



## **POLITICAL CONDITIONS FOR CARRYING OUT EXPERIMENTS IN THE VILLAGE OF KARAKALPAKSTAN IN 1917-1920**

A.A. Abdugarimov

Doctoral student of Nukus State Pedagogical Institute  
Nukus, Uzbekistan

### **Abstract**

The given article deals with political conditions for carrying out experiments in the village of Karakalpakstan in 1917-1920. There are given information about topical issues of the formation of the socio-political climate among dehkans (farmers), the demographic situation, the natural and geographical features of agriculture, which with a historical and comparative analysis will make it possible to highlight a number of trends and factors that determine the practical significance of the topic in the modern historical period.

**Keywords:** Karakalpakstan, Amu Darya, Land Decree, agriculture, dehkans (farmers), auls, villages, decrees, laws, resolutions on land, land-water use, nationalization of land, forests and waters.

### **Introduction**

In our opinion, the most relevant, deserving of priority in-depth study of agrarian reforms, are the following problems, which should be considered as the basis for broad discussion and debate: firstly, in order to understand and comprehend the reasons for carrying out land and water activities in Karakalpakstan, a deep analysis of the dynamics of the legal foundations of these processes, in particular, the concept of the "Land Decree" is necessary; secondly, the traditional and at the same time complex problem of the socio-economic sphere of the period under review is the history of the development of various branches of agriculture and the state of dehkans (farming) as a social group; thirdly, a comprehensive and balanced assessment requires the manifestation of socio-political activity of the population of auls and villages, taking into account the factors of violence and coercion against them. Equally important are the forms and methods of water use that existed in those critical years in the agricultural sector.

### **Methodology**

Topical issues of the formation of the socio-political climate among dehkans (farmers), the demographic situation, the natural and geographical features of





agriculture, which with a historical and comparative analysis will make it possible to highlight a number of trends and factors that determine the practical significance of the topic in the modern historical period. The agrarian sector of the economy, which was of paramount importance in the life of the society of our region, became the object of the purposeful policy of the Soviet totalitarian machine immediately after the overthrow of the tsarist government.

## **Results and Discussion**

The Bolshevik state in 1917-1924 created and approved the legal foundations for the functioning of the agrarian sector of the economy (Decrees on land, on the socialization of land, nationalization, etc.), created the “framework conditions” for land management, although the agrarian sector was extremely undeveloped under the conditions of the colonial control systems.

In practice, the activities of the new government in the field of land management were contradictory and partial. When pursuing a national policy, the Bolsheviks did not always take into account the peculiarities of the population resettlement. When pursuing a national policy, the Bolsheviks did not always take into account the peculiarities of the settlement of the population of the Amu Darya department.

Until the middle of the 20th century, almost every ethnic group of the Aral Sea region (Karakalpaks, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Turkmens) traced a connection between nature management and the natural conditions of settlement places, since agriculture was the main type of livelihood [1, p.13]

Large dekhkan (farmer) performances accompanied the first quarter of the twentieth century, as A. Tureev wrote about [2, p.98]. According to him, the aul became an arena of struggle, on the one hand, dehkans (farmers) against the royal (khan's) possession, and on the other, against their wealthy villagers.

New processes, which were identified in the Amu Darya department in 1917, affected the social structure of its population, society and power.

Determination of the real social structure in the course of agrarian reforms is very important, since it manifests the interests, moods, and behaviors of various social groups (merchants, large and medium landowners, dehkans, poor peasants, farm laborers, sharecroppers etc.). It is very difficult to give a detailed grouping of the population of the Amu Darya department in view of the close interweaving of various social categories.

According to statistical data, dehkans prevailed here, and the proportion of the poor and poor strata of the population was significant. As noted above, the transformation of Soviet power in auls and villages proceeded from the “Decree on Land”. But the



decree itself was more of a declarative act than a practical guide. The development of the relevant law and its implementation was entrusted to the People's Commissariat of Agriculture.

The tasks of the agrarian reform included: to divide the lands of large landowners, to carry out a new land management, to provide dekhkan farms with inventory, working livestock, etc. on equalizing labor principles. The reason for vigorous intervention in the sphere, which they knew poorly, was the further deterioration of the food situation in the villages and villages, the threat of famine [3, p.101]

In the period under study, the Amu Darya department had peculiar features in the sphere of land and water relations.

According to sources, the total land area was more than 110 thousand square kilometers. (105,063 sq. miles) [4, archive doc.133] Only the area of the Amu Darya delta was used for irrigated agriculture. Weak land use was explained not only by soil, but also by climatic conditions. Low humidity, low rainfall and high summer temperatures made it impossible to produce rainfed crops. The general state of agriculture of the department showed intensive dekhkan farming. According to G. Bukeikhanov [5, p.251-252], the reasons for this phenomenon are in the following:

- The need to work on the "Kazu" [6] (annual labor costs for cleaning the main ditches and their heads);
- Annual repair and maintenance of a small network that conducts water through dekhkan fields in working condition [7];
- Planning of the area and breakdown of its irrigated area [8];
- Thorough tillage of the soil surface [9];
- Annual application of fertilizer (manure from rushes [10]) to the fields [11];
- A wide variety of cultivated crops with a predominance of technical ones - more labor-intensive and profitable in the economy [12];
- Reduction in the area of fallow fields or their complete absence;
- The abundance of weeds and increased control of them.

According to G. Bukeikhanov, irrigation water, intensive cultivation of fields, and fertilization were the basis of intensive agriculture in the Amu Darya department. At the same time, it should be taken into account that, despite the absence of mechanisms and perfect tools of production, in terms of the thoroughness of cultivation of plants, in terms of the degree of utilization of field areas, the economy of the Amu Darya department was not inferior to the rationally set farms in Russia and Western Europe.

By 1917, per capita of both sexes of the Amu Darya department accounted for an average of about 0.43 acres of cultivated land [13, AJK RK, f.1. op. 2, d. 133, l. 4.]





In the settled-agricultural part, land use was household-district, the method of striping was used, free lands were used for grazing, served as a source of fuel and feed for livestock. Thus, there were signs of extensive land use. The allocation of land was decided by the entire community (village, which was formed according to tribal characteristics), the main criterion was the possibility and result of the labor force invested by dekhkans.

Such land use in historiography was often called bran or farm [14, p.56]. Such a definition is incorrect, since there were no constancy of boundaries in the existing household plot land use, and the size of the developed plots of individual dekhkans did not bear signs of cut land use. There was also no closed complex of necessary agricultural land for individual farms with marked boundaries, that is, the main features that define the concept of farm land use.

The presence of cultural lands, constant in location and belonging, often isolated and interspersed, provided a basis for the historian K. Ametov to attribute the household-communal form of land use to the cut-off form. Community in its essence most characteristically manifested itself in the distribution of water - according to the principle of "equal to all". The right to own land was granted to the settled population by the special position of the Turkestan Governor-General. There was a tradition among the dekhkans of the Amu Darya department that anyone who puts their labor into it can use the land. Each farmer traditionally looked at the land as an inalienable right of private property, it was deeply rooted in his mind.

By 1917, the total sown area in the Amu Darya department was determined at 90,916 acres (90,098 hectares).

The distribution of sown area among different groups of the population was as follows:

Without sowing throughout the department was 17.0%,

With sowing from 2 acres - 50.9%,

With sowing from 2 to 5 acres - 27.4%,

With sowing from 5.01 to 9 acres - 4.0%,

Over 9 acres - 0.7%. [15, p.56]

Thus, according to our calculations, of the number of sowing farms, 61.3% had an average sown area of 1.07 acres, 33% of farms - 6.33 acres, and only 5.7% of farms had an area of more than 9 acres (212 farms). Combining the first and second sowing groups, we will see that 94.3% of the sowing farms were provided with an average of 1.75 acres each, and none of them sowed more than 5 acres. Thus, more than 9/10 agricultural farms of the Amu Darya department were extremely small farms,



compensating for this situation by the intensification of agriculture. Such farms were called “dwarf”.

44,795 horses, 86,278 cattle, 29,458 camels, 186,125 sheep, 214,128 goats and 5,679 donkeys [16, p.56] were registered throughout the Amu Darya department.

The material and technical security of farming in the Amu Darya department was low. On average, one farm engaged in agriculture accounted for 2.5 heads, including 1.4 heads of horses, 0.6 heads of bulls, and 0.7 heads of camels. Agriculture was the first to suffer from this. According to Kondrashev's survey (carried out in 1913-1914), due to the difficulties of bringing water to the fields by gravity, dekhkans used primitive structures (local chigir - a water-lifting device in the form of a wheel with buckets or a drum with a rope equipped with scoops) with a low efficiency.

If by gravity it took an average of 22.7 hours to irrigate 1 hectare of land, then when using chigir, 51.6 hours were spent. In addition, it was an expensive undertaking, the amount of annual expenditure for this type of irrigation reached 2,755,000 rubles a year [17, CSA RK, f.17, op.2, d.16, p.33]. Nevertheless, the farms of the Amu Darya department in 1917 produced 7994.5 thousand pounds of grain crops and cereals in the amount of 7650.2 thousand gold rubles (Nikolaev). Gross cotton production amounted to 639.6 thousand pounds in the amount of 2686.3 thousand gold rubles. Alfalfa seeds collected 150,000 pounds worth 600,000 gold rubles. Alfalfa hay was collected 4494.4 thousand pounds in the amount of 449.4 thousand gold rubles [18, AJK RK, f. 1. op. 2, d. 133, p. 4]. Thus, in total, the gross output of production amounted to 15393.6 thousand pounds (without fodder gaush) for a total of 12 million 015.1 thousand gold rubles.

On the contrary, the gross output of animal husbandry was expressed in 3 million 721.4 thousand gold rubles. Horticulture and other branches of agriculture, although they were widespread in the southern regions, had a very insignificant impact on the economy of the Amu Darya department. They had an exclusively consumer character, they never had commercial value.

population of the Amu Darya department sold part of the harvest. The commercial part of the field products was:

- grain cereals - 1953.2 thousand pounds for a total amount of 1,971.8 thousand rubles;
- Raw cotton 607.7 thousand pounds for a total amount of 2,532.3 thousand rubles;
- Alfalfa seeds 150.0 thousand pounds for a total amount of 600.0 thousand rubles;
- Alfalfa hay 1,113.5 thousand pounds for a total amount of 111.4 thousand rubles;
- Other crops 618.0 thousand pounds for a total amount of 157.1 thousand rubles.

Thus, all this amounted to 4,442.2 thousand pounds for a total amount of 5 million 392.6 thousand rubles.





However, when implementing the policy of agrarian reforms, the Bolsheviks ignored the national-historical way of life of the population of the region, way of thinking, folk traditions and customs. It was also necessary to take into account the peculiarity of the ethnopsychological standards inherent in the national mentality of the people of this region, which at the level of public consciousness manifested itself in the cautious attitude of people to innovations, radical transformations, leading to a sharp change in the value system, established norms, rules and stereotypes of their behavior.

The “Decree on Land” was the first Bolshevik law that predetermined the agrarian policy of the new government for many years to come. The historiography of this problem, as it were, consists of sharp corners and requires the resolution of certain issues.

Firstly, studying the history of the spread of the “Land Decree”, one cannot fail to notice one detail: it was necessary that the land decree should become known to the broad masses as soon as possible and be adopted for implementation. If in Central Russia it was possible to do this without problems, then in Turkestan this was influenced by the factor of time and communication. For example, on December 10, 1917 (according to the old calendar style), the “Regulations on the organization of local Soviets” were received, and only on March 25, 1918 was the decision of the Council of Deputies of the Amu Darya department “On the implementation of the “Regulations on the organization of local Soviets”, and already on March 30, 1918, the elections of deputies to aul, village, region councils and to the Council of the Amu Darya department ended. Thus, the end of December 1917 - the end of March 1918 was marked by organizational moments. Implementation of the “Land Decree” was out of the question. In addition, the winter of 1917-1918 was cold, and famine broke out, which casts doubt on the “triumphal procession” of Soviet power.

Secondly, the Bolsheviks demanded not only to confiscate all living and dead inventory from the owners of private lands, but also not to distribute it among individual peasants, but to transfer it to public ownership. The most important principle of the Bolshevik agrarian decree was the transformation of all land - both confiscated and allotment peasant land - into state property, that is, the nationalization of all land. The Decree on Land provided for three ways of turning land into national property: through confiscation, obtaining state lands, and, finally, with the full consent of the peasants. But in 1918-1919. there were neither social nor economic prerequisites for the transformation of all lands into state property. Recall that on April 25, 1918 - in the midst of the sowing campaign - the Executive Committee of the Amu Darya Department approved a plan for the implementation of the “Law on the socialization of land”. It was planned to take into account the stock of land, the





prohibition of “Kazikhats” (debt books), the confiscation of property of large landowners.

Thirdly, the historiography does not trace the fact how the farmers were deceived by the “Law on the socialization of land”. But the first in the chain of legislative acts that ultimately nullified the content of the “Decree on Land” was the Law of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee “On the Socialization of Land” dated February 9, 1918. He essentially made the land ownerless, announced that it “passes into the use of the entire working people.” And most importantly, it did not say anything about the forms of land use, while in the Socialist-Revolutionary Decree of October 26, 1917, they were clearly indicated: “homestead, farm, communal, artel, as decided in individual villages and towns.” The named law was a trial step in the transition to the Bolshevik program of land socialization.

The second was the land decree of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee of February 14, 1919 “On socialist land management and methods of transition to socialist agriculture”, which 10 years later became the legal basis for Stalin's “total collectivization”. So, in this document it was emphasized that “all land within the RSFSR, no matter whose use it is, is considered a single state body, which is disposed not by the peasants, but by the government represented by the People's Commissariat of Agriculture.” The main form of land use was declared to be “large Soviet farms, communes, public cultivation of the land ...”

A.A. Golovanov determined that “the Bolshevik revolution caused a breakdown of the fundamental foundations of the pre-revolutionary village, determined the emergence of complex processes of reorganization of the life and psychology of the peasants. In Central Asia, the October Revolution contributed to the elimination of conservative feudal-bai (feudal-rich) relations, the redistribution of land and water resources in favor of the working people. At the same time, among the dekhkans, as well as in the rural population of the country as a whole, the genotype of a new type of peasant began to be laid - the “peasant sovieticus”, the nature of which has not yet been deeply studied, but the main distinguishing features have already been determined. Among them: alienation from land and property, indifference to the results of labor, a noticeable atrophy of the feeling of the owner, an extremely low level of financial situation” [19, p.7]

## **Conclusion**

Thus, it can be argued that the legal norms of the Soviet government aimed at solving the problems of the agrarian sector of Karakalpakstan in 1917-1921 were contradictory and could not be implemented in the conditions of our region. Returning again to the





period of “revolutionary transformations” of 1917-1920, one can hardly say about the final approval of the Bolshevik power in the Amu Darya department. The approval process took time. The new government was still too weak and scattered, not having the support of the indigenous population.

The main goals and objectives of state acts (decrees, laws, resolutions on land, land-water use, nationalization of land, forests and waters) were the transfer of land, water and other national wealth of the region into the hands of the central government, headed by the Bolshevik party. These acts were not actually carried out, they served only as slogans about the nationalization of the land, the improvement of irrigation and the situation of the dekhkan masses.

## Reference

1. Ballieva R. Karakalpak ethnos and traditional nature management.: Abstract of the thesis. dis. ... doc. hist. sciences. -Moscow, 2003. – 13p.
2. Tureev A. The end of the XIX century, the movement of peasants in Karakalpak land at the beginning of the XX century. -Nukus, 1991.
3. The problem is studied in more detail in the historiography of Turkestan and Uzbekistan, where there are fragmentary data on the Amu Darya department; Semenyuta V.A. Experience in solving the food problem in Turkestan in the first years of Soviet power. 1917-1920.: Author. diss. ... cand. hist. sciences. - Tashkent, 1991.
4. Archive of Jokargi Kenes of the Republic of Karakalpakstan (AJK RK), f. 1. op. 2, d. 133, l. 4.
5. Bukeikhanov G. Agriculture of the Kara-Kalpak region // National economy. - Moscow, 1928. - No. 11-12. - P. 251-252.
6. Kazu - the annual expenditure of labor for cleaning the main ditches and their heads. “Work for the kazu” is a natural labor service of the population.
7. The annual repair and maintenance of the irrigation network in working order required the labor of a farmer, on average, from 22 to 14 days per dessiatine of sowing. Each dekhkan farmer spends 2.5-3 times more labor every year on cleaning his network than on the main canal, since without this it was impossible to get water to their fields.
8. The distribution of water over the entire irrigated area of the dekhkan also required labor costs for careful planning and cutting the land into separate irrigated areas - kulchi. The farmer was engaged in the planning of his plot every year during plowing, watering and cutting ridges.





9. Having finished the planning, the farmer watered his plot 4-5-8 times in order to leach salts from the soil surface.
10. Rush - silt thrown out of the canal.
11. Before plowing, the farmer fertilized his field with a mixture of manure and rush, importing from 10 to 16 thousand pounds per tith.
12. Many crops are due to favorable climatic and soil conditions and economic incentives and factors that make it necessary to remove all crops that make it possible to feed a family and get money for clothes. The predominance of cereals and legumes is explained by the remoteness from the railway and the lack of imported wheat.
13. AJK RK, f. 1. op. 2, d. 133, l. 4.
14. Ametov K. Agrarian policy of the Soviet power... -P. 56.
15. AJhK RK. f.1. op. 2, d. 7, l. 5.
16. AJK RK. f.1. op. 2, d. 8, l. 8.
17. CSA RK, f.17. op. 2, d.16, l.33.
18. AJK RK, f.1. op. 2, d. 133, l. 4.
19. Golovanov A.A. The peasantry of Uzbekistan: the evolution of social status. 1917-1937 -Tashkent: Fan, 1992. -P. 7.

