

## Socio-Economic Situation of Auls (Villages) of Karakalpakstan During Land and Water Reform

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### ABSTRACT

*This article is about socio-economic situation of auls (villages) of Karakalpakstan during land and water reform. At the IX Congress of Soviets of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in September 1920, were approved directives for the implementation of land and water reform. During this period, in the Amu Darya region, rental land use was allowed with the lease of land for a period not exceeding three years. For materials there have been used information of Central state archive of The Republic of Uzbekistan.*

**KEYWORDS:** congress, Karakalpak Autonomous Region, dehkans, volost, region, district, land industry, water industry.

### INTRODUCTION

In September 1920 at the IX Congress of Soviets of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, were approved directives for the implementation of land and water reform.

During this period, in the Amu Darya region, rental land use was allowed with the lease of land for a period not exceeding three years. Tenants were given an average of 20 acres of land. Land leasing during the NEP period made it possible to accelerate the restoration of agriculture. But this was a temporary form of land use and was not widely used. It began the creation of the first labor agricultural artels and partnerships for the joint cultivation of land from the poorest peasant farms. Soon 85 labor agricultural artels were organized in the Amu Darya region [1]

### METHODOLOGY

All these artels were provided with seeds, working cattle and agricultural implements. For the needs of irrigating the fields of cooperatives of the Amu Darya region, the Commissariat of Agriculture of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic issued 8,751 thousand rubles, and the Amu Darya Regional Revolutionary Committee released funds for the manufacture of 200 sets of chigir.[2]

### RESULTS and DISCUSSION

As the result, in the newly organized 85 artels, the dehkans (farmers) already had a lot of livestock: horses - 252, camels - 60, bulls - 401. The artels also owned numerous agricultural implements. They had arbs (carts) - 60 pieces, chigirs - 171 sets, ploughs - 40, shovels - 631, harrows - 31, ketmens - 134, sickles - 769, jugs for chigirs - 30,000, pazny (coulters) - 31 etc[3].

The Regional Council of the National Economy ordered the craftsmen of the Khorezm Republic to make arbs and chigirs. Workshops for the repair of agricultural equipment were organized in all districts of large rural settlements and cities of the region.

The congress of agricultural workers of the Amu Darya region, held on March 1, 1921 in Turtkul, with the participation of 46 delegates from various organizations, discussed the issue of the sowing campaign and irrigation. General measures for targeted action have been developed. So, in the spring of 1921, the Shurakhan canal was expanded. The heads of other canals on the right bank of the Amu Darya were moved here. Reclamation work on Suyargan also contributed to the expansion of irrigated areas in the Turtkul district.

Irrigation work was also carried out in the Chimbay district. In the spring of 1921, the heads of the Kuanysh-jarma main irrigator and the Kegeyli canal were expanded here. The implementation of these and other irrigation works ensured the spring watering of the fields and the success of the sowing campaign of 1921 in the Amu Darya region. The restoration and repair of the main canals were supported by the population at their own expense. As the result of such emergency measures, in 1921 the sown area in the Amu Darya region increased and reached 162,666 tanaps. Dekhkans assigned more than 16,000 Beldar workers for irrigation work. A total of 731,370 working days per season was spent cleaning only the main irrigation canals, not counting the smaller ones.[4]

At the same time, measures were taken to "strengthen" the land authorities. Particularly close attention was paid to the creation of a specialized class organization of dehkans - the Koshchi union, designed to unite the proletarian and semi-proletarian masses of the indigenous population of villages and auls. The Koshchi union was organized in accordance with the resolution of the Amu Darya regional executive committee of April 30, 1921.[5]

The "Koshchi" union of the Amu Darya region consisted of landless and land-poor dehkans, numbering about 5,000 members. They personified an undeveloped, immature democracy, close to the power of the mob, ochlocracy. This explains many excesses of that time, which are difficult to justify. The leadership of the Amudarya region itself in many cases had to dissociate itself from "belsendi", "teperish".

For example, the 2nd congress of the "Koshchi" union of the Amudarya region adopted a resolution aimed at developing the region's agriculture and, in particular, cotton growing. However, neither the "Koshchi" union, nor other land and water bodies of the Soviet power coped with the restoration of agriculture and irrigation. All irrigation works were to be carried out by the dehkans-water users themselves. If in other regions of Turkestan 1 ruble was spent on irrigation of one tithe, then in the Amu Darya region - 20 rubles, that is, 20 times more. The floods that took place in the spring and summer of 1921 on the Amu Darya hampered the spring sowing of 1922. All this required huge financial resources and manpower.

For the implementation of the agrarian reform, it was necessary to gather many workers in kind, since it was simply impossible to carry out the necessary irrigation work at the expense of the funds allocated by the state. On June 17, 1922, [6] the Presidium of the Economic Conference of the Amu Darya Region, at the direction of the central authorities on this issue, decided to increase the tax on the prosperous part of the population.[6] According to this decree, representatives of the clergy, merchants and artisans, and other so-called rich households associated with agriculture were taxed at an increased rate. It was the policy of economic pressure of the Soviet government on the wealthy parts of the population. In collecting taxes and ensuring the attendance of workers at kazu, not only representatives of the parties, but also representatives of the Soviet authorities, especially the police and military food detachments took part. [7]

Already in the resolution adopted on July 18, 1922 by the Plenum of the Central Asia Bureau of the Central Committee of the RCP (b), it was indicated that the land reform in Turkestan was completed and the need to stop all further resettlements and evictions was stated. Finally, it was suspended in connection with the enactment of the decision of the TurkCEC of September 5, 1922 "Basic Law on

Labor Land Use in Turkestan” Nevertheless, in the Amu Darya region, land transformation work continued in part in the spirit of the previous reform. For example, it is indicated that “in 1924, winter and spring crops were irrigated with an area of 15,889 acres, while in 1923 less than 14,000 acres were irrigated.”[8] However, a comparative analysis reveals that the average sown area of an average farm has almost halved: if in 1900 it was 2.72 acres, in 1912 - 2.6, in 1917 - 1.8, in 1921 - 1.6, in 1925 - 1.4 acres. [9]

However, answering the most important question: was the land and water reform carried out during this period, we can point out that it could not be carried out due to local characteristics, to which we can include the prevalence of backward forms of cultivation in land use, the preservation of patriarchal-feudal relations and soil and climatic conditions.

According to the regional land administration (RLA), the total area of sown and non-sown lands amounted to 162,609 square meters. km and sands 97659 sq. km, of which sown and irrigated land in Turtkul district - 25,000 hectares, in Chimbay district - 27,265 hectares, in Kungrad and Khodjeili districts - 17,123 hectares.[10] The main water arteries were the Shurakhan canal (length 372 km), Kuanish-jarma, Kegeyli and Ishim (total length 1410 km) and the canal along the Kungrad direction (614 km).

At the I Congress of Deputies Soviet of Karakalpak Autonomous Region, held in February 1925, along with other issues, the issue of restoring agriculture was considered. Matkarimov and Bovol[11] made a presentation on this issue. However, this was a very difficult task and required a lot of work. The resolution adopted by the congress indicates the deepest crisis in agriculture, expressed “in a catastrophic reduction in sown areas, a shortage of working livestock, complete deterioration of agricultural equipment, poor condition of irrigation systems, the correction of which, without knowledgeable workers of the highest qualification, annually turns into hard labor for dehkans”[12].

The general state of agriculture in Karakalpak Autonomous Region was really critical: the cultivation of lands worsened significantly, their weediness increased (up to 10%), the yield was almost halved, there were not enough seeds (for example, according to estimates, 60,000 pounds were missing).[13] In addition, the agriculture of the region suffered great damage due to floods, civil war, outbreaks of plague, locust invasion, etc. Some sources provide information that “despite the fact that ten years have passed since the October Revolution, the land relations that developed in the era of tsarism have hardly changed during this time” [14]

From 1924 to 1925, design, survey and research work began on the reconstruction of obsolete local irrigation networks in Karakalpak Autonomous Region. The Tuyamuyun survey party “Upradis” under the leadership of engineer N. Yanchur conducted surveys in Turtkul water district in order to rebuild the head system of the Shurakhan canal and build its head in the Tashsak area.

The Kunyadarya survey party, under the leadership of engineers P.P. Ilenko - Petrovsky and N.T.Borodinsky conducted survey in Chimbay and Khodjeily - Kungrad water district. As a result of these surveys, in 1926 a new project was prepared for laying the Kizketken canal and clearing the old canal. Research in the Khodjeily - Kungrad water district made it possible to outline a plan for the reconstruction of the Suenli and Khanjap irrigation systems in order to connect them into one common, more powerful, main canal for irrigating vacant lands, eliminating chigir irrigation and improving the system of water distribution and water use.[15]

In 1926, irrigated and sown areas in the region amounted to 86,768 hectares, of which 48,607 hectares were allocated for cereals, 14,317 hectares for cotton, 14,039 hectares for auxiliary (court) plots, and 9,805 hectares for alfalfa.[16] However, according to the data of the Central Asian Water Industry, the area of irrigated land was 62,300 ha.[17]

The development of agriculture in the region was closely connected with land management. However, the deputy head of the regional department of water industry, N. Kozo-Polyansky, argued that “in Karakalpakstan, land industry without water construction cannot be” [18] By the decision of the regional land management meeting dated May 3, 1927, No.11, a plan for land management work in Karakalpak Autonomous Region was approved. Land management work was started in the Turtkul district. They covered 28,714 farms that cultivated 38,403 acres of land.

After the national demarcation, the land fund of the national statehood of the Karakalpak people, according to natural geographical features and types of farms, looked as follows:

- an area with low water, with unstable agriculture - the northwestern part of the Daukara, the northern part of the Kok-Uzyak, Naupyr volosts of the Chimbai district; Surkul and Khakim-Ata volosts of the Kungrad district;
- an area of normal irrigation conditions with a clearly expressed trend towards the development of cattle breeding Chimbai, Kegeyli, Nukus volosts, the southern part of the Kok-Uzyak volost of the Chimbai district, the Khodzheyli district (except for the Yana-Kalinsky volost);
- an area with excess water and poorly developed agriculture - Taldyk, Yany-Bazar volosts of the Chimbai district, Kungrad, Khanyab and Minjargan volosts of the Kungrad district;
- an area with the most developed agriculture - volosts of the cultural land strip of the Turtkul district;
- A purely nomadic pastoral region - the Minbulak and Tamdy volosts of the Shurakhan district and the eastern part of the Daukarinsky volost of the Chimbai district.

Therefore, the implementation of land and water activities in the Karakalpak Autonomous Region had its own characteristics. At first, the provision of landless and land-poor dekhkans with labor allotments was carried out at the expense of free lands and non-labor farms. Non-working lands included:

- lands of former large richman, beks and waqf lands;
- lands of dekhkans who do not cultivate land with their own labor;
- lands of dekhkans exceeding the norm of labor land use;
- leased lands;
- The lands of the khans, ataliks, large merchants.

In general, land and water activities in Central Asia began in 1925 and, taking into account the level of economic development, political activity and the degree of influence of various forces, ended in 1929. For two years in Karakalpakstan (1925-1927), 28,572 landless and small-land farms received 917,127 hectares of crop and pasture land through the expropriation of the land of large landowners and the clergy. For example, 575 acres of land were confiscated from the Karakum Ishan of the Chimbay District.

The “Koshchi” union became one of the large social movements of the Soviet type provoked by the state. On April 24, 1926, the Bureau of Karakalpakstan on the All-Union Communist Party, having heard the report of the leadership of the regional committee of the Union “Koshchi”, along with other main tasks, oriented this body to the following:

- urgently begin to regulate land and water relations through land management;
- allocate landless and land-poor dekhkans with land plots through the liquidation of non-labor farms and waqf lands;

- considering the backwardness of the dekhkan masses and the attempts of the reactionary elements of the aul and village (bays, ishans and clergy), instruct the Koshchi Union to provide all possible assistance in the construction of schools, explaining to the masses the difference between the old and new schools, send the children of farm laborers to study in a Soviet school;
- The Union should involve women in its ranks, while simultaneously combating enslaving deals associated with remnants of old customs (polygamy, bride price, etc.) and involving women in schools for the elimination of illiteracy.[19]

Meanwhile, by the middle of 1925, there were up to 5,000 members of the Koshchi Union in Karakalpak Autonomous Region. The number of members of the Union in October 1927 was as follows: a total of 5096 people, of which: 845 farm laborers, 2495 poor peasants, 1756 middle peasants.

By party affiliation: - 633 communists and 208 Komsomol members. By nationality: - 2254 Karakalpaks, 1839 Kazakhs, 788 Uzbeks, out of 5096 members of the Koshchi union, 4267 people were illiterate. Thus, other people tried to decide politics.

New trends in land use in the Karakalpak Autonomous Region have been outlined since the middle of 1927, when "there was a sharp inclination to the left, due to general political changes in the country", there is a sharp refreshment of the administrative apparatus in the region.[20]

On August 1, 1927, the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the KAR No. 28/61 "On the plan for land reform in the Karakalpak Autonomous Region of the Kazakh ASSR"[21] was adopted, although land management work in the region began as early as 1925 in accordance with the Regulations "On land management of nomadic, semi-nomadic and transitioning to settled economy of the population of the Autonomous KSSR" of April 17, 1924. According to the plan, the reform was supposed to solve the following tasks:

- 1) liquidate the landholdings of the richpeople (landowner type);
- 2) liquidate all the farms of merchants and various speculators;
- 3) withdraw land in excess of the norm of labor use from the kulak elements (semi-bays farms) of the village;
- 4) assign all the lands of the liquidated farms to landless and land-poor dekhkans and, first of all, to those chairikers who worked on the lands of the richmen.[22]

What were the main inhibitory factors in the implementation of land and water reform in the KAR? The form of use, where irrigated farming is carried out with the cultivation of valuable industrial crops, is a farm", therefore, to eliminate uneven land use in the conditions of the KAR through the redistribution of land, on the basis of the well-known Decree of the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of Kazakhstan dated May 20, 1926 "On the equal distribution of arable and hayfields", was impossible.

The land management measures carried out during these years were in the nature of partial reforms, however, even then the purchase and sale of land was prohibited:

- all agricultural lands were transferred to the People's Commissariat of Land, which provided them for labor use, had the right to lease these lands;
- The right to use the land was granted to everyone, without distinction of gender and nationality.

Under the conditions of the KAR, it was primary to carry out a detailed survey of the region, and the survey program should have included those moments that would correspond to the first stage of land management work, namely: statistical and economic survey; verification and presentation of

compiled family, household lists; determination of actual land use; soil and botanical survey; zoning of the surveyed territory; drafting a land reform project.[23]

According to the plan worked out in the depths of the land administration of the region, it was necessary to carry out a reform "in all the volosts of the settled agricultural region, characterized by intensive irrigated agriculture on a total area of 949235 hectares with the number of farms 29034 with 136096 souls"[24]

A plan was drawn up for the implementation of these measures, according to which, after the implementation of the first stage of work, which was to begin on October 1, 1927 and end on January 1, 1929, after that, before the start of the sowing campaign, carry out land reform. It was planned that first in Chimbai and Kegeyli volosts the second stage was to begin in 1929-1930, in the Turtkul, Shurakhan, Nukus and Kokuzyak volosts - in 1930-1931, in the Sarybi, Biybazar and Sheikhabbaz and other volosts - in 1931-1932. By this time, the work of the first stage had begun in the Chimbay district (Kegeyli volost).

Thus, by 1927, only some preparatory work was going on in the KAO, and there could be no question of land reform. Even, as sources testify, "land management work in the region was started only in 1925-1926, and according to the work plan of this year, the Kegeyli volost was surveyed in the order of the 1st stage of land management" [25]

According to the type of predominant economic activity, the districts were divided into cotton growing (Turtkul, Shabbaz, Khodjeyli, Kipchak) and semi-cotton growing (Chimbay, Kegeyli, Kungrad and Takhtakupir). The Chimbay region also specialized in the production of seed alfalfa, the Tamdy region in cattle breeding, the Karauzyak region was a cattle-breeding and commercial region; agriculture here was mainly consumer in nature.

Fishing dominated in Muynak region. Subsequently, a meat and fish canning industry of allied significance arose. There were differences in the provision of live and dead agricultural implements: in the lowest group (up to 2.09 acres) there were -3936 horses or less than one horse per farm, dunks - 2864 pieces or 0.1 on average per farm. There were 2204 horses in the highest group, 834 dunks and 1939 chigirs. On average, there were more than one horse and one dunk per household.

Initially, it was planned to conduct an economic survey of 30,761 farms, of which 12,581 farms were in Turtkul district (Turtkul, Shurakhan, Biybazar, Sarybi, Sheikhabbaz volosts), 11,093 farms in Chimbay district (Kegeyli, Chimbay, Karauzyak, Nukus, Yanybazar volosts), 7,087 farms in Khodjeyli district (Ktai, Kipchak, Khodjeili, Yanykalin volosts).

In 1928-1929, it was decided to subject 6,300 farms to a survey of continuous land management, and, in order to identify areas for land reform, 14,000 farms were subject to a selective survey. [26]

## CONCLUSION

As a result of land management campaigns, 30,788 hectares of bay and vaqf lands were transferred to the disposal of the Soviet authorities. 853 rich families were taxed on average in the amount of 500 to 1000 rubles from each household. 195,298 hectares of arable and hay state lands were transferred to the use of 62,026 dekhkan farms of the region.

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