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The Theme of the Issue:

**FOOD SECURITY OF RUSSIA IN THE 18TH – EARLY 21ST CENTURY:
ACHIEVEMENTS AND CRISES**

FROM THE EDITORS

The issue offered to readers is devoted to the reconstruction of the historical experience of ensuring food security in Russia from the 18th to the early 21st century. Its preparation aimed to address the development of strategies and tactics for implementing state agrarian and food policy, the organization of supply to cities and remote regions, and the ethnocultural aspects of agricultural production and consumption. Particular attention is paid to researching the problems of agricultural development that led to food crises, a comprehensive analysis of the economic, political, social, and psycho-mental aspects of crisis development, identifying ways out of crises for the agrarian economy and the food sphere, and studying both general patterns and regional specifics of these processes.

The issue consists of five sections, organized according to a problem-chronological principle: “Provision of Food to the Population in the Russian Empire”, “Food Supply in Crisis Conditions”, “Problems of Agriculture and Food Security in the Soviet Period”, “Risks and Problems of the Present”, and “Ethnocultural Aspects of Agricultural Production and Consumption”.

The first section includes six materials examining, through case studies of several regions, the organization of food supply to the population in Russia during the 18th–19th centuries. Attention is drawn to the agricultural occupations of townspeople in the central part of the country, including the widespread practice of vegetable gardening in urban environments. For the first time in historiography, the issue of vegetable consumption by Moscow residents in the first half of the 19th century is examined in detail: the trade infrastructure and pricing dynamics are reconstructed, information about gardeners and traders is uncovered, and the role of external supplies is emphasized. An analysis of the realities of the eastern regions of the Russian Empire distant from the center, particularly Irkutsk Governorate in the late 18th – first half of the 19th century, demonstrates the critical importance of state measures to support agriculture and prevent famine among the local population. Logistics issues, inevitably linked to ensuring food security, are examined through the example of organizing food supply along the Yenisei River to the vast Turukhansk Krai in the first half of the 19th century – the period preceding the advent of steamships. The author concludes that the existing navigation system hindered the economic development of the region, and that technical backwardness was compounded by the unfavorable trade and industrial conditions of Yenisei Governorate as a whole. The contribution of the Decembrists to the development of Siberian agriculture is also addressed – a topic only fragmentarily covered in historiography. Emphasis is placed on characterizing the representation of the agricultural experiments of exiled participants in the Senate Square uprising in anniversary collections published in 1925, which laid the foundation for the further development of Decembrist studies. Finally, the institution of communal plowing (*obshchestvennaya zapashka*) by the Cossacks of Orenburg Governorate is examined from the perspective of ensuring food security, highlighting both the advantages and disadvantages of this system.

The next thematic block comprises three articles. The first of these interprets the threat of famine associated with unfavorable natural and climatic conditions for agriculture, and state patronage in the sphere of food supply, as factors shaping the lifestyle and behavioral models of the population in Russia's northern governorates. Another article reconstructs the mechanisms for organizing the supply of food and consumer goods to the population of Yakutsk Oblast under conditions of political instability in 1917–1919. The third article analyzes the problem of famine and food supply to a rear city during the Great Patriotic War. The primary sources used include memoirs, diaries, letters, and archival documents. Emphasis is placed on the functioning of the rationing system, workers' supply departments, subsidiary farms of enterprises and institutions, and the combination of rationed distribution with commercial and "black market" trade.

The third section includes eight articles. They cover the main trends in the implementation of the Soviet state's agri-food policy. The experience of the Machine and Tractor Stations (MTS) in the 1930s is analyzed – they were intended not only to solve the grain problem but also to become a key element in the modernization of the countryside. The factors and consequences of state policy on the administrative stimulation of collective farm labor in the late 1930s–1940s are identified. The role of the MTS political departments and NKVD bodies in organizing agricultural production during the Great Patriotic War is revealed. The main parameters and methods for solving the grain problem in the second half of the 1940s–1950s are investigated. The dynamics of livestock development in the second half of the 1960s are reconstructed. Two works included in the section are analytical publications of unique archival sources, reflecting data on significant losses during grain harvesting in the mid-1950s – a critical factor in the USSR's grain deficit – as well as the mechanism of political pressure from Moscow on the leadership of Kazakhstan on the eve of the virgin lands campaign.

In the two articles of the fourth section, the dynamics of the main agricultural sectors in Eastern Siberia and the Far East during the post-Soviet period are reconstructed, and the basic trends in changes in the population's consumption of staple foods and self-sufficiency in the studied regions are identified. It is stated that the consequence of the radical agrarian reform of the early 1990s was a deep agricultural crisis, which led to a sharp deterioration in food supply. The consequences of the crisis have not been fully overcome to this day. The supply of Eastern Siberia and the Far East remains critically dependent on food imports, including from China.

The fifth section presents scholarly works addressing the ethnocultural aspects of agricultural production and consumption. The opening article of the section characterizes the methods of ensuring food stability in Kazakh pastoral society in the late 19th – early 20th centuries. It demonstrates the social mechanisms for preventing famine that existed in nomadic society, which in Soviet historiography were interpreted as methods of feudal exploitation of poor clansmen by clan nobility. Another article, based on regional fiction, examines the transformation of the agricultural sector and everyday structures of the Far Eastern village under the influence of market reforms. A third article presents the results of a field survey of the current state of traditional livestock breeding in Altai Krai and the Altai Republic. The concluding work of the section provides information on the nutrition of contemporary Nenets people as one of the objects of their intangible ethnocultural heritage.

Overall, the materials included in this issue are distinguished by their diversity, both in terms of territorial and chronological scope and in the range of issues addressed. The formulation of the overall research task reflected in the issue's title – the study of ensuring food security at various stages of our country's historical development – has made it possible



to illuminate various related subjects from a new angle and to focus attention on details that had previously escaped the notice of specialists. The presented results not only underscore the importance of reconstructing historical experience in the field of food supply but also prompt serious reflection on Russia's current situation and prospects.

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