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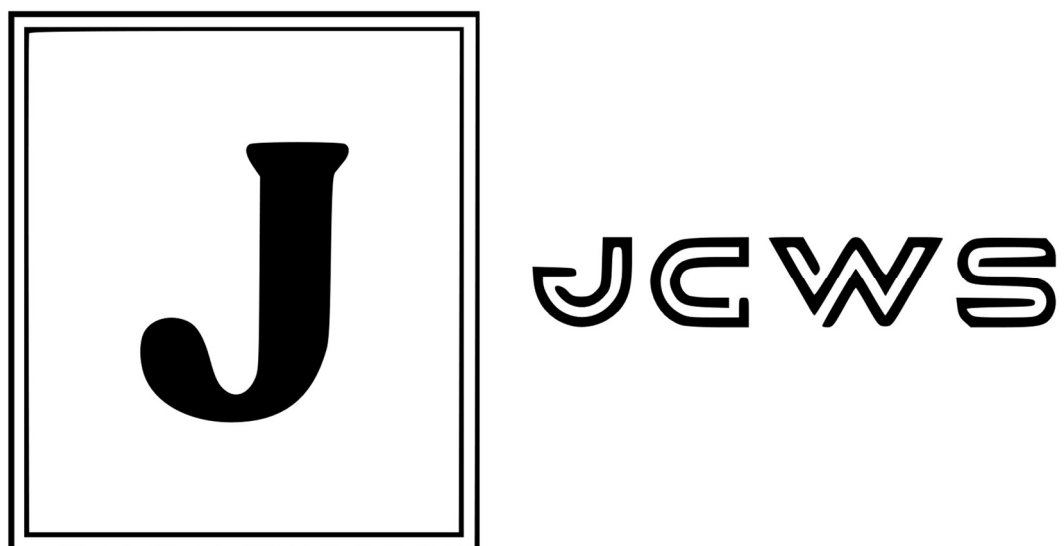
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THE STRUGGLE OF THE TURKESTAN AUTONOMY TO DEFEND THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

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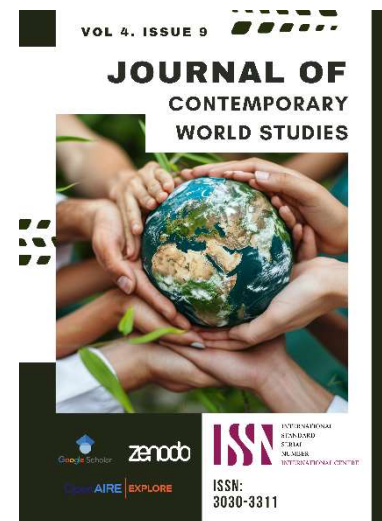
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ANNOTATION:

This article analyzes the issues of Turkestan Autonomy's struggle to save the national government from Bolshevik aggression. As a result of the violent policies of the Bolsheviks, many innocent people died and the first national government was said to have been soaked in blood.

KEYWORDS:

Turkestan Autonomy, national, proletariat, ideology, Soviet, Bolshevik, party, national intelligentsia, "gang of blackgroups", red soldiers.



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Introduction

The revolutionary events that began on October 25, 1917, in Petrograd, the capital of Russia, had a strong impact on the political consciousness of the population of Turkestan and led to a new wave of unrest in the region. In the city of Tashkent, a struggle broke out between workers and soldiers who supported the Bolsheviks and the forces of General Korovichenko, the Chief Commissioner of the Provisional Government of A. Kerensky in Turkestan.

On the second day after the October coup, General Korovichenko addressed the population and the troops in Turkestan, calling on them to maintain complete calm while awaiting information about subsequent events from the center. In a special telegram, he emphasized the following: "The uprising in Petrograd will be suppressed by armed force in the coming days, and all attempts to side with the Bolsheviks will be met with the use of weapons." [1]. However, the workers and soldiers in the Turkestan region launched an uprising in Tashkent against the forces of the Provisional Government. On the same day, a meeting of the Regional Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of Turkestan was held under the chairmanship of Levin. At the meeting, issues such as the overall political situation in the country and the resistance of the structures that remained under the control of the Provisional Government to the transfer of power to the Bolsheviks were discussed [2].

Main part

In Tashkent, in the struggle against the forces of General Korovichenko, the armed workers and soldiers numbered around 6,000 and were equipped with twelve artillery guns and eight machine guns. The insurgents, consisting of workers and soldiers, demanded that the Provisional Government troops cease hostilities and surrender, setting the following conditions:

first, that power be transferred to the Soviets; second, that the praporshchik (ensign) school in Tashkent be closed; and third, that General Korovichenko leave Tashkent [3].

During this armed clash, the population of Tashkent was left in fear and anxiety and suffered significant losses. According to official reports, there were numerous cases in the city's markets where many Muslims were looted [4]. After four days of bloody fighting, on November 1 (14), the workers and soldiers defeated the military forces led by General Korovichenko and established Soviet power in Tashkent. Members of the Provisional Government in Tashkent, along with General Korovichenko, were arrested.

On November 2, 1917, an expanded meeting of the Regional Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies of Turkestan was held to address the issue of forming a Provisional Regional Government. At this meeting, the composition of the Turkestan Regional Executive Committee was elected, consisting of 9 members: 3 representatives from the Regional Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, 2 representatives from the Regional Soviet of Peasants' Deputies, 1 representative from the Regional Soviet of Kyrgyz Deputies, 1 representative from the Regional Soviet of Muslim Deputies, 1 representative from the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, and 1 representative from the Regional Bureau of the Social-Democratic Party [5]. In this context, the Bolsheviks began to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat in Turkestan.

With the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat, various difficulties emerged in the socio-economic and political life of the Turkestan region. Problems in agriculture and food supply intensified. Most importantly, distrust was

shown toward local personnel in state administration. Therefore, the ideological struggle against the dictatorship of the proletariat by the national opposition was divided into three groups:

1. Intellectuals and religious scholars;
2. Local (national) communists;
3. Those engaged in armed resistance against the Soviet system.

In the autumn of 1917, the leader of the “Shuro-i Islam” organization, Munavvar Qori, in cooperation with members of the “Ulama” and “Fuqaha” societies, held meetings in Tashkent and called on everyone to unite as a single force against the intrigues of the Bolsheviks. At these events, Munavvar Qori’s friend, Abulqosim Qori, also sided with the Jadid reformers and carried out advocacy among the local population, calling for an end to internal conflicts and for the struggle toward national unity [6].

After the Bolsheviks began to fully take control of the administration of the Turkestan region, the organizations “Shuro-i Islamiya” and “Shuro-i Ulama” reached a unanimous decision to oppose the transfer of power to the Soviets. In order to preserve their independence, the peoples of Turkestan convened the Extraordinary Fourth Congress of All-Turkestan Muslims in Kokand on November 26–28 (December 9–11), 1917. This Congress marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the Turkestan region and proclaimed the establishment of the Turkestan Autonomy [7].

After the establishment of the Turkestan Autonomy, a National Assembly consisting of 54 members was elected to govern this administration. Of these, 36 members were representatives of the local population, while 18 belonged to European nationalities. The 36 Muslim representatives were elected from the five

regions of Turkestan: 10 from Fergana, 5 from Samarkand, 9 from Syr Darya, 6 from Semirechye (Yettisuv), and 2 from Transcaspia. The remaining 4 members were appointed by the city dumas of Turkestan [8].

The establishment of the national government was welcomed with great joy in the Turkestan region. In particular, on December 1 of that year, a peaceful demonstration of one hundred thousand people took place in Namangan. Their banners bore the inscription: “Long live the local autonomy of Turkestan and its government.”[9]. However, the demonstration that began in Tashkent on December 13 ended in tragedy. The Bolsheviks opened machine-gun fire on the people of Turkestan who were holding a peaceful protest in Kaufman Square. The people of Turkestan expressed their hatred toward the main perpetrators of this bloodshed in the article titled “I Am Not a Bolshevik [10]”.

The Bolsheviks pursued a policy of violence and ruthlessness in order to dominate the 95 percent Muslim population living in the Turkestan region, impose their authority, and enforce their orders. For instance, they dissolved the Tashkent City Duma, labeled the Turkestan Autonomy as a “decision of the rich and bourgeois,” and opened fire with rifles and machine guns on thousands of Muslims in Tashkent who had taken to the streets to celebrate the establishment of the autonomy[11].

In the city of Kokand, the newspaper *El Bayrogi* published an appeal on behalf of the national government, presenting the preservation of the Turkestan Autonomy as the duty of every Turkestan resident: “We pledged to sacrifice our lives for the Autonomy. Now we must faithfully uphold this vow. The people must know how to defend the proclaimed autonomy and act with unity and solidarity. If we are united,

five or six Bolsheviks will be able to do nothing[12]. Moreover, the Turkestan Autonomy took decisive steps to fully reclaim power from the Bolsheviks. On December 25, 1917, a congress of 200 representatives of the national government was held in Kokand, at which a decision was made that all institutions and authorities in the Turkestan region were to be immediately transferred to the government of the Autonomy.

In response, at the Extraordinary Fourth Congress of Workers', Soldiers', and Peasants' Deputies of the Turkestan region, held in Tashkent from January 19–26, 1918, a completely negative stance was taken toward the Autonomy. This Congress passed a resolution to imprison the government of the Turkestan Autonomy and its members. The Congress adopted the Bolshevik faction's resolution regarding the Turkestan Autonomy, which labeled the lawful government of Turkestan as a "band of black-clad conspirators." The Autonomists were declared to have aimed at overthrowing the dictatorship of the proletariat and restoring the feudal system.

In this context, on January 30, 1918, the Bolsheviks launched an aggressive campaign to abolish the Turkestan Autonomy. When the local population saw the Red Army shelling the historical monuments, shrines, mosques, and madrasas of Kokand, they rose up in anger [13]. However, these unarmed and innocent people were massacred by ruthless armed squads composed of members of the Red Army and the Dashnaktsutyun Party [14]. This bloody episode ultimately ended on February 19 of the same year with the overthrow of the national government. One of the intellectuals deeply grieved by these tragic events, Hoji Mu'in, wrote: "We never imagined such terrifying moments. Because of the Bolsheviks' lawlessness and the corrupt Russian ideas they promoted, our

Turkestan has fallen into such a dire state within the past three months.[15].

At the beginning of 1918, the Bolsheviks, having established their authority in Turkestan, began a harsh struggle against forces they considered rivals. The Extraordinary Investigative Commission began arresting former officials and local leaders under the pretext that they had held positions during the era of the Tsarist Russian administration. In response, local leaders organized large-scale demonstrations. However, the Soviet ideologues interpreted these protests as reactionary movements led by religious figures and clergy and punished them ruthlessly.

Regarding the suppression of the Turkestan Autonomy and the subsequent political situation in the region, Turkestan delegates reported at the Soviet assemblies as follows:

"We witnessed the horrific practice of dividing the entire population into the Madamin and Ergash units. We also witnessed the so-called Red Army, which included even Communist participants. In reality, it would be more accurate to call the Dashnaktsutyun members robbers. According to reports, the Dashnaktsutyun were armed by imperialist England, which we observed through their betrayals throughout the Caucasus, especially in Baku. All local Armenian merchants were aligned with this 'Communist' party" [16].

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Bolshevik Party seized power in Russia by force in October 1917 and established the Soviet state. They brutally suppressed the national government in Turkestan, which had defended its legitimate rights. This led to the beginning of an armed struggle against the Soviet system in the region. The Bolsheviks declared the existing system in Turkestan as feudal relations, particularly

the most brutal forms of exploitation. Relations between European workers and the local population also worsened. Local landlords and Muslim clergy faced proletarian attacks on their properties, and industrial enterprises were nationalized. As a result, the socio-economic situation deteriorated, market balances were disrupted, and the local population was drawn into a spiral of famine and hardship.

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