

What in your view is
the short term impact
of collectivisation on
soviet society



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In my view there are a number of significant impacts of collectivisation which were the famine, elimination of the kulaks and successful creation of collective farms, I believe these made major impact because of their scope and pace which they occurred. One of the short-term impacts of collectivisation on soviet society was the famine, which killed millions in the major grain producing areas of the soviet union. By the end of 1933, millions of people had starved to death or had otherwise died unnaturally in Ukraine, as well as in other Soviet republics.

The total estimate of the famine victims Soviet-wide is given as 6-7 million or 6-8 million. This is supported by the US Commission: " If they came upon a smelly old potato , they would clean it and take the starchy residue...It was terrible, absolutely terrible, they'd spot some small creature in the water, like a turtle and eat it as food ...people were reduced to this state. " The source does have a lot of weight as it is an interview with someone who was there at the time, it's an eyewitness account and it's by people who weren't involved in the communist regime and wouldn't have any reasons to lie.

However, this was conducted 50 years after the famine, which means that memories may be slightly distorted or over exaggerated if they have a hatred for the soviet regime. Generally, this account tends to match many others of the famine which leads us to believe it is true, for example this is also supported by Iaryna Larionivna Tiutiunyk: " He dropped by beginning - Auntie, give me a piece of bread. I did not give any because I was mad at him for eating the greens I had planted in the garden. To the day I die, I will not forgive myself for begrudging the child a piece of bread.

In the evening, on our way home from work, we found sitting right in the middle of the footpath-dead. ” This source also has a lot of weight as it comes from a school teacher in the city of Cherkassy, therefore it is an eyewitness account and she won't have been part of the communist regime so she will more likely be telling the truth as she has no-one to protect, however once again this was recorded 50 years after the famine and therefore can't be completely accurate. However, Stalin being the possible cause of the famine disagrees: “ When his niece reports seeing crowds of starving, half dead Ukrainians, Stalin snaps, ‘ She's a child.

She makes things up. ’” Stalin has less reliability and therefore reduces the weight of the source, as Stalin would not have wanted to admit to the impacts of the famine, and what was happening to his people. The overall impact of the famine was significant as its scope was so great and affected millions of people throughout the areas of the Soviet Union. The second short term impact of collectivisation on soviet society was the elimination of the kulaks, where they were treated so brutally, families were split up and taken away and their property taken away.

Stalin believed any future insurrection would be led by the kulaks, and thus he proclaimed a policy ‘ liquidating the kulaks as a class’. Declared ‘ enemies of the people’ the kulaks were left homeless as every single one of their possessions were taken from them. Kravchenko agrees: “ A number of women were weeping hysterically and calling names of husbands and fathers. It was like a scene out of a nightmare...So this was the liquidation of the kulaks as a class! A lot of simple peasants being torn from their native

soil stripped of their worldly goods and shipped to some distant labour camps”.

Kravchenko was a communist who later fled the soviet union, his source has weight because it is an eyewitness account and if he was a communist he wouldn't like the way the soviet union was being run and would disagree with it; he clearly doesn't agree with the elimination of the kulaks. The Smolensk Archive also agrees with this: “ Evicting kulak families who had Red Army connections... deprived member of kulak and middle peasant households of their clothes and warm underwear, directly from their body... the food they found was eaten on the spot; the alcohol was consumer directly”.

We can infer from this source that the kulaks were treated unfairly and in an inhumane way, and that the officials benefited from this elimination, taking the clothes and food they confiscated for themselves. This source also describes that many officials ignored precise instructions and interpreted the kulak category in their own way, to even the poor peasants. We can infer from this that the impact of the elimination of the kulaks should have been more organised and less horrifying if instruction were followed, and that officials who made their own rules up made the impact even greater than it should have been.

This source has some weight as it is a file taken from government documents, which infers that its information taken from eyewitness accounts and from knowledge from people who were there at the time, this means that the impact of the elimination of the kulaks was significant as these sources describe the truth of what happened to the kulaks. However, Stalin disagrees

<https://assignbuster.com/what-in-your-view-is-the-short-term-impact-of-collectivisation-on-soviet-society/>

with these sources: “ Stalin denies knowing the term kulak even as he systematically liquidates them on a daily basis.

We can infer from this that Stalin was not aware of how the kulaks were being treated, or simply that he did not want to admit to his role in the elimination of the kulaks, as he did know the truth of what was happening and didn't want to be linked to it. This makes the impact of the elimination of the kulaks more significant if Stalin wanted to keep it quiet. This source does have weight because it is likely that Stalin would deny knowing anything about the kulaks, and it is also from Stalin's personal notes, meaning that he wouldn't have thought anyone would see it and therefore is more likely to be true.

However, that doesn't mean that he was telling the truth and it is more likely that he was lying and he did know about the kulaks. Overall, the impact of the elimination of the kulaks is significant, as many people were affected and its pace was extremely rapid. However, it was not as significant as the famine as fewer people were affected. The third short term impact of collectivisation was the successful creation of the collective farms. By 1930 50% of peasant holdings and farms had been collectivised and by 1934 70% had been collectivised.

With this impact it is hard to define the meaning of success, and how we consider the collective farms to be a success, whether it means that the collective farms increased production or it was a success with the peasants and their home and family life, in these circumstances ' success' refers to the amount of production. Stalin agrees with the success of the collective

farms: " It is a fact that by February 20 of this year 50 per cent of the peasant farms throughout the U. S. S. R. had been collectivised.

This means... we have over fulfilled the five year plan of collectivisation by more than 100 per cent. " The statistics from an economic history of the USSR also agrees with the success of collective farms: " Grain harvest (million tons) 1928: 73. 3, 1935: 75. 0, State procurement of grain (million tons) 192: 10. 8, 1933: 22. 6, Grain exports (million tons) 1928: 0. 03, 1933: 1. 69". These figures show that grain production did go up, from this we can infer that the collective farms must have been a success in terms of the amount of production.

However, this source also shows that the amount of animals on collective farms was decreasing throughout the years: " Cattle (million head) 1928: 70. 5, 1935: 49. 3, Sheep and goats (million head) 1928: 16. 7, 1935: 61. 1". We can infer from this that even though grain production was going up, the peasants were losing a vast amount of cattle, and therefore the impact of farms was not only the success of production but also the affect it had on the peasants. We have to take these numbers as being true as they are statistics from the state and there are not others to compare with.

However, we have to be aware that farmers were under a lot of pressure to meet their targets and they may have changed their figures to look better to keep up with targets and not to get into trouble, therefore this decreases the weight of the source and implies that the impact of collective farms were not such a success. However, Feigin disagrees with the success of collective farms: " Their attitude is utterly bad in light of the famine and the fact they are losing their last cows through contracting....

<https://assignbuster.com/what-in-your-view-is-the-short-term-impact-of-collectivisation-on-soviet-society/>

I have not seen such an attitude as is now found in the villages due to famine and the loss of the last cows and sheep, in a long time. " We can infer from this that the collective farms may have been a success in terms of grain production and exports but the main impact on the farms was the negative fact it had on the peasants. The statistics agrees with Feigin in showing how many animals were lost on the farms and the massive decrease in meat over the years. The farms clearly were not successful to the peasants, who were de-motivated, felt very hostile and had no cattle.

This source has a lot of weight as it is an eyewitness account and you would have expected Feigin to lie and make the situation better than it was so he would not annoy Sergo, who was a leading communist. Because he did not do this, and ran the risk of getting into trouble the situation on the farms and peasants living conditions must have been terrible. Therefore, the overall impact of the successful creation of collective farms was significant as it had a massive scope, affecting many.

Therefore, the three impacts of collectivisation discussed all had significant impact on soviet society. The elimination of the kulaks had wide scope affect as even poor peasants were affected due to officials not listening to instructions, however, some people agreed with this policy and even though many were involved, it did not have such a significant impact in comparison with the famine. It is difficult to decipher which impact between the famine and the successful creation of the collective farms is a greater impact, due to the fact that the collective farms caused the famine.

However, I believe that even though the collective farms had a significant impact they had a smaller scope and a less rapid pace, and the famine had a

<https://assignbuster.com/what-in-your-view-is-the-short-term-impact-of-collectivisation-on-soviet-society/>

more significant impact as many more were affected and in a more horrific way than the collective farms. The total estimate of the famine victims Soviet-wide is given as 6-7 million or 6-8 million, and therefore I believe that the famine was the short-term impact of collectivisation on soviet society at the time.