



**POLICY OF THE TOTALITARIAN REGIME IN THE UZBEK
SSR: POLITICAL REPRESSIONS AND SOCIAL TRAGEDIES
OF THE 1920s–1940s**

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ABSTRACT

The article investigates how the Soviet totalitarian government implemented political repression throughout the Uzbek SSR between 1920 and 1940 and examines the resulting social and cultural effects. The research analyzes existing scholarly literature together with historical documents to examine how repressive policies affected national intelligentsia and peasantry and education system development. The study demonstrates that Soviet totalitarian governance methods created deep social and economic and cultural damage to Uzbek society. The process destroyed not only personal lives but also the complete national identity of the people.

**ПОЛИТИКА ТОТАЛИТАРНОГО РЕЖИМА В УЗБЕКСКОЙ ССР:
ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИЕ РЕПРЕССИИ И СОЦИАЛЬНЫЕ ТРАГЕДИИ XX ВЕКА**

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ABSTRACT

В данной статье анализируется политика политических репрессий, проводимая советским тоталитарным режимом в Узбекской ССР в 1920–1940-е годы, а также её социальные и культурные последствия. Исследование основано на существующей научной литературе и исторических документах; особое внимание уделяется влиянию репрессивной политики на национальную



KEYWORDS

Узбекская ССР,
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советская политика.

интеллигенцию, крестьянство и систему
образования. Полученные результаты
свидетельствуют о том, что тоталитарные
методы советского управления нанесли глубокие
социальные, экономические и культурные раны
узбекскому обществу. Этот процесс уничтожил не
только отдельные судьбы, но и национальную
идентичность целого народа.

**O'ZBEKISTON SSRDA MUSTABID TUZUM SIYOSATI: 1920-1940-
YILLARDAGI SIYOSIY QATAG'ONLAR VA IJTIMOY FOJIALAR**

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fojia.

ABSTRACT

Ushbu maqolada O'zbekiston SSRda sovet mustabid tuzumining 1920–1940-yillardagi siyosiy repressiya siyosati, uning ijtimoiy va madaniy oqibatlari tahlil qilinadi. Tadqiqot mavjud ilmiy adabiyotlar va tarixiy hujjatlar asosida olib borilgan bo'lib, qatag'on siyosatining milliy ziyolilarga, dehqonlarga va ta'lim tizimiga ko'rsatgan ta'siri keng yoritilgan. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, sovet hokimiyatining totalitar boshqaruv usullari O'zbekiston jamiyatini ijtimoiy, iqtisodiy va madaniy jihatdan chuqur jarohatlagan. Mazkur jarayon nafaqat individual taqdirarni, balki butun xalqning milliy o'zligini ham vayron qilgan.

INTRODUCTION

The first half of the twentieth century stands as one of the most complex and painful periods in the history of Uzbekistan. The establishment of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic in 1924 and its incorporation into the USSR brought with it a fundamental transformation of the region's political structure as the Soviet Union began to

implement its complete system of totalitarian governance. The repressive policies carried out during this era were not isolated acts of political violence but rather a systematic terror directed at dismantling the cultural intellectual and social potential of an entire nation. The Soviet authorities operated in two ways in Uzbekistan by using industrialization and collectivization to create economic



changes while simultaneously killing their political adversaries and indigenous leaders and independent thinkers who posed a threat to their control [1]. The totalitarian regime's twofold strategy created an environment that resulted in widespread social disasters throughout Uzbek society. The relevance of this subject lies in the fact that an honest and comprehensive investigation of Soviet-era repressions remains an unfinished scholarly task to the present day. The partial unavailability of archival materials together with the remaining influence of Soviet ideology results in inadequate research about this historical period. Nevertheless recent years have seen Uzbek historians and international historians produce extensive academic research that increasingly clarifies the extent and methods and impacts of the repressive measures they studied [2].

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

The study depends entirely on existing academic literature and the author's own research findings. The research employs historical-comparative, problem-chronological, and systematic analytical methods. The academic literature on this topic demonstrates that both Uzbek researchers and international researchers have made important contributions to the study. In their recent study Bolotnikov and Tsyryapkina examined the 1920s-1930s repressiveness of the Uzbek SSR through the lens of post-Soviet Uzbekistan's memory policies which show how the country has reevaluated these events since achieving independence [1]. Their

work demonstrates that the repressions remain not merely a historical question but a matter of ongoing political and identity significance. Argali's study provides a deep cultural analysis of the 1937-1938 purges which targeted Uzbek national intellectuals to show how these historical events permanently damaged the native culture throughout subsequent generations [2].

Ermetov and his colleagues conducted a historical research project which compares political repression in Uzbekistan to the unique operations of law enforcement agencies that existed between 1936 and 1938 which they studied through archival documents [3]. The study presents the complete operational requirements of a totalitarian state system which developed its law enforcement agencies into tools for governmental oppression. The article by Namazov demonstrates how the 1920s and 1930s social and political transformations affected educational systems because Soviet authorities used educational reforms to promote their ideology while the government suppressed national intellectuals who worked as educators [4]. Jamolov and Amirdinov conducted research using important primary materials to study how collectivization policies affected the 1932 to 1933 famine and how Russian workers were moved to Uzbekistan [5]. The economic analysis by Rakhmatulloyev presents the contradictory picture of the Uzbek SSR economy between 1925 and 1940 which shows both industrial development and the destructive effects of forced collectivization and political oppression [10].



The study has expanded its source material through primary resources which include Encyclopedic sources that document the historical background of the Uzbek SSR and its national leader Fitrat [6, 7] together with specialized papers that explain the targets and fundamental nature of repressive measures [8, 9]. The literature review shows that existing research examines particular aspects of repressions but there is a lack of complete studies which analyze their political, economic, social and cultural impacts in an integrated way.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research study used historical documents and academic studies to establish that the totalitarian regime in the Uzbek SSR followed four main operational paths during the 1920s to 1940s period. The first path involved the elimination of national political leaders. The second path involved the repression of national intellectuals. The third path resulted in agricultural destruction because of mandatory collectivization policies. The fourth path required educational systems and cultural institutions to operate under ideological restrictions.

The process which destroyed national political leadership started during the 1920s when Uzbek Communist Party executives began losing their power to Moscow authorities, which reached its peak during the 1937-1938 Great Terror. The government of the Uzbek SSR accused its leaders who held the position of people's commissar and most of the party members of being "enemies of the people" and "national bourgeoisie" and

"deviant elements," which led to their execution [3]. The GPU and OGPU and NKVD law enforcement agencies served as the main tools which carried out government-backed oppression. Ermetov's research shows that between 1936 and 1938 all district-level and regional-level leaders in Uzbekistan experienced replacement while most of them died through execution without trial or through special tribunal proceedings [3]. The process destroyed not only an individual person but also a complete system of governing political culture which had existed until its most basic elements were destroyed.

The second direction which caused the greatest cultural damage to Uzbekistan started when authorities began to repress national intellectuals. The progressive reformers known as the Jadids, followed by writers, poets, linguists, historians, and artists, were first criticized as "bourgeois nationalists" and then, during the mass operations of 1937-1938, were arrested en masse; the majority were shot [2]. The great representative of Uzbek literature, language, and culture Abdurauf Fitrat was arrested in 1937 and executed in 1938 [7]. Argali's research shows that the purges did not only take away individual lives because they destroyed a complete generation of intellectuals who would have created literature and scholarship in their national language. The event created a massive barrier which prevented national culture and historical research from progressing.

The forced agricultural collectivization introduced by the third direction caused severe damage to Uzbek peasant citizens. The state-controlled



cotton cultivation system which the government established through its 1929 to 1933 collectivization policy led to the complete land and property loss of all peasants [5, 10]. The Sovietized agricultural system which Soviet authorities established included a transfer of 25000 Russian workers to Uzbekistan which created deep social conflicts and demonstrated the implementation of Russification policies [5]. Uzbekistan experienced a severe food shortage during 1932 to 1933 which affected the entire Soviet Union because the government needed to take all remaining grain stocks from peasants to fulfill its mandated state requirements. Economic studies demonstrate that collectivization destroyed Uzbek agriculture within a brief period which resulted in permanent damage that persisted throughout an extensive timeframe [10].

The fourth direction — the subordination of education and culture to ideological control — formed part of a broader strategy of social governance. The literacy campaigns together with the establishment of new schools created an appearance of positive progress yet the actual implementation of these educational reforms functioned as a tool to teach Communist beliefs to young people [4]. The writing reforms — the successive transitions from the Arabic script to the Latin alphabet and then to Cyrillic — have been assessed as a deliberately employed instrument for separating the Uzbek people from their rich written heritage. After the repression of national intellectuals, the educational system located all open positions to teachers who would uphold

Soviet beliefs while the school system became fully controlled by the Communist Party. The education system expansion during this period resulted in a loss of national content according to Namazov, which caused future generations to grow up without any connection to their historical and cultural heritage [4].

The combination of four examined directions proves that totalitarian regime repression in Uzbekistan operated according to specific state policies which maintained comprehensive yet systematic control over its operations. According to Bolotnikov and Tsyryapkina the process of reassessing post-Soviet repressions in Uzbekistan has developed through distinct political challenges because the need to rehabilitate repression victims has been accepted while the establishment of an official state policy break from Soviet practices has created its own problems [1]. The current situation demonstrates how repressive practices from the past still impact both social and political dynamics in contemporary society.

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the policy of the totalitarian regime in the Uzbek SSR during the 1920s–1940s demonstrates that this era was not merely a sequence of external political events but a systematic tragedy that fundamentally altered the trajectory of the Uzbek people's national development and left enduring wounds. The elimination of the national political elite reduced state governance to a vassal of Moscow; the repressions targeting the national intelligentsia severed the continuity of a cultural and intellectual generation;



forced collectivization destroyed agriculture and dispossessed the peasantry; and the subordination of education and culture to ideological control distanced subsequent generations from their national identity. These processes were not separate policies but integral components of the unified strategy of a centralized totalitarian system. While the review of existing scholarly literature demonstrates that meaningful progress has been made in establishing the scale of the repressions, a substantial need

remains for comprehensive studies encompassing all dimensions of these tragedies. Future research — particularly as fuller access to archival sources becomes possible — will render deeper analysis of this period both necessary and fruitful. The study of repressive policy in the Uzbek SSR is not only a matter of restoring historical justice; it represents an opportunity to draw lessons of profound importance for society and to contribute to the formation of a genuine national memory.

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