

THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN KHOREZM AND ITS TRAGIC OUTCOME: THE OVERTHROW OF THE “YOUNG KHIVANS” GOVERNMENT (1920S)

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Abstract. *This article examines the struggle for national development in Khorezm in the early 1920s and the tragic overthrow of the “Young Khivans” government. It analyzes the conflict between the national-democratic aspirations of the Khorezm Jadids and the Sovietization policy pursued by the Bolsheviks. The study highlights the role of the “Young Khivans” in abolishing the Khiva Khanate, establishing the Khorezm People’s Soviet Republic, adopting a national constitution, and forming a government based on local, religious, and democratic values. Special attention is given to the growing interference of RSFSR representatives, the Turkcommission, and Red Army political structures in Khorezm’s internal affairs. The article shows that the Bolsheviks used military and political pressure to weaken national forces and remove the government led by Polvonniyoz Hoji Yusupov. The findings reveal that the overthrow of this government marked the beginning of Soviet repression in Khorezm.*

Keywords: *Khiva Khanate, Khorezm, KhPSR, Jadids, “Young Khivans”, Bolsheviks, plenipotentiary representative, government, Soviet power.*

Introduction

At the beginning of the twentieth century, under the influence of events within the territory of the Russian Empire and the ideas of the patriots of the region-the Jadids-the national-democratic movement in Turkestan became even stronger. This process did not bypass Khorezm. The Khorezm Jadids, who chose the path of changing the state administration based on the absolute rule of the khan in the Khiva Khanate and building an enlightened democratic state, founded the “Young Khivans” movement in the 1910s. Representatives of this movement established the first parliament in Turkestan in 1917-the Idorai Mashvarat. Their main goal was to limit the rights of the absolute ruler, the khan. This form of government may be interpreted as a parliamentary monarchy. However, the Khorezm enlighteners were subjected to severe pressure by the khan and his supporters. Some of the “Young Khivans” were executed. To escape repression, the Khivan Jadids were forced to find refuge in the part of Turkestan where Soviet power had been established. Thus, they became closer to the Bolsheviks. The Soviets, intending to use the dissatisfaction of the Khorezm Jadids with the khan’s government for their own interests, encouraged them to believe in their “right to self-determination.” The Jadids, having allied with the Red Army, took part in overthrowing the Khiva Khanate. The goal of the “Young Khivans” was to build a national-democratic state in Khorezm. However, the subsequent development of events showed the complete opposite. After the Khiva Khanate was overthrown, the struggle between national patriotic forces and the Bolsheviks entered a new stage over the choice of the country’s future path of development and the organization of the system of state administration. The American scholar Adeeb Khalid evaluates this historically formed process as follows: “I consider the history of this

period as a struggle between two competing visions of progress—the Bolsheviks and the Jadids, who were the local modernist reform movement” [1]. The Khorezm Jadids, the “Young Khivans,” sought to establish a republic in a national-democratic form corresponding to the local conditions of Khorezm and to the national and religious mentality of the people. In the twelve-point Program adopted by the “Young Khivans” party on February 8, 1920, they set out their aims [2]. However, the Turkcommission, acting on behalf of the Center, pursued a different course on this issue [3]. On February 10, 1920, at a meeting of the special commission for Turkestan affairs of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Russian Communist Party in Tashkent, “the events in Khorezm and the prospects of the Khiva revolution were considered” [4].

It was precisely from this historical point that an acute struggle began between local patriots and invading forces.

Materials and Methods

This study is based on a historical-analytical research approach. The materials of the study include archival documents, published documentary collections, historical works, memoirs, and scholarly studies concerning the Khiva Khanate, the Khorezm People’s Soviet Republic, the “Young Khivans” movement, the Jadids, and the Sovietization of Khorezm in the early 1920s. The research uses historical analysis, source analysis, comparative analysis, chronological description, and interpretation of political processes. Special attention is paid to the activities of the “Young Khivans” government, the role of the Bolsheviks and the Turkcommission, and the political struggle over Khorezm’s future path of development.

Results and Discussion

After the overthrow of the Khiva Khanate, while the five-member Provisional Revolutionary Government of a national-democratic orientation, formed on February 2, 1920, at a people’s assembly in the city of Khiva from representatives of the “Young Khivans” and Turkmen tribes, was operating in Khorezm, a general meeting was held on April 4, 1920, on the initiative of G. I. Broido, with the participation of Bolsheviks who had come from Russia, military personnel, and local democratic patriots [5]. Under the leadership of the Bolshevik Olimjon Akchurin, a representative of the Turkestan Central Executive Committee, the Organizational Committee of the Khorezm Communist Party was elected. At that meeting, at the demand and desire of the Bolsheviks, it was announced that the “Young Khivans” national party, which had fought for national-democratic changes in Khorezm, had dissolved itself, and it was officially abolished [6]. The powers of the Provisional Revolutionary Government, consisting of representatives of the local nation, were transferred to the Organizational Committee of the Khorezm Communist Party until the convening of the All-Khorezm Congress [7]. Thus, the Provisional Government elected at the people’s meeting on February 2, 1920, ended its activity. From this historical moment, the balance of political forces in Khorezm began to shift toward the Bolsheviks. The abolition of the “Young Khivans” party was the first blow delivered by the Soviets against the movement of national democratic forces.

The leadership of the new government formed in Khorezm passed into the hands of communists who had come from the RSFSR and Turkestan. Polvonniyoz Hoji Yusupov, the leader of the “Young Khivans” party, Boboovun Salimov, one of the leading enlighteners, and other national patriots continued the struggle. They did not consider it acceptable to act against their convictions. On April 27–30, 1920, the First Congress of Representatives of All Khorezm Working People was held in the city of Khiva [8]. The congress officially declared the abolition of the Khiva Khanate and the establishment of the Khorezm People’s Soviet Republic [9].

A distinctive feature of the KhPSR was that, since Bolshevik influence among the masses was very weak, they were forced to take into account the views of local patriots in choosing Khorezm's subsequent path of development. Therefore, in organizing the new state administration, the local, national, and religious characteristics, as well as the conditions of Khorezm, were taken into account. Representatives of the Turkmens, who were the second ethnic group in Khorezm after the Uzbeks, were also actively involved in state administration.

At the initiative of Khorezm's national-democratic forces, the congress adopted the first constitution of Khorezm, a fundamental law consisting of 37 articles that defined the country's future path of development [10]. This document established the organizational and legal foundations of the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic as an independent state. In accordance with the constitution, symbols of the independence of the new national state-the state emblem, flag, and monetary unit-were adopted.

At the congress, a fifteen-member executive authority called the Council of People's Nazirs-the government of the KhPSR-was formed [11]. Polvonniyoz Hoji Yusupov, a well-known Jadid figure, was elected chairman of the government. From this very period, preserving Khorezm's independence and national statehood became the main issue in the struggle of the local Jadids against the Bolsheviks. While Polvonniyoz Hoji Yusupov led this struggle within the country, on the international stage it was led by Boboosun Salimoxun ugli, a well-known scholar of Islamic jurisprudence who had served as Qozikalon in the Khiva Khanate but, dissatisfied with the unjust policy and system of the khans, had joined the Jadid movement.

It must be emphasized with regret that some representatives of the RSFSR plenipotentiary mission in the KhPSR caused great damage to bilateral relations because they acted by taking advantage of the complex socio-economic and political situation in Khorezm and without taking into account the local and national characteristics of the country. Despite pressure from Russian representatives and their crude interference in the internal affairs of the republic, the KhPSR government led by Polvonniyoz Yusupov followed the path of national-democratic development. Taking into account the socio-economic, national-demographic, and religious factors in the republic, they chose a path of development characteristic of the conditions of Khorezm.

This situation did not please the Turkcommission and its representatives in Khorezm. Therefore, relying on the Soviet troops in Khiva, the special representatives began efforts to discredit the Khorezm government and overthrow it on that basis [12]. V. Dubyansky, the commander of the Red Army troops in Khiva, skillfully used the existing contradictions and conflicts between Turkmens and Uzbeks. In September 1920, he secretly massacred at night hundreds of supporters together with Qoshmamed Khan and Ghulamali, members of the Khorezm government and elders of the Turkmens, accusing them of being responsible for the failures of Soviet troops in the struggle against Junaid Khan [13]. Moreover, by claiming that the KhPSR government had a hand in this massacre, they further complicated the existing situation. As a result, national conflicts and disagreements intensified even more.

The representatives of the Turkcommission skillfully used this situation and intensified their interference in Khorezm's internal affairs. According to the decision of the Turkcommission of October 19, 1920, an extraordinary commission headed by M. V. Safanov was sent to Khorezm. At the same time, M. V. Safanov was appointed the Plenipotentiary Representative of the RSFSR in the KhPSR [14]. Possessing unlimited rights, M. V. Safanov did not take the Khorezm government into account, rudely interfered in its internal affairs, and began to pursue a policy of setting the Turkmens against the existing government. Polvonniyoz Hoji Yusupov wrote with pain:

“...The policy pursued by Comrade Safonov was very harmful for Khorezm. The government figures sat relying on God. For all authority over the soldiers was in their hands” [15]. Representatives of the local government, complaining about Safanov’s actions and asking for him to be recalled, sent “brother Mulla Jumaniyoz Bekchanmuradov and Mulla Obdalov” as representatives to Tashkent [16]. This action produced no result. Safanov intensified the pressure even further.

In November 1920, the political administration of the Khorezm Red Army was established under the leadership of a Bolshevik of Tatar nationality named Mahmud Musaev, who had come from Russia [17]. Polvonniyoz Hoji Yusupov wrote the following about this: “...Without informing the Council of Nazirs, by Safonov’s order, the military nazir Hasanov established a political office and appointed a Bashkir young man named Musaev as its head” [18]. Mainly Soviet political workers operated in this administration, and they supported the activities of Safanov and Musaev in every way, because all military forces in Khorezm were subordinate to them. The situation had reached such a point that Safanov forbade the Khorezm government from sending any message to Tashkent or Moscow without his permission. Then Polvonniyoz Hoji Yusupov sharply raised the issue before the plenipotentiary representative: “...If Khorezm is an independent government... Moreover, the government of Khorezm is a government allied with the Soviet government of Russia. It is also possible that if the fully authorized representative appointed by Russia in Khorezm has done something bad concerning Khorezm, and if we wish to write and send a telegram about the inappropriate actions committed by this fully authorized representative, and if even then we must send it only after receiving permission from the honorable representative himself, then in that case the gentleman representative appointed by Russia must be a dictator. In that case, there would be no need to establish any government at all” [19]. With this justified demand, he defended the honor of his homeland and nation.

However, arms and military force were on the side of the Soviet representatives. The struggle between the KhPSR government, which consisted of the “Young Khivans,” and the Plenipotentiary Representative of the RSFSR and the Political Administration of the Khorezm Red Army ended on March 6, 1921, with the overthrow of the democratically elected government headed by Polvonniyoz Hoji Yusupov, which had chosen the path of national development. In fact, the Bolsheviks overthrew this government by slandering it with the accusation that it had “betrayed the cause of the revolution” [20]. Polvonniyoz Hoji Yusupov was forced to flee and go into hiding.

Conclusion

Thus, after the overthrow of the Khiva Khanate, the leaders of the “Young Khivans” party, who had chosen the path of national-democratic development in Khorezm, succeeded in establishing the Khorezm People’s Republic in its place. By adopting a national constitution and forming a government consisting mainly of the “Young Khivans,” they pursued the path of building a state that took local and religious values into account. However, the representatives of the RSFSR who had settled in Khorezm, relying on Red Army troops, began a struggle to seize state administration. As a result, the contradiction between the Bolsheviks who came from Moscow and the local patriots over Khorezm’s future path of development intensified. This conflict between the Bolsheviks, who chose the path of Sovietizing Khorezm by force, and the supporters of national development ultimately ended with the overthrow of the “Young Khivans” government. The Bolsheviks’ policy of repression began in Khorezm.

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