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# *Stolypin's Agrarian Reform: An Appraisal*

By George Tokmakoff

Stolypin's agrarian reform continues to be a point of controversy among Russian scholars. In the past decade Soviet historians have paid disproportionate attention to the problem—an interesting fact when one considers that he died over a half century ago, and one which accentuates the Soviet inheritance of the agrarian dilemma. Soviet historians, like some in the West, deprecate the reform's "achievements." The Soviets stress its ideological implications, while their Western counterparts tend to doubt the reform's alleged practical accomplishment. Both rely heavily on statistics to demonstrate their position, without making even a token effort to critically examine some of the most basic source materials. They make pronouncements on Stolypin's policy without having read the stenographic reports of the Duma and the State Council where the issue was debated with such passion and at such length. Those in the West who are insistent that the reform was a failure become absorbed with their notion, starting with the premise and selecting facts to substantiate their point, using only those statistics which prove their contention.

The purpose of this article is to register an opposing point of view. The present author feels that Stolypin's agrarian reform was neither a success nor a failure; no final conclusion can be drawn because the reform was never completed. A conclusive verdict would be possible only if the process had been brought to completion, and the results were as evident as is claimed.

No more can be done, therefore, in the evaluation of Stolypin's reform than to submit for scrutiny the available statistics on the period 1907-1914, for, as is known, owing to World War I and the ensuing Revolution, the scheme was never completed. Since the reform was not put into effect until mid-1907 it only operated for seven years, a clearly insufficient period for so colossal an undertaking, and one which, from its nature, could only proceed slowly. Before presenting

an appraisal of the facts and figures available, it is important to elucidate a number of basic issues which are central to the reform and which have been persistently distorted by Soviet authorities in the field.

The first point to be clarified is that some of the extreme right wing deputies in the Third Duma, and most of those in the State Council, were as firmly opposed to Stolypin's reforms as were the left wing deputies of the Duma; their argument was that the communal system did not itself hinder agriculture and that only its minor bad features should be removed. It was the progressive conservative and the liberal element which held views comparable to those of Stolypin, that is, the need to eliminate the commune and release the energy stored up within it. Soviet sources, *a contra*, contend that it was the reactionary group which alone favored the abolition of the commune. Secondly, it must be emphasized that land hunger was not the sole cause of the Russian agrarian problem, nor was it even the reason for the agrarian disturbances, as the opposition and Soviet sources later asserted. In the main, the peasants had sufficient land and only a minority, although a substantial one, fell into the category of genuinely land-hungry peasants. Karpov, a Soviet writer in the field, produces figures to show that by 1905, 50 percent of peasant households had an average of between 5 and 10 desyatin,<sup>1</sup> a high average even for Western Europe; 22.3 percent had large holdings, between 15 and 25 desyatin and only 27.5 percent held between 0 and 5 desyatin and could properly be described as in dire need of land.<sup>2</sup>

Another important point of contention is the Soviet and prerevolutionary view that the government's policy of the "wager on the strong" was directed exclusively to the benefit of kulaks—the well-to-do peasants. The word kulak, so much misused for political ends, requires a note of explanation. When Stolypin said that he was staking his policy on the strong and not on the wretched, as may be seen from the context of his speeches, he meant by the strong any peasant who was prepared to work to his fullest potential. There was meanwhile a class of kulaks, but this term could only strictly be applied to usurers, people within the commune or otherwise, who were able to profit from their

<sup>1</sup> One desyatina = 2.69 acres.

<sup>2</sup> N. Karpov, *Agrarnaya politika Stolypina*, Leningrad, 1925, pp. 123-125. See Krivoshein's speech in the Third Duma: *Gosudarstvennaya Duma, tretii sozyv. Stenograficheskie otchety*, October 12, 1909, col. 57.

positions as heads of the commune (village elders) or of their immediate families. They exploited the mass of the peasantry by their established role within the rural hierarchy. When Stolypin spoke of the strong, he was not thinking of this class, *i.e.*, of the already strong—on the contrary, it was from this class that he wanted to liberate the average peasant and give him a chance to develop such individual qualities as he possessed.<sup>3</sup> Soviet sources, on the other hand, announce that it was only the kulak class which was eager to leave the commune. Either this class must have been composed of the most able and “strenuous peasants,” whom the Soviets could hardly openly condemn for seeking to uplift themselves, or of those kulaks *strictu sensu*, money lenders for the most part, who were in fact bitterly against the breaking up of the commune and did all in their power to prevent others from departing. The reasoning of the latter was rather obvious—the usurers were afraid that, once the peasants settled on *khutors* (individual farms), it would be hard to maintain control over them, for the government would come to their aid financially. Kulaks of this persuasion are singled out by Kofod, a Danish collaborator of Stolypin’s in a report to the latter in 1910, while on tour to study the problems of the countryside:

It often happens, especially in small settlements, that some kulak-shopkeeper, holding a whole peasant settlement in bondage, considers the enclosure programme unprofitable for himself; fearing, not without basis, that the peasant will leave his tutelage on moving to a *khutor*.<sup>4</sup>

There is another and perhaps more appropriate term which can be applied to the type of peasant whom Stolypin’s agrarian program supported, that is, *smelchak*<sup>5</sup> (meaning courageous or daring), those unafraid of a new situation. The word is appropriate in that the mass of the peasant population were not only ignorant but also inordinately superstitious; this mental epithet enables us to see the problem in its temporal perspective. The communal system had deep roots in the collective mind of the Russian peasant, and it was hard for the average landworker to even imagine that he could now take an individual

<sup>3</sup> An analysis of the kulak question can be found in Professor D. Treadgold’s article, “Was Stolypin in Favor of Kulaks?” *The American Slavic and East European Review*, vol. 14 (1955), pp. 1-15.

<sup>4</sup> Karpov, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-19. This term appears in one of the reports of the Peasant Land Bank.

farm and face new responsibilities. To do so in fact constituted a courageous act on the part of the peasantry. Therefore, the government had to build demonstration *khutors*<sup>6</sup> when logic and speeches did not work, in order to show the peasant not only that he could survive outside the commune but also that he could thereby raise his living standard. Although there was peasant resistance to the enclosures, this was based largely on age-old mistrust<sup>7</sup> of the government and rumors to which this gave rise. However, once the "strong" and independent started to move into private farms and the advantages of the new development were seen by the peasants with their own eyes, the mass began increasingly to support the new agrarian program of resettlement on individual plots.

The effort on the part of the peasants was no doubt great, but the desire for individual ownership was even greater than the ties with the commune, and personal initiative was thus given an opportunity to start to flourish. Kofod, who observed the program closely and came into direct contact with new *khutor* settlers in all parts of Russia, remarked:

Though at the start settling on the *khutors* was a colossal effort for the peasantry, even in these years of strained labor and considerable expense it would be hard to find a single owner out of hundreds who was not happy with the new way of life, and the owner who went through these years of suffering and set his homestead on the right footing, will never agree to return back to the commune or to the strip system.<sup>8</sup>

Under the provisions of Stolypin's laws, which were introduced in

<sup>6</sup> W. Preyer, *Die russische Agrarreform*, Jena, 1914, p. 275. A. Kofod, *Khutorskoe razselenie*, St. Petersburg, 1907, p. 18. P. Polezhaev, *Za shest let—1906-1912*, St. Petersburg, 1912, p. 48.

<sup>7</sup> As one author notes, the new agrarian law was far from being well known to the peasantry, who had only a vague idea of what it attempted to do. See S. Semenov, *Dvadsat pyat let v derevne*, Petrograd, 1915, p. 274. Another authority, who took part in the enclosure movement, lists a series of reasons why the peasants resisted it. It was rumored, for example, that the government wished to introduce *khutors* in order to divide and control the peasant masses. The peasants also thought that the strip system offered better security against total loss of crops caused by fire and hail. It was also believed that individual farming would only prove profitable for those who could afford large tracts of land. Lastly, the peasant women were reluctant to lose the companionship of their neighbors by moving to individual farms. See A. Kofod, *Borba s chrezpolsotsoi v Rossii*, St. Petersburg, 1906, p. 951.

<sup>8</sup> Kofod, *Khutorskoe razselenie*, St. Petersburg, 1907, p. 54.

October and November 1906, some 2,755,633 householders applied for separation titles by 1915, out of whom 2,008,432 were settled on individual allotments. In addition to this last figure, under the provision of the law of June 14, 1910, 469,792 householders received separation titles automatically as they had held their holdings undisturbed for twenty-four years, thus bringing the sum total to just under 2.5 million householders.<sup>9</sup> If we remember that in 1907 there were, for example, only 600 surveyors working for the Ministry of Agriculture, a figure which had grown to 6,500 by 1914,<sup>10</sup> the complex task of organizing the vast administration for establishing and accommodating over two million householders in so short a time can be appreciated as representing an almost superhuman effort.<sup>11</sup>

An essential factor in Stolypin's reforms was the role of the Peasant Land Bank. Between November 1905 and November 1907, for instance, the Bank bought 4,118 estates containing 4,750,549 desyatin.<sup>12</sup> Between the years 1909 and 1915, 55.6 percent of those who purchased land from the Bank were individual farmers who bought approximately 4 million desyatin, while the other 44 percent consisted of autonomous village corporations and associations who bought a further 3 million desyatin.<sup>13</sup> In addition to buying land directly from the Bank, the peasants bought 5,239,000 desyatin from private owners with the aid of the Bank.<sup>14</sup> A round total of 15 million desyatin of land was acquired by the peasantry between 1906 and 1915. From these figures and those below, it can hardly be contended that the Peasant Land Bank was an instrument of the landlords.<sup>15</sup>

The purchase of land from the owners of large estates and the dis-

<sup>9</sup> A. Tiunenev, *Ot revolutsii k revolutsii*, Leningrad, 1925, p. 14. E. Vasilevsky, *Ideinaya borba vokrug stolypinskoi agrarnoi reformy*, Moscow, 1960, pp. 44-45. A. Bolshakov and N. Rozhkov, *Istoriya khozyaistva Rossii v materialakh i dokumentakh*, Leningrad, 1926, p. 39.

<sup>10</sup> P. Efremov, *Stolypinskaya agrarnaya politika*, Moscow, 1941, p. 29.

<sup>11</sup> The administration grew rapidly from 184 *uezd* agrarian commissions in 1906, to 411 in 1909, but this was still far from adequate for the area under their jurisdiction. S. Dubrovsky, *Stolypinskaya reforma*, Leningrad, 1925, p. 60.

<sup>12</sup> A. Chuprov, *Po povodu ukaza 9 noyabrya 1906 g.*, Moscow, 1908, p. 94.

<sup>13</sup> Efremov, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-53. P. Arkhangelsky, *Ocherki po istorii zemelnogo stroya Rossii*, Kazan, 1920, p. 292, gives the following figures: The peasants bought 9,520,000 desyatin during the period 1906-15 with the aid of the Bank, of which 5,605,000 went to collectives and 3,914,000 went to individual households.

<sup>14</sup> Vasilevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>15</sup> Dubrovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

posing of it to the struggling peasants was no doubt the most important function of the Bank, but at the same time it sought to keep inflationary prices at a minimum. One Soviet authority has estimated the cost of land in 1897 at 71.5 rubles per desyatina, and at 106 rubles in 1902.<sup>16</sup> Stolypin announced in an address to the State Council in 1909 that the average purchase price of land throughout Russia was 89 rubles per desyatina, whereas *nadel* (allotment) lands were being sold at an average price of 93 rubles per desyatina.<sup>17</sup> These figures, if accepted, reflect the Bank's efforts and success in keeping the problem of inflation under control. It should also be noted that the Peasant Land Bank attempted, and initially succeeded, in equalizing peasant holdings,<sup>18</sup> thus making it difficult to accept the Soviet contention that the Peasant Land Bank served only to further pauperize the already impoverished peasantry.<sup>19</sup>

The increase of land in peasants' hands also had a direct effect on the area of cultivation during the same period. The average of 85.5 million sown desyatins between 1901 to 1905 increased to 93.5 million by 1909-1913.<sup>20</sup> Besides encouraging the improvement of the soil by making loans to individual households, the Bank also established a chain of agronomic stations throughout the country in order to educate the peasants. By 1907 the Bank had set up some 312 agricultural instruction centers for the peasants; by 1909 this number had grown to 1,964; and in that year, attendance figures had increased from 36,000 to 233,981. The number of agronomists grew from 2,710 in 1909 to 10,000 in 1914.<sup>21</sup> This development brought about widespread improvements and the crop per capita rose steadily.<sup>22</sup>

Private ownership did encourage personal initiative and consequently output, as subsequent critics, such as Chuprov, have admitted.<sup>23</sup> If compared with European standards, the output in Russia was still very low, but only time and a combined effort to raise the fertility

<sup>16</sup> Efremov, *op. cit.*, p. 17. One ruble = 51.5 cents (U.S.).

<sup>17</sup> *Gosudarstvennyi Sovet. Stenograficheskie otchety*, March 26, 1910, col. 1603.

<sup>18</sup> G. Baturinsky, *Agrarnaya politika tsarskogo pravitelstva i krestyanskii pozemelnyi bank*, Moscow, 1925, p. 131.

<sup>19</sup> Karpov, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>20</sup> Efremov, *op. cit.*, p. 114.

<sup>21</sup> Tiimenev, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-175.

<sup>22</sup> Karpov, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>23</sup> Chuprov, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

of the soil could possibly have solved the question of more intensive cultivation. This disparity in output is understandable when one considers, to take only one factor, the relative amount of money invested in Russia and in Europe on soil improvement. Stolypin himself used the following figures:<sup>24</sup>

Belgium	1	ruble/desyatina on fertilizing the soil		
Prussia	1.33	"	"	"
Hungary	2	"	"	"
Norway	2	"	"	"
Russia	9	kopeks/desyatina	"	"

However, even this particular phenomenon was changing rapidly with the introduction of Stolypin's reforms. Whereas in 1905, 7,278,000 puds of fertilizer were used, by 1913 this had risen to 34,256,000 puds, a five-fold increase.<sup>25</sup> Mechanization also proceeded swiftly; in 1911 over 12 million rubles were spent on mechanized agricultural machinery, as compared with the nearly 7 million rubles spent in 1907.<sup>26</sup> These figures reflect the government's drive towards intensive cultivation, as well as the growing feeling on the part of individual families that land might yet prove a good capital investment. The increase in peasant self-reliance and the realization of the possibilities of ownership naturally stimulated the development of a cooperative movement. Credit associations (*kreditnyia tovarishchestva*) increased from 2,002 in 1908 to 4,050 by July 1910; and their membership rose from 838,700 to 1,600,000, respectively. Between the years 1898 and 1908, rural corporations (*selsko-khozyaistvennyia obshchestva*) increased from 269 to 1,020.<sup>27</sup> Agrarian associations of all varieties increased from 1,625 in 1902 to 18,023 by 1912.<sup>28</sup>

Soviet writers have consistently argued that the Stolypin reforms squeezed the poor peasant from the commune, leaving him with no resources other than his own labor for hire. To support this claim,

<sup>24</sup> P. Stolypin and A. Krivoshein, *Poezdka v Sibir i Povolzhe*, St. Petersburg, 1911, p. 160. One kopeika = 1/100 of a ruble.

<sup>25</sup> Tiunenev, *op. cit.*, p. 179. One pud = 36.11 pounds avoirdupois.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180. Stolypin and Krivoshein, *op. cit.*, pp. 46, 89.

<sup>27</sup> Efremov, *op. cit.*, p. 108; N. Makeev, and V. O'Hara, *Russia*, New York, 1925, pp. 114-115.

<sup>28</sup> S. Prokopovich, *Kooperativnoe dvizhenie v Rossii. Ego teoriya i praktika*, Moscow, 1913, p. iii.



they give the following figures: whereas in 1908 only 15,000 peasants sold their allotments, in 1910, 250,000 did so.<sup>29</sup> But this trend obviously can be explained in a number of ways. First, there was a certain percentage of peasants who wished to leave the land altogether and join the worldwide move to the cities. Second, the majority of the really poor peasants who sold their land were those who had decided to migrate to Siberia.<sup>30</sup> The reason why they sold their existing property at what might appear to have been a comparatively cheap rate was that they were receiving grants of land either without payment at all, as in the Altai region,<sup>31</sup> or at a price which was far cheaper than they had obtained for their old plots. Obviously enough of the richer peasants did not wish to move to Siberia, so the movement was largely confined to the poorest peasants who were, nevertheless, greatly improving their relative economic position compared with that which they had held in European Russia. In Siberia, for instance, the average *khutor* was about 35 desyatin, or almost 100 acres. Compared with European standards, the owners of such holdings would fall into the category of large peasant landowners.

It is important to recall the Peasant Land Bank memorandum of January 27, 1906, which stated that besides applying its efforts to the improvement of cultivation and migration, the Bank intended to shift its activity from being exclusively commercial to assisting those peasants who most needed land.<sup>32</sup> This trend in the Bank's function had already been foreshadowed in the Manifesto of November 3, 1905, which further indicates official policy toward the poorer class of peasants.<sup>33</sup>

It is thus reasonably well established that the Peasant Land Bank did in fact aid those impoverished peasants who seemed capable of helping themselves; for that matter, there was little need to help those

<sup>29</sup> Karpov, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

<sup>30</sup> Arkhangelsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-4; N. Oganovsky, *Agrarnaya evoliutsiya v Rossii posle 1905 g.*, Moscow, 1918, p. 61.

<sup>31</sup> C. von Dietze, *Stolypinsche Agrarreform und Feldgemeinschaft*, Leipzig and Berlin, 1920, p. 68.

<sup>32</sup> N. Karpov, *Krestyanskoe dvizhenie v revoliutsii 1905 goda v dokumentakh*, Lenin-grad, 1926, p. 272.

<sup>33</sup> von Dietze, *op. cit.*, p. 66. (Arkhangelsky notes that 18 percent of the peasants who bought land from the Bank were those having no land at all; 27 percent had an average of 1.5 desyatin; 15 percent between 1.5 and 3 desyatin; 21 percent between 3 and 6 desyatin; and 18 percent had over 6 desyatin. Arkhangelsky, *op. cit.*, p. 284).

peasants who already had sufficient land or who were otherwise well-to-do. On the basis of figures available to us, it can also be established that it was the poorer peasants in European Russia who took advantage of the migration policy. It is estimated that between 1908 and 1914, 1,022,687 peasants sold some 3,697,696 desyatin of land for a total of 410,950,000 rubles.<sup>34</sup> Those peasants who sold their plots were thus those who, at least on an average, had around 3 desyatin, and what is even more important is that they were able to sell their plots for over 100 rubles per desyatina. Tying these figures with Stolypin's statement that a quarter of the peasants who took advantage of the Siberian migration policy had no land at all in European Russia, and that 57 percent had less than 7 desyatin,<sup>35</sup> it appears unquestionable that the main concern of both the Land Bank and of the government was the most oppressed section of the rural population.

There is also something to be said in general favor of the more wealthy peasants. One of the government's aims was to carry agriculture into a progressive and less static phase, an objective which could not be achieved by lazy and indifferent peasants as Stolypin had stated; thus even if the rich peasants bought up the land of migrants or of the less energetic, the land was put to good use. These peasants could not be classified as kulaks since they worked the land themselves and were, for that matter, the foundation of the Russian economy; this type of peasant was emerging from the previous mass of undifferentiated peasantry. As for the completely destitute peasants, the government was more than anxious to wean them from the countryside and, at the least, to absorb them in industry where they could serve a better purpose, rather than to allow them to misuse the soil without apparent benefit to themselves or the community.

Soviet sources are correct in stipulating that Stolypin's policy was directed at transforming the village into a bourgeois community.<sup>36</sup> Government efforts were mainly devoted to this transition, that is, to the further breaking of deep-rooted feudal ties and to the inculcation of the instinct of private ownership, which would eventually produce a bourgeois community of small farmsteads. This new rural society was to become the backbone of the new reformed state which

<sup>34</sup> Khromov, *op. cit.*, p. 401; Arkhangelsky, *op. cit.*, p. 263.

<sup>35</sup> Stolypin and Krivoshein, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>36</sup> Vasilevsky, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

Stolypin envisaged. But there is no sign that Stolypin's underlying intention was to strengthen the interests of the gentry, so that they might subjugate the peasant masses with increased economic weapons, as Vasilevsky goes so far as to imply.

An intensified policy of peasant migration, from the overpopulated provinces of European Russia towards Siberia and Asiatic Russia, accompanied the agrarian reform. The following figures require no elaboration:<sup>37</sup>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of Migrants</i>
1906	135,274
1907	421,335
1908	649,886
1909	593,806
1910	285,878
1911	161,519
1912	177,285
1913	214,881
1914	224,987

Thus during the years 1906-14 almost 3 million migrants went to Siberia. The return of some 4 percent is understandable, for not all could bear the difficulties and rigors of the wild and its climate. The figure is nevertheless remarkably low if compared with the number who stayed and made the new lands their home. If one considers the hundreds of thousands who migrated annually, the surveys that had to be prepared, the huts built and wells dug, and the tools, grain and other essential items that had to be supplied, the government's problems can be appreciated. Viewed on this broad scale, it seems an almost insurmountable task when the backwardness and clumsiness of the administration and the enormous expenditure involved are compared with the relatively low level of taxation. The difficulties which confronted both the government and the settlers were thus manifold and complex. The migrants had to be physically robust and

<sup>37</sup> N. Karpov, *op. cit.*, p. 28. G. Pavlovsky, *Agricultural Russia on the Eve of the Revolution*, London, 1930, p. 177. The lists of those who took part in the Siberian migration show that the majority came from the central provinces of European Russia. On the breakdown of figures pertaining to migrants from the provinces of European Russia to Siberia, see *Izдание Pereselencheskago Upravleniya Glavnago Upravleniya Zemleustroistva i Zemledeliya, Aziatskaya Rossiya*, St. Petersburg, Vol. 1 (1914) pp. 490-491.

hard working, otherwise survival was often almost impossible. Therefore, what mattered in many cases was not the amount of money the peasant family had as such but its capacity as a family unit. On the other hand, hospitals, clinics, schools, roads, and much more were built by the government; and if these are visualized against the background of pre-1914 Russia, they are in themselves evidence as to how gigantic the whole effort of migration was, let alone the whole agrarian reform. No doubt the government provided economic advantages in order to help migration, but it did not hide the aspects of hardship which the peasants would find on location. Krivoshein, the Minister of Agriculture, was quite clear on that point when he answered accusations to that effect from the left wing opposition in the Second Duma.<sup>38</sup> A point worth noting is that within the first three years of the agrarian reform the work done by the Agrarian Commissions brought no complaints from 96 percent of the peasants.<sup>39</sup> This reflects the overwhelming approval of the goals of the program.

Stolypin and Krivoshein visited Siberia in 1910 in order to learn first hand the effects of the migration policy. After seeing the results, it appeared that the hardships suffered had not been in vain. In his report, Stolypin stressed that Siberia was rich in all but population; at the same time he described the complexity of the work of colonization and how the Resettlement Administration was overworked.

On September 19, 1906, an Imperial *ukaz* had been issued releasing the appanage lands in Altai region for free distribution to migrants,<sup>40</sup> together with other lands in Siberia, under the auspices of the Resettlement Administration. As an added incentive, besides being given some land, migrants to Siberia were also exempted from *zemstvo* and other taxes during the first five years, and those migrating to Turkestan were exempt during the first ten years.<sup>41</sup> Stolypin reported that some 40 million *desyatin* were available in the Altai region of which 18 million had already been distributed among the local population,

<sup>38</sup> *Gosudarstvennaya Duma. Vtoroi sozyv, stenograficheskie otchety*, May 24, 1907, cols. 1106-7. (Hereafter referred to as *G. D.*).

<sup>39</sup> Stolypin and Krivoshein, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

<sup>40</sup> *Sbornik zakonov i rasporyazhenii po zemleustroistvu*, St. Petersburg, 1908, pp. 371-415.

<sup>41</sup> On migration to Turkestan see V. Voshchinin, *Ocherki novago Turkestana*, St. Petersburg, 1914. It was estimated that there were 226 million *desyatin* of land available for resettlement in Turkestan. *G. D.* May 16, col. 627.

and 3 million among the migrants, leaving another 20 million desyatin immediately available.<sup>42</sup>

The migration policy required expenditures of large sums by the government. It was calculated that within the first three years of the reform almost 5,200 verst<sup>43</sup> of roads were built in the wilds of Siberia at a cost of 5 million rubles. In 1911 the government submitted to the Duma an appropriation of 3.5 million rubles for this purpose alone. In his report, however, Stolypin stressed with great enthusiasm the building of railroads, for as he said, "Only railroads will in actuality open the new spaces for the migrants."<sup>44</sup> The Duma was also requested to approve the allocation of 48 million rubles to build additional rolling stock in which to transport migrants, their goods and supplies.<sup>45</sup> Medical credits for Siberia were doubled within two years.<sup>46</sup>

Stolypin's report also describes the standard of living of the migrants, as compared with that of the peasants in Russia proper. The general results of the migrants' efforts were financially profitable and the average annual income increased by 15, and, in some cases, by 30 rubles. The migrants were better fed and had more to spend on themselves than the peasants of European Russia. The average expenditure of newly formed households was 66 rubles, rising to 73 rubles in the case of those who had been settled for a number of years. These figures compare favorably with the 55–58 rubles per head spent in European Russia.<sup>47</sup>

In agriculture, some 6 million desyatin were under cultivation in Siberia by 1910 and Stolypin estimated that, at the rate of 50 puds of grain per desyatina, this would result in an output of 300 million puds, only half of which would be needed in Siberia itself—an excess of 150 million puds.<sup>48</sup> The production of butter for export also rose rapidly; Stolypin cites the figure of 2 million puds for 1904, compared with 3.5 million puds in 1907.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Stolypin and Krivoshein, *op. cit.*, p. 26. See also *G. D.*, May 16, 1907, col. 661.

<sup>43</sup> One versta = 3,500 feet.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35-36. See also A. Finn-Enotaevsky, *Sovremennoe khozyaistvo Rossii*, 1890-1910, St. Petersburg, 1911, p. 520.

<sup>45</sup> Stolypin and Krivoshein, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

These figures provide an impressive indication of the magnitude of the task and the further possibilities of Siberian migration. The significance of the task which confronted the government has been summarized by Professor Treadgold as follows: "Probably no Western country ever had an agricultural Ministry whose functions approached those of Russia's in scope and in their importance to the nation's future."<sup>50</sup> The government estimated that, if the tempo of migration were maintained at the 1906-7 level, the program of resettlement could be completed by 1929.<sup>51</sup> More significant for our purpose was that by this migration policy "Siberia was, at least in practice, what Stolypin sought to create in European Russia, a land of peasant proprietors."<sup>52</sup>

Stolypin hoped to transform the peasant population, and thus Russia itself, into a nation of small farm owners, and allocated twenty-five years to accomplish his task. He was certain that it was not the shortage of arable land alone but the social organization and the long periods of inactivity of the countryside that constituted the major obstacles to progress. Expropriation, he felt, could not solve the agrarian difficulties, particularly in view of the rapid increase in population, for the same problem would then confront the next generation. Development of the resources of an increased number of individual landowners and intensive cultivation were the true seeds of the proper answer.

With an increase in agricultural production and a consequent increase in rural standards of living, Stolypin also endeavored to release those forces which would in themselves increase capital outlay and stimulate industrial development as a growing internal market opened. Industrial progress was advancing at an unprecedented pace between 1906 and 1914, the period of most vigorous growth in the country's economy up to that date.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, full industrial de-

<sup>50</sup> D. Treadgold, *The Great Siberian Migration: Government and Peasant in Resettlement from Emancipation to the First World War*, Princeton University Press, 1957, p. 130.

<sup>51</sup> *G.D.*, May 24, 1907, col. 1103.

<sup>52</sup> H. Ellison, "Peasant Colonization of Siberia," unpublished Ph.D. thesis of London University, p. 312.

<sup>53</sup> Count Kokovtsov, *Out of My Past*, pp. 457-66. M. Miller, *The Economic Development of Russia 1905-1914: With Special Reference to Trade, Industry, and Finance*. London, 1926, pp. 299-300. Finn-Enotaevisky, *op. cit.*, chapter 10 and appendix. Polezhaev, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-83. *Istoricheskie zapiski*, "Gosudarstvennyi biutzhet tsarskoi Rossii v nachale XX v.," Vol. 65 (1959), pp. 163-190.

velopment still awaited the advance of the agrarian economy and the increase in population; with the burden of the agrarian problem before it, the government was unable to devote the attention required to solve these new problems, with all their social and economic implications.

By 1910, Stolypin was able to announce that labor productivity was being influenced by the reform, and this was one of the most important steps forward. In accomplishing a major aim, the agrarian reform was slowly but surely replacing the outlived communes; as Pershin notes, the communes were cracking steadily as bigger hunks were torn from them.<sup>54</sup> A Soviet agrarian expert stated in 1918 that the yearning for a *khutor* was a characteristic inclination of peasants in many parts of the country on the eve of the 1917 Revolution.<sup>55</sup>

A number of German scholars who were extremely interested in Russian agrarian developments and who visited Russia during the period of Stolypin's reforms had nothing but praise. Preyer, an economist, considered the reform to have been generously carried out and believed that it was purposeful and was urgently needed; the figures of appropriation to individual ownership were, in his estimation, a tremendous accomplishment, considering the short span of the reform.<sup>56</sup> Sering, another German economist who visited Russia in 1911, declared:

Your agrarian reform is a most promising undertaking, perfectly right in principle. It opens up a great future for Russia. I am deeply convinced that thirty years hence Russia will be so prosperous as to be unrecognizable.<sup>57</sup>

One indicator of the success of the reform, interestingly enough, is that during the war years of 1914 to 1916, when over 12 million peasants were at the front, some 470,995 households were consolidated into *khutors*.<sup>58</sup> By 1915 it was estimated that there were 7,300,000 households with hereditary allotments.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>54</sup> P. Pershin, *Zemelnoe ustroistvo dorevolutsionnoi derevni*, Moscow and Voronezh, 1928, p. 244. G. Sliozberg, *Dorevolutsionnyi stroi Rossii*, Paris, 1933, p. 220.

<sup>55</sup> L. Chernyshev, *Agrarno-krestianskaya politika Rossii za 150 let*, Petrograd, 1918, p. 381.

<sup>56</sup> Preyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 343, 361, 366-7.

<sup>57</sup> S. Syromatnikov, "Reminiscences of Stolypin," *Russian Review*, (London) vol. I, no. 2 (1912), p. 5.

<sup>58</sup> P. Pershin, *Uchastkovoe zemlepolzovanie v Rossii*, Moscow, 1922, p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> G. Robinson, *Rural Russia Under the Old Regime*, New York, 1949, pp. 226-27.

Despite his inclination to the contrary, even Karpov, a Soviet analyst of Stolypin's agrarian reform, was forced to come to the following reluctant conclusions: First, during the period 1907-1915, the strip system was considerably reduced; second, the number of well-to-do peasantry had increased; and third, there had been an impressive growth of individual farmers. He ended by saying, "And so we see that for this period of Stolypin's agrarian policy the Russian pre-revolutionary village has considerably moved forward on the road of a rapidly developing capitalism."<sup>60</sup>

If all of these factors are considered carefully, then we can conclude that the reform represents, if not a movement that was carried to final success, a success at least in that all it was intended to accomplish, it steadily achieved—as even the leading Soviet commentator has admitted.

<sup>60</sup> Karpov, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-148.