

## AGRICULTURAL COOPERATION OF UZBEKISTAN (1918-1929): A PERIOD OF DEVELOPMENT AND TRIALS

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**Annotation:** This article analyzes the agricultural cooperative movement that emerged in Uzbekistan in 1918-1929 in a historical context. It details how cooperatives emerged at the stage of the New Economic Policy (NEP), their impact on the production and trade system, as well as the trials and consistent changes that occurred under the collectivization policy of 1927-1929. The article highlights positive results in expanding the economic and social opportunities of the population through cooperation, developing literacy and professional skills, as well as gaining experience in independent economic activity.

**Keywords:** *agricultural cooperation, New Economic Policy, development, consumer societies, collective farm, state farm.*

The period of 1918-1929 was a unique transitional period in the history of agriculture in Uzbekistan, during which the cooperative movement was formed and developed within the framework of the new economic policy (New Economic Policy - NEP). This period was closely connected with the collapse of the Russian Empire, the establishment of Soviet power, and the introduction of new economic relations. These processes fundamentally changed socio-economic life in the territory of Uzbekistan and, in particular, marked the beginning of a new stage in the activities of agricultural cooperation. After the establishment of Soviet power, the solution of agrarian issues came to the forefront. The creation of cooperatives was considered as an important tool for meeting the needs of the rural population, especially farmers, guaranteeing food security, and increasing production volumes. This movement, which began in 1918, initially had a more political-ideological basis, but later expanded as an economic necessity.

In the first years, the cooperative movement was associated with the supply of more food, the delivery of surplus products to the state, and the distribution of essential goods to the population. In this case, grain was forcibly collected from the peasants on the basis of the "prodrazvyortka" policy. This led to numerous protests. Therefore, with the transition to the EIS in 1921, the cooperative movement became relatively free. During this period, producers had the opportunity to sell their products through cooperatives, exchange them, and profit from cooperative membership.

The years of the New Economic Policy (1921-1927) were a period of significant development for cooperation in Uzbekistan. Through cooperatives, farmers and private entrepreneurs brought their products to the markets, and trade and service sectors emerged. This served not only to restore economic stability, but also to improve the culture of trade among the

population. In particular, structures such as "Consumer Societies," "Agricultural Artels," and "Machine and Tractor Stations" were created, and their activities were encouraged by the government.

Cooperatives were engaged not only in production, but also in the spheres of credit, insurance, education, and technical assistance. Self-governing and economically independent cooperatives were created in the villages. This situation served to form the relationship of the rural population with the state in a new direction. In particular, thanks to the idea of economic equality, it became possible to widely involve the poor and middle-class peasants in economic activity.

However, the collectivization policy, which began in 1927-1929, became a serious test for the agricultural cooperation of Uzbekistan. The Soviet government pursued a policy of gradual transformation of cooperatives into collective and state farms. This meant transforming cooperatives from a free, voluntary economic entity into a centralized and state-controlled system. In particular, the activities of cooperatives became increasingly controlled, and the degree of independence decreased. During this period, some cooperatives ceased operations due to problems such as lack of self-sufficiency, inexperience, and weak material and technical base, or were merged into large collective farms.

At the same time, the idea of cooperation began to move away from a free, voluntary basis due to increased ideological pressure from the state and increased differences between social strata. Many peasants did not want to join such a system, but opposing this situation led to severe punishment.

It should be especially noted that the cooperative movement of 1918-1929 was one of the most important factors not only of economic, but also of social transformations in the history of Uzbekistan. Thanks to cooperation, people gained the opportunity to actively participate in society, gain economic knowledge and experience, and protect their interests. Cooperatives operating in rural areas during this period influenced not only economic development but also social processes such as literacy, vocational training, and the activation of public life.

The agricultural cooperation of Uzbekistan in 1918-1929 went through a difficult, but important stage. Although in these years the cooperative movement began as a voluntary structure representing the interests of farmers, by the end of the decade it began to become a tool of state policy. Nevertheless, the experience and infrastructure created through cooperation during this period served as the basis for organizing and modernizing agriculture in subsequent years.

**In conclusion**, the cooperative movement of 1918-1929 laid the foundation for the modern development of the agrarian sector of Uzbekistan. Initially formed on the basis of political and economic necessities, this structure ensured the entry of peasants into market relations during the EEC period and stimulated economic independence, trade experience, and social activity.

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