



ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MUSLIM BUREAU OF TURKESTAN

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Annotation

Turkestan regional Muslim bureau added worthy contribution to the history of the national liberation movement of the peoples of Turkestan with its short but, significantly activity. For this reason, the activity of Turkestan Regional Muslim bureau (1919 – 1920 й) is important. In the eve of the becoming of Turkestan regional Muslim bureau various Muslim organizations were created not only in Turkestan, Bukhara and Khorezm, but other region of Soviet Russia which lived Muslims. Analyzing of the situations which happened in the region is important through the studying this organizations. This article is devoted to the establishing Turkestan regional Muslim bureau its activity.

Keywords: colonial policy, national communists, national chairmen, Turor Risqulov, communistic party of Turkestan, Bolshevik commissars which sent from Center, commission of Turkestan.

The colonial policy of the Soviet regime in the Turkestan ASSR provoked strong protests from the local population. This situation caused a great echo among all strata and categories of Turkestan society. From one side, the radical part of the protesters against the Soviet power took up a weapon and started an armed struggle against the Soviet regime for the independence of Turkestan. On the other hand, the National Communists, who joined the Bolshevik Party of Turkestan, tried to defend national interests as much as possible while working in various important positions in the offices of the Soviet power. Most of the national communists were national intelligentsia. There were also representatives of various sectors of society who did not belong to either group, who were initially in a wait-and-see attitude towards Soviet authority, and were in no hurry to take active action.

By early 1919, the social and political situation in Turkestan began to deteriorate. The



intensification of military action against the Red Army and the economic crisis deepened these processes.

The colonial policy pursued by the Soviet government in Turkestan provoked strong protests from national leaders in the governing bodies of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (TASSR).¹ The national communists first intended to use the ideas of Bolshevism for the well-being and happiness of their peoples. They tried to adapt these ideas to the specific features of Turkestan.

National Communists or national leaders in the Turkestan ASSR Turor Risqulov, Nizomiddin Khodjaev, Kaygisiz Otaboev, Abdulla Rakhimboev, Sanjar Asfandiyorov, Nazir Turakulov, Inomjon Khidiraliev, Sultanbek Khojanov, Munavvarqori Abdurashidkhonov, Sadullahoja Tursunkhodjaev, Abdulla Avloniy, in BSSR Fayzulla Khodjaev, Porso Khodjaev, Muinjon Aminov, Abdulvokhid Burkhonov, in KPSR Polvonniyoz Yusupov, Bobokhun Salimov, Nazir Sholikorov, Jumaniyoz Sultonmurodov, Bekjon Rakhmonov were such national figures who were ready to sacrifice their lives for their nation and homeland. They were the ones who set an example of serving their people during that time, especially in 1918-1920, the first period of the Soviet regime, despite the risk and danger they might face. These individuals, who were physically exterminated during the later years of the Great Terror, worked in Soviet government offices as the conditions demanded, and fought against the representatives of the Center and the chauvinistic Bolsheviks for the benefit of the local population. It was as a result of their efforts that certain progress was achieved in the field of national policy in the Turkestan region in 1919-1920.

The activities of the RCP(b) (Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Turkestan Krai Muslim Bureau, established by the National Communists, are noteworthy given the fact, that The Muslim Bureau had a great reputation among the local population, and in turn its delegates represented the interests of the local population.

Evaluating the short-term activities of the Muslim Bureau, prominent statesman and party leader Turor Ryskulov later wrote: "Soviet activity in Turkestan can be divided into about three stages: the first one – prior to the VII Congress of the Soviets of Turkestan, when the

¹Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (TASSR) is mainly used in Soviet-era research in Uzbekistan. However, in many books and periodicals and official documents published in Tashkent and Moscow in 1918-1924, the name Turkestan was first called the Turkestan Soviet Republic of the Russian Soviet Federation (1918-1920) and then the Turkestan Soviet Socialist Republic (1920-1924).



most part of men in power were russians; the second stage is the period in which the Muslim Bureau of Communist Organizations operated; The third stage is the annexation of Turkestan to the Center and the arrival of the Turkestan Commission of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee.”²

The Turkestan Communist Party, the country's branch of the Russian Communist (Bolshevik) Party, the RCP (b), was originally formed in June 1918 in Tashkent. By the end of 1918 and the beginning of 1919, Soviet power in Turkestan was on the line. The armed movement against the Soviet regime, which began in the Fergana Valley, had by this time covered the entire Turkestan region. Democratic movements against the monarchical regime intensified in the Bukhara Emirate and the Khiva Khanate. However, the Bolshevik propaganda distorted the essence of the events in Turkestan, Bukhara and Khiva to the people of the region. As a result, part of the local population was involved in the ongoing struggle to consolidate Soviet power. The Soviet government and the Bolsheviks needed local executors to carry out their policies in the national lands. Under such conditions, those who joined the Bolshevik Party from the local peoples of Turkestan (Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Turkmens, Tajiks, Karakalpaks, Kyrgyz) were called national communists.

The Sixth Extraordinary Congress of the Soviets of the Turkestan ASSR, which took place in Tashkent on October 5-14, 1918, was marked by a sharp process of ideological struggles and conflicts.³ Theoretically and politically uneducated, illiterate Bolshevik "geniuses" and Soviet commissars clearly demonstrated their chauvinistic mood and arrogance in the struggle for power. At this congress a fierce infighting broke out between a group of "old communists" led by I. Tobolin and F. Kolesov, who had been removed from leading positions, and a group of "young communists" who were Bolshevik commissars sent from Moscow in the spring of 1918. I. Tobolin and F. Kolesov publicly expressed their chauvinist and colonial ideas from the rostrum of the congress, as well as aggression and threats to the participants of the congress.⁴ I. Tobolin, a staunch supporter of the policy of great statehood and chauvinism, who consistently pursued the colonial policy of the Center in Turkestan,

²Musbureau of the RCP(b) in Turkestan. 1st, 2nd and 3rd Turkestan Regional Conferences of the RCP 1919-1920. With the introduction of Comrade Rysqulov. - Tashkent: Turkestan State Publishing House, 1922. - P.1.

³ CSA of Uzbekistan, Fund 17, List 1, Case 40, Page 175.

⁴ See also: CSA Uzbekistan, Fund 39, List 1, Case 220, page 9.



expressed his views at the congress as follows: "I carried out the revolution in Turkestan. It was me who made you Bolsheviks."⁵

The Center began to regularly send representatives to the Turkestan ASSR, which became part of the RSFSR. They were given enormous authority and rights. Within a short period of time (January-April 1919), when Turkestan was in contact with the Center, the Kremlin government arranged to send such Bolshevik emissaries, consisting of "experienced party and Soviet members."

On February 12, 1919, a Special Provisional Commission of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) and the CPC (Council of People's Commissars) of the RSFSR was established to deal with Turkestan affairs. The commission, chaired by Sh.Z. Eliava, included A.S. Kiselyov and P.A. Kobozev. This is stated in a special mandate issued by the CPC RSFSR on February 12, 1919.⁶

Tasks of the Provisional Turkestan Commission were outlined by I.V. Stalin – People's Commissar for National Affairs of the RSFSR in the special letter "to the Soviets and party organizations in Turkestan" dated February 12, 1919⁷ and in the article in "Pravda" dated March 2, 1919 and headlined "Our goals in the East"⁸ by the order of Central Committee. At the plenum of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) on March 17, 1919, F. Goloshchekin and G. Bakiyev were accepted as members to the Provisional Turkestan Commission. However, only a group of Commission members, led by P. Kobozev, arrived in Tashkent on March 4. The objectives of the commission were to take full control over the Turkestan ASSR, which had lost almost all leaders in consequence of the Osipov uprising in Tashkent in January 1919, and to monitor the unconditional implementation of Russian government decrees and decisions in the country. Afterwards, on October 8, 1919, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR V.I. Lenin signed a decree on the formation of the Commission on Turkestan Affairs (Turkestan Commission) of the All-Russian CEC and the CPC RSFSR consisting of Sh.Z. Eliava (chairman), V.V. Kuybishev (vice-chairman), M.V. Frunze, G.I. Bokiy, F.I. Goloshchekin, R.E. Rudzutak. The main group of the members of

⁵ Antropov T. 2nd Regional Congress of the RCP (b) in the Turkestan Republic // Revolution in Central Asia. Collection number 2. - Tashkent, 1929. - pp. 27-28.

⁶ Archive of the Office of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan (AOPU of Uzbekistan), fund 60, list 1, case 87, page 1.

⁷ Stalin I. To the Soviets and Party Organizations of Turkestan // Writings. Vol.4. - Moscow: OGIZ, 1947. - P. 230-231.

⁸ Stalin I. Our tasks in the East // "Pravda", No. 48, March 2, 1919



Turkestan commission arrived in Tashkent on November 4, 1919. M.V. Frunze and G.I. Boki were detained in Samara for some time and then came to Tashkent. The Turkestan Commission, leading virtually all parties, councils, economic and military organizations in the region, began to strictly implement the Bolshevik policy.

The armed movement launched against the Soviet regime in Turkestan forced the Central Government to moderate its policy towards the local population. Also, taking into account the difficult situation in the national question, the Central Committee of the RCP(b) was forced on July 3, 1919 to adopt a resolution "On proportional representation in power." The resolution stated that the indigenous population of Turkestan should not be conditioned on party affiliation, but should be widely involved in state-building. There also was the task to stop the requisition of local property. A radiogram sent by the Central Committee of the RCP(b) to the Krai Committee of the Turkestan Communist Party (TKP) and the Central Executive Committee of the Turkestan ASSR on July 10, 1919 stated the need to involve the local population in state activities: "It is necessary to involve the local population of Turkestan in the affairs of the state in a broad and proportional manner, without stipulating their affiliation with the party, and with the nomination of candidates by Muslim workers' organizations."⁹

However, at their July 20 meeting, the colonial communists in the Turkestan ASSR agreed not to announce the decision, which was taken by telegraph, and even to ban meetings. Even the research on the history of the Communist Party published during the Soviet era clearly shows that some officials, led by A. Kazakov, chairman of the Turkestan ASSR, and K. Sorokin, chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, insisted that CC of RCP(b) misunderstood the situation in Turkestan, that foreign elements would infiltrate and cause the Soviets to lose their proletarian content. They tried to hide the radiogram from the public, preventing it from being published in the press. On July 20, they sent a telegram to the Central Committee of the RCP (b), trying to justify the impossibility of carrying out its directives, demanding "additional instructions."¹⁰ But when the radiogram was leaked to the national communists and the local population, there was a great uproar in Turkestan and the communists were forced to announce the decision.

⁹ "Turkestan Communist", July 16, 1919

¹⁰ History of Communist Organizations in Central Asia. - P.392.



A group of responsible party and Soviet officials, poisoned by great state chauvinism, opposed the radiogram. The so-called "active group" included the chairman of the CEC of the Turkestan ASSR A.A.Kazakov, his deputy K. Uspensky, the chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of Turkestan K.E. Sorokin and their supporters. In a telegram addressed to the Central Committee of the RCP (b), they tried to prove that the fast implementation of the directive to involve the local population in governing the country could lead to the end of Soviet power in the region.

Speaking at the above-mentioned radiogram discussion at the Fourth Congress of the Turkestan Communist Party in September-October 1919, Turor Ryskulov sharply and ruthlessly criticized the crimes, violence and colonial policies carried out by the Soviet authorities. In his speech, he exposed all the intricacies of the Bolshevik policy pursued by the Soviet regime in Turkestan and showed the chauvinistic attitude of the representatives of the Center and the Communists towards the indigenous population of the country.¹¹

It is worth mentioning some of the views on the tyrannical nature and characteristics of the Soviet government in Turkestan. S. Ginzburg, one of the Red Army commissars who forcibly established Soviet power in Turkestan, once said: "In practice, Soviet power passed into the hands of the colonial part of Russian society, and they pursued a policy of open armed looting. The government's acts of requisition and confiscation, seen by the peasants are worse than the policy of tsarism."¹²

Numerous official documents preserved in the archives also confirm that these views are correct. For example, one of the notices sent to the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Turkestan ASSR "On the General Situation of Soviet Power in the Republic of Turkestan" stated: "It must be said that there is no Soviet power or Soviet apparatus on the ground. Instead, there is a complete misunderstanding, which leads to distrust and hostility towards the Soviets among the local population."¹³ Another report on local authorities at the time stated: "Most directives and orders were carried out through violence, sometimes through repression."¹⁴

¹¹ See: Musbureau RCP(b) in Turkestan ... - pp. 54-60.

¹²Ginzburg S. Basmachestvo v Fergane // Ocherkirevolyutsionnogodvijeniya v SredneyAzii. Sbornikstatey. - Moscow: Scientific Association of Oriental Studies in the CEC USSR, 1926. - p. 131-132.

¹³ The CSA of Uzbekistan, Fund 39, List 1, Case 450, Page 30.

¹⁴ The CSA of Uzbekistan, Fund 39, List 1, Case 450, page 31.



Despite the fact that the national communists and national leaders in Turkestan worked under such conditions, they achieved certain results. In particular, the Turkestan Krai's Muslim Bureau, which functioned in 1919-1920, played a major role in uniting the national communists in Turkestan.

In his preface to the book, T. Rysqulov, who prepared the documents on the Turkestan Muslim Bureau for later publication, described the difficult political and military situation in Turkestan in early 1919, the struggle for power among the Communists, oppression of local population, and the Bolshevik colonial policy. According to T. Rysqulov, at the VII Congress of Soviets of Turkestan, Muslims, who made up half of the delegates to the Congress, for the first time sharply criticized the activities of the Soviet government and demanded a change in this policy. Special envoys from the Russian Center P. Kobozev, I. Apin and others also supported some of their views. At that time, the leaders of the Soviet government and the regional communist organization (A. Kazakov, K. Uspensky, etc.) pursued a colonial policy and did not want to admit their mistakes.¹⁵

The Second Krai Party Conference of the Communists of Turkestan and the decisions taken at it played an important role in this sense. This conference was held in March 1919, during the VII Congress of Soviets. The conference was attended by Muslim delegates as well as communists of other nationalities. The sessions of the conference continued alternately with the sessions of the Soviet Congress. Many of the delegates to the Conference were also delegates to the Congress. Most of the issues that appeared at the Conference and at the Congress were the same. However, a special decision was made at the conference to establish the RCP(b) Turkestan Krai Muslim Bureau.

Thus, the issues raised at the meetings of the National Affairs Section of the IV Extraordinary Congress of Turkestan Krai Soviets were specially considered at the party conference. In its resolutions, the conference noted that the republican party organizations and the Krai party committee did not conduct extensive work among local population, and did not implement the decision of the Second Congress of the Turkestan Communist Party to actively involve local workers, poor peasants and farmhands in the Soviet and other state bodies.

¹⁵Muslim Bureau of the RCP(b) in Turkestan ... - P.3.



The conference made a historic decision to establish the Turkestan Krai Muslim Bureau. This bureau was tasked with organizing work among the indigenous population. The Krai Party Committee was asked to develop a special regulation on the functions and responsibilities of the Muslim Bureau. On March 30, 1919, Turor Risqulov, Nizomiddin Khodjaev, Abdulkadir Muhitdinov, Yuldash Ibragimov and M. Aliyev were elected members of the RCP(b) Turkestan Regional Muslim Bureau (briefly Musbyuro).¹⁶ Munavvarqori Abdurashidkxonov and Abdulla Avloni, major representatives of the Tashkent Jadids, also took an active part in the work of the Muslim Bureau.¹⁷

Thus, the establishment of the Turkestan Krai Muslim Bureau had a great impact on the political and social life of the region. Local Muslim national communists formed their own independent party and state bodies in Turkestan for the first time during the years of Soviet rule. This situation affected the complex political, social and military changes that took place in Turkestan in 1919-1920, as well as inter-ethnic and class relations.

¹⁶ History of communist organizations in Central Asia ... - P.362.

¹⁷ AOPU of Uzbekistan, fund 60, list 1, case 200, page 2.