

Stolypin agrarian reforms are the agrarian reforms to Imperial Russia's agricultural sector instituted during the tenure of Pyotr Stolypin as Chairman of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister). Most if not all of these reforms were based on recommendations from "The Needs of Agricultural Industry Special Conference" which was held in Russia between 1901-1903 during the tenure of Sergei Witte as Minister of Finance and Chairman of the Committee of Ministers.

The goal of the reform was to transform the archaic obshchina form of Russian agriculture which the peasants that were liberated by the emancipation reform of 1861 in Russia remained trapped within. Among the many faults of the obshchina included collective ownership, scattered land allotments based on family size and a stifling level of control by the family elder. Stolypin, being a staunch conservative, also sought to eliminate the commune system known as the mir and to stifle the liberal atmosphere among the peasants, preventing further revolution such as that during the Revolution of 1905. The idea was that by tying the peasants to their own private land holdings they would develop into more conservative farmers like those of Western Europe.^[1] (Thompson 83-85)

The reforms began with and introduced the unconditional right of individual landownership (Ukase of November 9, 1906). Essentially the reforms sought to abolish the obshchina system and replace it with a more progressive, capitalist oriented form highlighting private ownership and consolidated modern farmsteads.

The reforms were multifaceted and introduced the following:

- Development of large-scale individual farming (khutors)
- Introduction of agricultural cooperation
- Development of agricultural education
- Dissemination of new methods of land improvement
- Affordable lines of credit for peasants
- Creation of an Agrarian Party, to represent the interests of farmers

The Stolypin agrarian reforms were implemented by the state in an exhausting campaign from 1906 through 1914. This system was not a command economy like that found in the Soviet Union in the 1920s but a continuation of the State Capitalism program begun under Sergei Witte but so far essentially unapplied to the agricultural sector. It was different from Witte's reforms not by the rapid push which was a method also found in the Witte Reforms but by the fact that Stolypin's reforms were to the Agricultural sector, included improvements to the rights of individuals on a broad level and had the backing of the Police. These reforms laid the groundwork for a free capitalist enterprise system in Russian agriculture for the common people.

The principal ministers involved in the implementation of the Stolypin agrarian reforms were Petr Stolypin as Interior Minister and Prime Minister, Alexander Krivoshein as Agriculture and State Domains Minister, and Vladimir Kokovtsov as Finance Minister and Stolypin's successor as Prime Minister.

The Stolypin reforms and the majority of their benefits were reversed by the Soviet agrarian program in the 1920s.

Resettlement to Siberia

As a result of the expansion of the Trans-Siberian Railroad and other railroads east of the Ural Mountains and the Caspian Sea migration to Siberia increased. It is estimated that between 1890 and 1914 that over 10 million persons migrated freely from Russia proper to areas east of the Urals. This was encouraged by the Trans-Siberian Railroad Committee; personally headed by Nicholas II as chairman. The Stolypin agrarian reforms included a subsidized resettlement benefit for peasants who moved to Siberia. As a result of this reform approximately 2.8 of the 10 million settlements in Siberia occurred between 1908 and 1913 under this new subsidy. This increased the population of the regions east of the Urals by 2.5 times.

Cooperation

The following new types of cooperation-assistance were developed as part of the Stolypin agrarian reforms: financial-credit cooperation, production cooperation, consumer cooperation. Many elements of Stolypin's cooperation-assistance programs were in fact incorporated into the early agrarian programs of the Soviet Union, however without due credit to the "tsarist" minister.

References

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- Judith Pallot. *Land Reform in Russia, 1906-1917: Peasant Responses to Stolypin's Project of Rural Transformation*. Oxford and New York: Clarendon Press, 1999. xv + 255. [ISBN 0-19-820656-9](#)