FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE TOTALITARIAN COLLECTIVIZATION OF THE UKRAINIAN VILLAGE IN THE FIRST YEARS OF EARLY STALINISM

The economic determinism initially proclaimed by the Bolsheviks was replaced by a policy of incompetent administrative dictatorship, arbitrariness and terror against an entire class of agricultural producers. In fact, the Soviet government in a record short time (1929 – 1934) carried out a real campaign to conquer the Ukrainian village with all the relevant attributes: the use of military force, plundering contributions, the devastation of entire regions, mass deportations of the population – “the fight against the kulaks as a class”, the transfer of rural settlements under the control of “appointees” – communists and Komsomol members, who were mainly representatives of other social strata, relying on “collaborators from among the conquered population” – rural activists, among whom the rural lumpen proletariat prevailed, “creation of the fifth column” and puppet organs of self-government – the village council, by the ideological demoralization and demoralization of the “enemy” – all those whom the Soviet regime ranked among their enemies, etc [2, 265].

As for the factors that provided the Stalinist regime with a clear advantage in the struggle against the absolute majority of the population, in the literal sense of the breadwinners of the entire country, the psychoemotional aspect of the formation in the Ukrainian peasant environment of the stereotype of obedience and humility before the Soviet regime, which was not typical before the Holodomor-genocide, should be put in the first place [4, 198].

A significant role in the establishment of the collective farm-state farm system in the Ukrainian countryside was played by both direct coercion and a really tangible threat of its use. Thus, coercion was carried out by two interconnected forces. The first force was the military units of the NKVD, which carried out arrests, executions, deportation to camps and special settlements of “kulaks” and “podkulachniki”. The second included the corps of Twenty-Five-Thousander. These are party emissaries sent from the city with dictatorial powers, who had the right to take any measures to achieve the established “target figures” for confiscating food, dispossession and collectivization [1, 317].

The Stalinist apparatus used, in a slightly modernized form, the same mechanism of reliance on rural lumpen, which was one of the main political factors that ensured the victory of the regime in the Ukrainian village during the years of
“military communism” [3, 36]. Then it was reliance on declassed elements and those who considered themselves unjustly offended by fate, but now reliance was on rural lumpen promoters, as well as on the rural “asset” [2, 274].

The Soviet regime saw them as the main conductors of its influence in the Ukrainian countryside. They understood that their well-being depends entirely on their readiness to serve the Bolshevik regime with might and main, and the loss of its support threatens them with inevitable collapse [4, 198]. Awareness of their dependence, as well as a subconscious feeling of their own inferiority determined their devotion to the Stalinist regime, their ability to do any dirty work without hesitation, at the first call [1, 319].

The rural “asset”, in contrast to the “promoted”, consisted mainly of those peasants who, as before, remained an organic part of the rural social structure, but a rather specific part. These were people who demonstrated active conformism, a selflessly emphasized demonstration of loyalty to the Soviet regime, readiness to curry favor with it in every possible way [4, 201]. Usually it is inherent in those members of the group who, having achieved success in their main field, in this case – in agriculture, seek to take revenge at the expense of pseudo activities. First of all, through demonstrative zeal in fulfilling the instructions of state and law enforcement agencies. That is, those who are able to punish and prosecute, as well as encourage [2, 275]. Such activity was usually rewarded with both “master’s handouts” and “closing eyes” by the Soviet authorities in the illegal appropriation by rural activists of a part of the property taken from dispossessed peasants [4, 207]. In addition, the rural “asset” was also moved by “envy” of wealthy neighbors, as well as a sense of permissiveness and confidence in the impunity of their actions [3, 38].

The ideological factor also had a significant influence on the behavior of rural “activists”. This is the belief that all the actions they committed against the “enemies of the Soviet regime” are just. Amazingly, this belief was strengthened if it coincided with their personal benefit [1, 322].

Rebuilding the Ukrainian village in accordance with their main ideological principles, the Bolsheviks significantly revived and exploited some of the traditional stereotypes of peasant consciousness, which together constituted social ethics. Indeed, to a certain extent, one of the Bolshevik slogans about the “fair distribution of land among those who cultivate it” responded to the eternal aspiration of the Ukrainian peasant, above all landless and landless [4, 202]. However, this was the only point of intersection in the mutual understanding of the Ukrainian peasants and the Bolsheviks, in all other issues there were cardinal ideological differences between them [3, 38–39]. The irreconcilable contradiction of the tradition of the Ukrainian peasant community of the expansion of despotism contributed to the rather brutal enslavement of the Ukrainian village during the period of collectivization [1, 323].

Another important factor that helped the Bolsheviks to establish in the Ukrainian SSR the collective and state farm system of farming in the countryside was the massive ideological campaign of social and psychological coercion and demoralization of the “class enemy” [2, 277].

As an integrating circumstance, attention should be paid to one more mechanism mechanism that the Bolsheviks used to plant totalitarian collectivity in the Ukrainian village. The policy of the Bolsheviks, including the most brutal, repressive measures, was carried out by the hands of “appointees”. This created the illusion of democracy by the people, which significantly increased the stability of the Soviet
political system [4, 205].

The myth of “people’s power”, which was used by the party-state leadership of the early Stalinist period to “whitewash” the political practice of terror, does not stand up to criticism. The Ukrainian people, including the peasantry, were destroyed by the party-Soviet elite, which relied on its worst representatives, who were ready to march in columns along the routes proposed by the Soviet government [3, 40]. All this contributed to the acquisition by the Ukrainian peasantry of a system-centered tradition of popular obedience to fate, which was embodied directly by the Soviet regime [4, 208].

So, studying this issue, the author of scientific intelligence came to the conclusion that all of the above factors became the driving force behind Soviet expansionist despotism. Tough repressive measures against the Ukrainian peasantry, a massive ideological campaign of socio-psychological coercion against them – all this had a direct bearing on violence against the individual, the destruction of the traditional foundations of life in the Ukrainian village, populist justifications for the illegal actions of the Soviet government in relation to its inhabitants.

References:


