

POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN UZBEKISTAN SINCE THE 1980S AND ITS CURRENT IMPLICATIONS

Khumoyun Bakhtiyorov*

*Independent Researcher,
Thompson School,
15/2 Furqat Street. Tashkent, UZBEKISTAN
Email id: khumoyun_bakhtiyorov@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Political instability in Uzbekistan, a significant Central Asian nation, has been a subject of considerable concern for decades. This article explores the evolution of political instability in Uzbekistan since the 1980s, with a particular focus on its contemporary implications. Drawing on a multi-method approach that combines historical analysis, empirical data, and qualitative research, this study aims to shed light on the root causes and consequences of political instability in the country.

The research begins by examining the historical backdrop of Uzbekistan, tracing the origins of political instability to the late Soviet era. It delves into the sociopolitical dynamics and economic factors that have contributed to the persistence of instability. In its assessment of current implications, the study addresses the impact of political instability on regional stability, security, and socioeconomic development. It discusses the potential consequences for neighboring countries, the international community, and the global order.

In conclusion, this article offers valuable insights into the complex issue of political instability in Uzbekistan and its implications for the region and the world. It serves as a timely resource for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners seeking a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with the changing political landscape in Central Asia.

KEYWORDS: *Civil Society, Reforms, Democratic Transition.*

INTRODUCTION

After assuming the role of the general secretary of the Uzbek communist party in 1959, Sharaf Rashidov was tasked with overseeing the cotton production in Uzbekistan, which was a major contributor to the Soviet Union's cotton output. However, Moscow's demands for increased cotton production set unrealistic targets beyond Uzbekistan's capacity, hampering economic diversification and negatively impacting the standard of living for Uzbek citizens. To meet these unattainable goals, Uzbek leadership resorted to reporting inflated figures, leading to a corruption scheme that Andropov and Gorbachev aimed to dismantle following Brezhnev's and Rashidov's deaths. These events significantly contributed to enduring political instability and the resurgence of Uzbek national identity.

Subsequently, the underprivileged and malnourished people of Uzbekistan, particularly in the Ferghana valley, gravitated toward a radically different interpretation of Islam that challenged

the existing Soviet political order. After gaining independence in 1991, radical Islamists gained influence among the population, causing concern among politicians in Tashkent. This resulted in the dissolution of all religious groups and a wave of fear regarding Islam's impact on Uzbekistan, affecting individuals unrelated to terrorism or extremism.

The crackdown on Islamic extremism, coupled with the implications of the “Cotton Scandal”, triggered a new wave of political instability and economic stagnation in Uzbekistan. This not only fueled public discontent but also led to brief periods of Uzbekistan's political isolation on the world stage due to the consistent violations of human rights and the abuse of power.

Literature review

In the article, the reflection of socio-economic problems in the years of reconstruction in public appeals is explained on the basis of historical and sociological methods - systematic analysis, comparative-historical, structural, functional approach, comparative-logical, analytical, sequence, impartiality, objectivity principles. The history of the period of reconstruction has been studied by a number of scientists. In particular, G. Nadzhimov, M. Nishanov and Yu. Ergasheva's monographs also include D. Habibullaeva, J. Aytmurodov, Q. Ergashev, V. Rajapov, Kh. Yunusova, M. Alikhanov, Z. Yusupov, A. Dissertation studies of authors such as Mavrulov and N. Mustafoeva[2] are among them. However, the issue of the current socio-economic and political life of this period is reflected in the appeals of the population as a separate research object.

Discussion

At the initial stage of the reconstruction policy that began in the Soviet society, no particular change was noticed, the situation in the allied national republics, including Uzbekistan, remained tense. The wrong way of developing all sectors of the national economy at the same time without taking into account the country's capabilities was taken. During this period, the republic was far behind the average level in the Union in terms of all main economic and social indicators. and fell to one of the last places in the country. In particular, it took the 12th place among the allied republics in terms of production of gross social product per capita, and one of the last places in terms of income level and consumption of basic types of products. In terms of production of national income per capita, it is 2 times the average level in the Union, 2.5 times in terms of production of consumer goods, 2.5 times in terms of labor productivity in industry, and 2 times in terms of labor productivity in agriculture times, the average consumption of meat products, eggs, milk and milk products of the population is 2 times behind [3]. At the same time, the demographic indicator shows that the rate of population growth in Uzbekistan is more than three times higher than the rate of the Union [4]. However, for many years, such population growth was not strengthened by increasing the number of jobs in industry and other sectors of the economy, and by creating the necessary conditions for the livelihood of the population. This led to the deterioration of people's living conditions, increase in the number of unemployed, reduction of social labor productivity and income of the population, and ultimately, a decrease in the well-being of the people. Economic problems, combined with the demographic situation, made the solution of social issues extremely urgent. During this period, the social sphere in Uzbekistan also became a sad sight. The provision level of public education, health care, preschool educational institutions did not exceed 40 percent[5]. The way of life of the people of

this period, the people's dissatisfaction with the existing political system, were reflected in the appeals of the people kept in the archives, as well as in the "open letters" published in newspapers and magazines. In particular, two thousand from the editorial office of "Council of Uzbekistan" for 1974-1988, 920 from "Literature and Art of Uzbekistan" for 1983-1990, 300 from "Pravda Vostok" for 1985-1989, 80 letters from "Village Truth" for 1985-1987 and 700 letters from "Young Lenin" for 1985-1991 were received [6]. It can be seen that, despite the difficult socio-economic situation, positive steps have been taken towards democratization of society, transparency, and the opportunity to unite different opinions. Various opinions were expressed freely in the press, radio and television. An analysis of the appeals shows that almost every letter openly or indirectly criticized the government's rudeness and insolence. For example, residents of the Kalinin collective farm of the Samarkand region write: "...our ears are used to hearing empty promises" [7]. Publication in the press contributed greatly to this. Most authors tried to shed light on the causes and origins of the problem and find its culprits. A certain part criticized the neutrality of the government. It is known that in 1985-1989, the cotton policy of the Soviet government, the bureaucratic rebirth of the Soviet nomenclature, corruption, the decline in production rates and other negative features of the so-called true socialism were sharply criticized. There was a strong wave of condemnation of his vices in the media pages. In particular, the topic "Tragedy of the Archipelago Sea" occupied the first pages of periodicals. This flood of letters in the media appeared under the influence of the publicity given during the reconstruction. Some of the citizens' letters were published in newspapers and magazines as part of "opinions". In one of the letters sent to the editors of "Literature and Art of Uzbekistan", the author writes: "At the writers' congress, two Russian writers (G. Astafiev and V. Rasputin) opposed the transfer of Siberian waters to Central Asia. We cannot stand against it because the power is in their hands. The freedom regulated in the constitution remains only on paper and only for showing to foreign countries. The only way to save the Aral Sea is to reduce the development of deserts, leave the necessary amount of water and pour the excess water into the sea. There is no need to send several tons of polys crops to Russia. If asked, it must be said that there is no water, so we cannot grow it. You should water the Island often, not letting it dry out. They take our gas to the Urals and we use dung (animal manure). Oh, if only a brave speaker would appear, he would take the podium and scientifically substantiate these points. Please send the letter to some scientist or writer" [8]. In the letter sent by the hydrogeologist of the research and research department of the "Soyuzgidropalkhoz" institute named after Koryukin, the following proposals are raised: 1) on the use of underground containers as adjustment and transport water; 2) soil from the experience of Israel and the USA on obtaining clean water by condensing the atmospheric moisture of the air circulating in the system of pipes laid in the cold zone; 3) on increasing the bioproductivity of the sea [9]. Such appeals and the current situation became the basis for the government to apply several practical measures on the issue. In particular, on November 9, 1989, the Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union "On restoring the ecological balance of the archipelago" was adopted[10]. The authors used various techniques as a motivation for their appeal: open criticism, propaganda, appeal and even a business proposal. In particular, within the fund of the State Nature Protection Committee of Uzbekistan, the work "Complaints and suggestions of citizens on improving the environmental situation in the Aral Sea" is preserved. They appealed to district, regional and republican party and Soviet bodies. Hundreds of thousands of citizens marched from corridor to

corridor, door to door, complaining to the Central Committee of the KP, local authorities that their rights and legal interests were violated. Dissatisfaction has increased especially among women. In 1986-1987, 270 women set themselves on fire in the republic [11]. This situation was an expression of the last protest against the violation of their dignity and rights. In addition, many innocent people were executed in Uzbekistan as a result of another huge problem of that time, the "cotton case". In the regions, the protests of the population became more and more intense. In 1989, the inter-ethnic conflicts of Tashkent, Fergana, Andijon were actually caused by the failure to take practical and realistic measures in relation to the accumulated problems of everyday life. The Soviet leadership did not notice in time that in order to get the country out of crisis and crisis, it is necessary to switch from the administrative-command system, management and distribution of all resources based on centralized planning to a regulated market economy. But at the same time, the second important benefit of the reconstruction period was publicity. In the years when the communist ideology was in power, even in the fiction literature, it was possible to reflect the life events in the society only in an interpretative or positive way. Writers did not have the opportunity to take a deep look at these events and analyze them artistically. As a result, many works that idealized the Soviet reality and were far from the reality of real life appeared. The greatest opportunity given during the years of reconstruction was to take a careful look at such events in the life of Soviet society, to reevaluate the falsified and misrepresented pages of the republic's history.

CONCLUSION

In general, such an analysis of letters written by citizens to the authorities or the mass media shows that in most cases the appeals are very rational and well-thought-out actions with clear practical goals related to solving everyday needs and interests. It allows us to emphasize: urban development, improvement of rural infrastructure, sanitary-epidemiological activities, environmental protection served as a certain strategy of social influence on the authorities based on purely pragmatic arguments. Sources of this type are of special scientific interest as a reliable indicator of what bothered their authors (applicants), what problems citizens raised before authorities and administrative bodies.

However, the current socio-economic tension could not be solved with appeals alone. It should be noted that today's complex path and historical experience are important in the education of the young generation. Based on this, it is appropriate to focus the direction of scientific research on objective scientific study, analysis and delivery of appeals related to this period to the general public. Letters of citizens of the last years of the Soviet state and the period of sovereign development of Uzbekistan are available in the archives of local and central editions of newspapers and magazines. Most of them have been published, but the main purpose remains unknown to researchers. The study and introduction of a collection of historical sources during this period of change and socio-political and socio-economic reforms will help to shed light on the history of the daily life of the local population in a unique way.

REFERENCES

1. Rutland, P. (2023). Thirty Years of Nation-Building in the Post-Soviet States. *Nationalities Papers*, 51, 14–32.

2. Rajapov V. Changes and problems in the field of culture in Uzbekistan in the 80s of the 20th century: history science. name ... diss. -Tashkent, 2006; Alikhanov M. Deyatelnost tvorcheskoy intelligentsii Uzbekistana v period obreteniya nezavisimosti i ee ukrepleniya (1985-2000 gody): Autoref. diss. ... candy. ist. science -T, 2007; -Tashkent, 2007; Yunusova H. T, 2009; Yusupov Z. Nationality and internationalism in the culture of Uzbekistan (1970-2000 years): history science. name ... diss. -Tashkent, 2011; Mavkulov A., Culture of Uzbekistan in the modern stage: general situation. Problems, principles of development (mid-70s-1990s): Doctor of historical sciences. diss. Autoref. -Tashkent, 1993; Mustafaeva N. The main trends and problems of the culture of Uzbekistan in the 20s-30s of the 20th century in the historiography of the period: Tarikh science. name ... diss. -T, 1999.
3. Abuyeyev H.O. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) diss. -T, 2020. 56 p.
4. New history of Uzbekistan, book 2 "Uzbekistan during Soviet colonialism". Tashkent.; 2000, 648 p.
5. Rajabov Q, Abuyeyev H. Decay of Soviet state and reconstruction policy in Uzbekistan SSR 1985-1991.
6. National archive of Uzbekistan 837 fund 41 list, case 6556, sheets 43-44.
7. "Soviet Uzbekistan" August 11, 1988 No. 183.7.P-2806 FUND. Description 1. Case 15. 1.7. letters on political, economic, cultural issues.
8. National archive of Uzbekistan. P-2806 FUND. Description 1. Case 16. 1.7. letters on political, economic, cultural issues.
9. National archive of Uzbekistan. P-2806 FUND. Description 1. Case 16. 1.7. letters on political, economic, cultural issues.
10. Materials of the archive of the coordinating methodological center under the FA of the Republic of Uzbekistan on issues of the latest history of Uzbekistan, RGANI, 89 fund, 35 list, 29 work, 1-4 sheets.
11. New history of Uzbekistan. Book 2. Uzbekistan during Soviet colonialism. Scientific editor: M. Jorayev. -Tashkent: Sharq, 2000. p. 624