



HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE REPRESSIONS OF 1937-1938 AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

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Abstract: One of the most painful and sad pages in the history of Uzbekistan during the Soviet era is the collectivization of agriculture in the 1920s and 1930s and the subsequent exile, deportation and repression of peasants subject to collectivization. The article, based on historical evidence from the historiography of history, examines the policy of repression that began in 1937-1938 and its consequences for the education system.

Key words: Central Asia, education system, repressive policy, intelligentsia and educators, “enemies of the people”, labor camps and death camps, historiography.

INTRODUCTION.

In this terrible process, our people were condemned to endure unprecedented suffering. In particular, a large part of the rural population was deprived of their homes, yards, horses, national space, loved ones, neighborhood status, people and relatives, and all their belongings, and was imprisoned, exiled to distant foreign lands, lived a life of slavery, and was thrown into concentration camps. They died in the GULAG (Main Directorate of Camps) and labor camps in the North, Siberia, the Far East, the Urals, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia. Some of these compatriots became victims of the Great Terror of 1937-1938 and the Second World War. Of those who survived, a very small number returned to the embrace of their homeland, enduring the difficult journey and suffering of poverty. In Uzbekistan itself, many of our compatriots became victims of the Soviet regime and died under insulting labels such as enemies of the collective farm, former kulaks, former printing workers, nationalists, and enemies of the people.

LITERARY ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY.

The collectivization policy of the Soviet government, which began at the end of 1929, became the basis for the policies of earldom, exile, deportation and repression. Individual terror now laid the foundation for the development of mass repressions. On July 2, 1937, the Politburo of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks) issued a resolution “On Anti-Soviet Elements”, which, one might say,



gave the start to the “Great Terror”. Based on this resolution, the NKVD issued Order No. 00447 “On Ears” [3.P.96.].

According to it, from August 5, 1937 to mid-November 1938, specially formed “troikas” sentenced at least 800,000 people, half of whom were sentenced to death by firing squad. From August 1937, the NKVD received several more orders on the conduct of national operations. This brings the number of victims of terror in 1937-1938 to almost 350,000 [1.Pp.13-19.]. On July 30, 1937, the USSR People’s Commissar of Internal Affairs N. Yezhov’s top-secret order No. 00447 “On the operation to repress former kulaks, criminals and other anti-Soviet elements” noted that a large number of former kulaks who had been repressed, who were hiding from repression, and who had escaped from camps, exiles and labor camps had settled in the villages. It was noted that many repressed churchmen and sectarians, as well as former participants in anti-Soviet armed uprisings, had also settled in the villages. The order states that the remaining political parties (Soviet Socialist Revolutionaries, Gruzmekei, Dashnaks, Mussavatists, Unionists), as well as former active participants in the bandit uprising, white punitive workers, and a large part of the returnees were practically not touched. “Some of the above-mentioned elements have left the villages for the cities and infiltrated industry, transport, and construction” – the order states!

In addition, criminals, animal thieves, recidivist thieves, looters, and those who escaped from prison after serving their sentences and were hiding from repression have also established nests in villages and cities. The document also notes that due to the lack of adequate fight against this contingent of criminals and the lack of punishment, their criminal activity has become more active. Based on this situation, from August 5, 1937, an operation was to be carried out in all republics, territories and regions to repress former kulaks, active anti-Soviet elements and criminals. It was determined that this operation would begin in the Uzbek, Turkmen, Tajik and Kyrgyz SSRs on August 10, 1937. The order also contained 7-point instructions for conducting the operation [1.Pp.13-19.]. The contingent of those to be repressed consisted of the following:

1. Former kulaks who have returned from prison and are continuing their active anti-Soviet subversive activities.
2. Former kulaks who have escaped from camps or labor camps, as well as former kulaks who are hiding from being kulaked and are carrying out anti-Soviet activities.
3. Former kulaks and socially dangerous elements in rebel and fascist, terrorist and bandit groups who have served their sentences, hidden from repression or escaped from prisons and resumed their anti-Soviet criminal activities.



4. Members of anti-Soviet parties (Soviet Socialist Revolutionaries, Gruzmekei, Dashnaks, Mussavvatists, Unionists) and former whites who are hiding from repression, who have escaped from prisons and are carrying out active anti-Soviet subversive activities, gendarmes, officials, punishers, bandits, bandit aides, smugglers, re-emigrants.
5. The most hostile and active participants in the liquidated Cossack-White Guard rebel organizations, fascist, terrorist and spy-subversive groups, exposed by the materials of investigative and inspection agents. It is also envisaged to repress this category of elements currently in prison, under investigation, some of whose cases have been completed, but have not yet been considered by the judicial authorities.
6. Former kulaks, punishers, bandits, whites, sectarian activists, churchmen, etc., who are held in prisons, camps, labor settlements and prison colonies and are actively engaged in anti-Soviet subversive work in these places.
7. Criminals (bandits, robbers, thieves-recidivists) and those associated with the criminal environment who are engaged in criminal activity.
8. Criminal elements in camps and labor settlements and engaged in criminal activity in these places.
9. The order states that it is necessary to suppress all of the above-mentioned contingents in villages, collective farms, state farms, agricultural enterprises, and urban industrial and commercial enterprises, transport, Soviet institutions, and construction.

The order also specified the procedure for conducting the operation. It was indicated that the operation should begin on August 5, 1937, and be completed within four months. It was indicated that the operation should begin on August 10, 1937 in the Soviet Socialist Republics of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, and on August 15, 1937 in the East Siberian region, Krasnoyarsk, and the Far East. First of all, those in the first category of contingents were repressed. Those in the second category of contingents could not be repressed until a special instruction and order was received [5.P.74.]. In particular, the republican people's commissariats, regional departments, and departments of the NKVD were to begin conducting operations on the second category of contingents after completing operations on the first category of contingents. Only after receiving N.Yezhov's sanction on this could the operation be launched on the second category.

As soon as the sentences were issued for all those arrested and sentenced to camps and prisons for various terms, N.Yezhov was required to be informed of how many people had been sentenced, how many people had been sentenced to prison or



camps for what term. After receiving this information, N.Yezhov gave instructions on the procedure and to which camps the sentenced prisoners should be sent.

Operational sectors were organized in the territories of the republics, regions and regions in accordance with local conditions and the situation that arose. Operational groups were formed for the organization and conduct of the operation in each sector. These groups were formed from responsible NKVD employees who could successfully fulfill the serious operational tasks assigned to them. In some cases, the heads of operational groups were appointed from among the most experienced and capable district and city internal affairs chiefs. Operational groups were formed from the necessary operational personnel and were provided with transport and communication means. Depending on the operational situation, the groups were also assigned military or police units. The heads of the operational groups were tasked with identifying and accounting for those being repressed, supervising the investigation, approved indictments, and the issuance of sentences by the “troikas” and their execution. They were responsible for organizing and conducting the operation within their sector.

Detailed information and incriminating materials were collected for each repressed person. Based on these materials, lists of those to be arrested were compiled. They were signed by the head of the operational group and sent in 2 copies to the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs, the head of the NKVD department or regional department for review and approval. The People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs, the head of the NKVD department or regional department reviewed the lists and authorized the arrest of the persons on the submitted list. The “True”* could transfer a person being repressed under Category 2 to Category 1, and a person being repressed under Category 1 to Category 2, depending on the level of social danger of the prisoner in custody. The “True” recorded its meetings in minutes, which recorded the sentence passed on each condemned person.

The minutes of the meeting were sent to the head of the operative group for the execution of the sentence. An extract from the minutes was attached to the investigative file for each convicted person. The procedure for executing the sentence was also determined. The execution of the sentence was carried out by order of the chairman of the “troika”. An extract from the minutes of the “troika” meeting served as the basis for the execution of the sentence. The execution of sentences under the 1st category was carried out in secret, at the direction of the republican People’s Commissar, NKVD Department. The time and place were carried out in secret by order of the heads of departments. Documents on the execution of the sentence were placed in a separate envelope in the investigative file of each convicted person. Persons convicted under the 2nd category were carried out on the basis of the orders reported by the State Camps Department (GULAG) of the



USSR People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs. The organization of the "troika" and its work were determined by the order. The order also approved the composition of the "troikas" of the republics, regions and regions.

The "troika" for the Uzbek SSR was approved, consisting of the People's Commissar of Internal Affairs of the republic, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, and the Deputy Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars. The Prosecutor of the Uzbek SSR participated in its meetings as a secretary, and the Lieutenant of the Head of the 8th Department of the State Security Department of the NKVD of the Uzbek SSR participated in its meetings. The "troika" carried out its work at the locations of the relevant NKVD and its departments and divisions, or went to the location of the operational sectors. The "troika" reviewed materials on each prisoner or group of prisoners presented to it, as well as on each family being deported.

During this "great terror", that is, from August 10, 1937 to January 1, 1938, 5,924 former "kulaks", 1,679 criminals, and 3,097 "anti-Soviet elements", a total of 107,000 people were imprisoned in Uzbekistan alone. Of these, 3,613 were sentenced to firing squad under the 1st category, 7,087 were sentenced to 8-10 years in prison under the 2nd category, or to a labor camp. Of those sentenced to firing squad under the 1st category, 1,376 were former kulaks, 952 were criminals, and 1,285 were other counter-revolutionary elements. Of those sentenced under category 2, 4,548 were former kulaks, 727 were criminals, and 1,812 were other counter-revolutionary elements [13.Pp.378-388.].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

The multi-volume collection of archival documents also contains information about Uzbek victims of repression sentenced by the "Third" decree in 1937-1938. The first volume contains information that out of 3,083 prisoners who were repressed in Uzbekistan by the "Third" decree from August 10 to November 5, 1937, 1,688 were sentenced to death by firing squad, 1,369 to 8-10 years in a labor camp (with the possibility of exile), and 36 were released from prison. The national composition of the victims of this repression included 2,361 Uzbeks, 462 Russians, 58 Tatars, 33 Kazakhs, 31 Turks, 24 Armenians, 20 Germans, 18 Ukrainians, 16 Tajiks, 12 Poles, 10 Azerbaijanis, 5 Uyghurs, 3 Afghans, 3 Chinese, 3 Georgians, and 1 Frenchman. The social composition of the prisoners was as follows: kulaks - 1,543 people, collective farmers - 781 people, religious workers (imam, eshan, domla, etc.) - 437 people, merchants - 149 people, criminals - 87 people, rich people - 54 people, servants - 132 people, and people of unknown social status - 645 people, including craftsmen, cart drivers, guards, hairdressers, salesmen, firefighters, pensioners, homeless people, treasurers, butchers, brokers, etc.



In terms of party affiliation, 20 of them were former “Shu’roi Islam” members, 91 were former “Milliy Ittihad” members, 61 were former members of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), 17 were former Socialist Revolutionary Party members, 4 were “Ittihodiy va Taraqqiy” members, 5 were Mussavvat members, 5 were former members of the International Democratic Party, 2 were former members of the “Turon” society, 3 were former Dashnaks, and 2,866 were non-party members. Of the victims of repression, 454 had previously participated in the “press” movement, and 111 had participated in the uprising against the collective farm system and kulakization [7.Pp.172-262.].

A similar situation can also be clearly seen in the example of those repressed in 1938. Between February 4 and February 17, 1938, the “Three” held 21 meetings (Minutes 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89), during which the cases of 2,378 prisoners were considered. Of these, 1,977 prisoners were sentenced to death, 393 prisoners were sentenced to imprisonment in a labor camp, most of them to 10 years, a few to 8 years, a small number of prisoners were sentenced to release from prison, and some prisoners died in prison before their sentences were pronounced.

During the “Great Terror”, those “former kulaks” who were forced to live and earn a living outside the territory of Uzbekistan, in particular, prisoners in the GULAG and labor camps, colonies, and labor camps in Ukraine, the North Caucasus, and Kazakhstan, were also repeatedly repressed. If we count them, the number of victims of the terrible “Great Terror” from Uzbeks will be much higher. For example, it was established that about 200 of our compatriots, former kulaks, who were exiled from Uzbekistan to the Kherson region of Ukraine in 1931, were repressed during this same “Great Terror” in the Goloprstan, Kakhovsky and Skadovsky districts. It has been established that 41 of our compatriots in exile in the North Caucasus have been repressed so far [6.Pp.241-250.].

In the Dmitrov camp near Moscow, in 1933-1938, many Uzbek prisoners, former kulaks, actively participated in the construction of the Moscow-Volga Canal, which was considered the “great construction of the second five-year plan.” Many of them died, and a certain part was repeatedly repressed after the canal was built and put into operation. It was established that 51 of them were shot in 1937-1938 and buried at the Butovo training ground [8.Pp.277-278]. It was established that 21 of our compatriots in exile in North Kazakhstan were repressed and shot in the same 1937-1938 [10.P.26]. However, it is natural that this information will be supplemented, and there will be victims of repression who are not yet known. Because not all of our compatriots who were repressed outside the territory of Uzbekistan for various reasons have been fully identified from the relevant archives. Research and search work should be carried out in this area.



The Special Office expanded further in 1937-1938, the number of employees also increased, and it also had branches in the districts. While prisoners sentenced to death by the “three” in the capital Tashkent were kept in the Tashkent prison or in the house of political prisoners, they were shot in the execution rooms in Yunusabad, where the current Martyrs’ Memorial Complex is located. Those sentenced to death by firing squad by region were shot in the execution rooms in the district in which they were imprisoned, that is, there were executioners in the prisons of each district. For example, according to the Khorezm Okrug sector, no matter how many prisoners the republican “troika” in Tashkent sentenced to death by firing squad, the execution of the sentence was carried out in Khorezm according to the list, based on the decision. Thus, there was a central execution ground in the republic and local execution grounds in the regions [11.P.38.].

Yakov Mikhailovich Yakovlev, who served as secretary of the “troika” of the People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Uzbek SSR, recalls: “The troika” dealt with about 100 cases every hour, and the sentence was of two types: the highest punishment - execution by firing squad or imprisonment with restriction of correspondence for 10 years. The decision of the “troika” was immediately carried out by the NKVD commandant Shishkin, in my presence. The prisoner was shot. I have often heard the condemned shouts “Long live Stalin, long live Soviet power!” before their death. In my opinion, they were people who worked conscientiously and were loyal to the government. I also know that Shishkin was awarded the Order of the Badge of Honor for his performance” [2.Pp.142-143.]. The prisoners were brutally tortured, beaten, and forced to give instructions for others. On the basis of some instructions obtained in this way, there were new mass arrests. The arrests were carried out at night when everyone was asleep. The arrested were accused of being members of some organizations, of participating in assassination attempts on the lives of Stalin and other Soviet geniuses, and of being scoundrels who wanted to destroy factories, factories, and power plants. Many party members were accused of belonging to secret Trotskyism. Almost all of them were shot. Terror led to the destruction of the nation, its degradation. Of course, Stalin knew that there were many innocent people among the repressed. However, in his opinion, the scale of the company of victims was such that It was inevitable. He also knew well that when an ax hits a tree, its leaves fly away. Terror was not directed only against the communists. Along with them, millions of non-party officials and workers, peasants, artisans, and priests were imprisoned and exiled to concentration camps. They replenished the ranks of the free labor force.

According to P. Blinkov, who acted as the temporary secretary of the “True” (True), from one to three minutes were allocated to consider the cases of prisoners in the protocols received from the places. Only in some cases, up to five minutes



were allocated. At each “True” meeting, up to 500-600 cases were considered, and the fate of that many people was decided. Those who were repressed and serving their sentences in labor camps and labor columns lived in very bad, pitiful conditions. Many of them became disabled and died from disease, hunger, thirst, oppression and torture, severe cold, and exhausting hard labor. The mortality rate among prisoners in the GULAG camps was high [4.P.80.].

The mortality rate among prisoners was especially high in 1937-1938 and during the war. There were many Uzbeks among them. According to Part 1 of the report of October 1, 1937, at the height of the “Great Terror”, there were 20,954 Uzbek prisoners in the camps of the USSR People’s Commissariat of Internal Affairs, of which 2,643 were in the Baikal-Amur camp; 1,923 in the Volga-Moscow construction (Dmitrov camp); 1,673 in the White Sea-Baltic camp; 687 in the Ukhtim camp in the Komi ASSR; 543 in the Tem camp in the Moldavian ASSR; 2,247 in the Vladivostok camp; 643 in the Novosibirsk camp; 3,029 in the Central Asian camp in Tashkent, where they were imprisoned and subjected to hard labor [12.Pp.6-7.].

In the second part of this information, it is noted that 854 Uzbeks were in Karaganda, 12 in Prorva, 23 in Norilsk, 1,199 in Vyazemsk, 69 in Kaluga, 250 in the Stalin railway station, 96 in South-Eastern Havana, 47 in Podolsk airfield, 70 in Samara, 655 in the North-Eastern camps, a total of 3,275 Uzbeks. Thus, the period of 1937-1938 is the culmination of the era of the “great terror” [9.Pp.14-24.].

We have also witnessed who “created” this “great terror” and the deep roots of this terrible tragedy, and there are different views and interpretations on how to determine it. From the above considerations it is clear that there were certain objective reasons for the emergence of political repression and, as a part of it, the “great terror”. The opposition forces, directed against the party and Soviet power, especially their leadership, fought, using all their capabilities, using all means, fighting tooth and nail to seize political power.

CONCLUSION.

To summarize, in order to preserve the positions and leadership positions of party functionaries in various regions of the country, even in the capital Moscow and other large cities, the “counter-revolutionaries”, “anti-Soviet forces”, “former kulaks”, “criminals” pretended to oppose the Soviet electoral process and appealed to the Center, the Politburo, and Stalin to take drastic repressive measures against their opponents. In fact, they opened fire on the new electoral system established in the 1936 USSR Constitution. Because the new electoral system set out the tasks of transferring real power from the party to the people, introducing broad popular democracy, and strengthening statehood. It was expected that due to the holding of



elections based on the new electoral system, these local party leaders would be deprived of their real functions. Therefore, party functionaries appealed to the Center with proposals to arrest and shoot all “Anti-Soviet forces” – former kulaks and criminals. Thus, the place and role of local party functionaries in the emergence of the “great terror” policy of 1937-1938 was not small.

As was the case everywhere, the operational order of the USSR People’s Commissar of Internal Affairs Yezhov dated July 30, 1937 under the top secret stamp No. 00447 on conducting an operation to repress “former kulaks, criminals and other anti-Soviet elements” was promptly carried out in Uzbekistan.

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