



The State of Cotton Production in the Surkhandarya Oasis During the Years of Stagnation and its Negative Impact on Socio-Economic Life

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Abstract: *In the 1970s, the Soviet state continued to develop cotton growing in Surxondaryo. In the ninth five-year period from 1971 to 1975, the task was set to further increase cotton production in the region. However, to achieve this, it was necessary to establish cotton growing on newly developed lands. For this purpose, the main attention was paid to the Kyzylryk steppe. Renowned mechanics and experienced managers were involved in the state farms established here.*

Keywords: *J. Rustamov, Collective Farm, World War II, Unemployment, Baltic.*

Date of Submission: 20-10-2024

Date of Acceptance: 11-11-2024

In March 1970, Jiyankul Rustamov, a renowned mechanic who had moved from Denov to the newly created Okhunboboev state farm in the Kizirik steppe, planted cotton on an area of 60 hectares. In 1971, a cotton yield of 38.5 centners per hectare was obtained. Brigadier Zh. Rustamov himself collected over 500 tons of cotton on a cotton harvester. In 1973, the collectors led by Zh. Rustamov mastered 80 hectares of land in the Kosim Rakhimov state farm and harvested 42 centners per hectare. Rustamov himself collected 559 tons of cotton in his car. J. Rustamov continued to develop the desert, and in 1974, with his team, they acquired 86 hectares of land from the newly established Budyonny state farm. In the year when water was extremely low and the weather was unfavorable, they overcame all difficulties and harvested 50 centners per hectare. Each member of the crew received an average of 40 tons of cotton. A skilled mechanic collected and dumped almost 800 tons of cotton with the help of a machine this year. For his services to the development of the desert, Zh. Rustamov was awarded the title of Hero of Socialist Labor.

As a result of intensive land development, sufficient conditions were created for the formation of an administrative district in the Kizirik Steppe. In accordance with the Decree of the Council of Ministers of the Uzbek SSR dated March 6, 1975, the Lenin Yuli District (now Kizirik) was established in the desert areas. Normumin Turopov, Abdusattor Khayitov, A. Antones, E. Tursunov, Oytoshkhon Giyosova, Khalil Isaev and others set examples of selflessness in the formation of the new district. Khurram Toshmirov, Tukhta Khaydarov, Muzaffar Umarov, Mamatali Umirov, Normumin Kamolov, and Normurod Norqobilov, cotton-growing, livestock breeding, and other specialists, played a significant role in the development of deserts.

In the ninth five-year period, cotton production developed rapidly. Cotton planting areas increased to 138.1 thousand hectares in 1975. In 1970, this figure was 119.3 thousand hectares. Between 1971 and 1975, the region supplied 2,112,000 tons of raw cotton to the state. Of these, 665.3 thousand tons were fine-fiber cotton. The average yield was 31.8 centners per hectare. The yield of cotton

fiber was 670.2 thousand tons. In 1975 alone, 465,000 tons of cotton were produced in Surxondaryo Region, or more than in some cotton-growing republics (1079,000 in Turkmenistan, 836,000 in Tajikistan, 451,000 in Azerbaijan, 202,000 in Kyrgyzstan, 283,000 in Kazakhstan), and the yield reached 33.6 centners. In particular, 54.6 thousand tons of cotton fiber were delivered in Gagarin district, 43.5 thousand in Lenin Yuli district, and 24.3 thousand tons in Sherabad district. In 1975, 30 people/hour were spent on growing 1 centner of cotton in collective farms and 28.4 people/hour in state farms.

Thus, cotton farming became the main industry in the republic. Between 1860 and 1916, Uzbekistan produced 6 million tons of raw cotton, which averaged 100,000 tons per year. Between 1924 and 1973, this figure was 100 million tons, or an average of 2 million tons of cotton per year. Cotton ginning factories in Surxondaryo Region produced 138,000 tons of fiber in 1972.

Thus, the Surkhan-Sherabad oasis became the main area of Uzbekistan for the cultivation of fine-fiber cotton. The annual production of 350-400 thousand tons of fine-fiber cotton has been established in the region. The yield of these fields ranged from 20 to 40 centners per hectare. In 1980, 215.2 thousand tons of fine-fiber cotton were grown in the oasis, and in 1985, 412.2 thousand tons. In 1990, a total of 381,000 tons of fine-fiber cotton were grown in Uzbekistan, of which 293,000 tons were in the Surkhandarya oasis. Agricultural gross output increased by 140% in 1985 compared to 1975 and by 114% compared to 1980. In monetary terms, it increased from 325.3 million soums in 1966 to 1970 to 683.4 million soums in 1985. The total number of tractors involved in agriculture reached 5.1 thousand in 1965, 16.3 thousand in 1985, the total number of cotton harvesters reached 1121 units in 1965, and 3520 units in 1985. Due to the well-established operation of cotton harvesters on the fields of the region, the harvest rate in one season in collective farms reached 56 tons in 1970, 97 tons in 1976, 82 tons in 1970 and 93 tons in 1976 in state farms. The daily harvest in collective farms in 1970 was 1.4 tons, in 1976 - 3.7 tons; in state farms it was 1.7 and 1.8 tons, respectively. In percentages, machine harvesting yielded the following indicator: machine harvest in the region was 38% in 1970, 47% in 1975, and 62% in 1980. In this regard, the number of collective farms was 34% in 1970, 41% in 1975, and 64% in 1980, while in state farms it was 51, 57, 60% in the same years.

In order to increase the productivity of collective farms and state farms, from the end of the 1970s, cotton production began to be fully economically accounted for. The members of the cotton-growing brigade of the A. Nabiev state farm in the Gagarin district, headed by Olim Kholmuradov, were the first to work in the farm under a collective contract in 1979. Based on the collective contract, the collective cotton growers conclude an agreement with the farm at the beginning of the year. First of all, the production and financial plan of the collective was determined. In addition, the amount of fertilizer, fuel, and seeds will be agreed on for this purpose (20% of which will be retained as a reserve fund until the end of the year).

A collective council is formed in the brigade. All the work will be taken over by the Soviet members. They create a special journal in which they regularly record people's arrivals and departures, work productivity. This is, of course, taken into account in the distribution of monthly wages according to the limit allocated to the members of the collective. It is important that this method, called the non-charge system, makes the material interest of the members of the collective dependent on the final result of their work. If the plan is executed, the remaining 20 per cent of the salary fund will be transferred first to the members of the collective. In addition, 70% of the excess earnings from the plan, as well as the same amount of profit obtained through thrift, will be distributed as a reward.

In 1982, when the advantages of the collective contract were gradually revealed, all 42 brigades and units of the state farm switched to this method. A family contract was also introduced. As an

experiment, in 1987, the family unit led by Begimkul Dustmuradov was allocated 15 hectares of land in the A. Nabiev state farm, and it was commissioned to plant beets. The family unit was provided with mineral fertilizers and equipment in a timely manner. The family produced 686 tons of products instead of the planned 470 tons. The plan was fulfilled by 145 percent. In 1986, only 45 tons of fodder beets were harvested from the same hectares. Family members will receive an additional salary in the amount of 20%. This amounts to 1,545 soums. Also, 70 percent of the non-planned income, that is, 3,066 soums, was given as a reward. Overall, the family contract has clearly demonstrated its advantages.

In the years following World War II, the population of Surxondaryo Region steadily increased. In 1959, the population was 422,000, in 1970 - 662,000, in 1979 - 895,000, and in 1981 - 952,000 people. In 1981, the proportion of the urban population was 18.7%. The rest lived in agriculture. As of January 1, 1986, the population of Surxondaryo Region was 1,133,000 people, of whom 910,000 lived in rural areas. There were 210,000 urban residents, 296,100 schoolchildren, 66,900 children from preschool institutions, 4,000 students from higher education institutions, and 10,400 students from secondary vocational schools. In 1985, there were 48 collective farms and 82 state farms in the region, with a total of 167,800 workers. Of the remaining 377.8 thousand people, newborns, pensioners, military personnel, teachers of schools, higher and secondary specialized educational institutions, educators in kindergartens, medical workers, builders, irrigators, employees of party and Soviet institutions, employees of the judicial and legal, internal affairs systems, drivers, workers of state organizations, employees of communal services, employees of cultural organizations and employees of similar institutions were removed, it will be known that in the villages of Surkhandarya, at least 100-120 thousand people were unemployed. In the 1980s, unemployment arose in Surxondaryo Region, as in all of Uzbekistan. During the Soviet era, unemployment was not openly discussed, and it was considered to have disappeared as early as the 1930s. Moreover, during the cotton campaign, the entire population of the village went out into the fields, causing the public to think that "there is no work." In fact, the problem of unemployment in Uzbek villages was the result of the Soviet government's incorrect demographic policy. The severe demographic situation after World War II, the need for labor, and the expansion of cotton plantations forced the Soviet state to encourage births among the population. Women with many children were awarded the title of "Mother-Hero" and a number of benefits were established for them. In the 1950s and 1970s, with the improvement of medical services in the country, a decrease in mortality among the population, an increase in life expectancy, increased mechanization in agriculture, and an increase in the proportion of urban dwellers in the population, birth rates in the western and northern parts of the USSR were no longer encouraged as before. But the situation in Central Asia was quite different. More men were needed to pick the cotton from the huge plantations. For this reason, births were constantly encouraged. As a result of unplanned births, the problem of unemployment arose in the republic.

Processes such as "cotton business" and "Uzbeks business" revealed the true face of the Center. It became clear that the ideas of the Soviet state about internationalism, brotherhood, and equality were futile. The mass repression of the Uzbek people, who faithfully served the Soviet regime for so many years, lost the confidence of other republics in the Center. Advanced intellectuals and politicians in the republics intensified national movements to prevent such days from befalling them. There were attempts to leave the USSR first in the Transcaucasus, then in the Baltic Sea. The collapse of the USSR was obvious.

In the context of transparency, the leadership of the Surkhandarya region began to act based on the situation. Ten unprofitable state farms with little land were liquidated. But the mass repressions carried out due to the "cotton case" had already done their work. All sectors of production experienced a period of crisis and depression. In 1987, the plan for the delivery of meat and milk in

the region collapsed. The development of fixed assets in capital construction amounted to 100 million soums less than planned. The capital fund of about 30 million soums was not disbursed. Despite a cotton yield of 31 centners per hectare, half of the districts produced a lower yield per hectare. Productivity was particularly low in the Baysun, Sherabad, Jarkurgan, and Termez districts, as well as in 54 cotton-growing farms. In addition, 11 farms did not fulfill their cotton procurement plans. Between 1986 and 1987, cotton growers in the region earned about 50 million soums from cotton fiber alone. However, considering the costs, this was not enough. The fiber yield was 29% in Lenin Yul and Gagarin Raions, with an average of 32% across the province. In 1988, the Gulbakhor state farm in the Termez district was the first in the region to implement the cotton procurement plan. In addition to the plan, 500 tons of cotton were produced. 90% of the gross harvest was harvested by machinery. The productivity of 24 cotton harvesters exceeded 120 tons. 100% of the planned cotton was transferred to the first grade. The machine harvest plan was completed by 118%. The average yield reached 32 centners.

In conclusion, it should be noted that during the period under study, the cotton monopoly in the Surkhandarya oasis was finally established. Cotton farming became the main branch of the Surkhan oasis. The widespread use of scientific and technological achievements in the cotton industry has led to an increase in cotton yields. The use of machine labor played a particularly important role in cotton harvesting.

During this period, the oasis specialized primarily in the cultivation of fine-fiber cotton. After all, the hot climate of the Surkhan oasis allowed for the abundant cultivation of fine-fiber cotton. Therefore, the Center supported the conduct of scientific research in this area. New high-yielding varieties, created at experimental stations, further developed this field. As a result, the Surkhandarya region took the first place in the republic in terms of the supply of fine-fiber cotton.

But the cotton monopoly created other serious problems. These include unemployment, food shortages, slow industrial development, and so on. The excessive use of toxic chemicals in agriculture has worsened the environmental situation. There has been an increase in infectious diseases, maternal and child mortality. In addition, to fulfill the plan established by the Center, people were sent to cotton harvesting in severe frosts, which damaged their health. Nevertheless, the center paid the cotton-growers little. In addition to this, it also imposed an obligation to deliver even more cotton. Since they could not fulfill the plan, our local leaders were forced to write it down.

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