



DROPS FROM THE HISTORY OF SAMARKAND

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ABSTRACT

This article presents a brief history of Samarqand during the Soviet period and the socio-political landscape and economic life of Samarqand during this period.

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Introduction

When I talk about Samarkand, I am reminded of the words of the Chilean writer Pablo Neruda: "I liked your city, which is world famous for its beautiful cultural and ancient monuments, especially the Registan. It is a testimony to the high culture of the country and peoples of Central Asia"[2]. So what happened to Samarkand during Soviet times? Let us talk about it briefly.

Main body

Samarkand, like other cities, did not lose its importance during the former Soviet Union. The city's industry underwent rapid change over the years because of its rapid development. New industries such as engineering, metalworking, chemistry and building materials have sprung up. In the 1970s, the city had about 60 large and small factories. Samarkand produced over 20 percent of the republic's textiles and mineral fertilizers, about 15 percent of wine, all tea, over 20 percent of canned goods and about 5 percent of cotton fiber. Household refrigerators, film cameras, a porcelain factory and a shoe factory

defined the city's industrial image. [1]. It should be noted, however, that the share of finished goods and high-tech products in total production was much lower. Even the advanced factories and plants, evacuated during the war years, in the post-war years were re-profiled, taking into account mainly local conditions, primarily for the needs of agriculture. The one-sided development of the city's economy as a whole was a typical phenomenon of the 1970s and 1980s.

During the Soviet era, Samarkand, as a major cultural centre of Uzbekistan, underwent some changes in its life. Science, literature and art developed in the city. The inhabitants of Samarkand sought to change the appearance of their city and its architectural splendour for the better. As a result, alleys and parks were created and many new government and public buildings erected. Archaeological excavations began. Samarkand hosted an international symposium on the art of the Central Asian peoples during the Timurid period. In October 1970 the 2500th anniversary of Samarkand was celebrated. International music festivals dedicated to the music of the Middle East were also held in 1978, 1983 and 1987 [1].

During this period, the city of Samarkand began to pay more attention to the education system and the arts. In particular, schools, universities and colleges, libraries, clubs, museums, and cinemas began to open in the city in the 1920s. In the 1970s the city had an extensive network of pre-schools, more than 40 secondary schools, 17 technical colleges and 27 vocational schools.

In the last years of the Soviet rule, the town had 4 theatres: the Samarkand Regional Uzbek State Musical and Drama Theatre named after Khamid Olimjon, the Chekhov Russian Drama Theatre, the Opera and Ballet Theatre, and the Asror Jorayev Regional Puppet Theatre. Samarkand higher educational establishments made a significant contribution to the training of qualified specialists not only for the city, but for the entire country. In 1928–1939 five universities were created in the city: the Uzbek Institute of Musical Choreography (now the Institute of Art History of the Academy of Arts of Uzbekistan), the Pedagogical Academy, the Cooperative Institute, and the Agricultural and Medical Institutes.

The Uzbek Institute of Musical Choreography, where M. Ashrafiy, M. Burkhonov, T. Sodikov, and Sh. Ramazonov received educational degree, played an important role in the cultural development of Samarkand. The establishment of the Uzbek State University (Samarkand State University) on the basis of the Uzbek Pedagogical Academy in 1933 was an important event in the cultural life of the city. By 1941, the University had trained 1,157 qualified specialists in various fields, including 594 indigenous children. In addition, 75 postgraduate students (including 23 indigenous people) had been trained.

In those years, such prominent statesmen, scholars, writers and poets of the Republic as I. Muminov, K. Z. Zokirov, N. Romanov, G. Gulomov, M. Osimov, U. Orifov, O. Aminov, Uygun, H. Olimjon and Sh. Saadullah studied at the Uzbek State University. In 1966, the city's sixth institute of higher education - the Mirzo Ulugbek Samarkand Institute of Architecture and Civil Engineering - was opened. In 1969, the Samarkand higher automobile command and engineering college was established.

The establishment of the Institute of Archaeology at the Uzbek Academy of Sciences, the only one in Central Asia, on the basis of the Institute of Archaeology and History of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences in 1970 was a major event in the scientific life of Samarkand. Academician Yu. Gulyamov made a great contribution to the organization of the Institute. [1] Newspapers and magazines also played an important role in the study of the socio-political history of this period. In 1958, the multi-circulation newspaper of the "*Krasniy dvigatel*" («Red Engine») plant – "*Leninchi*", published 508

articles, news and photographs. Most of these articles, however, were written by working-class reporters and communists [3].

Many famous poets, writers and literary critics worked in the city. Among them were A. Fitrat, S. Aini, H. Olimjon, U. Nosir, Uigun, O. Sobirova, H. Polat, and others. During this period not only Uzbek artists, but also writers from all over the world began to write about Samarqand. Particularly, the talented Bulgarian poetess Lilia Stefanova dedicated her poems "The Living Pages" and "Bibikhanim" to the image of Samarqand, and another Bulgarian poet, Jordan Milev, wrote "The Epic of the East" on the theme of Samarqand [2].

Conclusion

However, positive changes in the cultural, spiritual and socio-economic spheres were fragmented because of tight political control and a strong ideology. The creative efforts of the Uzbek people and its creative intelligentsia to preserve, restore and enrich centuries of rich national culture were seriously hampered by the communist regime. The rejection of conventional commodity-market relations and the suppression of communist individual ideology based on the nationalisation of all forms of property led to contradictory principles in the economy of the Republic, including that of Samarkand. The one-sided, unfavourable raw material nature of the national economy, its underdevelopment and people-oriented nature, coupled with painful flaws in social policy, aggravated the material and financial situation of the republic. This led to stagnation in the socio-economic development of the country. Valuable power has not gone unnoticed during Soviet times, such as the one-sided administrative-command policy and the cotton case (later the Uzbek case). But, as they say, the truth will always be settled, and the Soviet system will collapse. The city of Samarkand also entered a new phase of development after independence. Today Samarkand is beautiful beyond recognition. I would like to end this article with the words of the First President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islam Karimov: *"Samarkand has a glorious past, a happy present and an eternal future"*.

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