



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

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Armenian realities of dekulakization¹ 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.

¹ The liquidation of kulaks as a class.

more active. Moreover, also some anti-Sovietish forces participated in Armenia from abroad and got the movement. These forms of resistance have been described as a general "revolt" with government involvement.

According to the Soviet references, in 1930 only in 2 months and 10 days 30 mass demonstrations took place in Armenia, 20 of which were against collectivization, including 30 persons with 30 murders, 1 person, 10 beatings, 1 demonstration, 10 persons with 10 property, 10 deaths in January/February, 1 called for the spring, the rest against collectivization.¹ The active armed form of resistance was strong especially in Shavaghat region. It actually abandoned the collectivization and the process of dekulakization and reached its climax in the summer of 1930. In general, it spread resistance in Northern Armenia (Marz, Shag, and Lach and in the Southern Armenia (Shavaghat, Gegharnak) was possible because of the mountainous terrain and the possibility to cross the border.² In the rebellion of the northern part of Armenia the Dashnaks played

no important role but in the south, they were directed and supplied by the Dashnaks from Persia.

Moreover, the rebellion was in general of a spontaneous nature, lacking the proper coordination.³

Referring to the passive forms of resistance to collectivization the most common type was self-dekulakization, in particular, the destruction or distribution of collective property between other houses, the slaughtering livestock, the cutting down trees. This form of self-dekulakization, which is reported in a state secret document, states that in 1930 in the village of Badkhan, Shag region the peasants slaughtered 100 livestock, and cut off cattle in Gegharnak. It is reported that in 1930 in Marz, Shag, Gegharnak, Marzash, the Soviet peasants slaughtered about half of the livestock in these regions.⁴

Another form of everyday resistance was working within old traditional groups on the collective lands. These groups consisted mainly of close relatives, friends and family members. In many cases, the village, participating in the obligatory work of the collective farm, resorted to working, continuing to cultivate the land that belonged to her before collectivization, or cultivated a small plot of land near the house, thereby avoiding the obligatory collective farm work. A passive form of resistance or a way to self-dekulakization at that time was leaving the collective farms, going to the mountains, or escaping from the village. The village, known as hidden, hidden, during

¹ <http://www.sovnet.org/eng/1930.htm>

² Shavaghat region (Shavaghat Marz) participated in mass 1930 village work, 1930 Marz, 1930, pp. 100-101.

³ A. Khachatur, 1930-1931 Shavaghat region (Shavaghat Marz) 1930, pp. 100-101.

⁴ Shavaghat 1930, 1930 Shavaghat region (Shavaghat Marz) 1930, pp. 100-101. 1930 Shavaghat 1930, 1930 Shavaghat region (Shavaghat Marz) 1930, pp. 100-101.