

COLLECTIVIZATION ON THE TERRITORY OF THE SHARKOVSHCHINA DISTRICT

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The text presents the results of the research conducted in 2016, 2017 and 2018 in the Sharkovshchina district of the Vitebsk region. Western Vitebsk region is a part of the modern Vitebsk region, during the interwar period it was a part of Poland. Memories of the postwar reality of the inhabitants of the West Belarussian region of modern Belarus have their own specifics. The return to peaceful life took place against the backdrop of not only overcoming the postwar devastation, but also the continuing sovietization of the region. The attitude towards the implementation of collectivization, the religious and cultural policies of the Soviet government – it all was reflected in the memories of the inhabitants of the region and also in the official documents of those years. The article is written on the basis of oral sources of narrators (mostly interviewees were born in the late 1920s and 1930s) and archival documents, which contain materials about the process of collectivization.

Collectivization is a process of association of individual agricultural units in one, general unit – collective farm. The report purpose is to study and reveal the specifics of implementation of the collectivization process in Sharkovshchina which was a part of the Polish state in an interwar time and became a part of BSSR after the beginning of World War II. Recently in connection with the publication of new researches (memoirs) which are guided by the declassified archival documents the subject of collectivization has received new sounding and judgment. During the Soviet period it was impossible to write about problems which arose during the collectivization or expediency of this policy, methods, a dispossession of kulaks and the fate of people who endured this process. It was impossible for the ideological and political reasons. Today researchers in this direction attract all new sources, and first of all they use the reminiscence of eyewitnesses who were direct participants. It is a unique material which gives the opportunity of better understanding what really happened and what is behind the official figures, documents, reports and pages of textbooks. Events of September 1939, which led to inclusion of the Western Belarussian territories into the structure of BSSR, introduced a lot of new, often unclear and negative into the life of the local population. The policy of the Soviet authorities in all spheres caused ambiguous reaction of residents of the Western Belarus. A part of the population accepted transformations, another didn't want to recognize the Soviet system and tried to resist.

By the decree of Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR on the territory of the Western Belarus there were created some districts, including the Sharkovshchina district. The territory of the district was 1,129 sq.km., with the population of 38,647 people. After the arrival of the Soviet power local authorities – rural and vo-lost rural committees – began to be formed. They carried out active work on transfer of lands of landowners to the peasants, registered the cattle and the stocks of grain. In 1939 3,487 poor rural families received lands, 1,128 families received horses and 380 families received cows [1]. According to data for June 1, 1941 there were 8,022 agricultural grounds in the district and 5,841 of them were on farms. Collectivization in Sharkovshchina began in October, 1939, in a month after reunion of West and East Belarus. By the beginning of 1941 in Sharkovshchina and in Sharkovshchina district 5 collective farms were created. These collective farms included 229 farms. Collective farms included 96 farms of the former farm laborers, 49 farms of the middling persons and 94 farms of poor people. The first collective farms had 1,695 hectares of the land, 329 hectares of meadows, 187 horses and 49 cattle units [2]. About 1941 in the former folwark Krasniy dvor the MTS (machine tractor station) was created. At that time there was the first equipment: 8 tractors, one 24-row seeder, the horse thresher, flax thresher, 2 cars – cargo and automobile. Among the locals 35 tractor operators including 7 women were trained [3].

Memoirs of residents of Sharkovshchina demonstrate, that the accelerated post-war collectivization was very painful for the majority of people, they didn't want to give the land and the cattle to general use. According to the stories, first of all collective farms were entered by land-poor or landless peasants. For example, Baturo-nok Gordei Vladimirovich, the resident of the village Zhukovshchina recalls the following: "Almost in every vil-lage, collective farms began to be created. People did not want to join them. And our fellow villager, Lysyonok Fyodor, was the first to join a collective farm called "Iskra". His parents died during the war, he lived with his grandmother and almost did not have his land. The rest, unwilling to join, were "tortured" for a week. They were

gathered in the same house of the hosts in the evenings, often in the presence of the prosecutor or the district police officer, and were told about the "happy" life on the collective farm. They said that they would take the land from the rich to the collective farm and everyone will live well. Those who didn't want to join the collective farm were intimidated. They threatened to confiscate property and send them to the Far East. The last ones entered the collective farms, those who had more land (about 9 hectares). Soon they made the land common, left only a small part. All the economic assets were taken away: harness, wheels, equipment, horses and grain. They left only a small part of the crop and allowed to harvest the crop for the last time. Small animals were not taken away: chickens, ducks, goats, sheep". Lysyonok Ivan Ustinovich was the first chairman of the collective farm "Iskra". He had heavy responsibility for all collective farm, it was strictly necessary to execute all orders and requirements of the administration. He was afraid to be shot therefore spent the nights in the shed. He was afraid of the Soviet people who served in the NKVD, then they were responsible for order in the state. Pinko Jozef and Miletsy Stepan were the next chairmen. On the collective farm there was a lot of work both for women and men. Women had to clean near the small river after a high water. Men needed to mow, clean grass of each flute. There was a hanging rail on an oak near the intersection. The foreman came and beat against the rail early in the morning. Then people came and he gave everyone tasks per day. At the beginning work was paid with natural products (grain or potatoes), and then with money [4].

Reorganization of all spheres of life of society on the Soviet exemplar, including collectivization, was temporarily suspended by the war with Nazi Germany. During occupation of the district by the Germans a loss to agriculture for the sum of 35-70 million rubles was applied. In August, 1944 after release of the area from the Germans the recovery works began. Till October, 1944 two pre-war collective farms were restored: collective farm named after Stalin "1 May ", their land area was 200 hectares. Collective farms united 40 farms, or 150 people. They had 10 cows, 18 pigs, 22 lambs, 26 horses, 2 bulls. In 1945 collective farmers sowed out 40 hectares of grain, 39 hectares of wheat, and 13 hectares of potato. Particular help was rendered to families of veterans, guerrillas and disabled people during sowing works. Work of collective farms was constantly described on pages of the regional newspaper which was called "Sialianskaia Praŭda". In May, 1946 the regional congress of working peasants took place. The main question of the congress was the need to receive 10 centners of grain, 120 centners of potatoes from each hectare and to increase a livestock of cattle by 1946 [5, P. 340 – 342].

Medvedko Anna Ioanovna told: «After war collective farms were destroyed, but after the liberation they were restored for a short term. That time was very difficult. In their reports chairmen and agronomists wrote that people voluntarily handed over the cattle, grain, linen and etc. to collective farms, but actually everything was not like that. The chairman was given a plan: the amount of products to be gathered from the peasants. The chairmen tried to fulfill the plan, but took all the "extra" for themselves. Everything from grain to equipment was taken away from the peasants. All grain was taken away, nothing remained to the peasant. Carts, plows, harrows, horses, pigs and etc. were also taken away [6].

More and more peasants every year had to unite in collective farms according to the state plan. By 1950 there were 100 collective farms and one state farm in the Sharkovshchina district. In 1950 in the area the following collective farms were considered as the main collective farms: collective farms named after Stalin, Voroshilov, Molotov, Lenin, Derzhinsky, Pushkin, Zhdanov, Malenkov; collective farms "Rassvet", "Jasnaia zara", "Shliach Lenina" and etc [7].

By December 1, 1955 there were 32 collective farms. In comparison with 1950 many collective farms united in this period for the sake of bigger benefit. The area of agricultural grounds of the district was 54,488 hectares. Efforts of the collective-farm peasantry went for increase in productivity of fields, but till 1955 it was still low. The productivity of grain was 3 centners. On collective farms achievements of science and practice of the best collectives were used [5, P. 395 – 397].

Newspapers and radio spoke about the prospering agriculture, about the economic recovery, about the increasing welfare of people. But real life of that time was very harsh, especially in rural areas where peasants were actually deprived of civil rights, had no passports, and received workdays for the hard work. Shestakevich Maria Antonovna remembers daily moments of life: "Before arrival of the Soviet power people had lands, economy, houses; they didn't use machinery. It was just unknown. Some peasants were richer, but it was a minority, generally there were peasants – poor people. Then the order on creating collective farms came. The order was as follows: first of all, to give away the horses. Remove the superfluous buildings. They also took away the cattle. If there were 2 cows, they took one. It was necessary to surrender as much grain as you have land. We had grain, but parents buried some grain in the ground. It was necessary for feeding children (There were five of us). For

Linguistics, literature, philology

work on the collective farm workdays were charged. For one workday people could get 1 kg. of wheat, 200 gr. of oil, 200 gr. of sugar and 1,2 ruble. Once, two women stole wheat sheaves. They just had no choice, their families were starving. Someone made complaints against them and these women were convicted for 7 years [8].

Also while speaking on collectivization it is necessary to tell about the process of the dispossession of kulaks. This process took place in the territory of all the Soviet Union since 1930 in some regions of the union and in post-war years (the Western Belarus). So what the dispossession of kulaks is? In the modern nomenclature it is the political repression applied administratively by local executive authorities on political and social features on the basis of the resolution of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (bolsheviks) of January 30, 1930 "About actions for liquidation of kulak farms in areas of continuous collectivization". During the Soviet period when all the system arose there was a term: the dispossession of kulaks is a process of withdrawal at a prosperous layer of peasants of surplus of agricultural products and materials. And who is kulak? In the Soviet nomenclature there are several terms, for example: 1: Kulaks are the most fissile, counteracting people breaking actions of party and the power for socialist reconstruction of economy; the kulaks which are running from regions of permanent residence and going underground the especially related to the fissile White Guards. 2: Kulaks — the fissile White Guards, insurgents; the former white officers, repatriates showing organized counterrevolutionary activity. 3: Kulaks are the fissile members of church councils, any actively proving religious communities and groups. 4: Kulaks — the richest usurers, speculators, former landowners who are destroying farms [1, P. 24-25].

Generally the fate of kulaks was the following: families of the arrested people, people, who were imprisoned in concentration camps or sentenced to execution were subject to the exile to the northern regions of the USSR, along with the kulaks and their families moved at a mass campaign, "taking into account existence in family able-bodied and degrees of social danger of these families" [1, P. 5-12].

After releasing the area from fascist aggressors, peasants conducted personal, independent agricultural activity. Production of agricultural products was quickly restored. But after a while the authorities started talking about agriculture collectivization and began approach on "kulaks". On September 6, 1947 the resolution of Council of ministers of BSSR "About taxation of kulak's farms of the BSSR western areas" was accepted. The resolution defined the tragic fate of many thousands of residents of the Western Belarus. A start to mass destruction of the best agriculture was given.

Kulak farms were laid over by the raised rate of a rural tax (75 – 100% of income) [9]. They also had to implement the raised plan of logging (3 – 5 times more, than in other farms). Increase wasn't a reason for mitigation of tasks or punishments for no realization. For frustration of logging plans or for nonpayment of rural taxes, lawsuit could be opened. People were imprisoned with confiscation of property. After that they were punished by the exile for several years and three years' withdrawal of the rights including the rights for pension. For example Dmitry Martsinovich Bagachov from the village Liady and Sergey Tsikhonovich Kushner from the village Karaliova were condemned for nonpayment of a rural tax for 1949. Vladimir Vasilyevich Klimansky from the village Pashki was punished for non-performance of the state deliveries, and his daughter, Valentina Vladimirovna Klimanskaiya, for failure to follow the plan of logging.

Till 1949 drastic measures of punishment were used quite seldom. Mass trials began with process of collectivization. Often all property of the convict didn't cover all taxes which the peasant had to execute. For example, a property inventory of the so-called kulak Benedict Biarnardovich Basikirsky from the village Kachany happened on September 17, 1948 for nonpayment of a tax for 1948 (shortage on the sum was 6524 rub 70 kopeks). The loss after levy of property made 4960 rub. The property was estimated by the commission on underestimated prices therefore there wasn't enough money to cover the amount of tax and shortages. Basikirsky's wife Alyona (1915) , sons Bogdan, (1943), Anatoly (1945), were sentenced to 6 years of strict regime by the national court of the Sharkovshchina district [2].

On April 7, 1952 the resolution of Council of ministers of BSSR No. 436 on the exile of kulaks abroad Belarus to "the remote regions of the state" was accepted. To bring home small amount of grain or potato bucket from the collective farm field to feed children was considered as "theft of state ownership" that, under the decree of Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR of 1947, provided imprisonment for a period of 3 up to 10 years. Dozens of hard-working owners who could feed the families and the state were dispossessed, condemned, taken out and in the majority of cases didn't return neither to the native land, nor to work.

Thus collectivization of the Sharkovshchinsky district took place in high gear. As a result of the accelerated collectivization of individual farms of Sharkovshchina and the Sharkovshchina district this campaign was carried

out generally in 1949 — 50, and by the summer of 1950 it was fully completed. By 1950 more than 100 collective farms were created, but in 1951 - 1952 collective farms began to unite for the sake of more favorable conditions, and by 1952 there were only 24 [5, p. 382-383]. The party soviet leadership of BSSR achieved such results due to ignoring of the principle of voluntariness, the fissile use of methods of coercion and "dispossession of kulaks". As a result of the Soviet agrarian policy the most capable groups of the population suffered. This fact became the reason for deep social and psychological imbalances.

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