POLITICAL REPRESSION AND ITS VICTIMS IN UZBEKISTAN (1950–1990)

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Abstract: *Political repression was one of the defining characteristics of the Soviet political system. In Uzbekistan, which remained part of the Soviet Union until 1991, many intellectuals, religious leaders, and ordinary citizens experienced various forms of political pressure and ideological control. This article examines the situation of political repression and its victims in Uzbekistan between 1950 and 1990. The study analyzes the mechanisms of Soviet ideological control, including censorship, surveillance, and restrictions on religious and cultural activities. Particular attention is given to the experiences of intellectuals and representatives of national culture who faced political pressure for expressing independent views. The article also discusses the gradual process of rehabilitation and historical reassessment that began during the period of political reforms in the late Soviet era. By examining historical documents and scholarly research, this study highlights the long-term social and cultural consequences of repression in Uzbekistan and emphasizes the importance of preserving historical memory about its victims.*

Keywords: *Political repression, Soviet Union, Uzbekistan history, victims of repression, Soviet ideology, intellectual repression, religious restrictions, historical memory*

Introduction: Political repression was a significant feature of the Soviet political system throughout the twentieth century. In Uzbekistan, which was part of the Soviet Union until 1991, repression affected intellectuals, religious leaders, writers, and ordinary citizens. Although the largest wave of repression occurred during the Stalinist period in the 1930s, its consequences continued for decades. Between 1950 and 1990, Soviet authorities maintained strict ideological control over society, limiting political freedom, religious practices, and independent cultural expression.

Soviet Ideology and Control

The Soviet government sought to establish a unified socialist society based on communist ideology. Any ideas that contradicted this ideology were often considered dangerous. In Uzbekistan, expressions of national identity, traditional values, and religious beliefs were frequently viewed with suspicion by the authorities.

The state maintained control through censorship, political surveillance, and ideological education. Institutions such as universities, publishing houses, and cultural organizations were required to follow strict ideological guidelines. Scholars and writers who expressed

alternative views risked losing their jobs, being publicly criticized, or facing legal consequences.

Repression of Intellectuals and Cultural Figures

Many intellectuals in Uzbekistan faced political pressure during the Soviet period. Writers, historians, and artists were required to produce works that supported socialist ideals and the official interpretation of history. Any attempt to emphasize national independence, cultural autonomy, or critical historical analysis could be considered "nationalist" or "anti-Soviet."

As a result, many scholars practiced self-censorship. Some historical topics were avoided, while others were interpreted according to Soviet political narratives. Cultural expression was therefore limited by ideological restrictions.

Religious Policy and Restrictions

Religion was another sphere where repression occurred. The Soviet state promoted atheism and considered religion incompatible with communist ideology. Islamic institutions in Uzbekistan were placed under strict state supervision.

Many mosques were closed or repurposed, and religious education was severely restricted. Religious leaders were often monitored by state authorities. Although some religious activities were allowed under official institutions, independent religious practice was discouraged and sometimes punished.

Changes during Perestroika

In the 1980s, political reforms initiated by the Soviet leadership led to greater openness in society. The policies of **glasnost** (openness) and **perestroika** (restructuring) allowed public discussion of previously hidden historical issues.

During this period, historians and journalists began to investigate political repression and the fate of many victims. Archives became more accessible, and some previously banned works were published. This process contributed to a broader reassessment of Soviet history in Uzbekistan and throughout the Soviet Union.

Historical Memory after Independence

After Uzbekistan gained independence in 1991, the study of political repression became an important part of national historical research. Scholars began documenting the lives of victims, publishing archival materials, and analyzing the impact of Soviet repression on Uzbek society.

Memorial sites, museums, and academic research centers were established to honor the victims and preserve historical memory. These efforts aim to ensure that the tragedies of the past are remembered and that future generations understand the importance of political freedom and human rights.

Conclusion: The history of political repression in Uzbekistan between 1950 and 1990 reflects the complex relationship between Soviet ideology and local cultural traditions. Although repression was less severe than during the Stalinist era, strict political control continued to shape social and intellectual life. Studying the victims of repression helps

modern society understand the challenges faced by earlier generations and highlights the importance of protecting cultural identity, freedom of expression, and historical truth.

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