

**THE SOVIET STATE’S “CLASS STRUGGLE” POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON THE
SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE UZBEK VILLAGE**

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Annotation: This article analyzes, in IMRAD format, the impact of the Soviet state’s “class struggle” policy on the social structure of Uzbek villages. The study examines the intensification of class stratification, anti-kulak campaigns, the collectivization process, and their effects on relations between social groups, migration, and rural economic life. The results demonstrate that Soviet policies intensified social contradictions and fundamentally transformed the traditional rural structure.

Keywords: class struggle, Soviet policy, rural social structure, collectivization, dekulakization.

Introduction

The establishment of Soviet rule in Central Asia in the early 20th century was not only a political regime change but also a historical process that profoundly affected all layers of society, particularly rural social life. After the 1917 Revolution, the Bolshevik Party interpreted “class struggle” as the primary driving force of social development and proclaimed this idea as a central ideological principle in the construction of the Soviet state. At the heart of Soviet ideology was the division of society into antagonistic classes, deliberately setting them against each other and eliminating the “exploitative strata” from political, economic, and social life [1].

For Turkestan, especially Uzbek villages, this policy was unprecedented and disrupted the foundations of the traditional social system. For centuries, the Uzbek village had its own stable social order: land ownership, division of labor, mahalla governance, neighborhood networks, and kinship relations served as its main pillars. Although the population was divided into wealthy, middle, and poor categories, these distinctions were rooted in economic life rather than ideological hostility. However, the Soviet state reinterpreted these natural social dynamics as forms of “class enmity” and divided the rural population into rigid political groups [2].

From the 1920s onward, political directives sent from Moscow declared the “kulaks” to be the main enemies of society. Regardless of their actual economic condition, this label was often applied to families capable of managing independent households or those holding social prestige. As a result, political tensions—previously absent in Uzbek rural life—began to intensify. Trust, solidarity, and the mechanisms of local governance deteriorated. The forced implementation of the “class struggle” doctrine caused deep damage not only to economic life but also to the cultural and psychological environment.

The collectivization campaigns launched in the 1930s elevated this policy to its most intensive phase. With the establishment of kolkhozes and sovkhozes, Uzbek villages underwent dramatic changes: landownership was transferred to the state, private households were eliminated, labor relations were collectivized, and rural communities came under strict central control. Collectivization represented the most extreme form of the class struggle policy, as this period saw the peak of dekulakization, deportations, forced labor, and severe political repression [3].

The impact of this policy on the social structure of the Uzbek village was multifaceted and complex, affecting economic systems, social consciousness, cultural traditions, mahalla institutions, and demographic dynamics. Because these transformations occurred rapidly, the population faced significant difficulties adapting to them. Moreover, the political amplification of class distinctions triggered widespread mistrust, fear, and social fragmentation.

Thus, the Soviet state's implementation of the "class struggle" doctrine radically changed the social structure of the Uzbek village, disrupting its previous natural balance and replacing it with a new model based on political control.

Methodology

The study relies on the following research methods:

Historical analysis method: archival documents, Soviet-era statistical data, and governmental decrees were examined.

Comparative approach: transformations in class structure in Uzbek villages were compared with those in other Soviet republics.

Sociological approach: demographic, economic, and social data found in scholarly literature were analyzed.

Analytical–tabular method: a special table was prepared to illustrate the dynamics of change.

The research is based on governmental resolutions, party archives, and modern academic works [1], [3].

Results

1. Intensification of class stratification

Soviet policy ideologically reinterpreted the relatively flexible traditional social groups of the Uzbek village — wealthy peasants, middle peasants, and the poor.

Wealthy peasants – “kulaks”

Middle peasants – “double-dealers”

Poor peasants – “class allies”

Thus, the local social structure became highly politicized, creating artificial contradictions among social groups [2].

2. Dekulakization campaigns

During the 1930–1933 dekulakization campaigns, thousands of families were labeled as “exploiters.” Their property was confiscated, and many were deported to Siberia or Kazakhstan [3].

3. Social impact of collectivization

The formation of kolkhozes forced rural populations into collective labor against their will. This process led to:

the disintegration of traditional family-based economic systems,

the weakening of local governance and mahalla institutions,

the intensification of social inequality.

4. Disruption of mahalla relations

Class-based differentiation weakened neighborhood ties, kinship networks, and mahalla solidarity. Families labeled as “class enemies” were socially isolated.

Table 1. Social Changes in Uzbek Villages Resulting from Soviet Class Policies

Period	Main Process	Social Transformations	Outcome
1925–1929	Intensification of class division	Political reinterpretation of wealthy, middle, poor peasants	Increased tension among social groups
1930–1933	Dekulakization	Confiscation and deportation of kulak families	Demographic shifts, fear, instability

Period	Main Process	Social Transformations	Outcome
1931–1940	Collectivization	Establishment of collective farms	Breakdown of traditional households
1940–1950	Consolidation of Sovietization	Strengthening of political control	Weakening of mahalla institutions

Discussion

The findings show that the “class struggle” policy radically reshaped the social structure of the Uzbek village:

1. Destruction of traditional institutions

Ancient institutions such as the mahalla and neighborhood networks weakened under political pressure.

2. Intensification of social conflicts

Political labeling increased social distancing, mistrust, and fear among families.

3. Forced migration

Dekulakization caused the mass displacement of Uzbek families, leading to demographic and economic consequences [3].

4. Politicization of the rural economy

Land ownership, labor relations, and property structures were reorganized on ideological grounds.

Conclusion

The Soviet state’s “class struggle” policy exerted deep and negative effects on the social structure of the Uzbek village. Traditional social institutions were dismantled, and natural socioeconomic relations among rural groups were artificially transformed into political contradictions. Dekulakization and collectivization undermined the stability of the rural social system.

The consequences of this policy were felt for decades, becoming one of the major obstacles to

the social development of Uzbek villages in subsequent periods.

Literature:

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