



THE VICTIMS OF POLITICAL REPRESSION IN UZBEKISTAN (1950–1990)

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Introduction: Political repression was one of the most tragic aspects of the Soviet period in Central Asia. Uzbekistan, as part of the Soviet Union, experienced various forms of political control, ideological pressure, and repression against intellectuals, religious figures, and political activists. Although the most intense wave of repression occurred during the 1930s, the consequences and policies of repression continued to affect Uzbek society during the 1950–1990 period. Many individuals were persecuted for their political views, religious beliefs, or cultural activities.

Historical Background

After the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, the Soviet Union entered a period often referred to as the "Khrushchev Thaw." During this time, some victims of earlier repression were rehabilitated. However, the Soviet political system still maintained strict ideological control. In Uzbekistan, writers, scholars, and religious leaders continued to face censorship, surveillance, and sometimes persecution if their activities were considered contrary to Soviet ideology.

The Soviet authorities aimed to create a unified socialist identity, which often conflicted with local traditions, religion, and national consciousness. As a result, many representatives of Uzbek culture and religion were monitored or punished.

Forms of Repression: Between 1950 and 1990 repression took several forms:

Political Control and Surveillance

The Soviet security services closely monitored intellectuals and cultural figures. Individuals suspected of promoting nationalism, religious values, or independent political thought were often interrogated or dismissed from their positions.

Religious Repression

Religion was viewed by the Soviet government as incompatible with communist ideology. Many mosques were closed, and religious education was restricted. Islamic scholars and believers were frequently subjected to pressure or discrimination.

Cultural and Intellectual Restrictions

Writers, historians, and artists were required to follow the principles of socialist realism. Works that emphasized national identity or criticized Soviet policies could be banned. Scholars who attempted to research sensitive historical topics often faced obstacles or professional punishment.

Rehabilitation of Victims



Starting in the late 1950s and continuing through the 1980s, many victims of earlier political repression were officially rehabilitated. The Soviet government recognized that numerous accusations during the Stalinist era had been unjust. In Uzbekistan, the names and works of previously banned intellectuals gradually returned to public life.

This process accelerated during the period of **perestroika** in the late 1980s, when public discussions about historical injustice became more open.

Legacy and Memory

The legacy of political repression remains an important part of Uzbekistan's historical memory. After independence in 1991, the government began actively researching the history of repression and honoring the victims. Museums, memorial complexes, and academic studies were established to preserve the memory of those who suffered.

One of the most important institutions dedicated to this topic is the **State Museum in Memory of Victims of Repression in Tashkent**, which documents the stories of intellectuals, scholars, and ordinary citizens who were persecuted.

Conclusion

The history of political repression in Uzbekistan during the Soviet period reflects the broader struggle between authoritarian political control and the preservation of national culture, religion, and intellectual freedom. Studying the victims of repression helps modern society understand the value of human rights, historical truth, and national identity. Remembering these victims is essential for building a more just and democratic future.

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