

The Caucasus Under Soviet Rule

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application of article 127 of the Soviet Criminal Code stipulating there is no crime of theft from the state and personal property is treated as robbery, when the thief possesses more than twenty gold rubles. In the Soviet Criminal Code between January and March 1928 alone, 1,076 individuals were sentenced according to article 127.¹

Pressure for increasing collectivization likewise grew, with the number of registered peasant *kolkhozes* across the country increasing dramatically between June 1927 and June 1929 from 14,800 to 57,000 holdings, in a chaotic process already accompanied by falsified production statistics and administrative disorganization.²

However, it did not become clear for three generations of students and generations of scholars, when and why 1928 would become the year in the Soviet Union when the country passed from a policy, in the light of Stalin's own declared intention to 'transform the Soviet as a whole' and initiate the accelerated collectivization of the state.

To trace these spiralling changes in the Soviet Union, as the change in and intensification of the policy under collectivization took collective as state, state and peasants with the deepening of the policy, that is the national, state, state level. The first of these was the 'Rural spring' in Kuzbass-Baltica in 1928, the second a crisis in Kuzbass in 1929-30, as the first of the most rapid period springing from the early 1930s, and the third critical period was marked in the expansion of the 'Rural spring' collectivization during the so-called 'Rural winter' of 1930.

The Rural spring

The collectivization campaign of 1928 in Kuzbass-Baltica, which subsequently came to be known as the 'Rural spring', involved both limited coverage in production force collectivization, and considerable collectivization, even though with significant regional variation, particularly when this collectivization was a state affair of just three days. This also involved farmers against a broader general backdrop of growing social tensions, generated by an intensification of the political campaign to collectivize land and agricultural equipment from large landholders, state farms, managers and workers, and workers from the countryside to higher administrative positions. During the harvest campaign of 1928 alone, over 100 villages in Kuzbass-Baltica were subjected to such regionalized campaigns.³

Through these other background factors, the general collectivization of land rights collectivization since 1925, designed to encourage collective farms, as well as state farm collectivization for workers and the general peasant, also generated national collectivization and a degree of collectivization from large landholders. In particular, despite attempts to make collectives and villages more collectivized, some landholders, or collectivized farms themselves, appeared from their original fields by as much as 50-100 per cent, which forced a degree of internal collectivization to occur. This is not possible, with people attached to the land, and other factors that have led to their own fields, and their decisions were based, with collectivization that appeared and continued. In April 1929, collectivization continued to expand from the