



STEPPE MADE DESERTS INTO IRRIGATED AGRICULTURAL AREAS IN UZBEKISTAN (Exemplifying Mirzachul steppe)

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Abstract

This article contains the authors' research on the resettlement policy of the Soviet government in the Uzbek SSR for the development of nature reserves and gray lands. It included the propaganda work of the Soviet government to relocate the local population to the newly developed lands (in the example of Mirzachul), the impact of labor migration on the living standards of the population, the development of cotton monoculture, as well as the forced relocation of the population. issues such as socio-economic status.

Keywords: empire, Turkestan, protected areas, irrigated agriculture, resettlement policy, Mirzachul, plenum, KPSS, Brezhnev, cotton, Rashidov, cotton administration, migration

Introduction

We know from history that Central Asia is world famous for its ancient culture of irrigated agriculture. However, the main part of the region was covered with vast undeveloped steppe and desert areas. The natural and ecological conditions of the Republic of Uzbekistan show that 10% of the area is irrigated. The rest of the territory is desert, steppe and foothill. To develop such lands, it was necessary to build a modern artificial irrigation system and irrigation facilities. The Russian Empire's desire to grow more agricultural products in Turkestan led to the launch of large-scale work in the country.

The Russian Empire, which was in dire need of Central Asia's rich raw material resources, managed to implement a policy of forced resettlement as it began to develop many steppes and deserts. A special "Resettlement Department" was set up to relocate the "excess" population from the central regions of Russia, and to set up an irrigation system on the newly developed lands.

In 1899, the State Council allocated 2,025,000 rubles for the construction of a 65-kilometer canal in Mirzachol. However, by 1908, only more than 11 km of the canal had been excavated [1: 107]. Senator K.K. Palen, who inspected Turkestan, said in the interests of the empire: secondly, it is of interest as a new province to accommodate the surplus population "[2:12].





This policy was actively pursued during the former Soviet Union. Article 3 of the Resolution of the Presidium of the USSR MIC of April 10, 1925 "On the Establishment of the All-Union Resettlement Committee under the USSR MIC" [3: 354] and the Resolution of the Presidium of the MIC of the USSR Article 270 of the Resolution No. 33 "On the implementation of planned resettlement of the population for the development of new lands within the USSR." In these resolutions, the All-Union Resettlement Committee was tasked with organizing resettlement management [4: 212-214]. According to him, it is planned to create an all-union relocation fund and finance it. Such issues are constantly in the spotlight of researchers, and a number of studies have been conducted to shed light on the history of this policy [5]. According to them, the situation of the evacuees was deplorable. That is why some leaders of the republic (F.Khojajev, A.Ikramov) were against the development of the agricultural sector in such a voluntaristic way [6:42]. However, their objective approach to the issue was not taken into account, and the Soviet government continued to develop new lands.

Just one example: in January 1941, the Republican Council of People's Commissars decided to relocate 1,000 individual farms in the Forish district to the Syrdarya district of the Tashkent region. At that time, it was important to expand the area under cotton, grain and other crops through the development of new lands, and to establish new collective farms. It took a lot of manpower, of course. With the approval of the republican government, 970 families were relocated to the Syrdarya district of Tashkent region (in the 1940s it was called Syrdarya district, Syrdarya region was founded on February 16, 1963) to develop the desert [15: 158].

The Soviet government's policy of developing new lands in the years following World War II was particularly evident in the case of Mirzachul. On February 2, 1946, a special resolution of the USSR Soviet Socialist Republic "On measures to develop cotton growing in the Uzbek SSR" set the task of increasing cotton production in the Uzbek SSR by 2.5 times in the fourth to fifth years. Based on this decision, the resettlement of people to the newly developed lands, including Mirzachol, was accelerated[7].

After the resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Uzbek SSR and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan (b) of April 15, 1949 "On measures for further use of Mirzachul lands" to improve land reclamation and abundant yields from crops were determined. In order to implement these measures in the country, special attention was paid to providing the newly established farms with manpower and qualified specialists.

From the 1950s onwards, the policy of developing protected areas intensified. By 1953, the first phase of new land development in Uzbekistan had been completed. The first





secretary of the Central Committee of the CPSU, NS Khrushchev, gave the following instructions on the development of nature reserves and gray lands: the development of protected lands will bring great economic benefits. However, it is not the most difficult to cultivate the land, it is necessary to increase the population, so that the protected lands can be developed [8:37].

A meeting on "Prospects for the development of cotton" was held in Tashkent on November 17-20, 1954. At the initiative of the government, the area under crops has expanded due to the development of new lands in Central Fergana, Jizzakh, Surkhandarya regions and the Amu Darya. However, mechanization of the agricultural sector was not in demand, and 200 cotton growers had to be hired to cultivate one hectare of land [9:18]. The USSR, then the world's most powerful empire, had a wealth of experience in mobilizing and relocating to newly developed territories and developed its own unique system for the formation of labor resources in new lands.

As a result of strict measures, more than 160,000 hectares of protected lands were developed in the Uzbek SSR in 1956-58. Millions of hectares of cotton fields and orchards have been planted in the Mirzachul, Karshi, Yazyavan, Surkhan-Sherabad deserts, which have been barren for centuries. Advocacy for the development of the reserve and the relocation of the population to these areas was associated with labor migration. At the heart of this policy of agricultural development was the idea of strengthening the cotton monopoly. Although the financial, logistical, and management problems of the reserve and grassland development campaign were gradually addressed, the need for manpower and skilled personnel remained.

It is known that in 1973 a new region - Jizzakh region was created in our republic. Due to the transfer of most of Mirzachol to the newly formed region, the territory and population of the Syrdarya region has decreased. According to the 1979 census, the population of Jizzakh Province was 510.7 thousand (including 139.8 thousand in urban areas and 370.9 thousand in rural areas) [10: 216-218].

We know that the Uzbek people live mainly in rural areas, on irrigated lands. However, the rapid growth of the population at that time and the extreme scarcity of irrigated land, as well as its declining quality, led to a number of serious socio-economic problems.

There were two ways to explore the new lands. First of all, it was necessary to accelerate the independent use of available water resources, irrigation and land reclamation. For this purpose, Amu-Bukhara, Karshi, Northern Fergana, Mirzachul named after Sarkisov, Lenin and Kirov canals were built. The Tashkent, Karkidon, Chimkurgan, Pakhtakor, Andijan, Tuyamoyin and South Surkhan reservoirs have





been built and put into operation. About 6 billion cubic meters of water are stored in 20 large reservoirs in the country. However, all of this made it impossible to develop the required amount of land [11: 289]. Therefore, the main source of expansion was the bringing of some Siberian rivers to Central Asia, including Uzbekistan.

If the project was implemented, the number of irrigated lands in the country would reach 8 million hectares. At that time, it was only 4 million hectares. As a result, 8 million tons of cotton, 12 million tons of grain, grapes and vegetables were to be extracted from the canal through the canal, and livestock breeding was planned to be accelerated. The implementation of this great project would open a new era in the irrigation of Central Asia and Uzbekistan and resolve the Aral Sea crisis.

Because it was clear that bringing water from the Siberian rivers would solve enormous socio-economic problems. An additional 8 million hectares of new land were developed, from which large quantities of cotton and other agricultural products were extracted. At that time, 4 million hectares of land provided food for more than 20 million people, and this additional land could feed more than 40 million people. It would be wrong to say that this policy was aimed at providing jobs for the rapidly growing population. They were to be spent primarily on irrigated land and on the Aral Sea [11: 290]. However, for various reasons, this project will also fail. If this project were implemented, would the Aral Sea problem, which has become a global problem today, be solved?

In 1960, a total of 3 million people lived in Uzbekistan. hectares, and by the 1980s the figure was 4 million. hectares (increased by about 1 million hectares). This means that almost 80,000 hectares of land have been developed each year, and in recent years, about 500,000 hectares have been developed, and more attention has been paid to the development of cotton growing. These lands are mainly in the deserts of Mirzachul, Karshi and Jizzakh, where millions of people have migrated and developed them. Newly developed lands are mainly planted with cotton. This is because the main source of economic growth in the country is cotton. The weight of cotton increased from 2,823 million tons in 1960 to about 6 million tons at the end of his presidency. However, the steady decline of the Aral Sea since the 1960s has led to environmental problems. In order to prevent such serious problems, the then head of the republic Sh.R. Rashidov again raised the issue of diverting part of the Siberian rivers to the Aral Sea. This issue was discussed during the XXII Congress of the CPSU in October 1961 under Khrushchev. The KPSS Program adopted at the forum put forward the following idea: "The Soviet people should use strong hydro-resources to change the flow of some northern rivers, regulate their waters and make bold plans to irrigate the





protected areas. it is possible, ”[12:77]. However, the dismissal of N.S. Khrushchev pushed the project aside as well.

On April 27, 1966, accompanied by Sh. Rashidov, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee LI Brezhnev and the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers AN Kosigin visited Mirzachol and got acquainted with the developed territories and socio-economic, cultural life and environmental problems [13: 20]. The demographic situation in the occupied territories has not been stable, despite the constant control of state leaders. In some of the relocated farms, the socio-economic situation was not up to standard. The displaced population was not provided with adequate food and clothing, forcing 2,700 families to return to their homes.

It should be noted that in 1956-1969, 42,000 families moved to the Mirzachul region for permanent residence. However, by 1969, only 25,000 of them had settled here. 17,000 families, or 40.5% of all immigrants, were forced to return to their original places of residence. In other words, the population survival rate in Mirzachol was only 0.59% [14: 199].

In conclusion, the process of development of protected lands, which began in the 50s of the twentieth century, took place in a unique way in the Uzbek SSR. Due to the labor of the resettled population, deserts, steppes, abandoned and protected lands, swamps and pastures were transformed into arable lands, a process that can be said to have played an important role in the economic growth of the republic. Advocacy efforts to provide labor and specialists to new farms in Mirzachol have been steadily intensified. As a result, the population growth of Syrdarya and Jizzakh regions has almost doubled. As a result, the number of prosperous settlements, towns and villages in the Mirzachul valley has increased rapidly.

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