

# Social Changes In Uzbekistan Agriculture In The First Half Of The 20th Century (The Example Of Kashkadarya)

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**Abstract:** This article studies the social and economic transformations carried out by the central government in rural areas of Kashkadarya region. In the course of the research, the impact of the policy of kulakization and collectivization on the lives of the rural population, as well as the contradictions that arose between social strata, are scientifically analyzed. The article also highlights the relations that have arisen in the social consciousness of the population as a result of the reduction of individual peasant farms, large land ownership and the distribution of private land resources. The results of the research are aimed at analyzing from a deep scientific perspective how rural life is changing socio-economically and the complex impact of these processes on local lifestyles.

**Keywords:** village, population, social structure, individual peasant farms, large landowners, private land, crops, social transformations.

**Introduction.** The collectivization policy implemented in Uzbekistan radically changed the social structure of the countryside. Previously, such social classes as large and medium-sized landowners, emirs-officials, and Muslim clergy were distinguished by their status. Although they partially tried to maintain their position in the early years of Soviet power, they were sharply persecuted from the second half of the 1920s. As a result, these classes were deprived of their main source of income - private landownership, endowment assets, and state assistance. The initial Soviet authorities paid unrestricted attention to the peasants, artisans, and merchants who belonged to the small and medium-sized property class of the old social structures. During this period, the majority of the rural population in Uzbekistan operated in the form of individual peasant farms. As a result, due to the collapse of many individual peasant farms, the level of agriculture decreased by 30 percent at the end of 1920 and by 40 percent at the beginning of 1922 compared to 1918. This process led to a reduction in arable land and a significant deterioration in the living conditions of the population.

Individual peasant farms played an important role in the cooperative movement, since a large part of them joined cooperatives. These farms worked hard on their private land, tried to use resources efficiently, and aimed to maximize income. This worried the Soviet government, which was associated with the risk of individual peasant farms turning into a proprietary class. Therefore, the Soviet government implemented a policy of enlarging individual peasant farms.

**Review of relevant literature.** As in different regions of Uzbekistan, famine was a constant source of danger for the population in the Kashkadarya oasis. Many peasants, even if they received only 1-2 kilograms of grain from the threshing floor, were completely imprisoned; as a result, their children were forced to live in hunger. Cases of slaughter or sale of livestock due to famine in collective farms were widespread. For example, on October 3, 1936, the head of the district police Vorobyov reported to higher authorities that the residents of collective farms in the Behbudi district massively sold their collective farm work animals. It was on the "Guliston" collective farm in the Kochkak village soviet that 6 horses and 4 oxen were sold. Similar cases were also noted in the "Kizil dehqon" collective farms of Akhunboboyev, since the state's food supply regulation mechanisms were practically non-functional and insufficient attention was paid to the needs of the population.

In general, the social living conditions of the population deteriorated sharply. The agrotechnical measures promised by the Soviet state were implemented slowly, which led to a decrease in grain yields and an insufficient level of food supply. The fields were mainly occupied by women, and the promised 8-hour working day was not observed. The introduction of cotton cultivation as the only direction exacerbated the food shortage. At the same time, as a result of the conversion of melon and horticultural arable land to cotton

cultivation, potatoes, onions, carrots, and fruits and vegetables were not grown sufficiently, which created problems in providing the population with food.

As a result, the analysis shows that agro-economic policy and improper use of labor resources led to a significant decrease in the living standards of the rural population and increased social tensions. These circumstances indicate the need for a deep study of the social consequences of famine and economic crisis in the history of agriculture in Uzbekistan.

As a result of the harsh policy of the Soviet government representatives on the rural population, many residents were forced to leave their places of residence and move to other regions in search of food supplies. For example, in November 1936, Kinshakov, who was sent to study the situation of collective farms in the Dehkanabad district, wrote a report "On the state of political, mass and cultural work in collective farms of the Dehkanabad district", detailing the difficult living conditions of the population. According to the report, out of 72 households in the Voroshilov collective farm, only 29 remained, two villages, and even the chairman left their places of residence. It is noted that 36 out of 80 oxen in the collective farm remained. At the same time, 3-5 households remained in the "Kizil Sharq" collective farm, and a large part of the population also migrated from the villages of Qazicha and Chechak. In total, 1,439 households remained empty from the district collective farms, and most of the population migrated to the regions of Baysun and Turkmenistan. Similar migration cases were observed in almost all districts of the oasis.

In the following years, the Soviet state paid attention to the social sphere and increased the funds allocated from the state budget to this direction. In 1924–1928, a total of 30.5 million rubles of capital funds were allocated to Uzbekistan for various sectors, of which 7.3 million rubles were spent on transport and communications, 4.8 million rubles on housing construction, and 2.8 million rubles on social and cultural events. However, this amount was relatively small for Uzbekistan, which was experiencing an economic crisis. The funds allocated for housing construction were mainly for urban workers, and in the villages, the population was forced to build small houses made of pakhsa and mud at the expense of their own capabilities and resources. Therefore, rural houses did not have any amenities, they often had a semi-basement form and did not meet sanitary requirements.

The analysis shows that Soviet policy and inadequate distribution of economic resources led to a decline in the living standards of the rural population, the expansion of migration processes, and the underdevelopment of rural infrastructure. These circumstances are of great scientific importance in the study of the rural economy and social history of Uzbekistan.

In 1935, the budget expenditures of the Kashkadarya district amounted to 27,312.8 thousand rubles, while in 1938 this figure reached 38,884 thousand rubles. Approximately 80 percent of the expenditures were directed to the areas of education, healthcare, culture, and social security.

As a result of the land and water reforms carried out in the regions of the republic, significant changes occurred in land ownership relations. Before the proclamation of collectivization, middle owners in the villages became the main economic force. At the same time, individual peasant farms were the main labor force in agriculture, and a large part of the products produced were provided at the expense of their labor. Thanks to their activities, the population was provided with the most necessary food products even in difficult conditions. The Soviet government also considered individual peasant farms to be an important force in the development of cotton growing: in 1928, 98.8 percent of the rural population was worked by individual peasants, and 98.7 percent of the cotton grown fell to them.

On July 26, 1930, the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) adopted a resolution "On measures to organize the mobilization of the masses in the process of grain production". According to the document, the entire system of Soviet authorities was involved in the grain procurement process and the fight against kulaks was intensified. During this period, those who raised grain prices were warned of severe punishment, and strict penalties were established for crimes.

In the Kashkadarya region, the grain harvest in 1930 was particularly tense. In the Shahrizabz region, Tajik and Jewish populations lived alongside Uzbeks, and small clashes sometimes occurred between them. These facts show how Soviet policy and economic policy in the region affected local social and ethnic relations.

The seizure of crops grown by landowners by the Soviet government sharply worsened the material well-being of the rural population and, as a result, intensified protests. For example, the Guzar market broker

Majid-Diyor buried 100 pounds of grain in a pit instead of handing it over to the state. Also, Mullah Ruzi in Guzar hid 2,000 pounds of grain, Abduljalil Boy 3,000 pounds, Ubay Maksum 1,000 pounds, and Normurod Hassan Boy 1,000 pounds of grain from the Soviet authorities. These cases were widespread in other villages of the region.

Particularly in the Kashkadarya region, there was serious resistance to the Soviet government in the irrigated lands and farms specializing in livestock breeding. Therefore, the collectivization process was uneven, depending on the nature and economic conditions of the population of the region: farms in irrigated lands were converted into collective farms faster, while collective farms in irrigated lands developed slowly.

There were many problems in the operation of collective farms. Most collective farmers and management personnel were illiterate and did not have sufficient experience in managing the farm. For example, 247 of the chairmen of 536 collective farms in five cotton-growing regions were completely illiterate. 14 of the 112 chairmen of village soviets could not read or write. At the same time, due to the insufficient knowledge of the leaders in accounting, income was not distributed correctly in collective farms and the farms could not achieve their goals to a sufficient extent.

Harvesting processes were long, and local authorities were not ready for serious changes in the villages. This limited the effective operation of collective farms and caused the collectivization policy to be uneven and fraught with difficulties across regions.

The Soviet authorities did not limit themselves to accelerating the mass mobilization of the population into collective farms, but also implemented various strategies to eliminate individual peasant farms. These included confiscating the property of large landowners, "taking over" the farms, giving small farmers the opportunity to use their land with tractors on condition that they join collective farms, providing various loans and tax incentives.

According to the 1939 census, 62 percent of the population in Uzbekistan was collective farm, and 1.2 percent was a member of individual peasant farms. As a result of collectivization, individual peasants were transformed into collective farmers, and the process that began in the mid-1920s was almost completed by the end of the 1930s. Thus, the Soviet state formed a new social group in the form of collective farmers and workers instead of poor peasants, middle class, rich, clergy and merchant classes.

The deterioration of living conditions and material well-being during collectivization forced many religious leaders and representatives of other sectors, in particular, farmers, to adapt to the new social system. At the same time, the Soviet authorities paid special attention to increasing the role of women in society and actively used them in propaganda work. For example, at the III All-Uzbek Congress of Soviets, Y. Okhumbobayev delivered a speech on the issue of strengthening women's activities. In the Kashkadarya region, thousands of women participated in the "Khujum" movement, acting as an important force in the process of attracting individual peasant farms to collective farms.

As a result, Soviet policy radically changed not only the rural economy, but also the social structure, and made women a key resource in the process of collective work, propaganda, and collective farming.

The measures taken by the Soviet government to establish and develop agriculture led to a significant increase in productivity. For example, in 1931, collective farmers fulfilled the plan for the production of agricultural products by 103.7 percent, while the poor classes achieved 76.6 percent, the middle class achieved 74.2 percent, and the kulak farms achieved 55 percent. Thus, the implementation of the state agricultural plan contributed to an increase in the monthly and annual income of the population.

Compared to other social classes in the village, the income of collective farmers was significantly higher. Collective farmers specializing in grain cultivation on arable land received income from 130 to 688 rubles. In 1931, the average income of collective farmers per working day was 1 ruble 26 kopecks and 2.5 kg of grain, by the end of the year this figure had reached 2 rubles 43 kopecks and 2.6 kg of grain, and in 1933 it reached 3 rubles 50 kopecks and 4 kg of grain. In the same year, the total income of the "Kommuna" collective farm in the village of Orta Chim, Chiraochi district, was 710,780 rubles, or 2,756 rubles per farm. Collective farmers were paid 3 rubles 40 kopecks for each working day. The high income also ensured that the funds allocated for the capital construction of the collective farm were significant: it amounted to 150,000 rubles.

As a result, in the Soviet period, the planning of agricultural production and the effective work of collective farmers not only increased productivity, but also made it possible to financially support collective farmers and develop rural infrastructure.

**Research methods.** This article widely used archival documents and periodical press materials as the main source. In the course of the research, socio-economic changes in villages, the impact of the policy of collective farming on the lives of the population, and the consequences for the local way of life were analyzed.

**The results of the analysis show that.** The collectivization policy implemented in Uzbekistan brought about fundamental changes in the rural economy and social structure. First of all, a significant transformation was observed in the structure of social classes. Instead of the previously existing social groups such as private landowners, rich people, middle-class peasants, religious leaders, merchants, and poor peasants, a collective farmer and working class were formed.

During this period, women acted as a result of Soviet measures aimed at increasing their social status. They were actively involved in public life as collective farmers, deputies, teachers, and propagandists, and were directly associated with the work of Soviet and party organizations. As a result, the social role and place of women in society significantly increased.

This analysis serves to shed light on the complex impact of the collectivization policy on rural social life and the composition of social classes from a scientific perspective.

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