



THE FORMATION OF THE ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF UZBEKISTAN DURING WORLD WAR II AND THE ROLE OF NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CADRES (1943–1953)

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ABSTRACT

Article provides a comprehensive scientific analysis of the institutional foundation and early development of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR between 1943 and 1953. It explores the paradoxical establishment of this premier scientific institution during the height of World War II, examining the structural shift from the Uzbek Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences (FANUZ) to an independent republican academy. The study highlights the dual nature of this process: the critical intellectual input from evacuated Soviet scientists and the simultaneous mobilization and rise of indigenous, national scientific cadres. Specialized attention is given to the contributions of pioneering Uzbek scientists in fields such as mathematics, geology, and chemistry, which were vital for both wartime defense and post-war industrial reconstruction. Finally, the paper analyzes the tightening of ideological control and the impact of late-Stalinist political purges on the national scientific elite prior to 1953.

INTRODUCTION

The year 1943 marked a critical turning point in the cultural and intellectual history of Uzbekistan. On November 4, 1943, amid the immense socioeconomic strains of World War II, the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR was officially established in Tashkent. This institutional milestone did not emerge in a vacuum; it was built upon the foundations of the Uzbek Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences (FANUZ), which had operated since 1940. The decision by the central Soviet government to charter a fully fledged national academy during a total war reflected a calculated geopolitical and military strategy to transform Uzbekistan into the primary scientific and industrial powerhouse of the Soviet East.

However, the historical trajectory of the Academy during its formative decade (1943–1953) was characterized by a complex tension between institutional modernization and imperial ideological oversight. For the newly emerging national scientific intelligentsia, the Academy offered an unprecedented platform to develop regional resources, establish native-language higher education infrastructures, and cultivate specialized scientific disciplines. Conversely,

the Kremlin and the central Bolshevik apparatus viewed the Academy primarily as an instrument for securing the state's military-industrial complex and enforcing the post-war cotton monoculture system. This paper investigates the structural mechanics behind the Academy's formation, details the crucial contributions of indigenous scientists, and analyzes the political constraints that shaped Uzbek science during the final decade of the Stalinist era.

METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This research utilizes a historical-genetic, comparative, and source-critical methodology to evaluate the administrative and intellectual evolution of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences. The existing literature on this institutional history can be divided into three distinct historiographical traditions.

Soviet historiography, exemplified by the works of Qori-Niyoziy (1950) and Shodiyev (1974), portrayed the creation of the Academy as a seamless triumph of Leninist nationality policy. These accounts heavily emphasized the "fraternal assistance" of evacuated scholars from Moscow and Leningrad, framing the growth of Uzbek science as a direct consequence of centralized socialist planning. While rich in institutional data, these studies systematically ignored the intense bureaucratic friction between Tashkent and Moscow, and completely omitted the ideological repressions that targeted native scholars in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Western historiography, including foundational studies by Lubin (1984) and regional scientific assessments by McCagg and Silver (1979), approached the topic through the lens of Soviet modernization theory and center-periphery dynamics. These scholars recognized that the wartime evacuation of Western Soviet intellectual assets to Tashkent acted as a massive catalyst for local institutional growth. However, they frequently underestimated the independent agency of native Uzbek scientists, often viewing them as secondary executors of dictates issued by the central USSR Academy of Sciences.

Modern Uzbek historiography has embarked on a rigorous re-evaluation of this period since 1991. Historians such as Rajabov (2015) and Toshov (2019), drawing from previously classified funds of the Central State Archive of Uzbekistan, have shifted the focus toward the sacrifices and strategies of the first generation of native academicians. This contemporary school of thought balances the acknowledgment of wartime intellectual cross-pollination with a critical analysis of how the Soviet system structurally restricted Uzbek science to extractive industries and heavily politicized humanitarian research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

First, the structural genesis of the Academy was uniquely accelerated by the logistics of wartime evacuation. Following the German invasion of the western USSR in 1941, over hundreds of elite scientific institutes, laboratories, and thousands of prominent scholars from Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev were relocated to Tashkent. This massive influx of intellectual capital transformed the existing FANUZ framework into a highly concentrated scientific hub. When the independent Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR was formally launched in November 1943, it inherited a robust network of 11 research institutes. The presence of evacuated luminaries created a temporary space of intense scientific collaboration, which allowed the infant academy to bypass decades of standard institutional development and immediately engage in high-level defense and resource research.

Second, the leadership and mobilization of national scientific cadres were vital to anchoring the institution within the local society. The election of Toshmuhammad Niyazovich Qori-Niyoziy, a brilliant mathematician and educator, as the Academy's first President signaled a deliberate effort to legitimize the institution as an organic product of Uzbek national development. Indigenous scientists quickly assumed pioneering roles in strategic disciplines. Most notably, the young geologist Habib Abdullayev formulated groundbreaking theories on petrometallogeny, directly leading to the rapid discovery and exploitation of crucial tungsten, molybdenum, and iron deposits in Western Uzbekistan. These raw materials were vital for the

Soviet tank and weaponry industries, demonstrating that national cadres were not merely trainees, but primary drivers of the Union's wartime survival.

Third, the post-war period (1945–1953) witnessed a structural shift from military defense to the intensive economic optimization of the republic. The Academy was tasked by Moscow with providing the scientific infrastructure necessary to turn Uzbekistan into the ultimate cotton production base of the USSR. Institutes of botany, genetics, and chemistry were expanded to develop high-yield, disease-resistant cotton variants and advanced chemical fertilizers. During this decade, the Academy established a formalized system of domestic postgraduate studies (*aspirantura*), which successfully trained a new generation of native Uzbek PhDs. However, this scientific expansion came at a steep cost, as it locked the republic's scientific trajectory into an ecologically punishing agrarian specialization that subordinated long-term regional interests to centralized state plans.

Fourth, the final years of the Stalinist era brought severe ideological polarization and political clampdowns that disrupted the Academy's intellectual growth. Following the onset of the *Zhdanovshchina* (ideological purges in the cultural and scientific spheres), the Academy's humanitarian branches, particularly the Institute of History and Archaeology, came under intense scrutiny. Native scholars who attempted to write objective histories of pre-colonial Uzbekistan or praise traditional epic literature were systematically accused of "bourgeois nationalism" and "anti-Soviet cosmopolitanism." Even the Academy's leadership was not immune; Qori-Niyoziy was removed from the presidency in 1947 amidst shifting political tides. These ideological purges terrorized the national intelligentsia, forced many fields of research into strict dogmatic conformity, and stalled creative scientific inquiry until the political thaw following Stalin's death in 1953.

CONCLUSION

The establishment and initial decade of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan (1943–1953) represent a transformative and paradoxical chapter in the history of Central Asian modernization. Born out of the geopolitical exigencies of World War II, the Academy quickly evolved from a temporary repository for evacuated wartime institutions into a permanent, highly structured incubator for national scientific talent. The first generation of native Uzbek academicians successfully demonstrated that indigenous intellect was fully capable of driving advanced scientific fields, contributing breakthroughs that were critical to both wartime survival and post-war industrial development.

Nevertheless, the institutional maturity achieved by 1953 remained deeply constrained by totalitarian structures. The Soviet state successfully instrumentalized the Academy to enforce an extractive economic policy and a restrictive ideological regime, severely punishing any attempts by national cadres to chart an independent intellectual course. Ultimately, the period between 1943 and 1953 laid the physical and institutional foundations of modern Uzbek science, creating a resilient technocratic elite that would continue to negotiate the complex boundaries between national identity and imperial centralization for the remainder of the twentieth century.

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