

AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES IN THE EARLY YEARS OF THE NEW ECONOMIC POLICY

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Annotation: This article provides a historical analysis of the process of formation and development of agricultural cooperatives within the framework of the new economic policy (NEP) introduced in the Soviet Union between 1921 and 1925. Cooperatives were chosen as the main tool in order to restore agriculture and improve economic ties between farmers and the state. During the study, the processes of socio-economic efficiency of cooperatives, the revival of trade through them, the development of the credit system and the transition to political control were covered. Regional features as well as long-term consequences have also been discussed. The article is written on the basis of historical-analytical and statistical approaches, which can be an important resource in understanding the processes of Soviet modernization.

Keywords: NEP, agriculture, cooperatives, Soviet Union, Economic Policy, agriculture, collectivization, historical analysis, Uzbekistan, 1921-1925.

Introduction

The radical political and economic changes that took place in Russia in the early 20th century, especially the stages after the October Revolution of 1917, led to the formation of new management and production systems nationwide. Among these, The New Economic Policy (NEP), implemented from 1921, was one of the important directions of the Soviet state's choice to get out of the economic crisis. The main goal of this policy was to alleviate the economic tension that had arisen during the war communism, to stabilize the socio — economic situation of the population, especially to restore agriculture.

In the context of the new economic policy, a number of innovations were introduced in agriculture. In particular, cooperative actions formed as early experiments on the path to the unification of small producers, coordination of their labor activity and simplification of product realism. It was through cooperation that the villagers entered into economic relations with the state, while maintaining economic independence. For this reason, cooperatives also occupy a special place in history as one of the most important mechanisms of NEP policy in agriculture.

This article will scientifically analyze the organization of agricultural cooperatives in the early years of the NEP era, their economic and social aspects, level of efficiency and existing problems. It is also studied what role cooperation played in the interaction of Soviet politics with the rural population. By researching this topic, an important stage in the history of the Uzbek national economy will contribute to the understanding of the first stages of Soviet modernization.

Methodology

This scientific article is written on the basis of a historical-analytical approach, aimed at studying the trends in the formation, activities and development of agricultural cooperatives in Uzbekistan (former Turkestan SSR, later Uzbek SSR) and the Soviet Union as a whole during the period of new economic policy between 1921 and 1925. The following scientific and methodological approaches were used when writing the article:

1. Historical-analytical method

On the basis of archival documents on the topic, the press of the period, speeches of political leaders, state decisions and statistics on agriculture, cooperative actions were studied in a historical context. This approach made it possible to determine how agricultural cooperation affected the socio-economic conditions.

2. Comparative analysis

The situation of the activities of cooperatives in the years before and after the beginning of the NEP policy was compared. Through this, the effectiveness of the cooperative and the changes that have arisen through it have been determined.

3. Regional approach

The study mainly focused on the activities of cooperatives in the territory of Uzbekistan (Bukhara, Samarkand, Fergana, Tashkent regions). Through this approach, regional identities were identified, showing how policies on an all-union scale influenced practices at the local level.

4. Scientific literature analysis

During the study, the scientific work of Western and local historians, economists, Soviet political figures was studied. In particular, V. on NEP politics. Lenin, N. Bukharin, A. The works of thinkers like Chayanov served as the main source.

5. Statistical data analysis

Agricultural indicators at the beginning of the 1920s, the financial and productive potential of the population, forms of land ownership and the degree of distribution of cooperatives were analyzed on the basis of numerical indicators.

The sources used in the study are based on the principles of historical reliability and science, serving to comprehensively and objectively illuminate the topic.

Results

In the early years of the new economic policy (NEP) era, the Soviet government began to retreat from its previously applied coercive policies and introduce principles based on Economic Freedom. Cooperatives were considered as the main tool in the revival of the agricultural sector during this period, and they gave the following results:

1. Stabilization of agricultural production

Before the NEP policy, which was the era of "War communism" in which peasants did not benefit from their products, the state forcibly seized. In NEP politics, however, farmers became interested in manufacturing as a result of the shift to a tax form and the opportunity to sell the product on their own will through cooperatives. According to statistics, by 1923 the grain yield had increased by 30-35% compared to 1920.

2. Sharp increase in the number of cooperatives

In the period 1921-1924, the number of cooperatives throughout the Union increased by 2.5 times, while in Uzbekistan this growth was 3 times. Consumer cooperations in retail and product sales became more common in particular.

3. The revival of the trading and credit system

Through cooperatives, farmers began to participate in the removal of their products to the cities and price fixing. Cooperative banks and credit societies were also established, expanding access to agricultural techniques, and seed procurement opportunities.

4. The revival of social life through cooperations

Cooperatives functioned not only as economic but also as social units. The activity of the local population in the life of the community increased, women and young people were also involved in the cooperative.

5. Mechanism of mediation between producers and the state

Cooperatives provided an economic connection between the state and the peasants based on mutual interest. This served to prevent famine and improve food supplies.

Discussion

The above results show that during the NEP policy, agricultural cooperatives not only paved the way for economic stability, but also the political and social strengthening of the Soviet system in the countryside. From this point of view, the following important aspects should be discussed:

1. Cooperation-a temporary political tool or an economic necessity?

While the Soviet leadership initially declared cooperatives to be voluntary units, over time it turned them into a means of implementing Soviet policies. This set the stage for gradual collectivization under the name "voluntary".

2. The problem of trust between cooperatives and farmers

Many farmers did not initially trust the state or cooperatives. They preferred to sell their products on the free market. However, through economic incentives (low taxes, loans, material assistance), their involvement in cooperation was ensured.

3. Regional variations

The effectiveness of cooperatives was not uniform across all regions. In particular, the cooperation was rapidly popular due to the development of trade and craft traditions in the Fergana Valley, while in the regions of Bukhara or Karakalpakstan this process was slow.

4. Political control of cooperations

While cooperatives were an economic liberator in the early period, they gradually came under the influence of communist ideology. This limited their natural development and subordinated them to the bureaucratic system.

5. Long-term results

The success of cooperatives in the NEP era later served as the basis for the violent collectivization policies of the 1930s. This ultimately eliminated many positive results.

Conclusion

As part of the new economic policy implemented in 1921-1925, agricultural cooperatives became an important experimental space for the Soviet state. They laid the groundwork for a short period of economic recovery, an increase in production, a revival of trade and an increase in activity in social life. It was through cooperation that beneficial ties were established between the state and the peasants. But as these processes retreated from the principle of discretion and came under political control, they had negative consequences in the long term.

The experience of this period has shown that the success of economic reforms is solid and effective when it is carried out taking into account the real interests of the population and free from political pressure. While cooperatives-as one of the most positive outcomes of NEP policy-remain in history, exploring the direction in which they were later turned-provides important lessons for today's reforms as well.

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