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**PEASANT CONGRESSES AS A
REFLECTION OF THE SELANOCENTRIC
PHENOMENON OF THE PERIOD OF THE
UKRAINIAN REVOLUTION - AGRARIANISM:
CLASSIFICATION OF HISTORIOGRAPHICAL
SOURCES***

The historiographical base has been studied, which will be useful in the study of peasant congresses as a manifestation of peasant agrarianism. The main groups of historiographical sources are singled out, the informative richness of each of them is outlined.

Key words: agrarianism, historiographical source, classification of sources.

Problem statement. Early twentieth century marked by revolutionary upheavals in Europe. European countries have been shaken by socio-political, socio-cultural and geopolitical transformations that have led to the emergence of previously unknown phenomena. An important factor in revolutionary change was agrarian. The socio-economic situation of the peasantry required urgent changes. The peasantry was dissatisfied with their situation. The beginning of the Ukrainian revolution in 1917, as S. Kornovenko rightly notes, caused a significant socio-cultural shift “in the collective and individual political culture and consciousness of the peasants – the transition from indifferent political culture and consciousness to active” [1]. The realization of the peasants’ hopes is one of the aspects of such a phenomenon of the early twentieth century as agrarianism. The peasant revolution was brightly manifested at the peasant congresses.

The purpose of the article is to study the source base on the history of peasant congresses.

The statement of the basic material. Agrarianism - the idea of the peasants about themselves. Peasant congresses are representatives of the peasant consciousness. The peasants hoped that the state would take immediate action to resolve the agrarian question: increase wages, lease part of the arable land and hayfields to the peasants on preferential terms, provide food and seeds at low prices, and so on. The struggle of the peasants with the landlords took sharp forms where large landowners resisted and did not want to make concessions to the peasants. Peasant congresses became one of the tools for solving agrarian issues.

Before referring to the classification of sources on the history of peasant congresses, we consider it necessary to outline the importance of peasant congresses, which played an important role in consolidating the peasantry as an active subject of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917-1921 congresses of

various levels met throughout Ukraine. The provincial congresses paid the most attention to resolving the agrarian issue. Their position on the solution of the agrarian issue was in tune with the agrarian program of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party – the land must be socialized [2, 124]. Between March 1917 and April 1918, 40 provincial congresses were held throughout Ukraine [3].

As early as March 1917, the Council of Peasant Deputies was established in the Kharkiv province, and in April 1917 it actively participated in agitation work with the aim of convening peasant congresses. During May 1917, the counties of the Ekaterinoslav province were full of slogans about the transfer of landed estates to peasants. On April 6-8, 1917, a peasant congress was held in Odessa, in which 200 peasant deputies joined. The Odessa Peasants’ Congress was followed by the 1st Peasants’ Congress of Peasants’ Deputies of the Kherson Province with 408 representatives from the peasantry [4].

The peasant congresses reflected the views of the peasantry itself on the solution of the agrarian issue. Their views evolved during 1917: from loyal in the spring of 1917 to radical in the autumn of 1917. For example, the first peasant congress of the Chernihiv province on April 7-9, 1917 considered the solution of the agrarian question possible by the Constituent Assembly, and in the requirements for agrarian reforms was expressed as follows: “During the consideration of the land issue at the Constituent Assembly there is a desire...” [4], ie there was no call for radical action. At the end of April - April 16-17, 1917, the Peasants’ Congress of Poltava Province used the following phrases in its resolutions to solve the agrarian issue: “it is necessary to establish”, “confiscate without ransom”, “prohibit”, “cancel” and so on [2, 124]. In August, there are notes of radicalism in the resolutions of peasant congresses. For example, on August 14-17, 1917, the Peasants’ Congress of the Kherson Province, in a resolution on the agrarian issue, demanded that “the following measures be taken immediately” [2].

One cannot ignore the significance of the First All-Russian Peasant Congress, which took place from May 28 to June 2, 1917, at the Solovtsov Theatre in Kyiv (now the Ivan Franko Theatre) [5, 4]. The resolutions “On Land” and “On the Organization of the Peasants” became significant results of the First All-Russian Congress of Peasant Deputies.

The resolution “On Land” was based on the proposals of M. Kovalevsky, who was elected a representative of the Poltava province and a member of the Small Council. In his speech at the discussions, he supported the idea of socialization of land, advocated the abolition of private property and considered the right solution to agricultural issues in the Seimas by representatives of volosts and counties [5, 19]. The resolution “On Land” abolished private ownership of land. It provided for the formation of a land fund, which was to be subordinated to the Ukrainian Sejm. Land use was provided to those who would cultivate the land “with their own hands”. The importance of establishing a labour norm was noted. All costs associated with agrarian transformation were borne by the state. The creation of the Central Ukrainian Land Committee was considered appropriate for a fair solution to the agrarian

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problem. Resolving resettlement issues was declared a priority. It was possible to create a group of farms by creating agricultural societies [5, 23–24].

The first paragraph of the resolution “On the organization of the peasantry” read: “Only the systematically organized peasantry can provide freedom and land to the Ukrainian people” [5, 27]. As we can see, the peasantry identified itself with a majestic mission – state-building. The form of the peasant organization was determined by the Ukrainian Peasants’ Union, and its legislative bodies – the All-Ukrainian, provincial, county, volost and village committees [5, 27].

The resolutions had an almost immediate reaction from the peasantry. First, the socio-political activity of the peasantry, which was expressed in the seizures, pogroms and distribution of property of the landlords, intensified; secondly, the local peasantry began to be actively involved in the creation of various peasant organizations, which in the future acted as bodies of the peasantry’s organization, their control and actions, and so on.

The decisions of the peasant congresses prompted the peasantry to revolt. The socio-political activity of the peasantry was constantly intensifying, the peasant revolution was changing: from threats and demonstrations the peasantry was moving to arbitrary seizures and pogroms.

The study of peasant congresses as a reflection of peasant agrarianism is a difficult task, as the source base of this problem has certain features: the peasantry has left a rather small number of documents. Taking into account the peculiarities of the study, the lack of a universal classification of sources and relying on the classification schemes of sources on the history of Ukraine [6], the historiographical source complex we classified according to the species principle. Using it, we will single out 5 main groups of sources from the Ukrainian historiography of peasant congresses of the period of the Ukrainian revolution of 1917 - 1921: 1) thematic collections of documents; 2) monographs, dissertations, abstracts of dissertations devoted to our research topic and related problems; 3) scientific articles; 4) reference literature; 5) materials of scientific meetings: round tables, symposia, congresses, etc.

The first group of sources – thematic collections – sources that reflect the content of resolutions of peasant congresses in individual villages [7], data on forms of peasant struggle for land, peasant demonstrations, resolutions of demonstrations, resolutions of peasant congresses of different levels (provincial, county, volost level). A diverse array of these documentary sources is in the regional archives.

Among the documentary sources, a special place is occupied by thematic collections, which were published after the proclamation of independence in 1991. In general, they are universal in nature, as they are devoted to a wide range of topics, compiled chronologically and have a significant number of documents. Such that are of scientific interest for our intelligence are the “Ukrainian Central Council” [8], the publication of P. Khrystyuk “Notes and Materials on the History of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917 – 1920” [9], a collection prepared under the leadership of V. Verstyuk “Ukrainian National Liberation Movement. March-November 1917” [10]. Part of M. Hrushevsky’s speech, delivered on the first

day of the First All-Ukrainian Congress in Kyiv on May 28 (June 10), June 2 (15), 1917, was published in the fourth book of the 50-volume collection of works by M. Hrushevsky [11].

Interesting for the coverage of agrarianism is a collection of documents and materials [12] devoted to agrarian legislation of various forms of statehood and political regimes that implemented their policy in Ukraine in 1917-1921: Provisional Government, Central Rada, Ukrainian State, Directory of UPR, WUPR, Bolsheviks, White Guards governments, etc. The collection presents more than 140 legislative, regulatory and administrative acts.

Collections that reveal the peculiarities of regional agrarian history are a thorough addition to the holistic picture of the history of peasant congresses. We will pay attention to the collections devoted to agrarian history of Cherkasy region, Podillya, Dnieper Ukraine [13]. The collections are of considerable interest, as they contain an array of documents published for the first time, help not only to reflect the history of peasant congresses, but also are an important historical source for understanding the events of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917-1921.

Auxiliary documentary sources are periodicals of that time, for example, “News from the Ukrainian Central Council” [14], “Izvestia...” of provincial, county and other councils of peasants, “Narodna Volya” [16], “Borotba” [17], “Dilo” [18], which contain information of all-Ukrainian, provincial, county and even parish peasant congresses. However, modern researchers are critical of the objectivity of the information contained in periodicals of the time and informed the public about the peasant congresses and characterize them as having a subjective nature and inherent bias [19].

Modern Ukrainian historians show an increased interest in the events of the Ukrainian Revolution of 1917 - 1921. This is confirmed by a large number of monographs and dissertations devoted to the study of these events. I. Khmil raises the topic of peasant congresses in his monograph “The Working Peasantry of Ukraine in the Struggle for the Power of Soviets” [20]. The focus of this paper is also due to the fact that it contains several applications that can be useful for understanding the agrarian sentiments of the peasantry in the movement for the establishment of peasant congresses, such as the application “Provincial and county congresses of Soviets and their attitude to power”.

There is no separate special dissertation that would reveal the problems of peasant congresses in Ukraine. However, there are several related works that are of value for the formation of a model of classification of sources on the history of peasant congresses and the formation of a new understanding of peasant congresses as a manifestation of the agrarian sentiments of the peasantry. Among them are the following: I. Kutashev “Peasant Movement in Ukraine (March 1917 - April 1918)” [15], V. Lozovy “The Attitude of the Peasantry of Ukraine to Power in the Days of the Central Council (March 1917 - April 1918)” [21], A. Datsenko “The Peasantry of Donbass in the Ukrainian National-democratic Revolution of 1917-1920” [22].

The topic of peasant congresses is also presented in the form of historiographical sources, such as a scientific

article. The content and richness of the material of the article is an important historiographical source, as the purpose of the article is to analyse a particular aspect of the scientific problem. Most scholarly articles on the history of peasant congresses are the legacy of Soviet historians [23], in which peasant congresses are presented as the confrontation of the poor against the rich. Historians of independent Ukraine consider peasant congresses through the prism of presenting the concept of peasant consciousness in the conditions of revolutionary upheavals [24], the political component of the peasant revolution of 1917-1921 [25], and so on. A thorough scientific study is an article by V. Skakolsky [2, 124], in which the author made an attempt not only to rethink the importance of peasant congresses in the early twentieth century in the agrarian sphere of state life, but also to show the congresses as a separate body capable of functioning in a legal society and interacting with public authorities. Peasant Congresses as a representative body of the Central Council on the ground is considered by O. Romyantsev in the article “Formation of the Representative Composition of the Central Council” [26]. V. Lozovy [27] was one of the first to put forward the idea of the role of peasant congresses as an active participant in political life in Ukraine.

Investigating the socio-political activity of the peasantry in the Kyiv region, I. Dudnyk [28] assigned a special role to the peasant congresses. The scientist not only defined the significance of the work of the Kyiv Provincial Congress as a meeting, which resulted in a resolution that officially declared the thesis that “private ownership of land in Ukraine should be abolished and land should be transferred without redemption to the Ukrainian Land Fund, which should be regulated by the Ukrainian People’s Sejm” [28, 76], but also revealed the effectiveness of the peasantry in the struggle for their rights. The landless and landless peasantry was involved in such political activity.

The fourth group consists of reference literature. Among the variety of historiographical sources on the history of peasant congresses, this group is represented by the smallest number of publications. It is worth noting the chronological guide edited by V. Verstyuk, O. Dzyuba and V. Reprintsev “Ukraine from Ancient Times to the Present” [29] and brief information prepared by I. Khmil for the “Encyclopedia of the History of Ukraine” [30]. These types of publications are often of interest to a wide audience.

One cannot ignore such a group of historiographical sources on the history of peasant congresses as materials of scientific meetings, conferences, congresses, symposia, etc. Current issues related to the history of peasant congresses have been covered at regional scientific events at various levels. For example, at the XVII Vinnytsia Regional Historical and Local History Conference P. Kvitkivsky drew attention to the peculiarities of the work of the peasant congress in Vinnytsia in 1917 [31]. Some aspects of the research topic were reflected at the meetings of the All-Ukrainian symposiums on agricultural history (Cherkasy), International scientific conferences “Revolutionary Upheavals of the Early Twentieth Century in Europe: Geopolitical, Sociocultural and Anthropological Dimensions” (Cherkasy). The problems raised at the

meetings are presented in the publications included in the issues of collections of scientific works “Ukrainian Peasant” [32] and “Visnyk of Cherkasy University. Historical Sciences Series” [33]. New approaches to understanding the importance of peasant congresses in the development of revolutionary events in the early twentieth century. published in the collections “Scientific Works of the Historical Faculty of Zaporizhia State University” [34] and materials of scientific readings dedicated to the memory of D. P. Poida “Issues of Agrarian History of Ukraine and Russia” [35].

The conclusions. The analysis of sources from the history of peasant congresses as a phenomenon of agrarianism of the period of the Ukrainian revolution is relevant for understanding the idea of peasants about themselves. A small array of historiographical sources is devoted to the coverage of the topic raised by us. Our proposed model of classification of sources from the history of peasant congresses has scientific and practical significance, as it not only provides an understanding of the main groups, their structure, etc., but also contributes to a comprehensive analysis of the manifestation of peasant revolution by gathering peasant congresses as one of the manifestations of agrarianism.

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СЕЛЯНСЬКІ З'ІЗДИ ЯК ВІДОБРАЖЕННЯ СЕЛЯНОЦЕНТИЧНОГО ФЕНОМЕНУ ПЕРІОДУ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ РЕВОЛЮЦІЇ - АГРАРИЗМУ: КЛАСИФІКАЦІЯ ІСТОРИОГРАФІЧНИХ ДЖЕРЕЛ

Проблема. Початок ХХ ст. позначився революційними потрясіннями в Європі. Країни Європи сколихнули суспільно-політичні, соціокультурні та геополітичні трансформації, що зумовили появу раніше невідомих феноменів. Важливим чинником революційних змін був аграрний. Соціально-економічне становище селянства потребувало назальних змін. Селянство було незадоволене своїм становищем. Аграризм – уявлення селян про самих себе. Селянські з'їзди – репрезентанти селянської свідомості.

Мета – вивчити джерельну базу з історії селянських з'їздів.

Основні результати дослідження. Враховуючи особливості дослідження, відсутність універсальної класифікації джерел та опираючись на класифікаційні схеми джерел із історії України, історіографічний джерельний комплекс класифікуємо за відомим принципом. Послугуючись ним, виокремимо 5 основних груп джерел із української історіографії селянських з'їздів періоду Української революції 1917 – 1921 рр.: 1) тематичні збірники документів; 2) монографії, дисертації, автореферати дисертацій, присвячені досліджуваній нами темі та дотичним до неї проблемам; 3) наукові статті; 4) довідкова література; 5) матеріали наукових зібрань: круглих столів, симпозіумів, конгресів тощо.

Висновки. Аналіз джерел із історії селянських з'їздів як феномену аграризму періоду Української революції актуальний для розуміння уявлення селян про самих себе. Висвітленню порушеної нами теми присвячений незначний масив історіографічних джерел. Запропонована нами модель класифікації джерел із історії селянських з'їздів має науково-практичне значення, адже не лише забезпечує розуміння про основні групи, їхньої структури тощо, а й сприяє комплексному аналізу прояву селянської революційності шляхом зібрання селянських з'їздів як одного з проявів аграризму.

Ключові слова: аграризм, історіографічне джерело, класифікація джерел.