),¹⁶ and education.

the Peasant', in: W.S. Vucinich (ed.), *The Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Stanford 1968) 263-284.

¹² D. Moon, 'Peasants into Russian citizens? A comparative perspective', *Revolutionary Russia* 9 1 (1996) 55. The term 'sites of cultural contact' was borrowed from James R. Lehning, *Peasant and French: Cultural Contact in Rural France during the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge 1995).

¹³ Macey, 'Reflections', 402 & 418n3.

¹⁴ Moon, 'Peasants into Russian citizens?', 54-55 & 75. This view did not fundamentally change in an update of his 1997 article, D. Moon, 'Late imperial peasants', in: I.D. Thatcher (ed.), *Late imperial Russia. Problems and Prospects* (Manchester 2005) 120-145; S.J. Seregny, 'Zemstvos, Peasants, and Citizenship: The Russian Adult Education Movement and World War I', *Slavic Review* 59 2 (2000) 290-293.

¹⁵ See J.S. Curtiss, 'The Peasant and the Army', in: W.S. Vucinich (ed.), *The Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Stanford 1968) 108-132; J. Bushnell, 'Peasants in Uniform: The Tsarist Army as a Peasant Society', *Journal of Social History* 13 4 (1980) 567; J. Sanborn, 'The Mobilization of 1914 and the Question of the Russian Nation: A Reexamination', *Slavic Review* 59 2 (2000) 279-284.

¹⁶ R. Philippot, *Société civile et état bureaucratique dans la Russie tsariste: les zemstvos* (Paris 1991) 39-61; F.W. Wcislo, *Reforming Rural Russia: State, Local Society, and National Politics, 1855-1914* (New Jersey 1990); L.H. Haimson, 'The Problem of Social Identities in Early Twentieth Century Russia', *Slavic Review* 47 1 (1988) 1-20; S.J. Seregny, 'Peasants, Nation, and Local Government in Wartime Russia', *Slavic Review* 59 2 (2000) 336-342; A. Verner, 'Discursive Strategies in the 1905

In the case of education, some historians have argued that peasants generally distrusted state teachers and took their children out of school early because they considered the state curriculum too disruptive of village life and too unpractical for working the land. In this view, peasants 'exploited' the teachers, which precluded any adoption of state mentalities through the teachers' lessons.¹⁷ The opposite view on school dropout is that peasants had no aversion to the state and did not so much find state curriculum or teachers incompatible with rural culture, but for most families school tuitions were simply too high to let children finish school. According to this side of the debate, peasants were not opposed to the state curricula and started to read popular literature for example, changing their traditional behaviour and marking their transformation to modern citizens.¹⁸

In this thesis, the focus is on the realm of agriculture and land, notably the legal procedures that emerged from conflict over land property. In this area, the 'peasantizers' argue that the Russian peasants had a specific mentality that favoured collective landholding and was aimed (in a great number of regions) at repartitioning the land among the members of the village commune. Private property was diametrically opposed to this view. The peasant also disliked innovations in land use, because he was only interested in produced enough to feed himself and the family (subsistence farming). All the inroads into the village by capitalist markets through new canals, roads and railways did not alter the peasant and to a large extent, this was the reason why so many peasants were poor in the second half of the nineteenth century. The linear capitalist way of thinking simply did not resonate with cyclical peasant traditions of redistribution. Any state reforms to alleviate the peasant's position would only fail, because these would inevitably meet with the resilient peasant nature. In fact, historians have argued that while the Great Reforms simply strengthened the village commune, the Stolypin reforms of 1906-1911 were to a large extent shaped by peasant pressures for more communal forms of property instead of private property.¹⁹

Revolution: Peasant Petitions from Vladimir Province', *Russian Review* 54 1 (1995) 65-90; E.E. Pyle, 'Peasant Strategies for Obtaining State Aid: A Study of Petitions during World War I', *Russian History* 24 1-2 (1997) 41-64; C. Goehrke, *Russischer Alltag. Eine Geschichte in neun Zeitbildern vom Frühmittelalter bis zur Gegenwart. Band 2: Auf dem Weg in die Moderne* (Zürich 2003) 253-261.

¹⁷ B. Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools: Officialdom, Village Culture, and Popular Pedagogy, 1861-1914* (Berkeley 1986) 214 & 225-231.

¹⁸ S. Hoch, 'Russian Peasant Schools: Officialdom, Village Culture, and Popular Pedagogy, 1861-1914 by Ben Eklof', *American Historical Review* 93 2 (1988) 464-465. The material side of school dropout is also mentioned by Carsten Goehrke. In agreement with Eklof on peasant distrust of teachers, Goehrke does detect a modernizing tendency in peasant education, see Goehrke, *Russischer Alltag. Band 2*, 268-274; Jeffrey Brooks, 'When Russia Learned to Read. Literacy and Popular Literature, 1861-1917' (New Jersey 1985) xviii-xix & 241-245.

¹⁹ Mironov, 'The Peasant Commune', 21-24 & 28-33; Ascher, *Russia in Disarray*, 163; T. Shanin, *The Awkward Class* (Oxford 1972) 63-80; T. Shanin, *The Roots of Otherness: Russia's Turn of the Century*. 2 vols. (New Haven 1986); Teodor Shanin portrayed peasants as less capable of possessing properties associated with 'modernity', precisely because the peasantry was considered pre-modern or non-modern, see J. Bushnell, 'Peasant Economy and Peasant Revolution at the Turn of the Century: Neither Immiseration nor Autonomy', *Russian Review* 47 1 (1988) 75-77; Carsten Goehrke

On the other side historians have rather argued for the openness among peasant communities to emerging markets, commercial farming and the idea of private property. All of this made it so that the late imperial peasantry as a whole was not necessarily poor, but some peasants were certainly wealthier than others. They also emphasize that the government reforms, notably those under Stolypin, did in fact resonate with many peasants so that the reforms should not be considered a failure from the government's perspective. The reforms' contents had not been changed by peasant resilience or pressures even, but they had instead succeeded in changing the peasants.²⁰

The conflicting views within the historiography on 'peasantizers' versus 'modernizers' come most clearly into focus in the interpretation of legal cases on land ownership the field of justice and legal culture. This is a highly relevant topic, since law and justice revolve explicitly around status and rights (which the historians also consider a basis for modern citizenship). These were particularly important to Russian colonists in the Ufa governorate, where they had to 'decide' between traditional social-agrarian views and state-enforced modern colonial views in their pursuit of land.

The peasants' choice for or against arguing their case before state courts can either be seen as proof that these courts were agents of modernization or that peasantization took place there. The argument for the latter comes in two ways: peasants generally did not accept state courts and the reformed courts after 1864 in particular in the first place.²¹ They did not recognize the legitimacy of these courts and rather held on to more traditional forms of village justice, like a council of elders, self-adjudication (*samosud*) or *charivaris*.²² The

also recognizes tendencies of change, but generally considers them to have been weak, Goehrke, *Russischer Alltag. Band 2*, 218-252; J. Pallot, 'Khutora and Otruba in Stolypin's Program of Farm Individualization', *Slavic Review* 43 2 (1984) 242-243; D. Moon, '[Review] Judith Pallot, *Land Reform in Russia, 1906-1917. Peasant responses to Stolypin's project of rural transformation* (Oxford 1999)', *Agricultural History Review* 48 1 (2000) 135-136; George Yaney is more nuanced in his evaluation of the peasants' attitude toward the Stolypin reforms, but mentions similar results all the same, G.L. Yaney, 'The Concept of the Stolypin Land Reform', *Slavic Review* 23 2 (1964) 284-287 & 289-293; Steven Hoch does not argue that peasants were poor and in fact sees in the traditional attitudes a way for peasants to prevent poverty, S.L. Hoch, 'The Serf Economy, the Peasant Family, and the Social Order', in: J. Burbank & D.L. Ransel (eds.), *Imperial Russia. New Histories for the Empire* (Bloomington 1998) 199-203 & 206-208; Macey, 'Reflections', 402 & 418n3.

²⁰ Smith, "Moral economy", 143-144; Macey, 'Reflections', 400-426; S. Thompstone, "Bab'ye Khozyaystvo": Poultry-Keeping and Its Contribution to Peasant Income in Pre-1914 Russia', *Agricultural History Review* 40 1 (1992) 52-63; Elvira Wilbur provided an excellent overview of prevailing views at the time of publication with respect to the peasant economy around 1900, E.M. Wilbur, 'Was Russian Peasant Agriculture Really That Impoverished? New Evidence from a Case Study from the "Impoverished Center" at the End of the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of Economic History* 43 1 (1983) 141; An interesting perspective that more or less combines the two sides in the debate, claiming that communal farming could also adjust to market opportunities, comes from M. Kopsidis, K. Bruisch & D.W. Bromley, 'Where is the backward Russian peasant? Evidence against the superiority of private farming, 1883-1913', *Journal of Peasant Studies* 42 2 (2015) 425-447.

²¹ J. Baberowski, *Autokratie und Justiz. Zum Verhältnis von Rechtsstaatlichkeit und Rückständigkeit im ausgehenden Zarenreich 1864-1914* (Frankfurt am Main 1996) 73.

²² Stephen P. Frank, for example, argues that peasants rejected the reformed courts, S.P. Frank, *Crime, Cultural Conflict, and Justice in Rural Russia, 1856-1914* (Berkeley 1999) 5, 37-38, 90 & 306-

other side of the argument is that even if peasants did go to newly reformed state courts (which also included township courts with peasant judges, the choice for verdicts either by state law or customary law as well as peasant juries), this experience did not fundamentally alter peasant attitudes. As Moon argues, for example, peasants merely interacted with the new and reformed court system (but especially with the higher authorities through petitions) within a 'centuries-old' framework of peasant justice. This also entailed a preference for the authority of personalities rather than formal law. Furthermore, the reformed justice system could never truly modernize the peasantry, because peasant access to it was limited and it precluded any form of universal laws due to its distinction between legal estates.²³

The opposite argument can also be divided into two perspectives: the experience of going to court with its new procedures, but also ritual and ceremony certainly 'nationalized' peasants, but this happened only on a practical level. While peasants appreciated the unambiguous character of state law in comparison to the more arbitrary judgments within their village communities, the substance of the state law may not have been that important to many peasants. Moreover, although the courts were genuinely accepted by peasants, they did not (immediately) replace traditional and alternative forms of conflict resolution.²⁴

The other aspect of the argument ascribes very strong transformative powers to the state courts and is perhaps most prominently represented by the work of Jane Burbank. She claims that the Russian empire had an 'imperial rights regime' that did not grant Russian subjects universal rights, but instead particularistic ones. This differentiated legal framework in fact allowed for different segments of society, including the Russian peasantry and the rural courts, to participate in modern justice and to appeal to the state in order to manage their local affairs. Accordingly, peasants were able to build up a 'repertoire of citizenship practices' that connected them to the polity and fostered an appreciation for the law and the state.²⁵ In this view, peasants did in fact care about the substance of the law, but its contents

308; Mironov, 'The Peasant Commune', 15; S.P. Frank, 'Popular Justice, Community, and Culture among the Russian Peasantry, 1870-1900', in: B. Eklof & S.P. Frank (eds.), *The World of the Russian Peasant. Post-Emancipation Culture and Society* (London 1990) 133-144 & 149-150.

²³ Moon, 'Late imperial peasants', 130; G. Popkins, 'Peasant Experiences of the Late Tsarist State: District Congresses of Land Captains, Provincial Boards and the Legal Appeals Process, 1891-1917', *Slavonic and East European Review* 78 1 (2000) 113-114; G. Popkins, 'Code versus Custom? Norms and Tactics in Peasant Volost Court Appeals, 1889-1917', *Russian Review* 59 3 (2000) 408-409. Peter Czap Jr. argued already in the 1960s that the separate peasant justice isolated the peasantry from society and that the 1889 introduction of so-called 'land captains' severely hampered peasants' access to the court system, P. Czap, Jr., 'Peasant-Class Courts and Peasant Customary Justice in Russia, 1861-1912', *Journal of Social History* 1 2 (1968) 176-178.

²⁴ C. Frierson, "I Must Always Answer to the Law..." Rules and Responses in the Reformed *Volost* Court', *Slavonic and East European Review* 75 2 (1997) 332; C. Gaudin, *Ruling Peasants: Village and State in Late Imperial Russia* (DeKalb 2007) 5 & 130; C.D. Worobec, 'Horse Thieves and Peasant Justice in Post-Emancipation Imperial Russia', *Journal of Social History* 21 2 (1987) 281-293.

²⁵ J. Burbank, 'An Imperial Rights Regime: Law and Citizenship in the Russian Empire', *Kritika* 7 3 (2008) 397-403; J. Burbank, 'Insult and Punishment in Rural Courts: The Elaboration of Civility in Late

simply matched their legal status. Through court procedure, written contracts and 'paper trails' in general became more important. Moreover, state courts allowed peasants to secure inheritances, hold land and acquire property.²⁶ Burbank has provided us with the valuable insight that 'modern' in the Russian state did not necessarily stand for universal law. The attitude changes among peasants could very well result in particularistic notions of state law, because despite the homogenizing tendencies of the Great Reforms in the 1860s, Russia remained an empire with differentiated rules for different social-cultural groups.²⁷ Maybe modern citizenship in Russia could be paraphrased as: 'We are all equal before the law, but the law is not equal for everyone.'

With the notable exception of Willard Sunderland's work, peasant colonization has received no attention as a potential driving force for changing peasant attitudes after 1850. Sunderland defines peasant colonization in terms of empire: Russian peasant colonization was a power struggle with non-Russians.²⁸ However, he also characterizes this colonization as a part of the traditional village outlook on land, life and government. While acknowledging that peasants had the awareness to apply their Russianness to gain an advantage both inside and outside of courtrooms, he deems it 'highly unlikely' that the Russian peasantry could have developed a sense of modern citizenship linked to statehood and institutions through empire. Ultimately, Russian peasants were 'consummate colonizers. Neither motivated by deep-seated prejudices nor by a sense of their own mission, the peasants (to their own way of thinking) were simply moving into and settling the "empty spaces" of their

Imperial Russia', *Études rurales* 149-150 (1999) 147; J. Burbank & F. Cooper, 'Empire, droits et citoyenneté, de 212 à 1946', *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 63 3 (2008) 506-510.

²⁶ J. Burbank, *Russian Peasants go to Court: Legal Culture in the Countryside, 1905–1917* (Bloomington 2004) 1-2, 12-13 & 47.

²⁷ Burbank grounds the Russian 'umbrella of imperial law' in the historical development of Russia as an empire. The centre of power concluded different social contracts with local elites or other intermediaries and enforced local legal practices in return for taxes. Over time, these distinct social contracts were altered, but never abolished. She makes a plausible case for the continuation of this practice up to the present day. J. Burbank, 'Souveraineté eurasiennne: un régime, une proposition, un exemple', *Histoire@Politique* 27 3 (2015) 78, 83-84 & 90-91; J. Burbank & F. Cooper, *Empires in World History. Power and the Politics of Difference* (New Jersey & Oxford 2010) 8, 11-14; M. Raeff, 'Un empire comme les autres?', in: M. Raeff (ed.), *Politique et culture en Russie, 18e-20e siècles* (Paris 1996) 139-147.

²⁸ W. Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field. Colonization and Empire on the Russian Steppe* (Ithaca 2006) 2-3; I am aware that the historiographical trend of the last decades has been to study non-Russians in the context of 'empire.' This study may serve as an addition to this historiography in that it focuses on ethnic Russians in a non-Russian context, but not in the usual form of conquering armies and tsarist bureaucrats alone. Moving beyond a strictly cultural focus, however, its 'materialist' focus also provides an insight into the effects of the social-economic and legal pillars of Russian colonialism in Ufa. See among others A. Kappeler, *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich. Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall* (Munich 2008), originally published in 1992; T.R. Weeks, 'Nationality, Empire, and Politics in the Russian Empire and USSR Overview of Recent Publications', in: *H-Soz-Kult* 29.10.2012, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/forum/2012-10-001> (accessed 4-5-2018); M. Kemper, 'How to Take the Muslim Peripheries Seriously in the Writing of Imperial History?', *Ab Imperio* 4 (2008) 472-482; A. Morrison, 'The Pleasures and Pitfalls of Colonial Comparisons', *Kritika* 13 4 (2012) 932-933 & 935-936.

own country.’ In a word, peasant colonizers thought it was their ‘natural right’ to settle and cultivate the land.²⁹

Identifying colonialism *itself* with peasant ‘traditionalism’ implies that peasant motives for colonization and its effects on the peasantry remained unchanged after 1850 too. The experience of colonization in Bashkiria might have realized the reforms’ goal to inculcate ‘a participatory, civic ethos and a sense of commitment (*grazhdanstvennost*)’ in Russian peasants.³⁰ After all, in the second half of the nineteenth century, society profoundly changed: ethnic identities became more pronounced (in educated circles), imperialism grew even stronger and the government’s encroachments into the countryside reached even deeper, pitting Russian peasants and Bashkir landowners against each other in court.³¹ Although Sunderland argues that the infamous plundering of the Bashkir lands was the result of the government’s ‘enlightened’ preferences for Russian peasant colonization instead of the semi-nomads’ inefficient use of the land, he has not explored this conflict in depth by analysing actual peasant motivations of their land takeover.³² It remains therefore unclear whether colonization in Bashkiria after 1861 had an ethnic-cultural overtone among peasants themselves and thus whether Russian peasants turned into modern citizens by appealing to a shared Russianness with the state or to official colonial policies during land conflicts.

In short, important here is whether peasants made use not merely of the empire’s differentiated statuses like Burbank argued, but rather of its *unequal* relations that rested on ethnic-cultural hierarchies, so that the colonial experience could transform peasants’ traditional mentality.³³ The central question of this thesis is therefore to what extent Russian peasants abandoned traditional social-agrarian attitudes to go along with the modern colonial enterprise when they acquired land in the Ufa governorate between 1861 and 1917.

Methodology

To come up with a well-rounded analysis, it is necessary to introduce the general organization of Russian peasant land relations in the European part of the empire after 1861

²⁹ Sunderland, ‘An Empire of Peasants’, 174-181.

³⁰ Y. Kotsonis, “‘Face-to-Face’: The State, the Individual, and the Citizen in Russian Taxation, 1863-1917”, *Slavic Review* 63 2 (2004) 222.

³¹ Kappeler, *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich*, 134-138 & 262-266; C. Steinwedel, ‘Resettling people, unsettling the empire. Migration and the challenge of governance, 1861-1917’, in: N.B. Breyfogle, A. Schrader & W. Sunderland (eds.), *Peopling the Russian Periphery. Borderland colonization in Eurasian history* (London 2007) 129.

³² Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field*, 146-147.

³³ Morrison, ‘The Pleasures and Pitfalls’, 927; due to well-known outcome of the ‘plundering’ of the Bashkir lands, I do not expect to find evidence of Alexander Etkind’s theory that ‘the imperial state and its elite [were] equally colonial toward ethnically Russian and non-Russian subjects,’ M. Mogilner, ‘New Imperial History. Post-Soviet historiography in search of a new paradigm for the history of empire and nationalism’, *Revue d’études comparatives Est-Ouest* 45 2 (2014) 39.

and why peasants migrated to Bashkiria. Moreover, the introductory chapter will also clarify why it was considered problematic to purchase land from the Bashkirs and why the 'plundering' of their lands occurred. In the chapter that follows, I will analyse the various arguments Russian peasants formulated against Bashkirs during land disputes. These concern court cases started by the peasants themselves, which inevitably obscures our view on peasants who had migrated to Bashkiria, but may not have recognized state courts and succeeded to evade them.

Judicial records are among the richest sources of the beliefs and expressions of peasants themselves.³⁴ The newly reformed court system of Ufa province therefore provides an interesting view on the way Russian peasants operated in confrontation with Bashkir property claims. In the Ufa province, there were justices of peace (*mirovoj sud*) since 1864 and district courts (*okruzhnoj sud*) since 1894, but there was also a court of appeal, the Ufa Palace of Justice (*sudebnaja palata*). This is the most interesting court for this study, because as a rule, its decision in these cases was most important to all parties. The proceedings of the court of appeal covers all aspects of peasants' strategies in disputes about land claims and therefore forms a compact and relevant set of sources to study the interaction of peasant with the state and competing farmers.

In order to learn about peasant justifications of their claims, I will analyse those sections of the records that make the Russian peasants heard, either first-hand or second-hand, such as petitions, oaths or reports of police investigations. I will then categorize the different defences of landholding in terms of traditional social-agrarian arguments and modern colonial arguments based on criteria that emerge from the debate. In the second chapter, I will go into more detail as to what constitutes each category, but by 'social-agrarian' I mean statements that emphasize the peasants' social status and bring forward assumptions or unwritten rules that the available land should be divided fairly among those who work the land. This includes references to collective landholding. Also, talk of a 'natural right' of peasants ('held from time immemorial')³⁵ to settle and appropriate any land they see fit are considered social-agrarian. I regard testimonies of good or proper farming without reference to Bashkirs a social-agrarian marker. Appeals to personalities instead of offices are included as well as language of distrust of the court's intentions and its personnel. By extension, those statements that reveal a peasant's contempt of court fit in this category too, since peasants may not even have recognized the legitimacy of the new courts.

Modern arguments, however, need to be divided into two separate, yet possibly overlapping and mutually reinforcing categories. The hypothesis is that modern colonial

³⁴ See for example the preface to the 2013 edition in C. Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms. The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (Baltimore 2013).

³⁵ E. Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford 1976) 60.

attitudes of the state were adopted by the Russian peasants in order to win land disputes with Bashkirs in state courts and that they therefore also adopted a state-enforced legal framework at the expense of traditional social-agrarian frameworks.

Modern arguments emphasize the legality of landownership and the peasant's (contractual) rights guaranteed by the state, particularly when it was written down. As opposed to collective landholding, modern attitudes can also emphasize private property of the land. Obvious markers are any references to state law, whether these were correct or not, because they indicate a trust in the court system and its judges. Whenever a peasant weaved state policies into their arguments, this would be modern too. When this coincided with ethnic-cultural arguments, though, it would belong in the modern colonial category.

A 'modern colonial' argument is one that stresses the legality of landownership and the peasant's (contractual) rights guaranteed by the state. Any justification of colonization based on government direction or assistance belongs in the modern colonial category. It also chooses language of ethnicity over social background and appeals to the shared Russianness of government and peasant colonials, but can point at differentiated modern laws for Bashkirs and Russian peasants too. In a 'modern colonial' frame, Bashkirs are considered an ethnic group and, as such, these arguments may also include cultural and ethnic hierarchization or derision of the Muslim Bashkirs to render their cases invalid. A reference to inefficient land use by the semi-nomadic Bashkirs in comparison to Russian agriculturalists belongs to this category since it bears argumentative strength only in relation to governmental policies for agricultural development.

The analysis of the peasant arguments serves to clarify whether their experience of challenging the (historical) rights of non-Russians in state courts brought about a modern attitude to land, justice and the state. However, because the development of modern citizenship does not only come from the peasants alone, but also relies on the state's readiness to accommodate their assertiveness to change, the last chapter deals with how the state responded to land disputes between Russian peasants and Bashkirs.

Sources

Given the obsession of the imperial bureaucracy to regulate, document and evaluate the entire process of colonization and economic-demographic development in Bashkiria, there are different tsarist court archives in Ufa today that contain numerous records on land conflicts in the Ufa province in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Most of the cases are from the period between 1861 and the early 1890s. While the lower courts in the archives were not all continuously in use, the Ufa court of appeal existed up until December 1885,

when its appellation function was transferred to the Palace of Justice in Kazan.³⁶ The actual working methods of the lower and higher do not appear to have differed much, as all gathered petitions, declarations, testimonies and other documents from involved parties. I should add here that due to the limited time I had in the Ufa city archives, I had to make rigorous decisions what files to study or copy. In the second chapter, I shall clarify what the consequences of this method are for the representativeness of my analysis.

Since modern citizenship was also a matter of great interest to Russian authorities, they may have commented on the measure of peasants participating in modern court systems and adopting state legal culture. In order to get a sense of the authorities' perspective on peasant (changing) mentality, I will make use of correspondences between high officials as well as statistical reports drawn up by provincial committees (starting in print only from 1878 onward). Lastly, the observations of contemporaries also provide a valuable insight into the actions of peasant colonists and the administrators' opinions of Russian peasant colonization.

Terminology and other considerations

While it may seem fairly obvious to speak of the Russian 'peasantry' or 'peasants', it is in fact necessary to clarify the meaning of the term used here. The peasantry was far from monolithic, since first of all it consisted of different rights groups, which influenced the method of peasant colonization of Bashkiria. By the 1850s, the peasantry had been grouped together in three main legal statuses, namely serfs, state peasants and crown peasants. The serfs are perhaps most well-known, but in Ufa they had always been a minority category and the other two categories did not share their lack of rights.³⁷ The state and crown peasants were considered personally free and to some degree could acquire property.³⁸ The state peasant category further consisted of many different classes of 'peasants' with various degrees of privileges (which formally included Bashkirs).³⁹ After the peasant reforms,

³⁶ Gvozdnikova a.o. (eds.), *Istorija Bashkortostana*. Vol. I, 123-126.

³⁷ J. Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia from the Ninth to the Nineteenth Century* (New Jersey 1972) 308-310; Goehrke, *Russischer Alltag*. Band 2, 30-41; B.S. Davletbaev, *Krest'janskaja reforma 1861 goda v Bashkirii* (Moscow 1983) 13; P.A. Zajonchkovskij, *Otmena krepostnogo prava v Rossii* (Moscow 1968) 364-367.

³⁸ M.S. Model', 'Udely', in: F.A. Brokgauz & I.A. Efron (eds.), *Entsiklopedicheskij slovar'*. Vol. XXXIVa: *Uglerod — Usilie* (St. Petersburg 1902) 587-590; N.P. Vasilenko, 'Udel'naja sistema', in: F.A. Brokgauz & I.A. Efron (eds.), *Entsiklopedicheskij slovar'*. Vol. XXXIVa: *Uglerod — Usilie* (St. Petersburg 1902) 590-594; Davletbaev, *Krest'janskaja reforma*, 21-22; V.P. Vorontsov, 'Udel'nye krest'jane', in: F.A. Brokgauz & I.A. Efron (eds.), *Entsiklopedicheskij slovar'*. Vol. XXXIVa: *Uglerod — Usilie* (St. Petersburg 1902) 594-598.

³⁹ P. Bushkovitch, *Peter the Great: The Struggle for Power, 1671-1725* (Cambridge 2004) 381; Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia*, 475-476; O. Crisp, 'The State Peasants under Nicholas I', *Slavonic and East European Review* 37 89 (1959) 387-388; Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 30; I.V. Luchitskij,

peasants were mostly considered 'former state peasants' for example, to indicate the conditions of their emancipation and accordingly their specific legal-fiscal position. Moreover, in this study, I will not make a distinction between the different peasant communities, whether some focused more on handicrafts or on agriculture, because the peasants who migrated to Bashkiria generally did so to find land. Nor will I distinguish the social-economic positions of peasants (as some were landless, others were rich), unless it is relevant to the type of argument they made in their court case.⁴⁰

Furthermore, while I speak of 'Bashkirs,' this was by no means a homogenous group. As we will see, Bashkirs were originally a legal status group which only gradually came to be considered a distinct ethnic group with its roots in landownership. The historical build-up of their privileges greatly influenced the form of colonization in Bashkiria and why the plundering of their land took place. The exact foundations of the Bashkirs' historical right to the land directly determined the legal framework of the nineteenth-century land disputes with Russian peasants. A concise sketch of Bashkir privileges in relation to Russian peasant colonization of Bashkiria is therefore no more than warranted.

The introductory chapter will also indicate that historical Bashkiria was greater than Ufa province alone (which roughly corresponds to the present-day republic Bashkortostan within the Russian Federation).⁴¹ Since Ufa was the largest province, had the largest population and attracted the lion's share of the Russian colonists, this territory seems particularly well-suited to study the attitudes of the Russian peasant in a colonial context.⁴² I should also add that I do not consider colonialism to have been a simple progress to 'modernity,' because it knew many variations depending on time and place.⁴³ I do, however, consider modern colonialism a form of rule which distinguishes itself from other varieties of colonialism by expressing its power relations in the ethnic-cultural terms of 'development' that, like in other European countries, prevailed in the second half of the nineteenth century among Russian officials. This does not mean Russian officials saw themselves as European-style colonizers too or that they did the same things, but they certainly shared their thinking

'Krest'jane', in: F.A. Brokgauz & I.A. Efron (eds.), *Entsiklopedičeskij slovar'*. Vol. XVIa: *Koĵalovich — Kulon* (St. Petersburg 1895) 693.

⁴⁰ Mironov, 'The Peasant Commune', 8-9.

⁴¹ R.G. Kuzeev, 'Etničeskaja istorija bashkir s kontsa I tysjačeeletija nashej ery do XIX veka (istoriko-etnografičeskij analiz)', in: *Sobranie nauchnykh trudov v 7 tomakh. Tom 3* (Ufa 2015) 253-256.

⁴² Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 124; R.G. Kuzeev, *Narody Srednego Povolzh'ja i Juzhnogo Urala*, in: *Sobranie nauchnykh trudov v 7 tomakh. Tom 6* (Ufa 2016) 338-343; Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnošenija*, 76 & 280; X. Le Torrivellec, 'Entre steppes et stèles. Territoires et identités au Bachkortostan', *Cahiers du Monde russe* 41 2-3 (2000) 383; F.G. Galieva, *Etnograficheskie issledovanija russkogo naselenija Bashkortostana* (Ufa 2012) 7-8 & 15.

⁴³ Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 231.

with marked colonial rulers from Western Europe.⁴⁴ The question, again, is whether the Russian colonists picked up these government attitudes.

Another caveat I would like to explain here is that Russian peasants were not the only colonists in Russia. In fact, as will become clear, migrants from the Volga-Ural regions, such as Tatars, Mari and Udmurts had been coming to Bashkir lands in the centuries before 1800 and established special relations with the Bashkirs living there. The share of Russian immigration only really soared after circa 1800. The difference between the two groups for the analysis of peasant arguments in land disputes is that only Russians could in theory claim the modern colonial attitudes by playing on shared language and religion for example.

Since I am interested in possible emerging modern colonial conceptions and use land conflicts as a prism to identify these, I will not look into the relation between Russian peasants and other landowners such as nobles and merchants. In Bashkiria, the nobility consisted of both Muslims and Russians, but was not particularly large in comparison to the non-noble Bashkir landowners. Along with wealthy merchants, (Russian) nobles only became more significant landowners during the 1870s, but then they merely bought large pieces of Bashkir land to make a big profit by selling these lands to Russian peasants.⁴⁵ The actual land conflicts that often ensued were between the Russian colonists and the original Bashkir landowners who did not recognize the rights of these settlers. Especially after 1882, most peasants bought their land directly from the Bashkir landowners. Moreover, as we will see, the growth of peasant landownership between 1879 and 1915 was based primarily on the (indirect) purchase of Bashkir lands and not that of the established nobility.

Finally, the history of land relations was not merely a local affair that belongs to Bashkir national history alone, but it is also a regional history or a national one even.⁴⁶ Accordingly, the story of Russian peasants going to Ufa courts starts with an empire-wide view of their trek to Bashkiria, roused by the whispers of Tolstoy's tradesman, to find 'more land there than you could cover if you walked a year.'⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Sunderland, 'Empire without Imperialism', 106 & 109; W. Sunderland, 'The Ministry of Asiatic Russia: The Colonial Office That Never Was but Might Have Been', *Slavic Review* 69 1 (2010) 123-124; Morrison, 'The Pleasures and Pitfalls', 922-925; Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 52-53 & 239; B.R.O'G. Anderson, *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London & New York 2006) 163-170; Burbank, 'An Imperial Rights Regime', 403-404.

⁴⁵ C. Steinwedel, 'Polozhenie Bashkirii v sostave Rossii: regional'nye osobennosti, paralleli, obshcheimperskij kontekst (1552-1917)', in: N. Norikhiro, D.M. Usmanova & Kh. Mami (eds.), *Volgo-Ural'skij region v imperskom prostranstve XVIII-XX vv.* (Moscow 2011) 67-71; Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 7; Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnoshenija*, 340-341.

⁴⁶ Kuzeev, *Narody Srednego Povolzh'ja*, 7-15; X. Le Torrivellec, 'La région Volga-Oural en Russie. Enjeux nationaux dans une région multiethnique', *Hérodote* 138 3 (2010) 145.

⁴⁷ L. Tolstoj, *Heeft een mens veel land nodig?* (Amsterdam 2013) 16.

Picking the fruits of the earth

‘And then all of a sudden a dragon appeared on these lands.’

— Yurmat *shezhere*.

‘After a certain time, [grandfather] started hearing often about the Ufa viceregency, about the immeasurable space of lands, the farmlands, the unlimited expanse, the unspeakable abundance of game and fish and all the fruits of the earth, about the easy way to acquire whole regions for the most petty sums of money.’ — Sergei T. Aksakov, *A Family Chronicle* (1856).

Between eighteenth-century Bashkiria, about which Sergei Aksakov’s grandfather had heard such fabulous tales of plenty, and Tolstoy’s more troubled Bashkiria a hundred years later lay a world of difference. One of the most obvious changes in the region was the demographic explosion in the first half of the nineteenth century: between 1800-1850, the population of then Orenburg governorate (which also included the Ufa territories) rose 2.7 times from 884,787 to 2,393,628 souls and the population density rose from 2.8 per square verst in 1811 to 8 per square verst in 1863. Most of these newcomers were ethnic Russians and between the abolition of serfdom in 1861 and the first national census in 1897, a further 190,944 colonists (86% of which were Russians) came to Ufa governorate, which by then had been separated from Orenburg, bringing the total population of the province up to roughly 2.2 million. Numbering around 1.96 million in 1897, the total ethnic Russian population of Ufa and Orenburg governorates taken together had increased 5.5 times since 1795. In a hundred years, the entire region’s population had grown ten times more than that of Russia as a whole.⁴⁸

The story of Russian peasant colonists is not one about Ufa governorate alone, because there is always the matter of what they were actually moving away from. How were Russian peasant land relations generally organized in the European part of the empire after 1861? Also, what role did the state play in peasant migration and did this change with the

⁴⁸ A verst is a measure of length equal to 1,067 kilometres. For the demographic statistics, see Kh.F. Usmanov a.o. (ed.), *Istoriya Bashkortostana s drevnejshikh vremën do 60-kh godov XIX v.* (Ufa 1996) 341; Kh.F. Usmanov, *Razvitie kapitalizma v sel'skom khozjajstve Bashkirii v poreformennyj period, 60 – 90-e gody XIX v.* (Moscow 1981) 72-73; Gvozdnikova a.o. (eds.), *Istoriya Bashkortostana. Vol. I*, 12; Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnosheniya v Bashkortostane*, 279; F.Kh. Gumerov (ed.), *Zakony rossijskoj imperii o bashkirakh, misharjakh, teptjarakh i bobylyakh* (Ufa 1999) 184; R.G. Kuzeev, ‘Chislennost’ bashkir i nekotorye etnicheskie protsessy v Bashkirii v XVI-XX vv.’, in: *Sobranie nauchnykh trudov v 7 tomakh. Tom 3* (Ufa 2015) 114.

reforms of the 1860s? Then we may also ask what peasant migrants were looking for exactly: why did so many Russian peasants come to Bashkiria and was Bashkiria different from other parts of the Russian empire as far as peasant land use was concerned? Considering the great outrage caused by the takeover of Bashkir lands in the second half of the nineteenth century, why did this happen in the first place and why was it problematic to purchase land from the Bashkirs?

'Expectations of a better deal'

The Great Reforms of the 1860s certainly lived up to their name by granting the peasants throughout Russia their personal freedom as well as the right to acquire property. This was a radical break with the previous centuries. However, the Great Reforms also kept many aspects of rural societies intact which had already forced thousands of peasants to leave their villages and seek their fortune elsewhere. Since peasants still migrated to different corners of the empire, the question is how the peasants organized their land use, what role the state played in this and why peasants migrated to Bashkiria.

Although there existed some regional variations, the majority of the Russian peasant households organized themselves in a village commune (*sel'skoe obshchestvo*, *obshchina* or *mir*). This commune was later adopted by the state in the peasant reforms of the 1860s. Although its exact origins are obscure and the second half of the nineteenth century undeniably brought about changes in village life, we may assume that the commune functioned similarly before and after the reforms.⁴⁹

The commune had several functions that touched upon many aspects of the peasants' lives and simultaneously served the interests of its members as well as that of the state. The *mir* was responsible for enforcing collective obligations, the payments in cash or in kind (*obrok*) to use the land and statute labour or corvée (*barshchina*) for serfs.⁵⁰ Naturally, it also served as an institution of tax collection (the poll tax or 'soul tax'). It also regulated communal resources by way of village assemblies, most notably to elect a village elder-representative (*starosta*) and to partition the land.⁵¹ The Russian landowners (state, noble or crown) granted the commune the power to divide the land. Crop fields and pastures were all

⁴⁹ Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia*, 508-523; Mironov, 'The Peasant Commune', 28-31.

⁵⁰ The distribution of *obrok* and *barshchina* varied greatly per province and per landlord even, M. Confino, *Domaines et seigneurs en Russie vers la fin du XVIII^e siècle. Étude de structures agraires et de mentalités économiques* (Paris 1963) 89 & 186-201.

⁵¹ The *starosta* embodied *mir* authority and was tasked with local administration, including simple policing and administering lower-level justice. On serf estates, peasant elections were always checked by the serfholder. Confino, *Domaines et seigneurs*, 80-91. Land redistributions were sometimes undertaken to balance parcels of several neighbouring villages, but most concerned individual villages. Goehrke, *Russischer Alltag. Band 2*, 48-49; Boris Mironov counts no less than ten distinct spheres of functions, Mironov, 'The Peasant Commune', 9-10.

valued and distributed according to 'mouths' per household, all in equal measure. Meadows, forests and bodies of water were in collective use.⁵² In principle, each household deserved a patch of the best land and then a piece of the second-best land and so on. That is why a household could end up with some forty very narrow and dispersed strips of lands. After demographic changes, the village assembly would redistribute the land to account for the changes and restore equal distribution. Therefore, repartitioning of the land did not occur at set times, but depended on household sizes and quality of the land. In some regions, however, this practice disappeared altogether and hereditary holding of the land became more common.⁵³ Besides demanding statute labour or establishing factories, the state in principle did not interfere with the utilization of the land nor its redistribution.

It should also be noted that the communes were no idyll of peasant unity, since larger, richer families could dominate smaller and poorer families and men usually dominated women in public life.⁵⁴ The communes were therefore not egalitarian, although they may have appeared as such to outsiders such as Marx and Engels, who admired the Russian commune as a possible springboard for higher communism. It is nevertheless true that the *mir* had a moderating and equalising influence on village economy and exercised supervision over village life.⁵⁵ Accordingly, politics and morals within the *mir* created a sense of tradition and custom, although these were never absolute as generations came and went.

Ultimately, the commune remained an institution tasked with the communication between the village, the formal landlords and the government. To communicate effectively required knowledge of how to read and write, but also of conventions. This led to a degree of bureaucratization in the commune in the form of specialized secretaries and writers, who could work in unison with other members of the village elite to consolidate their positions at the (financial) expense of their fellow-villagers.⁵⁶ Despite the outward appearance of egalitarianism, the politicization of land tenure through the commune produced its winners and losers. Nineteenth-century ethnographer Vladimir I. Dal' recorded a Russian proverb that

⁵² R.B. Shajkhislamov, *Gosudarstvennye krest'jane Juzhnogo Urala do otmeny krepostnogo prava* (Ufa 2013) 39.

⁵³ Mironov, 'The Peasant Commune', 3-17 & 20-23; Smith, "'Moral economy'", 147 & 153-154; Lewin, 'Customary Law', 9-11; D. Moon, *Russian Peasants and Tsarist Legislation on the Eve of Reform. Interaction between Peasants and Officialdom, 1825-1855* (Basingstoke 1992) 5; Kopsidis, Bruisch & Bromley, 'Where is the backward Russian peasant?', 426.

⁵⁴ B.A. Engel, 'Russian Peasant Views of City Life, 1861-1914', *Slavic Review* 52 3 (1993) 456-458; B. Evans Clements, 'The Effects of the Civil War on Women and Family Relations', in: D.P. Koenker, W.G. Rosenberg & R.G. Suny (eds.), *Party, State and Society in the Russian Civil War* (Bloomington 1989) 105-122; B.A. Engel, 'Peasant Morality and Pre-Marital Relations in Late 19th Century Russia', *Journal of Social History* 23 4 (1990) 697 & 705-709; Confino, 'Russian Customary Law', 40-42.

⁵⁵ Smith, "'Moral economy'", 147 & 153-154; K. Marx & F. Engels, 'Voorwoord bij de tweede Russische uitgave [1882]', *Het Communistisch Manifest* (Amsterdam 2014) 13-15; Worobec, 'Reflections on Customary Law', 21-25.

⁵⁶ Goehrke, *Russischer Alltag. Band 2*, 45-49; Shajkhislamov, *Gosudarstvennye krest'jane*, 63-65; Mironov, 'The Peasant Commune', 13.

neatly captured the ambiguous character of the commune as well as an inarticulate reserve toward it: 'The commune is something great, greater than man. Who is greater than the commune? You don't fight the commune.'⁵⁷

Sure, in the long run, the hold the aging elites had over other villagers would inevitably slacken off when they died and village notables could even alter customs, but if a peasant was very unsatisfied with these authorities, waiting for change to come eventually must have been insufferable.⁵⁸ In their case, moving out of the village on a more permanent basis than seasonal migration to the cities was an attractive alternative.⁵⁹ If the massive influx of Russian settlers into Bashkiria between 1800-1900 is any indication for Russia as a whole, there must have been hundreds of thousands of peasants who on their own initiative tried their luck beyond their old villages under pressure from on the one hand the growing rural population in European Russia and the financial pressure of the 'soul tax' and the rising *obrok* and statute labour dues on the other.⁶⁰ One contemporary commentator even compared the situation of migrants to 'economic slavery.'⁶¹

Peasants generally sent a scout to other regions to find suitable land for settlement, who would write home about how the search progressed. Drawn by fantastic tales and rumours like Sergei Aksakov's grandfather who wanted to pick 'all the fruits of the earth' in Bashkiria, these scouts hoped to find "'open land,'" "'the good peasant's life, a life without all the hardship, without all the failed harvests, without the cruel exploitation of village kulaks'" or at the very least someplace where "'life was possible.'"⁶² Some also fled religious harassment or persecution (a fate that had fallen not only to Russian Old Believers, for example, but especially to Jewish migrants too).⁶³ In the 'expectations of a better deal,' migrants left their loved ones at home to find 'a larger and more fertile stretch of land in a new place with more berries, cheaper consumer goods, [and] more fish in the local river.'⁶⁴

Coming from various regions and with different religious backgrounds, many Russians took to the Middle Volga region and the Southern Urals, where they settled in three distinct areas that had similar environments as their former home regions. The northern and north-eastern regions were popular due to the forests which could either be cultivated or, like (semi-)sedentary Bashkirs already living there did, be used for (honey) hunting. The border

⁵⁷ Mironov, 'The Peasant Commune', 23 & 38n72.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, 26.

⁵⁹ W. Sunderland, 'Peasant Pioneering: Russian Peasant Settlers Describe Colonization and the Eastern Frontier, 1880s-1910s', *Journal of Social History* 34 4 (2001) 895.

⁶⁰ Between 1800-1850 alone, *obrok* payments increased fourfold. Zajonchkovskij, *Otmena krepostnogo prava*, 19.

⁶¹ N.V. Remezov, *Očerki iz zhizni dikoj Bashkirii. Pereselencheskaja epopeja* (Moscow 1889) 14.

⁶² S.T. Aksakov, *Semejnaja khronika, Detskie gody Bagrova-vnuka, Vospominanija* (Moscow 1973) 33; Sunderland, 'Peasant Pioneering', 900-901; W. Sunderland, 'Empire Without Imperialism? Ambiguities of Colonization in Tsarist Russia', *Ab Imperio* 2 (2003) 108.

⁶³ Sunderland, 'Empire Without Imperialism', 107 & 113.

⁶⁴ Ibidem, 107.

region between forests and steppe, which was mainly the Belebei *uyezd* to the south-west of Ufa, was a very popular destination for former serfs after 1861 due to the availability of Bashkir lands.⁶⁵ The factories that were founded in the mountains in the northeast of Ufa province after 1700 also caused a great influx of Russian peasants, although their relocation was not always voluntary.

The other major destinations were the various fortresses and fortress towns the government established throughout the region to, as we shall see, frustrate Bashkir attempts at mobilizing against the Russian state. The most prominent of these were Ufa in the late sixteenth century and Orenburg in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Peasant colonists founded various types of homes: from single, separate farmsteads (*khutor-odinochka*) to middle sized farmsteads formed by colonists from different villages (*vyselok*) and in some cases even entire villages or towns with churches and local administrations (*derevnja* or *selo*).⁶⁶

These peasant colonists had been prepared to break with village customs when they had heard of far-away and fertile lands. Rather than settling for insufficient pieces of commune land, a colonist was probably more of an individualist and prepared to take the plunge. The government worried, however, about the ripples these plunges might cause in the ocean of society if left unchecked.

Addressing necessities

Before the Great Reforms, the peasants were divided into three historical categories, namely serfs, state peasants and crown peasants. Each of these categories had different rights and obligations (only serfs had no right whatsoever to acquire land). As their name already indicates, the state peasants were subject to the most direct form of state direction and as a result they were regularly moved around Russia. After 1837, the newly formed Ministry of State Domains sought establish more control over the state peasants and to 'improve their condition'.⁶⁷ This entailed a limited form of official colonization, because officials feared that too much migration would lead to social disorder, but in practice many peasants simply migrated on their own initiative in a desperate search for land. How did the Great Reforms affect the peasants' relation to the land and how did they influence peasant migration?

⁶⁵ Kuzeev, *Narody Srednego Povolzh'ja*, 338-343; Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnoshenija*, 76 & 280; Le Torrivellec, 'Entre steppes et stèles', 383; Galieva, *Etnograficheskie issledovanija*, 7-8 & 15.

⁶⁶ *Selo* was used by colonists from southern Russia and *derevnja* was more common among those from northern parts of Russia. Commonly, however, *selo* referred to a larger settlement which included at least a church, F.G. Galieva, *Russkie Bashkortostana. Krest'janskij byt, kalendarnye obrjady i prazdniki* (Ufa 2014) 6 & 12-15; Galieva, *Etnograficheskie issledovanija*, 11.

⁶⁷ Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field*, 123 & 137-143.

The exact reason and the immediate cause of the reforms of the 1860s, and of the 1861 abolition of serfdom in particular, have been a bone of contention among historians. Both Russian and non-Russian scholars have argued that the abolition of serfdom was either the result of a bottom-up 'revolutionary situation' or of top-down reformist attitudes. In the latter case, they differ in opinion whether the government discussed reform out of fear of peasant uprisings or out of military and economic necessity.⁶⁸

The Soviet idea that the 'oppressed classes' wrested the reforms from tsar Alexander II seems somewhat off the mark, since the actual reforms that 'liberated' Russia's peasants did not grant them their sought-after landownership and burdened them instead with huge repayment schemes.⁶⁹ During the complex build-up to the abolition, which involved a very broad yet antagonistic preparation of the reform by various ministries and noble representatives all with different views, the lawmakers touched upon many aspects of Russian society before 1861. As such, it is more plausible that the final promulgation was the result of a cumulative process with multiple causes reinforcing each other, although Mikhail Dolbilov has demonstrated that the reformers held an underlying belief that the peasantry could form the fertile ground of a Russian nation; a liberated peasantry was to cultivate the soil and develop Russia's national territory.⁷⁰ In the case of Bashkiria, high officials demanded a reform of the land markets to accommodate the Russian peasant onrush and stimulate social-economic development of their region.⁷¹

At any rate, the peasant reforms were part of a longer process of agrarian reform and state modernization that began under Catherine II and ended with the Stolypin reforms (under the imperial flag anyway). This modernization simultaneously had homogenizing and differentiating effects.⁷² During a process of strengthening 'territoriality', the state attempted to achieve more control over society by scientifically mapping and surveying regions for economic development (the same mentality that Peter Holquist identified behind state violence and 'population politics' across the revolutionary divide of 1917).⁷³ Moreover, by

⁶⁸ A. Gleason, 'The Great Reforms and the Historians since Stalin', in: B. Eklof, J. Bushnell & L. Zakharova (eds.), *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855-1881* (Bloomington 1994) 6-11; Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia*, 568-574; S.A. Makashin, *Saltykov-Shchedrin na rubezhe 1850-1860 godov. Biografija* (Moscow 1972) 335; Wortman, *Scenarios of Power*, 205-206.

⁶⁹ Makashin, *Saltykov-Shchedrin na rubezhe 1850-1860 godov*, 356-367; Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia*, 590-599.

⁷⁰ For the government preparation of the reform, see L.G. Zakharova, *Aleksandr II i otmena krepostnogo prava v Rossii* (Moscow 2011); M. Dolbilov, 'The Emancipation Reform of 1861 in Russia and the Nationalism of the Imperial Bureaucracy', in: T. Hayashi (ed.), *The Construction and Deconstruction of National Histories in Slavic Eurasia* (Sapporo 2003) 205-207, 215 & 224.

⁷¹ Gvozdnikova a.o. (eds.), *Istorija Bashkortostana. Vol. I*, 157-168.

⁷² C. Noack, *Muslimischer Nationalismus im Russischen Reich. Nationsbildung und Nationalbewegung bei Tataren und Baschkiren, 1861-1917* (Stuttgart 2000) 87.

⁷³ PSZRI, Series II, vol. 36 (1861), part I, no. 36662 (February 1861) 231-235; S. Dixon, *Catherine the Great* (London 2009) 129 & 145; T. Emmons, *The Russian Landed Gentry and the Russian Peasant Emancipation of 1861* (Cambridge 1968) 414, cited in: A. Gleason, 'The Great Reforms', 3; L. van de

institutionally integrating hitherto formally separate social and ethnic categories (yet keeping them separate), the Russian state was slowly changing its imperial configurations. Russian officials did not suddenly lose their sense of superiority nor their colonial views, though. Quite the contrary. The Bashkirs for example came more and more under state review and a relatively quick succession of reforms of their status between 1798 and 1865 highlights Russia's changing imperial character all the while maintaining the differences between populations.⁷⁴ Modernizing Russia prioritized differently now and wanted more from its subjects than loyalty alone. They had to cultivate all corners of the Russian landmass.

Land shortage, overpopulation in central Russia, peasant economic potential and mobility were therefore certainly hotly debated topics by the 1859-1860 Editing Commissions, which gradually gave shape to the intellectual notion of a 'homogeneous and indivisible' peasantry (an image Alexander II cultivated too in his capacity of a 'monarch of the nation').⁷⁵ In this image, which was grounded in some distant, medieval past, the peasant was 'forever' bound to his ancestral land. Next to the fierce resistance of several serfholders against too many liberties for the peasant, this view of the Russian peasantry contributed to the transfer of land after redemption payments not to individual households, but to the commune. The village commune (*sel'skoe obshchestvo*) was accordingly transformed into an official institution and fell under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Internal Affairs through the supervision of the Provincial Bureau of Peasant Affairs (*Gubernskoe po krest'janskim delam prisutstvie*).⁷⁶ The reform articles related the composition, size and competencies of the *obshchestvo* and its administration in detail, but much like before the peasant reforms, the state kept aloof from the actual land distributions within the commune in favour of the village assembly.⁷⁷ Ultimately, both the government and the Russian peasant continued to believe after 1861 that local land relations were in principle the domain of the peasants themselves.

The idea of high-ranking officials, like Orenburg Governor-General Alexander P. Bezak, that Russia should be developed further by integrating and equalizing different social

Grift, 'Introduction: Theories and Practices of Internal Colonization. The Cultivation of Lands and People in the Age of Modern Territoriality', *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity* 3 2 (2015) 139-158; Holquist, 'To Count, to Extract, and to Exterminate', 111-144; Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 173-178.

⁷⁴ Gumerov (ed.), *Zakony Rossijskoj imperii o bashkirakh*, 18-19, 178-185 & 412-417.

⁷⁵ Dolbilov, 'The Emancipation Reform of 1861', 218; Wortman, *Scenarios of Power*, 205-207; Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field*, 179-180 & 194; this idea of a direct relation between the Romanovs and the Russian people sheds some light on Eric Hobsbawm's question about the way 'authentically legitimist dynasties' sought 'not merely to command the obedience of their peoples as subjects, but to rally their loyalty as potential citizens' by updating the traditional social order. E. Hobsbawm, 'Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914', in: E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge 1983) 265-266.

⁷⁶ Zakharova, *Aleksandr II i otmena krepostnogo prava*, 223-225, 238-239, 251 & 263; Dolbilov, 'The Emancipation Reform', 216-221; PSZRI, Series II, vol. 36 (1861), part I, no. 36662 (February 1861) 235.

⁷⁷ PSZRI, Series II, vol. 36 (1861), part I, no. 36657 (February 1861) 147-155.

groups like the peasants (and their institutions) with Russia's markets through landownership had clashed with serfholders' interests and romantic views of the peasant.⁷⁸ As a result, the 1861 reform denied peasants private ownership of the land and limited their mobility even out of bondage to prevent antagonizing the noble-entrepreneurs. The two other categories, crown and state peasants, were reformed and accommodated to the former serfs in 1863.⁷⁹ Each peasant category had had its specific landowner, however, which meant that in practice, although all peasants were now considered 'temporarily obligated' peasants, the obligatory *obrok* and redemption payments to each former landlord differed (peasants were accordingly designated as 'former state peasants' for example).⁸⁰

The *obrok* payment was often fixed at pre-emancipation levels, but due to the progressive rural population growth, parcels became smaller and so *obrok* raised in real terms. Moreover, because the traditional redistribution provided increasingly smaller allotments, it was not uncommon for more well-to-do peasants to resort to buying or renting additional plots. Since redemption payments were also disconnected from current values of the land, for many former serfs the net result of emancipation was a financial setback in real terms. Although the financial pressure wore off with time (as land prices rose and redemption payments were reduced in 1883), even the government grasped that the lure of cheaper far-away lands remained understandably strong in difficult times.⁸¹

For that reason the reformers had inserted clauses, which stipulated that a peasant could not formally leave the commune unless he or she had no debts. They also demanded from prospective settlers, for example, a set of admission papers from a destination commune.⁸² Ultimately, the reforms proved to be ambiguous for the peasant's relation to the land. Peasants were now legally allowed to enter into contracts and acquire property, but like before the reforms the government was still not too keen on letting peasant migrate freely out of fear of social disorder. At the end of the day, however, the peasant land reforms could not prevent almost two hundred thousand settlers from still having to migrate to Ufa province between 1861-1897 alone, adding to an already sizeable Russian population. What the reformers had sowed, turned out to be hard to control: a great many Russian peasants were eager to reap. Many had heard the tales of the free and fertile lands of Bashkiria, but it was

⁷⁸ Of all 'estate groups and tribes', governor-general Bezak blamed the Bashkirs and their 'Asiatic laziness and irresponsibility' most for his region's underdevelopment, however. Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 120-125. The peasant communes were not given the land automatically. The land was considered 'allocation land' (*nadel*), for which minimum and maximum sizes were set. In practice, these sizes could be lower than pre-reform plots. The arrangement would apply to emancipated state and crown peasants. PSZRI, Series II, vol. 36 (1861), part I, no. 36657 (February 1861) 141-142.

⁷⁹ Zajonchkovskij, *Otmena krepostnogo prava*, 260-261.

⁸⁰ Ibidem, 363-367.

⁸¹ P. Gatrell, 'The Meaning of the Great Reforms in Russian Economic History', in: B. Eklof, J. Bushnell & L. Zakharova (eds.), *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855-1881* (Bloomington 1994) 93.

⁸² PSZRI, Series II, vol. 36 (1861), part I, no. 36657 (February 1861) 160-161.

anything but an empty expanse as the Bashkir landowners had lived and toiled on these lands for centuries.

The bow and fur make the Bashkir

The peasant immigrants of the late nineteenth-century were not the first Russian peasants to arrive in Bashkiria, nor were they the first significant Russian presence in the region. In contrast to other predominantly Muslim territories in the Russian empire that were conquered only around 1850, Bashkiria had already been under Russian rule for several hundreds of years.⁸³ Accordingly, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the Bashkir population had a relatively long experience of variable colonial relations with Russians. These relations had given shape to the social and legal meanings of the 'Bashkir' status as it was understood by the middle of the nineteenth century and also to the complex land relations of the region.

The legitimacy of the Bashkir rights to the land lay precisely in their long history and as such, without briefly going over the exact origins of these rights it is difficult to understand why the land disputes in the nineteenth century took the shape they did. It will become clear why it was rather difficult for Russian peasants to purchase Bashkir lands and why usually entire Bashkir clans spread over a number of villages were involved. The court cases also revolved around legal concepts that found their origins in the previous centuries. The discussion of Bashkir historical rights to the land also informs the analysis of the government's attempts to protect these rights, which will be dealt with later. Finally, the development of the Bashkir status is intimately connected with the area's colonization by various ethnicities and reveals the rise of the interventionist state that only accelerated this colonization, especially by Russian peasants after 1800. This will explain how the period from 1869 to 1879 entered the history books as the 'plundering' of the Bashkir lands.

Even in the nineteenth century, the legitimacy of the distinct Bashkir status group rested on its sixteenth-century origins and it was inexorably intertwined with the Russian state. Not long after the Muscovite conquest of the Khanate of Kazan' in 1552, several Muslim Turkic-speaking tribal leaders in the region between the Volga-Kama rivers in the west and the Urals in the east decided to swear an oath of allegiance to tsar Ivan the Terrible. After all, their overlord Shahghali Khan of Kazan' had been vanquished and, as several Bashkir genealogical chronicles narrate, tsar Ivan acted in similar fashion to the defeated khan. He had issued edicts to the tribes, in which he soothed: 'come to us without terror or fear. Let bygones be bygones. Pay me what you paid the Khans of Kazan'.' It worked: the tribal leaders who pledged their loyalty were granted noble status (prince, *murza*

⁸³ A.S. Donnelly, *The Russian Conquest of Bashkiria. A Case Study in Imperialism* (New Haven 1968) 19; Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 17-19.

or *tarkhan*) and privileges in exchange for their bow and arrow in military service of the tsar and the collection of valuable furs as yasak tribute from their tribes, as was customary among steppe peoples.⁸⁴

In contrast to Kazan's destructive conquest, Bashkiria was incorporated by what Karen Barkey identified as an example of imperial 'negotiation' or 'bargaining' (as opposed to coerced state formation).⁸⁵ The Muslim native elites had become part of the Muscovite nobility too, forming the link of power between Moscow and their people like they had done for their previous sovereigns.⁸⁶ The voluntary bargain was to determine the land relations in Bashkiria for the centuries to come. From this point on, Muscovite rule stretched onto the steppe, effectively introducing Russian imperialism to Bashkiria.

However, historians disagree on how 'voluntary' Bashkiria's joining Muscovy actually was given the fact that the 1550s were a difficult period in the region with harsh weather and hunger and political strife as a result, plus considering the lack of political options for 'orphaned' tribes after the defeat of their Kazan' sovereign.⁸⁷ Indeed, the main Bashkir sources for this period, the genealogical chronicles (Bashkir: *shezhere*) of different tribes were as a rule endlessly altered and updated until the twentieth century and presented great mythological creatures like mighty dragons to interpret tribal history; therefore they are understandably ambiguous as to why these tribal leaders 'bowed their head to the White Bey' of Muscovy.⁸⁸ On the one hand, they note the proverbial seven lean years and the even

⁸⁴ Yasak was a tax in kind, prevalent on the steppe and in Siberia, and paid mostly in marten and fox furs in Bashkiria. Also, these Bashkir delegations travelled first to Ivan in Kazan', where they pledged their allegiance, but they had to travel a second time to Moscow to receive their actual charters, R.G. Kuzeev, *Bashkirskie shezhere* in: *Sobranie nauchnykh trudov v 7 tomakh. Tom 2* (Ufa 2015) 53, 71-72, 91-93, 96-98, 148, 201n23, 203n31 & 237n4; R.G. Kuzeev, 'Novye istochniki o prisoedinenii Bashkirii k russkomu gosudarstvu', in: *Sobranie nauchnykh trudov v 7 tomakh. Tom 1* (Ufa 2015) 322.

⁸⁵ K. Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats. The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca & London 1994) 6-11; K. Barkey, *Empire of Difference. The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge 2008) 1 & 9-11.

⁸⁶ Until the founding of the fortress town of Ufa in 1586 at the intersection of the Belaja and Dëma rivers, Kazan' actually functioned as the primary connection to Russian authorities for Bashkirs, not Moscow. Kazan' nevertheless remained important to administration and the cultural life of Bashkiria until 1917. Small numbers of service Tatars (so-called Meshcheriaks) and Polish exiled nobles were also brought into the enormous region to staff offices, maintain order and support relatively few Bashkir nobles. Gumerov (ed.), *Zakony rossijskoj imperii o bashkirakh*, 15-17; Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 26; Kappeler, *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich*, 106.

⁸⁷ Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnoshenija*, 71; Donnelly, *The Russian Conquest of Bashkiria*, 19; Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 17-20; C. Noack, 'The western steppe: the Volga-Ural region, Siberia and the Crimea under Russian rule', in: Nicola di Cosmo (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age* (Cambridge 2009) 308; Le Torrivellec, 'Entre steppes et stèles', 380; a strong, Soviet confirmation of 400 years of 'friendship between the Bashkir and Russian peoples' can be found in the 1957 commemorative publication of R.G. Kuzeev & B. Juldashbaev, '400 let vmeste s russkim narodom: prisoedinenie Bashkirii k russkomu gosudarstvu i ego istoricheskoe znachenie', in: *Sobranie nauchnykh trudov v 7 tomakh. Tom 1* (Ufa 2015) 77-138.

⁸⁸ Kuzeev, *Bashkirskie shezhere*, 29-47; Kuzeev, 'Novye istochniki', 322. The *shezhere* were common to many Turkic tribes in the steppe region, including Kazakhs, and their collection by Soviet scholars in the 1970s revealed the tribal interconnectedness that challenged standard national histories in Central Asia (but seemed to have reinforced the national narrative in the Bashkir ASSR since the 1960s,

'more dangerous advance' of the 'infidel Russians', but they also seem to suggest that the submission to Ivan fitted into a natural order of things. The Russian tsar had after all become the 'Padishah' or 'Great King' thanks to his subjugation of the Khanate of Kazan'. In that sense, the decision to submit of Tatigach, bey of the Yurmat, who told his tribe that he 'did not have any way to come up with something else,' was nonetheless in line with steppe diplomacy by acknowledging the naturally superior status of the Russian 'White Bey Padishah'.⁸⁹

If anything, the ambiguity and differences in the genealogical narratives of various tribes convey how complex, partial, gradual and contradictory even the *voluntary* annexation of the tribes and its eventual outcomes were.⁹⁰ These contradictions were the real shaping factor of land relations and eventually provided Russian peasants the prospect of settling since the Russian state did not always mind their presence in an unstable Bashkiria. The prevailing standards of steppe diplomacy did not demand unquestioning loyalty to one sovereign and very often alliances shifted. Before the arrival of Russians in the region, different 'Bashkir' tribes had no political organization of their own and were instead subject to one or more steppe powers.⁹¹ These tribes were therefore used to overlords following each other sometimes in rapid succession and this political culture did not disappear when they acknowledged Ivan the Terrible.

Right up to the moment when the Russian state attempted to integrate and control the Bashkirs more around 1800, several Bashkir tribes frequently considered to renege on their oath of loyalty to the tsar whenever they felt that Moscow or Saint Petersburg failed to respect their privileges (some tribes even supplicated to the Ottoman sultan). They were not afraid to use violence to limit tsarist transgressions on their rights. As a result, more than nine separate uprisings and wars took place between 1552 and 1800, which included the participation in Pugachëv's enormous rebellion of 1773-1775. According to Charles Steinwedel, conflicts could result in brutal violence, but also led to 'a greater legal recognition of Bashkir privileges'.⁹²

notably by Rail' G. Kuzeev), see A. Bustanov, *Soviet Orientalism and the creation of Central Asian Nations* (London & New York 2014) 118-125. For a discussion of Muscovy's relation to the steppe, see C.J. Halperin, "'Know Thy Enemy": Medieval Russian Familiarity with the Mongols of the Golden Horde', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 30 2 (1982) 161-175; C. Halperin, 'Ivan IV and Chinggis Khan', *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 51 4 (2003) 481-497; E.L. Keenan, Jr., 'Muscovy and Kazan: Some Introductory Remarks on the Patterns of Steppe Diplomacy', *Slavic Review* 26 4 (1967) 548-558.

⁸⁹ Kuzeev, *Bashkirskie shezhere*, 51-55; see also Burbank, 'Souveraineté eurasiennne', 77-78.

⁹⁰ Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnoshenija*, 71-74; Le Torrivellec, 'Entre steppes et stèles', 380.

⁹¹ R. Portal, 'Les Bachkirs et le gouvernement russe au XVIIIe siècle', *Revue des études slaves* 22 1-4 (1946) 82-83; Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 19-21; Kappeler, *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich*, 43-46; Kemper, 'How to Take the Muslim Peripheries Seriously', 477-478.

⁹² Irek G. Akmanov counts at least ten rebellions and uprisings between 1662-1756, I.G. Akmanov, *Bashkirskie vosstaniia XVII-XVIII vekov – fenomen v istorii narodov Evrazii* (Ufa 2016); Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 19-22 & 26-32; even around 1800, the Bashkir tribes had a steppe-dominated

Until 1797, there was no separate administrative system for the Bashkirs, only a chancellery of a voivode (military governor),⁹³ who was poorly equipped to rule such a large area. To carry out tsarist policies more effectively, the voivode sought the support of Bashkir nobility in matters of war and diplomacy on the southern border. This meant that in practice the early modern Bashkirs were differentiated within the empire not by a separate administrative system, but by a great degree of autonomy and the right to their land.⁹⁴ In the nineteenth century, the Russian government wanted to claim these formally state lands for Russian peasants to settle, but the historical rights of the Bashkirs were still very resilient due to their collective character.

The tribal leaders who had travelled to Ivan the Terrible in Moscow gained the collective right for their tribes to use lands that after 1552 were left empty by the Nogai Horde, a tribal confederation that had dominated Bashkiria's south for a century. After Ivan's victory, the Nogais who had supported Kazan' fled further southwest toward Astrakhan, leaving the lands only for the officially recognized and loyal Bashkir tribes to take.⁹⁵ Bashkir status did not coincide with one cultural or ethnic identity, since the legal status the term 'Bashkir' carried, originally referred only to various tribal leaders and their kin with the collective rights to use the land how they saw fit. Some tribes were closer to sedentary Tatars, others to nomadic Nogais or Kazakhs and all had had different political and cultural developments.⁹⁶

culture, which meant they identified by clan, *tamga* (mark), tree, bird, *oran* (battlecry) and to a degree also by *shezhere* (genealogical chronicle), R.G. Kuzeev, 'Rodoplemennoj sostav bashkir v XVIII v.', in: *Sobranie nauchnykh trudov v 7 tomakh. Tom 2* (Ufa 2015) 7-21.

⁹³ While *duke* seems a perfect translation of voivode (literally a 'war-leader'), this may give the wrong impression of a (hereditary) title of nobility, because it was only an administrative office.

⁹⁴ The voivode governed at a local *uyezd* level from 1586 until the creation in 1708 of Ufa province, subordinate to the Kazan' governorate. After a brief period of direct Senate control between 1728-1733, the voivode remained a provincial institution until the province's dissolution (albeit subordinate to the Orenburg governor, established in 1744). In 1775, Catherine the Great introduced so-called *namestnichestva* (viceregencies; a *namestnik* similar to stadtholder) throughout the empire to replace the provinces. The Ufa *namestnichestvo* was introduced on December 23 1781 and lasted until 1796, when the large Orenburg province was created. Gumerov (ed.), *Zakony Rossijskoj imperii o bashkirakh*, 15-18 & 22; I. de Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great* (London 1981) 277-280.

⁹⁵ Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 17; A.J. Frank, 'The western steppe: Volga-Ural region, Siberia and the Crimea', in: Nicola di Cosmo (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age* (Cambridge 2009) 241-245.

⁹⁶ Rail' G. Kuzeev acknowledged, for example, that Tatars and Bashkirs shared a long parallel cultural development, Kuzeev, 'Etnicheskaja istorija Bashkir', 247 & 253-256; Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 32-37; as far as Bashkir (ethnic) identities are concerned, see Le Torrivellec, 'Entre steppes et stèles', 372, 378-381 & 386; Noack, *Muslimischer Nationalismus*, 43; C. Noack, 'The Tataro-Bashkir Feud Revisited: Zaki Validi and the Bashkir Autonomy in Western Historiography', in: I.M. Gvozdikova a.o. (eds.), *Istorija v litsakh i lichnost' v istorii. Materialy Vtorykh Mezhdunarodnykh Usmanovskikh chtenij, posvjashchennykh 90-letiju so dnja rozhdenija vidnogo istorika-agrarnika Bashkortostana, professora Khamzy Fatykhovicha Usmanova* (Ufa 2013) 191; P.B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples. Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East* (Wiesbaden 1992) 262-264 & 397-399.

In exchange for their privileges, the Bashkir nobles had to send the tsar yasak from their tribe (nobles themselves were exempt from yasak) and enter military service, acting as a border defence between Muscovy and the Kazakh steppes to the south-east. These two obligations, along with the right to use the land, were the pivot of Bashkir-Russian interactions (both peaceful and hostile) and shaped Bashkir identity in the centuries that followed.

To Bashkir or not to Bashkir

Originally Bashkir collective landholding had only been conditional (*pomestnaja zemlja*), ensured by the payment of yasak and military service. The 1649 *Ulozhenie* of tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich confirmed exactly this type of landholding, threatening any malefactor with the 'Sovereign's disgrace.' In this situation, the principle issue was 'who has *earned* the right to claim Bashkir status?', which meant that the Bashkir right to use the land could be lost too. Thanks to a fierce war against Muscovy between 1662-1664, however, Bashkirs consolidated their landholdings and even evaded serfdom. From now on, Bashkir conditional landholding was considered a tribe's hereditary or patrimonial landownership (*votchina*).⁹⁷

Ever since the formal establishment of Russian rule in the region mid-sixteenth century, the different Bashkir tribes and clans were organized in *volosts*, territorial administrative units that imitated the administrative order of the khanates, for which the elites had negotiated their privileges (during the eighteenth century, Bashkirs further divided *volosts* into sub-clans called *tiubs*).⁹⁸ In practice, the *volosts* were less territorial units than units of kinship for Bashkirs who found precise territorial borders of minor importance due to their nomadic lifestyle. Now that collective landholding had become hereditary, the *volosts* (or tribes, then) formally started to act as the collective owners of the communal *votchina*. At the time of Ivan the Terrible, the precondition for Bashkir status was military service and yasak, which meant that Bashkir status itself was in principle conditional. After the middle of the seventeenth century, this was turned around as Bashkir status became permanent and the question 'who is Bashkir?' was determined by 'who belongs to the tribe or clan?'

Thus Bashkirs did not own their land individually or as a family. Because this form of collective landownership was very complicated for Russian officials and Bashkirs alike, the *shezhere* chronicles, originally oral tales of kinship and privileges, had to be written down

⁹⁷ Relatively few Bashkir were enserfed, mostly as punishment for participating in uprisings, Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 6, 20-21, 32 & 263n21; Akmanov, *Bashkirskie vosstaniia*, 118.

⁹⁸ Le Torrivellec, 'Entre steppes et stèles', 371; Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnosheniia*, 80; C. Steinwedel, 'How Bashkiria Became Part of European Russia, 1762-1881', in: J. Burbank, M. Von Hagen & Anatolyi Remnev (eds.), *Russian Empire. Space, People, Power, 1700-1930* (Bloomington 2007) 102; C. Steinwedel, 'Tribe, Estate, Nationality? Changing Conceptions of Bashkir Particularity within the Tsar's Empire', *Ab Imperio* 2 (2002) 253.

more. In their written form, they increasingly acted as a legal document that confirmed a Bashkir's right by kinship to participate in a *volost's* patrimonial landownership.⁹⁹ The shifting emphasis to kinship also provided a foundation for an ethnic understanding of Bashkir identity on the basis of landownership that particularly flourished among Bashkirs in the (early) twentieth century and informed their resistance to Russian colonization.¹⁰⁰

The single most important condition of the Bashkirs' right to their lands was the payment of *yasak*. Who exactly paid *yasak* was recorded by Muscovite clerks in a register that was periodically revised. Losing such evidence of *yasak* payments jeopardized one's Bashkir status. The various charters to elites which the Muscovite chancelleries had issued were also carefully recorded in the *shezhere*. The Russian administration used the chronicles (with the help of translators) to implement its land policies and determine tribal affiliations in case of land disputes among Bashkirs. A major consequence of the significance of written *shezhere* was that from the middle of the seventeenth century onward, persons from outside the *volost* were 'written' into the genealogy in order to claim the patrimonial lands. Of importance here is that right up to the 1860s, many Muslim immigrants from the neighbouring regions were attracted to the privileged Bashkir status and were able to pass themselves off as Bashkirs. Frequent land disputes led many tribes to negotiate and repartition their lands to accommodate newcomers.¹⁰¹ As a result, the government sought to curtail these disputes and the increasing complexity of land relations by reorganizing the Bashkir tribes.

In the long run, however, collective land rights proved more resilient than conditional, individual landownership, evidenced by the Muslim Tatar nobles whose 'feudal estates' were lost to great pressure from conversion campaigns around 1700.¹⁰² The eighteenth century brought more pressure on Bashkir landownership too, though, and saw some of the heaviest resistance against tsarist authority. Russian peasant colonization of Bashkiria became greater too as a result. Since Peter the Great waged a prolonged war against Sweden, Russia's main supplier of iron ore, he needed to find this indispensable metal somewhere else in order to feed Russia's military ambitions. The Urals provided a rich source of iron and

⁹⁹ Kuzeev, *Bashkirskie shezhere*, 33.

¹⁰⁰ The influential ethnographer Rail' G. Kuzeev considered the Bashkir ethnos a result of longer formation, identifying 'potential Bashkirs' in the eleventh and twelfth centuries already. He located culmination of ethnic formation in the middle of the sixteenth century, R.G. Kuzeev, *Proiskhozhdenie bashkirskogo naroda: etnicheskij sostav, istorija rasselenija*, in: *Sobranie nauchnykh trudov v 7 tomakh. Tom 4* (Ufa 2016) 405; Kuzeev, 'Etnicheskaja istorija Bashkir', 254-255; Le Torrivellec, 'Entre steppes et stèles', 371-372; X. Le Torrivellec, 'Tatary i bashkiry: Istorija v zerkal'nom otrazhenii. Etnicheskaja kompozitsija, istoriograficheskie debaty i politicheskaja vlast' v respublike Bashkortostan', *Ab Imperio* 2 (2007) 261-262; Noack, 'The Tataro-Bashkir Feud', 168-194.

¹⁰¹ Kuzeev, *Bashkirskie shezhere*, 33-34, 209n15, 237n8 & 241n9.

¹⁰² Steinwedel, 'Polozhenie Bashkirii', 65-67.

copper, therefore the state sponsored the construction of mines and factories on Bashkir territories.¹⁰³

The establishment of these factories and the arrival of Russian peasants to work there formed the first infraction of Bashkir '*votchina*' or hereditary patrimonial right to the land.¹⁰⁴ In an effort to quash successful attempts at keeping out tsarist governance, the Russians built a long line of fortresses on Bashkir property and especially the founding of Orenburg in 1735 with the arrival of a large military presence formed the second major threat to Bashkir landownership.¹⁰⁵ Paradoxically, the greater military pressure only exacerbated Bashkir animosity and immediately triggered a series of devastating wars between 1735-1740, leading to more expropriations as punishment.¹⁰⁶ Later, instead of violent repression, the government sought to contain the Bashkirs by further integrating them and allowing peasant colonization.

Despite the steady encroachment on their rights, Bashkirs landowners managed to maintain their status and co-opt newcomers as renters. These co-called *pripushchenniki*, or 'those let in' to Bashkir lands, often paid the *votchinniki* monetary *obrok* as rent (not all had written contracts) and could be of any ethnicity and legal status. Russian peasants, however, mostly remained tied to either state, crown or noble lands, but in Bashkiria peasants generally lived on state property. The government actually preferred Orthodox colonization and strove to allocate a large portion of Bashkiria's free state lands to Russian colonists, so that Muslim immigrants of various ethnicities had to rent from Bashkir *votchinniki* as *pripushchenniki*.¹⁰⁷ In practice it proved difficult to prevent 'fugitive' peasants from living on Bashkir lands and evading the poll tax or 'soul tax', since the government had no power in large parts of the region.¹⁰⁸ Much like they did in central Russia, these peasants organized themselves in relatively autonomous communes and often acquired land in groups or entire villages.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ De Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great*, 466-468; Donnelly, *The Russian Conquest of Bashkiria*, 48-49.

¹⁰⁴ Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 37.

¹⁰⁵ Shajkhislamov, *Gosudarstvennye krest'jane*, 36; Donnelly, *The Russian Conquest of Bashkiria*, 64-70; R.F. Baumann, 'Subject Nationalities in the Military Service of Imperial Russia: The Case of the Bashkirs', *Slavic Review* 46 3-4 (1987) 491; another important aim of the founding of Orenburg was to control the Kazakh Junior Zhüz and to redirect the caravan trade from Central Asia through this fortress city, see A.J. Frank, 'The Qazaqs and Russia', in: Nicola di Cosmo (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia: The Chinggisid Age* (Cambridge 2009) 369.

¹⁰⁶ Akmanov, *Bashkirskie vosstanija*, 241; Shajkhislamov, *Gosudarstvennye krest'jane*, 37; Kappeler, *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich*, 131; Portal, 'Les Bachkirs', 99.

¹⁰⁷ Sometimes the government would attract peasants by offering to collect only the 'soul tax', Shajkhislamov, *Gosudarstvennye krest'jane*, 36 & 39-41; Noack, *Muslimischer Nationalismus*, 46-47.

¹⁰⁸ PSZRI, Series I, vol. 9 (1733-1736), no. 6581 (May 1734) 337; PSZRI, Series I, vol. 8 (1728-1732), no. 5438 (July 1729) 214. In 1739, in an attempt to limit Russian colonization of Bashkir lands, it was actually forbidden for 'Great Russian' peasants to settle in Orenburg, PSZRI, Series I, vol. 10 (1737-1739), no. 7876 (August 1739) 867-871; Donnelly, *The Russian Conquest of Bashkiria*, 145.

¹⁰⁹ Shajkhislamov, *Gosudarstvennye krest'jane*, 39 & 45.

The eighteenth century had already seen a sharp rise of Russian colonists, but when the state undertook land surveys to increase tax revenues and untangle the complex web of land relations in the area and confiscated and then redistributed 'surplus land' from 1798 onward, Russian peasant colonization truly soared to uncontrollable levels.¹¹⁰ Indicative of the state's increased desire to measure, regulate and optimize society and of the resulting imperial reconfigurations, the Bashkirs, some of their *pripushchenniki* and the Orenburg and Urals Cossacks were transferred under tsar Paul I into a cantonal system in 1797.¹¹¹

In this system, the hitherto largely autonomous Bashkir population was considered a military estate and placed under layered, yet strict state supervision of the Orenburg military governor (governor-general after 1851). The Bashkirs were also mobilized in the Bashkir-Meshcheriak Host, the commander of which exercised great control over the Bashkir servicemen after 1834. The military need to count troop strength called for even clearer demarcation and division of Bashkir land into territorial units that cut right through tribal *volosts* and *tiubs* (from large to small territory: *uyezds*, cantons and *yurts* or tents).¹¹² Bashkir properties were even further circumscribed and new, excised lands attracted countless Russian (state) peasants from far and wide. If Bashkir nomads had not already abandoned their migratory way of life under pressure of settled peasants and nomadic Kalmuks and Kazakhs, then many did so before 1900.¹¹³

Ultimately, the significance of the cantonal system proved twofold: it increased state control over Bashkirs and cultivated their loyalty through military service at the same time. As a result, it became less problematic for Russian peasants to move in and colonize the area, which in turn strengthened officials' confidence to fix Bashkirs to one position.

The historically rebellious Bashkirs were successfully reined in by the cantonal administration and even put to great use against Napoleon's *Grande Armée* in 1812-1814 and during the conquest of the Central Asian hordes and khanates to Bashkiria's south. By the 1860s, however, Russian authorities thought that after three centuries, the military value of the Bashkirs had finally been lost.¹¹⁴ In two large reforms in 1863 and 1865, the cantonal

¹¹⁰ Shajkhislamov, *Gosudarstvennye krest'jane*, 34-46.

¹¹¹ The other non-Russians in the military estate were the so-called Meshcheriaks (originally sixteenth-century service Tatars), Teptiars (formal *pripushchinniki* with written contracts, which granted them a more or less intermediary position between *votchinniki* and other *pripushchinniki*) and Bobyls (landless peasants from the Volga-Urals region). Le Torrivellec, 'Entre steppes et stèles', 384n70; for the importance of state institutions in integrating Bashkiria, see Steinwedel, 'How Bashkiria Became Part of European Russia', 94-124.

¹¹² In 1855, Teptiars were recruited into the Bashkir-Meshcheriak Host and the name was changed to simply Bashkir Host, A.Z. Asfandijarov, *Kantonnoe upravlenie v Bashkirii (1798-1865 gg.)* (Ufa 2005) 3, 16-25 & 110-111; Gumerov (ed.), *Zakony Rossijskoj imperii o bashkirakh*, 178-185.

¹¹³ Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnoshenija*, 277-284; Akmanov, *Bashkirskie vosstanija*, 111; Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 171; Donnelly, *The Russian Conquest of Bashkiria*, 20-26, 33-37 & 41-50; Kappeler, *Rußland als Vielvölkerreich*, 46.

¹¹⁴ During the 1812-1814 campaign in pursuit of Napoleon, Bashkir troops reached as far west as the Low Countries and Paris, where the Bashkir troops camped on the Champs-Élysées, 'cooking their

system was eliminated and the Bashkir Host was disbanded practically simultaneously with the peasant reforms of 1861 and 1863. The Bashkirs and other military estate groups were now considered 'rural residents', also organized in a *sel'skoe obshchestvo* with a *starosta* and like the former serfs received the right to enter into contracts and acquire private property, run businesses and change estate status.¹¹⁵ It is somewhat of a paradox that the official attempts to eliminate any confusions about landownership by land surveys gave rise to only more proprietary chaos and that liberal regulation of a private land market, meant to absorb Russian colonists and develop the region, laid such a great burden upon the justice system.¹¹⁶

The reason that the purchase of Bashkir lands in the following decades proved so problematic, was that it concerned the collective right to the lands. In other words, there were no clear boundaries that would allow easy and clear transactions of property between individuals. This way the Bashkir *votchina* was on a collision course with the governmental administration that wanted to establish a land market to accommodate incoming peasant colonists. For instance, Orenburg governor-general Nikolai Kryzhanovskii, who also oversaw the Ufa governorate, had pleaded with the Ministry of State Domains for mass migration of Russian peasants to develop Bashkiria. He sought to tie the population to the state by granting them a form of civil status and thus increase social responsibility and stimulate economic initiative.¹¹⁷ Proper economic development through peasant colonization would also attract educated landowners so that Ufa would in turn become eligible for the *zemstvo*, the institution for self-government introduced to some Russian provinces in 1864.¹¹⁸ Selling Bashkir lands seemed a necessary way to attract more colonists and other landowners, but that required an extensive land survey that got underway in 1869.

The surveyors distinguished between the lands of *votchinniki* and that of their *pripushchenniki*. They furthermore split the patrimonial lands into two categories: 'abundant land' and 'scarce land'. Then the officials set minimum and maximum land sizes and any 'surplus land' was to be transferred to Bashkirs with few land and their *pripushchenniki*. In 1871 Kryzhanovskii decided, however, to allow officials and nobles to purchase these

steak on the tip of an arrow,' and provoked mockery by Parisians due to their 'red kaftans and yellow fox-fur caps, with bow and arrow on their back.' See I.T. Radozhitskij, *Pokhodnye zapiski artillerista, s 1812 po 1816 god. Chast' 3: 1814-j god. Vojna vo Frantsii* (Moscow 1835) 135 and I.I. Lazhechnikov, *Pokhodnye zapiski russkogo ofitsera* (Saint Petersburg 1820) 245, both cited in A.Z. Asfandijarov a.o. (eds.), *Dokumenty i materialy po istorii bashkirskogo naroda (1790-1912)* (Ufa 2012) 173; D. Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon. The Battle for Europe, 1807 to 1814* (London 2010) 330, 471 & 520; Steinwedel, 'How Bashkiria Became Part of European Russia', 103.

¹¹⁵ Gumerov (ed.), *Zakony rossijskoj imperii o bashkirakh*, 412-417; Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 124.

¹¹⁶ Shajkhislamov, *Gosudarstvennye krest'jane*, 42; Gvozdnikova a.o. (eds.), *Istorija Bashkortostana. Vol. I*, 157-168.

¹¹⁷ Ibidem, 157-164.

¹¹⁸ Steinwedel, 'How Bashkiria Became Part of European Russia', 108.

surplus lands in an attempt to attract the educated men he so desired. However, wealthy local administrators, officials, merchants and nobles bought enormous swaths of 'surplus lands' at incredibly low prices. These gave the lands in turn to their friends or sold them to peasants with a huge profit. Even the respectable and educated men of the empire, such as the father of historian Aleksandr A. Kizevetter and governor-general Kryzhanovskii himself bought these lands.¹¹⁹

Because the Bashkirs were often tricked into obscure payment schemes and fraudulent contracts with unclear land boundaries or were even forced to sell their land, this period came to be known as the 'plundering' of the Bashkir lands. After the government passed regulations that stopped the sale of Bashkir lands to rich speculators and restricted it to peasants only in 1882, the Bashkir *votchinniki* were still confronted with other land surveys and yet more Russian colonists that encroached on their historical rights.

The reforms of the 1860s kept the patrimonial right to the land for the majority of Bashkirs intact, therefore when they were confronted with the 'plundering' of their land, they could assert their centuries-old privileges and employ their new rights to defend their property by going to court. Bashkirs filed countless complaints against frauds, local tyrants and squatters with the newly reformed courts. In doing so, Bashkirs moved between the legacies of Muscovy's noninterventionist particularism and the differentiated integration of what Charles Steinwedel called the modern Russian 'participatory empire.'¹²⁰ Russian historians of this period have considered the Russian peasant in Bashkiria an instrument of modern colonial policies of the state, but this assumes that the result reveals the process.¹²¹ After all, the question remains how Russian peasants themselves saw their acquisition of Bashkir lands in this period and how they defended their claims in court.

¹¹⁹ Remezov, *Byl' v skazochnoj strane*, 292.

¹²⁰ Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 115-116; Gregory Freeze likewise noted this ambiguity of fluidity and differentiation within nineteenth-century Russian social-legal distinctions: 'the *soslovie* structure proved adaptable to the exigencies of social and economic development; a multivariate structure permitted specialization and occupational professionalization, yet within a formal system of hereditary estates,' G.L. Freeze, 'The *Soslovie* (Estate) Paradigm and Russian Social History', *American Historical Review* 91 1 (1986) 24.

¹²¹ Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnosheniia*, 270.

A metamorphosis of land and people?

'It seems to me that in no province there are so many extremes, opposites and occur so many kinds of metamorphoses of "land and people" as in Ufa.' — land surveyor Nikolai V. Remezov, *Sketches from Wild Bashkiria: A True Story in a Fairy-tale Land* (1887).

'This year, the Bashkirs of Bol'shoi Chekmak have self-willedly invaded the meadowland and ploughed up a great part, so that they have completely ruined the meadows.' — peasant Sergei Danilovich Kozemaslov, petition to the Ufa Palace of Justice (1873).

The 'plundering' of the Bashkir lands was particularly intense between 1869 and 1879, a period which was also marked by an expansion of civil rights and the reforms of Bashkir status. In this period, analogous to agrarian policies in other non-Russian, nomad or Muslim areas like the Caucasus and Turkestan, imperial authorities sought ways to expropriate the Muslim and seminomadic Bashkirs for the benefit of the economic development of the region.¹²² As we have seen, the Russian peasant played a vital role in these colonial plans drawn up by the imperial officials. As of yet, it remains unclear how Russian peasant migrants tried to benefit from this changing colonial attitude in acquiring lands in Bashkiria.

In the years before 1869, Russian peasants and Bashkirs regularly went to court over land disputes. Due to the particularly great degree of fraud and abuse of power following the land survey of 1869, however, the number of court cases increased as many Bashkirs turned to court to reclaim their land by filing a complaint against Russian peasants. Others tried to simply retake their land in a straightforward manner without the help of court, which allowed Russian peasants to turn to court themselves. In both instances, the question that is at stake here is whether Russian peasants used traditionalist or modern arguments to defend their claims to land in court.

By traditional social-agrarian arguments I mean here an emphasis on social consensus, long duration of working the land (granting peasants a kind of natural right to the land), respecting the peace of the social structure as well as the idea that personalities are more important than the formal offices of people. They also encompass a peasants' traditional social-legal status and bring forward assumptions or unwritten rules that the

¹²² Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field*, 146-160; E. Pravilova, 'The Property of Empire: Islamic Law and Russian Agrarian Policy in Transcaucasia and Turkestan', *Kritika* 12 2 (2011) 358-363; Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnoshenija*, 337-339.

available land should be divided fairly among those who work the land. This includes arguments for collective landholding. Any straightforward identification as a (Russian-Orthodox) Christian is included here too, because it suggests the upholding of the traditional order through faith.¹²³ Traditional social-agrarian arguments can also include references to good farming to strengthen a claim to the land, but only in the sense that the peasants displayed their knowledge of agriculture and of nature (passed on from their ancestors). Here we can think of descriptions of what the land in question looked like, more explicit explanations why the land was so useful to the peasants or vice versa. Any mention of 'ignorant Bashkirs' does not belong in this category.

Conversely, modern arguments need to be split up into two separate, yet possibly overlapping and mutually reinforcing categories. The hypothesis is that modern colonial attitudes of the state were adopted by the Russian peasants in order to win land disputes with Bashkirs in state courts and that they therefore also adopted a state-enforced legal framework at the expense of traditional social-agrarian frameworks. When peasants developed modern attitudes toward justice, society and politics, it would also have been easier for them to develop specifically modern colonial attitudes.

In the modern category are arguments that stress the legality of landownership and the peasant's (contractual) rights guaranteed by the state. As opposed to collective landholding, modern arguments can also emphasize private property of the land. Especially references to state law are important markers of the modern arguments. Trust in the court system and its judges belongs here too. We may also find peasants who appealed to the legitimacy of other state institutions and their jurisdictions. An awareness and possibly even an interest in state (agrarian) policies belong in the modern category too (unless reinforced with ethnic-cultural arguments). Finally, also the sense that farming is not merely a way to survive, but rather an enterprise or a business and where land is considered a capital one could invest in.¹²⁴

In the modern colonial category are arguments that entail the connection between the state and the acquirement of land from Bashkirs. Therefore any justification of colonization based on government direction or assistance belongs in the modern colonial category. It also chooses language of ethnicity over social background and appeals to the shared Russianness of government and peasant colonials, but can point at differentiated modern laws for Bashkirs and Russian peasants too. In a modern colonial frame, Bashkirs are considered an ethnic group and, as such, these arguments may also include cultural and ethnic hierarchization or derision of the Muslim Bashkirs to render their cases invalid. For

¹²³ Sunderland, 'Peasant Pioneering', 908.

¹²⁴ As opposed to what Eugen Weber found among the mid-nineteenth-century peasants in France, Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 116-117.

instance, The association of Russian-Orthodoxy with the right to the land over that of non-Christian Bashkirs should be considered modern colonial. Also, a reference to inefficient land use by the semi-nomadic Bashkirs in comparison to Russian agriculturalists belongs in this category since it bears argumentative strength only in relation to governmental policies for agricultural development. In other words, Russian peasants may have tried to explain that they were more useful farmers than Bashkirs. Other examples may include when peasants expressed their claims to land in terms of 'teaching nomads to be farmers', 'spread Orthodoxy' or 'expand the empire's agricultural exports.'¹²⁵

Since the archive of the Ufa Palace of Justice holds (at least) 29 files concerned with land disputes, I selected them on the basis of the following criteria.¹²⁶ First of all, the cases had to cover the post-1861 period, but had to represent somewhat different periods: cases that started before 1869 to identify any significant differences with the later periods (also to see whether older immigrants act on the arrival of newer ones when cases dragged on), between 1869-1882 (the period of the 'land plundering') and after 1882 (when Bashkirs could only sell their lands to peasants and the state). Secondly, the archive catalogue had to explicitly mention that the case was about Bashkirs versus peasants or vice versa. For the period before 1869, I found a total of five explicit land disputes, for 1869-1882 sixteen and for the period after 1882 eight. However, since I searched for land disputes between Bashkirs and Russian peasants, this process yielded merely eight cases.

When studying the material, however, not all cases 'between Bashkirs and peasants' proved to be about Russian peasants, since (like the imperial authorities) the archive inventory listed non-Russians as 'peasants' too. I lost three cases this way. Third, the dossiers also had to contain documents that contained the arguments of Russian peasants themselves, such as petitions, testimonies or reports of court sessions. The remaining five all had these. Fourth, I was forced to further filter my found cases because of practical reasons. Upon closer inspection, the key documents in one file were simply too difficult for me to read.

This selection procedure nonetheless left me with four cases from the Ufa Palace of Justice to pick from and discuss here, which I did quite randomly in order to retain an open attitude about traditional-modern peasant attitudes. After I had gone through three cases to discuss here, for the sake of representativeness I also checked the remaining cases from the Palace of Justice (including that of non-Russians) as well as a similar land dispute from the Provincial Bureau of Peasant Affairs.

¹²⁵ To be clear, Willard Sunderland found that peasant colonists lacked such motivations, Sunderland, 'Empire Without Imperialism', 107.

¹²⁶ At least, this many cases I was able to find in the time I had to study the Palace of Justice catalogue. Also, sometimes the catalogue does not mention that one case is spread over multiple files, which can make it more difficult to assess the real number of land disputes after 1861 in this archive.

In what follows here, I will enter into the details of several cases where Russian peasants filed claims against Bashkirs and go over the involved parties as well as the sketched immediate cause. Then I will distinguish between the different arguments using either of the categories: traditional social-agrarian or modern colonial. It goes without saying that the small number of cases dealt with here warrants further research, but their detailed analysis nevertheless allows for a deeper understanding of how Russian peasants actually utilized traditional and modern attitudes to acquire Bashkir lands in court. After the analysis, I will briefly contextualise the selected cases with similar ones, but also with those that involved non-Russians.

1. *Agafia Maksimova Karmanova*

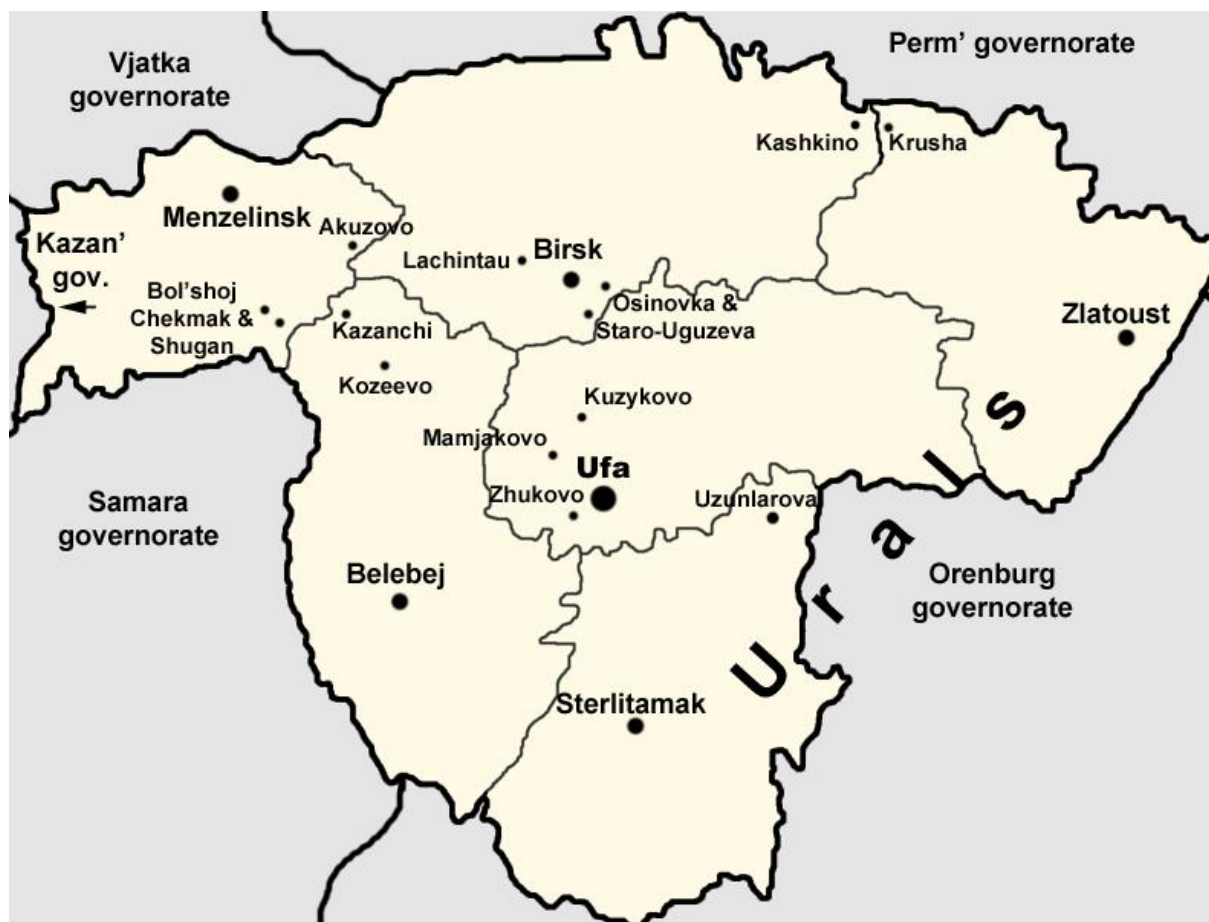
Our first case revolved around crown peasant Agafia Maksimova Karmanova from the village of Kosteevo in the Belebei *uyezd*, a region in the western part of Ufa governorate notable for its predominantly Muslim population.¹²⁷ Karmanova's pursuit of her own land at the expense of Bashkir renters is rather extraordinary, because there was almost fifteen years between the moment she brought a lawsuit against several Bashkirs on November 12 1863 at the Menzelinsk *uyezd* court and the dispute's resolution by the empire highest judicial institution, the Petersburg Governing Senate, on April 21, 1878.¹²⁸ The strife of Karmanova and her Bashkir opponents was also marked by an unusual degree of confusion on both sides about the history of their land relations. Moreover, observing the Senate's decision proved difficult for local authorities due to the administrative obscurities the land surveys had produced after 1869. For clarity's sake, however, it is useful to start with the immediate cause of this large case.

According to Agafia Karmanova's opening statement in her 1863 petition, the relationship between the Bashkirs and her family long predated the greatest influx of Russian peasants into Bashkiria. Her account went back to August 15 1802, when Karmanova's grandfather, Mikhail Evseev Karmanov, a crown peasant, concluded a private (*domashnij*) agreement with a number of Bashkir-*votchinniki* from different villages around Akuzovo in the Buliarskaia *volost*. Karmanova tells the court how her grandfather bought a piece of land from the Bashkirs near the village of Kazanchina in 'eternal and hereditary possession' (*vechnoe i potomstvennoe vladenie*), followed by a reference to the *Digest of Laws of the*

¹²⁷ Steinwedel, 'How Bashkiria Became Part of European Russia', 106-107.

¹²⁸ Tsentral'nyj gosudarstvennyj istoricheskij arkhiv Respubliki Bashkortostan (TsGIA RB), f. 101, op. 1, d. 468, l. 1; TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 469, l. 39-39v.

Russian Empire (SZRI). Important too is that to the Karmanovs, the exact size of their land was not clear, since the agreement was based on natural boundaries.¹²⁹



Map 2.1. Ufa governorate, its districts (*uezdy*) and the district capitals (c. 1900).¹³⁰

Karmanova's continued her case pointing out that both her grandfather and her father, Maksim Karmanov, had possessed their plot of land 'with all the rights of ownership' until the latter's death in 1850, when Karmanova herself was still a minor. At this point, the Bashkir community decided to confiscate the land, which Karmanova claimed belonged to her. She also notes how she had already tried to regain her land two times before her 1863 attempt, namely in 1857 and 1861, by presenting the then-governor-general of Orenburg and Samara the 'authentic agreement' of her grandfather.

During the investigation that followed, a group of young Bashkirs came into the picture who turned out to be the sons of the original 'sellers' of the land. Some older Bashkirs could confirm the 1802 private sale to her grandfather 'in good faith,' while the younger ones

¹²⁹ The petition referred specifically to *Svod Zakonov Rossijskoj Imperii* (SZRI), sections 920 and 921, vol. 10, part 1, (Saint Petersburg 1857) 179. TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 468, l. 1.

¹³⁰ Own work, based on the Wikimedia image File:Ufimskaya gubernia.png by user СафроновАВ. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ufimskaya_gubernia.png (accessed 5 May 2018).

who were not even born in 1802, were ignorant of the sale or failed to provide any supporting evidence still denied her the piece of land.¹³¹

The Russian peasant was quick to assure the court that the recent squabbles between the Bashkirs and herself could hold no repercussion for the legal validity of her claims to the land and she went out of her way to prove and support this claim with two arguments. First, she claims that the young Bashkirs had nothing to do with the 'true evidence' and are instead abusing their position as spokespersons of the deceased Bashkirs who could no longer speak for themselves. Moreover, Karmanova wanted her readers to know that one could say with great certainty that the entire generation of Bashkirs today was familiar with the land sale to her grandfather. Although she did not explicate the significance of this fact, Karmanova seems to have tried to prove that due to the 'self-seeking' Bashkirs' disingenuousness, the land dispute was not her fault. She alluded to this in her following argument.

The second piece of evidence Karmanova wished to highlight revolved around the authenticity of the original deed of her grandfather. Unsurprisingly, Karmanova argued that the 'seal' of the Buliarskaia *volost* or tribe present on the document undeniably proved its authenticity, which was further testified by the *yurt starshina*, a low to middle official in the Bashkir cantonal system.¹³² In short, despite the conflict she was in at the moment, Agafia Karmanova thought she had done nothing to cause any form of dispute and therefore, legally speaking, she could still claim ownership of the land.

The reason why it was so important to Karmanova to prove her peacefulness lay in the letter of the law. Having discredited the opposing party of Bashkirs, she continued: 'Equally, it is beyond any form of doubt that my ancestors have possessed their piece of land for an uninterrupted, calm and conflict-free period of time so that they enjoyed all the rights of ownership and that they have established a proper farm on their purchased land.'¹³³ Karmanova moved on and stated that 'despite all this', the Bashkirs had thus far evaded a 'peaceful' deal, again referring to state law.¹³⁴ The Bashkirs were not invited either by their direct military commander to prevent a lawsuit and as a result, the governor-general had advised Karmanova to seek to retrieve her lands by taking legal action.¹³⁵

Making her concluding remarks, Karmanova reiterated the legitimacy of her grandfather's purchase of 1802, expressly adding that he had acquired it for 'eternal use and

¹³¹ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 468, l. 1v.

¹³² TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 468, l. 1v. For a more detailed view of the cantonal system, see appendix A.

¹³³ Karmanova used the adjective 'household' (*khozjajstvennyj*), which also denotes a thrifty business, to describe her family's achievements on the disputed land, TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 468, l. 1v.

¹³⁴ The reference was to SZRI, points 7 and 8 in the appendix of section 1481, vol. 10, part 1, 295 & 476-478.

¹³⁵ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 468, l. 2.

did not rent it for a fixed period of time.’ She further ‘declared complete willingness, if necessary and in accordance with the law, to confirm my claims by oath,’ followed by another reference to the peaceful possession of what was now an uninhabited wasteland (*pustosh*), granting her the right of ownership of the property (ownership or *sobstvennost’* underscored).

Striking a more offensive tone, Karmanova then produced an exegesis of state law and jurisprudence, claiming that ‘judicial practice, strictly speaking, determines possession’ and that establishing possession required neither legal confirmation nor sincerity, only that the possessor (*vladelets*) is considered the owner of the property for a consecutive period of ten years. Such was the ‘opinion’ of the State Council, with a reference to the *Complete collection of laws of the Russian Empire* (PSZRI). Karmanova seemed very much aware of future agrarian projects of the provincial authorities, imploring the court to warn the superintendent of the Bashkirs not to allow her piece of land to be redistributed during the forthcoming repartitions of Bashkir lands.¹³⁶

The plea Karmanova had made was rather straightforward. Her strategy was to emphasize and repeat her claim of that the private contract between her grandfather and the Buliarskaia Bashkirs provided the former with the right to ‘eternal and hereditary use’ of Bashkir lands, which came down to purchasing their *votchina*. She also understandably stressed the fact that her family had lived there for over fifty years without any form of dispute, since state law dictated that long and peaceful possession of property might be considered ownership. Aside from these two pillars of her arguments, the 1863 petition also contains several phrases that seem of minor importance to her case, but are in fact quite revealing of Karmanova’s self-presentation. This brings us to the question of social-agrarian and modern arguments.

First of all, the manner in which Karmanova embeds her claims in state law is striking: Agafia Maksimovna Karmanova wraps herself seemingly effortlessly in the dress of modernity. Quite revealing is her concluding interpretation of Russian jurisprudence she uses to claim ownership of the land. One could convincingly argue that it does not matter whether Karmanova knew the letter of the law herself, because it is beyond doubt that the writer she had hired read her texts back to her and (like many other peasants) she confirmed each section in her own handwriting. It hardly needs any clarification at this point that Karmanova interpreted her right to landownership in terms of state law and that she saw her contractual rights guaranteed by the state (showcasing in passing an individual notion of property instead of a communal one). Karmanova had turned to the state court herself and, accordingly, she relied on state law to give her land back. Given its recurring role in her

¹³⁶ The law referenced to was PSZRI, Series II, vol. 20 (1848), part I, no. 18952 (April 1848) 356-363. TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 468, l. 2.

account, she must have thought that state law could do nothing else but recognize her family's deed of purchase.

Given the modern trust in state law, it is possible that Karmanova utilized her ethnicity by positioning herself as a trustworthy Russian against her Bashkir opposite, even before the largescale expropriations after 1869. However, the ethnic element never became an elaborate part of her argument. Certainly, she evidently tried to prove that the young Bashkirs were lying to effectively steal her land and consciously distorting their deceased fathers' testimony by denying the 1802 purchase. Therefore, it were the Bashkirs who were not 'peaceful', as they actually 'evaded' such a deal with her in the years prior to her 1863 petition. A reference to the civil code of the empire was meant to cement her frame of the Bashkirs, because, apparently, according to Karmanova the law dictated Bashkirs to attempt such a peaceful negotiation. In reality, Bashkirs were merely permitted to avert a lawsuit by means of a peaceful arrangement when two thirds of the village commune agreed.¹³⁷

While Karmanova's plea differentiated between Bashkir and non-Bashkir law, giving it a modern appearance, it did not turn quintessentially colonial by claiming for example that these laws (which were quite protective of Bashkirs) did not apply to Russian peasants who claimed Bashkir lands.¹³⁸ In fact, she argued rather that she had done everything to meet the requirements of these laws. Karmanova did not appeal to a shared Russianness of her and the authorities either, nor did she claim to be more useful to the state economically. She did, however, explain why it was only reasonable for her to deserve the land, but that argument is more social-agrarian than modern colonial.

Besides hammering at her family's peaceful possession of the land, Karmanova suddenly introduced the argument of the established household. The Russian word she used for household was the adjective *khozjajstvennyj*, which with her peasant background could best interpreted as referring to a farm. Moreover, the word also implies a sense of economy or business, a properly run business even. In a petition from 1865 to further assert her rightful claims, she added casually that, all in accordance with the Bashkir agreements (refuting any counterclaims), her grandfather had even built a water mill (*koleshchataja mel'nitsa*, literally 'wheel mill') in 1797, before he had purchased the land.¹³⁹ This was no mean feat and was surely a display of good farming.

¹³⁷ See note 134.

¹³⁸ For the formal protection of Bashkirs, see for example SZRI sections 1471-1489, vol. 10, part 1, 292-296.

¹³⁹ According to the 1797 statement of the elected villagers of Kazanchina, it had in fact been Karmanova's great-grandfather, Evsej Gerasimov, who was allowed to build the water mill on the Sharashla river. Karmanova only attributes the construction of the family home to him, TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 468, l. 43v & 75. For details on the area's rivers see M.I. Rodnov (ed.), *Ruf Ignat'ev. Sobranie sochinenij (ufimskij i orenburgskij period). Tom VI: 1875-1879, 1862, 1864 gody* (Ufa 2012) 91.

By claiming the establishment of a proper farm on the land, Karmanova could have done two things: first, she could have claimed the type of settlement on unused land which the authorities generally accepted as a reason not to force peasants to their former homes. Given the fact that she had already lost her land and was trying to get it back, this seems unlikely.¹⁴⁰ The more reasonable, second option is that Karmanova tried to prove her economic worth as a peasant if she were to return to the farm. She drove this point home by referring to the land as an 'uninhabited wasteland' (*pustosh*) when her grandfather acquired it and used the same words when she referred to the state of the land now that she had been not been able to work there.

While her description of the land surely meets some criteria of a modern interpretation of farming as a business and land as an investment (again revealing the mixed character of this case), Karmanova did not elaborate this potential argument by offering an account book for example to consolidate her claims. She neither explained whether the Bashkirs in question were nomadic nor made explicit the connection between herself as a good, hardworking peasant and ineffective Bashkirs (whom she quite consistently labels with their social-legal marker as *votchinniki*). The bottom line of her argument is that she and her family were good farmers and therefore, her argument of the proper farm should be considered a social-agrarian one.

Moreover, Karmanova's insistence on the 'eternal and hereditary possession' in 1863 had a legal tone that would never truly disappear, but in later petitions, such as the one dating from November 9 1865, she did not throw about references to state law. While not forgoing references to state law entirely, her argument relied more on a notion of common sense to persuade the court. Karmanova argued that the 1802 deed was very much 'real', unlike her opponents' 'fictitious' documents, and she seemed to suggest that the mere existence of the words 'eternal possession' was sufficient, especially in such a complex legal case.¹⁴¹

The case of Karmanova indicates that state law and traditional values could coincide. The law demanded the citizens to respect the public order and rewarded the peasants after a certain amount of time. These criteria overlapped with the values of peaceful and also 'eternal' possession, which were traditional social-agrarian because they conveyed respect for the social order. Therefore Karmanova did not always use these arguments with an explicit reference to the state law. This strongly suggests that while Karmanova truly believed

¹⁴⁰ According to Willard Sunderland, the Ministry of State Domains rarely evicted "firmly settled peasants" from the lands of nomads. The Ministry also formally managed the state lands sold to Karmanova by the Bashkirs. It may be possible that because of this Karmanova, despite being a crown peasant and not a state peasant, still had to deal with this Ministry so that she based her claim to land on her settled farm. However, she does not explicitly mention the Ministry. Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field*, 147.

¹⁴¹ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 468, l. 41-44v.

that state law could play a significant part in retrieving her land, this was possible because the contents of the law had resonated with her more traditional views on landownership. Her case gives us a glimpse of the way peasants could accept the legitimacy of state law in rural affairs. This does not immediately mean that the state had enshrined a 'distinctive peasant culture' in law (that it was peasantised), but evidently this overlap did constitute a means by which peasants could substitute their more traditional views.¹⁴²

A different, but significant traditional aspect of her account was the social-legal peasant status. As was customary, or traditional if you will, Karmanova opened her petition by stating her family's status as crown peasants.¹⁴³ The different peasant categories signified various traditional privileges, which denote a different, non-modern type of relation to the state. Peasants made their traditional status known to appeal to specific rights that reflected the traditional social order in which all groups had their own position. Everything Karmanova argued was consequently based on the corresponding rights and obligations of the crown peasants, including reference to state laws. This way, she tried to prove that her family had the rights to purchase Bashkir lands all those years ago. In accordance with her status, Karmanova closed the petition in her own writing saying she 'paid the taxes' a crown peasant was due. Later, from 1865 onward her self-designation as 'temporarily obliged peasant' reflected the peasant reforms.¹⁴⁴ Agafia Karmanova steered a middle course between modern (but not so much colonial) arguments centred on state law and traditional social-agrarian ones that emphasized her status and skills as a peasant as well as her respect for the social order.

The chosen strategy did not really change in the following years. After Karmanova had filed her complaint in 1863, investigations went underway. Not long after her initial petition, she offered another one on May 6 1864 in which she again urged the authorities to protect her land during the upcoming repartitioning of the Bashkir lands. She also added a copy of the deed of purchase from 1802. This was a translation from Tatar, since the Belebei police department had regrettably informed Karmanova that no deed of purchase existed in their archives. It is unknown how the Tatar text turned up exactly, but it indeed spoke of grandfather Karmanov's purchase for 'eternal and hereditary possession' of a parcel the Bashkirs' ancestors 'had been granted by the great sovereigns.'¹⁴⁵ The Bashkirs then ceded the land to Agafia Karmanova, but her woes did not end here.¹⁴⁶

The lawyer of the Bashkirs and family of the main opponent, Mukhamad Toktarov, pointed out that the 1802 witness had no right at the time to sell Bashkir land to the

¹⁴² Macey, 'Reflections', 402.

¹⁴³ Burbank, *Russian Peasants go to Court*, 13.

¹⁴⁴ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 468, l. 41.

¹⁴⁵ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 468, l. 11-12v.

¹⁴⁶ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 468, l. 88-97.

Karmanova's grandfather, since his mandate only applied to deals between Bashkir-*votchinniki* and their *pripushchenniki*. Toktarov concluded that the land had never been sold in the first place, continuing the dispute. On September 15, 1864, Karmanova argued, again referring to state law, that Toktarov was illegitimately appointed as a representative of the Bashkir village commune, because those who wished a court case did not receive two thirds of the 940 votes (only 150).¹⁴⁷ Even during the tumultuous years of the 'land plundering' after 1869, Karmanova did not introduce different, possibly more colonial arguments to bolster her own claims, which turned out to be her downfall when her case was taken up by the Governing Senate, the highest court of appeal.

The Senate judged that not only was Karmanova wrong in her argument that her family had never caused any dispute, the entire basis of their possession of the land was wrong. The Senate did not appreciate the fact that Karmanova had not provided any other arguments and in 1878 judged that the land should be returned to the Bashkirs.¹⁴⁸ However, when the local police tried to locate this land in the early 1880s, they had to inform the Ufa Palace of Justice that they could not find it anymore. The court in turn learned from the provincial administration that on October 9 1867 already the Palace had allowed the land surveyors to move the land markings. It is unknown who ultimately owned the land Karmanova had pursued for over thirty years.¹⁴⁹

Karmanova had not changed her strategy after 1869 when Bashkir patrimonial rights were basically violated by rich speculators, but also by Russian peasants. This indicates that while she inclined to modern ways of thinking, Karmanova had not adopted any modern colonial attitudes that could be stimulated by the national character of state law and institutions of justice. Given how comfortable Karmanova was with appealing to different state authorities as high as the governor-general and grounding her rights in the civil code, her case nonetheless suggests that overlap between state law and traditional social-agrarian views was not an obstacle to modernization or an example of state 'peasantization', but more a conduit through which further changes in peasant attitudes could take place.

2. Grigori Grigorev Kalachëv

The following case is rather unusual because it took the Palace of Justice only four months (July-October 1890) to resolve the question, but also because of the special relations the claimant Russian peasant community had with various groups of Bashkirs. These relations are in desperate need of analysis, but before we get there, it is necessary to clarify the direct

¹⁴⁷ SZRI sections 2291, 2292 & 2323, vol. 10, part 1, 453 & 459. TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 468, l. 30-30v, 37-37v & 41-41v.

¹⁴⁸ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 469, l. 32-39v.

¹⁴⁹ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 469, l. 142 & 155-156.

cause of the dispute and the types of arguments put forward first. The case revolved around the village commune of Osinovka, a village in the Ponomarëvskaya *volost* in the Birsks *uyezd*, an area to the north of Ufa inhabited by a significant population of Russians and sedentary Bashkirs.¹⁵⁰

In this case Grigori Grigorev Kalachëv, the commune's elected representative and one of Osinovka's peasants, teamed up with a group of Bashkirs from Staraya Uguzeva (represented by councillor Kamalytdin Iskanderovich Rakhmannulov) against their common adversaries, a group of Bashkirs hailing from the village of Lachintau.¹⁵¹ 'For reasons unknown' to both claimant parties these latter Bashkirs had occupied a piece of land which the Russians and former Bashkirs disputed. This cooperation between Russian peasants and Bashkirs is a good example of the 'intersection of cultures' Willard Sunderland saw as the very nature of the Russian empire.¹⁵² It did not help in court, however, since the Lachintau Bashkirs proved to the court that the piece of land was their patrimony (*votchina*) and therefore the Palace of Justice had no jurisdiction in this case. In fact, the Lachintau Bashkirs argued that the case had already been resolved by the Provincial Bureau of Peasant Affairs (*Gubernskoe po krest'janskim delam prisutstvie*) after its land surveyor had repartitioned the piece of land in question. Both the Russian peasants and the Staro-Uguzeva Bashkirs had been notified by the surveyor several years earlier. The Palata therefore did not take up the claimants' case. The arguments Kalachëv had put to the fore in the joint petition were decidedly social-agrarian, which for a large part had to do with the Russian's view of state justice.

The first of Kalachëv's traditional social-agrarian arguments was that he and his clients had possessed their piece of land measuring over 8667 desiatins together (*sovместно*) for over 150 years without any form of dispute. This argument is reminiscent of Karmanova's similar preoccupation with establishing her merit maintaining the social order. The difference is that, unlike Karmanova, Kalachëv does not refer to any sort of state law that was supposed to acknowledge or reward such good behaviour with landownership. In a traditional social-agrarian framework, the value of keeping the social peace was in and of itself an important ground for landownership. This also explains why in the eyes of the Osinovka peasants, during a conflict with the Apanage Office (*Udel'noe ведомство*) over 2405 desiatins of land, the Ufa Palace of Justice had 'recognized the inalienable right

¹⁵⁰ Le Torrivellec, 'Entre steppes et stèles', 373 & 383; Kuzeev, *Narody Srednego Povolzh'ja*, 338-434; Galieva, *Russkie Bashkortostana*, 6.

¹⁵¹ Throughout the case file, Kamalytdin is sometimes written as Kamaletdin, TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 496, l. 1-1v; in the documents filed by the Bashkirs themselves, Staraya Uguzeva was also referred to as Staro-Uguzeva, TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 496, l. 5.

¹⁵² Sunderland, 'An Empire of Peasants', 185-186.

[*neot'emlemoe pravo*] of our clients to all of the aforementioned land.¹⁵³ This is not to say that the state court granted the peasants the inalienable right to the land, but it merely recognized it. In other words, the land had always been theirs so a court could only recognize it and a government institution failed to take it away. This is the point Kalachëv wanted to make, despite his reference to a state court decision: he did not introduce any other court decisions to strengthen his case.

The question of the claimants' representation in this case was likewise based on traditional social-agrarian attitudes. Kalachëv and the Bashkir representative Kamalytdin had joined forces going to court (it became clear from the petition sent to the Palace and the subsequent hearings of the parties involved, that Kalachëv played first fiddle in defending the joint interests). As the representative of the Osinovka commune, Kalachëv provided a long account of how he was elected by his fellow villagers. In it, the commune of the village (*se/o*) Osinovka, declared itself first to be a community of peasant landowners consisting of 92 households and 223 revision (male) souls. On March 7, 1888 and in the presence of their village elder, the *starosta* Arsentii Glushkov, 54 of these souls passed a verdict (*prigovor*) to elect 'among our midst' their fellow villager Kalachëv to be their representative and granted him the right to petition throughout their *volost* about matters concerning the land of the commune (*obshchestvo*).

Kalachëv presented himself as the spokesperson of his commune, the claims of which were legitimate by power of social consensus. Not only was Kalachëv elected by his peers with the blessing of the traditional village figure of authority, *starosta*. The list of signatures reveals that Osinovka was dominated by three families: the Glushkovs, the Ovchinnikovs and the Chiglintsevs. The *starosta* of Osinovka was a Glushkov, but the district elder, the *volost starshina*, also hailed from Osinovka: one V. Chiglintsev headed the Ponomarëvka *volost* administration which declared itself 'convinced' of something we can probably regard as the feasibility of the Osinovka case.¹⁵⁴ Kalachëv wanted to court to know that his claims carried the approval of a large agrarian community, including the official local authorities. This reveals a sense among the Osinovka peasants that justice was not so much a matter of educated judges and law sections, but rather of social consensus. In a way, Kalachëv had merely come to express this consensus in court.

The Russian peasants might have sensed that local social consensus alone could not persuade everyone and articulated what Kalachëv had to do in the event of a setback. He was tasked with scouring the area for fertile ground for their case, which also included taking

¹⁵³ Even after the abolition of the peasant statuses in the early 1860s, the Apanage Office and its local branches still managed the lands of the imperial family throughout Russia. TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 496, l. 1.

¹⁵⁴ Judging by the given names and patronyms in the petitions, V. Chiglintsev could be either Vladimir or Vasilij, TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 496, l. 2-3.

'petitions and whatever other necessary documents' to the 'suitable office [*mesto*] and figures.' He was then supposed to listen to each of their decisions and having determined whether these offices and figures were well-disposed toward his case or instead displeased, Kalachëv was to decide on whether to seek out the assistance of someone else and 'if need be, also the Highest name of the Sovereign Emperor' (*Gosudar' Imperator*).¹⁵⁵ Here Kalachëv presented the peasant commune as part of a social hierarchy to which even the emperor belonged. By linking themselves to the emperor 'if need be', the Russians further expanded their concept of social consensus to persuade the court. This is not to say that the Osinovka peasants were (naïve) monarchists who believed the tsar knew them personally and was their 'terrestrial father and protector', like some authors have portrayed the Russian peasantry, because, if anything, the 'intimidation' by the Osinovka peasants was more a bluff, meant to force the local officials into action.¹⁵⁶

Still, the Russians' appeal to the tsar made it clear that personalities mattered in the Osinovka Russians' conception of justice. High officials might carry authority too, although these remained more abstract offices, whereas the tsar was singular and therefore identifiable as a personality which could be benevolent to one's case.¹⁵⁷ Similarly, Kalachëv had been tasked to seek out various government offices and figures to see which one of them was well-disposed toward their case. Instead of looking for a professional court, of which any one would do, Kalachëv had to find the right person. Justice for the Osinovka peasants, then, was not about the rules, but about persons and especially about persons that liked them. In the modern court system, appeals were certainly possible on certain prescribed grounds and their process was dictated by law. However, Kalachëv did not enter an appeal, but he had merely found out that someone was not right for him and continued his search for the right figure. This is not to say that the two paths could not coincide, but this was how Kalachëv and his fellow villagers approached court. This is further supported by the way the Russians assumed the evidence of the Staro-Uguzeva Bashkirs.

The fact that he made no bones about joining forces with the non-Russian Bashkirs is another important indication that Kalachëv held predominantly traditional social-agrarian views. The Russians approached land questions from a social-agrarian perspective in which

¹⁵⁵ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 496, l. 2.

¹⁵⁶ Riasanovsky, 'Afterword', 266; R. Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime* (New York 1974) 161-162; J.-P. Himka, 'Hope in the Tsar: Displaced Naïve Monarchism Among the Ukrainian Peasants of the Habsburg Empire', *Russian History* 7 1-2 (1980) 125; Karl Marx attempted to lend the idea of a naïve monarchist peasantry a material basis, further cementing the intellectual commonplace, see K. Marx, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', in: R.C. Tucker (ed.), *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York & London 1972) 596, 599 & 607-614; Andrew Verner has suggested that direct pleas to the benevolent tsar were part of a myth upheld by the Russian peasants themselves in order to better negotiate with the outside world, which could very well include threats, Verner, 'Discursive Strategies in the 1905 Revolution', 68 & 70-71.

¹⁵⁷ S.N. Tutolmin, 'Russian Peasant Views of the Imperial Administration, 1914-Early 1917', *Russian Studies in History* 47 4 (2009) 54, 69-74.

Bashkirs were simply other agrarian players with whom they could possibly even share the land fairly. Clearly, they did not hold any modern colonial feelings of superiority based on ethnicity or culture. Bashkirs were not their inferior or backward ethnic opposites. Their rather topographical descriptions of their Bashkir opponents strengthen this view, since they almost exclusively refer to them as 'those from Lachintau'.¹⁵⁸

The manner in which Kalachëv tried to substantiate his claims by assuming the evidence of his Bashkir allies is a further sign that he constructed his case within a traditional social-agrarian framework in which the courts did not have the final say in matters of justice. The court system was merely one way of achieving one's goals. By presenting a joint petition to the Ufa Palace of Justice, Kalachëv was also able to co-opt any of the credit the Staro-Uguzeva Bashkirs might have had in the form of deeds, the official book of land boundaries (*mezhevaja kniga*) or anything else the Russians lacked.¹⁵⁹ This is probably why the 1890 petition to the Palace of Justice was so unclear who the 'clients' with over 150 years of peaceful possession actually were. It is also likely the reason why only then the Russian representative was able to make firm claims about having evidence, while earlier the Osinovka commune could probably only rely on a *Palata* verdict from 1870 that recognized their 'inalienable right' to merely a portion of the land (according to the formal defence of the Lachintau Bashkirs against these claims, this portion of the land in question was apparently already 'alienated' in 1874 by a reversal of judgment of the Governing Senate).

Grigori Kalachëv had boosted his own claims which were based on traditional social-agrarian arguments with more modern forms of evidence in the form of contracts and government materials held by his allies. However, when the Lachintau Bashkirs refuted all claims to the land of both the Russians and the Staro-Uguzeva Bashkirs, it became clear that in the end, Kalachëv had utilized these materials without much conviction since he did not defend this evidence. Instead, he had relied more on the persuasiveness of the social consensus, which was to be supported by the Bashkir documents. These documents did allow Kalachëv to expand his claims on the land, however, since the court decision of 1870 recognized only 2405 desiatins whereas in combination with the Bashkirs, Kalachëv could claim a little over 6204 desiatins of land. Probably due to the larger size of the claimed land, he also sued the Lachintau Bashkir for the astronomical amount of forty thousand rubles.¹⁶⁰

The final defence of Kalachëv at the Palace of Justice took place on October 4 1890, which also supports the idea that Kalachëv made use primarily of social-agrarian argument. During this last defence, he had to answer the court about the claim of the Lachintau Bashkirs that both the Russians and Staro-Uguzeva Bashkirs were the *pripushchenniki*

¹⁵⁸ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 496, l. 1.

¹⁵⁹ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 496, l. 4.

¹⁶⁰ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 496, l. 1.

(special tenants of Bashkirs) of the Lachintau landowners (*votchinniki*). The Lachintau Bashkirs argued that because of their *votchina* or patrimonial ownership of the land in question, they had been approached by a land surveyor named Yakovlev in 1887 already who had repartitioned the land with the permission of the Provincial Bureau of Peasant Affairs. Yakovlev had subsequently notified the claimants on April 13/14 1888, a month after the initial assembly of the Osinovka commune, but long before Kalachëv's petition to the Palace of Justice.¹⁶¹ The Lachintau Bashkirs argued that this case did not fall under the jurisdiction of the Palace of Justice, but the 'Peasant institutions' (*Krest'janskije uchrezhdenija*) and since the case had already been resolved, the court agreed.

Kalachëv's only retort was that neither he nor his Bashkir fellow claimants were notified by the Bureau that they were *pripushchenniki* of the Lachintau and that their land had been surveyed.¹⁶² They therefore did not relinquish their claims to the land. Here two things came together, namely the idea that justice revolved not around rules, but about personalities. Despite overwhelming evidence of government in the form of law and resolutions, Kalachëv must have believed these were simply wrong as they did not support the established social consensus of his village and district. Secondly, it is remarkable that even Kalachëv and his fellow villagers, who were prepared to go through so much trouble by petitioning to a court in Ufa, had not sought out the assistance of one of the most important institutions for rural matters, the Provincial Bureau of Peasant Affairs.

This Bureau was meant to realize the peasant reforms after 1861 and oversaw land surveys as well as all the changes of property boundaries in village communes. As such, it could have been of great assistance to the peasants, but instead Kalachëv did not acknowledge its legitimacy in rural matters. He rather implied that all the confusion was the fault of the government Bureau, not that of his clients anyway, and therefore they were still entitled to the 6204 desiatins of land. Again, although having a modern (colonial) attitude does not mean that one cannot fault state institutions, Kalachëv's conclusion that he still had legitimate claims after this mistake is borne out of his predominantly traditional social-agrarian outlook.

In conclusion, Kalachëv and his fellow villagers seemed to have believed that an agrarian or rural consensus would be a sufficient basis to take legal recourse and in doing so, they selectively accepted the legitimacy of state officials and courts and only willing to recognize the legitimacy of those who would confirm their demands. All of this is an indication that the Osinovka peasants were not willing or able to utilize modern (colonial) arguments in court. They were rather inclined to apply their traditional social-agrarian views to acquire landownership.

¹⁶¹ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 496, l. 12-12v.

¹⁶² TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 496, l. 18-18v.

3. Sergei Danilovich Kozemaslov

The third and final case analysed here owes its significance to the Russians' explicit attacks against the Bashkirs who in their eyes had not simply disturbed social peace by taking the peasants' land, but had even committed murder in doing so. The case is also interesting, because the final verdict of the Ufa Palace of Justice was in favour of the complaining Russian peasants. The peasants were given their land plus as much land of the Bashkirs as they were legally allowed to take.¹⁶³ The case was taken up by the Palace in June 1873, following the petition of peasant representative Sergei Danilovich Kozemaslov, and it passed its verdict in January 1874.

The dispute centred on the Russian village of Shugan, which lay along the Shuganka river to the north-west of Ufa, near the border between the Belebei and Menzelinsk *uyezdy*, and the nearby Bashkirs of Bolshoi Chekmak, which lay on the other side of the Shuganka.¹⁶⁴ This region was also notable, because the north-western Bashkir tribes were to a large degree settled.¹⁶⁵ The peasant representative Kozemaslov explained how since 1869, the Chekmak Bashkirs invaded the Russians' lands contrary to longstanding agreements. Similar to Agafia Karmanova, Kozemaslov's case showcased both modern and social-agrarian arguments.

A rather obvious modern aspect of Kozemaslov's arguments were his references to modern state law, which, again similar to Karmanova, he may not have known himself, but could have been suggested to him by someone else. Nonetheless, he evidently found these state laws to bear sufficient argumentative strength to include them in his petition. For example, Kozemaslov denounced the Menzelinsk police for not following the correct legal procedures by granting the Chekmak Bashkirs the land, after the Russian peasants had failed to hand in a petition within the time limit of ten weeks. Kozemaslov argued that if this time limit set by the Russian civil code was exceeded, the police 'was obligated [by an article of state law] to present the entire case to a judge'.¹⁶⁶ Since the local police had not done this, but instead had simply granted the Chekmak Bashkirs the land, Kozemaslov claimed these Bashkirs now unlawfully possessed the land.

¹⁶³ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 22-22v.

¹⁶⁴ The June 5 1873 petition stated that the village of Shugan belonged to the Kazanchiskaja *volost'*, which according to the petitioner lay in the Belebei *uyezd*, but in 1879 at least, this *volost'* was located in the Menzelinsk *uyezd*. Since there were several villages in this border region with the name Shugan, it is difficult to determine its precise location. However, the villagers mentioned many times that their Shugan stood on the right bank of the Shuganka river, which is an indication that this village was located in the area of what is today Russkij Shugan in the former Menzelinsk *uyezd* (present-day Musljumovskij rajon in east Tatarstan), TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 1-2v.

¹⁶⁵ Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnoshenija*, 280.

¹⁶⁶ Kozemaslov referred to SZRI, sections 10 and 21, vol. 10, part 2, (Saint Petersburg 1857) 4 & 6-7; TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 2, see for example also d. 479, l. 51-52 & 53v.

The Russians from Shugan further complained to the court that the investigations carried out by the Menzelinsk police in 1869-1870 were imperfect to say the least. These peasants did not question the legitimacy of the police itself, but pointed out that the police had failed in their regular duties. Following their complaint to the police, the officers had heard several dozen witnesses from the neighbouring villages of Balyklov and Muslyumovo. Kozemaslov cited the supporting testimony of 38 Balyklov peasants which bore evidence that he and his fellow villagers before the Bashkirs took the land two years earlier. The problem lay in the way the police dealt with the Muslyumovo Bashkirs, of whom five witnesses claimed that the Chekmak Bashkirs were the ones who were now 'constantly utilizing' the land; by not asking the obvious question who worked the land before the Chekmak Bashkirs, the police had failed to fulfil the rather simple task of getting the facts straight in the eyes of Kozemaslov. He thought that the faulty investigation was further exacerbated by the police's neglect to interrogate the disputing parties, concluding that the unlawful situation was actually endorsed by the police investigation.¹⁶⁷

Furthermore, displaying a modern attitude by relying on the legitimacy of state justice, Kozemaslov provided the court with a detailed jurisprudence of his village's right to possession (*vladenie*) of the land. He opened his argument by recounting how in 1794 the Shugan peasants concluded a contract with the Bashkirs from the Irikhtinskaya *volost*¹⁶⁸ that was set to expire in 1807. In that year, the contract was renewed until 1820, but 'even before that time', this piece of Bashkir land had already been allocated to the Russian peasants by the former Orenburg Treasury (*kazënnaja palata*). It is unclear whether this decision was related to the legal proceedings Kozemaslov then referred. He explained how already in 1784 one titular councillor named Prokofev had acquired a piece of Bashkir land on the opposite, left bank of the Shuganka river and at some unspecified point started to 'seize' the peasants' land. Prokofev even managed to have government institutions recognize his ownership of this land.

Unsurprisingly, the peasants protested and their case appeared in the former Orenburg civil court (*grazhdanskaja palata*), which decided against Prokofev. In turn, Prokofev appealed and on 15 April 1809 the Governing Senate ruled that the Russian peasants were in the right. Kozemaslov even provided the administrative details of this court decision: when the Orenburg civil court received this ukase, what its registration number was and that a village representative had picked up a copy of the decision on 17 November 1814, again with registration number. Likewise relying on the authority of state courts, he told the

¹⁶⁷ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 2.

¹⁶⁸ Otherwise known as the Irekhtenskaja *volost* in the Belebej *uyezd*. Related to the Bashkir Irekte tribe living in the Menzelinsk-Belebej-Birsk area.

court of appeal that the lower Belebei land court should still have in its possession a verdict against the Chekmak Bashkirs from 1827 that proved the peasants' right to the land.¹⁶⁹

Having established some initial legal evidence of his village's right to the land, Kozemaslov went on to strengthen this line of argument by elaborating on how the Bashkirs from Bol'shoi Chekmak basically trampled on these officially recognized rights to the land.¹⁷⁰ After having dealt with the unlawful actions by Prokofev, the Shugan peasants were confronted with similar actions by the Bashkirs who possessed the left bank of the Shuganka (possibly after Prokofev). Kozemaslov informed the court that in early to middle 1819, the Chekmak Bashkirs invaded the Russians' land, upon which the peasants petitioned the Belebei court and the Orenburg governor-general.¹⁷¹ According to Kozemaslov, the provincial administration then ordered the Belebei court in May to 'protect my clients from oppression [...] from the Chekmak Bashkirs.'¹⁷² This fragment highlights Kozemaslov's modern attitude that for adequate protection against violence or other kinds of transgression one had to turn to state justice. Kozemaslov finishes the jurisprudence referring to the 1827 decision of the Belebei land court (*zemskij sud*) that granted the Russians their land at the cost of the Chekmak Bashkirs.¹⁷³ Building his case firmly on earlier court decisions, he could then move on to deal with the new dispute with the Chekmak Bashkirs since 1869.

The Russians from Shugan complained to the court that the investigations carried out by the Menzelinsk police in 1869-1870 were imperfect to say the least. These peasants did not question the legitimacy of the police itself, but pointed out that the police had failed in their regular duties. Following their complaint to the police, the officers had heard several dozen witnesses from the neighbouring villages of Balyklov and Muslyumovo. Kozemaslov cited the supporting testimony of 38 Balyklov peasants which bore evidence that he and his fellow villagers before the Bashkirs took the land two years earlier. The problem lay in the way the police dealt with the Muslyumovo Bashkirs, of whom five witnesses claimed that the Chekmak Bashkirs were the ones who were now 'constantly utilizing' the land; by not asking

¹⁶⁹ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 1-1v.

¹⁷⁰ These Chekmak Bashkirs were from a different tribe than the ones with whom the Russian peasants had concluded the 1794 agreement. Those were from the Irekte tribe, while the Chekmak Bashkirs were probably from the Yurmi tribe. See note 169.

¹⁷¹ Since the function of governor-general was introduced in 1851 at the earliest (of Orenburg-Samara) and in 1865 at the latest (of Orenburg), Kozemaslov, writing in 1873, possibly referred to the former military governor of Orenburg, who in the cantonal system figured as the high commander of the military status Bashkirs and also supervised the civil governor in Ufa from 1797-1851. Given Kozemaslov's intention to specify the government function, his possible ignorance does not warrant a social-agrarian interpretation here. Gvozdnikova a.o. (eds.), *Istorija Bashkortostana. Vol. I*, 85; B.V. Gryzlova & N.F. Samokhvalov (eds.), *Gubernii Rossijskoj imperii. Istorija i rukovoditeli. 1708-1917* (Moscow 2003) 29 & 201-203. See also appendix A & B.

¹⁷² TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 1v.

¹⁷³ Not a conventional court with specialized judges, the 'land court' (*zemskij sud*) was actually a pre-reform administrative-police organ elected by nobles and state peasants. The land court could also decide in petty criminal and civil cases. TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 1v-2.

the obvious question who worked the land before the Chekmak Bashkirs, the police had failed to fulfil the rather simple task of getting the facts straight in the eyes of Kozemaslov. He thought that the faulty investigation was further exacerbated by the police's neglect to interrogate the disputing parties, concluding that the unlawful situation was actually endorsed by the police investigation.¹⁷⁴

Therefore, Kozemaslov considered witnesses an integral part of judicial investigations: he referred to various persons who had been interrogated by the Belebei land court in September 1819 to indicate that the decision of this court had been legitimate. He understandably emphasized that not only several 'persons' from neighbouring villages testified, but also Bashkirs 'themselves' from the Yurmi tribe, and that in 1819 even the Chekmak Bashkirs 'themselves' recognized the Russians' rights in writing.¹⁷⁵ While his point certainly was to demonstrate the correctness of state justice, one cannot get away from the impression that Kozemaslov's insistence on witnesses in this context overlapped with more traditional social-agrarian views on justice. He apparently found it appropriate or necessary to introduce the witnesses, delivering the final blow to the Chekmak Bashkirs as it were, as if the court verdicts itself were not enough. Not rejecting modern state justice, it is very likely that Kozemaslov thought such state institutions were very well suited to deliver justice in a way that coincided with more traditional social-agrarian methods.

The lack of proper witness testimonies in 1869 led Sergei Kozemaslov to argue the reverse, namely that the police's incompetence led to an illegitimate and unlawful situation. He did not dislike the police investigations because of their outcome, he rather believed they had not done their job properly, which was to be neutral: 'The Chekmak Bashkirs do not have a single document to prove their right to possess the land and their rights rest solely on the Menzelinsk police's decision of 26 June 1869, which cannot possess the authority of legal evidence' (*ne mozhet imet' silu sudebnogo dokazatel'stva*).¹⁷⁶ That Kozemaslov did not fundamentally question the legitimacy of the police, but instead had a formalistic approach to the judicial process is further supported by the fact he did not introduce alternatives to state police, like more traditional figures of authority such as the village *starosta* or even the *volost starshina*.

It is by now clear that Kozemaslov's petition to the Ufa Palace of Justice revealed several modern perspectives, but it also displayed a sense of modern colonialism. When

¹⁷⁴ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 2.

¹⁷⁵ Given Kozemaslov's phrase that the Yurmi Bashkirs 'themselves' provided supporting testimonies, we may assume that the Chekmak Bashkirs belonged to the Yurmi tribe which indeed inhabited the Menzelinsk-Belebei border region (and the eastern parts of the neighbouring Kazan governorate). However, the Bashkirs of the Yurmi tribe to which Kozemaslov refers were not necessarily the Bashkirs living in Bol'shoj Chekmak, since he mentions them separately. TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 2; Kuzeev, *Proiskhozhdenie bashkirskogo naroda*, Maps 13 & 14, 470-471.

¹⁷⁶ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 2.

Kozemaslov spoke of the land his ancestors had acquired from the Bashkirs in 1794, he first demonstrated a more traditional social-agrarian outlook by going into detail about all of the agrarian qualities of the land: '[Our ancestors bought] the land which had forests, hay fields and arable lands.'¹⁷⁷ While this information was typically of no use to a state court, which was more interested in law, official agreements and recognized property boundaries, it did set up Kozemaslov with a way to represent the Chekmak Bashkirs as inefficient farmers, who had no knowledge of how to work the land properly. This was remarkable, since the tribes of north-western Bashkiria were generally settled by the mid-nineteenth century, and only supports the idea that Kozemaslov based his stereotype on the shared history of nomadism among Bashkir tribes in general.

According to Kozemaslov, 'in 1869, the Chekmak Bashkirs again started to enter unto [our] land, mowing down [*kosit'*] all the hay on the fields, ploughing up meadows to grow crops and cutting down the forest.' Eliminating all doubt that the Bashkirs could be regarded as sensible agriculturalists, Kozemaslov added: 'this year [1873], the Bashkirs have self-willedly invaded the meadowland and ploughed up a great part, so that they have completely ruined the meadows' (*luga sovershenno isportili*).¹⁷⁸

By portraying the Bashkirs as incompetent farmers, Kozemaslov reflected the modern colonial attitudes of the Russian regional authorities who wished to cultivate Bashkiria's vast expanses with Russian know-how and relieve the economic pressure on Russia.¹⁷⁹ This was supported by Kozemaslov's explicit complaint that the Bashkirs repeatedly prevented the Shugan Russians from haymaking and growing grain crops (*senokoshenie i khlebopashestvo*), which only underlined his argument that the land would be better off with the Russians cultivating it.¹⁸⁰ The key here is that the peasants did not merely argue they were good farmers, which would be a social-agrarian argument based on a general, natural right to the land, but that the Bashkirs were actually bad farmers. By this, they claimed the right to the land in relation to the Bashkirs, which moved their argument into the colonial sphere.

This is supported by the advice Sergei Kozemaslov gave the court not to let anyone work the land until the verdict, because the Chekmak Bashkirs were still ploughing up the meadows, damaging them and 'being of no use, including to themselves' (*ne prinosja i sebe*

¹⁷⁷ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 1.

¹⁷⁸ In order to clarify what happened to the hay, Kozemaslov used the verb *kosit'* which means to mow (down), but also carries a rather destructive meaning, close to decimate. Given his general tone, it is likely that Kozemaslov wished to convey that the Bashkirs had not treated the hay properly. TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 1v-2.

¹⁷⁹ Gvozdnikova a.o. (eds.), *Istorija Bashkortostana. Vol. I*, 157-164; Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnoshenija*, 282-284, 301, 311, 324-329, 336-337 & 355-358.

¹⁸⁰ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 1v.

nikakoj pol'zy).¹⁸¹ Far from showing here any compassion for the Bashkirs (as we will see, Kozemaslov practically skinned them alive in the preceding pages), this phrase was most likely intended as a two-pronged deathblow to the Bashkir case. Firstly, poor farming meant no usefulness and secondly, to continue their destructive actions would only make the Bashkirs' agrarian inefficiency more apparent to the court (or the state in general), bringing about their logical loss sooner. This was therefore not so much a display of compassion nor a threat aimed directly at the Chekmak Bashkirs as it was the Russian peasants fishing for the court's agreement. According to this line of reasoning the Russians proved to be better suited to work the land than the inefficient Bashkirs and in line with government views, they were entitled to the land.

This modern colonial argument ties in with the fact that not once did Kozemaslov express his concern for the Bashkir privileges, which belonged primarily in the traditional social-agrarian order. He makes no mention of their possible status as *votchinniki* landowners and rather unscrupulously subjects them to civil law, which indeed to a large degree governed Bashkirs too since 1863 (incidentally, these new state laws in fact respected the particularistic *votchinnik* status in the realm of land relations, although in practice authorities often failed to protect these rights).¹⁸²

The result is that Kozemaslov depicted the Bashkirs not as a traditional social-legal status group, but considered them something else, although not necessarily a modern ethnic group. Certainly, on the one hand, he only specified Bashkir testimonies of his supporting witnesses, which, in combination with the wording 'Bashkirs themselves [witnessed],' suggests that Kozemaslov expected Bashkirs to be one group on the same side in a land dispute. When their testimonies were evidence to the contrary, he thought them to be very significant. On the other hand, however, while Kozemaslov went beyond seeing Bashkirs as distinct social-agrarian actors with rights to specific pieces of land and more or less lumped Bashkir tribes together, he did not make use of specific markers of ethnicity, such as religion or culture, to strengthen his own position in the land dispute.

By extension, Kozemaslov did not commit himself fully to the modern colonial argument throughout his petition nor did he make the link to government agrarian policy explicit (whereas Agafia Karmanova, for example, did refer to specific government policies). Notably, making their case the Shugan Russians had not solicited aid from the Bureau of Peasant Affairs, which was meant to realize the peasant reforms after 1861 and acted as the driving force of colonial policies in the governorate, conducting land surveys and overseeing

¹⁸¹ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 2v.

¹⁸² The laws and rules that dealt with the transition of the Bashkirs from 14 May 1863 onward were laid down in the 'Statute on the Bashkirs', which was periodically updated. See I.A. Tukman (ed.), *Polozhenie o bashkirakh* (Ufa 1912) 3-38; Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnoshenija*, 320; Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 122-124 & 131.

the property boundaries. When dealing with the court they relied on their own documents and jurisdiction instead, remaining in the sphere of modern arguments. Importantly, at other points Kozemaslov also displayed more traditional social-agrarian attitudes. He namely spoke of the way the Bashkirs had taken over the piece of land and how they had behaved since. Here some social-agrarian views became visible.

Aside from demonstrating the inferior agrarian skills of the Chekmak Bashkirs, Kozemaslov made it clear to the court that these people were seriously disturbing the social peace by 'self-willedly' (*samovol'no*) invading the land again and again, causing different kinds of great tumult (*bujstvo*), riots (*volnenie*) and even committing murder. Next to the great damage the Bashkirs were doing to the land, they 'generally acted arbitrarily' (*samoupravstvovat'*, also: taking the law into one's own hand, literally: self-ruling).¹⁸³ The lack of references to state law (whereas he did include them elsewhere) implies that Kozemaslov found it self-evident that that this kind of behaviour was governed by social-agrarian customs instead of state law. It is also telling that except for murder, the accusations are relatively unspecific about the actual deeds and rather convey a sense of general violation of the social peace.

It has become clear that Kozemaslov did not consider these acts offences state law itself should or could deal with, leaving open only the conclusion that his criticism was meant for the judges of the court. He presented himself and his fellow villagers as the embodiment of the proper social order as opposed to the rioting and murdering Bashkirs, something the judges should not fail to recognize. We see here a prime example of a Russian peasant who straddled the traditional social-agrarian and modern orders: Kozemaslov was equally comfortable citing sections of the modern civil code as he was imploring state judges to respect traditional social-agrarian customs, unencumbered by their different social background.

A social-agrarian argument likewise related to the social peace was Kozemaslov's the question of honesty or trustworthiness. One could reasonably argue that generally everyone who hands in a petition tries to present themselves as honest and trustworthy, especially when they, like Kozemaslov did, reassure the court that their fellow villagers gave them 'genuine power of attorney' and hand in separate documents to prove it.¹⁸⁴ These formulations are part of a social-agrarian argument that attests the belief in a general 'will of the village commune' that could only find its expression in one of its members through consensus. By honesty and trustworthiness here, however, I mean wordings within the petition's text that directly refer to the aforementioned terms.

¹⁸³ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 1v-2.

¹⁸⁴ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 2v.

The way Kozemaslov made his honesty clear differed from that of Agafia Karmanova, who also made a point of her trustworthiness as opposed to that of her Bashkir adversaries. Karmanova linked her trustworthiness firmly to the letter of the law, trying to prove her peaceful possession of the land to gain ownership of it and as such it was a matter of concern to the court, but Kozemaslov's honesty was not linked to such law articles. Instead it reflected the upholding of the social-agrarian order, because it was linked to the social peace. The crux of the honesty argument is that Kozemaslov was honest and fair, whereas the Bashkirs were the ones breaking with social-agrarian customs. His characterization of the Bashkirs seems of inferior importance to the modern court, but he evidently believed it strengthened his case.

When Kozemaslov explained to the court how large the piece of disputed land was, right after he had spoken of the Bashkirs' misconduct, he added: 'it cost [us], with a clear conscience, 1500 silver rubles.' He later repeated the same words (*po chistoj sovesti*) about the price of the land, this time after having spoken of the unlawful evidence the Bashkirs had put to the fore.¹⁸⁵ In between these expressions of his own trustworthiness, Kozemaslov turned to the moral disposition of the Chekmak Bashkirs. Supported by his earlier account of these Bashkirs reneging on their written acknowledgment of Russian possession of the land, he warned the court that by granting the Bashkirs the right to the disputed land, the police had only 'affirmed the Chekmak Bashkirs in their arrogance.' This had led them to bar the Russians from the land as well as fly into rage (*bujstvo*).¹⁸⁶ The Bashkirs' untrustworthiness or dishonesty had led to a great disturbance of the social peace, which flowed from their pre-existing (not to say innate) arrogance. Accordingly, Kozemaslov took the graveness of this moral disposition (and the resulting offences) to be self-evident in a social-agrarian framework and in an attempt to convince the court presented himself as a kind of honest champion of the social order.

A more formalist argument the Shugan peasants had constructed concerned the traditional peasant status. Within the social-agrarian order, all actors had their place and concomitant rights. In short, to peasants it often mattered most whether they were serfs or not, since state peasants for example were allowed to purchase land. Therefore, Kozemaslov opened his petition by specifying the peasant status of their forefathers who had bought the piece of land on the Shuganka in 1794. 'The ancestors of my clients', he started, 'were allocated to the factories of the Demidov nobles and concluded an agreement with the Bashkirs of the Irikhtenskaya *volost*.' After telling what the purchased land looked like, he stated: 'in accordance with the instruction of the former Orenburg Treasury [*kazënnaja palata*], [our] ancestors, being state peasants [*kazënnij krest'janin*] and registered at the

¹⁸⁵ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 1v & 2v.

¹⁸⁶ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 2.

factories of the Demidov nobles, were granted the piece of Bashkir land to settle and cultivate.’ The Shugan Russians had sufficiently proven that they had rightful claims to the land, because their ancestors had had the right to purchase the land thanks to their status as state peasants. At least, that is how they argued their case in court.

The final indication that Kozemaslov made use of a mix of modern and traditional arguments came with his demands to the court, namely that it will investigate his case and retrieve all the necessary documents from the Menzelinsk and Belebei police in order to test their contents against the law, also against the 1809 decision of the Governing Senate.¹⁸⁷ Kozemaslov further requested to put an end to the Bashkir presence and he made it clear that the Bashkirs were in the wrong: ‘abate the Chekmak Bashkirs’ means of entering unto [our] earthen strip of land which they dispute’ (*v osparivaemyj imi u doveritelej moikh zemljanoj uchastok*).¹⁸⁸

Then, Kozemaslov characterized the Russians in a way that is reminiscent of Eugen Weber’s account of how French peasants near Toulouse sung of their immemorial bond with nature, in their case with a mountain, and how this bond granted them the property rights to that land – probably for all eternity.¹⁸⁹ Likewise, but admittedly not as evocative as the singing peasants from France, Kozemaslov rooted the Russians from Shugan in the disputed land. As mentioned, he spoke of the physical earth (*zemljanoj uchastok*) instead of the general term for land (*zemlja*) before he defined the Russians as the ‘indigenous owners’ (*korennoj*).¹⁹⁰ Other translations may include native or aboriginal, but the Russian word is derived from the noun *koren*’, which translates into English as ‘root’. Kozemaslov sketched an image, in which the Shugan peasants did not merely work the land, but were actually a living part of it. What is more, one could argue that these peasants were at the root of all the nature’s riches there, including its crops and possibly whatever the forest and the Shuganka river yielded. If anything, the Bashkirs lacked these relations and in a social-agrarian frame, the court could not but recognize the right of the ‘natives.’

Very similar to Weber’s peasants, the Shugan peasants placed themselves in a traditional social-agrarian order all the while seizing the opportunities the modern court system and corresponding laws had to offer. Sergei Danilovich Kozemaslov had presented an intriguing mix of modern and agrarian arguments in his petition to retrieve the piece of land. At times, there may appear to be some tension between these two categories, but in fact, they were complementary. For example, the hint at modern colonialism found in the

¹⁸⁷ The 1809 decision was against the titular councillor Prokof’ev, the first trespasser onto the Russians’ land before the Chekmak Bashkirs.

¹⁸⁸ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 2v.

¹⁸⁹ Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 60.

¹⁹⁰ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 479, l. 2v.

derision of Bashkir agriculture was mutually reinforced by the more social-agrarian arguments about the Russians' proper farming and their relation with nature itself.

Conclusion

Given the increasingly interventionist character of the Russian state in the second half of the nineteenth century and the introduction of modern colonialism to Bashkiria based on ethnicity, I set out in this chapter to analyse how Russian peasants responded to these changes during land disputes. Dividing their arguments into traditional social-agrarian and modern colonial categories, it has become clear that on the one hand, the traditional attitudes of the Russian peasants had by no means disappeared, even in Bashkiria, which was confronted with massive immigration over the decades. The case of the Osinovka peasants in the early 1890s makes this strikingly clear, as Kalachëv relied more on personalities than objective courts and held unsympathetic views of the Bureau of Peasant Affairs. Also, as becomes clear in the cases of Karmanova and Kozemaslov, it remained important for example to emphasize traditional privileges related to the old peasant statuses when introducing oneself.

However, not all Russian peasants with traditional social-agrarian views necessarily did so. Gavril Il'in Senin, who was interrogated in 1884 for stealing hay from the land of a Russian merchant's wife (he reasoned that since his village had not enough fodder, they could take it from the woman's land), introduced himself without former peasant status but explicitly integrated his religion with his peasant identity: 'I am a peasant from the village of Zhukovo, thirty years old, Orthodox of confession and of the Holy Communion.'¹⁹¹ Ufa's Russian peasants held traditional social-agrarian views, but in the cases analysed here, these traditional views might have stood closer to the state than in other cases.

On the other hand, the cases of Karmanova and Kozemaslov also suggest that Russian peasants did adopt certain modern attitudes, such as the legitimacy of written law and state courts. In Karmanova's case, this development seems to have been aided by the fact that her views coincided with specific sections of the law. In 1875, a group of former crown peasants from Kuzykovo insisted like Karmanova on the legitimacy of the Ufa Palace of Justice and their 1874 contract with Karshin Bashkirs, while also stressing that their ensuing conflict with Teptiars from neighbouring Mamiakovo had rendered the land an uncultivated wasteland.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ All the peasant testimonies in this case started like this. TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 26, l. 5-20, Gavril Senin on page 16.

¹⁹² This case was brought to the Bureau of Peasant Affairs instead of the Ufa Palace of Justice. Further study may show whether Russian peasants' evaluation of their case and choice of institution were significantly correlated. TsGIA RB, f. 10, op. 1, d. 1517, l. 1-3v & 9.

Likewise combining modern and traditional social-agrarian arguments, former state peasants from Krusha, in Zlatoust *uyezd*, argued in 1874 against Balykchi (Balyksy) Bashkirs 'of various villages' and referred not only to laws and court decisions to explain their right to the land and Bashkir misconduct. Their petition also specifically mentions the 1818 and 1832 decrees that forbade and allowed purchase of Bashkir lands respectively in order to legitimize their 'landownership.' At the same time, the Russian peasants held on to their idea that after the tenancy period, the land would be theirs 'in eternal possession.'¹⁹³ Moreover, in the case of Kozemaslov, his modern and traditional social-agrarian arguments strengthened one another, which indicates that he genuinely felt comfortable with the rising influence of the state on the countryside.

Despite the presence of modern attitudes among some of the Russian peasants in the Ufa governorate, a clear sense of modern colonialism remained absent (even among the Krusha peasants who incorporated colonial policies into their argument). Kozemaslov's was the only case that hinted at this modern type of colonialism, with its emphasis on cultural hierarchy. Kozemaslov evidently promoted Russian agriculturalism in contrast with Bashkir bungle, but he had not turned to the government institutions like the Bureau of Peasant Affairs that probably could have assisted him and his fellow villagers in their quest for land. Herein his case diverges from perhaps more obvious cases of modern colonialism among peasants, such as a case from the 1890s recorded by Willard Sunderland from the Kazakh steppe, on Bashkiria's southern border. There, the illegal settler did not worry about losing his land to the Kazakhs ('unbelievers' and 'nomads'), 'after all,' his village paid taxes, served in the army and they even had a church. 'It's simply impossible not to give us the land,' the Russian settler assured a visiting surveyor.¹⁹⁴

Based on the three cases of this chapter, one must conclude that modern colonialism was not markedly present as a factor of the development of modern citizenship among Russian peasants in the Ufa governorate. Other, non-Russian migrants utilized modern arguments too, such as a group of eight Cheremis (Mari) villages in the Birsks *uyezd* who built their case on detailed jurisprudence. In early 1872, these peasants handed in a petition against the Apanage Office in which they were hypercorrect by citing a document from 1686 with its Byzantine date still in use then: 14 January 7194.¹⁹⁵ Such was their reliance on the legitimacy of contracts. Also, in 1873 several Teptiars made a case against their Bashkir landlords by likewise citing state law extensively.¹⁹⁶ Traditionally both non-Russians and

¹⁹³ The Krusha peasants complained that on 1 June 1874, the Bashkirs from around the Kashkinskoe *sel'skoe obshchestvo* (village commune) had illegally sold their land to a merchant, TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 484, l. 1-9v, 50-53 & 86-87v.

¹⁹⁴ Sunderland, 'An Empire of Peasants', 193-194.

¹⁹⁵ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 472, l. 1-2.

¹⁹⁶ TsGIA RB, f. 101, op. 1, d. 474, l. 24-25.

Russians had concluded contracts to use Bashkir lands and this practice joined in with the modern emphasis on written agreements. More strict regulations stimulated these existing tendencies.¹⁹⁷

As we have seen, different criteria, such as the quality of farming or the characterization of Bashkirs, proved variable in either category of arguments and their specific meaning depended on context. The three cases analysed here suggest that the Russian peasant in Ufa was not 'completely' traditional, but the latest case from 1890 was evidently traditional in its argumentation. A broader perspective can provide insight whether this case is indicative of a development toward traditionalism among the Russian peasantry in Ufa. In the following chapter, we therefore discuss how the government reacted to land disputes between Russian peasants and Bashkirs.

¹⁹⁷ See also the 1880 correspondence between the Ufa Director of State Domains and the Bureau of Peasant Affairs that served to evaluate rights of *votchinniki* and *pripushchenniki* in relation to old contracts. TsGIA RB, f. 184, op. 1, d. 8, l. 1-2v.

‘With nothing but an axe in their belt’

‘Given the abundance of black earth lands, the natural and productive forces of the governorate lie mainly in agriculture, which is predominantly occupied by the Russian population; whereas local Bashkirs and Tatars are on the whole not very inclined to farming and sow crops in insignificant amounts for their own consumption.’ — Statistical committee of the provincial executive board, *Survey of the Ufa Governorate for the year 1879* (1880).

The analysis of court cases indicates that peasants used both modern and traditional social-agrarian arguments to acquire lands. This would also have affected the way they placed themselves in the social and political orders that legitimized their claims to land. It would only be sensible to examine the long-term development of these peasant attitudes by inquiring with a second witness of sorts. Since citizenship is given shape by bottom-up and top-down interaction, the behaviour and opinions of government officials may shed some light on whether one type of peasant attitude actually became dominant in Ufa. Therefore the question is how did the state respond to land disputes between Russian peasants and Bashkirs?

To reach a conclusion, it is relevant to know how the state interpreted the Russian peasants acquiring land in the first place. Then, what did the authorities think the effects of these land acquisitions were for the social-political order? Finally, how far was the Ufa administration prepared to go to promote modern private landownership among Russian peasants at the expense of Bashkir collective patrimonial rights?

Although the questions are meant to explain specific elements of state policy, I will not approach these questions chronologically. It will become more clear what the state actually thought of the peasant attitudes if we study these elements through time separately. This means that what the state actually believed was happening when peasants acquired lands in Ufa province will be one side in the analysis of state policies, whereas the way it assessed the effects of the developing modern peasantry on the social-political order is another. The third part of the analysis will be about the way the state tried to balance both of these concerns, which does not mean that the state did this only after it had somehow dealt with the issues. These matters rather occurred simultaneously and influenced each other. I am well aware that, much like the Russian peasantry itself (made clear by the court cases of Karmanova, Kalachëv and Kozemaslov), the state was no homogenous entity that

undisturbedly formulated coherent or rational policies.¹⁹⁸ My analysis here aims at the practical results of all the disagreements and disputes among the ministers, departments, governors and local officials to sketch the framework of laws and regulations with which the Russian peasants were able to shape their settlers' existence.

One way to get a sense of what the state thought was happening in the Ufa governorate is to study the so-called provincial *obzory* or surveys. These reports published by the Statistical Committee of the Provincial Executive Committee of the *zemstvo*¹⁹⁹ provide a yearly overview of government policies, their effects and other observations, including the evaluation of peasant behaviour in relation to state institutions and practices. The *zemstvo* statisticians are an example of the composite character of the state, since their reports evaluated and in turn informed (local) government policies.²⁰⁰ By means of this relatively compact set of sources, in theory we can plot developments over time, since the Ufa *obzory* ran from 1870 to 1915 (only editions after 1877 are available in print).²⁰¹ However, I myself had only partial access to them with certain years missing. The *obzory* further contain thematic gaps, such as government opinion of civil cases. In order to compensate for these lacunae in the *obzory*, I will also study various correspondences of high officials and publications of contemporaries that relate to Russian peasants and the land question. Moreover, I will make use of the secondary literature that exists on government decision-making concerning the peasantry in this period.

I am first and foremost interested in how the state saw the actions of the peasantry and whether it acted upon these views. Therefore I will go through these materials to find explicit mention of developments among the peasantry as well as government opinions of changes in landownership and to see whether this changed over the years. Since the development of landownership could also lead to an increase in land disputes, a related issue of concern would be government ideas of rising social tensions as a result of Russian peasant land acquisitions. Finally, official comments about the (changing) position of the Bashkir-*votchinniki* or landowners with patrimonial rights would reveal the considerations of the government in preserving social stability on the one hand and providing the Russian

¹⁹⁸ A.J. Rieber, 'Bureaucratic Politics in Imperial Russia', *Social Science History* 2 4 (1978) 399-400 & 404-410.

¹⁹⁹ The provincial executive committees were not the same as the provincial administration, the former being elected by the provincial representative council and chaired by the governor. For more information on government structures, see appendix B.

²⁰⁰ A.I. Razdorskij, 'Obzory gubernij, oblastej i gradonachalstv Rossijskoj imperii za 1870-1916 gg. kak istoricheskij istochnik', *Journal of Modern Russian History and Historiography* 8 (2015) 36 & 47; For the relations between employed statisticians and the *zemstvo* proper, see M. Mespoulet, 'Statisticiens des *zemstva*: Formation d'une nouvelle profession intellectuelle en Russie dans la période pré-révolutionnaire (1880-1917). Le cas de Saratov', *Cahiers du monde russe* 40 4 (1999) 573-575, 584-593 & 612-618; for the general influence of *zemstvo* professional employees on *zemstvo* policies, see Philippot, *Les zemstvos*, 114-119.

²⁰¹ Ufa was one of the eleven governorates that were surveyed for the entire period between 1870-1915, Razdorskij, 'Obzory', 53 & 78.

peasant with land on the other. This way we may discover how far the provincial government was prepared to go to build a modern peasantry based on landownership and how it felt about Russian peasants developing a form of modern citizenship on their own.

The modern peasant ploughs his own land

Peasants coming to Bashkiria had been a concern of the provincial government for at least half a century, but after 1861 peasants acquiring land had a much clearer purpose for the authorities. They wanted to shape a modern, enterprising and productive economic peasant estate.²⁰² To achieve this, two concrete steps were to be taken first: realize the economic potential of Bashkiria by having peasants cultivate its vast territories, but also optimize the peasants' land use through innovation of agrarian techniques. In other words, the migrants coming to Ufa had to be turned into a veritable landowning peasant estate that contributed to the agrarian output. This was necessary, because in the eyes of the authorities, the local population of Bashkirs could not fulfil this task.

The official commentaries on the agricultural situation in the governorate made no secret of the fact that the provincial government valued Russian peasant field labour more than the Bashkir semi-nomadic lifestyle. For example, the officials made it clear that, more so than heavy industry, agriculture was the engine of the region's development and they left no doubt as to who was responsible for and capable of strengthening Ufa's economy: 'Given the abundance of black earth lands, the natural and productive forces of the governorate lie mainly in agriculture, which is predominantly occupied by the Russian population; whereas local Bashkirs and Tatars are on the whole not very inclined to farming and sow crops in insignificant amounts for their own consumption.'²⁰³ In fact, 'this disinclination for farming by Bashkir-*votchinniki* is almost proportional to the amount of owned land. Namely, the larger these sizes, the more perverse the *votchinniki*'s disdain for labour in general and for agriculture in particular.'²⁰⁴

This point of Russian usefulness and non-Russian backwardness was repeated in the *obzory* between 1879-1883 to describe the agricultural situation, although not only Bashkirs and Tatars had to pay: 'However, despite all favorable conditions for agriculture, one could say that among the local *inorodtsy* (Cheremis, Votyaks, Chuvashes, Mordvians and to some

²⁰² Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnoshenija*, 295; in Siberia too, the administration sought to establish a 'homogeneous agrarian "order"' based on imperial citizenship which in turn was rooted in the 'certainty of law', see A. Masoero, 'Layers of property in the tsar's settlement colony: projects of land privatization in Siberia in the late nineteenth century', *Central Asian Survey* 29 1 (2010) 15.

²⁰³ *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1879 god* (Ufa 1880) 2.

²⁰⁴ *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1882 god* (Ufa 1884) 1; in the preceding decades, statistical studies had made clear 'what the government already knew: nomads were increasingly irrelevant.' Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field*, 147.

extent Tartar-state peasants), agriculture finds itself still in a primeval state.²⁰⁵ The perceived lack of agricultural capabilities among non-Russians is also why Orenburg governor-general Nikolai Kryzhanovskii felt the need to write to tsar Alexander II in the late 1860s that, next to attracting 'useful' cultured landowners to his region, it was also wise to 'divide the united mass of Muslims by settling pure Russians between them.'²⁰⁶ After all, Russian peasants 'have the experience to have a beneficial influence on [Bashkirs]' and can 'strengthen agriculture among them not by force, but naturally.'²⁰⁷ The authorities considered the Russian peasants not only political agents, but possibly more so a means to improve non-Russian farming.

Willard Sunderland may have been right in his judgment that the Russian government was not colonial in the sense that it did not fulfil an explicit *mission civilisatrice* and also because it was mainly concerned with economy and agricultural development.²⁰⁸ However, these survey commentaries clearly show that while the authorities by no means lost interest in economy and agriculture, they did in fact interpret them in ethnic and cultural terms. In Ufa, agricultural development and ethnicity were very much intertwined: agricultural development was understood in ethnic terms and ethnicities were valued according to agricultural productivity. The *obzory* occasionally referred to the Bashkirs as 'aborigenes', which is another indication that the provincial administration increasingly saw the Bashkirs as an ethnic group with specific agricultural traits instead of a social-legal group.²⁰⁹

This is supported for example by the fact that the head of the provincial statistical committee, Nikolai A. Gurvich, noted that the Bashkirs and Tatars were one people, but from different tribes. He stated that the Bashkirs saw themselves as the descendants of the pre-Mongol Volga Bulgars, though Gurvich also proudly emphasized that now Russians lived on the ancient lands of Ufa.²¹⁰ Moreover, the 1898 collection of laws and rules to carry out the land survey of that year also interpreted the land policy of previous decades in ethnic terms, seeing it as the attempt to draw in 'the productive forces of the Russian peasants.'²¹¹ Certainly, the official aim in Ufa was to definitively settle the semi-nomads and teach even

²⁰⁵ *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1883 god* (Ufa 1884) 1; the term *inorodets* (pl. *inorodtsy*) formally referred to non-Russian peoples not subject to the general laws of the empire. Around 1900, the term was used informally and often in a pejorative sense to refer to all non-Russians, J.W. Slocum, 'Who, and When, Were the *Inorodtsy*? The Evolution of the Category of "Aliens" in Imperial Russia', *Russian Review* 57 2 (1998) 173-174.

²⁰⁶ Gvozdnikova a.o. (eds.), *Istorija Bashkortostana. Vol. I*, 164; Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field*, 154.

²⁰⁷ Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 126-127.

²⁰⁸ Sunderland, 'Empire without Imperialism', 106 & 109.

²⁰⁹ See for example *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1900 god* (Ufa 1902) 5-7.

²¹⁰ N.A. Gurvich & N.K. Blokhin, *Spravochnaja knizhka ufimskoj gubernii* (Ufa 1883) 8.

²¹¹ S.D. Rudin, S.A. Plavskij & B.N. Khavskij (eds.), *Sbornik zakonov, rasporjazhenij i svedenij dlja rukovodstva mezhevykh komisij, ikh chlenov i zemlemerov pri razmezhevanij bashkirskikh dach* (Saint Petersburg 1899) 114.

those who had ‘finally’ given up nomadism the proper way of utilizing their vast lands through Russian presence.²¹²

Given the importance of the Russian peasantry in establishing a formidable agricultural economy, the authorities were very interested in the progress of land acquirement by the peasants and in the reduction in land sizes of the Bashkir patrimonial landowners. In the late 1870s, the statistical committee had not yet developed a consistent way of representing these processes, but from 1883 onward, the *obzory* contain fairly detailed data that differentiate between various types of landowners. In 1891, the surveys started to visualize these data in tables and included changes relative to the previous year, which strengthened the sense of progress or decline (although the column with changes was dropped for some reason in 1899).

While for example the size of landownership of various official and private institutions, merchants and the local nobility was also represented, the most valuable statistics were of course those about the Bashkir-*votchinniki*, their *pripushchenniki* and the peasants. The lands of the latter were officially broken down into two categories: first, those of private landowners (*krest'jane-sobstvenniki*), which the government considered to be those with ‘hereditary possession’ of the land.²¹³ In later years these were likely colonists. In marked contrast to the central government around 1860, the Ufa officials did not consider private landownership unnatural to peasant society. The other category of peasant landowners consisted of those who owned the land communally before 1861 (*nadel'nye krest'jane*) and either still paid their redemption fees or had already fulfilled this obligation set by the abolition of serfdom.²¹⁴ The *obzory* most frequently commented on these groups of landowners and occasionally remarked that changes in these categories were most significant to the local population. Typical of the survey commentaries was the 1890 analysis of some relatively small changes in landownership:

These changes [in landownership] could not have had any significant effect on the nature of the land economy. Nevertheless, they should be recognized as contributing to an increase in the productivity of the province and a more correct cultivation of the land. From the living space of the nobility, landownership passed into the hands of strangers. Not so much the land of the aboriginal landlords as the plots purchased recently under preferential terms by persons who do not live in the governorate. If the most correct farming in the province is practiced on the estates

²¹² *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1900 god* (Ufa 1902) 7.

²¹³ See for example *Obzor za 1879 god*, 46; Remezov, *Pereselencheskaja epopeja*, 75.

²¹⁴ Peasants in communes could not part from their allocated piece of land, even if they had paid off the redemption fees, but they could acquire additional private land. This means that the total property of an individual peasant could be divided among both of these categories of land. PSZRI, Series II, vol. 36 (1861), part I, no. 36662 (February 1861) 231-236, 241-247 & 250-251; H-D. Löwe, *Die Lage der Bauern in Russland 1880-1905. Wirtschaftliche und soziale Veränderungen in der ländlichen Gesellschaft des Zarenreichs* (St. Katherine 1987) 96-97.

of the aboriginal landowners, then from the lands of the second category, most of it is either empty or rented out, mainly to peasants. The increase of private landowners other than nobles at the cost of noble landholding does not signify an economic decline and it is impossible not to see an extremely pleasing phenomenon in the increase of peasant private landownership, which contributes to the welfare of the rural population and weakens the widespread practice in this governorate of peasants leasing their land, even often settling on this land. The growth of peasant private landownership is all the more pleasing, because it is partly at the expense of the Bashkir free lands, which find themselves in the unproductive hands of the Bashkir-*votchinniki*. They are so unconcerned with and little accustomed to agriculture that many of them do not even work their entire piece of land.²¹⁵

While this report did not exactly clarify who the ‘strangers’ were that took over noble lands, it is likely that these were peasants given the subsequent evaluation of their increased share of landownership. Despite the agrarian uselessness of the outsider speculators, the government evidently considered them to be at least a helpful stepping stone to peasant landownership. Again, the peasants were considered the key to the ‘welfare of the rural population’, whereas Bashkirs supposedly could not care less about development. Furthermore, the government appears to have equated peasant landownership with land cultivation and increased productivity, which explains why the ‘character of agriculture’ itself would not considerably change. This fragment also makes clear that for the authorities, peasant farming enterprises gave cause for satisfaction: when peasants decided to move away from leasing land and become private landowners, this promised more certainty for the peasant and therefore the economy. The 1892 survey reiterated the officials’ relief: ‘[before they could afford their own land], colonists settled primarily on leased land, or on lands purchased on private terms, exposing themselves to all the randomness of the instability of such transactions and to the arbitrariness of the landowners.’²¹⁶

Ultimately, the goal of the peasant reforms to create an independent economic class of peasants that would cultivate Russia’s empty lands and innovate its agriculture, was slowly being realized in front of the officials’ very eyes. In general, the provincial government tracked the broader establishment of a modern rural society (with corresponding schools, hospitals, prisons, roads and the like), but especially with regard to the 1861 reform, officials monitored the ‘course of the peasant matter’ (*o khode krest’janskogo dela*) in the *obzory* in a special section of the same name. Here they analysed the willingness of the former serfs to step out of their dependent position on the landlords and to become landowners.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1890 god* (Ufa 1891) 203. The rather vague phrase ‘even often settling on this land’ implies that the officials disapproved of living on rented land, since this meant these peasants did not even own land to actually live on.

²¹⁶ *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1892 god* (Ufa 1893) 3-4.

²¹⁷ Starting at least as early as 1879, when the survey still had a modest section on the peasants’ progress, see *Obzor za 1879 god*, 46-47; no later than 1890 did the surveys report that there were no

Year after year, the Ufa government noted the rise of peasant private landownership and from 1891 onward even introduced elaborate tables to visualize the developments. In ever-expanding issues of its survey, the statistical committee was able to measure that peasant private landownership grew almost sevenfold between 1879 and 1915. This massive increase took place mainly before Pëtr Stolypin's privatization reform of 9 November 1906, namely between 1879 and 1905, when private landholding rose almost 5,5 times.²¹⁸

	Communal landowners/ former temporarily obligated peasants	Peasant (private) landowners	Bashkir- <i>votchinniki</i>	Bashkir- <i>pripushchenniki</i>
1881	Too broad data	328,809.0	4,549,724.0	No data
1888	755,976.4	1,026,303.5	4,128,706.7	1,188,863.2
1900	874,046.9	1,458,190.0	3,126,877.6	1,581,208.2
1905	892,108.6	1,740,273.1	3,486,497.2	1,608,345.1
1915	1,046,644.3	2,250,185.2	3,264,366.8	1,610,219.4

Against such a background of an explosive rise in private landownership among peasants and the steady decline of Bashkir patrimonial landholding (the two trends roughly cancel each other out), it is not surprising that the provincial authorities came to think of this process as self-evident: 'Next to the reduction in landholding of the nobles, merchants and petty bourgeoisie, naturally there is an increase in peasant landownership,' the 1895 report states.²¹⁹ The 1900 *obzor* adds the obverse as a historical inevitability: 'The former cattle-breeder who moved from place to place with herds of cattle – the Bashkir, due to a whole series of historical events, legislative acts and the influx of newcomers, reduced his cattle breeding and finally lost the mindset of a nomad, having settled in his former winter camps.'²²⁰

Obviously the Bashkir-*votchinniki* suffered from the land hunger of the modern Russian peasant, but the acquirement of land was not unqualifiedly positive for the authorities either, despite all of their excitement in the surveys. As the years went by, it became clear that peasant landownership alone did not guarantee a stable rural economy. For one, many landholdings devolved into small strips of land which could hardly support a

more peasants dependent on landlords, *Obzor za 1890 god*, 144; for the broader development of the province, see for example *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1895 god* (Ufa 1896) 49-50, 53-59, 68-70 & 85; in Zlatoust *uyezd*, the school attendance of Bashkir boys, also in mixed Russian-Bashkir schools, drew the officials' attention, *Obzor za 1883 god*, 46.

²¹⁸ For a more detailed and elaborate version of this table, see appendix C.

²¹⁹ *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1895 god* (Ufa 1896) 3; also compare the *obzory* statistics on noble landownership of 1881 (2,164,354 des.), 1890 (1,893,899 des.), 1900 (1,698,680 des.), 1909 (1,127,792 des.), 1912 (1,045,172 des.), 1913 (768,937 des.) and 1915 (726,910 des.), which represents a decline of 57,2% between 1900-1915. Given this particular timeframe, this had probably to do with the Stolypin reforms and occurred at a time when the great swing in peasant landownership had already taken place first and foremost at the cost of Bashkir landownership. This development also continued up to at least 1915.

²²⁰ *Obzor za 1900 god*, 7.

rapid growth of agricultural production. In 1900, the land market had become overheated with the price of land soaring for example in Menzelinsk *uyezd*, 'which due to its geographical location was subjected earlier to the onslaught of newcomers the other areas are experiencing now.'²²¹

A second issue was the location of peasant settlement. The concerns about land size and price mostly regarded the north-western part of the province, where land was more scarce, whereas in the eastern portions 'there is still a significant reserve of Bashkir lands and where the indigenous population itself cannot be considered to have finally taken the path of agriculture. In these districts everywhere there are virgin lands, yielding a plentiful harvest, preserved forest areas, and there is the opportunity to lease a large area of arable land for a small price, also suitable as livestock pastures.'²²² According to ethnographer Farida G. Galieva, one of the reasons Russian colonists did not immediately flock to these eastern parts of the province was that they preferred to settle in areas with roughly the same climate as their place of origins (some colonists could not adjust to the different climate and left).²²³ Therefore, the initial destination for many colonists from central Russia were the western districts. The authorities do not seem to have appreciated this factor all that much, which suggests that they conceived of a modern enterprising peasant to be willing and able to work all of the region's lands regardless of climate.

The cultivation of Ufa's lands had been one of the government's objectives after 1861, but actually optimizing peasant land use was another. Here too it became clear that landownership alone was not an economic panacea. One of the earlier *obzory* claimed that while Russian peasants are the most productive of all peasants, in 1879 the state of agriculture on noble and peasant lands was abominable. The survey continues: 'The entire rural population and most of the landowners adhere to the system of three-field farming, do not fertilize their fields at all and do not own any advanced agricultural tools, due to a lack of people in the province who can handle them.'²²⁴

How different was the situation in 1900 when the amount of private landowners had more than tripled. Due to the great and early onrush of colonists to the Menzelinsk and Birsik districts, only there one could find the 'correct three-field system,' but this innovation was slowly spreading to other areas too, where 'almost everywhere dominates [a form of] a three-

²²¹ *Obzor za 1900 god*, 5; *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1898 god* (Ufa 1900) 7; land prices generally rose in the entire region, though, see also S.M. Vasil'ev a.o. (eds.), *Ocherki po istorii Bashkirskoj ASSR. Vol. 1, part 2* (Ufa 1959) 221.

²²² *Obzor za 1900 god*, 6.

²²³ Galieva, *Etnograficheskie issledovanija*, 9 & 15.

²²⁴ *Obzor za 1879 god*, 2.

field system and not seldom the arable field lies waste for several years.²²⁵ The reason for this success did not lie merely in the arrival of Russians, though, since local land captains (*zemskie nachal'niki*) were tasked with teaching communities the proper form of the three-field system next to their regular administrative and law enforcement duties.²²⁶ Given these developments, the government may have been right that private landownership, cultivation and innovation were closely connected.

The massive acquirement of land by peasants was an indication for the authorities that the creation of a modern peasant estate was achieved. The provincial government was happy to celebrate the additional success of the Stolypin's privatization reforms after 1906 and in 1911 noted 'the confidence of the population in the new forms of land use [*zemleustrojstvo*]', which signified a 'developing self-awareness of the peasant population' and even moved the 'local *inrodsty* (predominantly Bashkirs) to convert to new forms of landownership, which found its expression in a number of petitions to repartition allotment lands.'²²⁷

Ultimately, rise of a landowning peasant class yielded fruit for the authorities. While the relation between Russian landownership and Bashkir agricultural effectiveness remained important right up until the immediate pre-war years, the tables with all kinds of landownership eventually faded into the background as an appendix.²²⁸ The surveys had always grouped the analyses of peasant and Bashkir landownership under the header of 'farming' (*zemledelie*), but after 1898 this section was only reserved for the actual farming produce.

In conclusion, this government change of focus was possible due to two reasons: firstly, the Bashkirs were cultivating more and more of their lands to the extent that later surveys reported that in some areas the Bashkirs were no longer distinguishable from the Russian peasant landowners.²²⁹ Secondly, the largescale purchase of lands by peasants

²²⁵ *Obzor za 1900 god*, 7; Amir M. Juldashbaev confirms that in 1912 most of the purchased land in Ufa governorate belonged to Russian peasants, A.M. Juldashbaev, *Zemel'nyj vopros i natsional'nye otnoshenija v Bashkortostane v nachale XX veka* (Ufa 2007) 16-19

²²⁶ *Obzor za 1895 god*, 85.

²²⁷ *Obzor za 1911 god*, 88. Allotment land (*nadel*) was the piece of land assigned to the communes during the peasant reforms. These allotment lands had minimum and maximum sizes, so that it was not uncommon for communes to end up with less collective land than before the reforms. In the case of the former serfs, the landlord could decide whether the peasants could continue to work on his lands and under what conditions (*obrok* or a form of *barshchina*). Furthermore, the redemption payments former serfs had to pay their landlords were initially higher than the yields could support. When the commune had completed these payments, peasants became the collective owners of this allotment land.

²²⁸ The first survey with these statistics as an appendix was 1911.

²²⁹ *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1899 god* (Ufa 1900) 8; *Obzor za 1900 god*, 7; R.G. Kuzeev & E.S. Danilko (eds.), *Bashkiriy* (Moscow 2015) 152; Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnoshenija*, 280; see also the informative maps on the development of agriculture in Bashkiria in R.G. Kuzeev, *Istoricheskaja etnografija bashkirskogo naroda*, in: *Sobranie nauchnykh trudov v 7 tomakh. Tom 5* (Ufa 2016) 210 & 228.

indicated that they had become modern citizens who would now innovate their labour. This optimization of agriculture could be seen in the rising yield of the land and this had been the government's goal for decades.²³⁰ The creation of a modern peasant estate and the cultivation of the Bashkir lands had always served the economic situation in Ufa and in Russia as a whole. Due to the massive increase in private landownership among Russian peasants that greatly pleased the authorities, we may safely argue that what it meant to be a 'peasant' had been subject to change in Ufa after the 1870s. In the realm of rights of landownership, the traditional collective ownership of land had at least been complemented by new private landholding. In the *obzory*, this development in peasants' attitude toward land also suggested a closer relationship to the state.

Even during the First World War, when many peasants and Bashkirs were called to the front and faced hardships in general, the 1915 survey reported with satisfaction that the peasantry made use of zemstvo financial support, as well as zemstvo agricultural machines and applied for schooling about raising livestock. Furthermore, the report stated that despite the mobilization of the most able men, the corresponding decline in farming output and the general financial difficulties, the remaining peasants were still 'very happy' to appeal to government institutions to acquire property outside the commune and reclaim additional lands.²³¹ As far as the Ufa government was concerned, by way of acquiring land and utilizing modern machines to boost production in time of need, the peasants had once more proved the 'sense of commitment' that was typical of a modern citizen.²³²

The sharp edge of the Russian plough

In the eyes of the local government, the massive acquirement of land by Russian peasants since the early 1870s was a sign of progress, because it indicated the emergence of a modern peasant estate. However, the rise of the modern peasantry also presented the state with a problem most strikingly in the form of Bashkir resistance to the loss of land. Since the government wanted to maintain order too, the question is how it assessed the effects of the developing modern peasantry on the social-political order.

Between 1861 and 1915, the government thought that peasant land purchases had three main drawbacks. Namely, the obvious social tensions that arose from transgressions by Russian peasants of property rights, primarily of Bashkir-*votchinniki*; and the attention that

²³⁰ Vasil'ev a.o. (eds.), *Ocherki* v.1 p.2, 192.

²³¹ *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1915 god* (Ufa 1917) 22, 26 & 89-98.

²³² Kotsonis, "Face-to-Face", 222; Scott Seregny findings of peasant participation in *zemstvo* education programmes in Ufa during the Great War support the statistical surveys, though he does not believe that the education had managed to turn the peasants into modern citizens just yet, Seregny, 'Zemstvos, Peasants, and Citizenship', 313-315.

especially the Bashkirs' loss of land received in the local and central Russian press, which set the public opinion against the provincial government and, before 1881, to Orenburg governor-general Nikolai A. Kryzhanovskii in particular. Finally, the authorities even feared the complete disappearance of the Bashkirs as a distinct group due to a deterioration of their social-economic situation.

The provincial government had been concerned about social unrest among Bashkirs long before the 'land fever' that struck the region after 1869. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the number of Bashkir land sales increased. The issues that plagued the land transactions in the second half of the century were already present then, which according to an anonymous contemporary meant that Bashkir communities often sold their land without any 'landmarks, borders or permanent land boundaries; often they sold one and the same piece of land to two or three persons, which led to long and destructive court cases.' Both the local and central government tried to relax the situation by banning all colonists (notably all non-Christians) from dwelling on the Bashkir patrimonial lands in 1824, but to no avail. The increase of land disputes and loss of Bashkir *votchina* produced a tense situation in the region, which, among others, led to the last largescale Bashkir uprising in 1834-1835.²³³

Unsurprisingly, social tensions increased again when pressure on the Bashkir-*votchinniki* mounted in the late 1860s-1870s. In their first standardized account of Bashkiria's history, Soviet historians may have gone too far to declare the late 1870s a 'revolutionary situation,' but they were right to note the official concerns about unrest among Bashkir tribes. For example, in 1879 Ufa governor Vladimir D. Levshin complained that 'up to this time [the Bashkirs] cannot reconcile themselves with the idea of losing their land, which they consider their inalienable property [*neot"emlemoe dostojanie*]. Also not losing hope of regaining possession of their lands, the Bashkirs do not recognize the new landowners to be the rightful owners, nor do they recognize the colonists, who have violated their property interests. For this reason the Bashkirs do not recognize the colonists' rights to lands they acquired from the highest authorities. Therefore the Bashkirs destroy forests on these lands, self-willedly [*samovol'no*] plough up pastures and mowing down the hay.'²³⁴

If it were not for the fact that Levshin's complaint concerned the Bashkirs of three other Belebei *volosts*,²³⁵ the governor could just as well have described the court case of Kozemaslov, the peasant from Shugan who described similar acts in terms of poor farming skills instead of resistance to state policy. This only confirms government concerns that Bashkir resistance was not limited to one area. It is good to note, however, that Bashkir

²³³ Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnoshenija*, 285-286.

²³⁴ Vasil'ev a.o. (eds.), *Ocherki* v.1 p.2, 221-222.

²³⁵ To wit, the Zil'djarskaja, Kirgiz-Mijakinskaja and the Gajny-Jamakskaja *volosti* in the south-east area of the Belebej *uyezd*. The village Shugan was located in the Kazanchiskaja *volost'*, which was located in the northern border area between the Belebej and Menzelinsk districts.

resistance was not only aimed at Russian peasants, but also at other representatives of the 'land plundering' (which could also mean the peasants who made a fortune with Bashkir lands).²³⁶ Incidents involving for example land surveyors were no less disconcerting for the authorities, though, than when it strictly concerned Russian peasants.

For instance, one land surveyor called Trapper travelled to the Bashkir village of Uzunlarova on 23 September 1881 in order to measure the land a merchant had bought. Already expecting trouble, the merchant had even tricked a group of Cossacks into accompanying the land surveyor by telling them they were going on a bear hunt. It proved futile, because as soon as the party entered the village in question, they were 'given a thrashing' by Bashkirs who had gathered from surrounding villages and tried to kill Trapper. He was only able to escape by jumping on a raft and float down the river Inzer.²³⁷

For such and other forms of resistance to the 'land fever,' Bashkirs were generally punished by both lower and higher courts. The Bashkir 'rebels' that tried to kill Trapper for example were sentenced to prison from six months to 3,5 years. When Trapper attempted to measure the land a second time, another massive battle broke out and again, several dozens of Bashkirs were sentenced in court.²³⁸ In the eyes of the Bashkirs, the courts effectively punished them for defending their patrimonial rights. Evidently, tensions were high and the government had a hard time dealing with the situation due to the fast pace of local events.²³⁹

Many sources attest Bashkir violence and their general sense of outrage over fraudulent nobles and merchants, but incidentally also in relation to Russian peasants (for instance when they happened to work the land owned by the outrageous nobles and merchants). Unsurprisingly, these sources also relate the government officials' reactions to these problems (for which they had also themselves to blame). However, there are not many sources that provide information about the government interpretation of tensions that stemmed from the Russian peasant conversion to private landownership since the early 1860s. The *obzory* for example do not really mention anything about Bashkir resentment after 1878 in relation to Russian peasants. Therefore the published works by former land surveyor Nikolai V. Remezov are all the more valuable.

Remezov had planned to write a trilogy about the land politics in Bashkiria and as a surveyor in the local peasant administration, he had the inside knowledge to shock Russia's educated public by unfolding the many ways in which local administrators took Bashkir lands

²³⁶ One well-known yet infamous example was Kornilo A. Morozov, a peasant who became a lumber magnate by purchasing Bashkir lands and eventually attracted numerous peasants to his lands, Remezov, *Byl' v skazochnoj strane*, 5-6; for others, see Vasil'ev a.o. (eds.), *Ocherki* v.1 p.2, 173-175.

²³⁷ Remezov, *Byl' v skazochnoj strane*, 108-109.

²³⁸ Ibidem, 110; Vasil'ev a.o. (eds.), *Ocherki* v.1 p.2, 222.

²³⁹ Remezov, *Pereselencheskaja epopeja*, 69-71.

for themselves or for their well-placed friends. The first two volumes of his trilogy dealt directly with the many abuses and the colonial question: *Sketches from Wild Bashkiria: A True Story in a Fairy-tale Land* (1887) and *Sketches from Wild Bashkiria: A Resettlement Epopee* (1889), which told of the importance of the Russian colonists to the speculators and the provincial administration.²⁴⁰

In his *Resettlement Epopee*, Remezov showed that Russian peasants acquired lands immediately after the 1869 decree ordered another survey of Bashkir lands.²⁴¹ Right from the start, peasants pursuing private landownership caused local authorities headaches due to the appearance of many unclear land deeds and resulting law cases.²⁴² This was especially the case whenever peasants moved into the province voluntarily and without state direction.²⁴³ In March 1882, even Ufa governor Pavel P. Shramchenko wrote in the *Russkii vestnik* journal that this had led to a 'chaotic condition of landownership.'²⁴⁴ For example, when Remezov travelled through the governorate, he noted that the government had absolutely no idea how many villages had sprung up in the preceding years when he asked the officials. "They say that there are such things on the earth, but God knows where and what," was the typical answer.' To Remezov's amazement, he counted more than 400 new villages, double of what the government statistics showed.²⁴⁵

Such a 'chaotic situation' created by the "Drang nach Osten" of the Russian people,' as Remezov put it, unsurprisingly led to confusion among the landowners already present there, such as nobles and of course Bashkirs.²⁴⁶ Remezov described how many peasants were not properly registered, which made it difficult to estimate their numbers, to tax them and to resolve land conflicts.²⁴⁷ For example, in the early 1870s, the Nogai *volost* authorities (Ufa *uyezd*) had approved of a very 'confusing and unclear' contract drawn up by a number of peasants alone with a Russian landowner. The problem became urgent when new peasants settled on the same land. The landowner had built in a sort of Catch-22 since the original peasants would receive the act of purchase when they were settled and had paid for the land, but their settlement was only complete when the peasants received their act of purchase. Accordingly, this would never happen and unsurprisingly, the peasants protested. Eventually the provincial administration wanted to protect colonists for this kind of malevolent

²⁴⁰ The final part of the trilogy, *A Judicial Error or a Crime? (A Chronicle)*, was written in 1891, but published in 1900, and deviates from the other parts in that it deals with judicial failure in Ufa province by describing a single court case. A second, expanded and corrected edition of the first part, *A True Story in a Fairy-tale Land*, was published in 1889. I have used that edition here.

²⁴¹ Remezov, *Pereselencheskaja epopeja*, 23-25.

²⁴² Ibidem, 70-71.

²⁴³ Usmanov, *Razvitie kapitalizma*, 65-68.

²⁴⁴ Cited in Steinwedel, 'How Bashkiria Became Part of European Russia', 109 & 121n72.

²⁴⁵ Remezov, *Byl' v skazochnoj strane*, 98-99; Rudin, Plavskij & Khavskij (eds.), *Sbornik zakonov*, 135.

²⁴⁶ Remezov, *Pereselencheskaja epopeja*, 5.

²⁴⁷ Ibidem, 170-176; Rudin, Plavskij & Khavskij (eds.), *Sbornik zakonov*, 144.

contracts.²⁴⁸ Although this case may have been exceptionally complicated, since Russian peasants entered into more and more contracts on their own account, officials found it difficult to deal with the legal land disputes that increasingly arose between peasants and all sorts of landowners.

Despite the fact that Russian peasant colonization affected noble and merchant landowners too, rising tensions among the Bashkir population remained most pressing for the administration. When Bashkirs (and frequently their non-Russian *pripushchenniki*) did not recognize the rights of many colonists, nobles or merchants, in the first place they almost always filed a petition with the higher provincial authorities, but as a way of reclaiming their patrimonial rights, they also often marched onto the land held by these new landowners. Here, the Bashkirs cut down the precious forests, for example, and came into conflict with the authorities as a result. These clashes occurred practically without abatement until the middle of the 1890s.²⁴⁹

The provincial government's struggle to quell the agrarian turmoil even led the provincial noble assembly in the middle of 1883 to turn directly to the minister of internal affairs for help, pointing out the violations of property rights (by which the nobles probably meant their own rights in the first place). It worked and eventually, in the spring of 1884, Ufa governor Pëtr A. Poltoratskii noted that the number of agrarian disturbances had been markedly decreased due to the increased police surveillance. Soviet scholars naturally embedded these conflicts in a 'peasant movement' against the government, stressing the joint resistance of different ethnicities to the authorities.²⁵⁰ However, given the fact that Bashkirs did not recognize the rights of colonists and that peasant landownership rose dramatically after 1879, it is likely that to a large degree Bashkir resistance was aimed at Russian peasants and not only at nobles or officials.

A second issue for the local government that stemmed from peasant land purchases that was related to rising social tensions was the public opinion.²⁵¹ From 1880 onward, central newspapers started reporting on the abuses of land policy in Bashkiria. Appalled by the conduct of the 'civilized' administrators and upper class, the press took up the case of the Bashkirs. For example, some of the newspaper articles of arbiter of the peace in Birska and Belebei Pëtr I. Dobrotvorskii were read by the chair of the Supreme Executive Commission, Count Loris-Melkov, and even by tsar Alexander II himself. Within no time, the Bashkir land question became a national scandal and soon Saint Petersburg sent senator Mikhail E.

²⁴⁸ Remezov, *Pereselencheskaja epopeja*, 69-72.

²⁴⁹ Vasil'ev a.o. (eds.), *Ocherki* v.1 p.2, 226-230.

²⁵⁰ Ibidem, 229-230.

²⁵¹ Charles Steinwedel has extensively studied the local and central press on this topic, see Steinwedel, 'How Bashkiria Became Part of European Russia', 109-111; Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 139-142.

Kovalevskii (who was already on an inspection of neighbouring governorates) to Ufa and Orenburg to investigate the land policy there.²⁵² According to the *Gołos* newspaper, 'the inspection provoked a terrific commotion among the ruling classes; and it is no wonder. In Russia there is hardly another place where the law is so slighted as in Ufa Province.'²⁵³ Kovalevskii received thousands of Bashkir petitions and eventually both Orenburg governor-general Kryzhanovskii and former minister of internal affairs Valuev had to retire from politics in 1881.

Although press attention forced the local government to reconsider the way in which to attract colonists and stimulate economic development, the less outrageous explosion of peasant landownership after 1879 did not escape the gaze of the public either. Between 1881-1884, the Kazan' press closely monitored the loss of Bashkir lands. Also, in 1886, in *How Much Land Does a Man Need?*, Leo Tolstoy expressed his biting criticism of peasant land hunger and abuse of Bashkirs. While Tolstoy's description of the treatment of Bashkirs to acquire land was not really different from that of Sergei Aksakov published thirty years earlier, Tolstoy's message reflected the mood of the Russian public. Furthermore, Nikolai Remezov published his works on the matter too in the course of the 1880s.

Ultimately, the public considered the provincial administration of Ufa and Orenburg to have in fact reinforced Bashkiria's backwardness. In contrast to preceding centuries, however, this time it were not the Bashkirs who were wild, but the officials themselves were the 'wild' ones, as Remezov phrased it.²⁵⁴ Especially after the truly explosive rise in peasant landownership in the 1880s and 1890s, not all came to the conclusion that this had had an undividedly positive influence on the region. In 1910, A.I. Rodokanaki wrote that after the largescale land surveys of the 1890s, the Bashkir-*votchinniki* 'receive only the leftovers of their huge former riches.'²⁵⁵

Remezov, too, lamented that in 1873 and 1874 he was still able to accompany the Bashkir nomads on an unspecified location on the 'endless steppes' without coming across any Russian for weeks on end. To his dismay, however, this situation had already changed completely in 1877-1878 and 1881. The soil had sprouted peasant (private) households everywhere, the steppes were ploughed up and most Bashkirs were completely impoverished due to the arrival of Russian peasants. Initially only rich Bashkirs were still able to sustain large herds, but in 1881 they were apparently gone too. Now '[here] rules the kulak, rude and ignorant, who wears out the forests and enslaves the population. This public ulcer will be felt for a long time to come!'²⁵⁶ Even the populists started to doubt their firm

²⁵² Steinwedel, 'How Bashkiria Became Part of European Russia', 123n93.

²⁵³ Steinwedel, 'How Bashkiria Became Part of European Russia', 109.

²⁵⁴ Ibidem, 110-111.

²⁵⁵ Gvozdnikova a.o. (eds.), *Istorija Bashkortostana. Vol. I*, 167.

²⁵⁶ Remezov, *Byl' v skazochnoj strane*, 99-101.

belief in Russian peasant victimhood in the modern age. For instance, prominent *narodnik* writer Gleb I. Uspenskii, to whom Remezov had dedicated his *Resettlement Epopee*, sneered at the 'bearded' settler who bewails the "lost" non-Christian: 'the Bashkir will disappear, he will disappear! This very Bashkir surely must disappear!' only to take up his axe to 'cut down the first tree for the frame of his own *izba* on the virgin soil left by the "lost" Bashkir.'²⁵⁷

The public concern with the Bashkir loss of land to nobles, merchants and later peasants also had its effect on the provincial administrators. Due to the ongoing peasant land purchases, they too feared for the social-economic position of the Bashkir population. For example in the summer of 1898, right before another survey of Bashkir lands was carried out, Ufa governor Nikolai M. Bogdanovich shared his 'extremely sad conclusion' with M.I. Umetbaev, a Bashkir intellectual and translator for the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly: 'the indigenous population of Bashkir-*votchinniki*, with a vast territory of the lands they own, are in an extremely poor economic situation, which is much worse than the welfare of other immigrant nationalities and undoubtedly requires special administrative care.' The governor even feared the 'extinction' of the 'indigenous population,' because in some places their population numbers have reached pre-1860 levels.²⁵⁸ The provincial government deliberated for years on how to prevent the disappearance of the Bashkir, but then it also had to deal with the rise of the modern Russian peasantry. It had to deal with this dilemma somehow.

Balance of interests

It had never been the government's goal to completely expropriate the Bashkirs, only to optimize the use of their land, and let alone to extinguish them. All the same, the provincial administration still wanted to develop the region by means of a modern peasantry, which begs the question how the authorities in the end balanced both of these concerns. Central to this dilemma were the different types of land rights among the agrarian population and the discussion which of these rights was more important for proper development also took place in for example Russian Turkestan and Siberia (and was perhaps typical of a colonial setting in general).²⁵⁹ Therefore the concrete concern here is how far the Ufa administration was

²⁵⁷ The *izba* was a wooden peasant hut, G.I. Uspenskij, *Ot Orenburga do Ufy* (Ufa 1982) 18.

²⁵⁸ Steinwedel, 'Tribe, Estate, Nationality?', 266-267.

²⁵⁹ P. Sartori, 'Colonial legislation meets *shari'a*: Muslims' land rights in Russian Turkestan', *Central Asian Survey* 29 1 (2010) 43-60; Masoero, 'Layers of property', 9-32; for an example of the consequences of different conceptions of land use in North America, see M.S. Monmonier, *Drawing the Line: Tales of Maps and Cartocontroversy* (New York 1995) 105-107; for the Dutch East Indies, see for example C. van Vollenhoven, *De Indonesiër en zijn grond* (Leiden 1932) 5; M. de Muinck, *Onteygening in de Nederlandsche koloniën* (Ph.D. dissertation Groningen 1911) 1-14.

prepared to go to promote modern private landownership among Russian peasants at the expense of Bashkir collective patrimonial rights.

Despite the fact that the government ultimately stimulated peasant private landownership, it nonetheless did attempt to curb its detrimental effects on the rest of the population. Because peasant colonists bought Bashkir lands in particular, in practice any limits placed on their relatively new right to acquire private land amounted mostly to protecting Bashkir patrimonial rights.

Already in the early 1860s, governor-general Aleksandr P. Bezak believed that the Bashkirs held a higher 'degree of maturity' than other non-Russians so that they understood the 'civic principles,' which warranted their reforms.²⁶⁰ The following decades, the administration proved to be particularly sensitive to expressions of the Bashkir civic mind. After 1871, when wealthy nobles and merchants were able to buy up large swaths of Bashkir lands and peasant colonists had purchased land either directly from Bashkirs or from the rich speculators, Bashkir petitions about deceit and fraud started to flood the local and provincial administrations.²⁶¹ The same happened to senator Kovalevskii when he inspected the provincial administration in 1880-1882.²⁶² At all levels, the government responded in a formal and legalist fashion to tame the peasant land rush.

On the one hand, the Bureau of Peasant Affairs refused many petitions of peasants who wanted to buy Bashkir lands, on the grounds that this land had not been surveyed yet. Therefore the size of the Bashkir lands was still unclear and Bashkirs could not formally give permission to sell their lands. This way, the acquisition of private property by peasants was effectively slowed down.²⁶³ Remezov notes, however, that the pivotal role of the land surveys sometimes led to tense situations where Bashkir-*votchinniki* would resist the surveys out of fear that the government had not yet sanctioned the land survey so that the 'excess land' would simply be stolen from them.²⁶⁴ When the land surveys were finally carried out, the *obzory* actually bore witness to the fact that (at least to some degree) the lands that were now considered Bashkir property were in effect returned to them.²⁶⁵

On the other hand, the provincial and central governments issued several laws and regulations that were supposed to regulate the peasant onrush from the central provinces to spare the Bashkir patrimonial landowners especially. The primary problem at hand for the administration was that peasant colonists to a large extent settled on a voluntary basis, which

²⁶⁰ Steinwedel, 'Tribe, Estate, Nationality?', 262.

²⁶¹ Remezov, *Byl' v skazochnoj strane*, 107-108; Remezov suggests that the peasant colonists were effectively exploited by the speculators, Remezov, *Pereselencheskaja epopeja*, 26 & 158-159.

²⁶² Gvozdnikova a.o. (eds.), *Istorija Bashkortostana. Vol. I*, 166.

²⁶³ Rudin, Plavskij & Khavskij (eds.), *Sbornik zakonov*, 141.

²⁶⁴ Remezov, *Pereselencheskaja epopeja*, 29-30; Bashkir complaints about incorrect land surveys could drag out for several years. See for example one such case that ran from 1882 to 1886, TsGIA RB, f. 10, op. 1, d. 1298, l. 5-6.

²⁶⁵ See for example *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1891 god* (Ufa 1892) 9-10.

brought on a very obscure situation. Therefore, the laws on peasant 'resettlement' issued in the course of the decades after the abolition of serfdom in 1861 all tried in some way to fix the free movement of peasants into Bashkiria (some officials were even still haunted by the spectre of rampaging peasants under Pugachëv a century earlier).²⁶⁶ With various laws from for example 1869, 1871, 1876 and 1878, the government tried to circumscribe peasant settlement and the sale of Bashkir lands at the same time. One of the conditions introduced in this period was that peasants could only purchase land as part of a commune, which they could also form themselves with a minimum amount of male members.²⁶⁷

The law of 15 June 1882 is usually considered the driving force of subsequent peasant colonization in Bashkiria (and probably rightly so), but it also presented a limitation on the existing forms of peasant land acquisitions. The law stipulated that Bashkirs from now on would sell their land themselves, without public auction, and restricted the land sale to the state treasury and peasant communes only. In the case of the latter, all sales had to be confirmed by the Provincial Bureau of Peasant Affairs. It also went into details on the exact conditions of such sales and the law even led to higher prices for the land.²⁶⁸ Settlement regulations proved an ambiguous instrument that served to maintain order by clarifying colonization procedures, yet in doing so facilitated the very root of disorder all the same by attracting more peasants due to the articulated mechanisms of settlement.

Next to formal law making, the authorities also tried to actively intervene in the movement of peasants. If the colonists were to be grouped together, it would be easier for the administration to manage their land wishes, redirect them and relieve some of the pressure on the area's landowners. Nikolai Remezov notes that at some point this was suggested to governor-general Kryzhanovskii and in order to achieve such a degree of control, Ufa governor Levshin (1876-1880) moved to form special committees that consisted of the local peace mediators (*mirovoj posrednik*). They could establish personal contact with the peasants and determine their number, their rights to free lands as well as the wishes of the colonists themselves.²⁶⁹

The peace mediators, the provincial and district Bureaus of Peasant Affairs and eventually, with their introduction in 1889 throughout European Russia, the so-called land captains (*zemskij nachal'nik*) were all tasked with the local and personal supervision of the peasant communities. They were in the position to ascertain the social-economic situation

²⁶⁶ Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field*, 153-155.

²⁶⁷ Usmanov, *Razvitie kapitalizma*, 65-70.

²⁶⁸ PSZRI, Series III, vol. 2 (1882), part I, no. 764 (June 1882) 312-313; Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnoshenija*, 335; Remezov, *Pereselencheskaja epopeja*, 26; see for example TsGIA RB, f. 336, op. 1, d. 2657, l. 2-3.

²⁶⁹ Remezov, *Pereselencheskaja epopeja*, 169-170.

and legal position of different peasants in order to decide whether they had the right to stay in the region or not.

For example, in theory every peasant had to hand over documents that confirmed their departure from their former commune and their reception by a new commune (or their formation of a new commune).²⁷⁰ Whenever they lacked such proper documentation, they were to be sent back. Also, close inspection of the peasant colonists revealed that some of them had government papers that actually sent them to for example the Amur region or other Siberian governorates.²⁷¹ For some reason, these peasants had moved to Ufa instead.

To blatantly abuse government directions and move to an entirely different region hardly seem like the actions of a modern Russian peasant who appealed to the modern right to private landownership, especially since many of these peasants did not move anyway after being told to leave.²⁷² Willard Sunderland may very well argue that these cases prove his point that colonists 'were drawn by expectations of a better deal' and were not motivated to migrate in order to build a modern agrarian economy or an empire, for that matter.²⁷³ However, since Bashkiria had been the gateway to Siberia for centuries, it is no surprise that colonists travelled through this region too and authorities also noted that many of these peasants had not lost their way at all. Many of them had no more financial means to move along and therefore they were basically stranded in Ufa province.²⁷⁴ Besides, as the government surveys indicate, the authorities truly considered the peasant colonists to transform into modern citizens *after* they had settled and somehow acquired private landownership.

Regardless, while the government attempted to limit peasant colonization of (Bashkir) lands in theory, in practice the colonization did not come to a halt. The poorer 'illegal' peasants may not have been able to move out of the province, whereas others who had settled on the formerly Bashkir lands did not move away either, even when their rights to the land were not entirely clear. This was not the result of 'traditional' peasant dislike of state intervention or their denial of state-sponsored rights, but it was rather the result of the government sending mixed signals. This may have been the result of differences of opinion among officials, but not necessarily so.²⁷⁵ After all, governor-general Kryzhanovskii, the paternalist 'protector' of the nomads, was at the same time one of the greatest plunderers of

²⁷⁰ The zemstvo statisticians carefully monitored the number of newly formed communes. See for example *Obzor za 1898 god*, 122 or *Obzor za 1900 god*, 119.

²⁷¹ Remezov, *Pereselencheskaja epopeja*, 175.

²⁷² Ibidem, 175-176.

²⁷³ Sunderland, 'Empire without Imperialism', 107.

²⁷⁴ Remezov, *Pereselencheskaja epopeja*, 170-172 & 175.

²⁷⁵ Remezov provides a description of officials who dissuaded Kryzhanovskij from protecting Bashkirs by implementing stricter regulations on land purchases in the middle of the 1870s, Remezov, *Byl' v skazochnoj strane*, 108.

Bashkir lands. Perhaps more officials were internally divided on the matter of colonization.²⁷⁶ While the authorities wanted to appease the indigenous landowners, they wanted to develop the region too and for that, they really needed the peasantry. Therefore, the peasantry could often go its own way and the state would either keep aloof or even stimulated the peasants' right to private landownership.

State stimulation of the developing modern peasantry manifested itself in two ways: legal toleration or accommodation and material support. While laws lay down legal requirements for peasant land acquisitions, they were also an expression of government concerns with the actual development of the landowning peasantry. From this perspective, the point of regulating the peasantry was to guarantee a certain standard of living and to prevent exploitation. In general, the idea appears to have prevailed among local officials that as long as the new peasant landowners thrived, they could or even should stay.²⁷⁷ The law of 28 January 1876, for example, allowed various groups of peasants (except for former crown peasants) to remain on free state lands when there were at least some indications they could survive, even when they lacked proper documentation.²⁷⁸ Also, in a history of 'Bashkir landownership' that accompanied the 1898 laws for the new land surveyors (the so-called *sbornik* or 'collection'), its authors explained that the 'fundamental challenge' of the law of 15 June 1882 'ultimately' is to establish a prosperous landowning peasantry at the expense of the Bashkir landowners.²⁷⁹ Achieving this goal even warranted many of the negative effects of peasant land acquisitions. At the end of the day, as far as the local authorities were concerned the relatively new right of private landownership outweighed the traditional Bashkir *votchina* or patrimonial rights.

The authors of the 1898 *Sbornik* history related how despite a number of social-economic and legal wrongs, the Russian peasant presence on Bashkir lands was still justified. One of the issues was that peasants did not always follow the new formalities regarding the purchase of Bashkir land. They entered contracts directly with Bashkirs, as the 1882 law stipulated (which added to the modernist importance of written documents and contracts for peasants), but a significant number found it difficult to form the legally required communes, due to varying agricultural habits between peasants from different regions in the empire. The problem for the authors was not so much that the peasants did not follow the letter of the law (to some degree they believed that formalities only hindered the land sales to

²⁷⁶ See for examples of Kryzhanovskij's misplaced concerns with the Bashkir situation Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 119-120 & 126-127; Kryzhanovskij was not the only one who 'pledged to "protect" the nomads' and still failed to safeguard their way of life, Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field*, 147; Ajtugan I. Akmanov notes a similar 'contradictory' government attitude with regard to protecting Bashkir *votchina*. Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnoshenija*, 329.

²⁷⁷ This idea also prevailed among local officials in other areas with low population densities, see Steinwedel, 'Resettling people, unsettling the empire', 130.

²⁷⁸ Remezov, *Pereselencheskaja epopeja*, 162-165.

²⁷⁹ Rudin, Plavskij & Khavskij (eds.), *Sbornik zakonov*, 142 & 148-149.

peasants), but that failing to register as a commune meant that the government missed out on several taxes.²⁸⁰ The same problem understandably arose when peasants closed oral contracts with Bashkirs, which made it clear to the authorities that the newcomers were not (yet) the modern peasants they so desired by claiming the right to private landownership alone.²⁸¹

Another issue was that when peasants had no trouble forming a new commune (or a *tovarishchestvo* or 'association'), sometimes they were able to amass so much capital that they could buy enormous swaths of land, 'exceeding what was needed for agriculture', and distribute them among the members. According to the 1898 authors, this went against the point of the 1882 law to prevent large pieces of land falling into the hands of a few landowners.²⁸² Moreover, in the eyes of the *Sbornik* authors some peasants were particularly clever in buying Bashkir lands, which is not to say they acted according to the letter of the law. Officially, peasants had to convince at least two-thirds of the Bashkir village assembly to buy land, but in practice many found it easier to convince the *volost* or 'district' assembly. In this larger assembly, the portion of the Bashkirs who had no relation to the land in question was much larger, making it easier for the Russian peasant to reach a two-thirds majority.²⁸³

However, despite all the complications that arose from land acquisitions, the arguments the *Sbornik* puts forward in favour of the peasants attest to the government's promotion of private landownership over Bashkir collective patrimonial land rights. For one, they argue that although the peasants may not have followed the correct procedures in purchasing the land, at least the Bashkir-*votchinniki* have no need of such large pieces of communal land since they 'cannot even work all of their personal lands and now these unworked lands do not yield any taxes.' Besides, in contrast to the wealthy Russian peasant, the 'character of the Bashkir lacks independent action and energy.'²⁸⁴ Reminiscent of the *zemstvo* statistical reports, the *Sbornik* authors clearly favour agricultural accomplishments over (traditional) legalism in their justification of peasant rights to private landownership.

Secondly, the *Sbornik* claims that despite the fact that many peasants did not (yet) have a clearly defined legal relation to the land they had purchased and despite 'the entire multitude of difficulties they face to keep their land, thanks to personal labour, energy and endurance, they have reached such a level of economic prosperity, that with their existence, they have completely justified the goals set by the law of 15 June 1882 to form a fond of land

²⁸⁰ Ibidem, 142-144.

²⁸¹ Rudin, Plavskij & Khavskij (eds.), *Sbornik zakonov*, 139.

²⁸² Ibidem, 146.

²⁸³ Ibidem, 136.

²⁸⁴ Ibidem, 136.

designated for peasant colonists out of free Bashkir lands.²⁸⁵ Despite senator Kovalevskii's conclusion that the great upheaval of the 1870s was due to the violation of 'agrarian laws', in 1898 the *Sbornik* authors thus effectively proposed again to turn a blind eye to the peasants' behaviour for the sake of further economic development.²⁸⁶ Ten years earlier, Remezov in fact denounced the officials' attitude that it would be better to "hand over the court cases to God's will and store them in the archive," because he thought that the officials had miscalculated the benefits peasants had derived from (illegally) buying Bashkir lands from speculators. Remezov shared the officials' opinion that the province prospered due to the presence of peasants, but he believed they would have been much better off buying land directly from Bashkirs at lower prices.²⁸⁷

According to the 1898 *Sbornik*, the state should effectively tolerate the 'illegal' occupation of Bashkir lands by peasant colonists, but it also alluded to a more proactive stance of the government to support the peasantry materially. This way, a modern and independent peasantry that could cultivate Bashkiria's lands and innovate its agriculture would be established sooner: 'The general conclusion is that the economic situation of the settlers has not only guaranteed their subsistence, but also the further development of the settlements.'²⁸⁸ The 1898 land survey would only help to speed up this development.

Between 1881-1911, several laws were passed that attempted to indirectly improve the material conditions of the peasantry in relation to landownership. Some of these laws were specific to Bashkiria and others were national. For example, in 1881, 1884, 1889, 1892 and 1905 different laws were passed that lifted some of the financial pressures or attempted to provide the peasantry with more lands, whether leased or purchased.²⁸⁹

Probably because by 1892 all available state lands in Ufa had been distributed among colonists, in 1898 another land survey was announced in spite of repeated public and official concerns about the survival of the Bashkirs.²⁹⁰ This survey of the Bashkir patrimonial

²⁸⁵ 'Even in those places where the condition of the soil requires particularly hard work,' have the peasants reached 'complete economic prosperity,' Rudin, Plavskij & Khavskij (eds.), *Sbornik zakonov*, 148-149.

²⁸⁶ Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnoshenija*, 334-335; it must be noted, however, that Kovalevskij found it simply impractical to return all illegally gotten land, since Russian peasants had already settled there, Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 141.

²⁸⁷ Remezov, *Pereselencheskaja epopeja*, 26.

²⁸⁸ Rudin, Plavskij & Khavskij (eds.), *Sbornik zakonov*, 149.

²⁸⁹ PSZRI, Series III, vol. 1 (1881), part I, no. 575 (December 1881) 372-375; PSZRI, Series III, vol. 4 (1884), part I, no. 2488 (November 1884) 515-516; PSZRI, Series III, vol. 9 (1889), part I, no. 6198 (July 1889) 535-538; Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnoshenija*, 337; PSZRI, Series III, vol. 25 (1905), part I, no. 26871 (November 1905) 790.

²⁹⁰ D.P. Samorodov, *Russkoe krest'janskoe pereselenie v Bashkiriju v poreformennyj period 60—90-e gg. XIX* (Sterlitamak 1996) 99, cited in Steinwedel, 'Resettling people, unsettling the empire', 143n15.

lands proved especially advantageous for peasant colonists.²⁹¹ While this land survey was supposed to protect Bashkir patrimonial rights to the land and regulate relations between them and the migrants, in reality the Bashkirs were obligated to either sell land to the Russian peasants at low prices or to compensate them for the capital they had invested thus far.²⁹² Never would it become more clear that the government heavily favoured peasant private landownership over the centuries-old patrimonial rights of the Bashkirs. This type of laws certainly had their effect on the development of landownership among peasants by creating favourable material conditions, but the state went even further and also provided material support directly.

The most important form of direct material assistance was the establishment of the national Peasant Land Bank in 1882, right before the 1882 law that restricted the sale of Bashkir lands to peasants and the state. At the Bank (individual) peasants were able to receive substantial loans in order to purchase land from nobles and Bashkirs.²⁹³ The progress of the Ufa Bank (which opened in May 1883) and what the peasants did with their loans were noted by the annual *obzory*. They also broke down the number of peasants into different social-economic statuses, which ranged from landless peasants to households with over six *desiatins* per male head, as well as different directions of migration.²⁹⁴

In the 1883 *obzor*, the statisticians characterize the establishment of the Peasant Land Bank as 'completely appropriate for the local conditions, substantially meeting the demand for land' of the peasants. In their view, the Bank protected the peasant buyers from exploitation and gave them a fair price for the land. They further believed that the Bank was an excellent way to provide landowners the necessary 'free capital to conduct correct farming' and the means to innovate their agricultural techniques. In general, the additional flow of capital would allow landowners to make better use of their land, which in turn freed up the marginal parts of their land to be sold to 'more productive peasant hands.'²⁹⁵

Judging by the *obzory* of later years that celebrated the development of a modern peasant estate, government expectations of the financial assistance worked out as intended. Despite the possibility that the Peasant Land Bank served the interests of the nobility and raised prices in the early twentieth century, as Khamza Usmanov suggested, peasants had

²⁹¹ The surveys that started in 1869 aimed to differentiate between the lands of the *votchinniki* landowners and their *pripushchinniki* tenants. Now, the government wanted to establish borders among the *votchinniki* themselves; Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnosheniia*, 338-346.

²⁹² Steinwedel, 'Tribe, Estate, Nationality?', 272.

²⁹³ Akmanov, *Zemel'nye otnosheniia*, 348-349; see for example TsGIA RB, f. 336, op. 1, d. 3251, l. 4-5f.

²⁹⁴ See among many others, *Obzor za 1883 god*, 48-51 and *Obzor za 1891 god*, 171-176. For some reason, the *obzory* for 1908-1910 lack the special section on the Peasant Land Bank. It returned from 1911 onward. During the First World War the activities of the Peasant Land Bank slowed down, due to the mobilization of its personnel and the difficulties with railway travel that prevented colonists to move to the region, see *Obzor Ufimskoi gubernii za 1914 god* (Ufa 1916) 121.

²⁹⁵ *Obzor za 1883 god*, 50.

applied for loans *en masse* to purchase lands in the Ufa governorate.²⁹⁶ With the earnings of the land, they then bought or leased farming equipment from the zemstvo. Ultimately, they even took zemstvo courses to improve their agricultural knowledge.



Map 3.1. Ufa governorate in 1914 with the railway connections to Moscow and Siberia.²⁹⁷

Another form of direct material assistance was provided in the national Temporary Rules of 6 June 1904, which divided colonists in privileged and voluntary settlers. After the dismissal of the rather liberal Minister of Finance Sergei Yu. Witte in August 1903, decision making on the colonial question was left to the more conservative Minister of Internal Affairs Vyacheslav K. von Plehve.²⁹⁸ Since colonization could not be stopped completely, he wanted to control colonization more by promoting certain destinations and selecting colonists.²⁹⁹ Especially when the Samara-Ufa railway was built in 1888, which connected Ufa directly with Moscow and later via Zlatoust with Siberia, it became much easier for the government to substantially sponsor migrants, as long as they settled at specially designated destinations in need of

²⁹⁶ Kh.F. Usmanov, *Stolypinskaja agrarnaja reforma v Bashkirii* (Ufa 1958) 106.

²⁹⁷ Map taken from Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 204 (map 7.1).

²⁹⁸ The political struggle between Witte and Plehve (Finance versus Internal Affairs or liberal versus conservative) is iconic for the 'mixed signals' coming from officials across Russia. Again, the opinions and attitudes of individual officials were not set in stone. Even Plehve himself, for instance, showcased a somewhat nuanced approach to the 'inalienability' of the peasant commune and peasant landownership, E.H. Judge, *Plehve. Repression and Reform in Imperial Russia, 1902-1904* (Syracuse 1983) 150-153 & 180-186 & 189.

²⁹⁹ Sunderland, *Taming the Wild Field*, 178.

settlers. Voluntary settlers could move anywhere and would not be sent back, but they would not receive state assistance.³⁰⁰ In March 1906, when Witte had become Prime Minister and Plehve by then had been assassinated, the Temporary Rules were changed so that now all peasant migrants could apply for state funding.³⁰¹ This way, through legal and material support, the government provided significant support to the Russian colonists.

Out of a deep concern for the survival of the Russian state itself at a time of the great upheavals in 1905-1906, the somewhat liberal goal of Pëtr Stolypin was to transform the Russian peasantry into a modern innovating citizen with respect for the law. After he had overcome the concerns among some ministers and Slavophiles, who were not convinced that peasants were against the commune, he could proceed with his reforms in November 1906. Building on the work started at the latest under Plehve, they proposed a shift to a more intensive use of land instead of again expanding the amount of land available to peasants through colonization and reclamation. The commune had to be broken. In the mind of Stolypin, his reforms amounted to nothing less than the transformation of the Russian peasant psychology.³⁰² However, in Ufa this change had already been underway for some years now. The psychology of the migrant peasants found its expression in annually rising numbers of private landownership and the provincial administration had certainly already expressed the need to stimulate this type of Russian agriculture. In any case, Stolypin's reforms provided willing colonists with yet another means to acquire landownership and the provincial authorities noted their success with both the Russian and especially the Bashkir populations.³⁰³

In conclusion, in its consideration of economic and social-political interests, ultimately the modern rights to private landownership among the peasants proved more important for the government than the Bashkir collective patrimonial rights. Its main argument came down to the idea that Russian agriculture brought more wealth to the province than Bashkir efforts. Officials believed the justification of their stance to unfold in front of their eyes: 'With the exception of a few people who have gotten rich, the mass of the population lives in extreme poverty: the Bashkirs' buildings generally look like tight, distorted houses with ramshackle

³⁰⁰ Usmanov, *Stolypinskaja agrarnaja reforma*, 121-122; Steinwedel, 'Resettling people, unsettling the empire', 130-131; peasant landowners who were expropriated to construct the railway received financial compensations, it is unknown whether Bashkir-votchinniki received these too, *Obzor Ufimskoj gubernii za 1888 god* (Ufa 1889) 54.

³⁰¹ Steinwedel, 'Resettling people, unsettling the empire', 134.

³⁰² A. Ascher, *P.A. Stolypin. The Search for Stability in Late Imperial Russia* (Stanford 2001) 153-164; Judge, *Plehve*, 180-181; D.A.J. Macey, "'A Wager on History': The Stolypin Agrarian Reforms as Process", in: J. Pallot (ed.), *Transforming Peasants. Society, State and the Peasantry, 1861-1930* (Basingstoke 1998) 151-152; Stolypin's liberal views on a modern landowning peasant may share an interesting connection with the liberal environment of the zemstvo statisticians of Saratov province, where he had been governor prior to his position in Saint Petersburg. Mespoulet, 'Statisticiens des zemstva', 584, 588 & 622-624.

³⁰³ *Obzor za 1911 god*, 88.

roofs and sometimes completely without roofs. The owners themselves have neither livestock nor agricultural tools'.³⁰⁴

Conclusion

The land disputes between Russian peasants and Bashkirs simultaneously revealed and influenced slowly changing attitudes among Russian peasants. For the government, this was an ambiguous development. As peasants made more and more use of their recent right to acquire private property at the expense of Bashkirs landowners, officials felt a tension between stimulating peasant landownership to develop the Ufa region and trying to minimize the social unrest the peasant drive for land brought about among Bashkir landowners. The government had to steer a course between historically recognized patrimonial rights of the Bashkirs and a growing assertiveness of modern peasants, in which it generally supported the latter. As a result, peasants were able to transition from their traditional collective forms of landholding to largescale private landownership. By following the Russian example, Bashkirs had to become modern citizens and agriculturalists too.

However, for the Russian peasants themselves, the developments of modern citizenship must have been ambiguous too. The obvious benefits they received when they moved further toward the state also involved risks. Now that the state guaranteed their landownership, peasants were possibly more than ever subject to the will of the state. Registration for settling led to increased tax burdens and bank loans had to be paid back, otherwise the land would be taken away again.³⁰⁵ Land surveyors decided whether purchased lands were actually measured correctly. Likewise, relying on state law in land disputes was no sure way to gain or regain lands, no matter how long you and your family had worked it. What tipped the scales in the favour of the developing modern citizenship among the Russian peasants was their desire for a land to live on. While peasants did not necessarily adopt the modern colonial attitudes of the state, they did seize the opportunities to acquire land presented by the concrete measures that flowed from the state's colonial policies. The modern Russian peasant was then the result of his or her own decisions and desires in combination with the government's eagerness to put the Russian expertise to work in what it considered an underdeveloped wilderness. Many colonists had come to Ufa 'with nothing but an axe in their belt' and ultimately, the Russian 'axe' had chipped away at the

³⁰⁴ Rudin, Plavskij & Khavskij (eds.), *Sbornik zakonov*, 140.

³⁰⁵ Sometimes the peasants either loaned too much or failed miserably in their farming enterprise, since the 1891 survey mentions that some peasants had to return land after not being able to pay the loan back. *Obzor za 1891 god*, 9-10.

roots of the Bashkirs, but in doing so had provided its wielders with a solid foundation for their new home on the steppes.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁶ Remezov, *Pereselencheskaja epopeja*, 14-15.

Conclusion

The nineteenth century had considerably changed the character of Bashkiria. Whereas at the start of the century, the Bashkirs had been the proud participants in the Patriotic War against Napoleon in 1812-1814, at the century's close they had become known in educated circles as miserable victims of imperial policies who teetered on the brink of extinction.³⁰⁷ In the century's early decades, the Bashkir nomads still had enough space to move their herds around, but in the last years of the century, the vast steppes had been ploughed up and were dotted with peasant homes. This was the result of the unstoppable onrush of the Russian peasants who were eager to find a land to call their own. They came in large numbers and acquired directly or indirectly the lands that had been the Bashkirs' patrimony for over three hundred years.

The main question of this thesis is whether Russian peasants, in order to acquire these Bashkir lands in the Ufa governorate between 1861 and 1917, abandoned their traditional social-agrarian attitudes to go along with the modern colonial policies. It ties in with the historiographical debate about whether the late imperial Russian peasantry held on to its traditional attitudes in face of an encroaching state (the view of the 'peasantizers') or were more appreciative of the changing rural configurations so that they eventually became modern citizens (the view of the 'modernizers'). By studying the Russian peasantry in Ufa, I attempted to discover whether a colonial context mattered for the development of the Russian peasantry in the final decades of the tsarist empire.

The simplistic answer is no. Since land was generally very important to peasants and to colonists especially, the land disputes between Russian peasants and Bashkir landowners were very promising to detect any co-optation of state attitudes, but Willard Sunderland was right. During their court cases, the Russian peasants generally displayed no sense of an ethnic-cultural hierarchy associated with modern colonialism nor did they really refer to colonial policies to acquire Bashkir lands. However, matters become more complicated when one looks beyond the court records. Namely, in the decades following the peasant reforms of the early 1860s, official statistics showed that the Russian peasant colonists in Ufa increasingly pursued private landholding instead of (traditional) communal landownership. It is significant to note that in this colonial context, this development was well underway long before Stolypin's modernization reforms after 1906. Ultimately Russian peasants in Ufa were

³⁰⁷ Naturally, this included Muslim intellectuals too. A 1911 (nationalist) Muslim newspaper from Kazan' was appalled by the lack of interest among Tatar peasants in the fate of the Bashkirs and their refusal to purchase Bashkir lands: 'How far has it come with the Bashkirs and what will become of our Kazan' peasants, given that they consider the Ufa governorate to be the end of the world?', Noack, *Muslimischer Nationalismus*, 399.

not necessarily inclined to adopt the modern colonial mentalities (perhaps only marginally), but they certainly started to change their attitudes concerning landownership to a more state-centred conception. To some degree, this was also visible in several court cases that insisted on the legitimacy of state courts and written contracts.

The specific form of colonialism in the Ufa governorate stimulated the changing attitudes in two ways. On the one hand, land disputes between Russian peasants and other landowners, notably Bashkirs, were processed in state courts that relied heavily on proper documentation and written evidence. This strengthened the traditional tendency among the agrarian actors in Bashkiria to especially value written contracts with Bashkirs. The courts were not 'peasantized,' however, since they did not acknowledge exclusively traditional social-agrarian arguments. After the chaotic experience of the plundering of the Bashkir lands between 1869-1878, the 1882 law expressly required Russian peasants to enter into contracts directly with Bashkirs as proof of their legitimate possession of the land. The court cases indicate that traditional attitudes had not disappeared, but also that state law was by no means alien to peasants. For some peasants, moreover, their traditional social-agrarian views on their beneficial effects on the natural and physical state of the land corresponded neatly with modern attitudes of agricultural development. It is therefore important to conclude that there need not have been a tension between traditional and modern attitudes, as sometimes they could be complementary. This made a change in attitude only more gradual.

On the other hand, the state considered private landownership and innovation of agriculture markers of a modern peasantry that would also adhere to state law and 'develop a sense of civic obligation'.³⁰⁸ Therefore, in Ufa, the government's desire to create a modern peasantry that would economically develop the region led the officials to single out the Russian peasant as the paragon of proper agriculture – at least in comparison to the non-Russian agriculturalists. The modern colonial views of the authorities produced concrete measures in Ufa that stimulated acquisitions of (mostly) Bashkir lands by Russian peasants outside of the commune and provided them with the means to build up a proper farm.

Year in, year out, the zemstvo statisticians noted the success of the modernization policies that would urge Bashkirs to settle and learn agriculture by Russian example. The Russian presence would bring out Bashkiria's full economic potential. Modern peasant attitudes were thus stimulated from the bottom up and top down through an interaction between the peasant migrants and state representatives, or rather Weber's 'agencies of change', like the employees of the Peasant Land Bank, the land surveyors, the statisticians that visited the villages and of course the courts. Sometimes this interaction was painful,

³⁰⁸ Ascher, *P.A. Stolypin*, 156.

when peasants lost their land in court, sometimes it was exhilarating, when they managed to build a new life for themselves with state financing.

To a degree, this development mirrored the analysis by the head of the provincial zemstvo statistical committee, Nikolai A. Gurvich, of the transformation that had taken place among the Bashkir population: it was the result of economic conditions and regulations of their land rights.³⁰⁹ The statistics suggest that peasants could own private land while increasing their collective holdings too. Therefore here too, it should be noted that traditional and modern forms of landownership could coexist, while the latter certainly grew much harder. As far as the authorities were concerned, the Russian peasants in Ufa had become civic-minded citizens that would even work harder in times of need, such as the Great War.³¹⁰

The history of the Russian peasantry in Ufa reveals that 'modernization' was far from inevitable and that it did not bring universal happiness either. It was the outcome of a laborious process of implementing and experimenting with government policies that knew plenty of failures, but through this process, Russian peasants and state grew closer. In fact, the colonial context of the Russian peasantry shakes the very foundations of the peasantization-modernization debate, because, due to the semi-nomadic steppe environment in Ufa, being a 'Russian peasant' already received a modern charge without necessarily involving formal modern citizenship. While peasants formally remained peasants, they did introduce new attitudes to the peasant identity. This way, Russian peasants of Ufa belong somewhere in between the 'peasantization' and 'modernization' categories. Again, as the court cases of Karmanova and Kozemaslov indicate, the oppositions between the traditional and modern (colonial) categories of arguments were far less pronounced than the historiographical debate suggests when these peasants utilized a mix of those types of arguments.

Moreover, the colonial context of Bashkiria particularly uncovers the intrinsic tension of what 'modern' was, since moving toward the colonial state did not *always* coincide with obeying the letter of the law. Because the authorities were so hard-pressed to attract Russian peasants, they were often legally tolerant of colonists who had not followed the correct procedures. This way, even when those migrants had applied for state assistance and had met state expectations by cultivating Bashkir lands, strictly speaking they could still fall outside the modern category due to their failure to respect the law.

³⁰⁹ Vasil'ev a.o. (eds.), *Ocherki* v.1 p.2, 177.

³¹⁰ Besides the criteria later historians have come up with to describe the changes of peasant attitudes (or the lack thereof), the government's opinion on the modernization of the Russian peasant also fits Frederick Cooper's idea that in the first place, modernity was what the contemporaries thought it was. Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 115.

While the Russian peasant in Ufa certainly met the state's modern colonial expectations by moving onto Bashkir lands either legally or illegally, he or she did not showcase any significant modern colonial attitudes in the form of ethnic-cultural hierarchization. A reason for this may have been that the colonial policies themselves were limited to material measures. They did not involve an elaborate educational or cultural infrastructure designed to impart both Russian peasant and the Bashkirs themselves with the paternalist notion that the Russian peasant was there to guide the Bashkirs to political independence.³¹¹

The lack of this type of colonialism probably led contemporaries to believe that Russia was not a real colonial power. Colonialism in Ufa, however, was perhaps more nuanced than it may have been in other areas of the empire or in other European colonies even.³¹² The various levels of government tried to change the Bashkirs and preserve the “the firmly-formed order in the Bashkir way of life” at the same time.³¹³ It is understandable that in such a colonial context the modern Russian peasants were not (structurally) exposed to explicit rhetoric about their superiority and their corresponding task to ‘school’ the non-Russians. Therefore, the Russian peasants only marginally hinted at the colonial state attitude.

In a comparative perspective, Ufa appears to land somewhere in between the other major colonial regions of the time: Russian Turkestan and Siberia. Unlike the Muslim landowners in the former khanates of Central Asia, who were able to evade Russian colonial law by using *sharia* law instead, Bashkirs were unable to retain much of their historical rights to the land.³¹⁴ After 300 years of Russian sovereignty, by now their land rights were fully integrated into Russian state and therefore the Bashkirs had no viable legal alternative like the Central Asian Muslims to preserve their lands.³¹⁵

At the same time, the Bashkirs were in the end able to resist the pressures on their patrimonial rights caused by the great influx of Russian peasants insofar these rights themselves were not abolished altogether. This was different in Siberia, where the historical rights of the ‘indigenous’ peasants (which also included for example Russian Old Believers) were likewise considered impractical, but also significantly altered. Whereas in Siberia the ‘traditional hierarchy of social estates [was adapted] to new conditions and new colonial

³¹¹ See for example the colonial objectives of the colonial authorities in the Dutch East Indies, J.A.A. van Doorn, ‘Indië als koloniaal project’, in: J.A.A. van Doorn, *De laatste eeuw van Indië. Ontwikkeling en ondergang van een koloniaal project* (Amsterdam 1994) 83-104.

³¹² Sunderland, ‘The Ministry of Asiatic Russia’, 146-148; this may very well apply to the entire Volga-Urals region. Kuzev, *Narody Srednego Povolzh'ja*, 7-15; Le Torrivellec, ‘La région Volga-Oural’, 145; Noack, *Muslimischer Nationalismus*, 133-134.

³¹³ Steinwedel, ‘Tribe, Estate, Nationality?’, 268.

³¹⁴ Sartori, ‘Colonial legislation meets *shari'a*’, 44-45 & 50-52.

³¹⁵ The high degree of Bashkir integration with the Russian state around 1900 also led them to appeal to national bodies, like the State Duma, and to express Bashkir national identity in relation to the Russian state, see Steinwedel, ‘Tribe, Estate, Nationality?’, 272-274.

duties', the traditional hierarchy in Bashkiria had completely changed in the course of fifty years.³¹⁶ Russian peasants had risen to the top, while the once envied Bashkir status had lost its significance and was officially reduced to a limited number of remaining landowners and their families.³¹⁷

The Bashkir is dead, long live the Bashkir!

The development of the modern Russian peasantry led to the disappearance of the traditional Bashkir community and the emergence of a modern Bashkir ethnic identity. The modern peasant was first and foremost hungry for land. When the Bashkir patrimonial landowners sold their property to these peasants, they effectively undermined their own historical social-legal position. After all, Bashkir status had always been based on collective (tribal and later clan) landownership. Moreover, Russian peasants appeals to the state to provide them with more land led to the various surveys and redistribution of Bashkir lands, so that many Bashkirs became impoverished and lost their land. By the early twentieth century, the Bashkir status had lost its appeal to other Turkic Muslims. Whereas during the first national census in 1897 many Teptiars had still defined themselves as Bashkirs (officials considered these non-hereditary landowners 'new Bashkirs'), when the Bolsheviks wanted to establish larger ethnic groups in the early 1920s, hardly any of the Meshcheriaks and Teptiars who had previously identified as Bashkirs still did. Instead, they rather chose registration as Tatars.³¹⁸

This process was only aided when the Bashkir status was redefined as personal and familial landownership in the early twentieth century, which reduced the number of Bashkir status holders since many of them had no more land. Because Bashkir status was now defined in familial terms, the remaining Bashkirs themselves started to identify in ethnic terms. Far from being hopelessly subjected to an all-powerful colonial discourse, however, they appealed to the state in order to protect what was left of their patrimonial rights, since Bashkir legal status had been tied to the Russian state for centuries. During the same years, Russia had received its national representative body, the State Duma, and now Bashkirs voiced their discontent on a broad forum. In doing so, they presented themselves as a specific ethnicity that was formed on the tradition of landownership. One of the first Bashkir representatives to speak in the Duma, the nobleman Shaikhadar Syrtlanov spoke of the Bashkirs' voluntary acceptance of Ivan the Terrible's sovereignty, the tsar's charters to the land and that accordingly the Bashkirs were 'not a conquered people.' Their treatment the

³¹⁶ Masoero, 'Layers of property', 28.

³¹⁷ According to an ukase of the Governing Senate from 22 November 1910, see Tukman (ed.), *Polozhenie o bashkirakh*, 107; Steinwedel, 'Tribe, Estate, Nationality?', 270-271.

³¹⁸ Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 142; Le Torrivellec, 'Entre steppes et stèles', 389-390.

previous decades was therefore unacceptable. Other Bashkir Duma representatives likewise denounced the loss of Bashkir lands and demanded their return.³¹⁹

Although Duma representation of Muslims (and peasants) was severely curtailed after Stolypin's coup of June 1907, the Bashkir claims to their lands did not go away in the following ten years.³²⁰ After the February revolution of 1917, (leftist) Bashkirs tried to achieve territorial autonomy at the cost of a broader joint Tatar-Bashkir cultural autonomy (proposed by leftist *Muslims*). One of the grievances was the Russian colonization of Bashkir lands in the previous half century. Especially resented was the land survey of 1898, which had fragmented the lands of the patrimonial landowners themselves. The Bashkir delegates of the national Muslim Congress in early May 1917 were disappointed that their claims to their land had not been not respected. Therefore, they organized their own Bashkir congress in Orenburg, in late July, where especially the leftist Zaki Validi succeeded in outmanoeuvring large landowning clan leaders. Validi convinced the delegates to declare the lands around the Ural river as the 'ancient homeland of the Bashkirs' and that all Bashkir-owned land was now the 'property of the Bashkir people.' Thus were combined conservative notions of land restitution and socialist redistribution while at the same time the Bashkirs called for the reversal of Stolypin's reforms and for the expropriation and eviction non-Bashkirs who had acquired land acquired after 1898.³²¹ Meanwhile, rising tensions between Russian and Bashkir peasants over land led to bloody conflicts in the countryside.³²² Soon after the Bolsheviks had toppled the Provisional Government on 25 October 1917, Bashkirs declared their autonomy on 16 November.

The growing ethnic self-identification among Bashkirs reveals that the tsarist attempts at modernisation produced frictions within the imperial structure of the Russian state to the extent that its composite parts became antagonistic. In other words, whereas for a long time the empire was able to act as an arbiter or broker for its subjects, the quest for modernization forced the hand of central and local officials.³²³ Now they had to abandon their role as broker and favour the Russian peasantry. This does not mean that the break-up of the empire was inevitable. Officials still made an effort to protect the Bashkirs, but it is clear that they failed.

Especially during the civil war that followed the Bolshevik takeover, special Bashkir military units fought alternately on the Red and White sides of the war in an attempt to negotiate as much independence or autonomy for Bashkiria as possible. Eventually they

³¹⁹ Steinwedel, 'Tribe, Estate, Nationality?', 272-273; V.I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenij v 55 tomakh. Tom 16, ijun' 1907-mart 1908* (Moscow 1973) 390.

³²⁰ Noack, 'The Tataro-Bashkir Feud', 169-172.

³²¹ This included both Russian peasants and various *pripushchenniki*, Noack, 'The Tataro-Bashkir Feud', 172; Noack, *Muslimischer Nationalismus*, 527-528; Steinwedel, 'Tribe, Estate, Nationality?', 272n63.

³²² R.E. Pipes, 'The First Experiment in Soviet National Policy: The Bashkir Republic, 1917-1920', *Russian Review* 9 4 (1950) 307.

³²³ Barkey, *Empire of Difference*, 10, 14 & 18.

sided with the Bolsheviks at a crucial moment in the war to achieve a very high degree of autonomy, higher than that of later Soviet constituent republics. However, in a move that mirrored the abolition of the cantonal system in the 1860s, the antinationalist Joseph Stalin seized the opportunity to curtail much of the Bashkir autonomy when the military usefulness of the Bashkir forces had waned.³²⁴

Revolution of rights

Marx was not right. The modern peasantry did not form a distinct class that struggled with the upper classes. Quite contrary to what Soviet scholars had argued in their histories of late imperial Bashkiria, there was no distinct peasant class movement in Ufa (whether it failed or not).³²⁵ Russian peasants there had no qualms about pushing out their supposed agrarian class allies, notably the Bashkirs. Colonization and settlement legislation hardly produced an impoverished and oppressed peasant class, since many migrants managed their affairs quite well and especially with state assistance. Nor had they given rise to significant ethnic-cultural clashes. Instead, the rural conflicts in the early twentieth century were of a social-legal nature.

Peasant colonization did contribute to the strengthening of the legal peasant estate, though, which is not to say it was homogenized. In a world of colonization and agrarian development, land was still important, but it had become divided by struggles between three types of state-enforced rights: collective, private and (historical) patrimonial. Also, matters were complicated further when instead of merely being the elevated guarantor of these various rights, the state had come down from its throne to become an active participant in this arena by promoting private landownership. These struggles reveal how complex the formation of a 'modern citizen' actually was. In the Ufa governorate, the most significant conflict of rights was that between the private rights of migrants and the Bashkir patrimonial rights. Right up to the formation of the Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in 1922, this took the centre stage of the political arena.

Stolypin's privatization reforms of 1906-1911 have received varied evaluations from contemporaries and later historians, but in Ufa they were quite successful in achieving their (initial) goals.³²⁶ The Russian peasantry here had already been accustomed to private

³²⁴ M. Rywkin, 'The autonomy of Bashkirs', *Central Asian Survey* 12 1 (1993) 47-57.

³²⁵ See for example the standard Soviet history of Bashkiria, Vasil'ev a.o. (eds.), *Ocherki* v.1 p.2, 228-230.

³²⁶ It must be noted again that 'privatization' of communal allotment lands (*nadel*) formally meant 'individualization', as peasants could only consider the allotment lands acquired through the reforms their 'personal possession.' The government still feared that if peasants were to sell these lands, they could not guarantee their livelihood. Macey, "A Wager on History", 152; Y. Kotsonis, *Making*

landholding and the 1906 reform only made acquiring private lands easier. From a Bashkir perspective, however, the Stolypin reforms increased tensions as they were yet another assault on the patrimonial rights to the land which now even underpinned the emerging ethnic identity of Bashkirs (the additional resettlement plans in the reforms only added to the Bashkir predicament). Because in most places in Ufa, peasants were able to find additional lands next to their communal holdings, the tension between collective and private rights were not so great. According to the zemstvo statistics, communal holdings were also growing in size, which suggests that Ufa peasants could very well acquire lands collectively and privately at the same time.

In other places in Russia, the Stolypin reforms clearly intensified tensions between collective and private rights, by presenting these varieties as a dichotomy to the peasants in order to individualize and intensify Russian peasant agriculture at the cost of the communal holdings. (From the social-legal point of view, it does not even matter whether the reformers were correct about the commune's lacklustre productivity, since at the very least they exacerbated existing conflicts between types of rights).³²⁷ Historians disagree about which type of rights and which underlying attitude prevailed. They are unsure about the reforms' success in imparting the Russian peasant with a liberal appreciation of private landholding, because they had mixed effects indeed.³²⁸

In Tver' province, for example, the peasant Fëdor Volkhov complained to the authorities that his plans to form a private landholding within the commune (*otrub*) were thwarted by the commune's decision to undertake an enclosure of its collective lands.³²⁹ Conversely, in other regions some communes had ceased to repartition their lands and considered their collective allotment lands to be private property now or even requested their entire dissolution into *otruba* and *khutora* (separate farmsteads).³³⁰ When peasants pressed the authorities for consolidation of their collective landholdings, this did not present a turn away from the modern civic attitudes Stolypin sought to achieve, but rather the demand to respect or reinforce the collective rights. Even if the government sought to accommodate such pressures, the adaptations of policies could hardly be described as peasantization: collective landownership was no longer described in terms of idealized communal harmony, but as a pragmatic alternative to the many difficulties privatization posed for agriculture.³³¹

Peasants Backward. Agricultural Cooperatives and the Agrarian Question in Russia, 1861-1914 (1999) 54-55.

³²⁷ Kopsidis, Bruisch & Bromley, 'Where is the backward Russian peasant?', 425-428.

³²⁸ Macey, "A Wager on History", 149-150, 157 & 161-165; Pallot, 'Khutora and Otruba', 242-243; Yaney, 'The Concept of the Stolypin Land Reform', 284-287 & 289-293; Smith, "Moral economy", 150.

³²⁹ Moon, '[Review] Judith Pallot, *Land Reform*', 135.

³³⁰ Smith, "Moral economy", 147; Macey, "A Wager on History", 155.

³³¹ Pallot, 'Khutora and Otruba', 242.

To explain the trajectories rural conflicts in the early twentieth century, as in who quarrelled with whom and what social relations emerged, the study of social-economic stratification within the Russian peasant communes does not make much sense without taking the social-legal context of landownership into account. For example, in some villages the ones pressing for collective rights were the wealthy peasants (blocking the formation of *otrub* and *khutor* households on communal lands) and in others it were the poorer ones (claiming private lands). Likewise, the ones pursuing private title to the land were more well-to-do peasants in some villages (blocking or abandoning repartitions), but poorer ones in other places (trying to get out from under unfavourable land distributions). Sometimes entire villages were turned into private holdings and sometimes nothing happened.³³² This makes it clear that social-economic groups did not share a common attitude toward landownership throughout Russia. The problem for peasants that lost these confrontations was not that some were rich and others were not, but that they believed one or the other type of rights was better suited to solve their land problems. As the peasant Volkhov from Tver' complained: 'The peasants do not consider what the system of land-holding will be like after the land settlement. [...] The result of [collective landholding] is not a reorganization of the land but its disorganization.'³³³ Again, in the early 1900s, it were the tensions between the various types of land rights (and their interpretations) that determined the nature of rural conflicts within peasant communities and with other rural inhabitants.

In a way, which type of land rights prevailed exactly may not even be most significant here. The revolution that took place between 1861-1917 was actually that state regulations and a degree of state accountability had become something of a self-evident fact within peasant communities. Instead of the inherent antagonism for the state generally ascribed to traditional 'peasant culture,' even those that did not go along with particular state policies still insisted on the state to enforce their rights. Like other segments of Russian society, Russian peasants had become demanding citizens with varied perspectives on and solutions for their land problems.

Seen from this perspective, it may seem a mystery why the tsarist state eventually collapsed then. There was no fundamental flaw in the rights regime that existed in those early years of the twentieth century that would inevitably lead to the tsar's demise. The revolutions were no outburst of an inherent incompatibility between state and society. However, as the 1917 Bashkir revolution and the run-up to it indicate, the fact that the state had such a pronounced preference of one type of rights while still maintaining the others

³³² Smith, "'Moral economy'", 153 & 155; Verner, 'Peasant Petitions', 78-81 & 85; Rudin, Plavskij & Khavskij (eds.), *Sbornik zakonov*, 146; Macey, "'A Wager on History'", 155; Pallot, 'Khutora and Otruba', 255.

³³³ Moon, '[Review] Judith Pallot, *Land Reform*', 135.

made it very difficult in the long run for officials to keep supporters of other rights on board. Russia's citizens were increasingly concerned with the proper observance of their rights.

Although some historians have attributed the eventual collapse of the tsarist regime in 1917 to the peasants' lack of modern attitudes, perhaps the revolutions can best be seen as a way of the Russian citizens, also in the countryside, to find the best type of regime to uphold their rights. The reason why both in 1905-1907 and 1917 civic protests devolved into rural violence is twofold: government mismanagement of civic demands and a (temporary) loss of tsarist legitimacy among parts of the peasantry. The Russian officials clearly could not cope with the increased reliance on their services. Especially when war placed great stress on the country's population, infrastructures and food supplies, like in the 1904-1905 war with Japan and during the First World War, government officials could not meet the demands of peasants, Bashkirs and many others. Moreover, because Russian statesmen like Stolypin favoured private over communal landholding, many demands for consolidation of collective rights were held off (at first).³³⁴ Revolution still hinged on a degree of contingency, though: the Russian authorities were not particularly well-equipped to deal with rowdy protests as they had no proper crowd control troops. When soldiers were sent to intervene, things could quickly turn bloody.³³⁵

Therefore, when a combination of disappointment and resentment radicalized parts of the peasantry to the extent that they no longer held any confidence in the ability of the tsarist state to uphold their rights (mostly collective rights), they turned to the lands and estates of nobles in large parts of European Russia to realize the promise of the land that underpinned their rights.³³⁶ Only after the government promise of reform and national representation the rural violence started to wane.³³⁷ Driven by their insistence on their historical patrimonial rights (expressed in ethnic terms) against collective and private rights of mostly Russian peasants, the Bashkirs had gone into a different direction and eventually claimed territorial autonomy in late 1917. The collapse of the tsarist state was thus not the result of an inherent class struggle. The revolutions in fact revealed the dividing lines within the peasant estate. The vectors of rural conflicts did not run along social-economic lines alone, but perhaps more so along social-legal ones.

³³⁴ Pallot, 'Khutora and Otruba', 255-256; Ascher, *Russia in Disarray*, 344.

³³⁵ D.C.B. Lieven, 'The Security Police, Civil Rights, and the Fate of the Russian Empire, 1855-1917', in: O. Crisp & L. Edmondson (eds.), *Civil Rights in Imperial Russia* (Oxford 1989) 240-241.

³³⁶ Smith, "'Moral economy'", 153-155; Verner, 'Peasant Petitions', 74; Ascher, *Russia in Disarray*, 162-163.

³³⁷ Ascher, *Russia in Disarray*, 345; some peasants no longer trusted the tsarist regime and instead believed that their rights could only be guaranteed by the State Duma, whereas others were convinced that only the tsar and the Duma together could solve their agrarian issues, evidently within a legal framework that was not traditional, A. Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905. Authority Restored* (Stanford 1992) 283-284.

In a way that resembled the tsarist origins of Soviet 'counting, extracting and exterminating' of specific populations as well as the continuities in approach and personnel in land reform measures across the revolutionary divide of 1917 that spanned both Red and White parties, the government economic development of Ufa after 1861 anticipated the agrarian policies on the Kazakh steppe under the future Soviet state around 1930.³³⁸

While I cannot substantiate any genealogical connections between tsarist Bashkiria and agricultural departments of the Soviet state, there are some interesting similarities between their methods of agrarian development. These similarities should therefore be considered only as some tentative observations. The experience of the Ufa administration with raising agricultural output at the expense of 'unproductive' semi-nomadic Bashkirs informed (warned) tsarist officials of other non-Russian regions, but the methods applied here seem to have carried over into the Kazakh steppe in the Soviet era.³³⁹ The most important difference between the imperial and Soviet execution of agrarian policies, however, was that the Soviets undeniably went a lot further than their tsarist predecessors.

In order to alleviate the principal aim of the provincial authorities in Ufa was to expand and innovate its agriculture by claiming or 'plundering' the lands of the Bashkirs (coaxing them into adopting 'proper' farming), integrating them more into imperial society and also providing material assistance to Russian migrants. When confronted with an economic crisis in 1927-1928, the Soviet authorities had to resort to grain-requisitions throughout the country, including the Kazakh steppe region. Here, to begin with, (incorrect) doubts of Soviet officials about the net contribution to grain production by nomads echoed those their tsarist predecessors as early as 1879. They had blamed low yields and the depletion of grain reserves on the inefficient land use of Bashkirs, starving other 'hard-working farmers' of land, and their refusal to grow grain.³⁴⁰ During 1928 Sokolovskii, a Soviet statistician, likewise concluded that 'the Kazakhs are not grain producers, as the Russian population is, yet the quantity of grain they eat is not negligible.'³⁴¹

Accordingly, the Soviet authorities believed that settling the Kazakhs was the key to combat the famine. The three preceding measures they took resembled agrarian policies in Ufa, possibly the earliest interventionist attempt at 'agriculturalizing' a steppe region in Russian history. First, they expropriated the rich and noble Kazakhs and redistributed their

³³⁸ Holquist, 'To Count, to Extract, and to Exterminate', 111-144; P. Holquist, "'In Accord with State Interests and the People's Wishes": The Technocratic Ideology of Imperial Russia's Resettlement Administration', *Slavic Review* 69 1 (2010) 151-152.

³³⁹ Masoero, 'Layers of property', 12.

³⁴⁰ *Obzor za 1879 god*, 1879; *Obzor za 1891 god*, 33-34.

³⁴¹ N. Pianciola, 'Famine in the steppe. The collectivization of agriculture and the Kazakh herdsmen, 1928-1934', *Cahiers du monde russe* 45 1-2 (2004) 143.

property to cut through traditional hierarchies and tribal solidarities. This was accompanied by the pillaging, or the 'plundering' if you will, of the rural Kazakh population by all and sundry who thought they acted with government support or even dissimulated authority. Since many Kazakhs became impoverished and fled the region (even abroad), the massive expropriations prompted the Soviet's very own Kovalevskii-inspection in August 1928, headed by Aleksei S. Kiselëv, and the downfall of a 'little 'Kryzhanovskii of Kazakhstan', I.M. Bekker, who was blamed for provoking a near-rebellion among the Kazakhs in Semipalatinsk.³⁴²

Secondly, in the same vein as tsarist implementation of the cantonal system in 1798 as well as the universal conscription and formation of a special Bashkir military unit in 1874, the Soviets drafted young Kazakhs in order to abolish tensions that rested on differentiated treatment of Europeans and natives. The irony is that the Bashkirs and Kazakhs found themselves on opposite ends here: whereas Bashkirs historically thought their status was preserved through military service, the Kazakhs believed the universal draft undermined their freedom from military service (in 1916, tsarist violations of this privilege had even sparked a massive rebellion).³⁴³ In combination with the encroachment on their lands, however, due to its obligatory rather than bargaining nature, the universal conscription met with strong resistance by the Bashkirs who feared loss of their privileged status too. In any case, by binding the Kazakhs to the state, the Soviets hoped to pacify ethnic tensions (which they themselves had helped to create by insisting on ethnic hierarchies) and develop agriculture on the steppe.³⁴⁴

Finally, on 18 January 1928, the Soviets re-allowed migrants to come into Kazakhstan as part of the national decision that the movements of peasants would stimulate the economy. Like the tsarist government, the Soviets actively aided these colonists too and high 'nothing else, but a continuation of the work of the old Tsarist Resettlement Administration, carried out by the same bureaucrats within the apparat, and based on the old data from the materials of that administration.' Likewise, the committee of the Alma-Ata *okrug* aimed at the by now familiar goal of cultivating 'free' farmland in July 1929.³⁴⁵ As part of the collectivization programme, the Soviet government also brought in colonists who were

³⁴² Pianciola, 'Famine in the steppe', 148-152; T. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca & London 2001) 66-67.

³⁴³ Pianciola, 'Famine in the steppe', 152.

³⁴⁴ During the preceding period of the New Economic Policy, the Soviets promoted a 'decolonisation' policy in the steppe, by awarding land according to 'a system of priority based on national affiliation' (*ocherednost*). A lot of colonists were also expelled from these territories. Their program of 'nativization' of local political power (*korenizatsiia*) likewise increased the contrasts between Russians and Kazakhs. Pianciola, 'Famine in the steppe', 145-146 & 152; Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 59-67; N. Pianciola, 'Decoloniser l'Asie centrale? Bolcheviks et colons au Semireč'e (1920-1922)', *Cahiers du monde russe* 49 1 (2008) 101-102.

³⁴⁵ Pianciola, 'Famine in the steppe', 153-154.

supposed to raise agricultural output due to their specialized knowledge. Most of these peasant arrivals were deportees who had been stripped of their civil rights and had to live under miserable conditions.³⁴⁶

The great difference between the way the imperial and Soviet officials tried to realize their desire for increased grain output from the steppe was that the Soviets turned to the forced collectivization and 'sedentarization' of the Kazakh nomads, whereas the Bashkirs were never exposed to such (genocidal) violence after 1869. This project had four aims: 'freeing land for grain cultivation; incorporating the nomads into the collective farm system; making a work force available for agriculture and industry; ending friction between herdsmen and peasants, which had had a negative effect on the region's agricultural production.'³⁴⁷ If we replace 'collective farm system' by 'private landholding,' these goals could just as well have been taken from a tsarist report on transforming Bashkir land use. While Bashkirs were occasionally forced to relocate as a result of the land surveys and educated circles feared their extinction, they were never subjected to systematic violence like the Soviet countryside was around 1930.

Despite the major difference in the extent of application, it were by and large still the same methods of agrarian development in Ufa and Kazakhstan, which also led to the same problems. Both Bashkirs and Kazakhs were confronted with an attack on their livelihood and both vehemently resisted, albeit somewhat differently. The Bashkirs resisted tsarist policies with petitions and force, whereas Kazakhs also petitioned the Soviets, but they also simply fled the region. The local authorities hailed the results as the long-anticipated social revolution in Kazakhstan. The tsarist authorities appear to have drawn a lesson from the experience of trying to bring about the largescale settlement of (remaining) Bashkir nomads by refraining from such interventionism among the Kazakhs. The Soviets, however, apparently had not and took up the glove. Like the imperial officials before them, they learned that rural modernization could turn into disaster in an instant.

The question that remains is: why had the Soviets not learned? High-ranking Soviet officials cited and used materials from the imperial ministries and as Peter Holquist demonstrated, many tsarist 'specialists' working in those ministries barely had to change their letterhead when they transferred to Soviet commissariats.³⁴⁸ Why, then, did they use those hated methods of agrarian development in the steppe? While I cannot answer this question here, it may have had to do with the fact that Bashkiria was one of the few examples of 'successful' sedentarization within the Russian empire. Lenin himself had hailed

³⁴⁶ Ibidem, 157-159.

³⁴⁷ Pianciola, 'Famine in the steppe', 155.

³⁴⁸ Holquist, 'The Technocratic Ideology', 175.

the Bashkirs in 1918 as the example of the painful, yet unavoidable transformation from medieval to eventually a proletarian democracy.³⁴⁹

If the Bashkir example indeed inspired Soviet plans, it would also be worthwhile to investigate its genealogical outshoots to find out how the methods found their way to the Soviet desks in the late 1920s or whether there was a particular 'Russian way' of settling nomadic peoples.³⁵⁰ A good starting point would be the person of Nikolai Aleksandrovich Gurvich (1828-1914), physician, head of the Ufa statistical committee and leading figure in the civil society of Ufa.³⁵¹ Gurvich must have formed elaborate networks during his long tenure as head of the statistical committee (1864-1891) as well as the contacts he established as deputy of the Ufa nobility and founder of the provincial museum and city library. In a way, Gurvich is the embodiment of modern colonialism in Ufa: the benevolent doctor who has come to help an ailing patient, but is prepared to use desperate remedies.

One can only imagine how he conversed and debated with his colleagues and attended soirees at the homes of the high society members who ran the affairs of the empire. Or how he inculcated in them a sense of amazement at Ufa's development from a 'backwater, Siberia even' into a lively and alluring place through his historical writings.³⁵² Or even in their sons too when they visited his museum and who later had to find their way in the new realities of Soviet society. These were the generations who were taught that out of the hardships of the Bashkirs and through the 'personal labour, energy and endurance' of hard-working Russian colonist, a better world had emerged. The world of the Russian peasants in Ufa may not have become any easier since the moment they arrived at their

³⁴⁹ Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 6.

³⁵⁰ In the nineteenth-century Ottoman empire, for example, authorities similarly tried to sedentarize Anatolian (and Arab) nomads by imposing military control (over nomadic elites), but in general their relations centred much more on negotiation and nomads generally retained a significant degree of mobility well into the twentieth century, R. Kasaba, 'L'empire ottoman, ses nomads et ses frontières aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles', *Critique internationale* 12 3 (2001) 119-123; the Chinese Qing dynasty sought to vanquish the nomadic Zunghars in Xinjiang by launching military campaigns and isolating the nomads economically and diplomatically. Unlike Russia, however, the Qing never considered economic development of Xinjiang their primary goal, but they did utilize similar policies of sponsored colonization and military control without actively trying to settle the nomads (in other regions too). P.C. Perdue, *China Marches West. The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia* (Cambridge, MA 2005) 333-336, 339-356 & 518-523; P.C. Perdue, 'Strange Parellels across Eurasia', *Social Science History* 32 2 (2008) 274-275; P.C. Perdue, 'Nature and Nurture on Imperial China's Frontiers', *Modern Asian Studies* 43 1 (2009) 262; J. Reardon-Anderson, 'Land Use and Society in Manchuria and Inner Mongolia during the Qing Dynasty', *Environmental History* 5 4 (2000) 503-522; Furthermore, the histories of the sedentarization of the nomadic peoples in the Ottoman, Russian and Qing empires suggest this was an overlapping history of interactions among these empires.

³⁵¹ Gurvich was the son-in-law of Nikolaj V. Zhukovskij, the Orenburg governor who set up one of the first statistical committees in Russia in the 1830s. Also, during Gurvich's tenure as head of the statistical committee, the second census in all of Russia was organized in the Ufa territories in 1864 to prepare their separation from Orenburg, Remezov, *Byl' v skazochnoj strane*, 247-248; Gurvich & Blokhin, *Spravochnaja knizhka*, 241-242; Steinwedel, *Threads of Empire*, 223 & 320n85.

³⁵² Gurvich & Blokhin, *Spravochnaja knizhka*, 241.

patch of land to build a new home, but it was certainly very different from where they had come from.

Glossary³⁵³

Barshchina – labour obligation of peasants.

Bobył – Cotter or landless peasant, in Bashkiria often from the Volga-Urals region. After 1747 considered a separate status.

Crown peasant – *udel'nyj krest'janin*, category of peasant that came into existence in 1797 with the reform of the court peasants.

Desjatina – Russian unit of area, equal to around 10,925 square metres (the Treasury desjatina) or 14,567 square metres (proprietor's desjatina).

Deti boiarskie – Lesser gentry, minor servitors of the princes.

Dikoe pol'e – Steppe frontier.

Dvor – Peasant homestead; also the court of the prince.

Dvorianstvo – The nobility.

Dvorovye liudi – Household serfs.

Gubernija – governorate or province.

Izba – a wooden peasant house, the living quarters of the farm.

Khutor(a) – peasant family farm in which all strips have been consolidated into a single, compact plot and the peasant homestead and other buildings have been relocated on to it as well.

Meshcherjak – also *Mishar*, originally a Tatar in military or civil service in Bashkiria, but otherwise a fluid category of people that in the course of time identified as Tatars, Teptjars or Bashkirs.

Mining factory peasant – *gornozavodskij krest'janin*, category of peasants that consisted of peasants from the other peasant categories, who were allocated to factories that otherwise had a structural shortage of labourers.

Mir – peasant commune.

Obrok – quitrent paid by peasants in cash or kind.

Obshchina – peasant commune, sometimes also (*sel'skoe*) *obshchestvo* or 'village commune'.

Otrub(a) – peasant family farm in which strips have been consolidated into a limited number of plots (two to five) and the family continues to live in the core village.

Obzor – (statistical) survey report, published by the provincial zemstvo.

Pereselenie – process of peasant resettlement on to sparsely occupied lands in the north and east of Russia.

³⁵³ Partly based on Blum, *Lord and Peasant in Russia*, 621-622 and Macey, 'Reflections', 417.

Pomeshchik – until the early eighteenth century holder of land on service tenure; later, the general name for noble landowners.

Pomest'e – until the early eighteenth century land held on service tenure; later, the general name for estates owned by nobles.

Pripushchennik – literally 'those let in,' refers to the special renters of Bashkir *votchina* lands. Not all *pripushchenniki* had written contracts with the Bashkir-*votchinniki*.

Pugachevshchina – Peasant rising led by Emelian Pugachev in 1773-1774.

Sazhen' – Russian unit of length, equal to 2,1336 metres.

Serf – *pomeshchechij* or *krepostnoj krest'janin*, a category of peasants who were bound to the land and were considered personally unfree. They had to pay *obrok* or perform *barshchina* for their (noble) landlords. Some were household serfs. In Bashkiria, there were relatively few serfs and nobles.

Sobstvennost' – ownership, possibly hereditary.

State peasant – *gosudarstvennyj krest'janin*, category of peasants that originated around 1720 and encompassed all peasants who were thus far not yet bound to noble or crown landowners. As a result, these peasants had varying privileges. State peasants paid the 'soul tax' (a direct tax per male peasant 'soul' instead of household). In Bashkiria, the state peasants consisted of Bobyls, monastery peasants (formally Synodal manorial peasants or *ekonomicheskie krest'jane*), *yasak* payers (*jasachnye ljudi*), *Teptjars*, children of retired soldiers, so-called 'suitcase Tatars' (*chemodannye tatary*) who worked in the postal service between Kazan' and Ufa and independent soldiers or Cossacks (*belopakhotnye soldaty*).

Teptjar – formally *pripushchinniki* of various ethnicities with written contracts, which granted them a more or less intermediary position between *votchinniki* and other *pripushchinniki*. After 1747 considered a separate status.

Tiaglo (pl. *tiagla*) – total of the fiscal obligations owed by the peasant; also the capacity of the peasant to meet these obligations; also the unit of assessment for the levying of these and other obligations.

Uezd(y) – district or county, an administrative subdivision of the governorate or province (*gubernija*).

Ulozhenie – law code of 1649.

Versta – Russian unit of length, equal to 1066,8 metres or 500 *sazhen* long. Originally denoted the 'turn' of a plough.

Vladenie – possession, in principle not hereditary.

Volost' – territorial commune; administrative unit,

Votchina – patrimony or hereditary landed property of a noble or Bashkir; also the landed patrimony of early princes.

Votchinnik – a patrimonial landowner, the owner of a *votchina*.

Yasak – a tax in kind, prevalent on the steppe and in Siberia, and paid mostly in marten and fox furs in Bashkiria. The so-called ‘yasak payers’ (*jasachnye ljudi*) considered payment of yasak a privilege and a guarantee of their patrimonial landownership.

Zemledelie – farming.

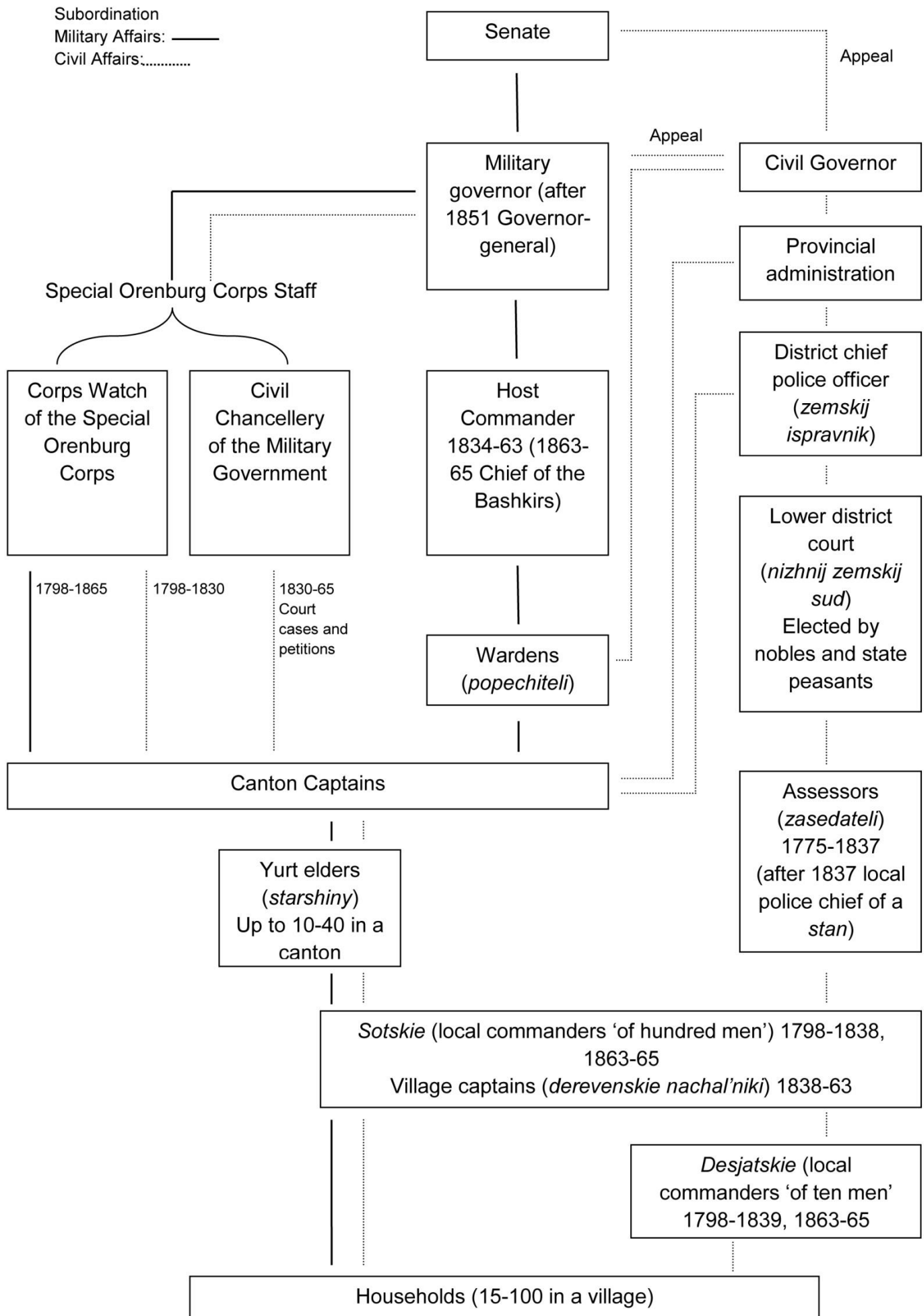
Zemleustrojstvo – the process of land reorganization or rationalization conducted by whole villages or large parts of villages and ranging from the reduction or elimination of the traditional practice of interstripping to the formation of *khutora* or *otruba*.

Zemstva – local organs of self-government created at the time of the Emancipation in 1864, initially in 34 provinces of European Russia and subsequently extended to six additional, western provinces by Stolypin.

Appendix A

The cantonal administration, 1798-1865

Cantonal administration (1798-1865)

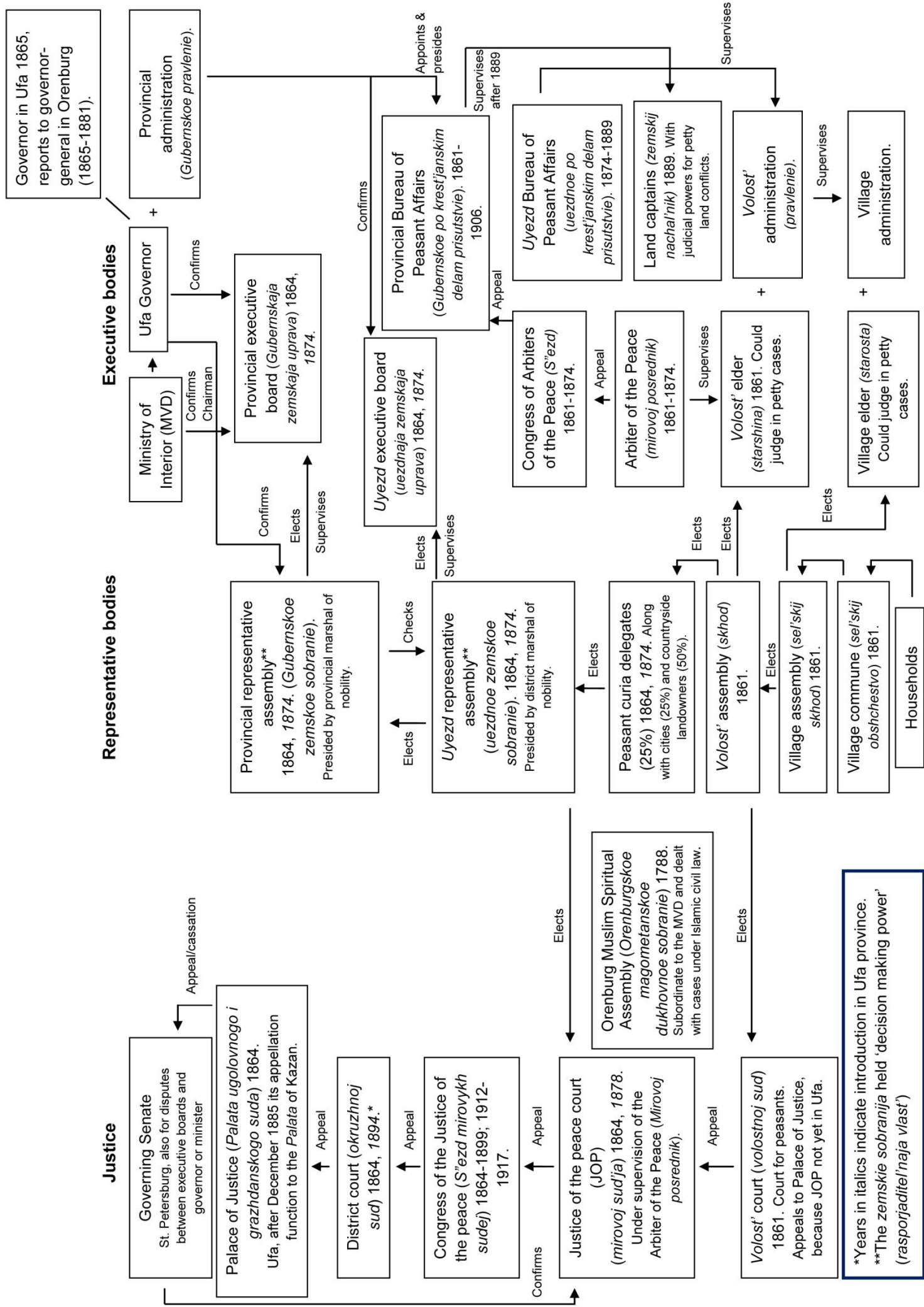


Made by Emma C. Spijkerman and based on:

Scheme (http://fb.bashenc.ru/MAP/KANTON_SYSTEM_skeme.jpg) (accessed 5 May 2018) from the article 'Kantonnaja sistema upravlenija' on the cantonal system from the online version of the Bashkir encyclopaedia: M.A. Il'ganov (ed.), *Bashkirskaia entsiklopedija: v 7 tomakh* (Ufa 2005-2011). The online version: <http://www.башкирская-энциклопедия.рф/> (accessed 5 May 2018).

Appendix B

*The division of rural powers in the Ufa governorate, 1861 -
1917*



Made by Emma C. Spijkerman and based on:

Corresponding articles on the online version of the Bashkir encyclopaedia: M.A. Il'ganov (ed.), *Bashkirskaia entsiklopediia: v 7 tomakh* (Ufa 2005-2011). The online version: <http://www.башкирская-энциклопедия.рф/> (accessed 5 May 2018).

A.M. Nazarenko a.o. (eds.), *Istorija gosudarstva i prava Rossii: nagljadnoe posobie* (Saint Petersburg 2012) schemes 115, 116, 117, 118, 120, 122, 124, 128.

R.D. Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar. Islam and Empire in Russia and Central Asia* (Cambridge, MA 2006) 53-54.

R. Crews, 'Empire and the Confessional State: Islam and Religious Politics in Nineteenth-Century Russia', *American Historical Review* 108 1 (2003) 56.

Appendix C

Types of land possession in Ufa governorate, 1879-1915

Land possession according to social-legal group in *desiatins*³⁵⁴

	Communal landowners/ former temporarily obligated peasants	Peasant (private) landowners	Bashkir- <i>votchinniki</i>	Bashkir- <i>pripushchenniki</i>
1879*	Too broad data	Too broad data	Too broad data	Too broad data
1880	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1881*	Too broad data	328.809,0	4.549.724,0	No data
1882*	Too broad data	Too broad data	Too broad data	Too broad data
1883	774.975,6	904.135,0	4.359.180,0	1.062.924,4
1884	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1885	778.979,0	958.024,0	4.352.200,0	1.072.146,0
1886	778.979,0	958.024,0	4.352.200,0	1.072.146,0
1887	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1888	755.976,4	1.026.303,5	4.128.706,7	1.188.863,2
1889	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1890	754.813,5	1.058.160,3	4.106.945,2	1.186.554,9
1891	756.360,1	1.047.382,1	4.268.941,0	1.194.940,6
1892	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1893	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1894	759.934,6	1.106.765,0	3.924.660,1	1.503.127,6
1895	760.833,4	1.144.908,1	3.862.689,3	1.555.837,3
1896	764.226,0	1.227.314,4	3.777.948,1	1.586.162,8
1897	862.092,2	1.270.833,1	3.751.071,7	1.577.088,1
1898**	862.092,2	1.270.833,1	3.751.071,7	1.577.088,1
1899	875.197,4	1.355.415,3	3.222.255,4	1.577.083,1
1900***	874.046,9	1.458.190,0	3.126.877,6	1.581.208,2
1901***	874.046,9	1.459.190,0	3.636.353,0	1.581.208,2
1902****	878.658,5	1.542.760,1	3.624.486,2	157.766,1
1903	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1904	889.068,6	1.672.027,6	3.514.738,6	1.608.328,9
1905	892.108,6	1.740.273,1	3.486.497,2	1.608.345,1
1906	892.872,0	1.813.421,5	3.457.892,0	1.608.312,0
1907	910.016,0	1.885.185,5	3.452.085,9	1.608.312,1
1908	857.653,0	1.925.073,1	3.456.948,0	1.608.312,1
1909	903.192,1	1.985.293,4	3.451.892,1	1.608.352,4
1910	904.860,4	2.036.791,1	3.467.404,1	1.608.535,6
1911	941.366,3	2.085.090,3	3.461.919,5	1.608.535,6
1912	948.625,9	2.156.612,5	3.314.383,0	1.608.537,7
1913	974.460,1	2.192.210,9	3.302.142,9	1.610.191,1
1914	995.461,7	2.216.609,4	3.282.360,7	1.610.251,1
1915	1.046.644,3	2.250.185,2	3.264.366,8	1.610.219,4

*The first editions of the *obzory* mostly group together 'rural communities' and 'private landowners', not yet distinguishing between peasants and Bashkirs (and their *pripushchenniki*).

** The 1898 statistics including commentary are a word for word copy of 1897.

*** The statistics of 1900 were incorrect for some reason and their corrected numbers were published in 1901. The numbers for the Bashkir-*votchinniki* for 1900 are divided in 'surveyed land' and 'non-surveyed land' (probably due to the 1898 law that called for another survey). In 1901, this category was further differentiated into two additional groups: Bashkir collectively-owned 'allotment land' (*dushevoj nadel*), which must have been the result of the land surveys, and Bashkir free land (*svobodnaja zemlja*).

**** The size of land possessed by *pripushchenniki* seems incorrect.

³⁵⁴ The data are taken from the *Obzory Ufimskoj gubernii* of 1879-1915, published in Ufa 1880-1917. I have indicated 'not available' (N/A) for the editions not available to me.

Appendix D
Timeline, 1552-1922

Timeline

(dates of Julian calendar)

2 October 1552 – capture of Kazan' by Ivan IV and conquest of the Khanate of Kazan'. Muscovy becomes a significant actor in steppe politics.

1553-1557 – the inception of the Bashkir social-legal status: various Turkic tribal leaders from former Kazan' territories recognize Ivan IV as their new sovereign, pledging to pay *yasak* and serve in the military and in return gaining conditional rights to use their land. The tribal leaders also receive noble status. The territories of these tribes are governed by the Kazan' administration, in turn directed from the Kazan' Palace in Moscow (which administered the entire lower Volga basin).

1574 – founding of the fortress Ufa to gather *yasak* and control the area more effectively.

1586 – Ufa received city status.

1586-1708 – Ufa *uyezd* (district) governed by a voivode, subordinate to the Kazan' *tsarstvo* ('kingdom').

1598 – Russian defeat of the Khanate of Sibir, after which Bashkir tribes living on its former territories recognize the Russian tsar as their sovereign.

1638-1648 – Russian war against the Oirat or Kalmyks on the Lower Volga and north-western Caspian shores. Several Bashkir tribes aid the Russians.

29 January 1649 – promulgation of the *Sobornoje Ulozhenie*, a broad legal code, which among other things deals with the different types of land use of various categories of subjects and recognizes Bashkir conditional land use. It also considers peasant communities juridical entities and provides a legal basis for serfdom by fixing peasants to the land.

1662-1664 – uprising of various Bashkir tribes, because the tsarist government did not uphold the conditions of Bashkir acceptance of Russian sovereignty. This rather successful uprising consolidates Bashkir conditional rights to their land, turning it into their hereditary patrimony (*votchina*). Through this war, Bashkir tribes also largely evade serfdom. Throughout history, Bashkir tribes seldom rebelled all at the same time (Bashkirs could also support the tsarist army) and other legal social-economic groups, such as the special tenants (*pripushchenniki*), could participate on either side of the war. These *pripushchenniki* are mostly non-Russian migrants from the surrounding regions, since Russian peasants are often settled on crown lands, state lands or noble estates.

1681-1684 – uprising of various Bashkir tribes due to threats to the Bashkir patrimony (*votchina*), raised taxes, power abuses of local authorities and attempts of forced Christianisation.

1704-1711 – uprising of various Bashkir tribes due to the common grounds of threats to the Bashkir *votchina*, raised taxes, power abuses of local authorities and attempts of forced Christianisation.

18 December 1708 – creation of Ufa province, still subordinate to the newly formed Kazan' governorate and voivode remains in place.

19 February 1711 – creation of the Governing Senate, which was the highest legislative organ besides the monarch.

26 November 1718 – decree that lead to the imposition of a 'soul tax' (*podushnaja podat'*), a direct tax per male peasant 'soul' instead of household, on the peasants that had not yet been bound to a landlord (or to the royal family). In 1724, this group of peasants was first referred to as 'state peasants' by Peter I.

26 November 1718-1719 – First revision of population that pays soul tax. Bashkirs are not yet counted. These records would be periodically updated, but were prone to manipulation. Eventually, Nikolaj Gogol's *Dead Souls* (1842) would caricaturize these fraudulent practices.

1734-1744 – Orenburg expedition under the command of Ivan K. Kirilov (1734-1737), Vasilij N. Tatishchev (1737-1739), Vasilij A. Urusov (1739-1741), Leontij Ja. Sojmonov (1741-1742) and Ivan I. Nepljuev (1742-1744).

July 1735-1741 – series of uprisings of various Bashkir tribes in reaction to the Orenburg expedition and the military presence which violates Bashkir patrimonial rights and threatens their local autonomy. The war itself and the repression of the first uprising are exceptionally brutal and spark subsequent uprisings. After the final victory of Russian forces, Orthodox missionaries step up their efforts at Christianization.

31 August 1735 – founding of the fortress Orenburg on the southern border between Bashkiria and the Kazakh steppes. The city was moved three times, in 1743 it moved to its current location. Orenburg was the most important link in the military encirclement of Bashkiria, which served to divide and contain Bashkir-Kazakh tribes as well as protect Russian subjects from Kazakh slave raiders. Both Cossacks and Bashkir military are vital to the Russian border defence.

1735-1739 – Russo-Turkish war, the Bashkirs that are mobilized on 5 January 1736 for this war also fought in the Seven Years' War.

11 February 1736 – law to punish Bashkir insurgents, among other things by giving the lands of the insurgents to their *pripushchenniki* (special tenants) and ruling that various tenants no longer had to pay *obrok* (rent) their Bashkir landlords. The Bashkir lands could also be purchased from now on by nobles and military officers.

September 1740 – Publication of Synodal decree that increases conversion efforts among the peoples of the Volga, which leads to many violent conversions of the region's pagans and to some extent Muslims.

8 August 1743 – law that issues Bashkir land to nobles and military and civil officials.

15 March 1744 – foundation of Orenburg governorate, which subordinates the voivode of Ufa province.

1747 – uprising of various so-called Teptjars and Bobyls, who work on Bashkir patrimonial lands. These legal social-economic groups resist a tax raise.

1754 – abolition of yasak payments for Bashkirs and Meshcherjaks.

25 May 1754 – law that makes the establishment of factories in the mountains of Bashkiria easier.

1755-1756 – uprising of various Bashkir tribes due to threats to the basis of their *votchina* and a government prohibition of free collection of salt, which was their traditional right. Moreover, the revolt is a reaction to the forced conversions of the previous decade and as a result these efforts are halted.

1756-1763 – Seven Years' War, during which Bashkirs are deployed in eastern Europe.

Late 1763 – Catherine II agrees to experiment with the abolition of serfdom on the crown estate Bronnaja.

15 June 1765 – establishment of the Imperial Free Economic Society for the Encouragement of Agriculture and Husbandry in Saint Petersburg. The Society aims to spread the latest methods of agriculture and estate management from abroad and dedicates itself to the questions of Russian agriculture and the peasant communities. Already in 1766, the Society held an international essay competition that dealt with the question of peasant landownership and the nature of peasant property. It was shut down by the Bolsheviks in 1919.

19 September 1765 – start of the General Land Survey in all of Russia in order to address the many land disputes. The General Land Survey lasts until 1861.

16 February 1766 – practical instruction to all land surveyors, creation of the Demarcation Expedition of the Senate.

1771-1773 – Russian campaign against the Bar Confederation of Polish nobles. A great number of Bashkir troops are involved in the battles and subsequent occupation of the area, including Julaj Aznalin, a military officer, government official and the father of Salavat Julaeu.

1773-1775 – Pugachëv's rebellion in the Volga-Kama basin in which also Bashkirs participate, including the poet-warrior Salavat Julaeu and his father in northern Bashkiria. Bashkirs join the mixed rural rebellion, because of military pressures and steady colonization of their patrimonial lands. The rebellion is the most forceful attempt by Bashkirs to renegotiate the terms of Bashkiria's inclusion in the empire. After being defeated, Salavat Julaeu was branded and convicted to forced labour and today he is considered a national hero of Bashkortostan.

23 December 1781 – Ufa provincial administration converted into separate *namestnichestvo* (viceregency) with a governor. The Ufa *namestnichestvo* is subordinated to a governor-

general (*namestnik*, 'viceregent') along with the Simbirsk *namestnichestvo* (formed in September 1780).

1787 – Saint Petersburg starts printing Qurans to be handed out to Bashkirs and Kazakhs in an attempt to win their trust and promote a proper understanding of the Islamic faith. Part of the broader strategy by Catherine II and governor-general Osip A. Igel'strom to settle the nomads and stop them from raiding by building mosques, caravanserais, schools and such. Igel'strom considered Islam to be the faith of a sedentary agricultural and trading community.

22 September 1788 – founding of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly (*Orenburgskoe Magometanskoe Dukhovnoe Sobranie*). Its head, the mufti, resides in Ufa. The Assembly has authority over all Muslims within the empire, except for Crimea, and it serves to create religious elites loyal to the tsarist state within Bashkiria as well as to reach out to Muslim Kazakhs outside of the empire.

1789 – governor-general Osip A. Igel'strom grants the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly judicial powers in matters that belong to Islamic law, like circumcision and marriage. The Assembly also becomes a court of appeal for Muslims who disagree with local mosque decisions.

18 November 1790 – law that grants Meshcherjaks, Teptjars and Bobyls lands they have bought from Bashkirs or received from the state.

1794 – Demarcation Expedition converted into the Senate's Demarcation Department.

12 December 1796 – Ufa *namestnichestvo* abolished and its territories subordinated to newly formed Orenburg governorate.

5 April 1797 – promulgation of the Pauline Laws, which among others arrange for the formation of a legal group of 'crown peasants' which live on the estates of the royal family.

25 June 1797 – ukase that orders the General Land Survey of the Orenburg governorate to start in the spring of 1798. To this end a special Orenburg Survey Office is installed, which is moved to Ufa in early 1798. The Land Survey divides the land into *dachi* (sing. *dacha*) that would largely coincide with the old Bashkir *volosts* to preserve their patrimonial lands.

1798-1799 – Russia participates in the War of the Second Coalition against France. Notable is the alliance with the Ottoman empire through which Russia drives the French out of the Ionian islands under admiral Fjodor F. Ushakov and establishes a protectorate there called the Septinsular Republic (1800-1807).

10 April 1798 – introduction of cantonal system, formally giving the Bashkir, Meshcherjak and Cossack populations military status and subordinating them to a military governor, based in Orenburg. This territorial form of administration serves to cut through tribal forms of organisation.

14 August 1798 – Governing Senate sets the norm of the land allotment in the Orenburg governorate to peasants at 15 *desiatins* per male person.

17 October 1801 – the Governing Senate declares the territories of the Orenburg and Samara governorates to be full of empty wasteland, which stimulates further colonization.

1805-1806 – War of the Third Coalition against France, which includes the Battle of the Three Emperors at Austerlitz, lost by Russia.

1806 – start of the Special Land Survey in the Orenburg and Ufa territories that lasts until 1917 and runs parallel to the General Land Survey. The Special Land Survey is meant to address the issues of landownership and land use between Bashkir *votchinniki* (called *asaba* in Bashkir) and the various *pripushchenniki* tenants. It results in a range of laws and ukases on this topic.

1806-1807 – War of the Fourth Coalition against France, Bashkirs saw some action and Alexander I reportedly showed Napoleon some of his Bashkir and other irregular troops after the Treaties of Tilsit.

1812-1814 – Napoleonic war, during which Cossacks and Bashkirs saw extensive action all the way to Paris.

1815-1825 – Seventh revision of population that pays soul tax. District revision committees verify the results with local communes. In Bashkiria, only Bashkir-*votchinniki* are counted.

11 October 1818 – law that prohibits the sale of Bashkir lands.

15 April 1824 – law that bans all colonists of all ethnicities from dwelling on the Bashkir patrimonial lands. This way, the law attempts to consolidate the boundaries set by the General and Special Land Surveys.

12 November 1825 – death of emperor Alexander I and succession by Nicholas I. During his reign, Nicholas launches several secret committees to experiment with the abolition of serfdom.

14 December 1825 – Decembrist revolt, a number of Decembrists were sent to the Orenburg line to serve their punishment in military service.

January 1826 – in an attempt to contribute to the ongoing systematization of Russian law, emperor Nicholas I orders Mikhail M. Speranskij to compile all the laws of the Romanovs in one collection.

14 April 1828-2 September 1829 – Russo-Turkish war, Bashkir units are deployed in the Balkan theatre of war (under general Ivan Ivanovich Diebitsch-Zabalkansky).

29 November 1830-5 October 1831 – Polish-Russian war, Bashkirs escort Polish prisoners of war to Bashkiria and beyond.

10 April 1832 – law ‘on the rights of Bashkirs to their land in the Orenburg region’ that recognizes Bashkir patrimonial rights to the land, although the state could confiscate it. It also reinstates and eases the sale and redistribution of Bashkir lands (while still providing Bashkirs with a minimum amount of land). The following years Bashkir land is sold primarily

to military and civil officials and to various categories of peasants via their respective government institutions.

19 January 1833 – Mikhail Speranskij presents emperor Nicholas I and the State Council the Complete Collection of Laws of the Russian Empire (*Polnoe sobranie zakonov rossijskoj imperii*), a chronological overview, and the Digest of Laws of the Russian Empire (*Svod zakonov rossijskoj imperii*), a thematic overview.

1834 – creation of the Bashkir-Meshcherjak Host, forming a separate military force.

4 April 1834 – a follow-up law to the 1832 law, ‘on the duties of the Orenburg Treasury regarding the demarcation of Bashkir lands and on the establishment of a special commission for this.’

October 1834-13 July 1835 – uprising of various Bashkir tribes as a reaction to and as a result of recent military campaigns and the threat of losing their *votchina* due to land surveys. The direct cause of the uprising is a food law from 5 July 1834 that ordered the construction of grain storages that Muslims interpret as Orthodox churches. Among others, Russian state peasants join the rebellion to retain their personal freedom and to resist plans to convert them to crown peasants.

10 July 1835 – Governing Senate urges to limit further colonization of state peasants to the Orenburg region.

11 June 1837 & 14 October 1838 – Recommendations by the Governing Senate to the Orenburg military governor to allow the *pripushchenniki* or special tenants on Bashkir lands to stay there.

27 December 1837 – creation of the Ministry of State Domains that governs state peasant colonization. Part of the reform of Pavel D. Kiselëv (first Minister of State Domains 1837-1856), which aims to regulate local peasant life and agriculture through the creation of local administrations. In general, Kiselëv sought to improve the social-economic position of the state peasants, but his contemporaries thought he failed.

26 November 1839-June 1840 – military governor of Orenburg Vasilij A. Perovskij fails his attack on Khiva Khanate.

10 May 1840 – law of the Governing Senate that obligates the military governor of Orenburg to verify all sales of Bashkir-*votchinniki* to state peasants.

1842 – end of the General Land Survey of the Orenburg governorate.

14 December 1842 – the State Council advises the Orenburg military governor to move some *pripushchenniki* from Bashkir lands and limit the number of new settlers in the area.

1848-1864 – final Russian conquest of the Kazakh Khanate, which bordered Bashkiria to the south. As a result, military service of Bashkir tribes in this border region becomes less relevant to Russia.

27 December 1848 – creation of the Demarcation Committee, which is meant to gather information about the size of the Bashkir lands to redistribute it among the *pripushchenniki*.

20 March 1851 – installation of the Orenburg-Samara governor-general who resides in Ufa.

1853-1856 – Crimean War, Bashkir regiments are deployed in the Baltic theatre of war.

1854 – Russian subjugation of the Khiva Khanate.

1855 – Addition of Teptjar and Bobyl troops to the Bashkir-Meshcherjak Host, renaming it simply the Bashkir Host.

18 February 1855 – death of emperor Nicholas I and succession by Alexander II.

3 June 1857-1 January 1859 – Tenth and last revision of population that pays soul tax. The population size is taken as a standard for various future decrees that divide the land per male person.

10 & 23 June 1857 – two statutes from the Governing Senate and the Committee of Ministers respectively, that differentiate Bashkir landowners in areas with much land and with few land.

1859 – instruction of Minister of State Domains Mikhail N. Murav'ëv-Vilenskij (1857-1862) that replaces the tax based on income with a tax based on total value of the land.

19 February 1861 – abolition of serfdom, former serfs are granted the right to enter into contracts and acquire property. They are now considered temporarily obligated peasants who had to pay their former landlords redemption fees to collectively acquire the land they worked (the State Bank of the Russian Empire oversees this payment scheme). The peasant village commune is considered a legal entity and the Arbiters of the Peace are introduced to supervise the local peasant authorities. First of tsar Alexander II's 'Great Reforms' and necessitates further reforms in Russia as a whole and in Bashkiria specifically.

April 1861 – uprising by the peasants of Bezdna and surrounding villages in the Kazan' governorate who disappointed in specific arrangements of the abolition of serfdom. Led by Anton Petrovich Sidorov.

23 April 1861-9 March 1868 – Pëtr A. Valuev is Minister of Internal Affairs.

31 December 1861 & 25 December 1862 – Minister of State Domains Mikhail N. Murav'ëv-Vilenskij (1857-1862) issues two decrees that raise the *obrok* payments for state peasants.

22 November & 24 December 1862 – two statutes from the War Council that arrange the registration of land boundaries and the recruitment of land surveyors in Bashkiria.

26 June 1863 – state peasants and crown peasant statuses reformed and accommodated to former serf status. The conditions of the emancipation from their respective landlords differ among the three former peasant categories. The combined peasant reforms lead to a large influx of Russian peasants into Bashkiria in the following years.

14 May 1863 – introduction of the Statute on the Bashkirs, which clarifies the legal position of Bashkirs, Meshcherjaks, Teptjars and Bobyls after the abolition of serfdom. These groups

are now considered free *sel'skie obyvateli* (rural residents) with the same rights and civil administrative organs as the emancipated peasants. Many Bashkirs feared that this change in status entailed their loss of land, enserfment or forced Christianization.

1864 – the Provincial Statistical Committee of Orenburg conducts a 'one-day census' to prepare the administration for the upcoming division of the governorate. Results were published in 1868.

1 January 1864 – zemstvo reforms, local form of rural administration for 'suitable' regions in Russia, which initially exclude the Ufa territories due to a lack of an educated landowning class.

20 November 1864 – judicial reforms introduce a new, unified court system which replaces separate courts for the estates of the realm. The Governing Senate is designated as the highest institution of cassation. The reform is only partially implemented in the Orenburg governorate, but at least the common court of appeal is installed.

19 January 1865 – abolition of the position of Orenburg-Samara governor-general.

9 February 1865 – installation of the Orenburg governor-general. Nikolaj A. Kryzhanovskij is the first and last to occupy this post.

31 May 1865 – the division of the large and understaffed Orenburg governorate into two, creating the Ufa and Orenburg governorates. Ufa receives its own governor and court of appeal. The first governor of Ufa was Grigorij Sergejevich Aksakov (1865-1867), son of the famous writer Sergej Timofejevich Aksakov. The new Orenburg governor-general of the entire region resides in Orenburg.

2 June 1865 – formal abolition of cantonal system and its territorial organization, whereby the administration of the Bashkirs and others is transferred to the civil authorities. Bashkir officers received hereditary or personal nobility. The reform emphasizes the transfer from military potential to civil development of the Bashkirs as well as the broader government project of creating modern citizens.

2 July 1865 – Bashkir Host comes under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior.

1868-1873 – partial annexation by Russia of the Emirate of Bukhara and conversion into Russia's protectorate of its remaining territories.

1868-1876 – Russian subjugation of the Khoqand Khanate and its subsequent annexation.

10 February 1869 – law 'on the demarcation of Bashkir lands' (*dachi*) to redistribute all the land among Bashkir patrimonial landowners (*votchinniki*) and their *pripushchenniki*. The law aims to differentiate primarily between the land of *votchinniki* and that of *pripushchenniki* and it divides the Bashkir land into 'abundant' and 'scarce' areas with minimum sizes of land per male (a 'scarce' area was where Bashkir could get the maximum size, but their *pripushchenniki* could not) as well as 'reserve land'. This way, the Bashkir *dachi* that were set by the General Land Survey, are substantially altered. The documents of the

Demarcation Committee are moved to the Bureau of Peasant Affairs, which is to oversee land surveys. The Arbiters of the Peace are to supervise the actual land surveys together with members of the *uyezd* Bureau of Peasant Affairs, but in practice the land surveyors often work alone, which regularly leads to mistakes and fraud.

9 April 1869 – Statutes that allow former state peasants who currently live in the area without the proper documentation (due to various reasons) to formally take up residence in the Orenburg governorate with the permission of local communes. For some communes a minimum size of land owned is required.

16 June 1870 – city reform that set up elected representative councils (*duma*) and executive bodies parallel to those in the countryside.

6 February 1871 – the law of 9 April 1869 is extended to the Ufa governorate (per request of the local nobility). Here too, the law only covers those peasants who already reside in the region.

4 June 1871 – law which allows retired officials and officers to purchase state lands, in practice mostly Bashkir lands. The ‘reserve lands’ that were the result of the recent land surveys were not redistributed among *votchinniki* and *pripushchenniki*, but sold to local administrators, officials, merchants and nobles. These gave the lands to their friends or sold them to peasants with a considerable profit.

1872-1879 – Pëtr A. Valuev is Minister of State Domains.

11 March-14 June 1873 – Russian conquest of Khanate of Khiva.

1 January 1874 – military reforms by Dmitrij A. Miljutin, introducing universal military service with the exception of the ethnic minorities of Siberia and Central Asia. Bashkirs resist universal military service, fearing it would break the privileged connection between service and land and the subsequent loss of the latter.

2 May 1874 – zemstvo introduced to Ufa governorate, the practical establishment of provincial and *uyezd* representative councils and respective executive boards took place in 1875.

6 July 1874 – creation of an irregular military unit of Bashkir cavalry (for those who ‘maintained their traditional lifestyle’), which would grow in size in the following years.

28 January 1876 – law that allows peasants who live on free state land (either as landowners or tenants), even those who only own temporary passports or a license to leave their former commune, to form a new commune or register with an already existing one. From now on, peasants also have to acquire lands as a commune with state direction. This law also applies to future peasant colonists.

1877-1878 – Russo-Turkish war. Despite the recruitment of other native units, the Bashkir military unit itself saw no combat.

2 May 1878 – introduction of Justices of the Peace to the Ufa and Orenburg governorates.

9 May 1878 – law that regulates the sale of Bashkir lands, the way in which a community can agree on the sale of land and even offers the possibility to return illegally sold lands to the Bashkir-*votchinniki*.

4 August 1878 – Orenburg governor-general Nikolaj Kryzhanovskij issues a set of rules that determines the size of allotment lands for Bashkirs and allows surplus lands to be sold to colonists. Land may only be sold in public trade. The rules also allow communal lands to be granted to householders as private property.

17 July 1879 – second one-day census of the Ufa governorate, results published in 1883.

Late 1880-1881 – a Senatorial Revision visits the Ufa and Orenburg governorates under ober-prokuror Mikhail E. Kovalevskij to assess the administration. Kovalevskij receives thousands of petitions by Bashkirs who complain about the authorities and their loss of land.

1 March 1881 – assassination of emperor Alexander II and succession by Alexander III, introducing rather conservative reforms.

30 March 1881 – fall of governor-general Nikolaj A. Kryzhanovskij due to the ‘plundering’ of the Bashkir land and other abuses of power. Both local and central press play a large role in his public condemnation. Former Minister of Internal Affairs Pëtr A. Valuev has to retire from politics.

10 June 1881 – law that limits the colonization of the south-eastern provinces of European Russia by former serfs.

10 July 1881 – provisional regulations that, until a general law on resettlement, allows the Ministers of Internal Affairs and of State Domains to meet a resettlement request of peasants according to their economic position and not their formal right to resettle.

12 July 1881 – abolition of the position of Orenburg governor-general.

14 August 1881 – law that expands the powers of the governors in order to strengthen public order as a reaction to the assassination of Alexander II.

28 December 1881 – reduction in redemption payments of temporarily obligated peasants and obligation of landlords to allow peasants to pay their redemption fees to acquire land.

18 May 1882 – creation of the Peasant Land Bank, meant to issue loans to peasants to buy land throughout almost all of Russia. The Peasant Land Bank is supported by the State Bank of the Russian Empire. In 1885 the Nobles’ Land Bank is established, which serves to support noble landowners.

15 June 1882 – restriction of Bashkir land sales to the state and peasant communes only. The sale of Bashkir land in public trade is no longer required. The law also intends to reserve Bashkir lands for peasant colonists. A separate law also allows *pripushchenniki* to claim patrimonial rights to the land bought from Bashkirs.

24 July 1882 – abolition of Bashkir irregular military unit. All Bashkirs are now universal conscripts, serving in the reserve and possibly only as mounted cavalry in wartime.

9 March 1892 – introduction of circuit court (*okružnoj sud*) to the Ufa and Orenburg governorates.

10 May 1883 – opening of the Ufa Peasant Land Bank which aims to assist peasants in buying land and becoming landowners.

13 March 1884 – law that places all Bashkir forests under state control in order to combat 'deforestation,' which was in part the result of Bashkir resistance to government land policy.

9 November 1884 – law that turns state lands over to peasant communes to lease without auction or interference by a third party.

1886 – third census of the Ufa governorate to commemorate the 300-year anniversary of Ufa city.

13 July 1889 – law that allows rural inhabitants to settle on state lands without permission of the peasant commune. The commune has to assume the taxes of the leaving peasants. Voluntary resettlement is formally forbidden and peasants who do migrate without state permission risk being sent back.

21 December 1892 – law that allows colonists to claim ownership of leased lands when long-term buildings are present on the land.

7 February 1894 – law that arranges for peasants to pay off their overdue redemption fees in instalments.

21 March 1894 – Reorganization of the Ministry of State Domains into the Ministry of Agriculture and State Domains.

6 June 1894 – law that places all forests on Bashkir lands under state directorship.

20 October 1894 – death of emperor Alexander III and succession by Nicholas II.

13 May 1896 – law that reduces some of the pressure of the redemption payments on peasants of all categories.

2 December – Foundation of the Resettlement Administration as part of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

28 January 1897 – start of the First Total Census of the Russian Empire, conducted by the Central Statistical Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The first and last national census to record extensive demographic data, including religion, occupation, mother tongue and social estate. Nationalities are determined according to mother language. The census shows that in the north-north-west areas of Ufa, Muslims identify as Muslims and that neighbouring Turkic Muslims, such as Teptjars and Meshcherjaks, also identify as Bashkirs due to their mother language (listed as 'Neo-Bashkirs'). Since the In the following years, Bashkir status would become less attractive to these groups, having lost its social prestige due to more legal equalizing, whereas the *votchinniki* increasingly refer to their status in ethnic terms.

1898 – introduction of advocacy and court jury to the Ufa and Orenburg governorates.

20 April 1898 – statute on the surveying of Bashkir patrimonial lands (*dachi*) to redistribute the land among the Bashkir *votchinniki*, the *pripushchenniki* and others. The 1869 survey had primarily differentiated between land of *votchinniki* and *pripushchenniki*, but now the government wants to demarcate the lands among the *votchinniki*. To this end Demarcation Committees are set up in August 1898, which are tasked with the break-up of Bashkir communal landholding.

8 February 1904-5 September 1905 – Russo-Japanese war. Bashkirs of the Orenburg and Urals Cossack units are deployed in Manchuria, for example at the battles of Wafangou (Te-Li-Ssu), Sandepu and Mukden.

6 June 1904 – Temporary Rules that differentiate between peasant colonists who receive government aid and those who do not (privileged and voluntary migrants). The latter do not receive financial nor fiscal benefits and can only migrate to a determined amount of governorates in Siberia and the Steppe region.

6 May 1905 – Ministry of Agriculture and State Domains reorganized into the Main administration of land management and agriculture (*Glavnoe upravlenie zemleustrojstva i zemledelija*), which oversaw the colonization programs. The Main administration acquires the Resettlement Administration.

17 October 1905 – by revising the 1832 Fundamental Laws, the October Manifesto turns Russia into a constitutional monarchy with a national parliament: the State Duma (lower house) and the State Council (upper house). Almost all citizens of Russia, which includes the peasants and Bashkirs could indirectly elect representatives to the Duma.

19 October 1905 – creation of the Council of Ministers.

3 November 1905 – manifesto from the Committee of Ministers that on 1 January 1906, the redemption payments of peasants are to be halved and completely eliminated on 1 January 1907.

10 March 1906 – amendment to the Temporary Rules of 6 June 1904 that allows primarily peasant communities or families to send their members to look for free state land to colonize. Local government officials have to assist these so-called *khodoks* ('scouts') in their search of land. Now all peasant migrants can apply for state assistance.

23 April 1906 – abolition of the Committee of Ministers. Nicholas II also grants himself the power to veto legislation of the State Duma and abolishes ministerial responsibility, although in practice some ministers like Pëtr A. Stolypin do go to the parliament.

9 November 1906 – Chairman of the Council of Ministers Pëtr A. Stolypin's agrarian reform that stimulates the purchase of land as personal property at the cost of communal ownership of land. Peasants could file for private landownership or personal possession (in the form of extra-communal *otrub* or *khutor* households) at a land management committee. This reform

does not apply to the Bashkir-*votchinniki*. They are still subject to the Statute of 14 May 1863, which allows for *personal* property, but not the sale of the land by an individual.

3 June 1907 – Stolypin's coup dissolves the Second Duma. The new Duma severely curtailed representation of the peasantry and of Muslims.

14 June 1910 – law that stimulates private property among peasants by automatically converting communal allotment and household lands into private property. This was done to alleviate the workload on the land management committees that could not cope with the stream of peasant petitions. This reform does not apply to the Bashkir-*votchinniki*.

29 May 1911 – law that forcefully establishes *otrub* and *khutor* households, especially to liquidate strip farming (*cherespolositsa*).

25 September 1912-31 July 1913 – the First and Second Balkan Wars.

1913-1914 – Evaluative-statistical Department of the Ufa Statistical Committee conducts first complete census of peasant householders.

13 April 1913 – introduction of the zemstvo to Orenburg governorate, which had a smaller landowning nobility than Ufa.

1914-1918 – First World War. Due to the universal conscription many Russian peasants and Bashkirs are recruited.

26 October 1915 – Main administration of land management and agriculture reorganized into the Ministry of Agriculture.

26 February 1917 – February Revolution that leads to the creation of numerous Soviets, the abdication of Nicholas II and the formation of a Temporary Government. Many Russian peasants support the socialist parties in the Soviets, including the Socialist-Revolutionaries and when the war continues, increasingly the Bolsheviks.

1-11 May 1917 – First All-Russian Muslim Congress in Moscow. Here, among other things, delegates vote for territorial autonomy within a federal Russia. Also, Bashkir and Kazakh delegates oppose the unconditional nationalization of land and decide to convene a separate regional congress (*kurultai*).

28 June 1917 – Provisional Government decree abolishes the Stolypin laws on land.

20-27 July 1917 – Scholar Akhmed Zaki Validi and other Bashkirs organize the First All-Bashkir Kurultai or Congress in Orenburg, during which a nationalist Provincial Soviet (*Shuro*) is elected. All land in the southern Urals must be declared 'property of the Bashkir people' and Russian colonization must be stopped. The delegates call for a federal-democratic form of government in Russia.

21 July-2 August 1917 – First All-Russian Muslim Military Congress in Kazan'. This congress is attended mostly by Muslims from central Russia.

25-29 August 1917 – Second All-Bashkir Kurultai or Congress in Ufa. The delegates agree that a separate Bashkir territorial autonomy is preferred to a national-cultural autonomy together with the Kazan' Tatars.

25 October 1917 – Bolshevik revolution topples the Provisional Government and installs a Bolshevik-dominated national Council of People's Commissars (*Sovnarkom*), which calls for the elections for the Constituent Assembly on 12 November.

26 October 1917 – The Second All-Russian Congress of Soviets declares all land nationalized. This spelled the end for Bashkir patrimonial landownership.

26-27 October 1917 – Bolsheviks come to power in Kazan' and Ufa.

12 November 1917 – Elections for the Constituent Assembly. The Bolsheviks do not formally win these elections, but do enjoy broad support at this moment. The Russian peasantry overwhelmingly vote for the peasant-oriented Socialist-Revolutionaries (SR), who become the largest party in the assembly. On 12-14 November in Ufa, the election lists are filled by Muslim nationalists, nonpartisan peasant landowners, different (Muslim) socialist-peasant alliances, supporters of the former Provisional Government, Russian-Orthodox clergy, Mensheviks, SRs, Bolsheviks, federalist Bashkirs and Kadets. The election results are in on 11 December, the obvious victors are the peasant-SR alliance and the Muslims' coalition with SR-Tatars. The federalist Bashkirs come in third and notably the Bolsheviks fifth.

16 November 1917 – Bashkirs declare autonomy in 'Little Bashkiria' (roughly the eastern half of the Ufa and Orenburg governorates) after Cossacks had overthrown the Provisional Government in Orenburg.

8-20 December 1917 – Third All-Bashkir Kurultai or Congress in Orenburg. The delegates agree that 'Bashkurdistan' should assume the borders of Little Bashkiria and possibly incorporate Greater Bashkiria later (more or less Ufa governorate, minus Menzelinsk *uyezd*).

8 January-18 February 1918 – Second All-Russian Muslim Military Congress in Kazan'.

1918-1923 – Russian Civil War mainly between Red Bolsheviks, rival socialists and White anti-revolutionaries. The Russian peasantry generally tries to keep aloof from the conflict (although idealist and career-oriented peasants do choose sides), preserve self-government in the village and to at least resist incursions into the villages. However, especially when the Bolsheviks were on the winning hand, a number of peasants more decidedly supported the Bolsheviks in the hope of gaining benefits, in contrast to other peasants who continued to resist. When the Civil War draws to a close, it are likely the peasants who had joined the Communist Party in an early phase who suppress any remaining peasant resistance.

In Bashkiria, Leftist Bashkirs, among which Akhmed Zaki Validi, attempt to gain Bashkir territorial autonomy from the Russians and to keep the Kazan' Tatars at bay too (while leftist Muslims in fact sought a joint Tatar-Bashkir cultural autonomy). One of the grievances was the Russian colonization of Bashkir lands in the previous half century. The

nationalist Bashkirs dominated the local Soviet and the armed forces, but Russian communists controlled the Party provincial committee (*Obkom*) and resisted Bashkir independence. Special Bashkir military units fought alternately on the Red and White sides in an attempt to negotiate as much independence or autonomy as possible. Finally, the Bashkirs sided with the Reds on a crucial strategic moment to defeat the Whites on **19 February 1919** and joined the RSFSR on **23 March 1919** to achieve a very high degree of autonomy, higher than later Soviet constituent republics. Ultimately, the Whites were no longer a threat and the Bashkir troops were sent to fight against Poland, which gave the antinationalist Joseph Stalin the opportunity to curtail much of the Bashkir autonomy on **22 May 1920** and established direct central control. On **4 June 1922**, the Soviet government added several districts to the Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, which reduced the share of the Bashkirs in the population. In the course of the twentieth century, the Bashkir ASSR was developed above all into an industrial centre.

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