

ISCKMC 2022**International Scientific Congress «KNOWLEDGE, MAN AND CIVILIZATION»****STALINIST COLLECTIVIZATION IN CHECHNYA: STAGES AND
METHODS OF IMPLEMENTATION**

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Abstract

The policy of collectivization in the history of Russia occupies a special place. Despite the fact that the "perestroika" leaders officially condemned violence against the peasantry, ongoing discussions indicate an increased interest in the problems of collectivization of agriculture and dispossession in the 1920–1930s. The results of a scientific analysis formed the basis for a conceptual rethinking of the history of collectivization. However, the results confirmed only the official assessment: collectivization is a forced measure, and dispossession is a crime. In Chechnya, the diversity of natural and climatic zones played a decisive role in the development of agriculture: transhumant cattle breeding prevailed in the mountainous areas, and agriculture – in the flat areas. Private land ownership was registered under the dominance of patriarchal-clan relations. The agrarian reform of the tsarist administration at the beginning of the 20th century aimed at developing capitalist relations caused the impoverishment of mountain peasants. The Land Decree determined the choice of the Chechen people in favor of the Bolsheviks during the years of revolutionary events and civil war (1918–1920). The liberal policy of the Bolsheviks towards the mountain peasantry and the entire Russian peasantry was replaced by a violent policy of creating collective farms, uniting individual peasant farms into collective ones. An analysis of the events associated with collectivization allowed for the following conclusions: creation of collective farms turned the peasantry into the poorest class, devoid of interest in the results of their labor; the passport system became the second enslavement of the peasantry.

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1. Introduction

In the historiography, there are two main periods: the Soviet one (from 1920 to 1991) and the post-Soviet (recent) one which began at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s.

The first stage is represented in the works by Popov (1976), who made a huge contribution to the study of socialist transformations in agriculture in Chechnya. Loov (1965) and Efanov (1968) made a significant contribution to the study of the history of the mountain peasantry. The authors proved “the achievements of the highlanders in the economy and culture under Soviet power”, “the inevitability of class struggle”, justified repressions against the kulaks, the advantages of the socialist model over the capitalist one, the directive economy over the market one. At the stage of restructuring, conditions for rethinking many events related to the collectivization policy were created. This was facilitated by the elimination of the secrecy of archives and access to new historical sources. Of interest are the works by Elzhurkaev (2000) on the history of the mountain peasantry during the collectivization of agriculture in Checheno-Ingushetia, Arlyapova and Ponomareva (2020) who made a significant contribution to the study of political processes in the North Caucasus. At the same time, the works published do not fully cover these problems; some aspects related to the contradictory phenomena in the economy of Chechnya in 1920-1930 have not been studied.

2. Problem Statement

Collectivization in Chechnya in the 1920–1930s needs a theoretical understanding. Taking into account the fact that the North Caucasian region has occupied a special place in the recent history of Russia in the last two decades, the study of economic and political processes in Chechnya in the 1920s–1930s. helps identify causes of current problems, which are a direct consequence of the accumulated contradictions in historical development.

3. Research Questions

The research subject is the policy of the Bolsheviks towards the peasantry of Chechnya aimed at involving them in the collective farm system, the stages of implementation of the policy of collectivization in Chechnya in 1920-1930, the methods used by the local leaders when creating collective farms.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to analyze the measures of the Bolshevik leaders taken in Chechnya in 1920–1930 aimed at the collectivization of agriculture.

5. Research Methods

The fundamental principles are historicism and scientific objectivity. The methods of statistical analysis and the comparative method were used to solve the problem, to look at the past impartially, to study the facts in all the variety of specific historical conditions.

6. Findings

At the XV Congress of the CPSU (b) in December 1927, a measure aimed to unite individual peasant farms into collective farms was approved. The congress resolution emphasized that currently, the task of uniting and transforming small individual peasant farms into large collectives must be the main task of the party (Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks and the Council of Ministers of the USSR, 1954). The transition to collective land cultivation would be carried out on the basis of intensification and mechanization of agriculture. The congress did not define a single form of collectivization. They did not talk about the elimination of the kulaks as a class. It was supposed to oust the kulaks by economic methods (taxes, land rent, etc.). In fact, this policy was aimed at curtailing the Leninist NEP. Stalin realized consequences of offensives against the peasantry. This is evidenced from the statements “You will get a peasant war as in 1918–1919,” Bukharin warns. Stalin was ready for this, whatever the cost of victory (Graziosi, 1996).

It was difficult to implement the decisions made by the Bolsheviks due to a small number of party cells. By the middle of 1928, in Chechnya, with a rural population of 450,000, there were only 373 communists and 813 candidate party members (Efanov, 1968). On the eve of the “Great turning point,” for the successful collectivization, Grozny and Sunzha districts were returned to Chechnya. (Elzhurkaev, 2000). The mountain peasantry represented by the Grozny proletariat was to find allies to transform agriculture.

In December 1929, guided by the decision of the November plenum of the Central Committee, the party leadership set a course for complete collectivization within a year and a half.

The first collective farm in Chechnya was created in April 1924. D. Balatov was elected its chairman. The partnership purchased an engine and two tractors. In connection with the incompleteness of land management, 55 hectares of land were rented. As of October 1, 1925, the partnership consisted of 17 households, of which 10 were horseless and 5 were cowless (Loov, 1965).

The collectivization required emergency measures, and they were taken. The collectivization began with an increased tax pressure on kulak farms. In 1929–1930, about 2,000 kulak farms paid 264,000 rubles in tax, that is, 132 rubles per farm, which accounted for approximately 45 % of the total amount of payments. These measures undermined the economic power of the kulak farms, which provided the country with grain. The tax oppression against wealthy peasants was supplemented by the deprivation of civil rights. By the beginning of the 1929 elections, only in 8 districts out of 14, 6,500 people were deprived of their voting right, approximately 6 % of the total number of voters; in some areas there were up to half of the population deprived of voting rights. The kulaks resisted the measures of the Soviet government resorting to terror. In 1928, the chairman of the Ken-Yurt village council Yu. Dubaeva, the chairman of the Urus-Martan Okrug Executive Committee Anzorov were

killed. Arrests were retaliatory measures. In 1929, 356 kulaks were arrested, while in 1928 the number of arrested was 62 (Popov, 1976).

Despite the discontent, collectivization continued. In 1930, the Chechen Regional Party Committee decided to evict 500 households. About 25 % of the dispossessed kulak farms were not kulak. The grossest perversions were allowed during the socialization of property. The only cows, small livestock, poultry, residential buildings and even household items were socialized. These events were held under the slogan: Socialize everything, including chickens and geese. Only in January–February 1930, three thousand cows were destroyed in Checheno-Ingushetia.

The first five-year plan was based on the socialist transformations in the countryside. Inhabitants of the village Benoy put forward the following demands: to stop the illegal "collectivization", arbitrary arrests of peasants; to replace the leaders of the GPU with a civil administration consisting of ethnic Chechens; to abolish "people's" courts and restore Sharia justice bodies; to stop the interference of regional leaders in the internal affairs of the Chechen Autonomous Region.

Faced with desperate resistance, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks adopted a resolution banning collective farms in Chechnya. Party leaders – the secretary of the Gudermes district party committee Vasilyev, the chairman of the district executive committee Suleimanov, the deputy chairman Sabulov, the head of the regional financial department Akhmatov – were removed from their offices as "deviators".

In 1930, about 2.5 million peasants took part in 14,000 uprisings, riots and demonstrations. These statistics makes it possible to refute the assertion about the extraordinary nature of the bandit-insurgent movement in Chechnya in the process of collectivization. The process of uniting into collective farms faced the same obstacles as in the whole country (Arlyapova & Ponomareva, 2020).

The mass resistance of the peasantry forced the authorities to change their plans. On March 2, 1930, all Soviet newspapers published Stalin's famous article "Dizziness from Success," in which he admitted that serious mistakes had been made in the countryside. The blame for the current situation was attributed to the peripheral performers, who "didn't feel dizzy" after the first "successes."

The resistance to the collective farm system forced the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks to adopt a resolution "On the pace of further collectivization and tasks of strengthening collective farms," which stated that the "collectivization" is an optional involvement in collective farms of 68–70 % of households.

The resolution of August 2, 1931 confirmed the resolution of June 1930 on the completion of collectivization in the North Caucasus in 1932, but without Chechnya and Ingushetia. It was decided to complete the collectivization by 1933, but this plan was not implemented. In February 1932, the party leadership of the Chechen region reported about the implementation of the counter grain procurement plan. Collective farms of Chechnya and auls "surrendered" almost 3,000 poods of grain in excess of the plan (Dzhuguriants & Varavina, 1977).

But the authorities did not say about the methods used in carrying out the grain procurement campaign. The rebellious peasants of Chechnya talked about them in March 1932. The epicenter of the uprising was Nozhay-Yurtovsky district. The armed uprising was led by Khusein Istamulov, Tavamov, and Kebetanov. On March 20, 1932, 8 auls of Nozha-Yurtovsky and Gudermes regions took part in the

speech. Four days later, the total number of rebels reached 1.5 thousand people, and almost all of these two regions joined them. The slogans of the rebels were "For religion", "For freedom of trade". (Institute of Russian History RAS, 2000). Parts of the 28th Infantry Division were sent to suppress the uprising. The troops acted decisively and on April 5 they fought the rebels. There were 333 killed and 150 wounded (Aliskhanova, 2012; Aliskhanova et al., 2020).

The famine of 1932, which engulfed the grain areas, caused a massive outflow of the population from the village to the city. On December 27, 1932, the passport system with a mandatory residence permit was introduced in the USSR; the peasants got their passports with the permission of the collective farm board; in fact, this was the second enslavement of peasants in the history of Russia, but the first in the history of the peasants of Chechnya.

In 1934, the Bolshevik leadership of the USSR ordered to "attack on the individual peasant"; this offensive was carried out through the financial and economic measures. A one-time tax, unbearable for individual farmers, was established – mandatory deliveries of agricultural products to the state and increased cash payments. Individual farms were ruined; they had only two ways – either to go to the collective farms, or to be recruited by construction sites. Most of them preferred joining collective farms because of their lack of knowledge of the Russian language and adherence to the values of traditional society.

In the spring of 1935, the leadership of the region reported on the achievements in the socialist reorganization of agriculture. The reports were full of figures on the fulfillment and overfulfillment of the plan. The plan for autumn sowing in the amount of 45,500 hectares was overfulfilled by 120%, or 54,531 hectares, 30 thousand hectares of winter wheat were sown. The grain delivery and procurement plan were overfulfilled by more than 60 %; 35,041 farms were united in 343 collective farms. The tractor fleet increased up to 667 tractors. Successes in agriculture raised the material well-being and cultural level of the collective farm peasantry (Dzhugurians & Varavina, 1977).

The statement about the improvement in the material well-being of the collective farm peasantry is unfounded, because the vast majority (79 %) of the peasants received 1–5 kg grain per workday and only in 12.2% of the collective farms farmers were given 5–20 kg grain per workday (Institute of Russian History RAS, 2000). The low labor productivity was explained by the low purchase prices set by the state for agricultural products. Following the policy of "price scissors," 100 kg wheat flour were sold at 216 rubles, and the collective farmer was paid 10 rubles 10 kopecks: 195 rubles 50 kopecks made a tax (Malofeev, 1964). The state robbery was justified by the needs of industrialization.

Despite the dissatisfaction of the peasants, collectivization continued. By December 1935, collective farms united 84.4% of peasant households in flat areas. Collectivization was completed (mainly in the form of land cultivation partnerships). In the mountain areas, collectivization required a longer period due to the stubborn resistance to the socialization of livestock on the part of the working population. As of July 1, 1936, 142 mountain collective farms covered 24,808 peasant households, which accounted for 79% (Table 01).

Table 1. Creation of collective farms in Chechnya (1928–1934) (Popov, 1976)

The date	Number of collective farms	Number of farms	Middle farms per collective farm	Collectivization percentage		
				Total number in Chechen-Ingushetia	In flat regions	In mountainous regions
October 1928	92	1580	17	1.7	1.9	
October 1929	165	5464	31	5.6	9.2	
December 1930	331	13069	40	14.2	20.0	
December 1931	440	37916	86	41.2	51	
December 1932	374	36181	97	39.2	46.5	2.5
December 1933	399	35250	89	38.3	50.6	26.0
December 1934	433	43315	100	45.8	60.9	31.0
December 1935	540	68878	128	77.3	84.4	62.0
June 1936	487	72564	149	84.6	87.9	79.0

7. Conclusion

Despite the cruel creation of collective farms, by the end of the first five-year plan (1928–1932) in the Chechen Autonomous Region, the collectivization was not completed due to the resistance of wealthy and working peasants. The collective farm system in Chechnya won by the end of 1935 in flat areas (mainly in the form of TOZ) and in 1936 in mountainous areas.

The creation of collective farms became the cause of mass peasant unrest in Chechnya and throughout the country, which makes it possible to refute the assertion that the bandit-insurgent movement here was of an extraordinary nature. Moreover, due to the passport system implemented in 1932, peasants did not have passports and were deprived of the right to free movement, choice of place of residence and profession. In fact, this was the second enslavement of the peasantry in recent history.

During the collectivization, peasants ceased to be owners and free workers. Mandatory deliveries of collective farm products to the state at symbolic prices turned the peasantry into the poorest class disinterested in the results of their labor.

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