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THE LABORATORY OF THE BOLSHEVIK ECONOMIC EXPERIENCE: 1921–1922 REFORMS ON LAND AND WATER USAGE IN KAZAKHSTAN

The first years after the October Revolution (1917) were years of revolutionary passion and experimentation, which found their expression in a set of political, social, and economic reforms. Economic policy towards the former Tsarist Empire as Central Asia and Kazakhstan, was characterized by two main features: the liquidation of inequality in land and water usage between the native nomad Kazakh population and the settled Slavic one, and the transition from a capitalist colonial policy to socialist economic development. The research employs a comprehensive methodological framework that integrates historical analysis, archival research, and a comparative study of policy implementation across diverse geographical regions. A primary focus is placed on archival materials from the Central National Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan, which serve as a pivotal source for understanding the directives and decrees that shaped early Soviet policies. This study also analyzes an extensive array of Party resolutions, Soviet decrees, and collections of key documents, enabling a detailed exploration of the ideological and procedural shifts from Tsarist to Bolshevik governance. This research provides new insights into the complex dynamics of Soviet policy implementation in Kazakhstan and Central Asia during the nascent years of the Bolshevik regime. It explores the juxtaposition of the revolutionary eagerness for immediate reform with the stark realities of socio-political and economic fragility in post-revolutionary times. By focusing on specific difficulties such as the stark regional contrasts in ethnic composition and the aftermath of the Civil War, this research contributes a nuanced understanding to the discourse on policy adaptation and execution amidst volatility.

Keywords: 1921–1922 land and water reforms in Kazakhstan, noncapitalist development, the Resettlement Authority, Bolshevik policy on national boundaries, national relations in Kazakhstan, Slav settled population, nomad and semi-nomad population.

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Большевиктік экономикалық тәжірибе лабораториясы: 1921–1922 жылдардағы Қазақстандағы жер мен су пайдалану реформалары

Октябрь революциясынан кейінгі алғашқы жылдар революциялық шешім қабылдау мен эксперименттер кезеңі болды, олар политикалық, әлеуметтік және экономикалық өзгерістер сериясында өз көрінісін тапты. Ұлттық шекаралардағы бұрынғы империяның, оның ішінде Орта Азия мен Қазақстанның, экономикасын дамыту саясаты екі негізгі ерекшеліктерімен сипатталды: жер және су пайдалануда жергілікті көшпелі қазақ халқы мен отырықшы славян қоныстанушылар арасындағы теңсіздікті жою және колониялық капиталистік саясаттан социалистік экономикалық даму бағытына көшу. Зерттеу аясында кең әдістемелік негіз қолданады, ол тарихи талдау, архивтік зерттеулер және Қазақстанның әртүрлі географиялық аймақтарында саясаттың іске асырылуын салыстырмалы түрде зерттеуді қамтиды. Негізгі назар Орталық Ұлттық архивінің материалдарына аударылады, олар алғашқы кеңестік саясатты қалыптастырған басқару нұсқаулары мен декреттерін түсінуде негізгі дереккөздер болады. Зерттеуде сондай-ақ партиялық резолюциялар, кеңестік декреттер және маңызды құжаттар жинақтарының кең ауқымы талданады, бұл Қазақстандағы царизмдік басқарудан большевиктік басқаруға өту процесіндегі өзгерістерді егжей-тегжейлі қадағалауға мүмкіндік береді. Бұл зерттеу Қазақстан мен Орталық Азияда кеңестік саясаттың алғашқы жылдарында жүзеге асырылуындағы күрделі динамикаға жаңаша көзқарастар ұсынады. Ол революциялық ұмтылыс пен әлеуметтік-политикалық және экономикалық тұрақсыздық жағдайындағы нақты жағдай арасындағы қайшылықты қарастырады. Әсіресе этникалық құрамдағы айқын айырмашылықтар мен Азаматтық соғыс салдарлары сияқты қиын-

дықтарға ерекше назар аударылады, бұл тұрақсыз жағдайларда саясатты бейімдеу және іске асыру процестерін тереңірек түсінуге мүмкіндік береді.

Түйін сөздер: 1921–1922 жылдардағы Қазақстандағы жер және су реформалары, капиталистік емес даму, Көші-қон басқармасы, большевиктік саясат ұлттық шекаралар бойынша, Қазақстандағы ұлттық қатынастар, орныққан славян халқы, көшпелі және жартылай көшпелі халық.

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Экономические эксперименты первых лет советской власти: земельно-водные реформы 1921–1922 гг. в Казахстане

Первые годы после Октябрьской революции (1917 год) стали временем революционного принятия решений и экспериментов, нашедших свое выражение в серии политических, социальных и экономических преобразований. Экономическая политика по отношению к национальным окраинам бывшей царской империи, включая Среднюю Азию и Казахстан, характеризовалась двумя основными особенностями: ликвидацией неравенства в земле- и водопользовании между местным кочевым казахским населением и оседлыми славянскими переселенцами, а также переходом от колониальной капиталистической политики к социалистическому экономическому развитию. В рамках исследования применяется широкая методологическая основа, включающая исторический анализ, использование архивных исследований и сравнительное изучение реализации политики в различных географических регионах Казахстана. Основное внимание уделяется архивным материалам из Центрального национального архива Республики Казахстан, которые являются ключевым источником для понимания директив и декретов, сформировавших раннюю советскую политику. В исследовании также анализируется широкий спектр партийных резолюций, советских декретов и сборников важных документов, что позволяет детально проследить изменения от царского до большевистского управления экономикой Казахстана. Настоящее исследование предоставляет новые взгляды на сложную динамику реализации советской политики в Казахстане и Центральной Азии в первые годы власти большевиков. Оно исследует противоречие между революционным рвением к немедленным реформам и реальностью социально-политической и экономической нестабильности послереволюционного времени. Особое внимание уделяется таким трудностям, как яркие региональные различия в этническом составе и последствия гражданской войны, что вносит более тонкое понимание процесса адаптации и реализации политики в условиях политической и социальной нестабильности.

Ключевые слова: земельно-водные реформы 1921–1922 гг. в Казахстане, теория некапиталистического развития, Переселенческое управление, политика большевиков на национальных окраинах, национальные взаимоотношения в Казахстане, оседлое славянское земледельческое население, кочевое и полукочевое население.

Introduction

The Soviet policies in Central Asia and Kazakhstan following the October Revolution of 1917 can be characterized as largely experimental and lacking a clear, cohesive economic and political strategy. Driven by revolutionary fervor and a strong aspiration to create a better future for the toilers of the East, these policies provided fertile ground for non-capitalist development pathways amid the broader socialist transformation. The Bolsheviks assessed the economic level of Central Asia and Kazakhstan as predominantly feudal, with certain elements of primitive capitalism. To legitimize the new regime and shape its approach toward the former colonies of Tsarist Russia, they justified the need for a direct transition from primitive capitalism to socialism, bypassing the stage of fully developed

capitalism. This approach reflected the ideological framework and practical necessities of constructing a socialist model in these regions.

Materials and methods

This article primarily relies on rich archival materials from the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as documents and statistical data from the Resettlement Authority, and decisions made by the party and Soviet authorities. The main research methods employed are systematic analysis and critical evaluation of sources, which ensure a high level of objectivity and reliability of the obtained results. In addition to archival data, the study applies methods of analyzing academic literature, including dissertations, books, and articles published both within the former Soviet

Union and internationally. The methodology uses a comprehensive approach that combines historical analysis, source criticism, and comparative assessment of data. This multifaceted, critical approach allows for the structuring and interpretation of information considering cultural, political, and socio-economic contexts, which enhances the validity and depth of the research.

The theory of noncapitalist development included the need for economic reconstruction of the formerly backward national borders alongside political reforms. The political foundations of the theory of noncapitalist development consisted of the following: the need to create a widespread network of local party organizations broadly involving the representatives of the local Kazakh population, and a network of Soviets, which had to be perfectly adapted to local pre-capitalist conditions and to involve Kazakh activists at every stage in the construction of socialism (Lenin 1974: 241-247; Cameron 2018: 45-70). At least at the initial implementation stage, the forms and methods of Bolshevik political work in Kazakhstan would differ from those in Russia. Kazakhstan's vast territory had a scattered Kazakh nomad population and neither a communications system nor the industrial proletariat, which, in Russia, represented the main base for political agitation. The 1921-1922 reforms on land and water usage were carried out utilizing the lands of the state fund, which was composed mainly of the land fund of the former Tsarist Resettlement Authority. The practical steps towards the realization of the economic tenets of the theory of noncapitalist development were to include the following: 1) the regulation and complete cessation of the policy of settling Slavs on Kazakhstan's territory; 2) the potential guarantee of lands from the state land fund to the local (Kazakh) toiling population; 3) the gradual and smooth access of the local population to advanced economic methods in agriculture (Stalin 1950: 52-59).

Land Regulation in Kazakhstan Before the October Revolution of 1917

A significant aspect of the reforms on land and water usage of 1921-1922 was to gain the local population's trust in the new Bolshevik regime and to eliminate inequality in land and water disposal between the Slavic and the local Kazakh populations. With the establishment of the Resettlement Authority in 1907, the Kazakh nomads have been regularly deprived of their best lands, which, despite numerous complaints, were transferred to the

Resettlement Authority fund. After the adoption in 1906 of the Agrarian Law, all barriers to the flow of population of settlers in the boundaries of the Empire were removed, thus considerably increasing the number of settlers to the area that was to become Kazakhstan after the national-territorial delineation in 1924. Before the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, the territory of modern Kazakhstan was split between two governor-generalships established with the conquest of Central Asia in 1867: the Turkestan governor-generalship, which consisted of Syr Darya, Semirechye, Samarkand and Amu Darya regions and the Steppe region governor-generalship, that included Akmolinsk, Semipalatinsk, Turgai, Ural'sk and a part of Semirechye regions. The Turkestan governor-generalship was transformed into the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and was eliminated in 1924 within the national-territorial delineation of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. The Steppe governor-generalship ceased to exist in 1917.

A special decree of the Ministry of Internal Affairs issued in 1907 on the question of the land structure of the Kazakhs defined lands which were not subject to expropriation from the local population as: 1) lands which are occupied by the winter dwellings of the Kyrgyz (Kazakhs), economic facilities, and kitchen gardens; 2) water facilities such as wells, ponds, areas irrigated by canals; 3) plantations: gardens' protected grooves, etc.; 4) cultivated lands where allotments are not rented out; 5) cemeteries which continue to serve as burial areas, and the separate graves of incredibly honored deceased persons; 6) caravan routes and areas serving as pasture held for the quarantine of livestock. This decree determined that the territories which did not comprise the categories mentioned above, 5100 temporary Kazakh settlements were to be destroyed, more than 30,000 people were to be expelled, to be replaced by 6500 households of new Slavic settlers in 260,000 desyatins of «freed up» territories at an estimate of 40 desyatins per peasant household (Kuznetsov 1950: 23).

The Kazakh population had been provided by land norms established by the Resettlement Authority for different types of households: nomad, settled livestock breeder, and settled land cultivator. Besides the question of the land redistribution of the Kazakhs, it was necessary to solve the problem of whether to implement these measures without limitations with respect to the entire Kazakh population or whether one could make exceptions for the well-off households. On 13 May 1908,

the Council of Ministers issued a decree «On the renewal of Land Distribution Activities in the Kyrgyz Communities undergoing the Expropriation of Land Plots for Settlement, with Simultaneous Land Arrangements for Resettling the Kyrgyz (Kazakhs)». The Decree established the population limit for land at 15 desyatins per person (not including the non-productive population of old men and children) (Rumyantsev 1910: 5-8). The land distribution of the Kazakh population was carried out only with the voluntary wish of the Kazakh tribes to settle down. If the aul's elite refused to settle, then it was necessary to establish the population partially so it could rent pastures and haymakers. Accounting for the land exclusions in Kazakhstan's southern districts, 45,000,000 desyatins of land were set aside for the colonization fund, comprising almost 1/5 of the region's territory (Rumyantsev 1913: 356).

Before the settlement and resettlement policy, the basis for the settlement of nomads was defined by the change in the social status of the heads of the Kazakh kin groups. According to the 1884 Steppe Code, they received the hereditary right to be involved in elective administrative duties, conclude trade deals with Russian entrepreneurs, and contract for livestock delivery. In exchange for service, they obtained rewards and titles, and their children received free access to European-style education and culture (Kraft 1898: 1-8). As a result of accelerated social differentiation within the tribal elite, there was an increase in the number of people possessing small quantities of livestock and little property. Many had no livestock, while others lacked sufficient livestock for roaming large distances. Thus, a small number of nomads, usually the poor, began to integrate elements of cultivation into the nomadic economy and, subsequently, went completely over to a settled way of life.

The settlement of Kazakh nomads from 1907 to 1917 proceeded more intensively and was essentially based on the activities of the Resettlement Authority, which set lands aside for the colonial fund. The setting aside of lands also changed the routes and the distance of the nomadic roaming as they were in the middle of the seasonal migration area. As a result, after several years of the Resettlement Authority's activity, nomadic livestock breeding lost its effectiveness in a number of districts, and the Kazakh population gradually went over to the stall-camp system of maintaining livestock. The Resettlement Authority's activities in allotting land plots to Kazakh auls promoted the transition to a settled lifestyle. Slavic settled population that lived

close to the Kazakh nomadic population also served as a visual example of the effectiveness of a settled cultivated economy compared to the nomadic one. The continuing social differentiation within the tribal elite increasingly favored the transition of Kazakh households with little or no livestock to a settled way of life (Yusupov 1949: 21-22).

Land and water regulation in Kazakhstan was widely discussed among the representatives of local intelligentsia and on the pages of newspapers and magazines in Kazakh, such as *Turgaiskaya Gazeta* and *Aikap*. Relationships in the area of land use in Kazakhstan were of extremely muddled character. Until the Bolshevik revolution, there was no land reclamation, except for the activity of the Resettlement Authority allocation plots for the settlement. The local nomadic population used the lands based on common tribal law – lands which never and under no circumstances were turned over to the aul but were used by them as a result of the right of first conquest. Wintering gave the kinship groups the right to use the land for centuries, and this right was transferred by inheritance. In August 1913, much work was carried out by these press organs towards the convening of a Kazakh congress at which the first Kazakh national party, the *Alash*, was formed.

Representatives of the Kazakh intelligentsia, such as Myrzhakup Dulatov, Alikhan Bukeikhanov, and Mukhamedzhan Seralin, actively participated in the work of the congress. The questions discussed at the congress mostly related to Kazakhstan's political and economic future. The following reforms were proposed: 1) land reform (the confiscation of lands from the Slavic settlers and their return to the Kazakh population); 2) religious reform (the institution of muftis in all regions where the population felt the need for muftis); 3) the establishment of a national court (the *sharia*); and 4) the election of Kazakh deputies to the central representative body – the State Duma (Martynenko 1992: 13-21).

Between 1917 and 1918, several Kazakh congresses were convened, where the basic questions were the development of local self-government and the possibility of organizing a Kazakh territorial-national autonomy – *Alash*. The *Ush Zhuz* and the youth organization *Birlik* were created in 1913-1914 on the territory of Northern Kazakhstan. In the first place, the task of these organizations was not so much dealing with the future political structure but rather with economic, cultural, and educational issues among the Kazakh population (Kakishev 1972: 44-45, 92-93). Later, these parties and groups

decided to support the reforms of the first years of Bolshevik power.

In the pre-revolutionary period, the settlement of Kazakh nomads was not planned. Social processes within Kazakh tribes stimulated settlement and were an indirect consequence of the Tsarist government's agrarian resettlement policy. For these reasons, the settlement process in the pre-revolutionary period can be characterized as spontaneous.

After the October Revolution, the first decrees of the Soviet authorities abolished the Resettlement Authority, thereby annulling its Regulations and Declarations. The land fund of the Resettlement Authority passed to the Bolshevik administration, and many of its former employees started to work for the new regime.

First Steps of the Soviet Power on Land and Water Regulation in Kazakhstan

The political basis of the land and water regulation on the Eastern borders of the former Russian Empire was determined by the decisions of the Second Congress of the Communist International on the National and Colonial questions (Lenin 1974: 241-247). Russia did not have overseas colonies, but distant parts of the Empire, such as Central Asia and Kazakhstan, for all intents and purposes, could be regarded as colonial holdings with colonial means of tutelage. Administration by the local population was based on the 1884 Steppe Decree and the 1891 Decree on the Administration of the Turkestan region that automatically became irrelevant after the October Revolution of 1917 (Galuzo 1929: 104-106; Rumyantsev 1913: 28-33).

One of the first acts of the new Bolshevik government was the Order of the Turkestan Executive Committee (TurTsIK) of April 10, 1920, «On the Rapid Return of the Lands to Kazakhs and Kyrgyz Returning from China». The 1916 Steppe uprising, and the subsequent punitive military expeditions of the Tsarist government resulted in the emigration of a considerable part of the local population of the southern districts on the territory of Xinjiang province. Therefore, it was necessary to address the question of returning those lands to the nomads returning from China. The native population of the Semirechye and Syr-Darya regions in the south of Kazakhstan especially suffered. According to the data from Soviet official sources, up to a quarter of the Kazakh population of the Semirechye region (about 300,000 people) were expelled from their lands and were forced to migrate to western China, where a considerable part of the Uighur

and Dungan people went as well (TsGARK. F.74. Op.3. D. 381. Pp. 89, 90; Pokrovskii et al. 1957: 180-182). The Special Commission of the TurTsIK, which dealt with the settlement of the returnees on the territories free of military action of the Civil War, produced data on the overall number of refugees returning to the territory of the Semirechye region – some 240,000. According to the decision of the TurTsIK on July 19, 1921, the neediest of the returnees were provided with 30,018 arshins (one arshin was about 70 centimeters) of cotton textiles, 9778 pieces of coarse fabric matting, 2226 pairs of footwear, 73,380 arshins of mangoline (dense flaxen fabric), 790 horses, 500 cattle, and 3500 sheep (Chupekov 1961b: 74-79). This assistance obviously was insufficient, but the new regime's lack of financial resources was compensated for by legislative decisions regarding land use.

On February 7, 1921, the TsIK of the Kazakh ASSR (the Kyrgyz ASSR had received legal status within the RSFSR in October 1920) adopted a Decree: «On the transfer of land to Kazakh toilers, land that had constituted the estates of the nobles and capitalists, monastery grounds, and lands of the colonization fund of the Resettlement Authority». This decree regulated land use in Kazakhstan's northern and eastern gubernia between the local and settler Slavic population.

Several difficulties arose when the decree was put into practice. During the Revolution and the Civil War, the settler Slavic peasantry took over vacant land plots and lands allotted to the Kazakhs. Settlements arose on these plots with economic structures and processing facilities. In the inquiries of the central Moscow government about the progress of the implementation of the provisions of the decree, the local authorities recognized their utter inability to deal with the emerging difficulties. For example, in the inquiry of the Guberniya Executive Committee (Gubispolkom) and the Guberniya Land Committee (Gubzemkom) of Kustanai guberniya, it was announced that the decision about the eviction of the unauthorized lands aroused the dissatisfaction of the peasants and brought about their hatred towards the Kazakhs. If these unauthorized Slavic settlers remained, it would contravene all the decrees of the center and bring about distrustful attitudes towards the Soviet authorities among the Kazakh population. The question of distrust is the political side of the question. The economic background for the prospected land regulation was much more complicated. Both the Slavic and the Kazakh populations suffered from hunger as a

result of famine, which widely spread in the Volga region and the northern and northwestern regions of Kazakhstan. Therefore, the unauthorized Slavic settlers could not be evicted without material assistance from the government, which lacked the finances to do so. Local authorities asked for detailed instructions from the Kazakh People's Commissariat on Land (Kaznarkomzem) and the Kyrgyz Central Executive Committee (KirTsIK) in all cases (TsGARK F. 74. Op. 2. D.215. P.8; Chupekov 1961a: 104, Vladimirsky 2020: 2). Such an inquiry from the local authorities was by no means unique and showed their inability to solve the problem by themselves.

As a sign of help in the explanation of the Decree, the Central Committee of the Kazakh ASSR sent 1922 a special *Red Caravan* to those regions of Kazakhstan where the provisions of the KirTsIK Decree of February 2, 1921, were disseminated. The *Red Caravan* defined its main purpose to close the gap between the local population and the representatives of the new power. It consisted of the regional executive committee representatives, Komsomol, Zhenotdel, People Commissariats of Agriculture, Education, Trade, Health, etc. The *Caravan* covered more than 4,000 kilometers between Orenburg and Semipalatinsk and visited 47 Kazakh auls and Slav villages. *Caravan* representatives not only explained the provisions and the decrees of the Bolshevik power but also took an active part in the practical realization of these decrees, especially in land and water regulation, the fight against hunger, and medical treatment.

In the official reports of the leaders of the *Red Caravan*, there are indications that the provisions of the Decree were still not being realized anywhere. The reason for this was, on the one hand, the inattentiveness of the local authorities to the needs of the Kazakh population and, on the other hand, the poor financial state of the local Soviet organizations, which deprived them of the means to handle the implementation of the provisions of the Decree. The transcripts of the *Red Caravan* participants reflected the main reason the local Soviet authorities did not have all the necessary resources – the fight against hunger and the necessity to buy and distribute bread, grain, and clothes to the starving population. Hunger affected the northern, western, and eastern regions of Kazakhstan. The local Kazakh population suffered the most, losing up to 70 percent of their livestock. At that time, when the most important thing for people was to survive at any price, newly recruited party activists issued instructions on the necessity

of deepening the class struggle in the Kazakh aul (Dahshleiger 1960: 30-41; Cameron 2018: 55-59). In their reports from the starving regions, they mentioned that the Kazakh poor are characterized by hunger and are, for all intents and purposes, naked. In the aul the bai ruled as before the revolution. «We [party activists] had to meet *bais* who freely fed up to 150 people each. All this bai activity undoubtedly strengthened the authority of the *bais*, leading to their winning the sympathy of the poor and, as a result, bringing about a greater dependency of the poor on the rich. It was time to begin extensive work among the Kazakhs in the areas of proletarian class education and Soviet construction (Chupekov 1961b: 96; Pianciola 2008: 102-104)».

Implementation of water and land reforms in Kazakhstan, 1921–1922

On April 19, 1921, the TsIK of the Kazakh ASSR published a Decree «On the return of the Land, which was expropriated by the Tsarist government for the Ural and Siberian Cossack forces, to the Kyrgyz people». This decree was intended to regulate land usage along the Ural River. A temporary technical instruction was issued to avoid confusion when implementing the decree provisions. The instruction determined 1) the boundaries of a 10-verst belt subject to seizure and 2) defined those persons who had a right to land redistribution. This redistribution within the 10 verst' belt was mainly to affect firstly the Kyrgyz living within the limits of the belt and using arable land on a rental basis, secondly, the entire Kyrgyz population who previously used these lands, and finally, all other Kyrgyz who expressed a desire to receive land allotments in the 10-verst belt (article 5), 3) establish temporary norms of land guarantees right up to the development of final norms of land guarantees, the highest norm for the distribution of land in the 10-verst' belt being an allotment of land of 7,5 desyatins per economic unit which is sufficient for subsistence, with a reduction in dependency on local conditions (TsGARK F.74 Op.2 D.47. P.6).

Implementing this Decree entailed fewer difficulties than the February 2, 1921 Decree. There were few Slavic settlements on the land within the 10-verst' belt. The Cossacks who owned these lands did not use them for crops but for haymaking. Cossacks, the most privileged category of non-native Slavic population, had acquired vast tracks of land in Turkestan by the end of the 19th century. The Cossacks held extensive fertile lands but could not exploit all of them, so they rented

out some of them to the native Kazakh population or the Slavic settlers who had arrived as a part of the Resettlement Authority quotas since 1907. For example, data on land holdings in the Semipalatinsk region testify that the Cossacks, who comprised less than 20 percent of the region's population, held 37.5 percent of the land (Kuznetsov 1950: 32). The Slav population's second rank was represented by long-running settlers who had come to the region even before the official announcement of the settlement policy in 1906. Finally, there were the newly arrived settlers, who occupied the lowest rank in this complex hierarchy. One hundred twenty-seven thousand one hundred seven desyatins of land were redistributed; 36,896 desyatins went to the Kazakh population. 10,286 desyatins were redistributed in the territory that was populated both by Kazakh and Slavic settlers, 57,268 desyatins of land remained in Cossack possession, and 22,650 desyatins remained vacant (Baishev, Gal'yanov, Karibzhanov 1971: 41).

The instructions of the Decrees of February 7, 1921, and April 19, 1921, concerned regulating land usage and distribution in Kazakhstan's northern and eastern regions. The most complicated aspect was the implementation of land and water reforms from 1921 to 1922 in the south of Kazakhstan in the Semirechye (Dzhetyysu) and Syr Darya gubernii. First, the quality of arable land was lower, and the conditions for cultivating the land were much more difficult (irrigation of land by canals). Second, the native Kazakh population was involved in nomadic livestock breeding, which depended mainly on weather conditions, and therefore, the boundaries of exploitable pasture and crop areas continually changed. Third, the population of the south of Kazakhstan was characterized by enormous ethnic diversity – all categories of the Slavic settler population, nomadic Kazakh and Kyrgyz populations, and the settled population in Uzbek and Dungan villages. The interrelationship between rich and poor in the aul was based on mutual assistance, which bound the poor to their wealthier kin. Bais rendered services to their kinsmen, such as leasing horses (*at mayin bery*) or dairy cattle (*sauin*). In exchange, the poor were obliged to tend the livestock of the bai, put up the yurts, shear the sheep, and perform other work in the bai's household. It was necessary for the Soviet authorities to distribute the «benefits» equally to each of the national groups (Thomas 2015: 71-73).

The reform tasks in the south of Kazakhstan were defined in the instructions of the 9th Congress of

the Soviets and the 5th Congress of the Communist Party of the Turkestan Republic. In the process of implementation of the reforms it was necessary: 1) to bring about the liquidation of kulak and bai households; 2) to expropriate the land surpluses of Slavic settler families above the working norm; 3) to expropriate land from Slavic families which was above the norms established by the former Resettlement Authority in 1916; 4) to equalize the rights of the native population to land with those of the newly-arrived European population; 5) to liquidate unauthorized Slavic settlements which were set up on the native population's lands after 1916, their population to be displaced to old and new settlements as well as to Cossack stanitsas; 6) to transfer land to the landless and small landholding native population from the land fund which resulted from the liquidation of the idle households (those that depended on hired labor), as well as the confiscated surpluses of settler plots. Officially established working norms differed from region to region and depended on the quality of land, average family composition, and actual working members of the family. The established working norm varied from minimal to maximal (Volkov 1924: 30-31; Chupekov 1961b: 113-120).

Since the native Kazakh population of Kazakhstan's southern regions was mainly involved in animal breeding, it suffered to a much greater extent than the settled agricultural households from the effects of *dzhuts*, livestock epidemics, and famine. On the eve of the revolution, 34 percent of Kazakh households in the Verny uezd did not own sheep, and between 44 and 51 percent of all Kazakh households in the Semirechye did not own any agricultural property. As a result of the repeated requisitions of livestock during the Civil War (1917-1922), the size of flocks had significantly decreased. In the Semirechye region, the extent of animal ownership was down by 75 percent in 1920 in comparison with 1912, and about 50 percent of the Kazakhs involved in nomadic livestock breeding were left without any livestock (Rybakov, Kuznetsov 1957: 74-88).

In the course of the implementation of the reforms, the native Kazakh population benefited from preferential treatment. Livestock inventory norms were established for the nomadic and semi-settled population, allotting grazing lands according to subsistence norms (depending on the number of souls per family) – six heads of cattle per person for purely nomadic households and five for mixed households. For settled and purely agricultural

households, under the average land norms, grazing lands were 10-12 desyatins per household, including the sown area between seven to eight desyatins, with the size of the animal inventory set at two heads of cattle per person. It was considered the maximum norm in the conditions of the Semirechye. The minimum norm was established at one head of cattle. The land norm for the Slavic population was the same as that established by the Resettlement Authority in 1916. The norms for the agricultural tool inventory for one Kazakh or Slavic household were established as one plow, one harrow, three sickles, three scythes, three pickaxes, two pitchforks and shovels, one two-horse brichka, one cart, and so on. The entire machine inventory – reapers, mowers, winnowing machines, grinders, horse rakes, and others- had to be used collectively (Dahshleiger 1958: 18-31).

Implementing the reforms was to be completed by July 1, 1922. For this purpose, shock land-troikas of Communists were established and uezds were divided into small districts to facilitate the work of the troikas.

During the reforms, considerable excesses were committed upon the Slavic population. In the reports and summaries of the land troikas, it was announced that by May 24, 1922, unauthorized settlers and refugees settling on seized Kazakh lands would be expelled – 284 households comprising 1255 persons; 75 households from the Dzsharkent uyezd, 102 households from Kopal uyezd, in Lepsinsk uyezd, and the evictions were entirely completed. Under the guise of the struggle against the kulaks and the liquidation of unauthorized Slavic settlements, the rights of not only the middle class but also the poor Slavic households were impinged upon. During the reforms, 120 villages, 32 farmsteads, and 95 mountain farmsteads were liquidated, and 6446 households were expelled (Kuznetsov 1950: 119, 166-167, 197-198).

The 7th Congress of the Communist Party of the Turkestan Republic, held in March 1922, pointed out that all expelled households would be resettled in places set aside. However, out of 3090 expelled Slavic households in the Semirechye, 1059 were not resettled until 1928 and were forced to work in the households of Slavic kulaks or prosperous bais. The *Chubar settlement and Bogorodskoe town served as typical examples of this policy*. In *Chubar*, expulsion was carried out while the male population fought during the Civil War as a part of the Red Army military units on the Bukhara front. When they returned, they found no property, and women

with children were scattered in surrounding Slavic settlements. Their «illegal» lands and livestock were transferred to alleged indigenous (Kazakh) landless and wound up in the hands of influential bais and manaps. Slavic population remained without lands, and their gardens and clover fields, which were handed over to the Kazakhs, were chopped down and destroyed. The inhabitants of *Bogorodskoe* were also expelled because they were accused of deliberately seizing land. However, the fact was that the lands of the closest relatives of the head of the Semirechye Agricultural Department were located nearby, and he decided to use the situation to increase lands at his family's disposal. As a result, 194 Slavic settler households in *Bogorodskoe* were ruined, and their lands were seized and used as pasture grounds for sheep, goats, mares, and camels (Chupekov 1959: 52-64; Chupekov 1961b: 119-122; Bagryantsev, Beisenov, Vilenskii 1957: 80-84, 115-118). Such distortions resulted in a stream of complaints and messages to Moscow referring to the illegal expulsion and resettlement of the Red Army soldiers, widows, orphans, and middle and poor peasants. In June 1922, a Special Commission of TurTsIK left for Semirechye to investigate reform implementation and examine the complaints.

During the reforms, the Commission recommended the cessation of the shock land allotment measures so that the land allotment could proceed in strict accordance with the original instructions of the central Moscow government, without limits being exceeded. The Semirechye guberniya issued Order No.5, «On the Measures to Eliminate Mistakes in Implementing the Reform». According to the provisions of the Order, the Red Army soldiers, WWI and Civil War invalids, widows, households consisting of orphans and their guardians, and households having people over 60 in their family were allowed to return to their former villages (Kaziev 2015: 218-224).

Attempts to implement the reform's provisions continued, but it became clear that practical work concerning the accounting and redistribution of land required more time than previously thought. The visible results of the 1921-1922 economic reforms in Kazakhstan can be expressed in the following manner: a sharp drop in the percentage of landless) owing to the allocation of plots to the local population from 4.3 percent to 0.5 percent, a reduction in the rate of those with little land (those with about one hectare at their disposal) from 38.1 percent to 34.3 percent, and a reduction in the rate of kulak-exploiter groups (those who had in their

disposal more than 12 hectares of land or more than 50 heads of cattle) from 6 percent to 3,8 percent (Yusupov 1949: 50-51).

Between 1922 and 1924, a number of decisions concerning land allotment were adopted, which could be viewed as a continuation of the 1921-1922 reforms. On May 10, 1923, and April 17, 1924, the TsIK issued the Decree «On land arrangement in the nomadic and semi-nomadic districts of the Turkestan and Kyrgyz autonomous Soviet republics». Both decrees considered the geographical characteristics of the region. The Decree of May 10, 1923 established the following norms of land use for the Kazakh households of the Semirechye and Syr-Darya gubernia: 1) One household in an agricultural-livestock breeding district was allotted from 6-12 desyatins of grazing lands; from 2-4 desyatins of hay-making lands and from 3-8 desyatins of common pasture; 2) One household in a livestock breeding-agricultural district was allotted from 2-5 desyatins of grazing lands; up to 2 desyatins of hay-making lands and from 49-90 desyatins of pastures. The Decree of April 17, 1924, provided special privileges to poor Kazakh nomads and semi-nomads adopting a settled way of life. The privileges included: 1) provision of credits with installment payments for 10 years for both farm animals and implements; 2) the transfer of seeds with installment payments for 5 years; 3) delivery of free wood-derived materials for the construction of houses and necessary economic facilities; 4) exemption from national and local taxes for 5 years and other measures (Kazantsev, Tumanova 1954: 213-215).

Conclusion

The 1921–1922 land and water usage reforms were largely formal in equalizing the land regulation between the native Kazakh and Slavic settler populations. The reform was destined for failure right from the start due to the lack of a preliminary investigation of the existing land fund, the agro-technical condition of the land in use, and the extreme paucity of the financial resources of the new Bolshevik authorities. Decisions in agrarian legislation adopted in 1922-1924 were unsuccessful for the same reasons. As a result of the 1921-1922 reforms on land and water usage, one could

observe the carrying out of intra-village and inter-village land arrangements in Northern Kazakhstan and the general division of the lands of the Kazakh population throughout the entire territory. However, the Kazakh population traditionally used the allotted land as pastures sown with grass or as land rented out to Slav peasants. The land plot did not become the household's economic base and political support for the new Bolshevik authorities because agriculture was still based on pasture. The fate of the nomad and semi-nomad households was doomed. The by-product of the land and water reforms of 1921-1922 contributed to the acceleration of the settlement process of Kazakh households because land plots were distributed to the entire Kazakh population. The social structure of the Kazakh *aul* changed slowly, resulting in the decreasing influence of the *bais*, the traditional tribal elite, and the increase in the number of middle peasant households (Sel'skoe khozyaistvo 1929: 26-27). Various statistical sources can detect this slow evolution of the Kazakh nomadic household. According to the 1926 census data, there were 1,220,668 households in Kazakhstan's auls and towns, of which 750,686 were purely Kazakh. Among the Kazakh households, there were 286,590 livestock breeding households (38.5 percent), 244,867 livestock breeding-land cultivating (with an emphasis on cattle breeding) and land cultivating – livestock breeding (with a focus on land cultivation) – 33.2 percent and 180,239 land cultivating Kazakh households (24.5 percent) (Baishev, Gal'yanov, Karibzhanov 1974: 166-167).

The analysis of the basic tendencies that were noticed in the development of Kazakhstan's agriculture during the land and water reforms of the 1920s attested to the fact that the transition of the Kazakh nomadic population to a settled way of life was inevitable. The fundamental disagreement on the fate of the nomad way of life was how the nomadic households were to evolve – either by gradual and natural changes in the character of the households or by stimulating the settlement process through government land regulation, tax, and financial policies. The smooth and gradual transformation of the nomad households into sedentary ones was abruptly ended by a forced collectivization process accompanied by political violence, hunger, and the complete destruction of agriculture in Kazakhstan.

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