

History of Turor Riskulov's Political and Social Activities Within the Government of Turkestan Autonomous Republic

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Abstract: This article examines the history of the Turkestan Autonomous Republic: the autonomist movement of regional progressives, national political societies and organizations created in 1917, and the beginning of the political activity of Turor Riskulov in the government of the Turkestan Autonomous Republic, as well as his life and fate are partially covered. The article also examines the important political changes that took place in Turkestan in 1917, the struggle of the peoples of the country for autonomy, the impact of the February Revolution and the October Revolution in Russia on the life of the peoples of the region and its consequences, the activities of national political parties and organizations in Turkestan, at the IV extraordinary congress of all Muslims of Turkestan, held in the city of Kogan. The history of the creation of the Turkestan Autonomous Government and the violent termination of the autonomous government, Turor Riskulov participation in these processes is studied in detail.

Key words: Turor Riskulov, city of Kokan, Turkestan, autonomy, Turkestan autonomy, Bolsheviks, February revolution, October revolution, colonial policy, progressives, national political parties, statehood of the Uzbek people.

The sharp political changes that began in Petrograd, Russia, did not fail to influence its colony, Turkestan. Here, too, councils of workers and soldiers began to form. However, they were not interested in maintaining calm and peace among the civilian population. The true situation that arose in Turkestan after the February Revolution was expressed by G. Safarov (Safarov G. [1891 - 1942] - one of the Russian revolutionaries, Soviet and communist party figure), who was sent to Tashkent by the Bolshevik party: "For the soldiers and workers here, there was no sense in preserving internal stability, civil peace, or 'national unity' under the dominance of Russian colonialism". Soldiers who had "demobilized" and later became "Red Guards" secured the comfortable living conditions promised to them by the colonial administration at the expense of the local population, striving to maintain connections with the Muslim elite, scholars, and the wealthy. It is hardly necessary to mention the Russian settlers: starting from the February Revolution, they began to act in the villages and auls as if they owned them. If one can talk about "soldier consumer communism", it was precisely here, in the Choresm colony, that it occurred [1, 67].

The first report on the firmness of the provisional government's power in Russia - "First telegrams about victory in war" [2, 88-89] In the early days of March 1917, telegraph messages began to be sent quickly from Tashkent to other cities of Turkestan. This event also intimidated the public of the country. Some of the locals who were not interested in revolutionary events, especially among the old city residents of Tashkent, were noticeably intrigued by these events. In this regard, in many places, gatherings and demonstrations involving several thousand people took place.

The events in Petrograd, especially the establishment of new government structures, the adoption of the first laws of the Provisional Government, and the transition of power to the principles of the traditional autocratic rule in the Russian Empire, as well as the intention to take initial steps towards democracy, were acclaimed worldwide. The majority of the population of the metropolis, various peoples, classes, social groups, movements, political parties, and the February Revolution were

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welcomed with great enthusiasm and supported it. The sparks of victory, freedom, equality, and independence raised the public mood, increased the hopes and aspirations of the people, and strengthened their power. Their desire to rebuild their lives on a democratic basis, to participate directly in the management of their state, encouraged their social entrepreneurship [3, 22].

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Turkestan progressives viewed the establishment of an independent state through the independence movement as a special stage in the development of the national-democratic forces and those who fought in this direction. In the spring of 1917, Turkestan became a turning point in the political emergence of new forces aimed at actively participating in the growing democratic processes. The young modernists awaiting birth, during their own activities, seriously prepared to perform the responsible tasks ahead of them. They tied up their visions of national progress and independence with the democratic revolution in Turkestan and actively began to implement the ideas they had proclaimed. Protecting the political interests of the Turkestanians in the ongoing democratic processes primarily determined the main direction of their activities. This situation will be clearly evident in shaping local government structures.

The II Congress of Muslims of the whole of Turkestan was held in Tashkent on September 8–10, 1917. More than 100 deputies attended. The III Congress of Muslims of the whole of Turkestan was held in Tashkent on September 17–20, with the support of the Ulama Society, with the participation of 500 delegates from all regions of Turkestan, as well as the Orenburg Governorate responsible for Orenburg (Orenburg Governorate in the Russian Empire, center - Orenburg city, now the capital of Western Kazakhstan region in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The city of Orenburg was first called Yayyik, and the river was also named so. After the suppression of the Pugachev rebellion in 1775, the city's Turkic Yayyik name was changed to the Russian Uralsk. The river name was also called Ural in Russian. Mainly inhabited by Cossacks and Tatars.) and Torgay (Torgay - the Orenburg governorate of the Russian Empire, the center - Torgay city; corresponds directly to the Aktobe and Kostanay regions of Kazakhstan.) provinces. The congress continued for four days, addressing economic issues among the political issues under the leadership of the Turkistan Muslims' Assembly [5, 88-89]. As written in the national press, this congress was actually a congress of ulama[6].

Thus, in the autumn of 1917, national forces in Turkistan came together at the end of a complex path. In September 17-20, 1917, the "Islamic Council", "Society of Scholars", "Turkestan" and other political organizations in Tashkent merged to establish the "Union of Muslims" political party [6]. However, this union was short-lived and temporary. In reality, the "Union of Muslims" party was formed by a group of Muslims in Russia in 1905 in Nizhny Novgorod, and it was considered a Muslim constitutional party (Cadets)[7, 78]. Nevertheless, in Tashkent, the "Society of Scholars" disrupted this union and claimed to be the sole political power in the region.

In this way, Turkistan faced a struggle for political power in the months of September and October 1917, entering a new phase. In the elections held in the city councils of Turkistan, socialist parties, especially the Bolsheviks, who did not win a majority or at all, (The Bolsheviks, meaning "majority" in Russian, were representatives of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP), led by Vladimir Ulyanov [Lenin] (1870-1924). This concept emerged during the Second Congress of the RSDLP in 1903 in July when they received the majority of votes. Their rival faction, led by Yuli Martov (1873-1923), received fewer votes. As a result, they were referred to as Bolsheviks, and their opponents as Mensheviks. The Bolsheviks operated as an independent political party from 1917 onwards. They forcefully seized power in Petrograd on October 25, 1917, and implemented totalitarian policies in Russia, establishing the Soviet regime. Later, they were known as Communists. Their party underwent name changes from 1917-1991, being referred to as RSDLP(b), RCP(b), AUCP(b), and CPSU. On August 23, 1991, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR ceased the activities of the CPSU across the entire country. The Uzbekistan Communist Party, previously a branch of the CPSU in the republic, transferred to the Uzbekistan People's Democratic Party on November 1, 1991.) attempted to seize power through armed rebellion rather than peaceful parliamentary means. The Bolsheviks aimed to achieve their goals through the activities of worker and soldier Soviets.



Starting from September 1917, Bolsheviks and left socialist revolutionaries began to gain power in Russia and Turkistan. T. Riskulov closely monitored the political events unfolding in Russia. In November, the Turkistan Bolshevik-Left Socialist Revolutionary alliance seized power through armed force, resulting in the establishment of two governments in the region: the first being the Soviet government led by Russian Bolsheviks and left socialist revolutionaries in Tashkent, and the second being the Muslim government in Kokand. T. Riskulov did not establish any connection with the Tashkent Council and did not provide any funds to go to Kokand.

The Bolsheviks' efforts to consolidate power by handing it over to the Soviet councils not only encountered resistance from the local population in Turkistan but also received negative reactions among the democratic forces of the European population. This situation became more apparent during the extraordinary II Congress of the Turkistan Worker and Soldier Deputies' Soviets held in Tashkent from September 30 to October 10, 1917, especially in the eye of the beholder. During the events of September 1917, a state of war was declared in Tashkent, with demonstrations, protests, gatherings, and strikes being restricted.

By the time October 1917 arrived, the Bolsheviks in Turkistan began their activities to seize power through force. The struggle of the Turkistan peoples for national autonomy was taking place on the brink of serious trials.

In 1917, a movement had begun in Turkestan to form new societal structures. The main issue in the social-political life of the region was the organization of autonomy activities. In the city of Kokand, on November 26-28, 1917, during the extraordinary IV congress of all Turkestan Muslims, the Turkistan Autonomous Government was formed in a meeting held on the night of November 27[8]. (In the historical records, the period from 1918 January 31 to February 14 is given with the old account, but starting from February 14, 1918, a new account was used. This change was due to a special decree from the RSFSR People's Commissars Council on January 26, 1918, where the Gregorian calendar was introduced in Russia, resulting in a 13-day difference. Thus, the date was shifted not from January 31 to February 1, but to February 14. This calendar was also implemented in Turkestan). The congress declared Turkestan as autonomous within the Russian Federative Republic. The idea of granting autonomy to Turkestan was not only discussed among democratic leaders and progressives, but it had also spread among ordinary people, and the word autonomy was echoed in everyone's speech. The term "autonomy" derives from an Arabic word and implies self-government. Using the term "autonomy" interchangeably with "autonomy" in Russian is incorrect. The "Uzbek Explanatory Dictionary" defines the word "autonomy" as "the right of a certain region to exercise state power independently within the limits set by the constitution". Autonomy indicates a certain degree of decentralization in the system compared to a centralized one, but it is less decentralized than in a federal state.

On November 27, 1917, the newly formed government was named the Turkistan Autonomous Government. Additionally, until the Assembly Council was convened, the administration was thought to be split between the Temporary Council of Turkestan and the Turkestan National Assembly [People's Assembly]. It was understood that the administration would be fully in the hands of the Temporary Council (government) and the Turkestan National People's Assembly (parliament) until the Assembly Council was convened. A government of 12 members was formed from the members of the Temporary Council. The number of members of the Temporary Council was determined at 32, based on the number of candidates selected from Turkistan to the All-Russian Assembly. The National Assembly (with 54 seats) allocated 4 seats for city district heads, and 18 seats for representatives of various European organizations in the country. However, only the names and titles of 32 individuals were announced in the media. Thus, one fifth of the European population, comprised of 5% of the total population, were given representation [10, 58-61]. Among the Muslims elected to the congress, 32 individuals were included in the National Assembly.

The government of the Turkestan Autonomy, consisting of 8 members from the Turkestan National Assembly, was formed at the Congress. In order to nominate candidates from the European population,



an additional 4 seats were allocated to them. The initial composition of the government included the following:

1. Muhammadjon Tinishboev [Muhamedzhan Tinishpaev] - Prime Minister and Minister of Internal Affairs, Member of the 2nd State Duma, Member of the Provisional Government of Turkestan, Civil Engineer.
2. Islom Sulton Shoaxmedov [Shahislam Shagisultanovich Shagiakhmedov] - Deputy Prime Minister, Member of the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Muslims Congress, Lawyer.
3. Mustafo Cho‘qay [son of Mustafa Chokai; Mustafa Choqae] - Minister of Foreign Affairs, Head of the Central Executive Committee of Turkistan Muslims, Lawyer.
4. Ubaydulla Xo‘jaev [Ubaidullohoja Asadullohojaev]- Minister of Defense, Member of the Central Executive Committee of All-Russian Muslims Congress, Lawyer.
5. Hidoyatbek Yurali Agaev [Hidayatbek Yurguly Akaev]- Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources, Agronomist.
6. Obidjon Mahmudov - Minister of Food and Agriculture, Deputy Head of the Kokand City Duma, Textile Industry Specialist.
7. Abdurahmonbek O‘razaev - Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Lawyer.
8. Solomon Abramovich Gersfeld - Minister of Finance, Lawyer.

The fact that 3 of the ministers of the autonomy government were highly educated lawyers, and 2 were moderately experienced lawyers, indicates the high level of education of the government members. However, at the first session of the Turkestan Soviet Government, which was formed in Tashkent on November 15, 1917, out of the 15 "people's commissars" who joined the government, one was a tailor, one a coachman, one a hunter, one a shoemaker, one a watchman, one a messenger, and one a lieutenant, etc. The head of the government, F. Kolesov was a tailor, the military commissar E. Perfilev was a coachman, the head of the Tashkent Soviet, known as the "Lenin of Turkestan," and the temporary head of the Turkestan Executive Committee, I. Tobolin, was a lawyer of average skill[12, 58]. However, not a single representative of indigenous peoples living in Turkestan was included in the initial Soviet government[13, 752].

Turkestan Autonomy government gained significant attention among the people in a short period of time. The new government was supported not only in Kokand and Fergana valleys, but also by the brave and strong peoples living in all of Turkestan region. The leaders of the country were workers, soldiers, and peasant deputies who organized and led the extraordinary First Congress held in Kokand on December 26-30, 1917. Muslim workers, peasants, and soldiers also supported the Turkestan Autonomy government at this congress. On December 30, a special resolution was adopted by the congress participants, expressing distrust in the support of the Turkestan Autonomy Government and the Turkestan Soviet government.

The Bolsheviks who had settled in the country considered the Turkestan Autonomy government to be a major threat to them. Therefore, the workers, soldiers, and peasant deputies of Turkestan expressed the issue of their attitude towards the autonomy government at the IV Congress of Soviets held in Tashkent from January 19-26, 1918. The congress categorically treated the government of Turkestan Autonomy and its members as enemies, even making decisions to arrest the ministers.

The Government of the Turkestan Autonomy was established on February 19, but the search for the city continued. On those days, in Kokand, there was an attempt to capture and plunder the peaceful population. The people of Kokand faced a grave situation and began leaving the city. Kokand turned into a three-day nightmare. Houses, warehouses, bread shops were looted and destroyed. One-third of the old city was completely destroyed. Kokand witnessed a horrifying scene. Dead bodies were lying everywhere. Some information suggests that as a result of these atrocities, more than 10,000 people lost their lives.



In January 1918, the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly was followed by the defeat of the Turkestan Autonomy leaders in February, leading the Turkestan leaders towards a serious political crisis. The Soviet system took action to intimidate this violence, aiming for no one in Turkistan to ever dare to claim "autonomy" without the Center's permission[10, 75-76].

Although the Government of the Turkestan Autonomy only survived for 72 days, it invited our brave fathers and mothers to fight for national independence and sovereignty. The harsh suppression of the Autonomy government by the Turkestan people was considered as another indication of the aggressive policies of Soviet Russia towards Turkestan. Understanding the impossibility of achieving national statehood through the peaceful route, the Turkestanis started an armed movement against the Soviet regime and Bolsheviks in late February 1918. The movement by the Turkestanis during the Soviet period was dubbed as "Basmachi movement", denoting the struggle for national freedom under the Turkestanli peoples[14].

In the Fifth Congress held in Tashkent on April 30, 1918, Uzbek, worker, soldier, and peasant deputies declared the formation of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (some sources call it the Soviet Republic of Turkestan under the RSFSR) within the RSFSR[12, 47-48]. The Soviet administration, seemingly giving the Turkestanis a sense of autonomy, provided "national statehood" and "autonomy".

In conclusion, the Turkestan Autonomy holds a significant place in the history of Uzbek national statehood. The lack of political harmony among the peoples of the country enforces the distrust of the peoples towards Soviet rule. Even the democratic segments of the European population in Turkestan resisted the Bolshevik's outrageous policy. Bolsheviks initiated confiscatory policies and chauvinistic stateless claims in the country's first years of Soviet rule, already defining the political nature of the new regime. The vigorous state chauvinism of the Bolsheviks was understood, even without any surprise when V. Lenin, the strategist and leader of the first Soviet government in Russia, asserted in his essay "Great Russian chauvinism", that this was peculiar to the Russian people.

The Government of the Turkestan Autonomy failed to carry out significant works in its very short tenure of less than half a year. The Autonomy government did not take shape as a state. However, it became a rare experience in our national statehood history. Bolsheviks did not allow the process of transitioning from the Autonomy government to an independent national state. Even though the draft Constitution of Autonomy was developed, it was not accepted. The flag of Autonomy government was not recognized, and its Aqcha was not struck. Other symbols of national statehood were not acknowledged.

In short, when the Turkestan Autonomy, which initially was a democratic government, was overthrown by the Bolsheviks, an armed resistance movement against the Soviet regime began. Along with this, a group of local communists such as Turar Risqulov and Nazir To'raqulov also acted in the administrative offices of the Soviet government and the Bolshevik party, wishing to adapt the Bolshevik policy to the local conditions in Turkistan. Therefore, they took action to establish a unique administrative body for the local population.

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