



LIFE IN TURKESTAN IN THE YEARS OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND RELOCATION OF PRISONERS OF WAR

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ABSTARCT

It aims to shed light on the history of our country in the 20th century by covering the political, economic and social situation in Turkistan during the First World War, and to show the resettlement policy of the Russian Empire. The activities of prisoners of war exiled to Turkestan are also covered.

Keywords: the land of Turkestan, the Russian Empire, exploitation, monopoly, colonial economy, labor, the First World War, prisoners of war, government, deportation

Throughout the history of mankind, there are certain reasons why peoples move from the place where they live. Some of them move voluntarily, while others move forcibly. The nomadic peoples, who changed their abode in order to develop new lands due to the arrival of unfavorable weather, later changed their habits after taking possession of a prosperous agricultural oasis. They made the areas where they came to be their own. Years later, their descendants made this place where they were born and raised their own.

Turkestan has been a place for many peoples for centuries. Nomadic Saks and Massagets, as well as settled Sugdians, Bactrians and Khorezms have lived in this country since ancient times. Before the Russian invasion of the new era, there were three Turkic states in this area: Bukhara, Khiva and Kokan states. During the Russian invasion, instead of fighting together, the peoples of Central Asia went into conflict with each other. As a result, representatives of this free nation were subjugated by the Russian Empire.

The Russian Empire implemented its policy of aggression. He took all the wealth that could be transported from the country. The state, which has been formed for centuries, has changed the traditions of governance. New ideology and ideas began to be absorbed into the minds of Muslim peoples. They turned Turkestan into a raw





material base and transported gold, oil and cotton products. They built a railway in order to transport more raw materials from Turkestan.

The beginning of the 20th century coincided with one of the most serious turning points in the history of Turkestan. During the past decades, the processes that have taken place in the heart of the country have come to the surface of social life and revealed the deep tension that covers its basis. These processes, which arose due to external and internal factors, were not identical in nature, but were integrated in their destructive effect [A1 B10].

One of the causes of decay in Turkestan was the ethnic problem. At that time, the Turkestan Governorate, which was called the Turkestan region in terms of the size of its territory and large population, was a big date. It included Samarkand, Syrdarya, Fergana, Kaspiyorti and Yettisuv regions. Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, Turkmens and other indigenous peoples made up the majority of the country's more than five million inhabitants. All of them were Muslims who believed in Islam. However, at that time, the concept of the Muslim population had not only a religious content, but also an ethnic content, and was used to distinguish the ordinary local population from the Russian-speaking population who had been transferred from Russia, the number of which was a tenth of the total population of the country. was also less. They numbered 197,000 at the beginning of the century, and 400,000 on the eve of the First World War. [A4 B 15]

If the Russian Empire wanted to settle in the country with all its might and rob the country of its wealth, it did not want to give the fertile land, which was considered the wealth of the local population, to foreign peoples. More privileges were given to peoples displaced from different parts of the empire. In the densely populated Ferghana Valley, the relocation of the population was considered as humiliation and enslavement of the local people. Although the local residents raised their heads against this several times, there was no result.

During the war, agriculture was destroyed, arable land was reduced, there was a shortage of workers in the countryside. The railway was dominated by the headship, and in practice it transported military cargo. All economic relations are lost. It became clear that the Russian economy is weak for war and military actions of this scale. State finances are in crisis. Spending on education and cultural development has decreased, and small loans have almost disappeared. During only one year of the war, the amount of taxes increased by 50 percent.

Looking for additional funds to compensate for the losses and the increase in military expenses, the tsar's government took the most usual and easiest way for itself, that is,





its own colony. Instead of plundering their lands, they went the way of imposing a large part of the costs of war on their colonies.

Starting from 1915, fixed state prices for cotton were introduced in Turkestan, in the conditions of the general increase in prices, this price could not cover the expenses of growers in growing crops. In 1914-1915, the price of wheat exchanged for cotton increased by 100%, and in 1916 by 400%, and the price of cotton increased by only 50%. These indicators meant that cotton was necessary for the state, but the fate of the grower did not interest him. "Violent" measures up to confiscation of property were used against growers who tried to sell their cotton at other prices, that is, at a price higher than monopoly prices [A7 B2].

Czarist Russia looked at Turkestan as a raw material base and therefore completely ignored the question of building heavy industrial enterprises. He only tries to build small-scale light craft businesses that make quick profits. The main branch of industrial enterprises in the territory of Turkestan is cotton ginning factories, the number of which was 254 in 1914 [A2 B261].

The tsar's government also made a lot of money by raising taxes on the population. For example, the income from taxes was 23 million soums in 1913, and reached 33.3 million soums in 1916. This sum was considered a huge amount for that time, of course. For example, in the newspaper "Turkestansky golos" at the end of 1916, the price of a pack of mutton in the old part of Andijan was 20 tyins, while in the new market it was 25 tyins. Land tax increased from 6859021 soums in 1914 to 14311771 soums in 1916. An additional tax of 2 soums 50 tineys per pound of cotton fiber was introduced [A2 B 266].

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, not only Turkestan, but also the territories forcibly taken from the Bukhara Emirate and the Khiva Khanate were used to accommodate the resettled Russian population, and from 1915, foreign prisoners of war as well. And it was very difficult for the native population. At the end of August - beginning of September 1914, the Ministries of Military and Internal Affairs of Russia, together with the administration of Turkestan, placed prisoners of war belonging to the Austro-Hungarian and German armies in Tashkent, Samarkand, Skobelev, Ashgabat, Kokand, Andijan, and the volume of work performed by the prisoners. types were planned [A6 B 55].

In 1916, the local population was obliged to pay "voluntary" contributions in favor of the Russian government for its war. These contributions became compulsory taxes collected from every house and family. These taxes were a heavy burden for ordinary people's income. During the war, additional taxes and natural duties were imposed on the population. In Turkestan, these obligations led to a deep decline of the entire





colonial economy. The devaluation of money, the impossible taxes and the oppressive conditions of the usurers made the suffering of the people excessive. Their economy has completely collapsed, and this has created a threat of complete collapse of the economy. Peasants used to sell their land cheaply, as a result, more than 50 percent of them became landless peasants [A4 B15]. In return for their debts, they took away their farm equipment and tools. As a result of the deterioration of the agricultural situation, the cotton productivity has decreased and the labor productivity has also decreased sharply.

At the end of 1915 and 1916, discontent with high prices spread to all sections of the population, and popular riots began. The news of the "women's revolt" in Tashkent soon spread throughout the country, in which women with starving children destroyed the stalls [A3 B 11].

They carried food products, resisted the police, sometimes beat them. This was the beginning of the decline of power and the new stage of the national liberation movement in Turkestan. Punishment groups were sent to places where sharp conflicts took place. In Turkestan, enough revolutionary power had accumulated to explode on a trivial pretext.

According to the royal decree announced on June 25, 1916, Turkestan men between the ages of 19 and 43 "belonging to the local nationality" should be recruited for the construction of defense structures in the regions of the active army, as well as for the work necessary for the defense of the state. In the document, it was said that "it was decided that the emperor should command in the highest position" [A7 B1].

After the decree, General Yerofeyev, acting as the Governor-General of Turkestan, received an instruction from the Minister of Internal Affairs to implement the recruitment of workers without delay and in a short period of time. The colonial policy of the tsar's government and its contempt for the local population were clearly expressed in the form of "requisition" of recruitment. After all, things or cattle - fodder, fuel, horses, carts - were usually seized, and now people belonging to the local nationality were also to be seized as things or objects. Based on the "Supreme Command" it was planned to "requisition" 250 thousand people from Syrdarya, Samarkand and Fergana regions [A7 B1].

People began to be sent from Turkestan not to build fortifications, but to use the workers and peasants in the enterprises and properties of Russian landowners and entrepreneurs. It was obedient and free labor. Local people worked in Ukrainian sugar factories, Caucasian copper mines, Donbass coal mines, and almost anywhere where free labor was needed. The announcement of the decree coincided with the peak of the work in the field. At this time, all working forces are counted. In such a place, it





was planned to withdraw the most necessary labor force from production. Mustabid government officials knew in advance that the workers could not be taken without a fight. The unlimited power concentrated in the hands of the governor-general gave him the opportunity to apply illegal punishments. The local population understood the situation well and felt that the tsar's administration was superior in the struggle. On the side of the authorities was a regular army with modern weapons and good military training. The weapons of local people were hoe, scythe and ax. Despite this, the people, fed up with oppression and injustice, started an unequal struggle with tsarism.

During the World War, life became extremely difficult not only for the residents of Turkestan, but also for the residents of the Bukhara Emirate and the Khiva Khanate, because during this period, the flow of people moving from the central provinces was joined by the flow of 70,000 refugees from the Western regions of Russia. In addition, as early as September 1914, prisoners belonging to the armies of Austria-Hungary, Germany, Poland, Serbia and the armies of the Czechs and Slovaks began to be sent to Turkestan, especially to Samarkand, Syrdarya and Yetisuv regions. Prisoners of war of the Turkish army who escaped from Siberian camps began to arrive. In February 1917, there were more than 200,000 prisoners of war in the country. It was the responsibility of the local population to provide them materially. In addition to settling the Russian population in the country, the administration of Turkestan forcibly took food, carts, sheep, horses, and camels from the local population to help the Russian army. increased the amount of previous taxes, new taxes; among other things, he introduced the military tax [A6 B 132].

This is also known. During the years of the First World War, the feeding of about 200,000 prisoners of war brought to Turkestan by the military ministry of the empire was covered by the military tax collected from the native population and many other fees. As a result, by 1917, the situation of the local population became extremely difficult. Even then, the ruling circles of the empire insisted that the management of the Turkestan region was causing multi-million losses to the Russian treasury. In fact, even before the construction of the railway, which shifted the exploitation of the country's economy to the interests of the metropolis, the government saw at least 7 million profits every year [A6 B166].

In conclusion, it can be said that at the beginning of the 20th century, the country of Turkestan came out of depression and entered the field of struggle for its freedom. Although they had few opportunities in the fight against the Russian Empire, they did not agree to give away their wealth without interest. During the First World War, he received prisoners of war and became a shelter for them.





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