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THE STATE OF AGRICULTURE IN THE KHOREZM PEOPLE'S SOVIET REPUBLIC (1920–1924)

Annotation

This article analyzes the condition of the agricultural sectors-including farming, animal husbandry, and land ownership relations-in Khorezm at the beginning of the 20th century. The political situation that arose at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, resulting from the First World War, the coup d'état, and the national liberation movements against the Soviets, had a serious impact on the socio-political and economic processes in the Khorezm oasis. The anarchy following the collapse of the monarchy led to the breakdown of artificial irrigation systems, a sharp reduction in cultivated land, and a deep crisis in the agricultural sectors. Based on historical sources, the essence of the agrarian policy pursued by the KPSR government to resolve the existing problems in these areas is analyzed.

Keywords: Cotton-growing, land ownership, farming, ruble, tanab, pood, inspectorate, waqf, seed, wheat, financial aid, confiscation, canal.

XORAZM XALQ SOVETI RESPUBLIKASI QISHLOQ HO‘JALIGIDAGI HOLATI (1920-1924)

Annotatsiya

Mazkur maqolada Xorazmda XX asr boshlarida qishloq xo‘jaligi tarmoqlaridagi, dehqonchilik, chorvachilik va yer egaligi bilan bog‘liq munosabatlardagi holat tahlil qilingan. XIX asr oxiri XX asrga kelib birinchi jahon urushi, davlat to‘ntarilishi va sovetlarga qarshi olib borilgan milliy ozodlik harakatlari natijasida vujudga kelgan siyosiy vaziyat Xorazm vohasidagi siyosiy-ijtimoiy va iqtisodiy jarayonlarga jiddiy ta‘sir ko‘rsatadi. Monarxiyaning qulashi natijasida vujudga kelgan boshboshdoqlik natijasida sun‘iy sug‘orish inshootlarini ishdan chiqishi, ekin yerlarining keskin qisqarishi va dehqonchilik sohalaridagi chuqur inqirozli holat vujudga kelgan. XXSR hukumatini ushbu sohalarda mavjud muammoni hal qilish uchun olib borgan agrar siyosatining mohiyati tarixiy manbalar asosida tahlil qilingan.

Kalit so‘zlar: Paxtalik, yer egaligi, dehqonchilik, rubl, tanob, pud, nozirlik, vaqf, urug‘lik, bug‘doy, moddiy yordam, musodara, kanal.

ПОЛОЖЕНИЕ В СЕЛЬСКОМ ХОЗЯЙСТВЕ ХОРЕЗМСКАЯ НАРОДНАЯ СОВЕТСКАЯ РЕСПУБЛИКА (1920-1924)

Аннотация

В данной статье анализируется ситуация в отраслях сельского хозяйства Хорезма в начале XX века, а также отношения, связанные с земледелием, животноводством и землевладением. Политическая ситуация, сложившаяся в конце XIX - начале XX веков в результате Первой мировой войны, государственного переворота и национально-освободительных движений против Советов, оказала серьезное влияние на социально-политические и экономические процессы в Хорезмском оазисе. Хаос, возникший в результате падения монархии, привел к выходу из строя искусственных оросительных сооружений, резкому сокращению посевных площадей и глубокому кризису в сельскохозяйственных отраслях. На основе исторических источников проанализирована сущность аграрной политики, проводимой правительством ХНСР для решения существующих проблем в этих сферах.

Ключевые слова: хлопководство, землевладение, земледелие, рубль, таноб, пуд, назирство, вакуф, семена, пшеница, материальная помощь, конфискация, канал.

Introduction. The history of the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic (1920–1924) constitutes one of the significant stages in the development of Uzbek statehood and socio-economic progress. The political and economic reforms implemented during this period, particularly the transformations that took place in the agricultural sector, had a substantial impact on the living conditions of the population and the economic life of the republic.

Since the economy of the Khorezm oasis was primarily based on agriculture and irrigated farming, any crisis in the agricultural sector directly affected not only the economy but also social relations, demographic processes, and the overall standard of living of the population. The consequences of the Civil War, changes in land and water relations, food policies, the taxation system, and natural and climatic factors played a

crucial role in the emergence and development of the agricultural crisis.

At the same time, in Soviet historiography, this issue was largely interpreted through an ideological lens, and the problems of agriculture were often analyzed from a one-sided perspective. Following the independence of Uzbekistan, opportunities for an objective assessment of historical events significantly expanded, while newly accessible archival materials and historical sources were introduced into scholarly circulation. This development has created the necessity to examine how the agricultural crisis in the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic has been studied in historiography, to compare scholarly approaches developed during different periods, and to identify existing gaps in the current body of research.

The relevance of this topic is also determined by the fact that the study of historical experiences in the agricultural sector provides an opportunity to evaluate contemporary agrarian reforms from a historical perspective. In this regard, investigating the historiographical treatment of the agricultural crisis in the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic represents not only an important and timely issue in historical scholarship but also a significant scientific task contributing to a deeper understanding of national history.

Literature Review. A considerable body of research on the subject has been produced by Soviet-era, post-independence, and foreign scholars. The first category comprises studies conducted during the Soviet period, which can be divided into two groups.

The first group includes works devoted to the general historical processes that took place in the Khorezm oasis during the period under consideration, in which agriculture was examined as one component of broader socio-economic and political developments. Representative studies in this category include the works of Pogorelskiy I. [10], K. Muhammadberdiyev [8], X. Hamdamov [16], and N. Ibovov [4].

The second group consists of specialized studies focusing on agrarian relations in the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic (KhPSR). In the works of I. Alimov [5], Ye. Zelkina [3], M. Yuldashev [18], and K. Yusupov [19], the essence and characteristics of agrarian relations in the oasis, the impact of political transformations on the agricultural sector, and the condition of agricultural culture were investigated on the basis of historical sources.

During the years of Uzbekistan's independence, substantial research on this issue was undertaken. Methodologically, these studies differ significantly from Soviet-era scholarship, as they seek to provide a more objective and balanced interpretation of the problem. Notable contributions include the works of M. Matkarimov [6], I. Xaydarov [17], and Sh. Saidov [17].

Among foreign scholars, the studies of S. Becker [2] and J. Roche [11] contain valuable information related to various aspects of the period under investigation.

The research methodology employed in this study is based on a combination of systemic analysis, the principles of historicity and logical consistency, systematic and institutional approaches, comparative analysis, and archival research methods.

Analysis. In late April 1920, the First General Congress of the People's Representatives held in the city of Khiva proclaimed the abolition of the former Khiva Khanate and the establishment of the independent Khorezm People's Soviet Republic. During the All-Khorezm Congress of People's Representatives (26–30 April 1920), agrarian reform was identified as an urgent and indispensable issue. This urgency was обусловed by the consequences of the First World War, political upheavals in Russia, and anti-Soviet liberation movements, which by 1920 had led to a 50% reduction in cultivated land. In 1913, cultivated land in the Khanate amounted to 900,000 tanabs, whereas by 1921 this figure had decreased to 400,000 tanabs [29].

The crisis was particularly severe in the cotton sector. In 1916, cotton cultivation covered 90,000 desiatinas; however, by 1921 this had declined to only 3,000 desiatinas. Similarly, raw material production fell sharply from 2 million poods to 100,000 poods [30].

In order to restore and manage the irrigation system, an Irrigation Department was established under the People's Commissariat for Agriculture. The republic's irrigation system was divided into two regions: the Southern region, with its

administrative center in Khiva, which accounted for 85–90% of irrigated land, and the Northern region, centered in Khujayli. In 1920, there were 88 canals in Khorezm, with irrigation capacities ranging from 1,000 to 10,000 tanabs. However, most of them had become inoperative due to silt accumulation and lack of maintenance [13].

At the initiative of the government of the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic, large-scale canal cleaning operations were carried out in 1920, involving 50,000 peasants, increasing to 60,000 participants by 1921 [28].

According to the decree of the Central Executive Committee of the KhPSR dated 20 November 1920, landless peasants were allocated 10 tanabs of land each. Special registration books were introduced for land distribution purposes. As a result, 20,000 tanabs of land were distributed among landless peasants.

During 1922–1923, improvements in the irrigation system led to the restoration of an additional 25,000 tanabs of land, which were subsequently allocated to 8,846 landless peasants [33].

On 15 October 1921, a special commission was established by the Council of People's Commissars to examine the material conditions of poor peasants and agricultural laborers (batraks) and to identify households in need of social assistance. Based on the decision of this commission, 10,000 poods of wheat were distributed as additional assistance to impoverished laborers, and they were exempted from all types of taxation.

In 1921, by the resolution of the Central Executive Committee of the Khorezm Republic, the Dehqonchilik (Peasant) Bank was established under the People's Commissariat of Agriculture to provide financial support to peasants, with an authorized capital of 1.5 billion rubles. In order to facilitate assistance to poor peasants, every four impoverished peasants and laborers were organized into peasant associations. Each association was provided with material support, including one unit of draft livestock, one horse, and a cart.

By the decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic dated 8 March 1922, a decision was adopted to allocate loans through the bank for poor peasant households to purchase livestock. Furthermore, during 1921–1922, the People's Commissariat distributed 6,160 batmans of seed grain, 750 batmans of rice, and 90 million rubles in material assistance to peasants.

According to the land distribution register of the KhPSR Agricultural Department, in September and October 1922, a total of 10,000 tanabs of land from the confiscated land fund was allocated to 1,500 households [33]. It can be observed that, in the initial stage of land allocation, the absence of clearly defined norms and regulations created a number of challenges and misunderstandings.

An analysis of land distribution during 1922–1923 shows that peasant households received arable land in the following proportions, regardless of family size: 30% of households received on average 3 tanabs, 40% received 3–6 tanabs, and the remaining 30% received more than 6 tanabs of land.

According to the decree of the Central Executive Committee dated 13 July 1921, landless peasants and those owning up to 1.5 tanabs of land were exempted from in-kind land taxation. Peasants possessing larger landholdings were required to pay a natural tax of 2 poods of grain per tanab [1].

In the process of agricultural reconstruction, the role of agricultural credit cooperatives established in October 1924 was of great significance. In 1921, the Peasants' Bank provided preferential loans to peasants in the amount of 1.5 billion rubles.

As a result, agricultural output increased substantially: while in 1921 only 25,000 poods of cotton were harvested, this figure rose to 250,000 poods in 1922 and reached 400,000 poods in 1923.

As a result of these measures, by 1923, 56% of the pre-war cultivated land had been restored, and by 1924 this figure had reached 78%. On 19 March 1921, the Provisional Revolutionary Committee granted the Agricultural Department of the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic the authority to confiscate arable lands, orchards, livestock, and agricultural implements belonging to the khan and his officials, thereby initiating a process of state nationalization.

As a consequence of the Civil War, cultivated land in Khorezm decreased by 67.7% in 1920, while the total livestock population declined from 1,328,000 to 703,734 head, representing nearly a twofold reduction [14]. According to statistical data, the number of large livestock decreased by 30% compared to the pre-revolutionary period, cattle by up to 60%, and small ruminants by up to 25% [7].

In order to develop animal husbandry, several measures were implemented. Peasants' committees were established in rural areas. By early March 1921, 12 district-level peasants' committees had been formed, each uniting several village and rural committees.

By mid-1922, 14 cooperatives had been established in the region. These cooperatives implemented a range of zootechnical measures aimed at increasing livestock numbers and improving productivity. These included the establishment of livestock transfer points, the organization of veterinary and supervisory services, as well as assistance in cattle feeding, calf rearing, and related activities.

In 1923, in several districts, four stud farms and livestock transfer stations were established. Popular literature on animal breeding and livestock care was also published [31].

In addition, a system of credit (loans) for livestock owners was introduced. In November 1924, the Agricultural Bank and breeding farm administrations sold 5,000 head of cattle to the peasants of Khorezm at preferential prices.

Veterinary and medical stations were opened in New Urgench and Kungrad [34].

According to statistical data, in 1924 there were 57,611 households in Khorezm region, with 83,823 head of cattle of all types and ages, 40,037 horses, 45,555 donkeys, 15,782 camels, and 33,917 sheep and goats.

As a result of the implemented measures, the living and working conditions of Khorezm peasants gradually improved. Agricultural production in the republic was steadily restored and developed. For instance, the cultivated area in 1922 increased fourfold compared to 1921 across all districts. In the same year, a bountiful harvest was obtained from all types of agricultural crops.

Conclusion. During the period 1920–1924, the agriculture of the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic operated under conditions of severe economic and social crisis. As a result of the First World War, political changes in Russia, and the Civil War, the republic experienced a sharp reduction in cultivated land, the collapse of the irrigation system, and the decline of both cotton production and animal husbandry. In order to overcome these difficulties, the government of the KhPSR implemented a wide range of comprehensive measures aimed at the restoration of agriculture.

First and foremost, considerable attention was paid to the rehabilitation of the irrigation system. Tens of thousands of peasants were mobilized for the cleaning of canals and irrigation ditches, which led to the expansion of irrigated land and the reclamation of additional arable areas. At the same time, land and water reforms were carried out to provide landless and land-poor peasants with agricultural plots, resulting in the redistribution of thousands of tanabs of land among the rural population. These measures played an important role in improving the socio-economic conditions of the peasantry and in stimulating agricultural production.

However, unfortunately, many of the reforms initiated by the republican administration were not fully completed. This was primarily due to the pressure and influence of the Soviet state, as a result of which the republic existed for only four years.

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