

# TASHKENT ECONOMIC REGION AND ITS ROLE IN THE NATIONAL ECONOMY OF UZBEKISTAN

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## Abstract

This article analyzes the composition, resource potential, and role of the Tashkent economic region in the national economy of Uzbekistan. Encompassing the city of Tashkent and Tashkent region, this economic area holds a leading position in the country's industry, transport, trade, services, and agro-industrial sectors. The article also highlights the region's strategic importance through its labor resources, scientific centers, and infrastructure capacity. Based on the analysis, the decisive role of the Tashkent economic region in the economic development of Uzbekistan is substantiated.

**Keywords:** Economic region, Tashkent, light industry, heavy industry, coal industry, chemical industry.

## Introduction

The role of regional economic zones in the socio-economic development of the Republic of Uzbekistan is invaluable. Among these regions, the Tashkent economic region holds particular importance as one of the most developed areas of the country in terms of industry, transportation, services, and scientific capacity. Encompassing the city of Tashkent and Tashkent region, this area is home to a significant portion of the country's population, with a high concentration of labor resources and well-developed infrastructure.

This article analyzes the structural characteristics, economic potential, leading sectors, and the role of the Tashkent economic region in Uzbekistan's national economy during the Soviet period. Additionally, the strategic functions of the region in the national economy and its prospective development directions are examined.

## Discussion

After the end of World War II, the leadership of the Soviet state launched efforts to restore the national economy and develop agriculture. These efforts were carried out through the expansion of so-called "socialist" production relations, guided by new objectives based on Marxist-Leninist theory, i.e., the economic laws of socialism.

In various regions of the country, the Soviet government sought to ensure specialization of the all-Union national economy, to establish complex and integrated economies within each region, and to raise backward areas to the level of advanced ones. The overarching goal was to evenly

distribute the productive forces across the entire territory of the country by developing all economic regions in a balanced manner<sup>1</sup>. Such a method of regional management “led to the formation of economic regions and the regional division of labor in the USSR”<sup>2</sup>. This approach essentially involved dividing the national economy into sectors, managing them based on planning, and was intended to eliminate the fragmentation of the socialist national economy by relying on territorial and inter-sectoral management<sup>3</sup>. A specific territorial part of the USSR’s national economy was called an economic region, and these regions were distinguished from other parts of the country by their specialized production<sup>4</sup>.

After the plans aimed at developing production were set in the party programs and decisions, in 1960, the Councils of National Economy were established for the first time in the Russian, Ukrainian, and Kazakh SSRs. In 1962, the USSR Council of National Economy was established, and in the same year, the USSR Supreme Council of National Economy was created<sup>5</sup>. In 1962, the Large Central Asian Economic Region, consisting of the Uzbek SSR, Tajik SSR, Turkmen SSR, and Kyrgyz SSR, as well as the Charter of the Council of National Economy, were adopted<sup>6</sup>. In the country, the largest economic region was the Great Coordination Council that united the RSFSR and Ukraine<sup>7</sup>, while the second largest was the Large Central Asian Economic Region<sup>8</sup>. All economic regions in the country included leading scientific, design, and engineering institutes of the country and republics. The functions of the CPSU Central Committee and the USSR State Planning Committee were also transferred to the newly established USSR Councils of National Economy<sup>9</sup>.

The Large Central Asian Economic Region included the republics of the Uzbek SSR, Kyrgyz SSR, Tajik SSR, and Turkmen SSR. Among these economic regions, the Uzbek SSR held its own place and, in terms of area, ranked second among the republics forming the Large Central Asian Economic Region, after the Turkmen SSR. Its area was 449.6 thousand square kilometers. This area could accommodate the countries of the United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Austria. Overall, the Uzbek SSR occupied 2% of the USSR's territory, with 5.1% of the country's population residing there<sup>10</sup>.

The Large Central Asian Economic Region was one of the key economic regions of the USSR. Besides natural conditions, it included four republics — the Uzbek SSR, Kyrgyz SSR, Tajik

1 Бедринцев Н.К. СССР Халқ хўжалигида Ўзбекистоннинг тутган ўрни. ... – Б. 6.

2 Досумов Р.Я. Перестройка управления промышленным производством в новых условиях хозяйствования. ... – С. 24.

3 Зиядуллаев Н.С. Моделирование региональных экономических систем. ... - С. 10-11.

4 Костенников В.М. Развитие экономических районов СССР (перспективы и проблемы). Пособие для учителей. – Москва. Просвещение, 1977. – С.7.

5 История России. С древнейших времен до конца XX века. – Москва. АСТ, 2000. – С.531.

6 NA Uz, fond - P-2303, list-1, case -1. 2-5 pages.

7 NA Uz, fond - P-2303, list-1, case -2. 27 pages.

8 Рудин А. Ўрта Осиё йирик иктисодий райони // Қизил Ўзбекистон. 1962 йил 13 апрель.

9 Коммунистическая партия Советского Союза в резолюциях и решениях съездов, конференций и пленумов ЦК. Т.10. 1961-1965. – Москва. Изд. Полит. Лит, 1986. – С. 295.

10 Бедринцев К.Н. Ўзбекистон ва унинг иктисодий районлари. ... -37 б.

SSR, and Turkmen SSR — which were interconnected due to their geographical location. Due to its distinctive production capacity and labor resources compared to other economic regions, it was called the “Large Central Asian Economic Region”. As one of the important economic regions, the Large Central Asian Economic Region occupied a central place in the country’s planned and project-based developments during the 1960s.<sup>11</sup>

In the Large Central Asian Economic Region, the management of regional economies was initially supervised by the Council for Planning and Coordination of the Large Central Asian Economic Region, established based on the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the USSR Council of Ministers dated April 26, 1961. To strengthen leadership over specific sectors within the branches of the Central Asian economic region, several other bodies were established at the Central Asian level — including the Central Asian Main Directorate for Irrigation and State Farm Construction, the State Construction Production Committee for Central Asia (Sredazstroy), as well as the Central Asian Planning Commission and Statistics Directorate, which oversaw planning and implementation of the national economy<sup>12</sup>.

Uzbekistan held a prominent position within the Large Central Asian Economic Region, with the industry of the Uzbek SSR being an integral part of the country’s overall industrial structure. The production methods and styles in the Uzbek SSR were somewhat distinct, allowing the development of sectors such as mineral fertilizer production for the cotton-growing agriculture, cotton cleaning industry, textile industry, as well as enterprises supplying machinery and equipment to these industries, and agricultural machine-building<sup>13</sup>. For this reason, an imbalanced and one-sided raw material structure of the national economy developed in Uzbekistan<sup>14</sup>. At the same time, besides the cotton industry, Uzbekistan developed sectors such as ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, as well as industries producing consumer goods to meet local demand<sup>15</sup>. The diversified machine-building industry in the Uzbek SSR held an important place in the economy of the Large Central Asian Economic Region. It comprised 300 organizations, of which 70 were large machine-building factories subordinate to 16 all-Union ministries<sup>16</sup>. Uzbekistan regularly supplied chemical equipment and products, as well as technological equipment for the gas and light industries to the Russian Federation; compressors, excavators, overhead cranes, and cables to Ukraine; electric motors, cables, electronic and thermal power instruments, and rubber-technical products to Moldova. The products of the “Tashkentcable” enterprise alone were exported to 25 foreign countries<sup>17</sup>.

11 Среднеазиатский экономический район. – Москва. Наука, 1972. – С. 14.

12 Рашидов Г. Города советского Узбекистана // Общественные науки в Узбекистане. 1974, № 8-9. – С.62.

13 Управление социалистическим производством. Вопросы теории и практики. – М.: Экономика, 1978. – С. 678-679.

14 Каримов И.А. Ўзбекистон: миллий истиклол, иқтисод, сиёсат, мафкура. – Тошкент: Ўзбекистон, 1996. Т. 1. - Б. 61.

15 Зиядуллаев К. Индустрия советского Узбекистана... - С. 6.

16 Интенсификация развития машиностроительного комплекса Узбекистана. – Ташкент. Фан, 1988. - С. 34.

17 Рашидов Г. Города советского Узбекистана // Общественные науки в Узбекистане. 1974, № 8-9. – С.61.

As in the entire Union, public bureaus began to operate in the enterprises of the Uzbek SSR's national economy. These bureaus were first established in 1959 at several enterprises under the Sverdlovsk Council of National Economy. Starting from 1961, such bureaus were created in other councils of the national economy across the country, including 13 public design and technology bureaus established in enterprises under the Uzbek SSR Council of National Economy that same year. Additionally, more than one hundred integrated brigades focused on the introduction of new technology, as well as over five hundred integrated brigades of inventors and rationalizers, were formed in the enterprises under the Uzbek SSR Council of National Economy<sup>18</sup>. These brigades included workers of various professions, foremen, technologists, as well as heads of workshops, sections, and departments of the enterprises. As a result, in the non-ferrous metallurgy industry, there were 17 public brigades with 201 members; in the chemical industry, 36 brigades with 138 members; in the energy sector, 10 brigades with 86 members; in the machine-building industry, 39 brigades with 294 members; in the textile and knitwear industry, 25 brigades with 143 members; in the light industry, 10 brigades with 75 members; and in the food industry, 9 brigades with 31 members were established<sup>19</sup>.

According to specialization, the Uzbek SSR was initially divided into four economic administrative regions: Tashkent, Fergana, Samarkand, and the Karakalpakstan economic administrative region<sup>20</sup>. In the post-war years, more than 150 industrial enterprises were launched in the republic, new lands were developed, and the territories of the districts expanded, leading to an increase in the number of economic regions within the republic. However, the factories built in Uzbekistan were unevenly distributed, with the Tashkent region alone producing 80% of the total output<sup>21</sup>. By the 1960s, the republic was divided into six economic regions. These included the Tashkent, Fergana, Samarkand, Karshi, Bukhara-Kyzylkum (comprising Bukhara and the newly established Navoi region), and Lower Amu Darya and Surkhandarya economic regions<sup>22</sup>.

The existing industrial sectors of the Tashkent economic region included enterprises engaged in both heavy and light industries. On this subject, Sh. Zokirov writes: "The Tashkent and Fergana economic-administrative regions have advanced significantly ahead of other regions in terms of economic development. In contrast, the underdeveloped Bukhara, Karakalpakstan, and Samarkand economic-administrative regions have not fully utilized their natural and labor resources. The republic's heavy industry was primarily centralized in the Tashkent region. In

18 Левенсон Л.И. Техникада жамоатчилик. (Ўзбекистон ССР Халқ хўжалиги кенгашига қарашли корхоналардаги жамоатчилик бюрларининг иш тажрибаларидан). – Тошкент: Ўзбекистон ССР Давлат нашриёти, 1962. – 5 б.

19 Левенсон Л.И. Техникада жамоатчилик (Ўзбекистон ССР Халқ хўжалиги кенгашига қарашли корхоналардаги жамоатчилик бюрларининг иш тажрибаларидан). – Тошкент: Ўзбекистон ССР давлат нашриёти, 1962. – 15 б.

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21 Развитие и размещение производительных сил экономических районов СССР. – Москва: Наука, 1967. – С. 247.

22 Совершенствование структуры народного хозяйства Узбекской ССР. – Ташкент: Фан, 1987. – С. 72.



the Karakalpakstan, Bukhara, and Samarkand administrative-economic regions, some branches of heavy industry developed slowly” 23.

In the development of the coal industry in the Tashkent economic region, special emphasis should be placed on the city of Angren. Angren, one of the largest industrial centers in the Eastern or Angren-Almalyk industrial district of the Tashkent economic region, has a population of 117,000 and is located 120 km southeast of Tashkent, in the mountainous part of the Ohangaron Valley. A railway line connects Tashkent to Angren, and the discovery of the largest brown coal basin in Central Asia in this area led to the establishment of the city.

By the 1980s, Angren had become an important heavy industrial center in the Tashkent economic region. Most of the city's industry was related to the coal sector. The “Uzbekugol” combine was located here, mining coal mainly by open-pit methods as well as underground mining. The “Podzemgaz” station, which converted underground coal into gas, also operated here. The Angren coal-based GRES power plant supplied the city with electricity. Additionally, the city hosted a rubber-technical combine, mines, equipment repair plants for machinery and vehicles, a gold enrichment factory, ceramics combine, a cement plant, a housing construction combine, dairy and bakery factories, and other enterprises.

According to the decree of the Council of Ministers of the Uzbek SSR dated July 1, 1960, the Chemical Industry Directorate was established within the Uzbek SSR's national economy. That same year, the following enterprises from the Tashkent economic region were included under this directorate. In the chemical industry, the Chirchiq electro-chemical plant, Tashkent lacquer and paint factory, and Tashkent chemical-pharmaceutical plants in the Tashkent region were included. In the forestry, paper, and wood processing industry, the Tashkent paper combine, Yangi-Yul hydrolysis plant, and in the rubber industry, the Tashkent rubber factory and Tashkent gramophone record factory were included<sup>24</sup>.

The Chirchiq Electrochemical Combine produced mineral fertilizers on a large scale. For example, the ammonium sulfate workshop alone produced 635,000 tons of product annually. In addition, the plant included workshops for the production of ammonia, processing of ammonia, production and processing of metallic sodium, and production of various other chemical products. It also had a catalyst production workshop, mechanical repair plants and workshops, as well as facilities for power and water supply, maintenance, and a thermal power station (CHP) with a capacity of 6,000 kW<sup>25</sup>.

The Tashkent Paint and Varnish Factory operated workshops for the production of oil-based drying agents (alif), varnishes, alcohol-based lacquers, and enamels <sup>26</sup>.

The Tashkent Chemical-Pharmaceutical Plant operated workshops for the production of ampoules, tablets, bandages, galenic preparations, and gauze (fatin), as well as an ointment section, a repair workshop, and other auxiliary services. The plant's technological support was

23 Зокиров Ш. Ўзбекистон халқ хўжалиги ва унинг бутуниттифоқ меҳнат тақсимоотида туганган ўрни. – Тошкент: “Қизил Ўзбекистон”, “Правда востока”, “Ўзбекистони сурх” бирлашган нашриёти, 1960. – 24 б.

24 NA Uz, fond - P – 2598, list-1, case – 10, - 2- 3 pages.

25 NA Uz, fond - P – 2598, list-1, case – 10, - 4 page.

26 NA Uz, fond - P – 2598, list-1, case -10, - 4 page.

very low, with manual labor accounting for 60% of operations. Due to insufficient safety measures, the number of workplace accidents increased from 9 in 1961 to 18 in 1962<sup>27</sup>.

The Tashkent Paper Combine, built in 1932, operated a cardboard production workshop, as well as workshops producing school notebooks, general-purpose notebooks, writing paper, notepads, and specialized paper for footwear production<sup>28</sup>.

The Yangi-Yul Hydrolysis Plant, launched in 1958, operated with a hydrolysis section, a fermentation department (*brodilnoye otdelenie*), and rectification sections<sup>29</sup>.

The Tashkent Vikel Plant was established in 1942 as part of the evacuated “Kauchuk” base from Moscow. The plant primarily consisted of a workshop producing 1.65 million rubber gaskets per year for V-belts and the canning industry. It also included a unit capable of producing 3,000 units of silicate glue per day, as well as workshops manufacturing rubber-technical products<sup>30</sup>. The plant had a high rate of low-quality product output. It failed to fulfill the delivery of V-belt rings to the Volgograd plant. Technical safety standards were entirely unsatisfactory, and the number of injuries in 1962 tripled compared to 1961. Unjustified expenditures steadily increased, with fines amounting to 5,200 rubles in 1962. Additionally, idle railway wagons caused a loss of 3,000 rubles, and wastewater pollution levels were extremely high.

The Tashkent “Gramplastika” (Record) Plant was established during World War II as part of the equipment evacuated from the Noginsk and Aprel record plants. Production was launched in 1945. The plant had an annual production capacity of 7 million records but, in practice, produced up to 13 million records per year<sup>31</sup>.

Additionally, the Tashkent Plastics Plant, which manufactured plastic products, was also operating in this region. The enterprise’s plans were developed by the Department of Local Industry under the Tashkent City Executive Committee (Tashgorispolkom). However, due to the irresponsibility of the leadership, in 1963 the enterprise was not provided with the necessary planned allocations for polyethylene, capron, castor oil, and other essential materials. Naturally, this situation made it impossible to fulfill the production targets set by the plan.

Moreover, at this plant alone, technological discipline was not observed, and proper working conditions were not created for the workers. As a result, in 1962, 11 workplace accidents occurred.

The plant’s warehouse was filled with approximately 130,000 rubles' worth of surplus and unnecessary products. This included:

- 42.2 tons of bicarbonate soda,
- 36.2 tons of calcined soda,
- 26.6 tons of ochre, mummy, and other dyes,
- 420,000 flacons of 100 grams each,
- 59,600 protective lenses,

27 NA Uz, fond - P – 2598, list-1, case -153, - 34 pages.

28 NA Uz, fond - P – 2598, list-1, case -10, - 8 page.

29 NA Uz, fond - P – 2598, list-1, case -10, - 8 page.

30 NA Uz, fond - P – 2598, list-1, case -10, - 10 page.

31 NA Uz, fond - P – 2598, list-1, case -10, - 11 page.

- 55.9 tons of copper sulfate,
- 50 tons of chlorine-based copper compound,
- and 21,300 rubles worth of leather goods<sup>32</sup>.

The accidents mentioned above also occurred at the Yangi Yo'l Hydrolysis Plant. The plant consistently met its production targets for ethyl alcohol. However, technical safety measures were not fully ensured, and in 1961, there were 5 cases of injuries reported<sup>33</sup>.

At the Tashkent Rubber-Technical Plant, technical production discipline was not observed, technological regulations were not followed, and safety instructions were not fully implemented. There were significant fines imposed, which by 1962 had increased by 11,100 rubles compared to 1961. In particular, a fine of 7,900 rubles was imposed for delivering substandard products, and a fine of 4,700 rubles was imposed for failing to fulfill contracts within the specified deadlines, both of which remained unpaid<sup>34</sup>.

### Conclusion:

During the Soviet era, the Tashkent economic region held an important position as the economic, industrial, and scientific center of the Uzbek SSR. Due to the industrialization processes carried out in the region, the largest production and processing enterprises of the republic were located precisely here. Industries such as machinery manufacturing, light and food industries, chemistry, and electrical engineering developed at a high level, producing goods for the entire Central Asia.

Additionally, higher education institutions, scientific research centers, and cultural establishments located in Tashkent played a significant role in enhancing the intellectual potential of the region. The centralization of transport and communication networks made the Tashkent economic region a strategically important area not only for Uzbekistan but for the entire Soviet Union.

Therefore, during the Soviet period, the Tashkent economic region was not only the heart of the republic's economy but also a center for socio-political and cultural development.

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