

ESTABLISHMENT OF SOVIET POWER IN TURKESTAN. ARRANGEMENTS TAKEN BY THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES IN UZBEKISTAN AND THEIR COLLONIAL ESSENCE

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Annotation: The article discusses the establishment of Soviet power in Turkestan, focusing on Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, and analyzes the colonialist essence of Soviet actions in these regions. It examines the political, economic, cultural, and social aspects of Soviet rule, highlighting policies of control, exploitation, assimilation, and infrastructure development. Through a historical lens, it explores how Soviet authorities implemented various measures to subjugate the local populations and advance Soviet interests in the region, shaping the socio-political landscape during the Soviet era.

Key Words: Soviet power, Turkestan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, colonialism, political control, economic exploitation, cultural assimilation, social engineering, infrastructure development, Soviet era.

Russian Turkestan (Russian: Русский Туркестан, romanized: Russkiy Turkestan) was the western part of Turkestan within the Russian Empire's Central Asian territories, and was administered as a Krai or Governor-Generalship. It comprised the oasis region to the south of the Kazakh Steppe, but not the protectorates of the Emirate of Bukhara and the Khanate of Khiva. It was populated by speakers of Russian, Uzbek, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, and Tajik.

Although Russia had been pushing south into the steppes from Astrakhan and Orenburg since the failed Khivan expedition of Peter the Great in 1717, the beginning of the Russian conquest of Turkestan is normally dated to 1865. That year the Russian forces took the city of Tashkent^[1] under the leadership of General Mikhail Chernyayev expanding the territories of Turkestan Oblast (part of Orenburg Governorate-General). Chernyayev had exceeded his orders (he only had 3,000 men under his command at the time) but Saint Petersburg recognized the annexation in any case. This was swiftly followed by the conquest of Khodzhent, Dzhizak and Ura-Tyube, culminating in the

annexation of Samarkand and the surrounding region on the Zeravshan River from the Emirate of Bukhara in 1868 forming the Zeravsh Special Okrug of Turkestan.

In 1867 Turkestan was made a separate Governor-Generalship, under its first Governor-General, Konstantin Petrovich von Kaufman. Its capital was Tashkent and it consisted initially of three oblasts (provinces): Syr Darya, Semirechye Oblast and the Zeravshan Okrug (later Samarkand Oblast). To these were added in 1873 the Amu Darya Division (Russian: отдел, otdel), annexed from the Khanate of Khiva, and in 1876 the Fergana Oblast, formed from the remaining rump of the Kokand Khanate that was dissolved after an uprising in 1875. In 1894, the Transcaspian Region (which had been conquered in 1881–1885 by military generals Mikhail Skobelev and Mikhail Annenkov) was added to the Governor-Generalship.

A policy of deliberately enforcing anti-modern, traditional, ancient conservative Islamic education in schools and Islamic ideology was enforced by the Russians in order to deliberately hamper and destroy opposition to their rule by keeping them in a state of torpor to and prevent foreign ideologies from penetrating.

The Russians implemented Turkification upon the Ferghana and Samarkand Tajiks, replacing their language with Uzbek, resulting in a dominantly Uzbek-speaking Samarkand, whereas decades before Tajik Persian was the dominant language in Samarkand.^[6]

In 1897 the railway reached Tashkent, and finally in 1906 a direct rail link with European Russia was opened across the steppe from Orenburg to Tashkent. This led to much larger numbers of ethnic Russian settlers flowing into Turkestan than had hitherto been the case, and their settlement was overseen by a specially created Migration Department in Saint Petersburg (Переселенческое Управление). This caused considerable discontent amongst the local population as these settlers took scarce land and water resources away from them. In 1916 discontent boiled over in the Basmachi Revolt, sparked by a decree conscripting the natives into labour battalions (they had previously been exempt from military service). Thousands of settlers were killed, and this was matched by Russian reprisals, particularly against the nomadic population. To escape Russians slaughtering them in 1916, Uzbeks, Kazakhs and Kyrgyz escaped to China. Xinjiang became a sanctuary for fleeing Kazakhs escaping the Russians after the Muslims faced conscription by the Russian government. The Turkmen, Kyrgyz, and Kazakhs were all impacted by the 1916 insurrection caused by the conscription decreed by the Russian government. The corvée conscription issued on June 25, 1916. Order had not really been restored by the time the February Revolution took place in 1917. This would usher in a still bloodier chapter in

¹ An account of the Russian conquest of Tashkent was written in "*Urus leshkerining Türkistanda tarikh 1262–1269 senelarda qilghan futuhlari*" by Mullah Khalibay Mambetov.^{[2][3]}

Turkestan's history, as the Bolsheviks of the Tashkent Soviet launched an attack on the autonomous Jadid government in Kokand early in 1918, which left 14,000 dead. Resistance to the Bolsheviks by the local population (dismissed as 'Basmachi' or 'Banditry' by Soviet historians) continued well into the beginning of the 1930.

Works done by the Soviet authoriteis in Uzbekistan

The Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic, also known as Soviet Uzbekistan, the Uzbek SSR, UzSSR, or simply Uzbekistan and rarely Uzbekia, was a union republic of the Soviet Union. It was governed by the Uzbek branch of the Soviet Communist Party, the legal political party, from 1925 until 1990. From 1990 to 1991, it was a sovereign part of the Soviet Union with its own legislation.

Beginning 20 June 1990, the Uzbek SSR adopted the Declaration of State Sovereignty within its borders. Islam Karimov became the republic's inaugural president.

Uzbekistan was bordered by Kazakhstan to the north; Tajikistan to the southeast; Kirghizia to the northeast; Afghanistan to the south; and Turkmenistan to the southwest.

The name, Uzbekistan, literally means "Home of the Free", taken from an amalgamation of uz (Turkic: "self"), bek (Turkic: "master"), and -stan (Persian: "land of"). However, the official name of the republic was the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic as defined by its 1937 and 1978 Constitutions.

In 1924, the borders of political units in Central Asia were changed along ethnic lines determined by Vladimir Lenin's Commissar for Nationalities, Joseph Stalin. The Turkestan ASSR, the Bukharan People's Soviet Republic, and the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic were abolished and their territories were eventually divided into five separate Soviet Socialist Republics, one of which was the Uzbek Socialist Soviet Republic, created on 27 October 1924. The next year Uzbekistan became one of the republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (Soviet Union). In 1928, the collectivization of land into state farms was initiated, which lasted until the late 1930.

Uzbekistan included the Tajik ASSR until 1929, when the Tajik ASSR was upgraded to an equal status. In 1930, the Uzbek SSR capital was relocated from Samarkand to Tashkent, which remained the capital since. In 1936, Uzbekistan was enlarged with the addition of the Karakalpak ASSR taken from the Kazakh SSR in the last stages of the national delimitation in the Soviet Union. That same year in December, it was renamed to the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic. Further bits and pieces of territory were transferred several times between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan after World War II.

In 1937–38, during the Great Purge, a number of alleged nationalists were executed, including Faizullah Khojaev, the first prime minister.

During World War II, many industries were relocated to Uzbekistan from vulnerable locations in western regions of the USSR to keep them safe. Large numbers of Russians, Ukrainians and other nationalities accompanied the factories, altering the demographics of the republic. The demographics situation was further aggravated by Stalin's forced deportation of some ethnic groups suspected of collaboration with the Axis powers (including Nazi Germany) from other parts of the Soviet Union to Uzbekistan. This included large numbers of ethnic Koreans, Crimean Tatars, and Chechens.

During the Soviet period, Islam became a focal point for the anti-religious drives of Communist authorities. The government closed most mosques, and religious schools became anti-religious museums.[citation needed] On the positive side was the virtual elimination of illiteracy, even in rural areas. Only a small percentage of the population was literate before 1917; this percentage increased to nearly 100 percent under the Soviets.[2][3]

Another major development, one with future catastrophic impact, was the drive initiated in the early 1960s to substantially increase cotton production in the republic. This drive led to overzealous irrigation withdrawals of irrigation water from the Amu Darya and the subsequent Aral Sea ecological disaster.

Towards the end of the Soviet–Afghan War, several troops crossed the Uzbek border from Afghanistan as part of the Soviet withdrawal on 15 February 1989. During the war Afghan mujahideen sponsored by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence also crossed the border to commit sabotage operations.

The Communist Party was the only legal party in the Uzbek SSR until 1990. The first secretary, or head, of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan was consistently an Uzbek. Long-time leader of the Uzbek SSR was Sharof Rashidov, head of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan from 1959 to 1983. Islam Karimov, leader of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan since 1989 and subsequently head of that party's reincarnation, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), became president of the Uzbek SSR in 1990. On 20 June 1990, the Supreme Soviet adopted the Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Uzbek SSR, which took over the laws of the Soviet Union days after the Russian SFSR adopted theirs.

Independence

The Uzbek SSR participated in the referendum in March 1991 as a part of the proposed Union of Soviet Sovereign States. This never came to pass after unsuccessful coup attempt events between 19 and 21 August 1991 in Moscow. In the aftermath, the Uzbek SSR was renamed the Republic of Uzbekistan and declared its independence on 31 August 1991, with the Soviet Union dissolving on 26 December 1991. After

independence, the 1978 Constitution remained in use. The referendum was confirmed on 29 December 1991.

The essence of colonialist actions in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan during the Soviet era can be understood through various policies and practices implemented by the Soviet authorities. Here are some key aspects:

1. **Political Control:** The Soviet government exercised strict political control over Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, appointing local officials who were loyal to the Communist Party. These officials often prioritized Moscow's interests over the local population's needs and aspirations.

2. **Economic Exploitation:** The Soviet economic model in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan emphasized the extraction of natural resources and agricultural products for the benefit of the Soviet Union as a whole, often at the expense of the local economies. Collectivization of agriculture and state control over industry meant that resources were directed towards Soviet priorities, with little consideration for local development.

3. **Cultural Assimilation:** Soviet policies aimed to suppress local cultures and languages in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, promoting Russian language and Soviet ideology instead. This cultural assimilation was seen as a way to homogenize the diverse ethnic and cultural landscape of Central Asia into a singular Soviet identity.

4. **Social Engineering:** The Soviet authorities undertook social engineering projects in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, attempting to reshape traditional social structures and norms to fit the Soviet mold. This often led to the disruption of traditional ways of life and the imposition of Soviet values and practices.

5. **Infrastructure Development:** While infrastructure development did occur in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan under Soviet rule, it often served the interests of the Soviet Union rather than the local population. Infrastructure projects were prioritized based on strategic importance to the Soviet state, and little consideration was given to the long-term needs and priorities of the local communities.

Overall, the essence of colonialist actions in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan during the Soviet era can be characterized by the imposition of external control, economic exploitation, cultural assimilation, and social engineering aimed at subjugating the local populations to the interests of the Soviet state.

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