



COMPULSORY IMPLEMENTATION OF COLLECTIVIZATION IN UZBEKISTAN

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ABSTRACT. *This article analyzes the collectivization policy implemented in Uzbekistan and its consequences. Drawing on archival materials, it examines the persecution of kulak (wealthier peasant) households, deportations, and processes of exclusion from collective farms. The findings show that although collectivization was officially justified as a policy aimed at social equality, in practice it resulted in famine, forced resettlement, and economic crisis.*

Keywords: *dekulakization, collectivization, kolkhoz, sovkhoz, NEP, famine.*

INTRODUCTION

Between 1925 and 1929, the Soviet government implemented the second stage of the land-and-water reform in agriculture with the objective of eliminating the property-owning stratum in rural areas. This stage set the goal of fully restricting large landownership – referred to in official documents as “kulaks” and “exploiters” – and liquidating it as a social class. The strategy and tactics of the “agrarian revolution” were approved at the Second Congress of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan (November 1925). This phase began with the decrees of the Central Executive Committee of the Uzbek SSR dated 2 December 1925, namely “On the Nationalization of Water and Water Resources” and “On Land-and-Water Reform.” The reform was carried out in three stages depending on local conditions and the level of preparedness.

According to the decree regulating the land-and-water reform, large landowners with irrigated land exceeding the established thresholds were to be fully eliminated: in Fergana Province – 40 desyatinas; in Tashkent and Samarkand Provinces – 50 desyatinas and above. Their land was to be transferred to the state



land fund and redistributed to peasants. Along with the land, all working animals (oxen, horses, etc.) and agricultural implements were confiscated as well [2].

The above-mentioned property-owning or relatively prosperous peasant households had restored their farms during the period of Soviet economic policy proposed by Vladimir Lenin in 1921. Under the NEP (New Economic Policy) – primarily during 1921-1929 – market relations became established in Turkestan as well, private ownership developed in rural areas, and agricultural production increased significantly [3]. It was during this period that working peasants, through entrepreneurship and labor, contributed to stabilizing the Soviet economy. Nevertheless, by 1929, under Stalin, this policy was terminated. Those who had gained property during the NEP reforms became the primary targets of repression in 1929-1933.

The policy later known as collectivization pursued several key aims:

Socialization of agriculture: bringing agricultural production under state control through collectivization and transforming peasant farming into large collective units;

Support for industrialization: reallocating resources derived from agriculture (raw materials and labor) to the industrial sector in order to accelerate economic development;

Centralization of the Soviet economy: establishing state control over agricultural products, distribution, and planning, thereby centralizing resources;

Ensuring social equality: reducing social stratification in villages and eliminating the “wealthy peasant” (kulak) stratum to strengthen economic and social equality;

Increasing productivity: raising efficiency through large collectives and renewing agricultural technologies [4].

RESEARCH OBJECT AND METHODOLOGY

In the 1920s-1930s, national income in the Uzbek SSR was considerable, and peasants constituted the majority of the population. Resolving the agrarian question



served as a key condition for regional development. The October Revolution fundamentally changed the status of Uzbek peasants. The agrarian reform implemented by the Soviet government in 1917-1924 was initially received positively by the peasantry. The revolution stimulated political activity among the rural masses, which became visible through their participation in Soviet parties, the Komsomol, and other class-based organizations [1, C 42].

The above analysis by Academician Raxima Aminova of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan indicates that the first stage of the Soviet government's planned agrarian policy produced certain positive results—specifically, an increase in the political engagement of the peasantry. As an example, she points to the "Qoshchi" union. However, despite the declared intention to eliminate class stratification in rural communities, the methods applied in later stages led to extensive losses.

Accordingly, land belonging to private entrepreneurs and prosperous peasant households was confiscated for the benefit of the state, and state farms (sovkhозes) and collective farms (kolkhozes) were established in their place. Those whose land was seized – landowners, wealthy peasant households, and well-to-do household heads – were declared "enemies of the people" by internal affairs bodies on the assumption that they might resist collectivization. The "dekulakized" were deported to sparsely populated deserts and forests of the North Caucasus, Ukraine, Siberia, and Kazakhstan. The collectivization policy, officially implemented "for the working people," ultimately produced more harm than benefit to the national economy. This was because the measures directly contradicted the Uzbek people's millennia-old historical traditions of land ownership. For this reason, resistance to collectivization often acquired political significance [5].

On 17 February 1930, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan adopted the resolution "On Collectivization and the Elimination of Kulak Households." In 1930, the central authorities designated 19 districts in Uzbekistan for complete collectivization. The first kolkhozes (collective farms) and sovkhozes (state farms) were established. Beginning in the spring of 1931, the districts subject

to full collectivization were reorganized. Officially, collectivization of agriculture in Uzbekistan was completed in 1932. By that time, 75% of peasant households in the republic had been incorporated into the collectivized sector (kolkhozes and sovkhozes). In 1932, more than 60 sovkhozes operated in the republic. Some individual peasant households remained outside the kolkhoz system; however, economic pressure on them intensified. Agricultural taxes for such households were increased, and the volume of compulsory deliveries to the state was raised by 50% compared to kolkhoz obligations. By 1939, individual peasant farming in Uzbekistan was completely eliminated [2].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Persecution of kulak households within kolkhozes reached an extreme level. Under strict secrecy markings, the NKVD submitted a 62-page list to the chairmen of the Khorezm okrug containing full names of individuals to be expelled from collective farms and information about them. The list required immediate expulsion of those persons from kolkhozes [6, C 7]. These individuals were mostly those previously “dekulakized” and subjected to confiscation, former merchants, or descendants of officials who had held high positions during the khanate period. This indicates that individuals who had helped revive the economy during the NEP period later became targets of repression during collectivization.

Another noteworthy aspect is that village leaders who refused to implement such orders, delayed execution, or re-admitted expelled kulak households into kolkhozes were prosecuted criminally. This can be seen in the case of Safar Jumamurotov, the village chairman of Bazir in Gurlan District, who re-admitted previously expelled kulak households into the kolkhoz and was sentenced-together with those he re-admitted-to imprisonment for a term of six to eight years [7, C. 47].

Collectivization, initiated in 1928, began to reveal its negative consequences by 1931. After millions of rural residents were deported, strong hostility toward the Soviet government intensified among those who remained. As a result, the planned grain harvest was not obtained nationwide in 1931. Moreover, a large portion of the

harvest was reserved for autumn sowing. In addition, local authorities, under the pretext of fulfilling state quotas, confiscated all grain in the hands of peasants. Requests by local administrations to reduce quotas were rejected by Moscow. For example, in 1931 Kazakh authorities asked Stalin to reduce the grain procurement plan from 75 million poods to 50 million, but received the response that they must “not argue and work.” According to unofficial accounts, between half a million and one million people came to Uzbekistan in search of bread at that time; most returned home after the famine years ended, while some remained in Uzbekistan.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the Soviet government used the New Economic Policy as a means to recover from the severe consequences of “war communism.” Certain freedoms were granted to the population and patents were issued for trade activities. As a result, the country was able to emerge from crisis largely through the hard labor of ordinary people. However, instead of acknowledging this contribution, the authorities launched a campaign to eliminate capitalist elements once again. Consequently, peasant households that had acquired property through honest labor were labeled “exploiters” and subjected to persecution. Lands inherited from ancestors were confiscated. Those who resisted were severely punished: their property was seized and they were deported to remote regions. Criminal prosecution was also applied to village chairmen who, without losing their humanity, helped expelled fellow villagers in desperate circumstances.

Collectivization inflicted serious damage on agriculture. Livestock breeding declined sharply, and famine intensified among the population. All these outcomes were among the severe consequences of dekulakization and collectivization policies.

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