

Khorezm German Mennonites In Collectivization Period And Its Presentation In “Ichan – Kala” State Museum Reserve.

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Annotation: This article is explored the least studied topic in the history of Khorezm - the life and work of German mennonites who lived in the oasis from 1884 to 1935. The scientific novelty of the article is that it covers the land ownership of the Mennonite Germans during the collectivization period through documents in the Khorezm regional state archive that have not yet been put into scientific use. At the same time, the arrival of the Mennonite Germans from Europe to Russia, and from there to Khorezm, and their activities in various fields in the oasis are also revealed through the facts in Russian archives and books by Russian authors of the early 20th century. It is for the first time, based on archival data, that Germans, especially during the Soviet era of collectivization, tried to operate as farms, as they did abroad, without handing over their lands to the collective farms.

Key words: German mennonites, Oqmachit, yarimchi, tanob, farmhand, collectivization, kolkhoz.

After the end of the civil war, the Soviet state, based on communist ideology and declaring itself a working-class peasant government, began a policy of collectivization in 1929 to abolish private land ownership in agriculture and to establish a state monopoly. This policy was also forcibly pursued in Khorezm district, one of the most remote areas of the Soviet state, on the banks of the Lower Amudarya. On the basis of this policy, the Central Executive Committee of the Uzbek SSR, on December 2, 1928 adopted a decree "On the liquidation of large farms in Khorezm district." As a result, the property of the rich in the villages of Khorezm, the lands and property of middle-class peasants were confiscated and collective farms were established.

However, from December 1928 to 1934, the German Mennonites living in Khorezm did not have their collective farms in the village of Oqmachit in the Khiva region, where a small amount of land and property were located. Because the Germans wrote a letter to the chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR M. Kalinin, asking for permission to operate as a farm abroad, without handing over their land to the collective farm.

After all, the peasants who were forcibly included in the collective farms were deprived of all basic civil rights, first of all, the freedom to move voluntarily, the right to choose their profession. In addition, the so-called collective farmers over time lost their sense of ownership of land, their centuries-old qualities of diligence, which led to a cooling of their love for labor, professionalism, and the emergence of formality and hypocrisy. As a result, the forcibly established kolkhoz system became an unsuitable form of land use, which eventually led to a decline in agricultural production.

The reason for all this was that the Soviets, in order to establish a state monopoly on agriculture, abolished private property, land tenure and forcibly established collective farms.

The reason for the appeals of the Germans of Khorezm to M. Kalinin, who knew that the abolition of private property and land ownership would lead to great tragedies,

On April 18, 1934, Poretsky, the head of the Khorezm district branch of the NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs), and Tarasov, the operative representative, studied the land tenure and life activities of German mennonites living in the village of Oqmachit in the Khiva region at the time.

It is well known that in order to collectivize, the property of the rich and middle-class people, who had lands and property in general, had to be confiscated, and people had to work as a collective in these lands. The middle class and the rich did not want to be separated from their lands and property, so they did not want to join the collective farms. Therefore, "on February 25, 1929, there were 3 uprisings against forced collectivization in Khorezm district, the number of insurgents was 550, and until March 17 there were 5 more uprisings, in which 2900 people took part." (**State Archive of Russian Socio-Political Organizations, Fund 62, List 2, Case 2141, pp. 125-127**).1

The German Mennonites, on the other hand, had proposed to Kalinin not to revolt against the Soviet state, but to operate as a farm without entering the kolkhoz in order to legally protect their lands and property.

Before studying the activities of German Mennonites living in Khorezm during the period of direct collectivization, let us talk about how Mennonite Germans came to Khorezm, far from Europe.

"Menno Simons (1496–1561), a philosopher and theologian of Vitmarsum in the Netherlands, reformed Christianity and established his own sect. According to his teachings, taking up arms, taking part in wars, killing people, and resisting evil by force of arms in general, was considered evil, inhuman, inhumane, heinous crime, and sin. Those who recognized this doctrine were called mennonites. Naturally, during the period in which Menno Simons lived and preached his faith, wars were a source of enrichment and expansion of his territory for kings, soldiers, and priests under their command. For this reason, when the Mennonites were severely persecuted in the Netherlands, they migrated to Prussia in the mid-16th century, and some Mennonites to Ukraine and Russia in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It was because of the teachings of the Mennonites that they were destined to leave their homeland and wander aimlessly." (**U. Bekmuhammad "Germans living in Khorezm" Urgench-2019, "Khorezm" publishing house, page 5**).2

The Germans from Marionburg, Germany (Prussia), a Protestant sect that broke away from the annabattist sect of Christianity in the 16th century, were also called Mennonite Germans. In preparation for the war, the Prussian government tried to recruit Mennonite Germans for military service, forcing them to leave their homeland, Marionburg. In this way, the Mennonite Germans of Marionburg immigrated to the Russian Empire in the 30s of the 19th century.

However, their stable life in Russia was disrupted in 1874. In the same year, a law was enacted in Russia to enlist men of all faiths, and the law was announced to take effect in 1880. This decision naturally played a negative role in the life of the Mennonite Germans. Therefore, in 1874-1880, representatives of the Mennonite Germans went to St. Petersburg and asked the tsar to release them from military service. However, their requests were denied.

Meanwhile, Yantzen, who held a prominent position among the Mennonite Germans, met von Kaufmann, the governor-general of Turkestan. Belonging to the family of a Russified German aristocrat, Fon Kaufmann tries to alleviate the anxiety of his compatriots. Kaufman offers Yantzen to move to the Khiva khanate. He promises to exempt his compatriots from military service for 25 years.

As a result, on April 16, 1884, the German Mennonites Medemtal, Valdechim, Molotschna, living in the Samara province of Russia, 34 families led by Klass Epp, Emil

Ryson, Wilhelm Penner, Jacob Janatzen, Michel Klassen settled in the village of Chiqirchi, 15 km from Khiva. Gradually, German houses began to be built in the apricot and peach orchards belonging to the khan's brother. Soon, European houses were erected on all four sides of this garden. In the large square between it, a church, a school and a teachers' room were built. There is a lot of information about Mennonites in the Russian literature on Khorezm in the early 20th century.

According to Russian military historians W. Hirschfeld and M. N. Galkin, "the Germans were 142 people in 36 houses." ("**Military-statistical description of the Khiva oasis**", T, 1912) 3. According to Russian General N.S. Likoshin, "German houses are densely built and located on small narrow streets. From the outside, it looked more like a small German town." ("**On the current state of the Khorezm Khanate.**" TsGA RUz, f 2, op 1, d 314, l 48.) 4 noted in his work.

A group of Germans devoted to agriculture were engaged in the reclamation of protected lands in the countryside. High yields were obtained from crops such as potatoes, cabbage, tomatoes, beets, eggplant, cucumbers. The Khorezmians learned to plant potatoes, tomatoes and eggplant from the Germans.

. The orchards in the village were more beautiful with fruit trees such as apples, pomegranates, quinces, apricots, and on the outskirts with ornamental trees such as poplar, willow, gujum, and oak. The Germans used oak, gujum, poplar and willow as building materials. Houses with windows and high framed doors were a complete novelty for Khorezm. The Mennonites brought to Khorezm the first elements of the construction industry, hand-operated lathes, joinery. They were not only engaged in animal husbandry and farming, handicrafts, and gardening, but also taught their children in the German schools they founded.

German farmers introduced new methods of farming and created varieties that were new to Khorezm. German farmers were the first to plant potatoes and tomatoes in Khorezm. The terms "German watermelon", "German cow", "German beef fat" and others were derived from these.

The Germans, who were engaged only in their work, did not take part in the popular uprising of 1916 in the Khiva khanate, nor in the political processes of 1917. They also lived quietly in the village allotted to them during the Khorezm People's Republic, which was abolished by the Bolsheviks in 1920 and operated on its territory until 1924. On April 14, 1934, when the formation of collective farms intensified, the NKVD compiled a list of Germans. According to the list, 196 people lived in 82 families.

The information in the list focused on how the Germans made a living on the basis of the ideological policy of that time, how they used the labor of hired workers and peasants. It was found that the Germans in 52 households had 43 horses, 112 cows, 56 calves, 42 oxen and 5 donkeys at their disposal. From this list we can learn the following information about the German land tenure in the period of collectivization. Here is information about some of them from German families:

Tayfs Ivan Ottovich - his family consisted of 4 able-bodied people. He was 27 and his wife Anna was 20. Their 50-year-old father, Ivan Funk, and his wife also lived in the same house. The family had 1 cow and a calf, 1 donkey and a horse and its 2 foals. The family used a separator for many years. There was 1.85 tanobs (1 tanob-0.20 hundredths)) of land belonging to the house of I.O. Teifs. I.O. Teifs was a teacher by profession, and his lands were cultivated by his son, Friedrich Test.

Pauls German Frantsev - his family consisted of 2 able-bodied people. There were also 1 cow and calf, 1 donkey in this house. A separator was also used. There was 5.05 tanob of land belonging to the Pauls`a house. During the busiest times of the season, he used to hire a worker. At the time the list was compiled, Mulla Bergan from the village of Chiqirchi was

working for 2 rubles a day on the land belonging to the Pauls` house. He worked an average of 20-25 days per month. The origin of Pauls was a farmer.

Pyles Pyotr Asrlonovich - his wife Maria, 52, and four daughters (Louise, 32, Zara, 25, Anna, 21, Klyona, 17) and two sons (Franz, 20, Gerard, 16) lived in his house. 1 horse, 2 cows and one calf, two oxen were also kept in the house. This house also used a separator. Pyles owned four tanobs of land and was not used by tenants or hired workers.

The 28-year-old and his wife, Ekaterina, both lived in the home of **31-year-old Tifes Otto Ottovich**. There were 1 horse, 2 bulls, and two cows in the house. They also used a separator. The O.O. Tifes`s household had 3 tanobs of land, and an Uzbek farmer was used as a hired laborer when seasonal work increased.

In the family of **Kviring Yakov Yakovlevich** lived 3 able-bodied people. Ya.Ya.Kviring was 44 years old and his wife was 48 years old. Their 21-year-old brother Berger also lived in their house. The Kviring`s family had 1 cow and calf, 1.8 tanob land. Their land was used by Rengold Pauls for rent farming.. He received 80 kg of wheat for a salary. Ya.Ya.Kviring was a craftsman who was engaged in making doors and windows.

Pauls Cornelia Germanovna, 50, lived in her family with her two sons (Boris and Arthur). They had 2 cows and 2 tanob land at their disposal. Pauls' land was leased and farmed by Gerard Dick.

Lep Ivan Gerardovich, 32, lived in his family with his 24-year-old wife. In their house 1 horse and a mare, a cow and a calf were raised. An Uzbek peasant was also employed on the 5 tanob lands at a time when German farmers and seasonal work were on the rise.

Berkman Ivan Petrovich, 50, and his peer wife Anna lived in his house. I.P. Berkman was a craftsman and moved to the village of Oqmachit from the Povolje region of Russia. During the khanate, he used the labor of 7 people as hired workers on 54 desyatina of land. By 1934, without any workers, he was cultivating the land himself.

Yantzen Gergard, 35, lived in his house with his wife, Anna, 33 and brother, Gergard, 20. He had 1 horse and 2 cows and calves in his house. Pauls Maria had been farming on G. G. Yanttsen's 6 tanob lands and had shared the harvest in equal partnership.

Pauls Abson Abson, 40, lived with his wife, Avanna, 44, and son, Peter, 13. In his house were raised a horse, 2 cows and 2 oxen, and a calf. A.A. Pauls's 6 tanob lands were permanently employed by a man of German descent.

Thus, in April 1934, the Khorezm district NKVD studied the land ownership of 82 families, their livestock, and their way of life in general. As a result, the center was informed that they did not want to join the kolkhoz, that they wanted to work as a sole proprietorship, or that their children were being educated in German schools in their villages instead of in Soviet schools.

Naturally, such a situation was perceived as resistance to Soviet policy at a time when collectivization was mandatory. For these reasons, on June 10, 1935, German mennonites living in Oqmachit were involved in the construction of the Vakhsh Water Reservoir in the Tajik SSR and moved from Khorezm. When construction was completed, the Tajik SSR was moved to Canada via Russia.

After German Mennonites had been forcibly relocated their household items, labour tools preserved in the hands of local people. In 2019 having collected those items the staff of Khiva "Ichan- Kala" museum reserve established a museum to represent German Mennonites lived in Khorezm.

This museum exhibition through photos in chronological order displays German Mennonites` migration from Europe to Russia and eventually to Khorezm.

Also the exhibition has photographs reflecting their lives in Khorezm, life style, textile productions, handicraft items and farming tools.

After the museum has opened Margarita Genrikhovna Unruh – Tsiganova earlier in Tashkent, currently living in Germany came and presented to museum a 200-year-old family chest had been preserved through several generations, her grandfather's diaries and many photographs dating back to the start of 20th century. The museum has had amongst travelers some other descendants of the very Khorezm German Mennonites too since it opened .

Also, May 2019 Russian Prime Minister D.Medvedev and President of Federal Republic of Germany Frank-Walter Steinmeier visited the museum.

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- [2] U. Bekmuhammad “Germans living in Khorezm” Urgench-2019, “Khorezm” publishing house.
- [3] V. Girshfeld, M. N. Galkin "Military-statistical description of the Khiva oasis", T, 1912
- [4] “On the current state of the Khorezm Khanate.” TsGA RUz, f 2, op 1, d314, l 48.
- [5] Khorezm regional state archive, F № 69, op № 1, 322-case.