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ADMINISTRATIVE-COMMAND METHODS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE SOCIETY OF KARAKALPAKSTAN IN 1937-1941

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Abstract:

The work analyzes the internal politics and social processes in the Karakalpak ASSR in 1937-1941. Particular attention is paid to repression, collectivization, and administrative methods of governance. The influence of authoritarian modernization on the social life of the region is emphasized.

Keywords: Karakalpak ASSR, administrative-command methods, collectivization, repressions, labor days, authoritarian modernization, social tension.

The modern stage of the historiography of the USSR's internal policy in 1937-1941, including research dedicated to the Karakalpak ASSR, is characterized by a significant expansion of the source base and the introduction of new scientific approaches. Unlike the previous period, when the social policy of the Soviet government was presented primarily in a positive light, modern research strives for a more critical and objective analysis.[1]. This became possible thanks to access to previously closed archival materials, as well as the application of interdisciplinary methods.

The greatest attention of researchers is still focused on the problems of collectivization, repression, and the position of the peasantry in the context of forced modernization. At the same time, such important aspects of social policy as the state of healthcare, housing, food supply, and the standard of living of the population as a whole remain in the shadows. These issues remain particularly understudied in relation to national autonomies such as the Karakalpak ASSR.

Thus, despite the positive shifts in studying the socio-political situation of the late 1930s and early 1940s, the field of research still needs significant expansion. The relevance of this work is due to the need to fill these gaps and comprehensively



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understand the internal processes that took place in Karakalpakstan during the period under study.

In 1937-1941, the rural population of Karakalpakstan experienced very difficult times. In April 1938, in the resolution "On the Incorrect Distribution of Income in Collective Farms," the People's Commissariat of the USSR and the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (b) condemned the practice of careless attitude towards the work of collective farmers and the squandering of collective farm income for excessive capital, production, and administrative-economic expenses. In agriculture, the number of collective farmers, essentially not engaged in social production, increased. They invested all their energy in personal subsidiary farms, the size of which steadily increased, and often at the expense of public lands. In many cases, collective farmers disposed of plots as private property: they donated them, sold them, even leased them. The principle of payment for labor in collective farms still operated in a limited form. And soon, once again, strict administrative measures were taken to strengthen collective farms. Based on the decisions of May (1939) The Plenum of the Central Committee of the party carried out the seizure of excess land in household plots. At the same time, a mandatory minimum of 60 to 100 working days per year was established for each collective farmer, depending on the district. Violators were considered "out of the collective farm" and had lost their rights as collective farmers [2,89].

To streamline the use of labor force, penalties for violating labor discipline were tightened in 1938, and labor books were introduced in 1939. According to the 1938 law, administrative liability for violation of labor discipline - were dismissed for being 20 minutes late in factories and plants [3,39].

By decree of June 26, 1940, an 8-hour workday was established with a seven-day work week, and the unauthorized departure of workers and employees from enterprises and institutions was prohibited. The working hours of each worker increased by an average of 33 hours per month. Unauthorized departure from the enterprise was punishable by imprisonment for a term of two to four months, absence without a valid reason - by correctional labor at the place of work for a term of up to six months with a deduction of up to 25% of wages. In October 1940, a system of state labor reserves was created. By conscription (mobilization), professional



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educational institutions were staffed, and their graduates were sent to work in a centralized manner. Almost simultaneously, a procedure was established for the mandatory redistribution of engineers, technicians, masters, employees, and skilled workers from one enterprise and institution to another, depending on the emerging needs.

Criminal liability measures were recognized as the best means of solving the problem of labor quality. The Decree of July 10, 1940, equated the production of substandard and incomplete products, non-compliance with mandatory standards [4,13] with all the resulting consequences to harmfulness.

Thus, in the pre-war months, the economic levers of labor regulation were maximally replaced by administrative ones. However, attempts to compensate for the imperfections of the organization and stimulation of labor, the economic mechanism as a whole, with measures of administrative influence have not yielded and could not yield the desired result.

The problem of eliminating violations of labor discipline, absences remained far from being solved. Despite the optimistic reports, reports occasionally slipped through the press, testifying to the insignificant effectiveness of the decree of June 26, 1940. The judicial practice in cases of disciplinary violations brought serious moral costs.

Thus, before the war, command-administrative management methods once again demonstrated their low effectiveness. The lack of innovation, initiative, creativity, attempts to replace them with orders in the most detrimental way affected not only the moral climate in society, but also the performance indicators of the national economy. The limits of coercion, which for a long time was considered a universal method for solving all problems, were increasingly clearly defined.

At the same time, individual farms continued to be persecuted and repressed. In 1937 alone, more than 60 thousand farmers in Uzbekistan were repressed for "anti-kolkhoz sentiments" and belonging to "kulak, bay, merchant, clergyman" families [5,54].

Representatives of the national economy, including ordinary farmers, were persecuted and arrested. In the Takhtakupyr district of Karakalpakstan, at the end of 1937, 27 people were expelled from collective farms as "enemies of the people" and



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for belonging to the former clerical strata [6,18]. In the same Takhtakupyr district, there was a mass exodus of farms from collective farms, which were subjected to various types of fines and oppression [7].

By the end of 1939, 97.5% of dehkan farms in the republic had already been collectivized, covering over 99% of all sown areas, and by 1940, all single-farm farms had completely ceased to exist. Thus, in the republic, for many years, the class of owners in the agrarian sector was eliminated: land was completely declared state-owned, and private lands and sole proprietorship were displaced from the economic sector.

Karakalpakstan did not have serious industrial potential, therefore, agriculture and the industrial processing of its products developed intensively here, which negatively affected the social situation of the population, especially in rural areas [8, 69]. The share of agriculture in the national income of Karakalpakstan exceeded the share of industry.

The analysis of the socio-political processes in the Karakalpak ASSR in 1937-1941 allows us to conclude about the extreme degree of administrative-command pressure on all spheres of the region's social life. Characteristic features of the period under consideration were the intensification of repressive policies, forced collectivization, strict regulation of labor relations, and attempts to compensate for systemic economic and social imbalances through coercion and mobilization mechanisms.

Under conditions of limited industrial potential and dependence on agriculture, the population of Karakalpakstan experienced significant hardship, which, in combination with repressive measures, created an atmosphere of social tension and oppression. The historical experience of this period clearly demonstrates the limited possibilities of authoritarian modernization and requires a critical reassessment of state intervention in social processes.

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