

# The Influence Of The National Policy Of The Former Soviet Power On Social And Political Life In Uzbekistan (In The Case Of Fergana Valley, 1980-1990)

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**Annotation.** The article analyzes the national policy of the Soviet state in the second half of the 20th century and its impact on social and political life in Uzbekistan. It also tried to analyze the content of the deportation policy of the mosque towards the Meskhetian Turks, the resettlement process, and the efforts of the Meskhetian Turks to return to their homeland in various aspects.

**Keywords:** national policy, inter-ethnic relations, deportation, The Meskheti Turks, national interest, historical justice, movement of return to the homeland, socio-political crisis, processes of national awakening.

**Introduction.** As a result of the process of world globalization and the acceleration of information exchange, the study and analysis of inter-ethnic conflicts has become an urgent problem that must be solved first in many countries of the globe. Among the disagreements, conflicts, contradictions that have occurred for various reasons throughout the long history of mankind, these inter-ethnic conflicts are characterized by their fullness of contradictions and emotionality. These are issues that cause public discussion and are directly related to people's lives, and their research remains one of the urgent problems in world historiography.

From the first years of independence, special attention was paid to improving inter-ethnic relations, developing a culture of tolerance and humanity, creating opportunities for equal rights for all citizens, regardless of nationality and religion, and raising the young generation in the spirit of respect for national and universal values. The task of preserving and developing the history, culture, spiritual values, national traditions and customs of all nationalities and ethnic diasporas living in Uzbekistan, treating them with respect, and harmonizing inter-ethnic relations has become more urgent. In the Strategy of Actions adopted on the five priority directions

of the development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021 [1], the determination of tasks such as the strengthening of inter-ethnic and inter-confessional peace and harmony in important areas such as ensuring security, inter-ethnic harmony and religious tolerance, also requires raising the ongoing work to a new level.

**Methods and level of study.** Research is being conducted in a number of higher educational institutions and scientific centers of the world on topics related to inter-ethnic relations, ethnic conflicts and their consequences. In particular, systematization of the theoretical and methodological foundations of the study of the national policy of the Soviet state through the analysis of concepts and terms, socio-philosophical aspects of inter-ethnic relations, the essence of the national policy of the Soviet state, the causes and tragic consequences of the deportations used by the Soviet state against peoples and nations, the formation of ethnic conflicts and collisions. The factors that influenced the formation of the Meskhetian Turks as a nation and the realization of their national identity are being researched from a scientific and theoretic point of view. In the 80s of the 20th century, there are a number of scientific research

works on the problem of interethnic relations in Uzbekistan, which can be divided into three groups based on the period of their creation: works published during the years of Soviet power, literature published during the years of Uzbekistan's independence, and scientific publications published abroad.

The researches of the first group can include scientific works carried out by historians, economists, and politicians. The problem studied in these works is approached from one side, communist ideology, class theory and Marxian-Leninist methodology. Including E. Ahmedov, N. Sultanov, S. Ziyodullaev, K. Eshchonov, R. Aminova, M. Rahimov, A. Legay's researches [2] in elucidating the socio-economic foundations of inter-ethnic relations mainly show the achievements in these areas and the advantages of the socialist economic system. At the same time, the repressions carried out in the national sphere, the denial of the identity of the nation and people, and the negative consequences of the Soviet national policy have not been sufficiently revealed. Among such works H. Tursunov, N. Rahmonov, Sh. Rashidov, M. Rahimov, T. Scientific works of administrators [3] can be included. Also, works dedicated to the tragedy of Fergana, which happened in 1989, were announced. For example, in the articles of H. Bobobekov, A. Ibodinov, N. Sobirov, O'. Kadyrov [4], the details of the Fergana tragedies, the causes and consequences of the event are expressed.

The second group, that is, in scientific works published after 1991, in particular, Sh. Abdullaev, R. Researchers such as Murtazaeva, Z. Haydarov, H. Yunusova, R. Nazarov approached various aspects of inter-ethnic relations objectively and critically, such as the Soviet national policy implemented in Uzbekistan, its socio-economic, spiritual consequences, the role of socio-political and ethno-psychological factors in inter-ethnic relations [5]. At the same time, many works dedicated to the tragedy of Fergana, which occurred in 1989, were published. Among them, in the works of Mirzo Kenjabek, Sh. Ziyamov, R. Sagitov, H. Bobobekov's [6] opinions are expressed about the socio-economic and political

situation in Uzbekistan, the causes of the tragedy, the driving forces, and the consequences of the event. Theoretical and methodological foundations of interethnic relations were reflected in R. Nazarov and O. Musaev's research [7]. In particular, theoretical issues such as ethno-political processes in Uzbekistan and development problems of inter-ethnic relations, ethnic diasporas, conflicts, ethno-confessions are well covered in these works.

The third group is foreign publications, in which researchers have studied inter-ethnic relations in Uzbekistan, including some aspects of the Fergana tragedy in 1989. In particular, M. Lure, P. Studenikin, E. Panesh, L. Ermolov, M. Baratashvili, A. Yunusov, A. Osipov, M. Jirokhov, T. Goluenko, M. Dmitrenko's scientific works and articles [8] reflect the process of deportation of mosque Turks, the events of Fergana in 1989, the forces driving it, socio-economic and political environment, and theoretical interpretations of the eventual point of view.

**Results.** One of the main problems faced by the former USSR in the 80s of the 20th century was the tension and complexity of inter-ethnic relations. For several decades, the national policy based on colonialism in the former Soviet republics, carried out under the guise of fake internationalism, created a difficult situation in the last years of the rule of the former Soviet Union. This problem had its roots in the past.

The main goal of the national policy of the former Soviet Union is to establish a single Soviet nation, "a new historical, social and international unity of peoples, unprecedented in history" [9] based on the convergence and eventual integration of all nationalities in the state with common cultural characteristics. , this policy is basically the implementation of colonial policy, national development and self-awareness, a movement against national diversity. As a result, this policy created an objective contradiction [10] between national development and the rapprochement of nations, the striving for independence and the deepening of unification ties. The denial of such contradictions and the failure to recognize their legal necessity were

among the main factors that led to the long years of accumulation and eventual escalation of national problems in the former Soviet Union. Naturally, such a national policy had no future.

In the former USSR, national politics was approached from a purely political point of view, that is, based on the principle of class [11]. According to this, the main task in national politics was solved mainly on the basis of ending socio-class and ethnic antagonisms [12] [13]. It can be seen that in the former Soviet national policy based on the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism, the national question was considered as a part of the general socio-class issue [14], a different form of socialist construction [15]. This approach to national politics has always denied the role of national interests [16].

The well-known English scientist E. Gellner, when analyzing the process of national conflicts, writes that the interests of nations and the national state should be mutually compatible. He stated that it is necessary for a certain ethnic group to dominate the state [17]. In the former USSR, the state structure was made up of 53 national states, including 15 allied and 20 autonomous republics, 8 autonomous regions and 10 districts [18], but in fact, the participation of the indigenous people, who make up the majority in the state administration, was significantly lower. In particular, in 1926, Uzbeks made up 24.7% of the state administration apparatus of the Uzbek SSR, or Jews 6.0%, representatives of other nationalities made up 7.4%, and Russians made up 61.9% [19].

According to M.V. Olcott, a scientist who studied the national policy in the former Soviet state, the decisive role of the Russian people in the "all-Soviet culture" was preserved, the Russian language became a means of inter-ethnic communication, Russian culture maintained its dominance, and other nationalities agreed to some forms of national inequality. were forced" [20].

In the national policy of the former Soviet state, the process of growing people's sense of national identity was deliberately given a negative, political tone, and it was considered a nationalist movement. In this way, the purpose of distracting the nations from the need to realize

their identity [21] was intended. This led to the accumulation of various problems in the republics and the strengthening of national protests.

Until the 80s of the 20th century, nothing was written in scientific literature about inter-ethnic conflicts in the USSR [22]. In many literatures published during the Soviet period, it was stated that the national issue was positively resolved in the country, that peoples freely decided their own destiny and united in an equal union on this basis, that national oppression and national inequality were ended [23].

**Discussions.** From the middle of the 80s of the 20th century, the inter-ethnic relations in the former Soviet state began to become tense. In particular, from 1988 to 1991, more than 150 different conflicts occurred in the republics based on ethnic factors. 20 of them resulted in human injuries and death [24].

The similarities between the inter-ethnic conflicts that took place in Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Baltic republics, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and other places of the Soviet Union at the end of the 80s of the XX century [25] indicate that the conflicts in these regions were part of the Soviet national policy. In addition to being the result of mistakes made in the previous period, the Center had a direct involvement in their origin. In densely populated regions with acute socio-economic problems, inter-ethnic conflicts were deliberately created, and in this way, an attempt was made to distract the population from the main goals and aspirations of achieving independence [26].

In this period, the national movements of the peoples who were deported during the World War II in the Ferghana Valley to return to their historical homeland was one of the factors that caused the complication of inter-ethnic relations [27].

During the regime of I. V. Stalin, one of the peoples who suffered from the deportation policy and were subjected to violence was the Meskhetian Turkish people. They have lived for centuries in the historical Meskhet-Javakheti

region of Georgia, in the southwestern part of present-day Georgia.

On November 14, 1944, on the basis of special decree No. 5279 [28] of the USSR Defense Committee, a decree was issued to deport citizens whose mosques belonged to the Turkish nationality from their homes to Central Asia. Although the reason was not explained in the decree [29], the presumed disloyalty to the Soviet authorities, i.e., the possibility of crossing over to the side of the hostile bordering country - Turkiye and helping the Nazis, was the "ground" for the relocation, as in the case of other forcibly displaced peoples [30]. However, during the World War II, 46,000 men of this "guilty" nation participated in the war by the former Soviet state, and 26,000 of them died [31]. Presumptive deportation against them was, in fact, no less than the crimes committed by the Nazis during the World War II.

The plan to deport the Meskhetian Turks was clearly developed, the "unreliable" villages of the five adjacent regions - Adigen, Aspindza, Akhaltsikh, Akhalkalaki and Bogdanov [32] where they lived, were surrounded by troops, people were placed in echelons and sent to Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan [33]. The Meskhetian Turks were given two hours to prepare for departure. As a result, these people could take only the most necessary things for the journey and reached the destination in a bare state: without enough food, without medical assistance, for more than two months. Tens of thousands of people died on the way from hunger, cold, various diseases (according to some reports, half of the Turks of the "specially moved" mosque [34]).

Suleiman Barbakadze, the president of the international society of Turks of the "Vatan" mosque operating in Moscow, told "Nezavisimaya Gazeta" that over 92 thousand people were displaced from 224 villages of Georgia during one night [35]. The deportation of the Meskhetian Turks was completed in January 1945 [36]. 15,432 people died due to traffic difficulties in the first months of the relocation [37]. For a long time, the number of the Meskhetian Turks remained unclear, because most people of the Meskhetian Turk nationality

were registered as Azerbaijani and Georgian nationals in state statistical documents.

In 1956, they were informed that the forced resettlement of Turks to Central Asia and Kazakhstan was cancelled. However, at that time, their historical place of residence was included in the so-called border zone - a separate territory along the border of the USSR. Coming to this place and living in it was strictly restricted. This, in fact, was another injustice done to the Turks, saying that they were forbidden to return to their country [38].

Most of the Meskhetian Turks deported to Central Asia in 1944 settled in Uzbekistan. One of the large groups of the Meskhetian Turks was located in Fergana region. Most of them lived in the city of Kuvasoi region, as well as in the cities of Fergana, Margilan, Kokand, Tashlok, Komsomol town, several villages of Kirguli, Okhunboboev region (former Margilan), Kuva, Rishton, Fergana regions. A number of Turkish families were also among the residents of Gorky town in the Kirov region, west of Kokand [39].

The Meskhetian Turks mainly settled near the city and regional centers of the region [40]. Since the housing problem was at a high level at that time, they were placed in households of 4-5 people, as well as in public places (teahouses, schools, kindergartens).

After settling in our republic, the majority of Turks living in Tashkent and Syrdarya region were mainly engaged in agricultural production, while the representatives of this people living in Samarkand region and Fergana valley were engaged in industrial and construction work [41]. Heroes of Labor, such as Saodat Gulahmedova, Hamroli Hasanov, who made a great contribution to the economy and education of Uzbekistan, and devoted people such as Kholis Akhmedov, a teacher who served the republic [42] came from among the Turkish people of Meskheta.

Although the Meskhetian Turkic people lived in peace and harmony in Uzbekistan for a long time, the idea of returning to their homeland, which was passed from one generation to the next, did not die out. For this purpose, they held meetings several times during the former Soviet period. In particular, 10 meetings were held from 1962 to 1989 [43]. Their main goal, i.e. returning

to their homeland, was discussed at these meetings. The activities of the Meskhetian Turkish people to return to their homeland became active, especially in the Fergana region, in particular, in the city of Kuvasoy, where they live in large numbers. Activists of this people demanded to resolve their national issues before the Center (Moscow) and transfer their homeland to the southern regions of the Georgian SSR. For this purpose, they formed an initiative group, sent their representatives to the Center several times, held meetings among the population and discussed ways to solve their national issues.

Field surveys showed that almost all Turks wanted to return to their homeland. They believe that the solution to this problem lies in the removal of restrictions on immigration to Meskhet-Javakheti regions [44]. For this purpose, they applied 154 times to the higher authorities of the USSR for 45 years to return to Meskhetia [45]. However, this restriction was not removed from 1944, when the Turks were deported, until the end of the 80s of the 20th century.

**Conclusion.** In the second half of the 80s of the 20th century, the mosque of the leadership of the USSR did not have the opportunity to solve the national issue related to the return of Turks to their homeland, and was also not interested in it. This was also influenced to some extent by the fact that it was hindered by the Georgian SSR [46]. Because Georgians now live in the areas where the Meskhetian Turkish people were deported, restoration of historical justice could cause new problems in Georgia. At the same time, the main reason for the deportation of the Meskhetian Turks from the Georgian SSR, that is, the danger of their merging with their blood relatives in Turkey, was still a cause of concern for the Soviet leadership. This factor was the main obstacle to their migration to their homeland. The well-known Georgian writer Ch. Amiredjibi also expresses a similar opinion. In his opinion, if the Meskhetian Turks are settled in the Caucasus, then the position of the Islamic religion will be strengthened here. This situation could have caused the region to completely escape from the hands of the Russians [47]. In such conditions, the leadership of the Center

could not remain indifferent to the processes of national revival in Uzbekistan and the national problem of the Turkish people. Because these national problems could serve as an accelerating factor of the process of disintegration of the Union.

So, the national policy of the former Soviet state, based on the Marxian-Leninist doctrine, imbued with the spirit of colonialism, denying nationality, and aimed at its loss, had a great negative impact on national problems and the aggravation of inter-ethnic relations in the Fergana Valley in the 80s of the 20th century.

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