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## THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE "PERESTROIKA" POLICY IN SOCIAL LIFE IN THE UZBEK SSR

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### Abstract

This article analyzes the socio-economic changes carried out in the Uzbek SSR during the period of Perestroika and the problems that arose in this process. The relevance of the article is that it studies the impact of the Perestroika period, which was an important stage in the history of Uzbekistan, on local socio-economic life. Today, the lessons of this period play an important role in correctly assessing the post-independence development strategies of Uzbekistan. The main goal of the research is to reveal the essence of the reforms carried out in the Uzbek SSR during the years of Perestroika, to show their impact on society and the economy, and to analyze the mistakes and shortcomings made. In conducting our research, historical-analytical, statistical and comparative methods were used, and an analytical approach was implemented based on archival documents, official data and the press of the time. The policy of perestroika, along with positive results, also caused a number of serious shortcomings. In particular, the over-regulation of cotton production, the inefficiency of the socialist economy, problems in national relations, and the agricultural crisis have increased public distrust of reforms. Learning from these mistakes is important for Uzbekistan's current and future reform policies.

**Keywords:** Perestroika, Gorbachev, the Aral Sea problem, Cotton, economy, national relations, agriculture.



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## **Introduction**

Perestroika is a set of political and economic reforms initiated by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in the mid-1980s. The main goal of perestroika was to modernize the social, political, and economic systems of the Soviet Union, to soften totalitarian rule, and to address the country's existing problems. These reforms were aimed at preserving the stability of the Soviet system, increasing economic efficiency, and liberalizing the political system. Perestroika primarily aimed to implement market-based reforms in the economic system. It was proposed to soften the centralized planning system, give freedom to non-state sectors, and manage production and economic activity through market mechanisms. In the political sphere, attention was paid to introducing the principle of transparency and developing political pluralism. This, in turn, implied free expression of opinions by citizens, the abandonment of censorship policies, and support for competition between political parties.

## **Literature review and methodology**

On this topic, John E. Elliott (University of California, USA). His research provides detailed information on the nature of Gorbachev's economic reforms, how they were implemented, and their impact on the economic system. Stephen White (University of Glasgow, UK). Analyzes Gorbachev's attempts to democratize socialism. Archie Brown (University of Oxford, UK). The following issues were attempted to be revealed in the work of T. Dadabaev from Uzbekistan on Gorbachev's political reforms and their impact on the political system of the Soviet Union: The situation in the republic is quite complex, and its causes depend on several factors. People do not doubt the essence of the perestroika process, but it is natural that they are dissatisfied with its results, because they are tired of waiting for changes and improvements for a long time. In such conditions, various social groups and political forces are trying to take advantage of the emerging difficulties and discontent. They, in turn, are trying to incite society against the party, Soviet and economic bodies, which can increase instability in the country's political system and similar issues, in the studies of R. Fayzullayev, the policy of the Soviet era, the process of perestroika led to its many contradictions and political instability. The delay in economic



reforms, internal contradictions and the weakening of the central government exacerbated socio-economic crises in the USSR. The increase in political freedoms, in particular, intensified national and ethnic contradictions, which led to research on independence movements in the republics in the early 1990s.

The article considers the methods of studying history based on sociological, logical-experimental, classification, description, comparison, statistical analysis, archaeological scientific sources, systematic analysis of educational and methodological literature, observation, SWOT systematic analysis, functional and literary analysis.

## **Discussion**

The tension in interethnic relations and the resulting socio-political tension are primarily due to the difficulties that the population of our republic, especially families and individuals living in rural areas, regardless of their nationality, face from year to year, day by day in providing themselves with the resources necessary to ensure their normal life. The population is increasingly facing difficulties in providing food, energy, jobs and other basic needs necessary for survival. This situation, in turn, negatively affects social and political stability and creates additional tension in interethnic relations [1.3]. The essence of agrarian policy, in particular, the expansion of irrigated land, the misuse of water resources and the monopoly of cotton, has led to the emergence of a global environmental problem called the "Aral Sea problem". Despite the fact that almost 56 km<sup>3</sup> of water flows into the Aral Sea from the Syrdarya and Amu Darya rivers every year, the rapid development of new lands and the further development of irrigated agriculture have led to the drying up of the sea since the 1960s. In 1989, the level of the Aral Sea dropped by another meter. The population living on the shores of the Aral Sea has increased in various diseases, especially respiratory and dermatological diseases. This, in turn, poses a serious threat to the health of the region's population and exacerbates social and economic crises. The Aral Sea problem has had a negative impact not only on the environment, but also on regional security and sustainable development. By the 1980s, child mortality had doubled (see table in Appendix 9) [2.58]. Cotton growing is the main sector of Uzbekistan's agriculture and has a significant



impact on the development of the republic's economy. Cotton growing processes are of great importance not only in the agricultural sector, but also in the general economic and social system of the country. The success of the cotton sector directly affects the well-being of all workers in the republic. The development and efficiency of this sector are not limited only to the lives of farmers, but also have a positive or negative impact on large-scale economic processes. Therefore, cotton growing is considered not only as an economic sector, but also as an important factor ensuring national relations and social stability. The role of cotton growing in increasing the economic well-being of Uzbekistan is very large, and successes in this area ensure the sustainable development of the economy of the entire republic. Our people have accumulated rich experience in irrigated agriculture and cotton cultivation. Our people cultivate white gold of national importance with unquenchable love, ardent hearts, boundless faith, great devotion, a clear conscience, and without sparing their strength and skills. The sluggishness in the cotton sector had a significant impact not only on the economy of Uzbekistan, but also on the entire country. During 1984-1988, an average of 5 million 200 thousand tons of raw materials were produced in the republic, which was equal to the indicators of ten years ago. In 1988, the cotton yield per hectare was only 24.3 centners. Also, in a quarter of 307 small and state farms, the yield was less than 20 centners, which indicates the need to increase efficiency in the cotton sector.

Such low productivity, in turn, had a negative impact on the country's economy. In particular, low efficiency in cotton production has led to waste of resources, reduced production, and reduced competitiveness in international markets. This situation, with its economic consequences, has seriously threatened not only cotton farming, but also the entire agricultural sector and the overall economic stability of the country.

## **Results**

The main reasons for backwardness are: the lack of application of scientifically based methods in agriculture, especially the improper organization of the cotton-alfalfa crop rotation system. Currently, only cotton is grown on 70-80 percent of the arable land in cotton farms, and alfalfa fields account for only 16 percent



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instead of the scientifically based 30-36 percent. In addition, only 4-4.5 percent of cotton fields are located in the place of alfalfa, which indicates the ineffectiveness of the crop rotation system. In cotton farming, the practice of planting cotton on the same land for 18-20 years is widespread, which reduces soil fertility and increases backwardness. In most collective farms and state farms, the crop rotation system is not implemented at all, which reduces the efficiency of the cotton growing process and creates environmental problems. This situation leads to a decrease in humus in the soil, a decrease in productivity, and a deterioration in the quality of cotton products [3.3].

In July 1984, the 16th Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan was held, and a number of resolutions were adopted to combat and put an end to such negative phenomena as embezzlement, double-entry bookkeeping, bribery and indifference in collective and state farms, as well as in the general national economy. However, family links initially did not bring the expected results. Some individuals, pursuing their personal interests, began to illegally send the harvest of vegetables grown on collective or state lands to the market or to receiving points. This situation hindered the effective functioning of the family links system, as this practice led to corruption and waste of resources in the system. It was necessary to transfer the entire amount of the crop grown on the basis of an oral contract to the state. For products grown in excess of the plan, the heads of collective farm families were paid by the state at purchase prices. However, 70 percent of the value of the products delivered outside the plan was given to family links. This situation, of course, did not please some senior managers in the system, because for them this distribution mode meant relatively less control. At the same time, if commissions or inspection groups arrived from somewhere, instructions were given to the collective farm managers so that they would be aware of them in advance. When asked by the inspectors how they worked, the answer was "someone on a contract basis". This indicates the existence of partially hidden and unclear working methods in the system, which in turn hindered clarity and transparency in the administrative system [4.27].

The standard of living of the population of Uzbekistan at that time was extremely low, occupying one of the last places in the Union in terms of per capita income,





consumption of food and daily necessities, as well as in all sectors of the social sphere, such as housing, public education, health care, and social services. This situation indicates the low level of development of the country's economic and social infrastructure and serious problems in improving the well-being of the population. The insufficient development of the social sector, as well as the existing restrictions on meeting the needs of the population, reduced economic efficiency and hindered the efficient allocation of resources [5.41-42]. These changes are explained by the reduction in the supply of food products in the country, as well as the economic and social causes of the decline in the standard of living of the population. These indicators, in turn, affect the issues of food security, the allocation of resources, and the effectiveness of state policy [6.53]. In Uzbekistan, potato consumption decreased by 18% in 1989 compared to 1960[7.15]. The country's economic resources and main efforts were directed to cotton growing, and great attention was paid to obtaining a bountiful harvest, which negatively affected the development of other spheres of social life.

84% of the labor in the cotton growing sector fell on our people, but only 16% of the income from primary processing in this sector went to the population. This situation indicates the injustice associated with the distribution of labor and resources in the development of cotton growing and the imbalance between the well-being of the population [8.238].

As a result of the unrealistic production and low efficiency of the system, cotton farmers were forced to work 12-16 hours a day to fulfill the plan. During this work, work continued even on weekends and holidays. However, the labor of farmers was very undervalued. The central government decided to increase the 1 soum paid to collective farms for 1 kilogram of cotton by only 32 percent since 1990, i.e., the value of 1 soum was 32 kopecks [9.147]. Cotton growers worked in the fields all year round, even in winter, but for one ton of cotton, which cost 30,000 US dollars on the world market, only 3-3.5 thousand soums were paid in the Uzbek SSR. This shows that the wages received by cotton growers from the sale of cotton were about 15 times lower than the world market price. These figures indicate the undervaluation of cotton workers, their annual hard work, and the unfair distribution of wages. The low wages paid to cotton growers also



highlight economic inequality and systemic shortcomings in the agricultural sector [10.11].

## **Conclusion**

This policy, implemented by M. S. Gorbachev and his supporters, on the one hand, is considered a partial reform of the Soviet Union system, on the other hand, it had a great impact on world politics in general. Through perestroika, the Soviet leadership sought to abandon existing political systems and make changes. In particular, this policy led to the end of the Cold War, the collapse of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, and the emergence of new orders in global politics. However, during the implementation of the perestroika process, contradictions and discontent within the country intensified. This, in particular, led to a delay in economic reforms and instability, and political changes intensified national and ethnic conflicts. As a result, by the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Soviet Union began to experience serious socio-economic crises in various areas. During this period, national conflicts and political instability increased, and also led to the disintegration of the USSR and its collapse in 1991. Thus, although the policy of perestroika sought to create a new socio-political and economic system in the Soviet Union, the contradictions, protests, and social crises that arose during its implementation ultimately led to the collapse of the USSR.

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