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Organization of Social Assistance to Indigenous Minorities in the Turukhansk Region in 1920–1925

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Abstract: The authors consider the issues of involvement of native minorities of the Russian North in the Soviet construction in the first half of the 1920s. The problem is illustrated through the example of Turukhansk region (until 1930 it united the peoples that populated the North of Yeniseysk Governorate). The source base includes the documents from the fund of the State Archive of Krasnoyarsk Territory. It is noted that during the early Soviet period the national policy towards the indigenous peoples of the North was characterized by flexibility and search for balance between the interests of the government and the northern peoples. This policy was mostly founded on socio-economical tasks, rather than political ones. At this stage the government assumed the administration management, provision of economic aid to the native minorities of the North, preservation of the life-sustaining system for using natural resources, all that determined their traditional lifestyle. There began the creation of institutions of self-government (clan councils), trade services, medical care and school education. It was the Northern instructors that acted as conductors of Soviet policy among indigenous peoples. It was intended, on the one hand, to streamline the activities of Soviet institutions among the indigenous peoples of the North, and on the other hand, to help the latter adapt to the new socio-economic conditions. The authors determine the specifics and role of Northern inspectors (from 1924 – instructors in foreign affairs) through the nature of interaction between state, local administrative and clan institutions in the process of developing and implementing support for indigenous peoples of the Yenisey North; their general catastrophic situation could entail irreversible processes of the extinction of these peoples.

Keywords: Yeniseyskaya Province, indigenous people of the North, revolutionary committee, regional executive committee, sovietization, nomadic way of life, cooperation

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Организация социальной помощи коренным малочисленным народам в Туруханском крае в 1920–1925 гг.

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Аннотация: Рассматривается проблема вовлечения коренных малочисленных народов Севера в советское строительство в первой половине 1920-х гг. на примере Туруханского края (до 1930 г. он объединял население, проживавшее на севере Енисейской губернии). Основу источниковой базы составили документы из фондов Государственного архива Красноярского края. Отмечается, что на раннем советском этапе национальная политика в отношении автохтонных народов Севера отличалась гибкостью и поиском баланса интересов государства и северных народностей, так как в основу были положены не политические, а социально-экономические задачи. На этом этапе государство взяло на себя административное управление, оказание экономической помощи малочисленным северным народам, заботу о сохранении жизнеобеспечивающей системы пользования природными ресурсами, всего того, что определяет традиционный уклад их жизни. Началось создание органов самоуправления (родовых советов), торгового, медицинского обслуживания и школьного образования. Проводниками советской политики среди коренных малочисленных народов выступили северные инструкторы. Этот институт был призван, с одной стороны, упорядочить практику деятельности советских учреждений среди коренных малочисленных народов Севера, а с другой – помочь последним адаптироваться к новым социально-экономическим условиям. Авторы определяют специфику и роль северных инспекторов (с 1924 г. – инструкторов по инородческим делам) через характер взаимодействия государственных, местных административных и родовых институтов в процессе выработки и реализации поддержки коренных малочисленных народов енисейского Севера, общее катастрофическое положение которых могло повлечь за собой необратимые процессы вымирания этих народностей.

Ключевые слова: Енисейская губерния, автохтонные народы Севера, революционный комитет, краевой исполнительный комитет, советизация, кочевой образ жизни, кооперация

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Introduction

Relevance. In their article, the authors consider the ways and methods that were attempted in order to solve the social problems of indigenous minorities of the north on the territory of the Turukhansk region¹ during the early Soviet period, an analysis which

¹ Turukhansk region is a historico-geographical area in Eastern Siberia covering in the XIX – early XX century a significant northern part of the Yenisei province; in 1924 it was granted the status of a uyezd of the Yenisei province. In 1925, the uyezd was abolished, and its territory became part of the Krasnoyarsk district. In December 1930, in the north of the former Turukhansk region there was formed the Taimyr (Dolgano-Nenets) national district, and in the west – the Evenki national district. The rest of it became part of the Turukhansk region of the East Siberian Territory (since 1934 – Krasnoyarsk Territory). See: A.A. Nikolaev, “Turukhanskii krai [Turukhansk region],” in vol. 3 of *Istoricheskaja entsiklopediia Sibiri* [Historical Encyclopedia of Siberia], 321 (Novosibirsk: Historical Heritage of Siberia Publ., 2009).

requires the reconstruction of events in accordance with the updated source base to present a specific historical picture of the past. The study of the early Soviet experience of interaction between the authorities and the northern autochthons is still relevant today, as it was during this period that the groundwork was laid for the relationship between the government agencies under Soviet Union and the peoples of the north. The recognition of the nation's living area as an objective element of the system of its core values, which still has a strong impact on the development of interethnic relations in present-day Russia. During the period under study, the Bolshevik Party leadership had no practical program of action on solving national-territorial problems; there were discussions on these issues until the late 1920s. After the end of the Civil War, Sovietization of the north minorities was declared a priority, but as the recent studies show, it was solved in the targeted regions differently.

Elaboration of the problem. The issue of involving the peoples of the northern outskirts in Soviet construction in the first half of the 1920s is not a new one. This issue was studied in the USSR in a positive light, as it was in accordance with the official ideology of the time and had a certain bias. The works of that time inform the reader of the difficulties of developing self-government of the northern minorities of Siberia and the Far East in the 1920s², the stages of state building, and the role of party bodies in Sovietization of indigenous peoples³.

The works of the 1990s on Soviet transformations in the national outskirts, the nature and forms of the national-state reforms confirm the artificial nature of the councils for the indigenous population; they explain such features of their formation as the long-term (until the end of the 1920s) non-involvement of the national masses in this process⁴.

In the XXI century, interest in nation-state building in the USSR increased and methodological approaches changed. There appeared comprehensive works devoted to Sovietization of the north. Many of works in this field were written by American researchers. As a result, Yu.P. Slezkine's⁵ monograph covers the history of the relationship between the Russians and hunters and gatherers of the Arctic from the XVI century until the mid-1980s. The analysis of state policy towards northern ethnic groups at different historical stages and in the long term allowed the author to identify and comprehend the key principles (progress, development, evolution) that underlie the perception of "small peoples" by the Russians. Of particular attention is Slezkine's analysis to the era of the 1920–1930s – it is difficult to separate the comprehension and reformation of the life of "small peoples" against the backdrop of the processes of indigenization, Sovietization and Stalin's "Great Breakthrough."

As Francine Hirsch notes, starting from the First Russian Revolution, the national issue became the most important one in the propaganda of all political parties. After 1917, the Bolsheviks had no common view of how to reorganize the vast areas of the Russian

² V.S. Zibarev, *Sovetskoe stroitel'stvo i malye narody Severa* [Soviet construction among the small peoples of the North] (Tomsk: TGU Publ., 1968).

³ I.P. Kleshchenok, *Narody Severa i leninskaia natsional'naia politika v deistvii* [The Peoples of the North and Lenin's National Policy in action] (Moscow: Vysshaya shkola Publ., 1961); V.I. Yurtaeva, "Sovetizatsiia malykh narodov Eniseiskogo Severa [Sovietization of the small peoples of the Yenisei North (1920–1923)]," *Sibir' v period stroitel'stva sotsializma i kommunizma*, no. 6 (1966): 16–23; V.I. Uvachan, *Put' narodov Severa k sotsializmu. Opyt sotsialisticheskogo stroitel'stva na Eniseiskom Severe (Istoricheskii ocherk)* [The path of the peoples of the North to socialism. The experience of socialist construction in the Yenisei North (Historical essay)] (Moscow: Mysl Publ., 1971) etc.

⁴ D.A. Amanzholova, "Istoriografiia izucheniia natsional'noi politiki [Historiography of the study of national politics]," in *Mezhdru kanunami. Istoricheskie issledovaniia v Rossii za poslednie 25 let*, 305–327 (Moscow: AIRO-XXI Publ., 2013).

⁵ Yu.P. Slezkin, *Arkticheskie zerkala i malye narody Severa* [Arctic mirrors and small peoples of the North] (Moscow: New Literary Review Publ., 2008).

Empire; a struggle started between the ethnographic and economic paradigms. The supporters of the ethnographic principle believed that the administrative-territorial structure should be along ethnographic boundaries. The followers of the economic approach supposed that in the huge country the principle of “economic expediency” was the most effective one, that is, the administrative-territorial structure of the country should be based on a scientific assessment of the productive forces⁶. F. Hirsch is convinced that until the mid-1920s the influence of imperial ethnographers on the leaders of the young Soviet state was the predominant viewpoint.

The object of the research of N.V. Ssorin-Chaikov was the transformation of the traditional norms and values of the small peoples of the north into a study of which anthropological methodology was applied⁷.

The contribution to the study of Sovietization of the indigenous peoples of Evenkiya in the 1920–1930s was made by V.V. Bibikova⁸. Relying on the archives and periodicals, the author showed not only the inconsistency of the policies pursued, but also the non-standard decisions made by local leaders on Sovietization of the indigenous peoples of Evenkiya; she restructured the stages of the Soviet construction in the region, starting from 1920, when Soviet rule was restored after the end of the Civil War up to the formation of the Evenki Autonomous District. Focusing on the three elements of Soviet national policy among indigenous peoples – the institutional level, personnel policy and cultural and linguistic (to a lesser extent), V.V. Bibikova notes that the result of this policy was the establishment of national autonomies, new national identities with their writing, etc. Her other work⁹ provides an analysis of the socio-economic problems in the development of Evenkiya. Structuring the material according to the sectoral principle made it possible, thanks to the problem-chronological approach, to gain complete understanding of the development of traditional crafts, trade, cooperation, and the social sphere in Evenkiya in the 1920–1930s.

Broader historiography of the period also analyzes the changes in relations with the indigenous peoples of the north throughout the 1920–1970s, policies in the field of agriculture, education, local self-government, and in general, shows that the transition of the indigenous population of the north to a sedentary lifestyle leads to the decline of traditional areas of employment¹⁰.

The work of N.N. Pimenova illustrates that the stage of the formation and implementation of national policy towards indigenous peoples in the Evenki National Autonomous District (the 1920–1970s), an event which contributed to the fact that these ethnic groups were singled out in a special category and became the object of systemic social protection and state policy. At the same time, the author is convinced that the transition from the policy of indigenization to that of Sovietization of indigenous small peoples led to their partial assimilation (Ket people)¹¹.

⁶ F. Hirsch, *Imperia natsii. Etnograficheskoe znanie i formirovanie Sovetskogo Soiuzu* [Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Formation of the Soviet Union] (Moscow: New Literary Review Publ., 2022).

⁷ N.V. Ssorin-Chaikov, “From the invention of tradition to the ethnography of the state: Podkamennaya Tunguska, 1920s,” *The Journal of Social Policy* 9, no. 1 (2011): 7–44.

⁸ V.V. Bibikova, *Stanovlenie gosudarstvennosti v Evenkii v 20–30-kh gg. XX v.* [The formation of statehood in Evenkia in the 20–30s g XX v.] (Krasnoyarsk: Znak Publ., 2019).

⁹ V.V. Bibikova, *Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe razvitiye Evenkii v 20–30-kh gg. XX v.* [Socio-economic development of Evenkia in the 20–30s XX v.] (Krasnoyarsk: Sibirskii promysel Publ., 2020).

¹⁰ Yu.N. Avdeeva, K.A. Degtyarenko, et al., “The principles of the Soviet national policy of 1920–1970 in relation to the indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North, Siberia and the Far East, compactly living on the territory of the Evenki National (Autonomous) District,” *Northern Archives and Expeditions*, no. 5 (2021): 8–25, <https://doi.org/10.31806/2542-1158-2021-5-3-77-88>

¹¹ N.N. Pimenova, “Modeling of the national policy of the USSR in relation to the indigenous small-numbered peoples of the North living in 1920–1970 in the Evenki National (autonomous since 1977) district,” *Northern Archives and Expeditions*, no. 5 (2021): 64–76, <https://doi.org/10.31806/2542-1158-2021-5-3-64-76>

At the same time, the issues of developing a program of economic, social and organizational measures in relation to each northern region, especially at the stage of the formation of Soviet national policy remain poorly studied.

The purpose of the study is to identify the role of Soviet-employed northern instructors in establishing social assistance to indigenous peoples living in the Turukhansk region. Interrelated tasks are set: 1) to determine the specifics of the institution of northern inspectors (from 1924 – instructors in the affairs of non-Russian peoples) established in the Turukhansk region; 2) to identify the interaction of state, local administrative bodies and indigenous peoples of the Yenisei northern area during the period under study.

The source base of the study includes documents and materials of various types: legislative, record-keeping, statistical, etc. Rich factual material was found in the state archive of the Krasnoyarsk region. The historical and historiographical sources used, their volume and contents made it possible to consider the stated problem, and the methodology of local history allows understanding the multidimensionality of the social processes of the initial Soviet period in the Turukhansk region and its specific features as the manifestation of local circumstances, contradictions, and conflicts. The authors proceed from the fact that the idea of “progressive evolution of society” became the fundamental doctrine of the party and Soviet bodies in relation to the indigenous peoples of the north until the mid-XX century.

Socio-economic situation of “small peoples” in the Turukhansk region and early attempts to improve it

The peculiarity of the population structure of the extremely sparsely populated and developed Turukhansk region (covering 72% of the area of the Yenisei province) was that the indigenous population as of 1925 amounted to more than 62%¹² of the local population, and was represented by such peoples of the north as the Tungus, Dolgans, Yakuts, Samoyeds and others; they preserved the traditional life support system in the form of commercial farming (reindeer husbandry, hunting, fishing). Concerning the socio-economic situation of the region by the early 1920s, one should keep in mind that the picture of the pre-revolutionary economy was distorted and deformed by the three-year period of repeated changes of power, as well as the Civil War. The commercial products of a part of the population became less and less competitive, whereas the demand for certain types of resources (in particular, this included all fur and raw materials) increased due to the demand of foreign markets. Local merchants (speculators) taking advantage of the poor commodity supply of nomadic peoples regularly exchanged a pood of flour for an Arctic fox; a reindeer was bought for five pounds of rusks; a bar of tile tea was sold for 30 rubles¹³. At that time, it was being written in the press that the fishing wealth of the region was not fully exploited; the fur trade was poorly planned, reindeer husbandry was in a catastrophic situation, and that the very existence of the “primitive masters of the tundra” was in danger¹⁴. The problem of the local population’s survival was aggravated by the almost complete disruption of the system of life-supporting mechanisms of supplying bread and gunpowder, which, in turn, were being regularly exchanged for furs.

The Civil War and the economic crisis suspended the work of the Yenisei Provincial Union of Cooperatives (Yengubsoyuz) which relied on the so-called trading posts –

¹² Data of: “Pervyi Sibirskii oblastnoi s"ezd Sovetov. Otchet Sibirskogo revkoma (konets doklada tov. M.M. Lashevicha) [The first Siberian Regional Congress of Soviets. Report of the Siberian Revolutionary Committee (end of the report of Comrade M.M. Lashevich)],” in *Sovetskaia Sibir*, December 8, 1925, p. 9.

¹³ “Sotrudnichestvo v Turukhanskom rayone [Cooperation in the Turukhansk region],” *Kooperativnoe delo*, no. 9 (1919): 40.

¹⁴ “Tundra sovetuyut [Tundra is being sovietised],” *Sovetskaia Sibir*, November 28, 1924, p. 6; “Pervyi Sibirskii oblastnoi s"ezd Sovetov,” 9.

trading, supply and procurement points in remote fishing areas through which the population was supplied, competing in this area with private traders¹⁵. The situation objectively required the development of a strategy and program of economic and organizational measures.

After the overthrow of the Supreme Ruler, Admiral A.V. Kolchak in the Yenisei province, all power in the Turukhansk region was concentrated in the Turukhansk Revolutionary Committee created on February 7, 1920. The management department headed by P.V. Silin became the body for implementing local and central decisions of the Soviet government¹⁶. The fragmentary information received by the Revolutionary Committee indicated that a significant part of small peoples were in poverty, some were on the verge of extinction; the main sectors of the economy (reindeer husbandry, fur farming and fishing) were ruined. Thus, in 1914–1920 the reindeer population the Tungus of the Vivi trading post decreased by 20 times, of Lake Agata – by 25 times. In 1918–1920 the production of squirrel skins in the Turukhansk region decreased from 200 to 50 thousand¹⁷. It was not possible to develop a trading cooperative network due to the lack of appropriate personnel. The Revolutionary Committee considered it paramount to inventory all products in the region; to this end there was created an accounting and standardizing commission¹⁸. It was necessary to establish contacts with nomadic peoples in order to provide them with targeted assistance, and pay special attention to the organization of hunting and fishing as the main sources of livelihood for the “native working and Russian population.”¹⁹ A significant problem was that the majority of the indigenous peoples of the north did not speak Russian, and officials had to communicate with them in regards to all situations of social significance through shamans and clan princes.

Providing the nomadic population with food was declared the most important task that needed to be solved immediately. In 1920, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR sent bread to the Turukhansk region worth 477 thousand rubles free of charge, and in 1921 – another 200 thousand poods of bread²⁰. In 1921–1922 the Engubsoyuz, which had come under the control of the new government, conducted the campaign to supply the nomadic population with the goods they needed through trading posts opened instead of the grain stores²¹, and the Turukhansk regional executive committee established in 1922 to replace the Revolutionary Committee, loaned gratuitously 3 thousand poods of flour to reindeer-less nomads through state food authorities²². But due to a number of conditions, the assistance was available not to everyone. The reindeer-less natives of distant areas were unable to get to the trading posts due to the lack of means of transportation; some indigenous peoples took a wait-and-see attitude due to their inherent suspicion and distrust of the new authorities. It often happened that Soviet activists initiated the requisition of reindeer from the northern peoples, entrusted them with various duties which caused fear of the indigenous population; it often resulted in a kind of protest – flight to the tundra. Most natives neither understood nor accepted the innovations; moreover, they were intimidated by the elders and princes who did not want Sovietization

¹⁵ O.B. Stepanova, “Red Selkups: revolutionary transformations among the population of the Taz and Turukhan,” *Ural Historical Journal*, no. 1 (2018): 91–99, [https://doi.org/10.30759/1728-9718-2018-1\(58\)-91-99](https://doi.org/10.30759/1728-9718-2018-1(58)-91-99)

¹⁶ Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Krasnoïarskogo kraia [State Archive of the Krasnoyarsk Territory] (henceforth – GAKK), f. P-1303, op. 1, d. 13a, l. 13.

¹⁷ GAKK, f. 1845, op. 1, d. 31, l. 53.

¹⁸ V.I. Yurtaeva, “Sovetizatsiia malykh narodov, 17.

¹⁹ GAKK, f. P-1303, op. 1, d. 38, l. 18.

²⁰ V.I. Uvachan, *Put' narodov Severa*, 115.

²¹ O.B. Stepanova, “Red Selkups,” 93.

²² V.I. Uvachan, *Put' narodov Severa*, 122.

to reach the polar regions of the Turukhansk region for as long as possible. Therefore, despite the difficult financial situation, they did not come to the trading posts from the tundra until 1922²³.

Institution of northern instructors

The improvement of the lives of small peoples, as well as their involvement in the social transformations were entrusted to the Polar subdivision for the management and protection of aboriginal tribes of the north (hereinafter referred to as the Polar subdivision) established in March 1922 under the department of national minorities of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities of the RSFSR. As A.A. Aseev writes, the effective solution of a wide range of tasks entrusted to the Polar subdivision (from assisting in the supply of basic necessities and regulation of the use of hunting grounds and pastures for reindeer to improving cultural and educational work and health care) was hampered by a poor material base and a shortage of qualified personnel on the ground²⁴.

The local authorities tried to independently develop mechanisms for involving the population in social transformations. Thus, at the meeting of the administrative-territorial commission of the Yenisei Provincial Executive Committee held on November 20–23, 1922, there was a discussion on the issue of introducing the institution of northern inspectors in order to ensure the free development of the natives of the Turukhansk region and to protect them from capitalist exploitation. Already in January 1923, the Turukhansky region was divided into four inspection districts: Tazovsky, Ilimpiysky, Yuzhny and Zatudrinsky; in each of them there was appointed one northern inspector (in 1924 they were renamed instructors in the affairs of non-Russian peoples)²⁵.

In March 1923, the administrative commission under the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee recommended the “Regulations on the Northern Inspectors of the Turukhansk Territory” to the Siberian Revolutionary Committee (Sibrevkom), Far Eastern Revolutionary Committee (Dalrevkom), and the Central Executive Committee of the Yakut Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in order to further develop the foundations of Sovietization of indigenous peoples due to the common conditions in the territories of these authorities²⁶.

Candidates for the position of northern inspectors were selected by the Turukhansk regional committee and approved by the Turukhansk executive committee. It was required that candidates should know the Constitution of the RSFSR, have knowledge on ethnography, anthropology, material and spiritual culture of native people²⁷, since they were to carry out explanatory work among the indigenous population about the essence of Soviet rule, to organize annual elections to clan councils on the principles established by Soviet legislation, and to objectively report to the regional committee on the state of affairs in the tundra in order to make management decisions. Each inspector received an identification document from the regional committee which confirmed his powers and obliged all residents of the tundra to assist him²⁸.

²³ V.I. Uvachan, *Put' narodov Severa*, 115; A.S. Chursina, “Socio-economic conditions of life of the indigenous peoples of the Turukhansk region in the first years of the establishment of Soviet power.” *Law and State: The Theory and Practice*, no. 11 (2020): 6–8, https://doi.org/10.47643/1815-1337_2020_11_6

²⁴ A.A. Aseev, “The place of the indigenous peoples of the Far East of the RSFSR in the policy of the state (1922–1941),” *Power and management in the East of Russia*, no. 1 (2007): 80–86.

²⁵ GAKK, f. P-1303, op. 1, d. 107, l. 2, 4.

²⁶ V.S. Zibarev, “Iz istorii razrabotki zakonodatel'nykh osnov samoupravleniya mal'nykh narodnostey Sibiri i Dal'nego Vostoka [From the history of the development of the legislative framework for the self-government of small peoples in Siberia and the Far East],” *Sibir' i Dal'nii Vostok v period vosstanovleniia narodnogo khozyaistva*, no. 1 (1963): 91–106.

²⁷ GAKK, f. P-1303, op. 1, d. 107, l. 2, 4.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, l. 6.

The Turukhansk executive committee was purposefully responsible in selecting candidates for the position of northern instructors. Only those were appointed who knew well the way of life of native people and were respected by them. On November 5, 1924, the Presidium of the uyezd executive committee (hereinafter referred to as the UEC) approved the regulation “On UEC instructors on the affairs of non-Russian peoples,” where, along with the list of requirements for a candidate for the position of an instructor, and they clearly stated that reporting deadlines and activities mandatory among northern ethnic groups was one of the requirements²⁹.

I.D. Potapov and E.S. Savelyev were appointed the first northern inspectors. Both of them had lived in the Turukhansk region for a long time, knew some of the languages of native people and their way of life. Potapov had completed a parochial school, he was a fisherman; Savelyev was a local employee, and had primary education³⁰. To solve the tasks set, they had to cover considerable distances on skis or in a boat in harsh climatic conditions, often without means of communication, as well as suffering material deprivation and regularly faced the ignorance of local population. Savelyev’s special merit was drawing a map of the route through the tundra for the expedition of the Siberian branch of the Red Cross. Traveling expeditions were the only opportunity to provide qualified medical care to native people that suffered from consumption and stomach diseases due to unsanitary conditions³¹. Veterinarian N.G. Rakhmanov noted that he often provided medical rather than veterinary care to nomads, but the Tungus refused to take medicine to treat scabies³².

While organizing elections to clan councils, northern instructors recorded native people’s orders addressed to the Turukhansk regional executive committee. Among the problems that required the interference of Soviet authorities there were as follows: lack of guns and gunpowder for specific clansmen³³, the provision of veterinary care to the Tazov clan when the reindeer were sick³⁴; the creation of a paramedical station in places of fairs of native people, and the organization of an expedition of doctors through the Red Cross³⁵. In 1924, the Ilimpiysk and Turukhansk clan councils asked the authorities to open a school, one different from the Russian one³⁶. According to the protocols of the Turukhansk executive committee, one can trace how these orders were carried out. The documents show that in 1924, paramedical stations were created in the Khatanga and Tazov tundras, and a school for 10 people had been opened³⁷.

Northern instructors paid great attention to the work of Soviet trade and cooperative organizations. Thus, in 1925, on the instructions of the regional executive committee, E.S. Savelyev thoroughly checked the trade organizations in the Turukhansk region – the patents, prices and range of goods. According to his report, there were practically no state trade organizations in the tundra, while the trade of alcohol was not eliminated (despite the ban by the regional executive committee), and the range of goods did not fully meet the needs of native people³⁸.

The instructors organized the inspection of how orders were executed, checked how mandatory regulations related to how fishing in the Turukhansk region were organized,

²⁹ GAKK, f. P-1303, op. 1, d. 107, l. 4, 16; d. 24, l. 37–37 ob.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, d. 114, l. 7, 18 ob.

³¹ *Ibid.*, d. 9, l. 48.

³² V.V. Bibikov, *Stanovlenie gosudarstvennosti v Evenkii*, 126.

³³ GAKK, f. P-1303, op. 1, d. 41, l. 4; d. 92, l. 22–22 ob.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, d. 86, l. 1 ob.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, f. P-1845, op. 1, d. 2, l. 34.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, f. P-1303, op. 1, d. 107, l. 4.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, f. P-1845, op. 1, d. 22, l. 2 ob.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, d. 31, l. 53.

fought against the predatory extermination of game animals and fish, and regulated the relations between native people and trade organizations³⁹.

Through the efforts of the Turukhansk executive committee, as well as trade and cooperative organizations and on the recommendations of northern instructors, during the period under study there were organized expeditions of commissioners to carry out supply, sales and acceptance operations directly among nomadic peoples through sales agents⁴⁰. However, due to the lack of necessary personnel as sales agents, in the early 1920s cooperatives were forced to invite former buyers who imposed older methods on Soviet trade and were engaged in cheating native people⁴¹.

The northern instructors paid great attention to the formation of reindeer funds in clan councils (analogous to the peasant committee of mutual assistance) which could be used to supply the poorest clansmen⁴². Through the efforts of northern instructors and the regional executive committee, by 1924 five native consumer societies were created in the Turukhansk region⁴³.

In 1924, the Turukhansk executive committee stated that the decline and collapse of the economies of the small peoples of the north had been stopped, the threat of extinction had been eliminated, the production of fish and furs had increased: 72 retail outlets were opened; in 1923 locals caught 667 thousand squirrels, 29 thousand arctic foxes, and 27,5 thousand poods of fish⁴⁴. This is the result of the dedicated work of all Soviet institutions. The northern instructors of the regional executive committee turned out to be the link between the indigenous peoples of the north and the new government. Through their efforts, relationships with native people were established and economic and social tensions in the Far North were reduced. However, due to the small number of northern instructors (there were only four of them), the nomadic lifestyle of native people and the vast territory, by 1925 it was not possible to establish relationships with all the indigenous peoples of the north. Subsequently, the northern instructors joined the staff of the Northern Committee, where some positive practices of their activities were further developed.

Conclusion

As the study shows, the national policy of the Soviet state towards the small peoples of the north at the early Soviet stage was characterized by flexibility and the search for a balance of interests, since it was based not on political objectives, but on the need for the socio-economic development of this sparsely populated, but resource-rich territory. The creation of the system of life-supporting supply mechanisms, the restoration and preservation of ethno-social environmental management presupposed the inclusion of representatives of small peoples in the process of social production while preserving their traditional crafts and way of life was the priority. Considering conditions of the state's large budget deficit, the crisis state of the economy of the country and the region, and a lack of personnel, it was the northern instructors that acted as conductors of Soviet policy among the native population. This institution was designed to streamline the practice of Soviet institutions among the northern ethnic groups.

Despite the small number, but thanks to the good awareness of the way of life of native people and some of their languages, the northern instructors were able to establish a constructive relationship, although not with all, but with many clans that lived in the

³⁹ V.I. Yurtaeva, *Sovetizatsiia malykh narodov*, 22.

⁴⁰ I.P. Kleshchenok, *Narody Severa*, 87.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁴² ГАКК, ф. Р-1303, оп. 1, д. 107, л. 4.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, ф. Р-1845, оп. 1, д. 31, л. 53 об.

⁴⁴ V.I. Uvachin, *Put' narodov Severa*, 122.

Turukhansk tundra. They did not manage to completely eliminate the trade in alcohol among the indigenous peoples of the north; the assistance of the reindeer funds was not always provided to the needy people, etc. At the same time, the institution of northern instructors made it possible to streamline and regulate the practice of interaction between the Soviet state and the autochthonous peoples of the north, and to create a mechanism for solving their pressing social problems. These selfless people objectively reported to the regional executive committee on the real state of affairs and the needs of the northern ethnic groups, which made it possible, given limited resources, to improve the financial situation of the autochthonous population of the Turukhansk region. The activities of the northern instructors contributed to increasing the population's trust in the institutions and commissioners of the Soviet government, since they showed concern for the northern ethnic groups and readiness to provide assistance in solving their pressing problems, which formed the basis of the fundamental doctrine of the Committee of the North established in 1924 in the region.

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