

The Role of MTS (Machine-Tractor Station) in Agriculture after the Second World War

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Abstract:

This article describes the machine-tractor stations (MTS) established after the Second World War and their activities. The role and impact of MTS in agriculture has been studied. At the same time, it was also reported that MTS was one of the main factors in the establishment of cotton monopoly in agriculture. That is, it was shown that machine-tractor stations affected the activity and quality of collective farms and state farms.

Keywords: Collective farm, state farm, machine tractor stations, repair technical stations, brigade, material and technical base, agriculture, cotton stations.

The era of the former Soviet Union was a period of fundamental change for the history of Uzbekistan. It was during this period that each industry created its own legal framework and this process determined various factors of the population's life and work style. In addition, the material and technical base of agriculture was formed during the Soviet era.

In the years after the war, the Soviet government tried to force the expansion of cotton cultivation areas in the republic. As a result, the main issue in the development of cotton production is to strengthen its material and technical base. Because picking cotton by hand and transporting the crop on horse-drawn carts required time and manual labor. Therefore, in the 50s of the 20th century, serious attention was paid to the mechanization of cotton production, and the activities of the MTS were somewhat reformed. This forced the government to spend more money on the material and technical base.

In particular, in 1954-1955, the state spent 34.4 billion soums on the country's agriculture. In the same two years, MTS (machine tractor stations) and state farms received 404,000 tractors, 288,000 trucks, and 88,000 combine harvesters. In 1954-1958, 3 billion 199 million rubles were allocated for the development of the republic's agriculture (equal to all the funds spent during the previous 23

years)¹. Workers of the Uzbek SSR industry diligently mastered the production of new equipment needed for cotton growing. In the 1950s, a certain amount of experience was gained in cotton picking with the help of harvesting machines, as a result of the wide introduction of technical tools to agriculture, the close connection of scientific and technical achievements with production. Picking of cotton with the help of machines was defined as the main link in the mechanization of agriculture. Also, special attention was paid to this area.

The main part of the MTS is the tractor brigade, which includes tractors, combine harvesters and other agricultural machines. Usually, MTS had 10-20 tractors and field-farming brigades, more than 30 combines and a lot of agricultural machinery for soil and planting. MTS had a mechanical workshop, an oil storage warehouse, warehouses, trucks, and sleeping quarters for mechanics and repairmen. Machine-tractor stations (MTS) belong to the state and are equipped with modern machinery-tractors, combines and other agricultural enterprises. With the help of MTS, the Soviet state played a leadership role in relation to collective farms. There were commonalities and differences between MTSs and collective farms. What they have in common is that both are integral parts of the economic system and are based on property. The difference between MTS and collective farms is that MTS belonged to the state, while collective farms were cooperative (group) property, and they were not the same in terms of the level of socialization of the means of production. In the February plenum of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in 1947, the need for strict fulfillment of contractual obligations by MTS and collective farms was specifically indicated. The party, soviet and agricultural bodies systematically monitored the implementation of the contracts concluded between MTS and collective farms. A lot of work in this direction was carried out by the Council for Collective Farm Affairs under the USSR government and its representatives in the field. Therefore, in 1947, machine-tractor stations and collective farms approached the conclusion of contracts more responsibly than in previous years. As a result, by 1953, the number of cotton picking machines reached 13 813². A number of works have been carried out in this regard in Fergana region. The concluded contracts were discussed at general meetings of collective farmers. As a result of this, the district departments of the district executive committees of the MTS were convinced that they would take the obligation to maximally help the collective farms with their means of production. It was a more difficult task to ensure that MTSs fulfill their obligations in full, on time and at a high agrotechnical level. That is why MTS failed to fulfill their obligations in hundreds of collective farms. Such work of MTS could not have a negative impact on the level of collective farm production and the growth of crop yields. In addition, in the model contract concluded between the MTS and the collective farm, the management of the MTS should regularly report to each collective farm at least twice a year on the fulfillment of the contractual obligations. As a rule, most collective farmers of the MTS reported only once a year, and even then with a delay, submitting the report to re-election meetings. Also, in many places, existing machine-tractor stations were used extremely inefficiently. Due to the poor performance of MTSs and failure to fulfill their obligations, agrotechnical work was carried out in collective farms in an unsatisfactory and low-quality manner. This would prolong the ripening period of cotton, cause most of the crop to die, and the plan to hand over cotton to the state would not be fulfilled. Such situations have caused many problems. At this time, existing MTS could do great things. After all, according to the data of 1956, the total capacity of the equipment-tractor park in the republic was 800,000 horsepower. Only in 1954-1955, 106 million soums were spent on the production, cultural and household expenses of machine-tractor stations. In order to provide this sector with qualified personnel, according to the government's instructions, 3 thousand specialists were transferred from industry and other sectors of the national economy to machine-tractor stations. Nevertheless, machine-tractor stations could not set an example in the work of picking cotton and hoeing. Machine skinning was not encouraged by farmers in many cases. Therefore, its

¹ History of the Uzbek SSR. The fourth roof. - Tashkent, 1971. - 253 pages.

² Uzbekistan during the Soviet colonial period. - T.: Sharq, 2000. - 535 pages.

size decreased year by year. If in 1953 the state plan for picking cotton with the help of machines was fulfilled by 29%, by 1955 this number was only 17%. This was not even one percent of all harvested cotton.

There were also major shortcomings in the financial and economic activities of MTSs. In 1955, 10 million soums were lost due to the excessive use of the funds allocated for the repair of 148 MTS, excessive administrative and economic expenses. However, despite this, the supply of MTS with tractor drivers was 42%. The number of Uzbeks among MTS leaders was 54.3%. Because the level of education of collective farm chairmen, MTS and state farm directors was low. A decision was made in the field of retraining of such personnel. According to the decision, a large amount of agricultural machinery was handed over to the Ministry of Higher Education from MTS for higher educational institutions of agriculture.

Therefore, at the end of March 1958, the Supreme Council of the USSR adopted the law "On the further strengthening of the collective farm economy". Accordingly, MTS was gradually transformed into Repair and Technical Stations (RTS), all agricultural machinery was provided to them. The state gave collective farms the right to purchase combines, tractors and other complex equipment, and provided benefits for economically weak collective farms. The repayment period was 2-3 years, and in some cases up to 5 years. Reorganization of MTS was the most important step after the collectivization of agriculture and had a great impact on the development of the entire economy of the country. Most of the collective farms of Uzbekistan now have the opportunity not only to purchase machinery, but also to use it effectively. Until April 1, 1959, 1192 collective farms in the republic (95% of all collective farms) bought tractors and other agricultural machines worth more than 756 million soums from MTS.

These activities helped to strengthen the material and technical base of collective farms, better use of equipment, wide introduction of advanced methods of agrotechnics to collective farm production. It also helped to spread new forms of labor organization and thereby further increase labor productivity and reduce the cost of agricultural products. The tractor-field brigade, which has the necessary equipment to ensure the complex mechanization of agricultural work, has become an effective form of labor organization. The creation of such brigades was initiated by Valentin Tyupko, a mechanic of the Central Asian machine-testing station, K. Kenjayev, a tractor operator at the Gorsky MTS in Fergana region, and T. Absamatov, the head of the tractor brigade at the Shorchi MTS in the Surkhandarya region.

In the following years, the number of machines in MTS increased even more. For example: in 1966, the number of tractors in Fergana region alone was 1114, and by 1970, this number reached 1650. Or cotton picking machines increased from 246 in 1966 to 365 in 1970. This increased productivity.

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