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The Fate of The Karakalpak Volosts During the Russian Empire

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Abstract: The article discusses the volost (bolis) administrative system established in the South Aral Sea region, on the right (eastern) bank of the Amu Darya River, based on the Russian Empire's administrative system in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The role of volost administration in the social and cultural life of the Karakalpak people and its historical significance in the administrative system are revealed. Historical sources indicate that the administration of the Russian Empire conducted the election of volost administrators based on territorial procedures and developed methods for incentivizing and punishing volost administrators in collecting taxes and other payments. The three stages of volost elections and volost administration are illustrated with concrete examples.

Keywords: Amudarya region, Karakalpaks, Russian Empire, history, volost, elections, colonial policy.

Introduction: At the end of the 19th century and in the first quarter of the 20th century, a division system was implemented in the Southern Aral Sea region, on the right (eastern) bank of the Amu Darya, within the Russian Empire's administrative system. This volost (bolis) administrative system left a deep historical mark on the social life of the Karakalpak people.

METHODOLOGY

After the conquest of the Southern Aral Sea region by the Russian Empire, starting in June 1876, the volost (bolis) administrative system, a form of military command administration in the Amudarya region, was introduced into public life and implemented in practice. In the Karakalpak land, the system of governing the people and tribes had long been based on the Khiva Khanate's system of governance. It was governed by individuals chosen according to the high titles and ranks appointed by the Khan, such as “biy, batir, eliwlik, juz basi, ataliq, begler begi, Aga baba, hakim, and mehram”. But then, the "European" administration, that is, the administrative district (uyezd) volost (bolis) of the Russian Empire, became widespread in the lives of the people.

In the Lower Amudarya region, regional governance was carried out based on regional electoral procedures. In historical sources, the territorial electoral procedure has its own peculiarities and is called "military governance." Historian B. Alimdjanov states: "Two fundamental principles were established in the colonial administration of Turkestan: 1) The indivisibility of military and administrative power and their centralization; 2) The granting of internal self-governance by the regional population, which is not political in nature" [3.37]. The regional governance of the Amudarya district was also formed on this basis. According to reports, the organization of volosts in the Amudarya Department was initially organized by village elders, with one “eliwbasi” elected for every approximately 50 households.

Two candidates were required to be nominated for the position of governor. One of them served as the governor, while the other was appointed as the deputy governor. The practical goal of appointing a deputy is to prevent repeat elections during this term. Researcher Z. Saparov, based on data from the National Archives of Uzbekistan, writes: ..."volost (bolis)

administrators were elected for a three-year term, mainly during the summer-autumn season. For example, the first elections of 1876 (June-July, Chimboy district), 1880 (April-May, Shoraxan district), and 1882-1883 (June-September 1882 in the territories of both districts) are cited [4.19]. This is because the main agricultural products in the Lower Amudarya region were harvested at this time, and it was convenient to record the number and composition of livestock at this time.

According to historian T. Tuxtametov: "Based on the conclusion of the Organizing Committee of the Amudarya Department, two districts were formed. The Shoraxan district was divided into 6 volosts and 24 village elders. The Chimboy district is divided into 9 volosts and 37 villages and village councils. Based on the 1886 Law "On the Administration of the Turkestan Region," the Amudarya Department was incorporated into the Syr Darya Region of the Turkestan Region. At the beginning of the 20th century, with the economic development of the Amudarya Department, three more volosts were formed in the Chimbay district: the Bes-ariq, Jana-bazar, and Kok-ozek volosts, and the Saribiy volost in the Shoraxan district. In 1908, the Shoraxan district was divided into 31 villages and seven volosts, and the Chimboy district consisted of 12 villages and volosts.

Thus, the "the period of volosts" began in the country. As a result of the Russian Empire's construction of new cities modeled on European models, the opening of military barracks, hospitals, obstetric stations, and Russian educational institutions, and other cultural and civilizational changes, volost administration was also implemented in the administrative-territorial structure of the population. In the Aral Sea region, on the right (east) side of the Amu Darya, the “Aq patsha”(White Tsar) volosts initially held elections in a "democratic" manner. The first elected volosts in the Karakalpak land in 1876 were documented in the works of renowned historians R. Qosberganov, G. Tuxtametov, A. Toreev, and O. Yusupov.

In the summer of 1876, the biys of the “Qongirot” and “on tort uriw”(fourteen tribes) of the Karakalpak people on the eastern and western sides of the Amu Darya branch of the Kegeyli Canal, along with their elders, leaders of the eliwbasi, murabs, and ordinary citizens, were called to the first democratic election. They gathered in Keneges Ernazar’s son Seytnazar biy’s garden and participated in “volost” elections. There a volost election campaign was held for 2,486 households, a volost election for the Navpir settlement, and a volost election for 2,872 households located in the Kegeyli region [2]. The working people often expressed their dissatisfaction and resistance to unfairly held elections, and there were cases of some candidates not being elected. For example, in the July 1876 election, Ernazar Keneges was not elected head of the Kegeyli volost, and Oraz was not elected head of the Esim volost. In 1877, Biysenbey Jilgeldiev, a former governor of Esim, was convicted of a crime and removed from his position. During and after the elections, the farmers continued their struggle against the unfavorable volosts, elders, and people's judges [7.36-37].

The administration of the Russian Empire, in its colonial policy, developed methods of encouraging and punishing volosts in collecting taxes and other payments from the population. For example, they implemented a policy of rewarding officials who performed their duties well and, conversely, punishing those who performed ineffectively. In accordance with the order of the Governor-General of Turkestan, officials of the volost administration were awarded honorary certificates of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd degrees, uniforms, and medals, which were considered the highest awards [4.21]. However, the Governor-General of Turkestan governed the volost (district administration) in two forms: collective and individual. Researcher Z. Saparov writes that the method of collective awarding prevailed in this [4.21]. This form of incentive primarily aligned with the interests of the colonial administration, fostering competition and rivalry among the regional volost administrators. Secondly, it demonstrated the volosts' loyalty to the administration of the Russian Empire [4.21]. Thus, the Russian Empire, in its colonial policy, also aimed to prevent popular discontent and prevent any uprisings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

At the end of the 19th century, in the first quarter of the 20th century, in the social life of the Karakalpak people, the procedure for electing volost governors and governing volosts, that is, the history of volost administration, took place in three stages, and we see from the sources that it manifested itself on the "stage of history."

The first “aq patsha (White Tsar)” volosts appointed between 1876 and 1916 by the “aq patsha (White Tsar)” officials. Among them: Kulen volost, Iniyat volost, Lepes volost, Chiniqul volost - these were historical figures. In Berdaq's poem "Qulen volost" the historical image of Qulen volost, elected leader of the people, is created, artistically portraying him as an enterprising, dedicated, and noble individual with many gardens. Furthermore, the poet Qulmurod, who lived at that perios, criticizes him for portraying his fellow villagers as guilty before the "aq patsha (White Tsar's)" officials and for sending nineteen young men to

court. This was because, in 1899, the Chimbay district chief of police, Kornilov, arrived in the Taldiq volost with the head of the Taldiq volost, Kulen Xudayshukurov, and other officials. The local residents expressed their disagreement with the results of the election held for the village elder and demanded a re-election. Kornilov did not agree to this. Disagreeing with the decision, approximately 150-200 people, dissatisfied with the injustice of the election, gathered and staged an uprising. They called for the beating up and the murder of the bailiff. Galkin, the head of the Amudarya department at that time, sent a telegram to Tashkent city, stating that on March 6, a group of Karakalpaks from the Taldiq volost, disobeying the bailiff, showed resistance and beat up the volost (bolis) chief, his replacement candidate, and the elderly man, accompanying the bailiff and other officials, and that the case had been brought to trial, and that he was going to Taldiq volost to establish order.

Since March 28th, a case has been opened in connection with this incident, and the Karakalpaks who revolted have been tried, with 19 of them imprisoned for five months in Petro-Aleksandrovsk. Despite the defeat of the rebels, Qulen volost and the head of the Chimbay district bailiff were dismissed [1.243]. In his work “Qulen volost” Berdaq wrote that there must be historical truth in describing Qulen bo'ling as “Aq patshaga dadi jetti (reaching the White Tsar)” - stated professor M. Tilevmuratov [1.244]. Poet Qulmurat wrote the poem «Он тоғыз» (Nineteen) dedicated to this historical event. Nineteen insurgents, dissatisfied with the injustice of the election campaign, were imprisoned for various years.

In Karakalpak ethnopoetry, writers like Berdaq, Otesh, Sadiq, Ayapbergen, Abdiqadir, Umar, Qazi Mawlik, and others express their views on the artists and artistically depict the realities of their time.

In 1907, Sayfulgabit Majit uli wrote a letter to Iniyat Niyazov, Nukus volost, urging him to open a new school. Ayapbergen Musa uli wrote that "during the war years, the volosts forced one man from every seven households into forced labor."

Secondly, during the Bolshevik rule of 1919-1921, the "qizil bolislar (red volosts" ruled the country. Ibrayim volost, Adil biy ataliq’s son from Chimbay, was a tyrannical figure during his rule. Shiniqul the grocer from the "Red House," located on the Khalqabad-Chimbay road, was the wealthy Qallekov were the "red volost", he was an entrepreneur and wealthy man, the most respected and prosperous volost in the northern region. Shiniqul, however, suffered from the Bolshevik persecution of the Soviet government and, due to the hardships of social life and poverty, died in the "year of heavy snow" (1935). Lepes Joldas uli, who owned a large fortune in the Lower Amudarya region, was one of the first entrepreneurs in the region, in 1915, Lepes Joldas uli was elected volost administrator of the Ichim volost, Chimbay district, for a three-year term. He held this position until the fall of the Russian Empire [4.23]. According to Sh. Babashev, who conducted research on the consequences of the repressions, Lepes Joldas uli was arrested on November 10, 1937, and sentenced to 10 years in prison [6.122].

In general, by 1928-1929, the "Soviet" authorities in Karakalpakstan, and their fate, were compared to the persecution of the totalitarian regime.

Third: Between 1922 and 1928, there were 24 volosts in the Karakalpak people's governance system, which were considered "Soviet" volosts. The Soviet representatives led the mobilization of men for the preparation of raw materials for cotton, alfalfa, leather, silkworm cocoons, fish, and other goods, tax collection, and the execution of various social orders (excavation work, construction work). Yusuf, grandson of Qazi ishan from the Oq Tuba settlement in one of the Soviet districts, was the son of Qazi ishan, Amet Yusuf uli. He served as governor in Kegeyli, managing the administration. Later, Amet Yusuf became a victim of the Bolshevik totalitarian regime.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we believe it is necessary to conduct a special study of the history of the emergence, formation, and establishment of the "volost (bolis)" position in Karakalpak society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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