

# Russian Security State

GOVT-5519/IPOL-3519/REES-5519/SEST-6763

Lecture 07. Collectivization, Industrialization,  
Famine

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September 25, 2025

## Today's objectives

1. *Define:* collective farms, and how they were supposed to work
2. *Discuss:* why collectivization was so difficult in practice
3. *Deconstruct:* how collectivization laid foundation for collective punishment and mass repression

# Collectivization and Industrialization

## How collective farms worked

## Why collectivize?

*Problem:*

How to fuel mass industrialization in cities?

*Solution:*

- transform small private farms into large, high-yield cooperative farms



Figure 1: Part of the plan

## Types of collective farms

### 1. Sovkhoz (Soviet agro enterprise)

- state farm
- on state-owned land
- farmers had salaries/wage labor
- government-funded investment,  
more mechanized than kolkhoz

### 2. Kolkhoz (collective agro enterprise)

- cooperative farm
- on formerly private land  
(former communes)
- revenues divided between  
members of cooperative



Figure 2: Future is here



Figure 3: But not yet here

## Three types of kolkhozy in 1918

### 1. *komuna* (commune)

- everything communally owned (no private gardening)
- proceeds distributed “to each according to his needs,” not proportional to labor/investment

### 2. *artel'* (cooperative farm)

- means of production communally owned (livestock, equipment, etc)
- private property includes home, garden for household consumption

### 3. *tovarishchevstvo* (association)

- only land, labor in communal use
- proceeds distributed in proportion to labor, investment

*artel'* became main form of collective farm



Figure 4: Work the fields



Figure 5: for greater good

## How kolkhozy were organized

1. Membership
  - everyone over 16 (except kulaks)
2. Governing body
  - general assembly
3. Head of farm
  - *in theory*: chairman, elected by general assembly
  - *in practice*: directors were often urban workers sent from cities

## How kolkhozy operated

- farms got rigid, non-negotiable quotas
- surrender all grain to state, keep only surplus above quota
- no cushion for bad weather, crop failure
- failure to meet quota → higher quota next harvest → black list (everything confiscated)



Figure 6: Bread to state

**Pre-1928:** collectivization was voluntary

- incentives:
  - 0% interest loans
  - government-financed farm machinery
  - tax benefits

**Post-1928:** mass, forced collectivization

*Discussion:*

Why the switch?

Would collectivization have been possible in a democratic state?

Would collectivization be possible today?



Figure 7: Kolektyvizuysya!

## Did collective farms work?

## How successful was collectivization in fueling industrialization?

Not very, according to data from NEP days

- in 1926, 47% of farms were collectives
- they accounted for 1.7% of production

Post-NEP: agricultural surplus was negative  
(sales to industry < purchases from industry)

- decline in livestock (need machinery)
- unfavorable terms of trade (low agro prices, high manufature prices)
- limited state-funded capital investment



Figure 8: Meet the quota!

## Problems before collectivization

- small, subdivided land holdings
- reliance on manual labor,
- very little mechanization
- production not scalable

## Problems after collectivization

- *gigantomania*: emphasis on large agricultural enterprises, big acreage
- *low mechanization*: dependence on manual labor (sickles still dominant technology of harvest)
- *low crop yield*: grain rots before it is collected, processed and shipped
- *monocultures*: plant same crop over large plot, no diversification

why were these “problems” problematic?



Figure 9: Plowing ahead!

# Dekulakization and Famine

# Kulaks

## Who were the kulaks?

- *in theory*: wealthy peasants who used hired labor and engaged in rural usury
- *in practice*: peasants (broadly defined)

Dekulakization: “destroy kulaks as a class”

- Politburo order, Jan 30, 1930
- arrest kulaks, confiscate their property
- sentencing quotas:
  - 60,000 to concentration camps
  - 150,000 resettled to remote areas
  - death penalty for kulaks in “counterrevolutionary core”



Figure 10: Death to kulaks!

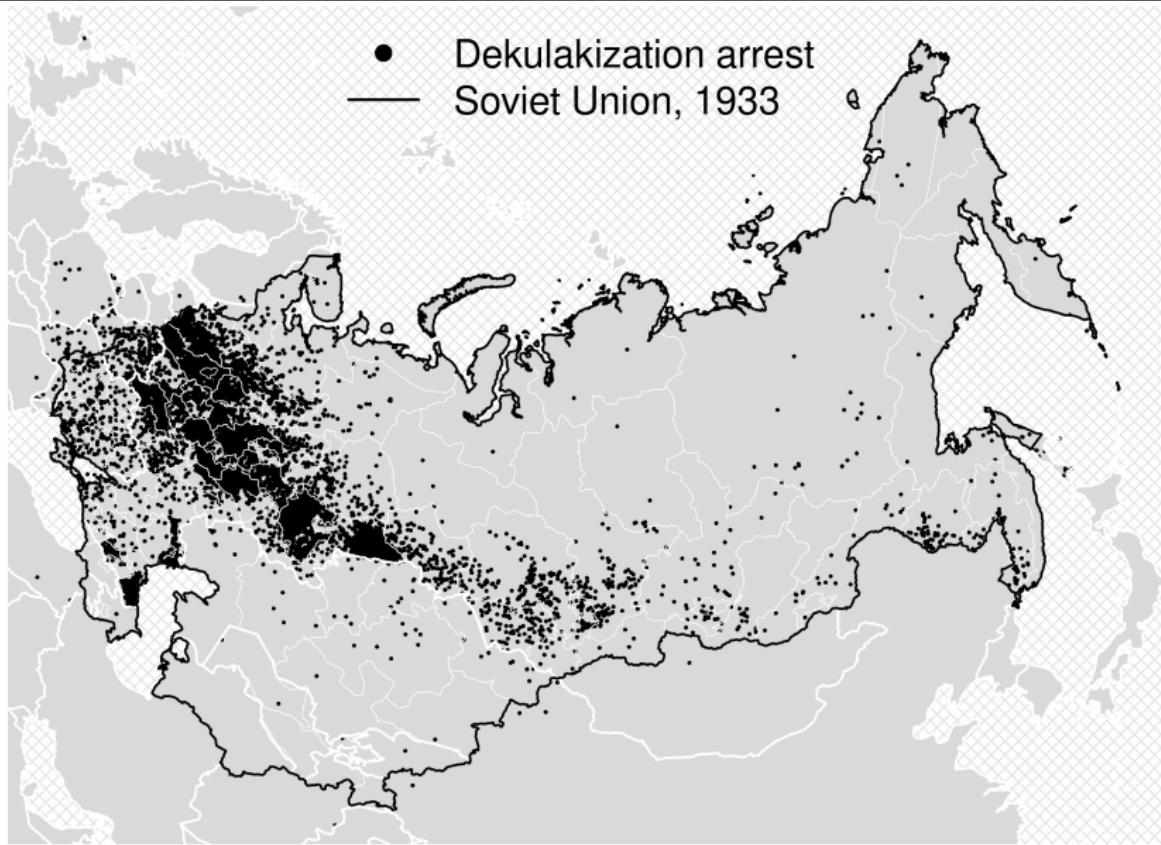


Figure 11: Geographic distribution of dekulakization

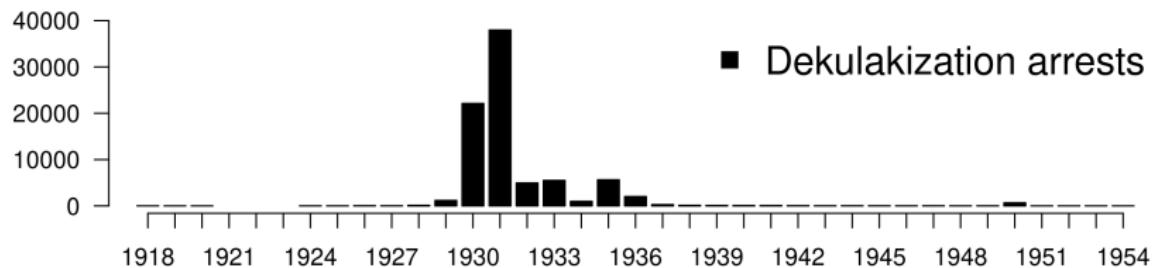


Figure 12: Temporal distribution of dekulakization

## Who was “dekulakized”? (data from Memorial NGO)

1. Occupation
  - 93.7% farming
  - 5.9% services
  - 0.4% other
2. Nationality
  - 76% Russian
  - 9% Ukrainian
  - 2.5% Tatar
  - 12.5% other
3. Party affiliation
  - 48% no party
  - 6% Communist
4. Education
  - 47% none/illiterate
  - 52% primary
  - 1% secondary
  - 0.2% higher
5. Education

# Holodomor

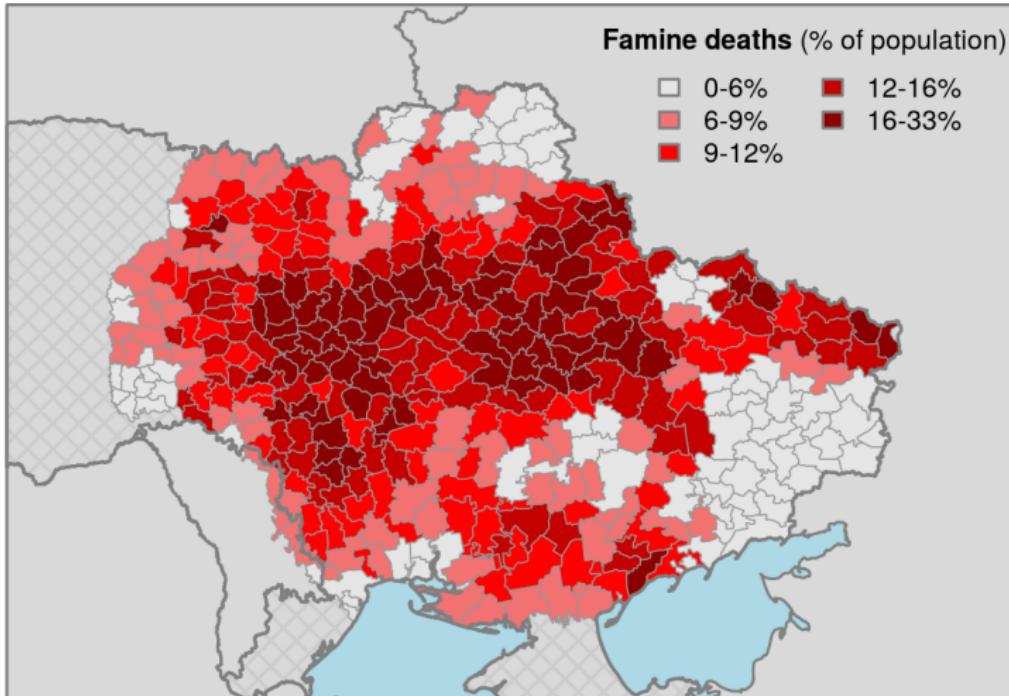


Figure 13: Famine deaths in Ukraine (1933 borders)

## Explanations for 1933 Ukrainian famine

1. Bad weather
  - unusually cold, wet spring
  - unusually hot, dry summer
  - early frost in fall
  - disrupted sowing, germination
2. Bad policies
  - collectivization
  - rural brain drain due to dekulakization
  - punitive production quotas
  - confiscation of grain, livestock
  - internal passports
  - use of hunger as punishment
3. Ethnic discrimination
  - punitive measures stricter in Ukraine than in other regions
  - more excess fatalities in Ukraine than in other regions



Figure 14: De zerno?



Figure 15: Os' de zerno!

*Discussion:*

How could famine have been avoided?

- a) reduce pace of industrialization?
- b) reduce quotas?
- c) reduce exports of grain?
- d) return to market system?
- e) go easy on the kulaks?
- f) accept foreign aid?



Figure 16: Avoidable?

# NEXT MEETING

*Forced Labor and the Gulag (Tu, Sep. 30)*

- mass bondage machine
- things to consider:
  - what parallels and difference do you see between the Gulag and other forced labor institutions we've covered?
  - what came first: demand for forced labor, or supply of forced laborers?