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DEVELOPMENT OF COTTON AND GRAIN SECTORS IN 1946–1990

Gulyamov Alisher Azizovich
Asia International University
"Lecturer of the Department of Foreign Languages and Social Sciences"
aligulyamov1997@gmail.com

Annotation: This article explores the economic and social development of the cotton and grain sectors in the Uzbek SSR between 1946 and 1990. It examines the post-World War II recovery years and analyzes how the agricultural policy of the former Soviet Union directly influenced the formation and functioning of these sectors under centralized state planning. The study focuses on the structural transformation of agriculture, state intervention, and the mechanisms of management and production in cotton and grain farming during the Soviet era.

Keywords: Cotton cultivation, grain production, agriculture, Soviet agrarian policy, kolkhoz, sovkhoz, forced labor, cotton campaign, state planning, agrarian reforms, water supply, irrigation system, production quota system.

During the second half of the twentieth century, the political and economic reforms implemented in the agrarian sector of Uzbekistan fundamentally transformed its key branches, particularly cotton cultivation and grain production. Between 1946 and 1990, these sectors not only became the principal pillars of the republic's economy, but also emerged as strategically significant industries within the broader framework of the Soviet Union.

The cotton and grain production sectors occupy an important place in the agricultural economy of Uzbekistan. During the period of 1946–1990, these sectors experienced rapid development in the Tashkent Region and Sirdaryo Region. The agrarian policies, economic reforms, and technological transformations of this period had a significant impact on the advancement of these branches of agriculture. This dissertation is devoted to a historical and analytical examination of these processes.

The Second World War exerted a profound influence on the agricultural sector. In the post-war years, the cotton and grain industries were gradually restored and expanded. By 1950, cotton yield had reached 21.1 centners per hectare. During this period, the production of cotton-picking machines and the application of chemical agents for defoliation accelerated the process of mechanization in cotton cultivation.

The period between 1946 and 1960 represents an era of reconstruction, industrialization, and profound transformation in the agriculture of Uzbekistan, particularly in the sectors of cotton cultivation and grain production. In the post-war years, primary attention was directed toward restoring agricultural production, increasing productivity, and reclaiming new lands for cultivation. Special emphasis was placed on the development of the cotton industry in the Tashkent Region and Sirdaryo Region, where substantial financial and labor resources were allocated.

During the 1950s, new water wells were drilled in the Tashkent Region, irrigation networks were expanded, and irrigated lands were significantly improved. As a result, cotton productivity increased from an average of 12–13 centners per hectare in 1946 to 22–24 centners per hectare by 1960.

In the Syrdarya Valley, new state farms (sovkhozes) and collective farms (kolkhozes) were established during the late 1950s. Major irrigation and land-reclamation projects, including the Turtko'l Canal and the Yangiyer melioration initiatives, were implemented in this region. The development of newly reclaimed lands also created favorable conditions for the expansion of grain

cultivation. In particular, large-scale production of wheat and barley was organized in these territories.

Within the framework of the "Virgin Lands" (*Selina*) campaign implemented throughout the country between 1954 and 1956, new cotton- and grain-producing areas were established in the Syrdarya Valley. During this period, the amount of land allocated for grain cultivation in the Tashkent Region increased by 18 percent. At the same time, the level of mechanization in agriculture continued to expand. The introduction of tractors, cotton-picking machines, and grain combines significantly facilitated agricultural labor and improved production efficiency.

During these years, the grain-production sector also experienced substantial development. New crop varieties were introduced, irrigation systems were improved, and mechanization processes were further intensified. In addition, the activities of scientific research institutions expanded considerably, with particular attention devoted to agro-technical measures and crop selection programs. For instance, new cotton varieties developed at the Tashkent Agricultural Institute became an important factor in increasing agricultural productivity.

Political and economic conditions and agricultural reforms. Starting from 1946, the government of the USSR paid great attention to the restoration and development of the country's agriculture. In this process, cotton growing and grain production were defined as the main strategic directions. During this period, the collective farm (kolkhoz) and state farm (sovkhoz) systems were strengthened, and significant changes were implemented in the fields of mechanization, irrigation, and agronomy.

Raising cotton production to the level of state policy. Cotton was considered a strategic raw material for the USSR industry. During the 1950–1980s, the Tashkent and Syrdarya regions occupied leading positions in cotton production within the republic. New irrigation systems were constructed, the area of cotton fields was expanded, and new varieties were introduced.

Among the labor resources engaged in cotton farming, women and youth held the main share. In this process, elements of state propaganda and compulsory labor were also present. Increased attention to grain production. Starting from the 1950s, special attention was paid to grain production in order to ensure the country's food security. In the Tashkent region, Chinoz and Oqqo'rg'on districts, and in the Syrdarya region, Sayxunobod and Boyovut districts became firmly established as important grain-producing areas.

Updated agro-technologies and land reclamation works. In the grain farming sector, land reclamation measures and the use of mineral fertilizers became widespread. As a result of crop rotation and agro-technical practices, productivity began to increase. The introduction of new varieties, equipment, and technologies stimulated the modernization of grain production.

Grain production and population supply. The grain produced during this period was directed not only to local consumption but also to meeting all Union needs. Therefore, the government allocated subsidies and incentives to grain farming. Impact of climate and geographical conditions. In both regions, the availability of irrigation systems and favorable climatic conditions created suitable areas for cotton and grain cultivation.

Scientific research institutions and personnel training. Scientific research institutes were established in the fields of cotton and grain production. The Tashkent branch of the Uzbekistan Agricultural Institute, along with breeding and agro-technical laboratories, played an important role.

Regional specialization. In the Tashkent region, specialization developed in grain farming and horticulture, while in the Syrdarya region cotton farming became the main focus. This specialization led to increased regional economic efficiency.

The reforms and development processes implemented in cotton and grain farming in the Tashkent and Syrdarya regions during 1946–1990 played an important role in increasing the overall agricultural potential of Uzbekistan. The experience of this period still holds scientific and practical significance today.

During 1946–1960, despite the economic and political conditions in the country, special attention was given to agriculture, particularly cotton and grain production. As a result of post-war economic reforms, land management policies in the Tashkent and Syrdarya regions were revised, new water supply facilities were constructed, and land reclamation (melioration) works were carried out. During this period, specialized state farms (sovkhozes) and collective farms (kolkhozes) for cotton production were established. For example, in Syrdarya, the “Paxtachi” and “Yangi Hayot” kolkhozes were among the farms that achieved high yields. In the grain sector, wheat, barley, and rye were prioritized as the main crops.

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