



The economic landscape of post-war Uzbek SSR: development trends and challenges

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ABSTRACT

The article analyses the economic processes that took place in the Uzbek SSR in the years following World War II. It examines the republic's role within the Soviet Union, the limitations of economic planning, and the impact of state-controlled industrial and agricultural sectors on economic development. The research is based on historical documents, statistical data, and previous scholarly works, using comparative analysis to reveal the complexity of economic processes. This article aims to provide an in-depth study and evaluation of the post-war recovery phase of the Uzbek SSR economy.

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Urushdan keyingi O'zbekiston SSR iqtisodiy manzarasi: rivojlanish yo'nalishlari va qiyinchiliklar

ANNOTATSIYA

Kalit so'zlar:

iqtisodiy tiklanish,
og'ir sanoat,
markaziy rejalashtirish,
agrar sektor,
ishlab chiqarish,
mahalliy sanoat.

Maqolada ikkinchi jahon urushidan keyingi yillardagi O'zbekiston SSR iqtisodiyotida yuz bergan jarayonlar tahlil qilingan. Respublikaning Sovet Ittifoqi tarkibidagi roli, iqtisodiy rejalashtirishdagi cheklovlar, davlat nazorati ostidagi sanoat va qishloq xo'jaligi tarmoqlari faoliyatining iqtisodiy taraqqiyotga ta'siri masalalariga ham e'tibor qaratilgan. Tadqiqot tarixiy hujjatlar, statistik ma'lumotlar va ilgari olib borilgan ilmiy ishlarga asoslanib iqtisodiy jarayonlarning murakkabligini ochib beradi. Ushbu maqola O'zbekiston SSR iqtisodiyotining urushdan keyingi tiklanish bosqichini chuqur o'rganish va baholashga qaratilgan.

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Экономический ландшафт Узбекской ССР после войны: тенденции развития и трудности

АННОТАЦИЯ

Ключевые слова:

экономическое
восстановление,
тяжелая промышленность,
централизованное
планирование,
аграрный сектор,
производство,
местная промышленность.

В статье анализируются процессы, происходившие в экономике Узбекской ССР в послевоенные годы. Особое внимание уделено роли республики в составе Советского Союза, ограничениям в экономическом планировании, влиянию деятельности промышленных и сельскохозяйственных отраслей, находившихся под государственным контролем, на экономическое развитие. Исследование основано на исторических документах, статистических данных и ранее проведённых научных работах, а также с помощью сравнительного анализа раскрывает сложность экономических процессов. Данная статья направлена на глубокое изучение и оценку этапа послевоенного восстановления экономики Узбекской ССР.

INTRODUCTION

The Soviet Union's economic system underwent substantial changes following World War II. The reconstruction of infrastructure, agriculture, and industry was the state's primary concern as a result of the war's devastation. The planned economic model, which was implemented under Stalin's leadership, prioritized the development of heavy industry, with agriculture serving as a source of funding for this industrialization [1]. The economy of the Uzbek SSR was also directly affected by this process. The Soviet Union's industrial development strategy was further bolstered by the extensive supply of munitions and materials that were available during the war [2]. Nevertheless, the economic recovery process was not transparent. The government concealed significant issues in the agricultural and industrial sectors that were the consequence of industrialization and repressive policies during Stalin's era, and economic realities were kept secret [3]. A fundamental factor in the preservation of economic stability and the promotion of industrial development was agriculture, which was regarded as one of the important sectors of the Soviet economy. As a result, political leaders implemented rigorous oversight of this sector [4].

The Uzbek SSR also became a strategically significant element of Soviet agriculture. The republic was compelled to adhere to centrally determined production quotas through coerced labor and was subjected to economic exploitation as one of the primary cotton-producing regions. The Soviet government's implementation of reforms to develop agriculture, particularly by expanding the irrigation system, was accompanied by a variety of economic challenges [5]. The emergence of a new economic paradigm was facilitated by the introduction of agricultural reforms in Central Asia, particularly in Uzbekistan, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union [6]. The challenges and consequences of this process were underscored by the economic policies that were implemented in the agricultural and industrial sectors of the Uzbek SSR. The republic's economy was centrally influenced by agricultural policy [7], agrarian development issues [8], and the advancement of the irrigation system [5.1] during the post-war years.

The cotton monoculture policy directly affected the expansion of agriculture and light industry by increasing the irrigated land area yearly [9]. In the food sector, problems concerning the processing of agricultural goods and satisfying the demand of the population remained urgent ones [10]. Furthermore, stressing regionalization, the Soviet economic policy connected the republic's economy with that of the larger Soviet Union, a process whose effects were seen for many years [11]. This paper tries to examine the post-war economic advancements in the Uzbek SSR overall, the effects of the Soviet economic model on industry and agriculture, and the results of these economic changes.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The evolution of the Uzbek SSR's economy, its primary tendencies, and its outcomes has been seen differently in several eras. In the soviet era, scientific publications, and economic development policies were mostly addressed using a Marxist-Leninist perspective. Research of the soviet economic model by Yu. Volkov, G.N. Skopsov, S. Braginskiy, K.N. Bedrinsev, and I. Ivatov found it to be flawless and assessed industrialization projects and economic reforms favorably. These studies did not, however, fully examine the flaws of the central planning system, especially the agricultural crisis and industry inefficiency. An objective and analytical approach to researching Uzbekistan's economic past developed over years of independence. Scholars have reevaluated the soviet period economic reform outcomes and investigated closely how they affected Uzbekistan's economy. Scholars include K. Usmonov, K. Yuldoshev, V. Abdurahmonov, A. Razzoqov, and M. Muxammadjonov, who have investigated the social and economic effects of the post-war recovery process and given insightful analysis of the outcomes of industrial development programs.

In international literature, Soviet Union economic policy has usually been studied from a critical point of view. Scholars including J. William, A. Alan, A. Brown, and T. Naylor have concentrated on the centralizing of the soviet economic model, bureaucratic issues, and features impeding creative development. This paper evaluates the results of several research methods from different eras by use of the historical comparative analysis methodology. Official records, statistical data, and academic studies on Uzbek SSR economic progress comprise main sources. Analyzes of industrial production volumes, agricultural output growth rates, and statistical data on post-war economic recovery also helped to evaluate markers of economic growth.

RESULTS

According to the research results, the post-war rebuilding phase brought notable changes in the Uzbek SSR's economy. First, post-war economic strategy started to mostly focus on the rehabilitation and growth of industry. Especially, the capacity of cotton-processing industries and light industry grew. Under the framework of the central planning system, this process was executed with the union level distribution of production resources. Second, agricultural reforms accomplished some degree of success despite difficulties. The volume of governmental procurement of agricultural products rose as the collective farming system got established. But this arrangement reduced farm laborers' economic independence and caused output efficiency to drop.

Thirdly, social issues persisted. Wages stayed low, and problems with food supplies were somewhat common. Although the trend of urbanization picked up speed in the years following the war, issues involving population migration remained

unaddressed. One of the main challenges facing industrial growth turned out to be labor shortages. The centralized planning approach helped Uzbekistan's economy to be rebuilt generally. While expansion in industry and agriculture yielded favorable outcomes, the limitations of the administrative-command system persisted in impeding the sustained development of the nation.

DISCUSSION

One of the main goals of the post-war economic reconstruction and peaceful development plan of the Soviet Union was to guarantee social well-being, recovery, and economic stability. One of the main components of this strategy was cutting military industry resources [12]. The military sector developed uniquely during the conflict; hence it became essential to use these sectors for civilian needs. Normal labor conditions were restored in factories and military businesses were allocated chores linked to the manufacturing of building materials. Based on the infrastructure of the nation, the Soviet Union effectively pursued post-war economic recovery and stabilization by lowering military industrial expenditures, supporting peaceful construction operations, and applying policies required for steady economic development. This approach thus called for efficient use of financial resources.

1. Post-war economic recovery.

1.1. The Soviet Union's industry was mostly driven for military purposes throughout the war years; numerous businesses were set aside just for the manufacturing of military products. The State Defense Committee resolved on May 26, 1945, "On measures for the reconstruction of industry in connection with the reduction of arms production." This choice sought to solve the main economic problems the nation was facing following war termination [13]. Adapting the national economy to peacetime conditions became an urgent chore once the war ended. Based on the resolution, industrial businesses were scheduled to move to the manufacturing of civilian goods and arms production was lowered. Restructuring industrial facilities, changing production objectives, and promoting the growth of civilian economic sectors constituted part of this process. Restoring war-torn cities and economic areas, satisfying population social requirements, and reordering the nation's economic growth along new lines were the main goals of these changes. As a result, alongside heavy industry, sectors including light industry, construction materials manufacture, energy, and transportation also started to grow. Adoption of these resolutions signaled a turning point in the post-war economic strategy of the Soviet Union, therefore laying the groundwork for the recovery and later expansion of its industrial sector.

1.2. Uzbekistan's economy remained fragile in the post-war period, characterized by debilitated infrastructure and reduced production capacities. The forced labor of women and children was used to offset the paucity of labor resources, particularly in agriculture. The concept of "over-fulfilling and surpassing planned targets" was also frequently enforced through force and close state supervision, resulting in official reports that were not always accurate. The resolution of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), titled "On measures for the development of agriculture in the post-war period," emphasized the sector's systemic deficiencies. The harsh working conditions that producers endured, insufficient technical support, and low production efficiency were among the primary issues. Resolutions regarding agricultural development were enacted at the February plenary of the Central Committee of the

All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). The objective of these decisions was to enhance the intensity of the intended objectives; however, they neglected to account for the economic challenges and local conditions. These objectives were frequently associated with initiatives to fortify the kolkhoz system, supply raw materials to industry, and enhance food security, in addition to the implementation of more stringent regulations for employees and the increased participation of individuals in the production process. These issues were duly discussed during the first session of the second convocation of the Supreme Soviet of the Uzbek SSR. Nevertheless, the process was primarily concerned with the approval and reinforcement of central government directives, with local requirements and challenges being regarded as secondary concerns. The economic results of 1946 did not suggest the implementation of significant agricultural reforms; rather, they were indicative of the accomplishments that were achieved through enforced labor obligations. In the collective (kolkhoz) and state (sovkhoz) farm systems, producers were not financially motivated to implement technological advancements that would have enhanced planned productivity. Consequently, productivity was primarily sustained through diligent effort. One of the primary goals of the 1946–1950 five-year plans was to enhance the quality of life by increasing the availability of consumer products and improving the material well-being of the population. To accomplish this objective, the state sought to increase the turnover of government and cooperative trade by 28% in comparison to 1940 levels [13.1].

2. The Budget's Contribution to Economic Recovery.

2.1. The post-war recovery program was instrumental in the restoration of Uzbekistan's economy and agriculture, it was also burdened by challenges such as forced labor, resource shortages, and the pressure to achieve excessively high production targets. The state budget of 307.7 billion rubles, which was approved during the 11th session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, was a critical indicator of economic transformation following the conflict. In comparison to 1944, budget revenues increased by 37.3 billion rubles (13.9%), while expenditures increased by 42.3 billion rubles (16.1%), indicating a shift in economic policy [14].

On the one hand, this expansion can be regarded as the commencement of the transition from a military-economic system that was in place during the war to a construction-oriented economy that was in place during the peacetime. Conversely, the expansion of state resources was directly associated with initiatives that were designed to enhance and restore the economic potential of the USSR. Following the conclusion of the conflict, the restoration of industry, the development of infrastructure, and the fulfillment of the social needs of the populace became urgent issues.

Although the 1945 budget of the Uzbekistan SSR reflected the planned socioeconomic principles of economic development, it is crucial to recognize the intricacy of the actual economic conditions during this period. It is important to note that the 51.1% increase in the budget can be interpreted as evidence of economic development; however, it was also accompanied by substantial structural challenges and constraints in resource allocation [14.1]. Nevertheless, inflation and increased government spending may have contributed to this growth. Production was predominantly focused on military requirements during the war years, resulting in a significant decline in civilian economic sectors. Consequently, the 1945 budget adjustments, which were designed to revitalize the industry and implement new economic programs, encountered a multitude of

obstacles. The government's endeavors to enhance the quality of life of the populace are evidenced by the 43.1% increase in expenditure on social and cultural sectors and the 78.7% increase in funds allocated to the national economy, which underscores the emphasis on industrial reconstruction.

2.2. The 1945 budget of the Uzbek SSR encapsulated the major objectives of state economic policy, the strategies for mobilizing financial resources, and the public's reaction to economic hardships. The state economy was in command, as evidenced by the budget's structure and the policy of centralizing economic resources by increasing taxes on individual and business entities. In comparison to 1944, the Uzbek SSR's revenue objective for 1945 was 6.68 billion rubles, which represents a rise from 6.4 billion rubles. This growth suggests that economic activity has expanded in general, despite the persistent obstacles. The government anticipated that state enterprises and organizations would contribute 54% of this sum, underscoring its dependence on state-owned industries to preserve budgetary stability. This strategy was designed to balance the budget by increasing production volumes, maintaining profitability levels, and transferring the economic burden to enterprises. Turnover tax revenues increased from 16.5% to 17.2% during this period, while state bond contributions increased from 15% to 50%. The Soviet government's increased efforts to mobilize financial resources through coerced public contributions are reflected in the sharp rise in state bond revenues, which further underscores the centralized control over economic resources [14.2]. This demonstrates the fortification of a state-bond-based financial system, in which both individuals and enterprises were constrained to contribute through mandatory bond purchases. The intricacies of the post-war economic recovery process are reflected in this budget structure.

On the one hand, the reallocation of industrial and economic resources was implemented through a centralized planned economy, which guaranteed state control over production and distribution. Conversely, the rise in tax revenues and bond contributions imposed an additional financial burden on private households and workers. The true distribution and efficiency of these funds remained a topic of debate, even though a substantial portion of the budget was allocated to support industrial and social programs. The overall impact of soviet post-war economic policies continues to be a critical point of discussion in the evaluation of the extent to which these allocations effectively addressed economic challenges and enhanced living conditions.

3. Cotton Monoculture and Forced Cotton Production.

3.1. The economic reconstruction of Uzbekistan following World War II was a critical objective. Nevertheless, Uzbekistan's economy was predominantly agrarian within the Soviet economic model. The economy was heavily reliant on agriculture and industrial development was slow as a consequence of the centralized planning system, which prioritized union-wide economic interests over local needs. The intensification of cotton monoculture was a result of the growing demand for cotton production, which resulted in the overexploitation of land resources and irrigation systems. This excessive dependence on cotton farming resulted in the acceleration of environmental crises, including the eventual Aral Sea calamity, and disrupted the ecological equilibrium. It is crucial to acknowledge that the economic development of Uzbekistan during this period was influenced by Soviet central planning policies. Moscow's directives were the primary determinant of the 1945 state budget and the obligations placed on cotton production,

rather than local economic requirements. As a result, the Uzbek SSR's economic strategy was modified to accommodate the Soviet Union's requirements, rather than promoting equitable local development. This impeded Uzbekistan's economic independence and restricted industrial development. The heavy industry was the primary sector during the post-war recovery.

In August 1945, the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the Communist Party (VKP(b)) were tasked with the development of the fourth five-year plan to revitalize the national economy. The Supreme Soviet of the USSR subsequently approved the law "On the five-year plan for the restoration and development of the national economy of the USSR for 1946-1950" on March 18, 1946. The primary objectives of this strategy were the restoration of war-damaged regions and the development of heavy industry. Nevertheless, these endeavors were unsuccessful, as the central government continued to prioritize agriculture – particularly cotton production – over local industrialization, resulting in a slow pace of industrial development in Uzbekistan [12.1]. This economic strategy did not aid in the diversification of Uzbekistan's industry; rather, it served to bolster the republic's reliance on agriculture, notably cotton production.

3.2. In 1946, Uzbekistan implemented extensive strategies to develop the cotton sector. Nevertheless, systemic issues persisted. These results were the result of labor exploitation, forced labor policies, and inefficient resource allocation, even though the state exceeded its production targets by delivering 104.1% of the planned cotton. The cotton sector faced heightened challenges as policies were solely focused on increasing production volume, disregarding long-term sustainability and economic diversification. In its resolution "On measures for the development of agriculture in the post-war period," the Central Committee of the Communist Party (VKP(b)) recognized the existence of systemic deficiencies in the agricultural sector.

The government's quotas, coerced labor, and excessive emphasis on cotton production hindered Uzbekistan's ability to establish a more self-sufficient and balanced economy. This resulted in a significant reliance on agriculture and a delayed pace of industrial development in the republic. A scarcity of technical resources, inadequate production efficiency, and unfavorable working conditions for producers were among the primary concerns. The post-war recovery program was officially authorized on February 9, 1946, as part of the five-year plan. The economic burden of Uzbekistan within the soviet system was further exacerbated by the plan's emphasis on the expansion of cotton production and the revitalization of agriculture.

The government increased its efforts to increase output to meet state production targets. However, these accomplishments were frequently employed as a political propaganda tool rather than as a reflection of genuine economic progress. It was anticipated that cotton production would resume at pre-war levels in 1947, with 1.5 million tons of cotton to be delivered to the state, as per the plan. However, the demand for increased cotton yields was not adequately supported by investments in agricultural infrastructure. This resulted in the continued exploitation of workers and the wastage of resources, further increasing Uzbekistan's dependence on a single-crop economy that was strictly regulated by the central government [15]. For the Uzbek people, the post-war era was difficult and full of challenges; nonetheless, their tenacity and hard work were seen as absolutely vital for economic recovery. Designed on the five-

year plan, the strategy sought general economic recovery and focused especially on the growth of industry and agriculture at the republican level. Under the program's structure, agricultural output was expected to climb by 27% globally and by 52% in Uzbekistan while industrial output was supposed to rise by 48% all around, reaching 89% in Uzbekistan. These numbers accurately capture the strategic ideas of that era as precisely defined and strongly ingrained [13.2].

4. Industry and manufacturing.

4.1. Uzbekistan experienced a notable phase of industrial development during the years of war. The industry's composition changed significantly, which resulted in the rise of fresh manufacturing sectors. Especially, the sectors of manufacturing and aviation grew, the petroleum industry developed, and the power station capacity grew. The main cause of the increase in industrial output was the production of guns and other military supplies. The fast industrial growth during the war raised Uzbekistan's strategic significance. Still, economic changes and difficulties accompanied this process.

The general increase of the nation's industry resulted from the reorientation of the economy, the development of new industrial sectors, and the enlargement of current ones. Strengthening the energy infrastructure was crucial to ensure that economic development would keep on and that every industry sector would keep growing. Power station construction including Farhad, Low Buzsuv, Ak-Kavak, and others was accelerated to support industrial development and economic stability [14.3]. Moreover, building medium-sized and small hydroelectric power plants was enlarged to guarantee the effective utilization of current hydro resources. The central soviet government kept careful observation over all these procedures. Rising oil extraction volumes were among the most important accomplishments throughout the war years. New oil fields like Polvontosh and Southern Olamushuk highlighted encouraging signs for the sector. While exploratory efforts were stepped up in areas including Nayman, Namangan, to support local interests and needs, economic development was promoted by these activities. Furthermore, lacking in development was the coal sector.

Designed to yearly extract 1.5 million tons of coal, the open-pit mine built in the Angren field began in 1946, the daily coal extraction target was established at 1,000 tons; later on in the second part of the year, it was raised to 2,000 tons daily. The "Voroshilovneft" trust exceeded its oil output objective in 1944 with 92.6%. But by early 1945, this number had declined to 84.9%, a reflection of some of the difficulties sustaining output levels throughout the post-war transition era.

The basis for Uzbekistan's industrial future is set by the metallurgical sector. We found sites of iron, aluminum, copper, tungsten, molybdenum, and other metals. While first design work started for the development of an aluminum mill in Bekobod, plans were developed to establish a plant manufacturing aluminum alloy in Chirchik. The fast expansion of the Almalyk Copper Combine helped to raise the gold and copper production capacity. Previously serving military demands, industrial companies were also turned into producing basic goods for peacetime. Meeting the demands of the population depends on the expansion of these industries. To more meet the needs of the time, the textile, sewing, footwear, and food sectors changed their production plans.

Specifically, footwear manufacturers intended to provide 2 million pairs of shoes for the population in 1946; their goal was to raise output to 6 million pairs in the next 2-3 years. At the Tashkent Footwear Factory, the hot vulcanization technique greatly sped up the shoe manufacturing process, hence improving production efficiency.

With this revolutionary technology, 60,000 pairs of shoes were supposed to be produced in 1946. Still, such ideas were not enough to cause a notable economic change. Labor productivity and industrial efficiency grew slowly, and usually the system stayed mostly dependent on hand labor. These sectors were under tight government control even when the light and food sectors grew to satisfy the need of the population. Product diversity stayed restricted, and problems in the textile and footwear sectors continued. The centralized supply system of the Soviet Union meant that population needs and desires were not satisfied. For example, local industrial output doubled and a half time in 1944 compared to past years, but the intended production targets for that year fell short [14.4]. This predicament was mostly caused by discrepancies in economic planning and the main distribution of resources to the military sector. The demand from the labor and the general people expanded greatly when the war ended and the time of calm development took place. Local businesses had to change their emphasis from military manufacture to serving civilian demands.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the economy of the Uzbek SSR underwent significant transformations during the post-war recovery period. While the centralized planning policies implemented by the Soviet government contributed positively to industrial development, economic and social problems were not eliminated. Several key conclusions have been drawn from this research:

- Although industrial sectors were restored and production volumes increased significantly, the limitations of the centralized management system slowed the development process.
- Agriculture remained under the influence of compulsory planning, leading to persistent structural inefficiencies that hindered productivity growth.
- Socio-economic challenges, including food supply shortages, low wages, and issues related to urbanization, continued to obstruct the economic recovery process.

These findings help to better understand how the economy of the Uzbek SSR developed within the framework of the Soviet economic model. The study contributes to the comprehension of historical processes and allows for an assessment of the long-term consequences of post-war economic reforms.

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