



REVIEW ARTICLE

THE SOVIET UNION'S NATIONAL POLITICS AND ITS ATTITUDE AMONG THE NATIONS IN UZBEKISTAN (IN THE EXAMPLE OF FERGANA EVENTS OF 1989)

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ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the colonial character of the national policy of the former Soviet Union and the ethnic tensions that have emerged in the late 1980s. It is a movement of Turks deported to Meskhetian Turks who were deported to Uzbekistan during the Second World War, and the Soviet government's attempt to provoke ethnic conflict in light of the history of archival documents and eyewitness accounts. The article deals with the origins of the conflict between the Turks and Uzbeks in the Fergana Valley in May 1989, Formation of this conflict by the Soviet government, the ethnic tension-making forces, and the ethnic intrigue were analyzed through the various political sources of the former USSR leadership. The article also analyzed the effects of ethnic conflict in the Fergana valley in Uzbekistan in 1989, and the problems of the driving force, space and time. The article outlines a new national policy pursued by the new leadership of Uzbekistan after the ethnic conflict in 1989, and the principle of equality in interethnic relations, which is the basis of socio-political stability in the country.

INTRODUCTION

The second half of the 80s the early 90s of the twentieth century were distinct with its important changes in the world political life. Particularly, the collapse of the systems in the structure of Soviet state in Eastern Europe, Latin America's military dictatorship to an end, Yugoslavian splitting up, Czechoslovakia is splitting up, the unity of East and West Germany, which had remained apart for almost half a century, were vital political changes. However, undoubtedly, among the events that had occurred at those times, the collapse of the Soviet Union was one of the top important changes of the 20-century. As we know, any kind of empire or «independent states union»'s regression in some period is considered a historical necessity. The most essential feature is that any kind of empire or "state of unions" experience some collapse due to some certain factors. Particularly, in the early 90's, the reason for Yugoslavia's splitting up was the government's ignorance to follow the tendency of equality that resulted in the increase of conflicts between nations leading to the country's getting torn out. The crisis of the Soviet Union and its process of splitting up was learnt by lots of researchers. The reason for the collapse of the USSR was the government's construction on Marxist-Leninist doctrine based on utopian socialist ideology,

its economy professing ideology, the administrative system management based on bureaucracy, armament races after World War II and many more other factors. Among those factors, there were colonialist features of national policy of soviet state that brought up different conflicts. That can be seen in the 1989 interracial conflict of Fergana, Uzbekistan where two nations (Uzbek and Mesxeti-Turk) fought against each other. There was a conflict between Mesxeti-Turks and local inhabitants (Uzbek, Tajik and others) in Quvasoy city, Fergana on May 23-24, 1989. In the consequence, 58 persons were wounded, 32 persons were sent to hospital from both sides¹, a young Tajik who was hit on his head by a Mesxeti-Turk punk² with a hard object died in hospital³. From June 3 the public chaos began to occur in Toshloq district, Margilan town that spread to Fergana city (5 June) and surrounding areas spreading to Kokand city (7-8 June) and neighboring districts and then to Namangan province (June 12). During the chaos, Turkish and Uzbek people's houses and administrative buildings were set on fire; criminals killed a few people. During the historically so called "Fergana tragedy", 754 houses were set on fire, 27 public buildings were damaged, 107 people died, over a 1000 people were wounded, 386 of them became

¹ The flag of labor (mehnat bayrog'i). June 15, 1989. №240 (18.863)

² From the conversation with Mirzajanov To'raxo'ja (the Head of local chiefs) living in Quvasoy town, Azizov street, home №121. It was on August 26, in 2008.

³ The judgement from the court// Komunna. December 15, 1989, №240 (18.863)

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invalids for good⁴. After those events, the social-political situation in Uzbekistan became complicated. Analyses of the events in Fergana valley, in 1989 show that even though events were a quarrel between Uzbeks and Meskheti-Turks, in reality, it was just the appearance of the events. The ones who started were just the inner mobilizing power. That can be learnt that those who were active in those events gave the local inhabitants doubts. In particular, Toirova Sabriya, a Mesxeti-Turk, living in Fergana region, Margilan town⁵, mentioned in her conversation that in those-days battles in Margilan the ones who beat and killed the Mesxeti-Turks were wearing Uzbek national robes. However, they were not like the Uzbek people in appearances. Later on the doubt became clear, that is, the former Fergana province State Security Head, N. Leskov said that just before the public massacre a few top-dangerous criminals had come from RSFSR (Russian Federation) to Fergana region⁶. They were-blood-thirst criminals who enjoyed killing people, and they were too dangerous⁷, they took active parts in 'contribution' to making chaos and they 'served' a huge deal in beginning and developing the events. This was not only to happen in Margilan but also in many other areas. Particularly, the same happened in Toshloq as well. According to the information of event-witnesses, the people all of whom were wearing the same Uzbek national clothing (a white national shirt on, a sash made from "atlas" in the waist and a Margilan hat on their heads) who were the lads but not alike the local nationals were at the lever of the chaotic actions. The surprising thing was that the local inhabitants recognized none of them. Those lads threw stones and the hard objects at the soldiers who were sent by the Center (Moscow). The soldiers had chased them away without a single bullet shooting at them⁸.

Once discussing the factors of occurrence of "Fergana events", we can see that it leads to the root of the colonialism of the political system of the USSR. Because the involved in the events Mesxeti-Turk were the victims of harsh repression policy of the USSR. They were deported from the historical region Mesxeti-Javxate of Georgia to Central Asia. Although the reason for moving was not explained⁹, the disloyalty towards the Soviet Union like other departed nations, particularly; bordering unfriendly country Turkey gave the possibility of moving there was their fault and the reason for moving¹⁰. Suleiman Barbakadze, the president of "Vatan" (homeland) national Mesxeti-Turk society, said to the newspaper 'Nezavismaya', from 224 villages of Georgia, over 92 thousand persons were deported within about 24 hours¹¹. This process was ended in January 1945¹². The most of deported Meskheti-Turks were deported to Central Asia were placed in Uzbekistan. Even though the Mesxeti Turk had been

living unharmed in Uzbekistan for a long time, they never gave up hoping for returning to their homeland. This hope went through from a generation to the other. On this purpose, they held congresses several times during the Soviet period. For example: there were 10 congresses held from 1962 to 1989¹³.

At these congresses, their main goal was to return to their homeland. The Meskhetian Turks' return to the homeland was particularly active in the Ferghana region, particularly in Quvasoy, where they live. These activists demanded that the center be moved to the center of Moscow (Moscow) to resolve their national issues and move their homeland to the southern parts of the Georgian SSR. In this purpose, they created an initiative group and delegated several times to the Center, held meetings among the population and discussed ways to resolve their national issues. According to researchers in places, almost all the Turk people would want to go back to their motherland. To tackle the problem, they considered the key solution to the problem was abolishment in limitation to moving to their homelands¹⁴. Therefore, they kept insisting on returning to Mesxetiya for 154 times¹⁵. However, the limitation was not cancelled from 1944 until the end of 1980.

In the second half of the 80th of the 20th century, the USSR leadership was unable to solve the national issue related to the return of the Turks to Meskhetian Turks. The fact that this was made barriers by the Georgian SSR has a considerable influence.¹⁶ Because, the Georgians are now occupied in the deported areas of the Meskhetian Turkish people and the restoration of historical justice could have created new problems in Georgia. At the same time, the main reason for the deportation of the Meskhetian Turks from the Georgian SSR was that the threat of their merger with their fellow citizens in Turkey was still the cause worry of the Soviet leadership. This factor was the main obstacle to their migration. The famous Georgian writer Ch.Amiredjibi will also give a similar comment. He believes that the Meskhetian Turks will be placed in the Caucasus, where the status of Islam will be strengthened. This could have caused the region to go out of the hands of the Russians.¹⁷ Under such circumstances, the management of the Center could not bear the national awakening processes in Uzbekistan (this process was exacerbated in the late 1980s and ultimately required Uzbekistan's declaration of independence from the USSR) and the national problem of the Turkish people. Because, these factors could serve as an aggravating factor in the process of disintegration of the Alliance.

The USSR leaders tried to prevent from the strengthening national movement of the Meskheti-Turks. Because these factors could serve as an accelerating factor to the collapse of the Soviet Union. In consequence, the Mesxeti-Turk people's (living in Uzbekistan) movement to return to their homeland was turned into interethnic conflict by the USSR's specific organization. This tragedy had nothing to do with the Uzbek and Mesxeti Turk people. Interethnic quarrels in Uzbekistan was one of the movements of enemies to keep the Soviet Government in power. The study of the history of interethnic relations in Uzbekistan shows that the so-called "ethnic conflict between the Turkic and Meskhetian Turkic peoples", which

⁴ Uzb Republic PDA FarB, fund-1 list-301, folder volume-210, page-175

⁵ Conversation with Toirova Sabriya New Margilan town Mash'al street dweller. The conversation took place on 21 August 2008.

⁶ What is behind the Fergana events. Literaturnaya gazeta (literature newspaper. 14 June. 1989. N24 (5246)

⁷ Art of intriguing. Uzbekistan literature and art library. E: subject, 1993. Page 93.

⁸ From conversation with the dweller of Sufilar village Abdubannob Ismoilov, Tashlaq region. The conversation took place on 27 August; from the conversation with Dustlik mahalla dweller Qosimov Khusan. The conversation took place on August 25 2008.

⁹ Soviet Uzbekistan. 15 September 1988. N212 (20.180).

¹⁰ Moscow News. 18 June 1989. N25.

¹¹ Central Asian news. Anatoli Gordienko. Nezavisimaya gazeta (Independent Newspaper). 16.10.2005.

¹² A. Yunusov. Akhiskin (Meskheti) Turks: the twice deported people. Central Asia and Caucasus. N1 (2) Sweden page 170. 1999 .

¹³ E.E. Panesh, L. B. Yermolaev. Meskheti Turks: dynamics of ethnocultural and socio-political changes. "Vostochnaya literatura". 1993. (Eastern literature)

¹⁴ Moscow news. 18 June 1989 N25.

¹⁵ Art of Intriguing. 1-book. Tashkent. Subject. 1993, page 149.

¹⁶ Young Leninist. June 16, 1989.

¹⁷ <http://www.ca-c.-org/journal/10-1997/st15enoh.html>

took place in the Fergana valley in 1989, was actually planned by the leadership of the former Soviet Union in a careful and carefully planned manner. On August 31, in 1991 Uzbekistan gained its independence and developed new national politics based on equality differing from the Soviet Union's. All the nations and nationalities living in Uzbekistan have the equal rights with the Uzbeks. This has been serving to strengthen friendship and partnership among the nations.

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