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FORMATION AND ACTIVITY OF COTTON GINNING FACTORIES IN THE SURKHANDARYA OKRUG (1925–1941)

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Abstract

This article examines the development of the cotton ginning industry in the Surkhandarya region between 1925 and 1941. The reconstruction of the Termiz cotton ginning plant, the construction of the Denov cotton ginning plant, and the establishment of new enterprises in the Khazarbog and Sherobod areas played an important role in expanding the cotton industry in the region. The study also analyzes the Soviet policy of expanding cotton cultivation, the improvement of raw cotton processing, modernization of technical equipment, and the expansion of the network of cotton procurement points. In addition, the article provides information about the activities of the cotton ginning industry and its economic significance on the eve of World War II and during its initial years.

Keywords: Surkhandarya region, cotton growing, cotton ginning industry, Termiz cotton ginning plant, Denov cotton plant, Khazarbog cotton plant, Sherobod cotton plant, Soviet period, cotton industry, collective farms, agriculture, cotton procurement trust.

Introduction

After thoroughly studying the unsatisfactory situation in the cotton ginning industry of Central Asia, the Central Committee of the VKP(b) adopted a decision to urgently repair cotton ginning factories. Soon these decisions produced

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positive results. Cotton growing and related production sectors expanded significantly.

In 1925, the Termiz Cotton Ginning Plant No. 77, which was part of the Turkestan Cotton Committee, was reconstructed. Seven new gins were installed, increasing the number of saws to 490. Three linter machines and a hydraulic press with mechanical tamping and a capacity of 300 tons were installed. The power capacity of the plant's machines reached 239 horsepower. In addition, a dryer was built for drying cotton. The plant was transformed into a modern single-battery facility with improved infrastructure. A 1,290-meter railway line was also extended to the plant.

The Termiz cotton ginning plant, which was the only plant in the region at that time, processed 13,826 tons of raw cotton during the 1928–1929 harvest season and completed processing within 201 working days. During the 1929–1930 harvest season, 23,262 tons of raw cotton were prepared and processed within 260 working days, producing 6,522 tons of fiber. The fiber yield exceeded expectations, reaching 28.04 percent.

Literature Review and Methodology

At the end of 1929, construction began on the Cotton Ginning Plant No. 81 in Denov district of the Surkhandarya okrug, which was also part of the Turkestan Cotton Committee under the Bureau of the Central Committee of the VKP(b). Pavel Pavlovich Kostyuk was appointed as the first director of the plant and served from 1929 until November 1931, when the plant was put into operation. The Denov cotton ginning plant was fully commissioned at the end of 1931. The newly constructed plant was equipped with 12 gins, 6 linters, and a hydraulic press with mechanical tamping and a capacity of 300 tons. The power capacity of the plant's machinery reached 465 horsepower. As a result, the Denov plant also became a single-battery cotton ginning facility. An 800-meter railway line was laid to the plant.

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Discussion

During these years, cotton ginning plants in the region were supplied with electricity through diesel power stations. Due to the low capacity of these stations, cotton ginning plants processed cotton throughout the entire year. In some years, cotton from the previous harvest season was mixed with the next season's harvest. According to the decision of the government of the Uzbek SSR dated February 13, 1930, the Surkhandarya okrug was incorporated into the Bukhara region. The Termiz and Denov cotton ginning plants operating in the Surkhandarya okrug were subordinated to the Bukhara department of the Turkestan Cotton Committee.

The central government's desire to expand cotton cultivation increased steadily. In this regard, the Khazarbog state farm, specializing in seed cotton production, was established in Denov district in 1929 and began its activities in 1930. Since the Khazarbog state farm was the only enterprise producing seed cotton in Surkhandarya at that time, several varieties of cotton were planted and tested there in 1932, including "Navrotsky," "Kok," "8517," "8196," "114," "23," "35-1," and "2IZ."

Results

In order to maintain the quality and purity of the newly planted varieties, a cotton ginning plant called "Jingauz" (Khazarbog cotton ginning plant) was built in 1932 within the Khazarbog state farm to process seed cotton. From that year onward, seed cotton processing began. By 1934, the "Jingauz" plant was modernized and transformed into a large enterprise. Since the Jingauz plant was under the balance of the Khazarbog state farm, it was not included in the system of the Uzbekistan Cotton Committee.

In 1940, the Khazarbog Jingauz plant obtained an independent balance and became a separate cotton ginning plant, although it remained under the control of

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the state farm. In 1944 it became known as the Khazarbog cotton plant, and in 1954 it was renamed the Khayrabod cotton ginning plant.

Due to the Soviet government's strong interest in increasing cotton production, a cotton ginning plant was built and put into operation in 1934 in the center of Sherobod district. The launch of this plant created opportunities to process cotton grown in the southern districts of the region and also ensured the supply of seed cotton to these areas.

The Termiz and Denov cotton ginning plants operating in the Surkhandarya okrug became fully subordinate to the Uzbekistan Cotton Committee, while the Khazarbog and Sherobod Jingauz plants submitted reports but retained relative independence.

Through efficient use of existing reserves in the cotton ginning industry, the production capacity of cotton ginning plants across the country increased threefold in 1932–1934 compared to 1930–1931.

Despite various difficulties, the Termiz cotton ginning plant achieved the following fiber yields from processed cotton:

- From “Pima” cotton variety in 1934 — 28.30%
- From “Marad” cotton variety in the 1934/1935 harvest season — 29.03%
- From “Pima” cotton variety in the 1935/1936 harvest season — 28.57%
- From “Marad” cotton variety in the 1935/1936 harvest season — 29.90%

The Denov cotton ginning plant achieved the following fiber yields:

- From “Navrotsky” cotton variety in the 1934/1935 harvest season — 34.69%
- From “36-M-2” cotton variety in the 1934/1935 harvest season — 34.52%
- From “Navrotsky” cotton variety in the 1935/1936 harvest season — 34.27%
- From “36-M-2” cotton variety in the 1935/1936 harvest season — 34.59%

By 1935, the formation of small collective farms (kolkhozes) intensified in the region. Cotton cultivation expanded significantly compared to other crops. Most of the population joined collective farms, which primarily specialized in cotton

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production. As cotton production increased, the number of cotton procurement points also grew.

During these years, the Termiz cotton ginning plant managed procurement points in Yangiyul, Boldir, Sherobod, Talashkon, and Sarikh in Termiz district, as well as Jarqorgon, Surkhon, and Navshahar in Jarqorgon district.

The Denov cotton ginning plant supervised procurement points in Denov and Yurchi in Denov district; Mirshodi and Karluk in Shurchi district; and Sariosiyo-1 (in the town) and Sariosiyo-2 (at the railway station) in Sariosiyo district.

Although the Khazarbog cotton plant in Denov (established in 1932) and the Sherobod cotton plant (established in 1934) existed, they were not part of the Uzbekistan Cotton Committee system. They had independent balances but were subordinated to the agricultural sector. Therefore, their activities were not included in statistical publications of the 1930s–1940s.

Since 1924, cotton ginning plants in Uzbekistan had processed raw cotton, but the extraction of short fibers (lint) from cottonseed had been carried out by oil-processing plants. According to the decisions of the People's Commissariats of Textile Industry and Food Industry, from the end of 1940 the task of linting cottonseed was fully transferred to cotton ginning plants, and linter machines were removed from oil plants.

After this decision, linter machines were installed at all cotton ginning plants — Termiz, Denov, Khazarbog, and Sherobod — and the lint produced was sent to military industries.

On March 6, 1941, the administrative and economic regional divisions of Uzbekistan were revised. As a result, Andijan and Namangan regions were separated from Fergana region, and Surkhandarya region was separated from Bukhara region. At that time, the territory of the present-day Kashkadarya region was included within Surkhandarya.

From 1941 to January 20, 1943, Kashkadarya region remained part of Surkhandarya region before becoming a separate administrative region.

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In the newly established regions — Surkhandarya, Andijan, and Namangan — new cotton procurement trusts (“Zagotkhlopkotrust”) were created.

In Surkhandarya region, according to Order No. 91 issued on March 10, 1941 by the Chairman of the People’s Commissariat of Textile Industry of Uzbekistan, Kokonboyev, the Cotton Procurement Trust (“Zagotkhlopkotrust”) was established. All cotton ginning plants operating in the territories of present-day Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya regions were included in this trust.

Isaak Grigorevich Kassiriskiy was appointed the first head of the Surkhandarya Cotton Procurement Trust on March 23, 1941. His tenure coincided with one of the most difficult periods.

On June 22, 1941, Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union without declaring war. The people of Surkhandarya also mobilized to defend the homeland. About 41,500 residents of the region went to the front. On June 23, rallies were held at all cotton ginning plants in the region, where plant leaders and speakers called for patriotism and resistance against the invading forces.

During the early years of the war, increasing cotton production became a priority task. Agriculture was reorganized to meet wartime needs. In 1941, the cotton procurement plan was fulfilled, but during the next two years the targets were not achieved. Cotton fields were reduced, yields declined, and mechanization became difficult.

Heavy labor at cotton plants fell mainly on the elderly and women. There was a shortage of spare parts and qualified personnel, and the industry faced serious difficulties. Although two work shifts were organized at the plants, workers lacked experience and training. Workers received 600 grams of bread per day, office staff 400 grams, and children 200 grams. During these years many people died from hunger, yet the population continued to hope for better days and work at the cotton ginning plants continued intensively.

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During this difficult period, Isaak Grigorevich carried out his duties with dedication. Significant organizational work was accomplished within the trust, and the production plan for 1941 was fulfilled and even exceeded.

Sergey Yakovlevich Babenko was appointed Chief Engineer of the trust in August 1941 and served until June 1944. He supervised the operations of all cotton ginning plants within the trust and personally oversaw repair and maintenance work.

In 1941, Yetin was appointed Chief Accountant. He organized the accounting and reporting system for all cotton ginning plants within the structure, recruited economic specialists, trained them, and introduced the memorial-order accounting system.

Conclusion

The cotton ginning industry in the Surkhandarya region began to develop in the early twentieth century, starting with the construction of the Termiz cotton ginning plant. This process was closely connected with the initiatives of local entrepreneurs and the economic interests of the Russian Empire. Later, during the Soviet period, new cotton ginning plants were built and existing enterprises were modernized as part of policies aimed at expanding cotton cultivation. The construction of railway networks expanded opportunities for transporting and exporting cotton products. As a result, the Surkhandarya region became one of the key areas in the republic for cotton production and processing. These historical processes played an important role in the development of industry and the formation of the agricultural system in the region.

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