

Practice Of Deprivation Of Voting During Soviet Election Campaign In Uzbekistan

(On The Example Of The Election Campaigns Of 1928-1929)

Yakubov Nazirjon Salijonovich

Independent researcher of Andijan State University



Abstract – The article is devoted to the analysis of statistical data on the election campaigns in the Uzbek SSR in 1928-1929. The Soviet electoral system served as one of the most popular and effective ways to strengthen the government of its time. Under the guise of elections, the government has set itself the lofty goal of neutralizing in any way any force that is likely to be its enemy. In this regard, the issue of providing legal evidence and grounds for including citizens on the list of the rich and the kulaks (the people who were oppressed, tortured and often deported to distant places for their beliefs and loyalty to their faith) was not important.

Keywords – Soviets, electoral system, election campaign, right to vote, the disfranchised, the rich, the kulaks (the exiled).

An important moment in the development of the Soviet electoral system in the 1920s and 1930s was exclusion of certain categories of citizens from participating in elections by depriving them of voting right. The election campaign itself was marked by an escalation of aggression among the disfranchised, especially among wealthy farmers. This measure was aimed at exerting economic, administrative, social and psychological pressure on certain strata and groups of the population as part of the social policy of the Soviet state. As a result, those who were deprived of the right to vote - "The disfranchised" - appeared. The name was given to one of the most popular groups of people who were subjected to repression at the time. The policy of deprivation of the right to vote later turned into announcing as "kulaks" (the exiled) and deportation of the farmers and their family [6].

At this point, we must pay special attention to the issue of "The disfranchised". This is because the most common form of repression used by the Soviet government in the process of collectivization was the policy and practice of depriving certain segments of the population of the right to vote [5.209].

Based on some statistical and analytical data, it would be just to describe the policy of the Soviet government on the election campaign in the Soviet republics in 1928-1929, which is known in history as the beginning of repressive policies in the union of republics, especially in Central Asia and Uzbekistan.

The activities of the working masses of the urban and rural population were undoubtedly reflected in the identification and registration of people deprived of the right to vote. The number of members of this category more than quadrupled in the following years as a result of the revision of the past lives of anti-Soviet and alien elements hiding behind various masks, and their inclusion in the list of deprived of the right to vote en masse. During this campaign, together with those of deprived the right to vote of Tajikistan, 145.819 people of urban areas and 67.934 people in 23 cities of UzSSR were deprived of their right too. In UzSSR, the average percentage of those deprived of the right to vote was 6,1% in rural areas and 13,7% in 23 cities [10.246].

The number of those deprived of voting rights is distributed among the districts as follows:

In rural area *Table 1*

	Regions	The number of “The disfranchised”	percentage of voters
1	Kharezm	18.432	9,2%
2	Bukhara	15.492	7,9%
3	Zarafshan	6.992	4,7%
4	Samarkand	7.591	3,3%
5	Tashkent	17.012	8,6%
6	Hujand	7.724	7,7%
7	Fergana	15.957	5%
8	Andijan	21.928	6,4%
9	Sirdarya	5.949	5,7%
10	Kashkadarya	9.494	5%
11	Kanimeh	458	6,3%
12	Tajikistan ASSR	18.790	5,3%
	Total in UzSSR:	145.819	6,1%

In cities *Table 2*

	Regions	The number of “The disfranchised”	percentage of voters
1	Kharezm	3.122	19,4%
2	Bukhara	6.987	18,1%
3	Samarkand	8.772	11,2%
4	Tashkent	23.021	11%
5	Fergana	13.544	23,2%
6	Andijan	5.070	10,8%
7	Sirdarya	1.315	11,5%
8	Kashkadarya	2.597	19,6%
9	Khujand	3.506	14,8%
	Total in 23 cities:	67.934	13,7%

In 1926-1927, 33.029 people were deprived of the right to vote in rural areas of the UzSSR, and 36.806 people in cities, which accounted for 1,8% and 7,8% of the total number of voters, respectively [10.247]. If we analyze the above statistics on the number

of people deprived of the right to vote, the number of “The disfranchised” in the villages of Kharezmi, Tashkent, Bukhara and Khojand regions is much higher than the national average, and in Samarkand region it is significantly lower.

The average rate of “The disfranchised” in the cities of the country was 13,7%. However, the share of “The disfranchised” in the cities of Fergana region had the leading position with 23,2% of voters, and in the cities of Khorezm (19,4%) and Kashkadarya (19,6%) districts, the list of “The disfranchised ” was abnormally high. In turn, there were many complaints from “The disfranchised” in the mentioned districts, who claimed that they had been unfairly deprived of their right to vote and demanded a re-investigation. [4]

If we compare the situation in the electoral processes of 1928-1929 and 1926-1927, dividing the “The disfranchised” into separate categories, the following table will be formed, and it will be clear that the practice of restricting rights becomes more active every year.

In rural areas Table 3

	Types of “The disfranchised”	In 1928/1929 (in percentage)	In 1926/1927 (in percentage)
1	Entrepreneurs	10,4	2,7
2	Those living on the income without labor	11,9	11,6
3	Merchants	13,9	19,3
4	Clerics	22,8	28
5	Former policemen, people who had belonged to Khan and Amir governments	8,4	12,6
6	Mentally ill people and the fostered	1,6	1,6
7	The prisoners	3,1	4,6
8	Others	27,9	19,6

Family members of administratively deported people fall into the “others” category. The analysis of the table shows that there were significant changes in the “The disfranchised” groups. In particular, the group of entrepreneurs increased significantly, as they included all individuals who used hired labor, as well as the kulaks and the rich. Therefore, the rate of the “others” group was high, requiring a more in-depth study of the families of those deprived of the right to vote. There has been a significant decline in the number of merchants, clerics and officials, members of the former khan and amir governments, and police officers [10.247].

In cities Table 4

T/p	Types of “The disfranchised”	In 1928/1929 (in percentage)	In 1926/1927 (in percentage)
1	Entrepreneurs	9,9	1,3
2	Those living on the income without labor	4,8	13,3
3	Merchants	37,9	58,8
4	Clerics	7,9	12

5	Former policemen, people who had belonged to Khan and Amir governments	2,2	4
6	Mentally ill people and the fostered	1,7	0,9
7	The prisoners	3,9	2,1
8	Others	-	7,6
9	Family members of "The disfranchised"	31,7	-

Family members of those deprived of their rights during the 1926-1927 election campaign were included in the "others" group of this table. By the season of 1928-1929, as a result of the inclusion of these individuals directly in the list of users of hired labor, the number of representatives of this category increased sharply. The number of groups of residents having income without working, traders, clerics, and former police officers declined significantly. [10.248]

In the process of mass collectivization of agriculture, a number of violations of electoral legislation took place. The principle of voluntariness in the process of collectivization was grossly violated, and lawlessness and violence escalated. Restrictions on tax and credit (debt) policy in relation to the business, entrepreneurial and politically active part of the rural population, who did not want to be separated from their land and property and opposed collectivization, included deprivation of the right to vote, confiscation of property, a forced relocation with the whole family policy was implemented [5.212].

Although the Program for Elections to the Soviets described the economic aspects of depriving farmers of the right to vote, it was these indicators that played a decisive role in defining kulak farms in the areas of mass collectivization.

The Soviets wanted to justify the policy of fighting against "kulaks" (the exiled), restricting them, squeezing them out by making various decisions and laws. At a time when the abolition of "kulaks" (the exiled) as a class had not yet begun, the Soviet authorities adopted resolutions of February 20, 1929, "On the Application of the Labor Code in Kulak Farms," and May 21, 1929, "Signs on Kulak Farm Where the labor code should be applied", according to which "announcing as kulak" was also being practiced in Uzbekistan [7.26].

We should also mention that at the beginning of this article we gave official data that in 1926-1927 those who were deprived of the right to vote in rural areas comprised 1,8% (3,5% in the whole union). However, the analysis of the following tables that we have considered shows that these figures are far from the realistic picture. To substantiate this view, we cite a number of additional arguments. First of all, if we briefly consider the organizational aspects of the registration of the people deprived of their rights to vote, the instruction of the Center on careful organization of registration of the "The disfranchised" placed on the ground was not specifically developed, there were no grounds to prove the legitimacy of almost all lists. In a number of districts, the compilation of the list of those deprived of their rights began too late. For example, in Bukhara and Zarafshan districts, until November 27, 1926, there was no information on the registration of those deprived of the right to vote. A number of village councils in the Andijan region did not compile lists of the "The disfranchised" until 17 December, which was a gross violation of the programmatic rules of displaying these lists two weeks before the election day [10.248].

The available materials on the activities of the Central Election Commission show that certain categories of citizens were illegally deprived of the right to vote. In particular in Khojand district election commission 354 citizens were included in the list of "The disfranchised" citizens as a result of incorrect learning of the election program and incorrect assessment of the actions of hooligans and other similar offenders. The Khorezm district election commission pursued a policy of mass deprivation of the right to vote in the Khazarasp district. In Gazovot (now a village in the Koshkopir district - the author) and Gurlan district the poor and discharged from the soldiers were also included in the list of the "The disfranchised" [10.250].

One more noteworthy fact is that Batrak (farm laborer), who was caught stealing chickens in the Khavas district of Tashkent district and was deprived of the right to vote. However, he has not been prosecuted or convicted for that crime. Forty-five people praying in a mosque in the village of Uymovut in Fergana district were placed on a list of those deprived of the right to vote by a

district election commission representative without any inquiries. In the Pop district of the region, even those who died were added to the list of the “The disfranchised”, while the secretary of the village council in the Zakharevsk village of Tashkent district explained to the population that the batraks who did not own property or yards could not participate in the elections and were among the “The disfranchised”.

The high level of illiteracy in local government offices and election commissions and the large number of low-level legal staff often resulted in the suffering of ordinary citizens. In particular, it must be acknowledged that not only the programmatic requirements for elections, but also the human rights section of the constitution of the time devoted to elections, was grossly violated.

In Shahrikhan village of Andijan district, 24% of citizens were deprived of the right to vote, while in Izbaskan district and in some polling stations in Andijan all those over 80 years of age were included in the list of those deprived of the right to vote,.

In Kurgantepa (TASSR), thin chieftain was forbidden to vote because he was paid a large salary and had one day worker under his care. And in Khojand district, some freelance wheelbarrow pullers were also deprived of voting right. Although the election program set standards for the use of hired labor in agriculture, in the Shakhrisabz district of Kashkadarya region, all representatives of the sector were included in the list of the disenfranchised, and as a result, 80 out of 120 voters in one polling station were disenfranchised [10.250].

When speaking about the history of the Soviet electoral system in Uzbekistan, alongside with studying the way of conduction of elections, suffrage, deprivation of the right to vote one of the most sensitive aspects - the problem of restoring the rights of the "The disfranchised" is important. The issue of reviewing related applications is important and this topic will require further separate and comprehensive research. Now we restrict ourselves by only giving the following statistic data currently available at the Central Election Commission.

Table 5

constituency	All applications	viewed:		
		Election rights restored	refused	Send to be reviewed
MSK	158	17	87	54
Samarkand	228	65	137	26
Tashkent	311	61	203	47
Khujand	606	280	192	134
Fergana	192	9	130	53
Andijan	172	34	138	-
Bukhara	136	25	111	-
Total:	1803	491	998	314
Per cent	100%	27,2%	55,3%	17,5%

It should also be noted that during the election campaign of 1928-1929, the activity of the poor, the batraks and the middle class of the rural population increased significantly, while in this process the movements of the rich and those who were announced to be “kulaks” intensified. In particular, those included in the category of rich and kulaks sought to covertly support their own candidates in the election campaign in order to maintain a certain degree of influence in the future, and thus expand their sphere of influence in village councils. In a number of villages in the Andijan constituency, the rich sponsored various public and entertainment events, weddings and celebrations in preparation for the election campaign and in the election process, in return for which they held secret meetings and nominated candidates for the chairmanship and membership of village councils. At the same

time, they raised the issue (before the chairman and candidates for membership in village councils) of not including themselves on the list of the rich and kulaks and deprived of the right to vote.

According to the top-secret information of the Information Department of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (b) of April 3, 1929, "The program of kulaks and the methods of their struggle", on December 11, 1929, about 40 rich and priests gathered in the village of Kipchakkurgan, Asaka region.

In the house of a rich man in the village of No. 26, Marken district, Syrdarya region, a meeting will be held on the nomination of candidates for the new composition of village councils, which will be attended by 30 poor people, including two members of the VKP (b). Rich supporters are nominated for the chairmanship of the village council [7.43].

On the basis of the above mentioned information there is the open disagreement movement of those listed the "rich" and "kulaks" with the Soviet regime. In some cases, little by little the "The disfranchised", the rich and kulaks began writing applications to local authorities and higher institutions in order reinvestigations to be organized and even some unrest took place [4]. In the village council of Suyri "bays" (the wealthy) deprived of their right to vote held a meeting in the house of unaccepted to the Kolhoz bay Abduraim Karimov's and wrote an application demanding to restore their voting rights and to be accepted by the Kolhoz. When this application was viewed and the authors' demand was rejected, there was a brawl; as a result the meeting was cancelled [7.108].

There is one more important aspect in the process of studying the Soviet electoral system and the history of elections. As noted above, while some categories of citizens were deprived of their suffrage on the basis of the original class, it was not the end. Measures to further restrict the rights of the "The disfranchised" began to intensify.

The law strictly restricted the rights of the "The disfranchised" members of the society, who were deprived of the right to join trade unions and agricultural cooperatives, as well as the right to participate in the governing and inspection bodies of consumer cooperatives (*as a result of their class status and past activities being members of consumer cooperatives is absolutely impossible for them*) [4.129].

Although the law did not provide for the additional deprivation of food rations for the "The disfranchised", it was established that food cards will not be issued to persons with limited rights and their families.

In rural areas, the situation was even worse for the "The disfranchised". In particular, they were equated to kulaks, not employed on collective farms, and their property was confiscated and they were evicted from their homes along with their family members. In addition, decrees were issued in some villages prohibiting selling them goods at even double prices, and selling tea and any other products in teahouses and hotels. In other words, the "The disfranchised" in rural areas were utterly hopeless [4.130].

In short, the Soviet electoral system served as one of the most popular and effective ways to strengthen the government of its time. Apparently, the government set a lofty goal of neutralizing in any way any force that is likely to be its enemy under the guise of elections. In this regard, the issue of providing legal evidence, proof and grounds on the issue of including citizens in the list of the rich and the kulaks or depriving them of the right to vote was not important.

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