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## PEASANTS IN TRANSITION. FORMS AND METHODS OF PEASANT RESISTANCE IN SOVIET ARMENIA IN 1929- 1930S

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Armenian realities of dekulakization<sup>1</sup> processes, legitimized by the policy of forced collectivization in the USSR in 1929-1930, still remain one of the areas in the history of Soviet Armenia that need more in-depth research. The socialist economic restructuring of the village, presented by the Bolsheviks as an effective policy of modernization, gradually led to the changes in the peasant lifestyle. This reorganization of the villages caused various forms of reaction among the peasants, the largest wave of which rose in 1928-1932, during the period of the first five-year plan (*первая пятилетка*), in response to the dekulakization process. It was manifested in different ways of resistance: armed and peaceful, boycotts, terrorist acts, as well as in passive or everyday forms. This study examines the main forms and methods of passive and active peasant resistance in Soviet Armenia, the motives and causes of armed resistance not only as an act and movement in defense of individual property, but also as an instrument for peasant identity preservation.

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<sup>1</sup> The liquidation of kulaks as a class.

## On the Eve of the Resistance

The role of collectivization of the peasantry in the process of socio-economic transformation of the Soviet village in the late 1920s - early 1930s is one of the most controversial topics of Soviet history. The most comprehensive study this process needs to be conducted not only by the economic aspects, but the dramatic social changes, the creation of new social class, the construction of a new social reality as one of the most important strategies of domestic policy of the Soviet government. The socialist reorganization of the village was the main tool of industrial modernization in the Soviet Union, according to industrialization of the agricultural sector, it dramatically increased the process of depeasantization, which was the interest of the entire political and social system of the Soviet state, especially in the scope of the industrialization of the country.

The socialist restructuring of the village included an inevitable component of changes in the peasant culture, including rural traditions, interpersonal family, religious, and social relations, self-perception.

Although the Communist Party represented collectivization as an important prerequisite for the socialist transformation of the village, in reality it meant a destruction of one by self-perceived modern, progressive forces against rural culture as part of the struggle to eliminate rural backwardness.<sup>1</sup> In the middle of November 1928, the Dashnaks' leadership began mass collectivization in the country, and on January 15, 1929, the project of the formation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Dashnaks' of Armenia within religious and religious issues in the list of targets of collectivization.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Armenian Communist Party*, 1929.

<sup>2</sup> According to the Dashnaks' report to the 15th All-Union Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Dashnaks' leadership opposition was expressed in highly organized mass collectivization movement in Armenia. See Dashnaks' leadership opposition, 1929, p. 12. According to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia letter 'Strengthening Anti-Religious Work' signed in March 14, 1929 the anti-Soviet elements: the kulak, the NEPman, and the clergy led by the Dashnaks'utyun were united against the Soviet authorities. As part of a mass collectivization program, priests were subject to expropriation and expulsion from their localities. The persecution and repression of clergy continued brutally, churches and monasteries were closed, and clergy, like other social groups, were subjected to mass imprisonment and deportation: See A. Manukyan, op., pp. 28-42.

<sup>3</sup> According to A. Manukyan, in the 1920s, the peasantry suffered from economic hardship, religious freedom was restricted, religious institutions were nationalized, and a new social class, the kulak, emerged. In 1929, the peasantry was forced to collectivize, which led to the destruction of the village community. The collectivization process was accompanied by mass imprisonment and deportation of the peasantry. See A. Manukyan, op., pp. 28-42. According to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Armenia letter 'Strengthening Anti-Religious Work' signed in March 14, 1929 the anti-Soviet elements: the kulak, the NEPman, and the clergy led by the Dashnaks'utyun were united against the Soviet authorities. As part of a mass collectivization program, priests were subject to expropriation and expulsion from their localities. The persecution and repression of clergy continued brutally, churches and monasteries were closed, and clergy, like other social groups, were subjected to mass imprisonment and deportation: See A. Manukyan, op., pp. 28-42.