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## AGRARIAN QUESTION IN UKRAINE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 20TH CENTURY: GOVERNMENT-BUREAUCRATIC VISION

**Abstract. Purpose.** The author of the article aims to analyze the government-bureaucratic vision of solving the agrarian issue in Ukraine at the beginning of the 20th century. in the context of the agrarian policy of the government of the Russian Empire.

Scientific novelty. The government-bureaucratic vision of solving the agrarian issue in Ukraine at the beginning of the 20th century was analyzed on the basis of the involved sources and the application of current methodological approaches. in the context of the agrarian policy of the government of the Russian Empire.

Conclusion. The main feature of the life of Ukrainian peasants at the beginning of the 20th century. land was considered scarce, there was also agrarian overpopulation. The transition to intensive farming was restrained by the irregularity of agrarian relations. The problem of renting land was extremely acute for peasant farms, with which the interests of both landowners and peasants were closely connected. Due to the lack of land, the peasants could not do without renting land, but its conditions were quite difficult. Another difficult problem for peasant farms was the payment of taxes.

Several government commissions and meetings created at the beginning of the 20th century dealt with the study of the state of agriculture in the areas and proposals for solving the peasant question. The Commission on November 16, 1901 and the Special Meeting on the Needs of the Agricultural Industry had the most tangible influence. They summarized valuable material about the state of the agricultural industry, attracted a wide range of officials, citizens, public figures, scientists and directly peasants. However, their intentions remained unknown to the general public, which also contributed to the maturation of revolutionary sentiments on the ground.

The activity of the Special Meeting chaired by O. Styshynskyi and the Special Meeting A. Kulomzyn was effective. They drafted a draft law, which on July 6, 1904, took on the character of temporary rules regulating immigration policy in the Russian Empire. It was a law that for the first time in the legal practice of the Russian Empire regulated the social aspect of the life of peasant settlers. But he cannot be fully recognized as socially oriented, impeccable. Because, firstly, self-willed resettled peasants did not receive state financial support. Secondly, total state control over resettlement processes was established.

**Keywords**: agrarian issue, agrarian policy, Commission of November 16, 1901, Special meeting on the needs of the agricultural industry, Special meeting of O. Styshinskyi, Special meeting of A. Kulomzyn.

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# АГРАРНЕ ПИТАННЯ В УКРАЇНІ НА ПОЧАТКУ XX СТ.: УРЯДОВО-БЮРОКРАТИЧНЕ БАЧЕННЯ

**Анотація. Мета.** Автор статті ставить за мету проаналізувати урядово-бюрократичне бачення вирішення аграрного питання в Україні на початку XX ст. у контексті аграрної політики уряду Російської імперії.

Наукова новизна. На основі залучених джерел і застосування актуальних методологічних підходів проаналізовано урядово-бюрократичне бачення вирішення аграрного питання в Україні на початку XX ст. у контексті аграрної політики уряду Російської імперії.

**Висновки.** Головною ознакою життя селян України на початку XX ст. вважалося малоземелля, також мало місце аграрне перенаселення. Перехід до інтенсивного господарювання стримували невпорядкованість аграрних відносин. Надзвичайно гострою для селянських господарств була проблема оренди землі, з якою були тісно пов'язані інтереси як

землевласників, так і селян. Через малоземелля селяни не могли обійтися без оренди землі, але її умови були досить складними. Іншою складною проблемою для селянських господарств була сплата податків.

Вивченням стану сільського господарства на місцях та пропозицій вирішення селянського питання займалися кілька урядових комісій та нарад, створених на початку XX ст. Найбільш відчутний уплив мали Комісія 16 листопада 1901 р. та Особлива нарада з потреб сільськогосподарської промисловості. Вони узагальнили цінний матеріал щодо стану сільськогосподарської галузі, залучили широке коло чиновників, земців, громадських діячів, науковців та безпосередньо селян. Однак їхні наміри залишалися невідомими широкій громадськості, що сприяло визріванню революційних настроїв на місцях.

Результативною виявилася діяльність Особливої наради під головуванням О. Стишинського та Особливої наради А. Куломзина. Ними було розроблено законопроект, який 6 липня 1904 р. набув характеру тимчасових правил із регулювання переселенської політики в Російській імперії. Це був закон, за яким уперше у юридичній практиці Російської імперії регламентувався соціальний аспект у житті селян-переселенців. Але його не можна повною мірою визнати як соціально орієнтований, бездоганний. Оскільки, по-перше, самовільні селяни-переселенці не отримували державної фінансової підтримки. Подруге, встановлювався тотальний контроль держави за переселенськими процесами.

**Ключові слова:** аграрне питання, аграрна політика, Комісія 16 листопада 1901 р., Особлива нарада з потреб сільськогосподарської промисловості, Особлива нарада О. Стишинського, Особлива нарада А. Куломзина.

**Problem statement.** At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Ukraine, taking into account the socio-economic, political and socio-psychological circumstances that developed at that time, the agrarian issue was significantly intensified, which was characterized by a complex of issues of a production nature, such as agrarian overpopulation, peculiarities of land use and land ownership, production and sale of agricultural products, economic and financial aspects of agricultural development, financial condition of business entities, resettlement policy, etc.

The agrarian issue was in the focus of constant attention of government circles, as evidenced by the government's creation of various

emergency commissions and Special Meetings. They were usually tasked with revising the previous legislation on peasants in accordance with the socio-economic and socio-political development of the country.

**Research analysis**. A number of historians appealed to state attempts to solve the peasant issue at the beginning of the 20th century. M.S. Symonova<sup>1</sup> covers in sufficient detail various activity periods of the Special Meeting on Agricultural Industry, and also examines the struggle of currents in the ruling circles on agrarian policy. S.M. Sydelnikov<sup>2</sup> makes a meaningful analysis of the policy of the autocracy on the eve of the revolution of 1905. The most weighted analysis of the specified problem was made in the works of historians B.V. Ananyich and R. Sh. Hanelin<sup>3</sup>. During the years of Ukraine's independence, domestic historians who studied some of its aspects, including N. Kovaliova<sup>4</sup>, S. Kornovenko<sup>5</sup>, O. Reyent<sup>6</sup>, D. Selikhov<sup>7</sup>, and others, addressed the topic we raised.

The purpose of the article is to analyse the government-bureaucratic vision of solving the agrarian issue in Ukraine at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the context of the agrarian policy of the government of the Russian Empire.

The statement of the basic material. According to the 1897 census, the population of Ukrainian governorates was 23.4 million people<sup>8</sup>. 93% of the Ukrainian population was classified as peasants, and 87% of all Ukrainians lived from agriculture<sup>9</sup>.

The main feature of peasant life at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was considered a shortage of land. According to M. Porsh's calculations, 19% of Ukrainian peasants employed in agriculture were considered landless (1905)<sup>10</sup>. There was agrarian overpopulation, which as of 1890 was 5 million people<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Симонова М. Кризис аграрной политики царизма накануне первой российской революции. М.: Наука, 1987. 254 с.

<sup>2</sup> Сидельников С. Аграрная политика самодержавия в период империализма. М.: Издательство Московского университета, 1980. 289 с.

<sup>3</sup> Ганелин Р. Российское самодержавие в 1905 году. Реформы и революция. СПб. : Наука. С.-Петербургское отд-ние, 1991. 221с.; Ананьич Б., Ганелин Р. Кризис власти в России. Реформы и революционный процесс. 1905–1917 годы. *История СССР*. 1991. № 2. С. 96–106.; Ананьич Б., Ганелин Р. Сергей Юльевич Витте и его время. СПб., 1999. 430 с.

<sup>4</sup> Ковальова Н. Селяни, поміщики і держава: конфлікти інтересів. «Аграрна революція» в Україні 1902—1922 рр. Дніпро: Ліра, 2016. 368 с.

<sup>5</sup> Корновенко С., Священко З. Аграрне питання у політичній діяльності С. Ю. Вітте. Черкаси : Чабаненко Ю. А., 2015. 190 с.

<sup>6</sup> Реєнт О. Україна в імперську добу (XIX – початок XX ст.). К.: Інститут історії України. НАН України, 2003. 340 с.

<sup>7</sup> Селіхов Д. Аграрне законодавство царської Росії в Україні епохи капіталізму (ІІ пол. XIX – поч. XX ст.): дис.... канд. юрид. н. X., 2002. 210 с.

<sup>8</sup> Теличук П. Економічні основи аграрної революції на Україні. Київ : Вид-во Київського ун-ту. 1973. С. 38.

<sup>9</sup> Кравченко Б. Соціальні зміни і національна свідомість в Україні ХХ ст. / пер. з англ. Київ : Основи. 1997. С. 40

<sup>10</sup> Порш М. Статистика землеволодіння в 1905 р. і мобілізація земельної власности на Україні від 1877 р. по 1905 р. Київ : [Б. в.], 1907. С. 35.

<sup>11</sup> Лещенко Н., Теличук П. Взаимоотношения между городом и деревней в период капитализма на Украине. *XXVI съезд КПСС и проблемы аграрной истории СССР (социально-политическое развитие деревни)*. Уфа : Башкирское книжное изд-во, 1984. С. 268.

The transition to intensive farming was restrained by the disorganization of agrarian relations (strip farming, long land tenure, etc.), the presence of easements (places for cattle grazing, hayfields, etc., common for peasants and landowners). They also caused conflict relations between landowners and peasants, which were strengthened by the border factor, since the distribution of land holdings was not always documented or fairly carried out.

The issue of renting land was extremely acute for peasant households, with which the interests of both landowners and peasants were closely connected. Due to the lack of land, the peasants could not do without renting land, but its conditions were quite difficult. Peasant rent accounted for 50-60% of privately owned land<sup>12</sup>, and the rent was quite high. According to the materials of the Commission on November 16, 1901, the rent took an average of 34% of the gross profit and 81.1% of the net profit that the peasants received from the rented land<sup>13</sup>.

B. Myronov explained such a ratio of land prices and rental prices with the peculiarities of the market economy – the law of supply and demand: «the huge demand for land from the peasants exceeded its supply from the landowners», for whom all this was extremely profitable. In the same way, the peasants' demand for land rent was much higher than the available areas could satisfy<sup>14</sup>. According to N. Kovaliova, «this issue was caused by the spontaneous development of the land market in the post-reform period and was not solved due to objective and subjective factors: due to the lack of legislative regulation of lease relations, long-term ignoring of the interests of the peasantry, the desire for material gain on the part of influential participants of land market. The «conflict of interests» was most clearly manifested precisely in the issue of land lease»<sup>15</sup>.

Another difficult challenge for peasant households was the payment of taxes. Peasants were forced to pay the state land tax, redemption payments (both landlord and state peasants), zemstvo and mir fees, mandatory insurance payments. Soviet historians recognized excessive

taxation of the peasantry as one of the reasons for the peasant protests of 1905–1907.

The calamity from which at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century peasants suffered, there was chronic malnutrition caused by frequent crop failures: 1891–1892, 1896–1897, 1899, 1901, 1905–1906. Grain production significantly lagged behind demographic growth: during the 1860–1890s, the gross harvest of bread per capita on the Right Bank it increased by 30%, in the South – by 2.5 times, and on the Left Bank – by only 10% <sup>16</sup>.

At the state level, attempts to solve the peasant issue continued throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, as is known, not all ideas of the peasant reform of 1861 were implemented.

The situation that developed at that time countryside of the Russian Empire was depicted very appropriate in the autumn of 1898 in a letter addressed to Nicholas II by Minister of Finance S. Witte. He saw the main cause of the crisis in agriculture in «peasant disorganization». It was, according to the statesman, the alpha and omega of all the troubles that took place in the countryside at the end of the 19th century. «Peasant disorganization» was understood by him as the absence of legally established rights and duties of peasants. «Emperor Alexander II», wrote S. Witte, «redeemed the soul and body of the peasants, but did not make them free sons of the fatherland, did not organize their life on the basis of legality... the peasants found themselves in slavery to arbitrariness and ignorance» 17.

According to the Minister of Finance, the agricultural crisis caused «paralysis of the vital nerve of progress». He substantiated his position with numerical information from the ground received by the Ministry of Finance. Having free access to it, the statesman drew reasonable conclusions, claiming that the peasants had lost the incentive to improve their well-being by legal means. In this regard, he proposed to make the peasants «truly free people» endowed with civil rights. S. Witte considered land ownership to be one of the most important civil rights.

Not only ministers, but also governors spoke about the need for changes in the socio-econom-

<sup>12</sup> Ковальова Н. Селяни, поміщики і держава: конфлікти інтересів. «Аграрна революція» в Україні 1902—1922 рр. Дніпро: Ліра, 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Дубровский С. Сельское хозяйство и крестьянство России в период империализма. Москва: Наука, 1975. С. 324.

<sup>14</sup> Миронов Б. Н. Социальная история России периода империи (XVIII – начало XX в.): Генезис личности, демократической семьи, гражданского общества и правового государства: в 2-х т. Т. 1. Санкт-Петербург: Дмитрий Буланин, 1999. С. 411.

<sup>15</sup> Ковальова Н. Селяни, поміщики і держава: конфлікти інтересів. «Аграрна революція» в Україні 1902—1922 рр. Дніпро: Ліра, 2016. С. 102.

<sup>16</sup> Гуржій І. О. Україна в системі всеросійського ринку 60–90-х років XIX ст. Київ : Наукова думка, 1968. С. 53.

<sup>17</sup> Письмо С. Витте Николаю II в связи с образованием Совещания "для упорядочения крестьянского дела" в стране – о необходимости изменения правового положения крестьянства. Витте С. Ю. Хроника. Документы. Воспоминания. С-Пб., 1999. С. 135, 138.

ic and socio-political situation of the peasants. In this context, the report of the Governor General of the South-Western Region, M. Dragomirov, is eloquent. Reflecting in the document the crisis nature of the development of agriculture, he insisted on the use by the authorities of urgent and serious measures aimed at eliminating the crisis and improving the material and legal situation of the peasants. His warnings and considerations to some extent echo the thoughts of S. Witte. For example, M. Dragomirov, like the Minister of Finance, linked the improvement of the material wealth of the peasants to the «regularization of life» of the peasants. In his report, the Governor-General proposed to Nicholas II to immediately review the laws regarding the property and nonproperty rights of the peasants, the principles of their public self-government, etc<sup>18</sup>.

The situation in the countryside was studied by several government commissions created at the beginning of the 20th century. On November 16, 1901, the «Commission to Study the Issue of Changes from 1861 to 1900 in the Welfare of the Rural Population of the Middle Agricultural Governorates Compared to Other Territories of European Russia» was founded (Commission of November 16, 1901). It was headed by Deputy Minister of Finance V. Kokovtsov, and included representatives of three ministries (finance, internal affairs, agriculture, and state property), theoreticians on agrarian issues and zemstvo practitioners, including from the Poltava governorate. The commission worked for three years. The result of its activity was three volumes, in which interesting data on the state of agriculture in 18 governorates of the Russian Empire were published, specific opinions and proposals regarding the elimination of those negative phenomena that took place in the countryside were outlined. The members of the commission considered the main cause of the crisis in the agricultural industry to be the shortcomings of land management. That is, it was said that the inconvenient distribution of allotment land, strip farming, multi-strip farming, smallness of allotments had a negative impact on the development of both the agrarian sector of the country's economy in general, and peasant households in particular<sup>19</sup>.

Considering the issue of taxation of the peasantry, the commission outlined the new boundaries of the «impoverishment» district – it also included three Ukrainian governorates: Kharkiv, Poltava, and Chernihiv. This status provided for a reduction in redemption payments<sup>20</sup>. Despite the fact that the results of the commission's activity received a low rating from S. Witte, it played a significant role in studying the peasant issue and ways of solving it: valuable materials were collected, zemstvo officials were involved, peasant issues received public resonance.

On January 22, 1902, Nicholas II signed a decree on the creation of a Special Meeting on the Needs of the Agricultural Industry, which operated until March 30, 1905. It was headed by the Minister of Finance S. Witte. It included 22 high-ranking officials (from the State Council, the Ministry of Finance, Internal Affairs, Agriculture, and State Property). More than 100 people were additionally invited<sup>21</sup>.

The programme of activities of the Special Meeting included 40 issues that realistically reflected all the crisis phenomena in the development of the agrarian sector of the economy of the Russian Empire at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20th centuries, and was aimed at their elimination. In our opinion, the essence and content of the programme corresponded to the challenges of the time, and its authors, in particular S. Witte, had information about the real state of affairs in the industry, since in accordance with the programme of the Special Meeting on the Needs of the Agricultural Industry in many uezds and governorates of the Russian Empire, local committees, the purpose of which was to collect proposals for the fastest possible rise of the countryside and improvement of the peasantry's situation, were created. 618 committees were created, of which 82 were governorate, 536 were uezd. Among the last 50 governorate and 490 uezd committees operated in the European territory of the Russian Empire<sup>22</sup>. 13,000 local figures took part in their activity<sup>23</sup>.

The created governorate and uezd local committees united representatives of the regional elite: officials, large landowners, representatives of zemstvos and noble self-government, agronomists, newspaper editors, that is, those

<sup>18</sup> Російський державний історичний архів (Далі – РДІА). – Ф. 1291. Оп. 122. Сп 70. арк. 101.

<sup>19</sup> РДІА. Ф. 1278. Оп. 1. Спр. 310. Арк. 21.

<sup>20</sup> Журнал "Комиссии Центра". Заседания 10, 18, 20-23, 24 октября 1903 г. С. 11.

<sup>21</sup> РДІА. Ф. 1233. Оп. 1. Спр. 1. Арк. 202.

<sup>22</sup> Всеподданнейший отчет по Особому совещанию о нуждах сельскохозяйственной промышленности 1902–1904 гг. С-Пб., 1904. С. 8. 23 Фигуровская Н. «Особое совещание» о реформировании сельского хозяйства. Актуальные проблемы аграрной истории Восточ-

ной Европы Х-ХХІ вв.: источники и методы исследования: материалы ХХХІІ сессии симпозиума по аграрной истории Восточной Европы. Рязань: Ряз. гос. ун-т им. С. А. Есенина, 2012. С. 235.

who played an important role in the life of society at that time. They organized meetings at which landowners, merchants, and peasants spoke. The materials of such meetings were published in individual volumes by governorate. In fact, the uezd committees collected information about local needs and challenges for agricultural development, and the governorate committees summarized it.

In terms of social composition, the committees represented both organizers of land policy and direct producers of agricultural products: the share of nobles and landowners in the governorate committees was 1/3, in the uezd committees – 1/4, officials – 1/4, zemstvo officials – respectively 23% and 22%, peasants –  $1/5^{24}$ . The involvement of the main subjects of agrarian relations and, in particular, the peasantry (for the first time in the history of the Russian Empire), created conditions for clarifying the real needs of the agricultural industry at the regional level, provided the process of developing governmental agrarian initiatives of a public nature, which was extremely important for public opinion after peasant rebellions of 1902.

However, by decree of March 30, 1905, the Special Meeting was closed as a «revolutionary club»<sup>25</sup>. The Meeting left a large array of prepared materials (58 volumes of «Works of Local Committees on the Needs of the Agricultural Industry»), a number of economic works that investigated the dynamics of cultivated areas in Russia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, issues of land lease, public land use, animal husbandry, communication routes, infrastructure challenges for grain industry, dissemination of agricultural knowledge, financial issues, etc<sup>26</sup>. Individual volumes of «Works...» reflected the situation in Ukrainian governorates.

The materials of the meeting had no influence on the government's development of the main directions of agrarian policy due to the neglect of the public opinion by imperial political system of the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, the activities of the meeting were mainly informative. Among the positive aspects of the work of the meeting, it is possible to note a new vision by government officials of the role of the peasant – an initiative, individual producer of

goods and, in general, a change in attitude towards the peasant estate. At the same time, broad sections of the peasantry remained ignorant of the government's intentions and measures.

More effective was the activity of the Special Meeting chaired by O. Styshynskyi and the Special Meeting of A. Kulomzyn on the development of resettlement legislation, which were active in the period from March 1903 to January 1904.

The report of the Poltava Governor M. Urusov on the resettlement of small-land Poltava peasants and its discussion was put on the agenda of the Special Meeting on March 3, 6, 10, 12, 1903 chaired by O. Styshynskyi. In his speech, the prince reproduced the crisis of extensive agriculture in the Poltava governorate in detail and realistically. He noted that «under modern extensive methods of management, it is impossible to fundamentally change the economic conditions of peasant life in a short period of time». In our opinion, this conclusion is logical, supported by the real state of affairs in the agrarian sector of the economy of the Poltava governorate. Poltava officials saw a way out of the crisis in the resettlement of peasants. The project provided for the simultaneous resettlement of 50% of small-land owners – 337,027 people of both sexes. According to the calculations of the members of the governorate presence, this would solve the issue of peasant landlessness and shortage of land in the governorate for 10-15 years. During this period, it would be possible to take appropriate measures to intensify the agriculture of the governorate. Resettlement, according to the Poltava governor, would also have a political effect. M. Urusov believed: «... only directed by the state authorities to achieve certain goals, it can become a powerful means of improving the economic situation of the peasantry ... calming the anxious state of minds»<sup>27</sup>.

The Poltava governor called for a careful approach to the resettlement of peasants, to coordinate and harmonize this process with the state's general line in agrarian policy. The project announced by the Governor of Poltava did not cause serious debate among the members of the Special Meeting chaired by O. Styshynskyi. On the contrary, its complete expediency

<sup>24</sup> Шидловський С. Общий обзор трудов местных комитетов. СПб., 1905. С. 65.

<sup>25</sup> Витте С. Воспоминания: в 3-х т. Т. 2 (1894 – октябрь 1905). Царствование Николая II. Москва : Изд-во соц.-экон. лит-ры, 1960. С. 536, 539.

<sup>26</sup> Фигуровская Н. «Особое совещание» о реформировании сельского хозяйства. Актуальные проблемы аграрной истории Восточной Европы X—XXI вв.: источники и методы исследования: материалы XXXII сессии симпозиума по аграрной истории Восточной Европы. Рязань: Ряз. гос. ун-т им. С. А. Есенина, 2012. С. 234—237.

<sup>27</sup> Журнал совещания, образованного при МВД для обсуждения предложений Полтавского губернского присутствия о переселении малоземельных крестьян из Полтавской губернии. Заседания 3, 6, 10 и 12 марта 1903 г. СПб., 1903. С. 3.

and necessity of application was recognized not only for the Poltava governorate. It was decided to extend the new order of resettlement to eight chernozem governorates of the Russian Empire, among which were the Kyiv, Podillia, Kharkiv and Chernihiv governorates.

On the initiative of Nicholas II, an interdepartmental Special Meeting on Resettlement was established under the chairmanship of A. Kulomzyn. Its members included the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Agriculture and State Property. In December 1903, its members completed work on the resettlement bill and an explanatory note to it<sup>28</sup>. On January 30, 1904, both documents were already considered by the members of A. Kulomzyn's Special Meeting<sup>29</sup>.

The main provisions of the draft of the new resettlement law were reduced to the follows. Direct control over resettlement processes was entrusted to the relevant state authorities. There were two main types of the resettlement. The first is with the permission of the government. It highlighted: a) resettlement to the Caucasus and the Far East; b) resettlement in accordance with the interests of agrarian policy from densely populated central governorates of the empire. The second is arbitrary or free, that is, without the permission of the government. In this way, an end was put to the unjustified practice of the authorities to return arbitrary migrants to their places of previous residence. In fact, the draft law officially recognized this type of resettlement. The state stopped applying punitive sanctions against self-migrants<sup>30</sup>. On July 6, 1904, the draft law took on the character of temporary rules regulating resettlement policy in the Russian Empire.

Thus, for the first time in the legal practice of the Russian Empire, the social aspect in the life of resettled peasants was regulated. The authorities went for a certain liberalization, reducing passporting of the population only to the function of an identity card. Also, the softening of the state policy in the field of resettlement was evidenced by the absence of persecution by the authorities at the legislative level of arbitrary resettled peasants. We also see the positive in the fact that the temporary rules on resettlement reconciled two vectors of the state's internal policy: resettlement and agrarian.

Despite the presence of certain disadvantages related to the fact that the temporary rules limited the possibilities of resettlement of smallland peasants, it became the basis for the Stolypin agrarian transformations.

**The conclusions.** So, the beginning of the 20th century was marked by an active search by the state authorities for ways out of the crisis state of the agrarian sector of the country's economy, which it got into due to a combination of internal and external factors.

One of the initiators of solving the agrarian issue at the government level was the Minister of Finance S. Witte. Several government commissions and meetings created at the beginning of the 20th century dealt with the investigation of the state of agriculture in the areas and proposals for solving the peasant issue. The Commission on November 16, 1901 and the Special Meeting on the Needs of the Agricultural Industry had the most tangible influence. They summarized valuable material about the state of the agricultural industry, attracted a wide range of officials, zemstvo officials, public figures, scientists and directly peasants. However, their intentions remained unknown to the general public, which also contributed to the maturation of revolutionary sentiments on the ground.

The activity of the Special Meeting chaired by O. Styshynskyi and the Special Meeting chaired by A. Kulomzyn was effective. They drafted a draft law, which on July 6, 1904, took on the character of temporary rules regulating the resettlement policy in the Russian Empire. This was the law by which, for the first time in the legal practice of the state, the social aspect of the life of the resettled peasants was regulated. But it cannot be fully recognized as socially oriented, excellent. Because, firstly, self-willed resettled peasants did not receive state financial support. Secondly, total state control over resettlement processes was established.

Thus, the leitmotif of the government's internal policy at the beginning of the 20th century there was an improvement in the material and legal situation of the peasantry.

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<sup>28</sup> РДІА. Ф. 1273. Оп. 1. Спр. 433. Арк. 6-74.

<sup>29</sup> РДІА. Ф. 391. Оп. 1. Спр. 909. Арк. 190.

<sup>30</sup> РДІА. Ф. 1149. Оп. ХІІІ. Спр. 94. Арк. 161.

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