



OMON POLVON AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

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Abstract: *This article examines Omon Polvon as a representative of the independence (istiqlolchilik) movement in Central Asia during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although Omon Polvon is not extensively documented in official archival records, his image occupies a significant place in Uzbek oral tradition and collective historical memory. By analyzing historical context, folklore, and modern historiography, the article argues that Omon Polvon symbolizes popular resistance against colonial domination, social injustice, and political oppression. The study highlights the importance of folk heroes in shaping national consciousness and understanding grassroots independence movements.*

Keywords: *Omon Polvon, independence movement, istiqlolchilik, Central Asia, anti-colonial resistance, national identity.*

1. Introduction

2. Central Asia's history is deeply shaped by struggles for independence and resistance against foreign domination. In the nineteenth century, Russian imperial expansion transformed political, social, and cultural structures in the region. Traditional khanates and local authorities faced the challenge of maintaining autonomy under the pressure of colonial conquest.

Among the popular heroes remembered by the people, Omon Polvon stands out as a symbol of courage, justice, and resistance. He is remembered not only for his physical strength and martial prowess but also as a moral leader who defended the oppressed. This article analyzes Omon Polvon as a representative of the broader independence movement (istiqlolchilik) in Central Asia, emphasizing both his historical and symbolic significance.

3. Historical Background of Russian Colonization



4. Russian expansion into Central Asia intensified in the mid-nineteenth century. The annexation of key cities, including Tashkent (1865) and Samarkand (1868), and the subjugation of the Kokand and Khiva Khanates, significantly disrupted local governance. Russian colonial administration introduced new taxation systems, land reforms, and military oversight. These measures, while consolidating imperial control, created widespread social and economic tension among peasants, artisans, and nomadic communities.

Resistance emerged through various forms: local uprisings, guerrilla activities, and the mobilization of popular heroes to defend community rights. Figures such as Omon Polvon are central in understanding the grassroots dynamics of this resistance.

3. The Concept of Istiqlolchilik (Independence Movement)

4. Istiqlolchilik refers to the aspiration for political independence, cultural preservation, and social justice. In nineteenth-century Central Asia, these movements were often decentralized and lacked formal political structures. Local leaders, charismatic individuals, and folk heroes often served as rallying points for collective action. Omon Polvon exemplifies the role of such leaders. He represented communal interests and moral authority, guiding popular resistance against both colonial forces and oppressive local rulers. His image reflects not only martial capability but also ethical leadership and social responsibility.

5. 4. Omon Polvon in Oral Tradition

6. In Uzbek folklore, Omon Polvon is celebrated as a fearless warrior and protector of the poor. Oral narratives recount his extraordinary feats, unwavering commitment to justice, and opposition to tyranny. Such stories preserve historical memories of social struggle while incorporating legendary elements that elevate him to a symbolic status. These narratives provide insight into the moral and social values of the communities that preserved them. They also reveal the mechanisms through which popular memory transforms historical figures into collective symbols of resistance and national identity.



5. Omon Polvon as a Representative of the Independence Movement As depicted in oral traditions, Omon Polvon embodies the core ideals of *istiqlolchilik*. He resisted foreign domination, defended communal rights, and rejected corruption and exploitation. His leadership was derived from personal integrity and popular trust rather than official titles or military rank. Omon Polvon's example demonstrates how grassroots leadership can serve as an effective agent of social cohesion and resistance, particularly in contexts where formal political authority is constrained by colonial structures.

6. Comparative Perspective

When compared with other Central Asian resistance figures, such as Madaminbek or Ibrohimbek, Omon Polvon is distinguished by the prominence of his image in folklore rather than formal historical documentation. Despite this, all these figures share common traits: opposition to foreign domination, defense of communal justice, and the embodiment of popular aspirations for independence.

Omon Polvon represents an early or parallel form of the independence movement, reflecting local responses to colonial pressures and serving as a model of collective leadership.

7. Cultural Memory and National Identity

The enduring image of Omon Polvon demonstrates the power of collective memory in shaping national identity. Through storytelling, folk songs, and oral history, his legacy has been preserved across generations. In post-independence Uzbekistan, such figures are increasingly interpreted as symbols of national pride, historical continuity, and the struggle for freedom.

Collective memory not only commemorates heroic deeds but also communicates values, ethical norms, and cultural ideals, ensuring that figures like Omon Polvon remain relevant to contemporary national consciousness.

7. Conclusion

Although precise historical records about Omon Polvon are limited, his symbolic significance as a representative of the independence movement is clear. He



embodies the aspirations of the people for freedom, justice, and dignity. Recognizing Omon Polvon as an *istiqlolchilik* figure enhances our understanding of resistance in Central Asian history and highlights the interplay between folklore, collective memory, and political consciousness.

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