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Agrarian Migration of Peasantry from Central Russia Gubernias in the late 19th – early 20th Century in Documents from the State Archive of the Oryol Region

Abstract

The article analyses archival materials from the State Archive of the Oryol Region on agrarian migration of the peasantry in the late 19th – early 20th century. Migration processes are an integral part of demographic behavior of the society. The Oryol peasantry, which preserved

some features of traditional society just stepping onto the path of modernization of its socio-economic relations, was drawn into agrarian migration policy of the country in the period under review. It is the insufficient knowledge of causes and process of the peasantry migration outside the boundaries of Central Russia that makes the study significant. Its territorial frameworks coincide with administrative borders of the Oryol gubernia in the late 19th – early 20th century. The study is to review the complex of archival materials as a main source on re-settlement of Russian rural population in the late-imperial period and to introduce it into scientific use. The article presents office documentation in form of reports, reports, circular letters. Of greatest value are reports of the organizers of the resettlement movement, descriptions of natural and geographical conditions in the resettlement regions, of emotional distress of the participants. The study of the regions of departure and those of resettlement allows the author to identify the causes of resettlement and backtracking. The information potential of archival sources permits the conclusion that migration process was not just mechanical movement of the population, but a social-demographic phenomenon that stemmed from on social and economic problems of Central Russia development. Complex study of archival materials has been conducted via traditional scientific methods (systems analysis, structural approach, retrospective approach, etc.) and new ones (civilization approach and theory of agrarian society modernization arising from it). One of the most important results of studying archival documents on migration of the population of the Oryol gubernia in the studied period is the discovery of information potential of metric books concerning resettlement and return migration. This feature of metric books is being described in the scholarship for the first time. Introduction into scientific use of the mass record keeping documents on migration from individual settlements allows us to look at this important historical and demographic process in a new way.

Keywords

Archive, historical sources, agrarian migration, civilizational approach, theory of agrarian society modernization, Russian peasantry, record keeping documents, Russian Empire, State Archive of the Oryol Region.

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