

Cheswick, Barry R.

2000 "Are immigrants self selected: An economic analysis," In: *Migration Theory: Talking across Disciplines*, Caroline B. Brettell and James F. Hollifield, eds., New York: Routledge.

Kolstø, Pål

1998 "Anticipating demographic superiority: Kazakh thinking on integration and nation building", *Europe-Asia Studies*, 50(1) 51-69.

Massey, Doug S.

1996 "The age of extremes: Concentrated affluence and poverty in the 21st century," *Demography*, 33(4) 395-412.

1998 *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Morozova, G. F.

1993 "Vliianie migratsii na formirovanie rynka truda [The impact of migration on the formation of the labor market]," *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*, 1993(5) 12-6.

Shevtsova, Lilia.

1992 "Post-Soviet emigration today and tomorrow", *International Migration Review*, 26(2) 241-257.

Field Report on Oral and Archival Histories of Collectivization in Uzbekistan

Russell Zanca, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois, USA, rzanca@neiu.edu

Introduction

In Spring of 2002 I worked in Tashkent and Nurota (Navoi Province), Uzbekistan, on the second year of what will be a four to five year oral and archival history project on the nature of Stalinist collectivization as experienced by peasants. My principal colleague, Dr. Marianne Kamp (University of Wyoming), and I will resume research starting February, 2003. To our satisfaction, this year we added members from Uzbekistan's Young Scholars Organization (*Yosh Olimalar Jamgharmasi*—YO) to our team, including Drs. Elyor Karimov and Komil Kalonov. Kalonov worked with me in interviewing 14 elders of the semidesert and mountainous district of Nurota. We spent eight days traveling throughout this district long famed for pastoralism and Qaraköl sheep production, gaining a sense of what the impact of collectivized agriculture and pastoralism meant to the lives of the interviewees and what kinds of key events or social processes they seemed able to recall. Working with contacts and local residents, we visited the elders in their homes and asked permission to discuss the topics covered by our questionnaire.

Kamp and I developed the idea to gather oral histories back in 1999-2000, and we began proposing the project to funders in late 2000. Kamp had worked in Namangan earlier, doing research that

involved interviewing elders, and I had carried out my own research on villages in Namangan. Although we were aware of the multitude of Soviet sources on collectivization in Uzbekistan and have since deepened our knowledge of this literature, we thought it was important to examine collectivization in Central Asia, as Western scholars have already been doing in Russia and Ukraine. We knew from the outset that we would have an enormous amount of work to do with the archival materials alone, but we also vetted the idea of finding witnesses, hoping that if we could find those who were still mentally competent we then would be able to present eyewitness evidence that had never been recorded or memorialized.

Methods and Strategies

The process of conducting this research has been marked by challenges, not just in the research process, but from our colleagues, both in the U.S. and in Uzbekistan. We knew that if we were to do this research thoroughly, we would need at least three years of fieldwork and archival collection, and we also knew that once we began to interview we would have to return to Uzbekistan often because our aged informants might not live much longer. Furthermore, we would need to carry out the research over this length of time because we would

want to work in different areas that reflect the country's ethnolinguistic and economic differences (i.e., cotton farming as opposed to sheep pastoralism). This is why we situated ourselves in the Ferghana valley in 2001 and in Navoi in 2002. We plan to visit Khorezm and Karakalpakistan this spring, and to conduct interviews in 2004 in at least two other areas of Uzbekistan. In 2002 I received grants from both IREX and my home institution, Northeastern Illinois University, obtaining a short-term grant in the case of the former and what's known as a core research grant in the latter. Happily, Kamp and I were awarded a two-year research grant last August by NCEEER (National Council for Eurasian and East European Research) to complete the research portion of the project.

We understood from colleagues who were critical of our approach that this project would not be without its problems, even if we could find witnesses to the period. The two prominent warnings were: 1) people would no longer be cognitively competent and 2) they might not feel at ease speaking to Americans about this eventful period in their lives. In spite of these concerns our actual fieldwork has gone rather smoothly thanks to the assistance of local colleagues and others. For example, in Nurota we were fortunate to have the services of a driver who, while neither an academic nor an intellectual, demonstrated an intuitive grasp of our mission. This made him a fine asset in explaining the nature of our aims to local officials and ordinary folk. The importance of our local contacts cannot be emphasized enough, for these are the people who know where potential interviewees are, know interviewees' particular characters, unique personal histories, etc., and they are able to work as terrific facilitators, enabling informants to understand why we want to interview them and smoothing out linguistic difficulties.

Having undertaken fieldwork in Uzbekistan over the course of ten years, I can say that ordinary people seem to be slightly but steadily freer in the way they interact with and speak to Americans, even as local and provincial authorities help to bolster the state's authoritarian outlook on life that brooks little dissent and tolerates only the barest of openness. Also, scholarship and intellectual life continue to be vibrant in Uzbekistan despite bossy ideological proclamations from on high.

Shortcomings and Misgivings

While our Western colleagues have challenged our methods on pragmatic terms, our Uzbekistani colleagues have confronted us with substantial philosophical issues. Kalonov and I discussed whether or not the people we interviewed and worked with felt that the ideas and questions of the project were worthwhile. However, several people suggested that such interviews were necessary so that contemporary young people and coming generations would have a better understanding of what had happened to their forebears. Back in Tashkent, colleagues from YO and I conducted "scientific discussion" sessions both at YO headquarters and at the History Institute to investigate responses to our findings and ideas.

These discussions were animated and very useful to me because I gained an understanding that I had really never had from nearly a decade's worth of previous social science work in Central Asia. Now my work and involvement with these scholars was a part of other people's sense of their own past, and the reconstruction of collectivization history must take into account many facets of local life that were tinged by far more gray than black and white distinctions. Simply put, this second round of collectivization research reinforced my commitment to a methodology that embraces cross-cultural collegiality. At the History Institute in Tashkent, for example, senior scholars cautioned us to be careful about the very nature of our questions because one might run the risk of predisposing informants to portray collectivization positively. One person asked if I myself didn't have a neo-communist position in claiming that most of the interviewees looked upon the vicissitudes of collectivization positively. I was more than a little surprised by this allegation, but I calmly explained that in no way was I conducting interviews mainly to provide evidence for one ideological persuasion or another. In general I take the challenges very seriously, and I really think they will serve our writing well.

I have spent a long time wondering if this project really has value based solely on the practice of interviewing and talking to witnesses to collectivization. The intrinsic worthiness of dragging these people's memories back from buried vaults of consciousness in their senescence doesn't always seem so transparent to me. The value of the interviews has to be tempered by both a cross-disciplinary theoretical perspective and a comparative effort that examines other works

framing social histories of collectivization. We are always rethinking and reassessing the kinds of questions that we ask, although we think it is nearly impossible to anticipate all the ways biases may be built into questions or how a particular question is going to be received.¹

We know that however many interviews we manage to record and however many patterns in thought about the period we are able to discern, we will still be inscribing a fragment of meaning in the entire appraisal of collectivization in Uzbekistan. Operating from a dictum that all truths and histories are partial, and that the relating of the past changes as time passes, I feel that I am left needing to reiterate the overall usefulness or good of the work. The point is that ethnographic methods not only give us the opportunity to try to represent those who have never had a chance to recount their recollections, but also help us see and feel what conditions of existence may have been like based on the settings we enter today. Surroundings, terrain, resources, and living conditions at present provide a window to the past, since our informants physically demonstrate how the present is like and unlike the past. This knowledge cannot be gained from the primary and secondary sources now available. Thus, weaknesses of our oral history project notwithstanding, I am sure that the greatest benefit of our research will have little to do with showing that a representative sample of collectivization survivors in Uzbekistan, for example, favored or disavowed Stalinist collectivization. Rather, it will be that we acted upon the realization that a major source of information on the collectivization period had been largely neglected and should to be tapped to make collectivization history more multifaceted and complete.

Ultimate Goals

In addition to the obvious business of churning out articles, we are hoping to write a pathbreaking

¹ As an example, one scholar whom I greatly admire and respect suggested that our question concerning the arrival of European-style shoes and clothing may be leading informants to think that such things were necessarily good and progressive, and therefore the informants themselves were being led to see such aspects of collectivization (as a new way of life) as positive. Naturally, he may be on to something; however, we have had informants tell us point blank what they liked and did not like. One elder said, "I never could stand socks and I don't wear them to this day." He then removed a worn overshoe to show us his bare foot.

book. Equally important to the project will be success in forging collegiality that will set a new and exciting tone for cross-national research between Americans and Uzbeks. We think that we are on that path right now, and that we have the support and commitment to research from those whose guidance we seek as they benefit from our ability to entertain new approaches to anthropology and history and provide funding to continue Uzbekistan's tradition of scholarship. I am speaking here precisely about the History Institute and YO.

Collectivization is a branch of Uzbekistani historical scholarship now up for major revision as its Soviet manifestation is re-examined. While there have been zealous attempts to paint the Soviet period with a broad black brush, the last few years have seen some serious and important reevaluations of collectivization. Here I would include recent essays by Alimova and Golovanov (2000), Germanov (2000), and Karimov, ed. (2001). While such essays are not completely about collectivization, they all deal with it in novel and nuanced ways that we would not have seen even as recently as ten years ago. It is in this new investigative and broad-minded spirit that we hope to make a substantial contribution to collectivization that benefits people in Uzbekistan as much as it will benefit Western scholarship.

References

- Alimova, D. A. and Golovanov, A. A.
2000 *Özbekiston mustabid sovet tüzimi davrida: siësii va mafkuravii taziiq oqibatları.* Tashkent: Özbekiston.
- Germanov, V. A.
2000 *Istoriia Turkestana v usloviakh politicheskogo terrora 20-30-kh godov.* Tashkent: Uzbekiston.
- Karimov, Naim, ed.
2001 *Khalq khotirasi oldida bosh egamiz.* Tashkent: Sharq.