



From The History Of Socio-Economic Relations In Uzbek Rural Areas In The Years Of New Economic Policy (1925-1929)

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes socio-economic situation in Uzbek villages in the years following the establishment of the Uzbek SSR. In the context of the new economic policy, data on the general state of agricultural production, the social stratification of farms are summarized.

KEYWORDS

National-territorial delimitation, Uzbek SSR, New economic policy, farms, chorikor, mardikor, "kulak", landlord, rent relations, social strata.

INTRODUCTION

After national-territorial delimitation in Central Asia in 1924, 17071600 hectares of land passed from the former Turkestan ASSR to the Uzbek SSR. According to the 1926 census, population of the republic was 5,267,700, representing more than 65 nationalities and ethnic groups. Major population of the republic - Uzbeks - is

3.5 million people, who made up 66% of the country's population^[1].

As can be seen today, the formation of Uzbekistan SSR, despite the declarative nature of national statehood, opened up new opportunities for solving problems of

agriculture and socio-economic development of the countryside. At the same time, there was a new opportunity for creating an optimal program with fully considering national economic construction aspects and for renewal of the structure of Uzbek villages according to their social and economic characteristics.

At the time of the formation of the Uzbek SSR, agriculture was the main sector of the national economy of the republic, 85% of the population was employed in this sector in 1924-25. The share of the agricultural sector in the country's GDP was about 80 percent. Ninety percent of the republic's industrial enterprises specialized in the processing of agricultural raw materials[2]. Under these conditions, the implementation of agrarian reforms was also of priority socio-political significance for the newly formed republic. Changes in agriculture were interpreted as the need for a deep reorganization of the most important links in the social life of the republic in the context of the whole economy.

Specific changes were obtained in the 20s of the twentieth century socio-economic development of Uzbek villages. With the transition to a new economic policy (NEP), Uzbek farmers also began to breathe more freely. Replacement of food distribution with a food tax, restoring of some market mechanisms have allowed rural workers to sell their surplus production and increase the area under cotton and other crops. However, agricultural situation remained difficult. In 1924, agricultural land accounted for only 58.7% of the country's total arable land, while gross agricultural output was 47.2% of the 1913 level.[3].

Despite the land reform of Turkestan ASSR in 1921-1922, landlessness and low land tenure still remained in Uzbek villages. In 1925, 13 out of every 100 farms in Uzbek SSR were landless. Also, farms without land or owning up to 2 desiatins (*measure of land, 1 desiatin equals 2.7 acres*) of land accounted for 71.8%[4]. In 1926, in Zarafshan and Fergana oblasts (regions) 52% of farms had less than one desiatin of land, in Zarafshan oblast 54% of farms had up to 2 desiatins of land, and in Tashkent and Samarkand oblasts - 42%.[5].

Another priority in the agricultural development strategy was to continue agrarian reforms. Despite the land reform in 1921-1922, farmers basic public requirements were associated with the solution of land issues. Even in the mid-1920s, social structure of Uzbek villages had retained many of the features that existed in the country before the October Revolution. Dehkan farms were concentrated in small areas that had previously been irrigated, mainly in the Fergana Valley, Tashkent, Zarafshan and Khorezm oases. In agriculture, the backwardness of agro-techniques, irrigation systems, the constant lack of funds for the improvement of these systems did not allow the development of new lands. All of this has led to an sharpening of the land issue and escalation of tensions between the rich and poor strata of local farms. At the same time, this conflict was artificially intensified by the Bolshevik government.

Analysis of the social structure of dehkan farms shows that in the mid-1920s, more than 30% of irrigated arable land in Uzbek SSR was concentrated in the hands of "rich and kulak farms". In particular, in Fergana region, kulak

and small landowners owned 39% of arable land, and in Samarkand region - 32.7%, and the same situation could be seen in other regions.[\[6\]](#).

Wealthy peasants also accumulated agricultural equipment along with land. Landless peasants worked on the lands of wealthy farms, renting land and equipment under certain conditions. Economic relations between rich and poor farms were built on the basis of rent. Many laborers and carpenters rented land, working animals, and farming equipment. In Uzbekistan, *chorikorlik* - a long-term lease, was relatively common. Even farmers with lands of up to 2 *desiatins* would join this form of rent. Depending on the factors of land use, interests of different social strata of the rural population began to clash. This confrontation intensified as Uzbek villages became increasingly politicized[\[7\]](#).

Land and water reform in 1925 -1929 in Uzbekistan in all its aspects was aimed at restricting wealthy, self-sufficient farms and escalating of the class struggle. This approach has been characterized by inappropriate restrictions on the more affluent and market-oriented layers of the rural population as well as by taking excessive measures in the reform process. During the reform period, the affluent strata of villages shrank sharply, accounting for 1.4 percent of all farms.[\[8\]](#). They were mostly peasants too who owned 5-7 *desiatins* of land, but did not have sufficient manpower, working animals, and tools of labor.

During the reform, much injustice and violence against peasants was committed. A large part of the farms that were destroyed as

kulak and rich farms were middle-class, self-sufficient farmers. Most of them were given land by the Soviets themselves yesterday, and today they have been turned into kulaks. Most of those who held leadership positions in the Soviet and Communist Party offices were theoretically, ideologically and politically immature individuals, many of whom lacked economic and organizational skills. As a result, in the 1920s, company farms, which had brought huge profits to the state, were abolished and they were squeezed out by mass collectivization.

Abolition of wealthy farms made villages impoverished. Business activities have been stifled. On the other hand, the reform suspended lease relationships. Before the reform, 42.5% of farms in Uzbekistan rented land, but after the reform this figure was 5.7%.[\[9\]](#). However, situation with renting working animals and tools has increased dramatically. In Samarkand, Fergana and Tashkent oblasts, 7.1% of working animals were rented before the reform, while after the reform this figure was 15.1%.[\[10\]](#). This was because of the fact that during the land reform's process of land allocation to farmers, they were not adequately provided with working animals and tools. Moreover, during the reform period many farms slaughtered their working animals and livestock in protest of government policies.

From 1927 to 1928, transition to administrative-command methods in management became increasingly transparent. Abolition of the new economic policy in the late 1920s led to the collapse of the cooperative system. The Communist Party took the path of transferring control of

agriculture to the state. By this time, Stalin, who had become the sole dictator, had begun to pit the party against the petty commodity system. Here also, the main blow was focused on the middle class which was the basis of the agricultural sector. The party and the government began to squeeze the middle class farms in every way. Factors influencing development and improvement of farms, increasing the number of working animals and labor equipment also put farmers at risk of being considered kulak. In rural areas, mood of not developing the economy began to prevail.

Land and water reform had a significant effect on the number of middle-class people in Uzbek villages. Also, tax cuts during the NEP years allowed farmers to recover. From 1927 to 1929, the so-called "rich-kulak farms" in the republic grew from 3.4% to 5.4%.^[11]. Production has also increased slightly. However, grown agricultural products could not fully supply the whole country. Reduction in grain prices by 20-25 percent also aggravated the situation. Farmers were reluctant to sell grain at low prices set by the state. As a result, in 1927 there was a problem with the supply of bread to the townspeople. Card system resumed in the country. The crisis deepened. Then the state began to take urgent measures - to take grain forcibly from peasants.

Difficulties in grain production affected Uzbekistan too. Since the second half of the 1920s, grain production in the republic declined from year to year. If in 1914 grain was grown on 1437.36 thousand hectares of the territory of Uzbekistan, in 1927 grain was planted on 983.81 thousand hectares, which is

64.5% of the amount of 1914^[12]. The republic's grain needs were met by delivering it from central regions of Russia in exchange for cotton. Sharp decline in grain production across the country has ruined plans to bring grain to Uzbekistan. In 1928, grain harvesting was carried out in the regions of the republic that were specialized in grain-growing. Violence rate rose significantly. For example, grain production in Guzar district of Kashkadarya region could be understood as almost food distillery. There were cases when farmers were detained by police and forced to sell their grain. ^[13]. Such violence has exacerbated the socio-economic situation in Uzbekistan.

In general, from 1926 to 1927 in Uzbekistan had a sharp transit from the path of the new economic policy to the denial of its principles. Consequently, more advanced and effective economic innovations were abolished or modified to suit the policies of the period. In the result of land and water reform carried out in the republic under the guise of "struggle against rich landowners", the entrepreneurial, market-oriented social class in the Uzbek countryside had been abolished by 1929.

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