



**THE INCREASING DESIRES FOR IDENTITY IN UZBEKISTAN DURING THE PERESTRACTION YEARS**

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A B S T R A C T	K E Y W O R D S
<p>This article analyzes the intensification of the desire for self-awareness in Uzbekistan in the second half of the 1980s, during the period of perestroika and transparency policies. The processes of restoring historical truth, rediscovering national heroes, granting the Uzbek language the status of the state language, and restoring national culture and traditions are highlighted. This period is also considered as a stage when the first steps towards independence were taken, and the factors that led to the awakening of national consciousness are analyzed.</p>	<p>Perestroika, transparency, national consciousness, self-awareness, historical justice, victims of repression, national heroes, state language, national culture, independence movement.</p>

**Introduction**

The policies of perestroika and glasnost that began in the Soviet Union in the second half of the 1980s led to profound changes in the republics of the union, including Uzbekistan. This period was an important step towards the awakening of national consciousness, the restoration of historical justice, and the achievement of independence. Historical figures and events that had previously been forgotten or distorted under the influence of communist ideology were re-studied, and the desire to restore national culture and traditions intensified. In particular, such processes as granting the Uzbek language the status of the state language and the formation of an open attitude towards national customs and religious values paved the way for independence. This article analyzes the main aspects of the desire to realize one's identity in Uzbekistan during the years of perestroika.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In the mid-1980s, the obstacles that arose in the issue of celebrating the Navruz holiday as a national holiday in Uzbekistan caused fierce debate. It is good that Navruz is celebrated every year with new content. But it would be more correct to call it the Navbahor holiday"[1], a proposal was put forward. However, the actions against the Navruz holiday were also one of the measures aimed at condemning and restricting national cultures. As a result, by 1986, the Navruz holiday was completely canceled. The holiday, which had nothing to do with Islam, was labeled "religious". Instead of Navruz, the last Sunday of March was declared "Remembrance Day". Party and state bodies made every effort to

celebrate Remembrance Day in all regions of the republic. It should be noted that the issue of celebrating the Day of Remembrance was raised correctly, but its replacement with Navruz was a source of great resentment among the people.

The Navruz holiday, which has become a national holiday for the people over the centuries, was re-celebrated in 1987 as a result of the efforts of intellectuals. In this regard, the writer E. Vohidov emphasizes that "I consider the revival of the Navruz holiday to be a great victory for the writing community"[2]. Also, articles about the Navruz holiday highlighted that it is a national holiday, that Navruz is not a religious, but a cultural heritage, and that its content signifies the arrival of a new day, that is, a new year[3]. By the end of the 1980s, the Republican Ideology Commission reconsidered the issue of celebrating the Navruz holiday. In particular, at a meeting of the Ideology Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, it was noted that "...in the recent past, administrativeism was allowed in the cultural and spiritual sphere of people's life, the total disregard for traditions formed over centuries, and the imposition of fabricated events at the same time had a negative impact on the socio-spiritual environment in the republic"[4].

The issue of celebrating the holiday "Navruz" was reconsidered and a working group was established on the "Problems of restoring national holidays". As a result of the active efforts made, the working group determined that March 21 should be widely celebrated as the holiday "Navruz" every year. It was recommended to declare the days from March 21 to April 21 as the "Month of Compassion and Environmental Protection". During this period, it was decided to hold the "Memorial Day", "First Pushta", "First Crop", "Day of Grain, Grass and Water", the children's holiday "Boychechak" and other ceremonies. The Ministry of Culture of the Uzbek SSR was given relevant instructions to organize a large holiday concert in Tashkent on March 21, to develop a plan for tours dedicated to "Navruz" throughout the republic, and to widely cover the progress of preparations for the "Navruz" holiday in the republic and its holding.

Since 1989, the Navruz holiday has been celebrated on a wider scale in the republic. The mass media have been publishing articles, various programs and broadcasts about the Navruz holiday, its celebration, and national festivities. By the resolution of the Council of Ministers of Uzbekistan, March 21, 1990, was designated as the "National Holiday of Navruz - a day off" [5]. The legal basis for holding the Navruz national holiday as a permanent national holiday was the Decree of I.A. Karimov dated February 12, 1991 "On Preparation and Holding of the National Holiday of Navruz in the Republic" [6]. It should be noted that the restructuring that began in the second half of the 1980s deepened democratic processes in society and created conditions for the formation of the principle of free speech and free thought. This led to the strengthening of the aspirations of the people living under the tyrannical regime to restore their independence, national values, customs and rituals, which had been artificially destroyed. By the end of the 1980s, the negative attitude towards national traditions and its consequences began to be openly expressed from large platforms. In particular, the People's Deputies of the Uzbek CP SSR and deputies of local Soviets in the action program of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan stated that "the Republican party organization, having abandoned its voluntaristic actions in relation to religion in the past, is a supporter of ensuring freedom of conscience, the legal rights of believers, and cooperation with religious organizations. ...It is emphasized that all opportunities are being created for believers to participate in peacekeeping and charity work in the socio-political and cultural life of the republic, to establish humanistic, respectful and good-neighborly relations in interethnic relations[7]. In several speeches, the head of the republic, I. Karimov, touching

upon national values and religious issues, explains the problems in this regard as follows: “National traditions are the most delicate and most respected qualities of the people. Unfortunately, there were times when some people from abroad did not take this into account. Even some leaders who came from our own country opposed the Navruz holiday and national clothing. We have reached such a point that even participating in the funeral of a relative was considered an old-fashioned thing, and such people, especially leaders, were subjected to pressure. Let alone the issues of communicating with believers and conducting business in consultation with them. So, enough is enough. Therefore, today I would like to reiterate our strong condemnation of these acts, the need to treat the traditions of the people, their heritage, and the religious beliefs of the people with strict respect and attention”[8].

“We cannot accept either the bodies of the tendency to a way of life inherited from the past, or the arbitrary assessment of folk traditions, religious beliefs, or attempts to erase the past from the people's memory. We must also approach the issues of freedom of conscience from new positions. We are for the full restoration of legal principles in the relationship between the state and religion, abandoning violent methods of combating religion and arbitrariness[9].”

The attitude towards religion, which was persecuted during the totalitarian regime, changed. On July 2, 1990, the Presidential Decree “On the Pilgrimage of Muslims to Saudi Arabia” was issued[10]. The regular celebration of the holy days in the life of Muslims - Eid al-Adha and Eid al-Adha - fulfilled the noble intentions of our people. National and religious morals and hadiths began to be conveyed to the people through the media, and books on these topics were published. Also, the adoption of the Law “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” by the Supreme Council of the Republic on June 14, 1991 also made a fundamental change in the spiritual life of our people.

The local “guardians” of the Soviet regime strongly opposed their justification as creators and the return of their works to the people. During this period, many local intellectuals in their articles cited many well-founded examples of the one-sided approach to the study of literary heritage, which resulted in “a very superficial and class-based interpretation of our classical literature, dividing our classical poets into progressive and reactionary, religious-mystical and democratic, court poet and folk poet”[11]. O. Sharofiddinov also puts forward a number of weighty ideas about the freedom that should be introduced into literature, the study of Yassavi’s works, the reinterpretation of the Jadid movement, and the attention paid to the study of the works of Cholpon and Fitrat[12].

Since 1987, when a commission was established to study the literary heritage of Cholpon and Fitrat, activities in this area have begun to take a more positive turn. In July of this year, the Republican Writers' Union and the newspaper "Uzbekistan Literature and Art" jointly held a round table discussion on "Methodological Problems of Reconstruction and Study of Cultural Heritage" at the Institute of Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan[13]. The discussion will focus on the scientific study, impartial coverage, and public dissemination of the "protected" areas of literary heritage, namely the works of Yassavi, Husayni, Amiri, Abulgazi, Cholpon, Fitrat, and others. On January 22-25, 1988, a meeting was held at the Institute of Language and Literature on some issues of studying literary heritage and Jadidism with the participation of literary critics, philosophers and historians of the Republic[14]. The commission for studying the literary heritage of Cholpon and Fitrat found it expedient to publish their works in three stages. The work of preparing the literary heritage of Cholpon and Fitrat for publication was entrusted to the Institute of Language and Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan[15].

The efforts of the intelligentsia to study the work of the Jadids and thereby reduce the "white spots" in history were also positively assessed by other intellectuals of the republic. In particular, in 1988, a large round table discussion was held at the Institute of Language and Literature on the topic "Issues of Jadidism", in which prominent scientists from other republics participated and shared their views.

## CONCLUSION

The years of perestroika created the basis for the awakening of national consciousness and a strengthening of self-awareness in Uzbekistan. Historical justice began to be restored, the names of national heroes were vindicated, and issues of national language and culture came to the fore. This process later became one of the most important stages leading to independence.

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