CHAPTER - II

AUTONOMY AS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS A FEDERATIVE STEP IN SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA
CHAPTER II

AUTONOMY AS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS A FEDERATIVE STEP IN SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA

The underlying principle of Soviet federation is the concept of autonomy for nationalities living compactly on a definite territory. The concept of autonomy is regarded here as the form of national statehood in which the nation determines its independence in deciding questions having local or purely national (ethnic) significance. Lenin believed it was necessary to set up diverse autonomous entities to assure big and small nations of free and all round development.¹

In Soviet state law, the concept of autonomy implies two fold meaning. First - the independent exercise of state power by Soviet Socialist National State (autonomous republic) and second - the national territorial entity (autonomous national area) itself, that forms part of a union republic. Autonomy is exercised within the limits of competence established

¹. V.I. Lenin, "Centralisation and Autonomy", in Collected Works, (Moscow, 1964), vol. 20, p. 50.
by the supreme bodies of state authority of the union republic with the participation of the autonomous unit in question.² 

Lenin considered the autonomy as the means for the realisation of the right of nations to self-determination. In his article published in 1914 'On the question of National Policy', he wrote, "A democratic state must grant autonomy to its various regions, especially to regions with mixed populations. This form of autonomy in no way contradicts democratic centralism, on the contrary, it is only through regional autonomy that genuine democratic centralism is possible in a large state with mixed population".³

In fact, it required autonomy in diverse forms for the most convenient and flexible system of local self-government. But not every kind of autonomy was thought to be accepted for the Socialist State.

While Lenin and his party were working out the programme of the Party in second congress of the RSDLP,

Lenin objected to the use of the word "regional". He explained that this term "regional" is not very clear and could be confused with the demand of Social Democrats for division of whole state into smaller regions.4

A more explicit assertion of this right was taken into account in point 9 of the programme which the RSDLP adopted at its second congress in 1903. It called for "wide local self-government, regional self-government for those localities which are differentiated by their specific habits, customs and population".5 Later the demand of regional autonomy was included in the resolution of the national question adopted by the Poronin Conference of the RSDLP in 1913. It pronounced the need:

(a) to protect the right of national minorities by providing them regional autonomy and full democratic, local

self-government. The demarcation of the boundaries of these regional autonomies and self-governing units must be undertaken by the local population themselves in conformity with their economic and ethnic distinction and national composition etc.

(b) The interest of the working class demands the union of workers of all nationalities of a given state in proletarian organisations.

(c) The Party supports the right of oppressed nations of the Tsarist monarchy to self-determination, i.e. to secession and formation of independent states.

(d) The question of the right of nations to self-determination must not be confused with the question of expedience of separation of any given nation. The issue must be dealt with by the party separately in each individual case from the point of view of the whole social development and the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat for socialism.  

The programmatic demand of broad "regional autonomy" raised by Lenin and the Party must be understood as autonomy of large nations lying inside Russia or on its periphery like Finns, Ukrainians, Byelorussians and Transcaucasian people which did not want to secede from the Democratic Socialist Unitary Russian Republic. It was also applied to a large national areas of the Former Tsarist Russia. Lenin worked out the theoretical aspect of the principle of autonomy "In the materials for Second Congress of RSDLP", "Thesis on the National Question", where he formulated the various postulates about autonomy. According to Lenin, the applicability of autonomy is the principal question. Autonomy must be applied to those nations which do not desire to secede and it would belong to whole territories inhabited by compact national groups having a distinct language and way of life. Lenin and Communist Party accepted the autonomy unconditionally in carrying out the plan of democratic national state organisation of the country, in as much as it did not contradict with the democratic centralisation but helped to secure it. Simultaneously autonomy, which presumes a high measure of political independence, was necessarily directed to weaken centralisation and substitute a federal association for the stronger integral political whole.
In assessing the position following points should be kept in mind:

(1) Federation in that period was seen as undesirable form of state structure since, as compared with the measure of centralisation already attained, it offered no advantage, and moreover, led to a considerable weakening of centralising ties.

(2) The concrete historical situation in Russia at that time although characterised by national oppression and inequality, did not, nevertheless, call for using the federal form as a means of softening national antagonisms and bringing different people together. The actual level of Political State Centralisation, should it be secured through a radical democratisation of the entire social system, could already offer decisive advantage over the much weaker federal association.

(3) The plan for broad regional autonomy, allowing the use of the most diverse forms of such autonomy was an important democratic form of organising the national life of people within
the framework of an integral, centralised state, guaranteeing their independence and free development.7

In contradiction to regional autonomy there exists another plan which is known as "Cultural-national autonomy". The theory's leading exponents were K. Renner and O. Bauer. Though similar views, with some modifications arose independently among Slavonic social Democrats notably E. Kristan. This plan implied that autonomy should not belong to territories with compact populations differing in language, way of life etc., but to nations irrespective of the place where they live. This autonomy was stipulated only within the cultural sphere of life. Further, Cultural-National Autonomy must elect its own national council (which was to be a sort of cultural national parliament (Diets) on non-territorial basis for promoting its cultural and educational development. This idea is more clearly reflected in Bauer's "The National Question and Social Democracy in 1907, Russian translation in 1909: "All nations",

Bauer wrote, "wherever they may reside would always constitute corporations independently managing their national affairs. Two or more nations would live side by side in the same city, without interfering in each other's affairs, and would peacefully develop their own form of national self-government and build their own educational institutions". 8

The ideological basis of the Plan of Cultural National Autonomy ignored the class contradiction and social, economic and political development of the nations, emphasizing more on cultural aspect of development.

Lenin exposed the "opportunistic" nature of the theory and criticised attempts to apply it to the multinational Russian States. Lenin remarked that "In Austria the idea of cultural national autonomy has remained largely a flight of literary fancy, which Austrian Social Democrats themselves have not taken seriously". 9 Again he pointed out that the "plan of


of cultural national autonomy, anticipating the division of educational affairs on the basis of nationality in a single state is harmful from the standpoint of democracy and the proletarian class struggle." 10 Lenin made his observation regarding the presence of two cultures in every national culture. There is no question of uniform general culture under conditions of a bourgeois state.

"There are two national culture existent in every nation. There is the Great Russian culture of the Purishkeviches Guchkova and Struves but there is also the Great Russian culture typified in the names of Cherhyshevsky and Plekhanov". 11 Lenin always looked upon autonomy as national territorial, as one of the forms of national statehood and also a means for the solution of the national question. In this connection, it is very important to note about the "Autonomisation Plan" which arose in connection with a proposal uniting the various independent Soviet republics. The plan proposed that RSFSR be

10. Ibid., p. 37.
11. Ibid., p. 38.
declared a state which would include the Ukrainian SSR, Transcaucasian SFSR and Byelorussian SSR with the right of autonomous republics. It did not take into account the difficulties of the national relations and negative consequences of turning independent republics into an autonomous republic. Lenin criticised this plan in one of his last letters "on question of Nationalities or on 'Autonomisation'. Lenin wrote that "This entire venture of autonomisation was fundamentally wrong and untimely", and it could bring only harm, distorting the ideas of unification of Soviet republics in the spirit of great power chauvinism.

Lenin supported the idea of forming a united state based on full equality of all independent Soviet republics. He pointed out, "We recognise ourselves as having equal rights with the Ukrainian SSR and other republics, and together, on an equal basis, we will enter into a new union, a new federation".  

13. Ibid., p. 211.
Hence Lenin and Party took sharp exception of these views and put forward their own following programme:

(1) Insisting on the unitary form of the integral, democratically centralised republic, implying the use of broad regional autonomy of the localities essentially different in their way of life, ethnic composition and so on;

(2) demanding the maximal guarantees of national equality;

(3) advancing and staunchly defending the right of nations and nationalities to self-determination;

(4) demanding constitutional guarantees of the right of national minorities and declaring all privileges of one of the nations null and void; and

(5) demanding that the obsolete administrative division of the country be replaced by a new one taking into account, as far as possible, the ethnic composition of the population.

The above mentioned general theoretical framework worked out by Bolshevik Party for the Soviet federation
took a definite shape during the formulation of the RSFSR. Contemporary documents make it clear that the Russian federation was formed in the interests of autonomous republics and regions, voluntarily joining it. The federation assumed responsibility for their defence against the counter revolution. At the same time the internal affairs of these republics and regions remained in their own hands.14

After the establishment of Soviet Power in Russia all laws affirming inequality between nations and races were declared null and void. The Soviet Power legally affirmed the right of self-determination up to state secession. This programmatic understanding of the Bolshevik Party on the nationalities brings about two points:

Firstly, opposition to the Tsarist Policy of National oppression and the need to draw wider stratum of the population of all nationalities into the revolutionary movement.

Secondly, the achievement of socialism for which the RSDLP was struggling required a closer union of all workers irrespective of their national affiliation in a single working class organisation.  

For the construction of Soviet autonomy in its different form "The appeal of the Council of People's Commissars" to all Muslim toilers of Russia and the East (November 20, 1917) was also an important document. This document reiterated that from now on the belief and customs as also the national and cultural institutions of Muslims of oppressed peoples are declared to be free and inviolable and they were given the right to develop their life as they chose. This policy was further clarified and given more concrete shape in the "Address from the people's Commissariats on the Affairs of Nationalities of the Soviets of Kazan, Ufa, Orenburg", the Council of People's Commissars of Turkestan region and other issued in 1918. This appeal exposed the bourgeois autonomy and laid down the essence of Soviet Socialist Autonomy as one of the forms of political construction.

of nations. It ran in part "The immediate task of Soviet Power is to recognise autonomy not to reject it. Only this autonomy must be built on the basis of Soviets in the localities and in this way alone can power become the power of the people and be endeared to the masses, i.e., it is necessary only that autonomy secure power not for the upper crust of a nation but for the masses. That is the whole point of the matter". 16

Before the October Revolution the party decision spoke about autonomy in general form as the right of nations to organise broad local self rule. Now in this appeal it was enriched with new contents in the form to establish concrete organs of state power and administration as also cultural, educational institutions, functioning through the mother language of the masses. This shows a step forward in the development of the Leninist theory on autonomy. Lenin favoured two forms of Soviet autonomy. One, the state political autonomy in the form of Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, which is characterised by a wider range of rights. An autonomous republic has its own constitution. Supreme

bodies of state authority, legislation, government, supreme courts and citizenship requirements. Second, Administrative autonomy in the form of Autonomous Regions and National areas. The various forms of Soviet autonomy reflected the peculiarities of the historical development and flexibility as a form of political self-determination by various people.

In the implementation of Soviet autonomy during the 1918-22 period one could observe two stages:

(1) The first lasted up to the first half of 1918, when the first autonomous republics were formed. A majority of which due to peculiar location did not take the character of national states.

(2) It was the second stage (second half of 1918 to 1922) that the process of construction of Soviet autonomy in various forms proceeded.

After the end of Civil War the process of construction of Soviet autonomy was considerably expedited. The 10th Congress of the RCP(B) adopted the following task to introduce the autonomy in form consisting of the concrete existing conditions and their way of life.
to develop and firmly establish at home Soviet statehood in such forms as shall be consistent with the national conditions of these people and their way of life;

(2) to develop and firmly establish at home, the courts, administration and governmental bodies in the native languages manned by local people, familiar with life and manners of the local population;

(3) to develop at home the press, schools, theatres, clubs and all kinds of cultural educational centres, operating in native languages;

(4) to launch and develop a broad network of courses and schools in the native languages providing general educations and vocational training". 17

While summing up the experience of the creation of Soviet autonomy two points must be kept in mind:

(1) Autonomy was permitted to those nationalities

17. V.I. Lenin, "First All Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, June 3-24 (June 16 - July 7), 1917", in Collected Works, (Moscow, 1964), vol. 25, p. 37.
who lived more compactly on a certain territory and National Territorial principles was the sole basis in determining all forms of Soviet autonomy.

(2) In the formation of Soviet autonomy due consideration was given to the economic principle which will serve as a basis to determining the boundaries of the autonomous units.

Therefore, the concept of autonomy is known to be the subsequent forms of Soviet national statehood that emerged during the October Revolution, in the course of national state development. It is pertinent to note that this conception has played an important role in the formation of the theory of Soviet federation and its implementation. The relationship between the concept of autonomy and the Soviet federation can be traced along the following broad lines:

(1) the subsequent emergence of a federation based on autonomy; and

(2) the emergence of such a form of Soviet national
statehood rooted in Lenin's conception of broad regional autonomy as Union Republic - members of an "integral federal, multinational state" - the USSR.

A resolution on federal institutions of the Russian republic was legally adopted by the 3rd All Russian Congress of Soviets in January 1918.¹⁸ The declaration stated that the Russian Republic, as a federation of autonomous regions, was conceived a state that territorially coincided with Russia. This comprised the Ukraine, Bylorussia, Transcaucasia, etc., and not as the RSFSR proper, in its subsequent shape. Finally, it declared that the "method of participation by Soviet Republics and individual regions in the federal government, regions distinguished by a particular way of life and national composition, as well as demarcation of the spheres of activity of federal and regional institutions of the Russian republic is to be determined immediately upon the formation of regional Soviet republics by the All Russian Central Executive

Committee and the Central Executive Committees of the Republics. 19

This policy, laid down by the Congress of Soviets, was further clarified and given more concrete shape in an "Address from the People's Commissariat on the Affairs of the Nationalities to the Soviets of Kazan, Ufa, Orenburg, Yekaterinburg, the Council of People's Commissars of Turkestan region and others".

The address stated the necessity for collecting data of various kinds essential to determine the character and pattern of the autonomous status of these areas; Commission should be created to prepare the convocation of constituent congresses of Soviets in them and this should be carried out as soon as possible in order that a further All Russia Congress of Soviets could draw up a constitution for the Russian Soviet Federation, giving a final, official shape to the federation as a whole. 20 Thus the autonomous formations, as concrete forms of national self-determination, are the cornerstone of the Soviet federation.


The Formation of the Turkestan

Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic

The formation of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was the first step towards the founding of national states. In 1917, creation of national republic for the Central Asian people was out of question as they were divided between three state units, viz., Turkestan, Bukhara and Khiva. The administrative, territorial division of each of the above territories did not coincide with the national ethnic boundaries. Under such condition, the self-determination of the Central Asian People could not have been national either in form or content. Nevertheless, self-determination in Central Asia was definitely anti-colonial and also anti-feudal and anti-capitalist in character. It was rooted in the desire of the people to cast off the social and national yoke of Russian colonialism and imperialism and the social yoke of the local feudal lords, money-lenders, bourgeois, compradores who were not homogenous in their national ethnic composition. 21

Administrative re-arrangement

was necessary in order to pave the way for their national unity. At that time, it could not be given top priority as their basic task was not the self-determination by one or the other nationality, but defence of a given territory on which the Soviet Power existed from internal as well as external enemies. While the slogan 'autonomy for Turkestan' steadily gained popularity among the indigenous population the revolutionary situation in Turkestan deepened. In September 1917, in response to the call of the Central Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party (RSDRP) to effect the transfer of 'all power to Soviets', the Bolshevik faction of the Tashkent Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies made an attempt to capture power in Turkestan. Though this move was frustrated by the provisional government, the defection of a large number of soldiers of the Tashkent garrison to the Soviet side finally brought about the collapse of the authority of the provisional Government in Turkestan towards the end of October 1917. Following this event the system of dual authority which had existed in Turkestan region even since February 1917 came to an end. 22

Soon afterwards, with the outbreak of the civil war in Russian, Central Asia was completely cut off from the Central Regions of Russia.

Under this complicated situation of intense class struggle, the Third Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies was convened in Tashkent between 15-22 November, proclaiming the formation of a Soviet government in Turkestan. Commenting on the composition of the Congress, Mustafa Chokaev stated that 'one of the strongest peculiarities of this congress was the fact that no representatives of the native population of the Turkestan took part in its deliberations. The soldiers sent there from the interior provinces of Russia; the peasants settled therein by the old (Tsarist regime) on the lands confiscated from our people, and the workers accustomed to regard us haughtily from above, these were the people who were to decide at this moment the fate of Turkestan.' The Resolution of the Congress of the Soviets contained

among others the following statement:

"The inclusion of the Mussalmans in the organs of the higher Regional Revolutionary Power appears at the present moment unacceptable". 24

The Congress of Soviets thus having ignored the claims of the indigenous people, elected the Sovnarkom (Council of People's Commissars) composed of exclusively Europeans. Though they were only four Bolsheviks in the Sovnarkom as against eight left socialist revolutionaries and two right socialist revolutionaries, the Bolshevik leader F. Kolesov, was elected its Chairman. 25 In the initial stages of the Soviet rule in Turkestan, it was difficult to distinguish the attitude of the Bolsheviks from that of the other Russian Political Parties to the question of the participation of the indigenous people in the Tashkent Soviet. In other words, the Bolshevik attitude to this question was wholly negative. 26 This, rather

24. Ibid.


hostile attitude of the local Bolshevik faction towards the indigenous people largely emanated from its peculiar composition. In Central Asia, there did not exist an independent Bolshevik Party; only towards June 1918 an independent Communist Party of Turkestan was formed. Soviet writers usually assert that ever since 1905, a separate, independent and well integrated Bolshevik faction existed in Turkestan and played an important role in the revolutionary movement in the region. However, facts do not fully endorse this view. The Bolshevik, George Safarov, who was sent by the Central Committee of the Communist Party to Turkestan and who remained there for two years (1919-21) as a member of an extraordinary commission for the guidance of the Soviet policy, wrote a book entitled "The Colonial Revolution: The Experiment of Turkestan". In this book he stated that "It was not the Bolshevik Party that created in Turkestan the Bolshevik Power; it was the Bolshevik power that created there the Bolshevik Party and the Party of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries. The inevitable consequence of this was that the Bolshevik and the Left Socialist Revolutionary Parties became from the very first day of the

---

revolution a veritable harbour of a considerable number of adventures, careerists and even of simple criminal elements". Safarov continues "the appurtenance to the industrial proletariat of the Tsarist colony was a national privilege of the Russians. The proletarian dictatorship here, therefore, put on from the very first day, the typically colonizing cloak". Later with the clarity and thoroughness, the Fifth Regional Congress of the Communist Party of Turkestan set to diagnose the ills which had plagued the Bolsheviks during this time. The Congress pointed out: unfamilially with experience of class war in the international context, absence of revolutionary traditions in the past, the chronic situation of colonial oppression and national inequality conditioned the peculiar course which the revolution in Central Asia took. Having taken a leading position in the revolution for the first time the small group of the Russian Workers... being torn away from the Proletarian Centre and deprived of its ideological guidance, let the events to take their own course....


The growing power of the Bolsheviks at the centre, the Socialist Revolutionaries forced the Tashkent Soviet to follow an independent course. This resulted either in completely ignoring the directives of the centre or perverting its policies. The Tashkent Soviet became so much independent of the centre that the Socialist Revolutionary leader, Cherneskii was able to boast: 'we already have autonomy since we do not communicate with Petersburg on the work of administration of Turkestan, we administer it ourselves.' Against such a background it was not surprising that the regional Soviets openly took up the position of the defenders of the privileges of the Russian workers and the Russian peasants against the pretensions of the local population.

The refusal of the Soviets to allow the natives to participate in the Tashkent Soviet led the Ulema and the Shuro-i-islamie to convene the Fourth Extra-ordinary Muslim Congress in Kokand towards the beginning

30. Svobodni Turkestan, 24 January, 1918, as cited in Safarov, n. 23, p. 76.

of December 1917 and to proclaim the formation of the Autonomous Government of Turkestan.\footnote{Vaidyanath, no. 3, p. 80.}

During the negotiations proceeding the congress two tendencies were observed. Some favoured the entry of Turkestan in the so called South Eastern Union of Russia headed by anti-communist leader Dutov. Others stood for the proclamation of a provisional autonomous government of Turkestan.\footnote{R. Pipes, The Formation of the Soviet Union, Communism, Nationalism - 1917-23 (Cambridge, 1970), p. 93.}

The attempt to create an impression that the Congress represented all the regions and national groups, however, did not materialize, while the Kazakh and Kirghiz-inhabited region of Semirechie went altogether unrepresented in the Congress, only a solitary delegate represented the Turkmen region of Transcaspia. The Uzbek region were represented better with 150 delegates from Fergana, 23 from Samarkand and 22 from SyrDaria.\footnote{Vaidyanath, no. 3, p. 80.}
Soviet writers assert that nearly 43 per cent of the delegates who attended this Congress were Tatars.35 Despite this great imbalances in its representation, it claimed that it represented the will of the people of Turkestan. The resolution of the Congress stated: "The 4th Extraordinary Regional Congress expressing the will of the peoples of Turkestan to self-determination in accordance with the principles proclaimed by the great Russian Revolution, proclaims Turkestan territorially autonomous in union with the Federal Democratic Republic of Russia. The elaboration of the form of autonomy is entrusted to the Constituent Assembly of Turkestan, which must be convened as soon as possible. The Congress solemnly declares that the rights of the national minorities settled in Turkestan will be fully safeguarded".36

It elected a people's council of 54 members to perform the function of provisional parliament and

35. Manzhara, no. 20, pp. 82-3.
also an Executive Committee to serve as provisional government. Chairmanship of the council was entrusted to the head of the Ulema, Lepin; whereas the executive committee chairmanship went to leaders of the Central Council, Mohammedzhan Tanyshbaev and after his resignation to the Chokayev.\(^{37}\) Almost simultaneously a vast demonstration of Muslims was held in Tashkent in favour of autonomy.\(^{38}\)

With the establishment of the Turkestan Autonomous Government two rival governments came into existence. The Kokand Government was weaker, having in its possession neither funds nor arms. Hence it decided to seek the assistance of the Central Bolshevik Government to remove from the Turkestan region the local Bolshevik regime. By a subtle diplomatic move the Kokand Government in January 1918, called a 'Turkestan Congress of Workers and peasants' and pointed out the Central Soviet Government the necessity of the dissolution of the Soviet Government

\(^{37}\) Pipes, n. 33, p. 93.

formed in Tashkent, which 'leaned' on the foreign elements hostile to the native population of the country, contrary to the principle proclaimed by the October Revolution of the self-determination of peoples'. 39

The Central Government was fully aware that the Tashkent Soviet was far from being the genuine workers' and peasants' Government it claims to be. But because of its own pre-occupation in the European part of Russia and also in view of the blockade imposed on Central Asia by Dutov and other 'white generals; the Central Government was unable to take any concrete measures. These considerations weighed heavily on the centre while replying to the appeal of the Kokand Government. 40 The People's Commissars for Nationality Affairs, Stalin, on behalf of Central Government replied in the following terms:

"The Soviets are autonomous in their internal

40. Vaidyanath, n. 3, p. 82.
affairs and discharge their duties by leaning upon their own actual forces. The native proletarians of Turkestan, therefore, should not appeal to the Central Soviet Power with the request to dissolve the Turkestan Sovnarkom (Soviet People's Commissars) which in their opinion is leaning upon the non-Muslim army elements, but should themselves dissolve it by force, if such a force is available to the native proletarians and peasants.  

41

After this answer of Stalin, the Fourth Regional Congress of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies assembled in Tashkent at the end of January 1918, to extinguish the autonomous Government of Turkestan.  

42

Military action began on February 19, 1918 and continued up to February 22, 1918.  

43 In the process of disbanding of the Kokand Autonomous Government, the Soviets indulged in "great deal of violence and pillage."  

---

41. Chokayev, n. 23, p. 408.


44. G. Skalov, 'Sotsial'naia priroda Basmachestva V. Turkestana; Zhizn' Natsional Hostei (Moscow, 1923), 3-4, pp. 56; cited in Vaidyanath, n. 3, p. 83.
the dissolution of the Kokand Government did not put an end to the opposition of the natives to the Soviet regime in Turkestan but strengthened their will to resist. The fall of the Kokand autonomy manifested in the "Basmachi rising" in different regions of Central Asia. The Fourth Extra Ordinary Congress of Soviets which met in January 1918 could not resolve the question of autonomy on a satisfactory basis.

The resolution adopted in this Congress, in fact reduced the autonomy into a farce and closed the door for any compromise on the question of the participation of the indigenous in the administration. The narrow and distorted interpretation, the Congress gave to the Bolshevik doctrine of national self-determination, as a right exclusively of the toiling strata, in effect was nothing but an apology for the continued dominance of a small group of Russian workers in a region which had a predominantly agricultural population. Tabolin, a Prominent Bolshevik, even declared 'one should not talk of introducing autonomy immediately, since autonomy entails the

withdrawal of the Russian Soldiers from the region.46

On the invitation of the Central Government, the question of autonomy once again momentum. In April 1918, the Council of People’s Commissars of Turkestan, Stalin pointed to the necessity of organising an autonomous government in Turkestan and disapproved the negative attitude which the local Bolshevik had taken on the question of autonomy. He declared "The immediate task of the Soviet Power is to recognise autonomy, not to reject it. Only, this autonomy must be built on the basis of Soviets in the localities and in this way alone can power become the power of people and be endeared to the masses, i.e., it is necessary only that autonomy should secure power not to the upper crust of a nation but to the masses. That is the crux of the matter and in view of this the Soviet Government intends to declare autonomy... for the Turkestan region."47


It deputed P.A. Kobozev, the extraordinary commissar of the Soviet Government and representative of the Central Committee of the RCP(B) to supervise the implementation of all its directives and decrees and to organise the autonomy of the region. In April 1918, the Fifth Territorial Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants', Soldiers' and Muslim Dehkans' Deputies of Turkestan was convened to discuss the question of autonomy. On April 1922, the Congress received a telegram from Lenin and Stalin in which it was assured that the Sovnarkom will support the autonomy of the region on a Soviet basis.48 On April 30, 1918 the Fifth Congress confirmed the 'statute on Turkestan Soviet Republic of Russian'. Points 1 and 2 of this Statute established the State structure of the Republic, its territorial limits and mutual juridical relations with the RSFSR. The Turkestan Soviet federative Republic was declared to be autonomous and self-administering. But it recognised the

central authority and co-ordinated its activities with it. A commission appointed by the Congress was sent to Moscow to define the mutual relations with the centre. 49

In conformity with the provisions of this statute, the Fifth Regional Congress of Soviets elected the first Central Executive Committee of Turkestan (TSIK) which consisted of 36 members with Kobozev as its Chairman. Ten of these members were indigenous people. 50 Sixteen members of Sovnarkom (The Council of People's Commissars) with all its earlier legislative powers duly sworn was placed in charge of the executive functions of the republic. It consisted of the Commissariats of Justice, Food, Health, Nationality Affairs, Military Affairs, Internal Affairs, Labour finance, Education, Foreign Affairs, Industries, Communication, Posts and Telegraph and the administrative matters of the Sovnarkom the Commissariats of Justice, Internal Affairs, Nationality Affairs and Health were headed by natives. 51

49. Kaushik, n. 43, p. 146.
50. Safarov, n. 23, p. 85.
In 1918 another significant even took place. In June, the first Congress of Bolshevik organisation of Turkestan was held. The resolution adopted by this Congress pointed out the necessity for a broad participation of local working people in the administration of the State, strengthening party agitation, formation of commissariats for nationality affairs in all oblasts, Uyezds and local Soviets, Publication of Congress material in native languages, etc. 52

A five member Extraordinary Turkestan delegation proceeded to Moscow in June 1918 to negotiate the question of mutual relations. The delegation laid claim for a separate Turkestan citizenship, the right of the Turkestan Central Executive Committee to nullify altogether or amend the Centre's decrees, the right of the Turkestan republic to establish relations with neighbouring countries, independently of the centre, etc. In view of the extraordinary nature of the demands put forward by the Turkestan delegation, the talks ended in failure. Sometime later the Sixth Extraordinary

52. Kaushik, n. 43, pp. 146-7.
Congress of Soviets of Turkestan meeting in October 1918 approved the first constitution of the Turkestan Republic. This constitution left defence, foreign affairs, post and telegraph, and navy to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Central government. But this constitution made it obligatory for the centre to carry on the Administration in these spheres not through its own commissariats but through the appropriate commissariats functioning within the Turkestan council of people's commissars. In view of this Central Government refused to approve this constitution. The dispute between the Centre and the Turkestan Republic on the question of the competence of their commissariats was not resolved until April 1921.53

In September 1920, under the guidance of the Turkestan Commission, a new constitution was adopted which stipulated that the control of foreign affairs and defence should be the exclusive responsibility of the Federal Government.54 Further it extended the scope of the decrees and directives of the Central Government


over the administration of Post, telegraf and communi-
cation.\textsuperscript{55}

On April 11, 1922, the Russian Central Executive
Committee gave/constitution of the Turkestan ASSR. A
decree issued by it state that 'th Turkestan Soviet
Socialist Republic composed of the oblasts; Syr Darja,
Semirechie, Fergana, Samarkand, Transcaspia and the
Amu Darja division is declared an autonomous part of
the RSFSR and is given the name The Turkestan Soviet
Socialist Republic.\textsuperscript{56}

The Decree stated that the Government of the
Turkestan Republic should be organised on the basis
of the constitution of the RSFSR. I envisaged no change
in Chapter VI of the Constitution of the Turkestan
Republic which dealt with the question of interrelations
between the RSFSR and the Turkestan Republic.\textsuperscript{57} Thus
the long standing conflict between Turkestan and the

\textsuperscript{55} Syezdy Sovetov V Documentakh, pp. 279,450; cited in
Kaushik, n.43., p. 149.

\textsuperscript{56} Istoriia Sovetskaia Konstitutsii (V documentakh)
1917-57 (Moscow, 1957), pp. 282-3; cited in
Vaidyanath, n. 3, p. 115.

\textsuperscript{57} I Storicheskii Protsess Rezvitiia Sovetskogo Federalizi-
ma, Sovetskoe Pravo (Moscow, 1924), vol. 5, no. 11,
RSFSR on the competence of their governmental organs within the frontiers of the Turkestan republic marked the end of a phase. In setting up a new constitution 9th Congress of Soviets of Turkestan derived a series of practical measures to ensure the implementation of the autonomy. A large number of natives were drawn into the orbit of governmental activities and placed in positions of responsibility. Besides, not only were the rights of the Russians and the native populations equalised in the sphere of distribution of food and of other essential articles, but the indigenous were even allowed to engaged in small-scale trading and to have their own traditional schools and law courts. Even the waqf lands were restored to the clergy.58

Establishment of Soviet Republics in Khiva and Bukhara

In Khiva and Bukhara the situation differed markedly from that in the Steppe Region and Turkestan. These two native states where the anarchonistic regimes

58. G. Skalov, 'Sotsial'niia Privoda Basmachestva v Turkestane', Zhizn 'natsional' nostei (Moscow, 1923), pp. 3-4; Ibid., pp. 116-7.
of the Khan and the Emir still survived, remained untouched by the revolutionary upheavals of the neighbouring Turkestan region. The Uzbek rulers of these two states had adopted a policy of most intras­
gent religious fanaticism and a dogged opposition to all modernising trends. As a result, the medieval science and philosophy for which the two states were so justly famous had been replaced by a barren schol­
asticism which only succeeded in sterilizing all creative thinking and stultifying the growth of culture. In both Khanates there were internal problems. In Khiva there was the age-long rivalry between the town dwelling Uzbeks and the nomad Turkmen; while in Bukhara the reactionary Government of the Emir was opposed by the young Bukharans and Jadids.

Towards the beginning of 1918 when the Russian armed forces were recalled from Khiva the eruption of national feuds on a major scale became imminent. The Turkmen united under Dzhunaid Khan, almost immediately marched on Khiva, killed its ruler and began


systematically pillaging the Uzbek towns and villages. Dzhunaid Khan set up a puppet regime headed by the uncle of the deceased ruler and became the virtual dictator of the Khivan Khanate. 61 Among the Uzbeks there was the party of young Khivans which constituted the sole force capable of rallying the Uzbek population of Khiva against the Turkmens. 62 After an agreement between the young Khivan Party and the dissident Turkmen leaders, an appeal was made to Tashkent for Soviet aid. In January 1920 Red Army force of some 800 crossed the Amu-Dar'ya into Khiva and quickly drove Dzhunaid Khan and his forces into the Karakum Desert, 63 and in the same month he was defeated. In 1920, the provisional government prepared for convening the First All Khorzmian Kuraltai (Congress), the nucleus of a Communist Party was established in Khiva under the protective guidance of the representatives of the RSFSR. Immediately after the establishment of the provisional government in Khiva the Government of RSFSR nominated G.B. Skalov as its representative in Khiva.

63. Ibid.
Some time later, a new extraordinary commission composed of the representatives of the Tashkent group of "young Khivans" and a number of Bukharan Communists was created under the Chairmanship of G.I. Broido. The Commission was charged with the task of establishing the Communist Party of Khorezm and a revolutionary government in Khiva. Alimdizhan Akchurin, a Tatar, played an important role in the establishment of the communist party in Khorezm and in May 1920, he was elected the head of its Central Committee. The Turkestan Commission took particular care to point out to its representatives in Khiva of the need to avoid the mistakes which were committed by the earlier Bolsheviks in Turkestan. On 17 May, 1920 it wrote to them that 'in all our work in Khiva it is necessary to take the greatest amount of care and to see that it does not take the form of attempts to impose European culture by force... All aspects of local life, customs, ethnic peculiarities, and even the religious beliefs of the people must be borne in mind.'

---

The first all Khorezm Kurultai of Soviets on 30 April, 1920 proclaimed the establishment of the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic and adopted its constitution, which transferred all power in the Centre as well as in local places to the Soviets of working people. The constitution guaranteed to the people of Khiva the freedom of speech, press and assembly etc. The property of Khan and his high officials seized at the time of the revolution was declared to be public property. All person of 18 years and over in age were given right to vote with the exception of counter revolutionary Khans and their high officials. The constitution also proclaimed equality of rights for all nationalities. The first government formed in Khiva after the revolution under the leadership of Yusupov was composed of former "young Khivan" elements.

On September 13, 1920 representations of the Khorezm Republic and the Russian Federation concluded

65. USSR: Sixty years of the Union, 1922-85; A Collection of Legislative Acts and other Documents (Moscow, 1982), p. 95.

a union treaty in Moscow. By this treaty the RSFSR recognised the full independence and Sovereignty of the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic (Article 1) and abrogated all previous treaties and agreements concluded between the former governments of Tsarist Russia and the Khanate of Khiva (Article 2). The RSFSR transferred the title of all movable and immovable properties which were situated on its territory and also renounced all claims to concessions which were formerly granted by the Khan of Khiva to Russian citizens, industrial or commercial enterprises (Article 3). Both the parties to this treaty agreed not to allow their territories to be made use of by any other governments, organisations, groups or persons having hostile motives or seeking to carry out either direct or indirect warfare against either one of them or against any other Soviet Republic (Article 16). The treaty also envisaged the establishment of a common plan of action, centralised leadership and ready the forces which will safeguard the independence and freedom of the republics and also the two contracting parties will conclude a military political pact (Article 17). The RSFSR offered to assist the Khorezm Republic by sending teachers, instructors, teaching aid and books, organising the printing industry
etc. (Article 18). By virtue of the same consideration, the RSFSR granted the Khorezm Republic an extraordinary subsidy of 5,00,000,000 rubles (Article 19). The Khorezm Republic agreed not to grant any mining, transport land or industrial concessions to any other states except to the Soviet republics (Article 20). 67

The revolutionary upheaval which took place in Khiva had its repercussions even in remote Bukhara. There the resistance to the despotic rule of Amir came mainly from the 'Party of young Bukharans' which consisted of young Bukharan or Djadid and Bolshevik elements. 68

This party was a political offshoot of the former Djadist movement of Bukhara which was merely a "Muslim Reformist Movement". 69 By 1917, it had transformed itself into a political party and started agitating for

67. Sobraniye Uzakoneniy RSFSR, 1921, no. 20, item 161; cited in USSR: Sixty years of the Union, n. 65, pp. 115-20

68. This party was a party of the Petty bourgeoisie and urban middle class intellectuals. Faizuallh Khodzhaev, native communist was recruited from the trading class and some of the young elements of trading community were brought to Tashkent to be trained as propagandist and agitators. M.N. Roy, Memoirs (Delhi, 1964), p. 448.

the establishment of a responsible government in Bukhara.

Lenin spoke at this, at the 8th Congress of the RCP held in March 1919 and stressed the need for caution in carrying out revolutionary changes in backward regions. 70

This party lacked organisational unity. One of these two factions one was nationalist in its outlook and opposed to the idea of class war, while the other was essentially left wing and adhered to the principles of the revolution. 71 The aggravation of the class differences and contradiction tended to increase with the deepening of political crisis in Bikhara.

On December 6, 1917 a delegation of 'Young Bukharans' came to Tashkent to solicit Soviet aid against the Emir's regime in Bukhara. On February 28, 1918 Kolesov, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of Turkestan, proceeded to Bukhara as the head of some 500-600 Red Guards and Kolesov began his military action on March 2, 1918. He had under his


71. Wheeler, n. 38, p. 112.
command a total of 2,000 persons but the first attempt to overthrow the Emir's role ended in failure. 72 The Emir who in April 1917 had issued a manifesto promising limited reforms now treated the 'young Bukharans' to a 'reign of terror'. He declared a holy war on the Russians and concluded agreements with Persia and Afghanistan for the supply of arms and made contacts with other counter revolutionary organisation including the Basmachis and also with the British forces in Russia. 73

During this period another rift developed among the young Bukharian 'emigre's in Turkestan. They split into the 'Young Bukharian Revolutionaries' and 'Young Bukharian Communists'. 74 The Turkestan Commission sought to reconcile the two factions with a view to speed up the revolution in Bukhara. But Bukharian Communist Party accused the Bukharian Revolutionaries as a bourgeois nationalist, anti Soviet and Pan Islamist in orientation. The Turkestan Commission wanted to utilize

72. Kaushik, n. 43, p. 113.
73. Wheeler, n. 38, p. 112.
the party of young Bukharan Revolutionaries only for
the sake of fighting the struggle. In the meeting of
the Turk Commission held on June 30, 1920, the Commission
decided to prepare for the overthrow of the Emir's
tyrrany. It called for breaking all relations with
young Bukharans' and directed the Council for Inter-
national Propaganda to support only the Communist
Party of Bukhara. The Commission called "Young Bukha-
rans" the Party of the February Revolution and the
Communist of Bukharan, the Party of the October Revo-
lution.75 Towards August 1920, the young Bukharan
Revolutionaries began to veer more and more towards
communism although they still oppose the immediate
merger of their group with the Bukharan Communist Party.
The Turkestan Bureau of the Young Bukharan Revolutio-
naries propose a merger of the two factions soon after
a successful revolution in Bukhara.76 But the communist
did not accept the inclusion of its members within the
young Bukharan Communist Party. To resolve this dead-

75. Istoriya Uzbekstoi SSR, vol. 11, p. 170; cited in
Kaushik, n. 43, p. 160.

76. The Turkestan Bureau of the Young Revolutionaries was
aware that though the leaders of the Party were
increasingly leaning towards Communism, its rank
and file as well as bulk of the sympathisers were
opposed to communism. In order to alienate those
people from the Party, the Turkestan Bureau of
the Young Bukharan Revolutionaries opposed the imme-
diate merger in the Communist Party of Bukhara.
Faizullah Khodzhaev K. Istori Revoiliutsii v. Bukha-
lock between the two factions of the Young Bukharan, the Turkestan Bureau of the Russian Communist Party suggested that both of them should collaborate about the speediest downfall of the Amir's regime in Bukhara on the basis of a working formula. Though this formula suggested by the Turkestan Bureau was more on the lines of the proposal earlier put forward by the young Bukharan Revolutionaries, The Bukharan Communists were forced to accept it.\textsuperscript{77} In the meantime, the mounting discontent of the masses with the feudal oppression and increasing intrigues of the British led to an armed uprising in Bukhara. The Fourth Congress of the Bukharan Communist Party was held in Chardjui between August 16 and 19, 1920. It decided upon armed revolutionary action against the Emir's power.\textsuperscript{78} The Communist Party of Bukhara began the revolution in Bukhara on August 28, 1920 by capturing Chardjui.\textsuperscript{79} Following this, the young Bukharan Revolutionaries sent a formal appeal to the RSFSR and Red Army for help.\textsuperscript{80} On August 28, 1920, M.V. Frunze, then Soviet Commander on the Turkestan Front, wired Tashkent:

\textsuperscript{77} Ibid., pp. 125-6.
\textsuperscript{78} Kaushik, n. 43, p. 160.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{80} Khodzhaev, n. 76, pp. 75-6.
"A revolutionary uprising occurred in a number of localities in Bukhara. The hour of a decisive struggle by the suppressed and enslaved masses of Bukhara against the bloody government of the Emir and the bekhs has struck. The regiments of the Bukhara Red Army which are being organised have marched on to help their own people. The Red Regiments of workers and peasants' Russia are duty bound to stand by them. I, therefore, order our troops to give their powerful armed assistance to the Bukharan People in this decisive hour. 81 This time Soviet aid to Bukhara had a decisive effect. On September 2, Frunze wired Lenin that Bukhara had been captured by the joint efforts of Bukharan and the Soviet Russia units, and that the Emir and retinue had fled. 82 On September 11, 1920 the party of 'young Bukharan Revolutionaries' dissolved itself and its members joined the 'Bukharan Communist Party' en masse. As a result, the membership of the latter rose to 14,000. 83 Following


82. "M.V. Frunze na Turkestankom Fronte", Krasnyi Arkhiv, No. 93(100), 1940, p. 77, ibid., p. 37.

the success of the Revolution in Bukhara the first All Bukharan Kurultai of People's representatives proclaimed the establishment of People's Soviet Republic on October 8, 1920. Its functions were delegated to the Revolutionary committee. The Council of People's Nazirs was nominated as the highest executive organ of the Republic on March 4, 1921 this republic signed a 'Treaty of Union' with the RSFSR with the same line as it was earlier concluded between Khorezm and the RSFSR.

During the same period, 1920-23 significant steps were taken to draw the people's republic into the political and economic orbit of Turkestan and the RSFSR. In February 1922, the Bukharan and Khorezmian Communist Parties were merged into the Russian Communist Party.

85. Vaidyanath, n. 3, p. 129.
86. Sobraniye Uzak'oney RSFSR, 1921, no. 73, Art. 596; cited in USSR: Sixty years of the Union, no. 65, pp. 131-9.
State and Social Structure:

At that time the state and social structure of these republics was characterised by 'bourgeois democratic' character. As there were many features which distinguished them from socialist principles which were enshrined in the constitutions of the RSFSR and other Soviet Republics, there was no mention of the Rights of the Toiling and oppressed People's or to the dictatorship of the Proletariat which were contained in all Soviet constitutions of the time and they conferred rights on all the peoples inhabiting their territories irrespective of their class affiliations.\(^{88}\) The most striking departure from Soviet constitutional practice was made by declaring in Article 26 of its constitution that, no published laws of the Republics may contradict the foundations of Islam.\(^{89}\) These regimes recognised private property and private capitalists.\(^{90}\)

---

88. Article 6 of the Constitution of Bukhara.

89. Dervish, n. 74, pp. 197-8.

The relation between the RSFSR and the two Central Asian People's Republics between 1920-24 also revealed certain other interesting features. Though the "full independence" of Khorezm and Bukhara was recognised by the RSFSR in the initial treaties signed with them but its later practice tended to compromise the sovereignty of Bukhara and Khorezm. The Military, Political agreements concluded by the RSFSR enabled the former to secure control over the armed forces and the military organisation. The right of independent action of the two republics in the economic field was also curtailed by two other agreements, concluded between the RSFSR and Bukhara on 4th March, 1921 and between the RSFSR and Khorezm on September 13, 1920. These agreements sought to govern the economic and financial policies among their signatories which placed Bukhara and Khorezm under the obligation granting trade concessions to any other foreign states and to establish trade with the RSFSR on commodity - exchange basis.  

The RSFSR formed a single custom union with Bukhara and Khorezm by securing the abolition of all internal customs barriers among the three republics. On May 20, 1921 the RSFSR concluded with Khorezm an agreement on the administration of post, telegraph, telephone and radio, and on September 21 it concluded another agreement on the administration of the ships of the Amu Darya Flotill with Bukhara and Khorezm. The later agreement was replaced on April 30, 1923 by a fresh treaty which placed the management of the Amu Daria Flotilla in the hands of the commissariat of Naval Communications of the RSFSR.92

In March 1923, the economies of Turkestan, Bukhara and Khorezm were unified and Central Asian Economic Council was formed which had authority over all three areas. Its members included representatives of Turkestan, Bukhara, Khorezm and RSFSR.93 This council unified their economic planning, postal and telegraph system and foreign trade activities and place

92. Ibid., p. 21.

their transportation system under the RSFSR Commissariat for communications. Though the formation of Central Asian Economic Council facilitated the speedier economic construction of Central but it was tended to a considerable extent, to restrict the action of the Central Asian republics in the economic sphere. This move was severely criticized by former "Young Bukharans" and "Young Khivans" leaders who headed the Government in Khiva and Bukhara. They argued Bukhara constituted a distinct economic unit by itself and as such there was no need to tag it on to the other two Central Asian Republics. But this objection was overruled. The reluctance of the communists of Bukhara is follow the policies framed by Central Asian Bureau led to their expulsion from the Communist Parties of their states on the plea that merchants and traders trying to hinder the Sovietisation of these republics. Central Asian Bureau started an extensive Purge campaign. In Bukhara


it started in 1922. The Bukharan Party had already reduced its membership from Sixteen thousand to "Not more than thousand". In Khorezm it was alleged that nearly 50 per cent of the members of the Communist Party hailed from among traders and speculators. The purges were started in 1923 and when completed only few hundred of the several thousand members of the Communist Party remained within its ranks.

At the same time, the policies of the Governments of Bukhara and Khorezm also came in for severe criticism at the hands of the People's Commissar for Nationality Affairs, Stalin. In the Fourth Congress of the Central Committee of the RCP(B) with the responsible workers of the National Republics held on June 1923, criticised the composition of the Council of Nazirs of BPSR and the manner in which the funds of the State Bank of Bukhara was allocated. Stalin alleged that 75 per cent of the credits given by the State Bank of Bukhara had gone to private traders and only 2 per cent had come to the share

of the peasants' cooperatives. He announced that two independent Soviet Republics, Khorezm and Bukhara, being people's Soviet, but not Socialist Republics remain for the present outside the framework of this union solely and exclusively because they are not yet socialist.

The refusal to admit Bukharan and Khorezm into the USSR and Stalin's criticism of the policies of their Government led to the introduction of large scale reforms in these republics. The extraordinary session of the Central Executive Committee of the BPSR was summoned on August 14, 1923. It took the decision to change several articles of the constitution, the Bukharan constitution was amended so as to disfrenchise all former officials of the Emir's government and members of the upper bourgeoisie and to extend broader political rights to the urban proletariat and poor peasantry. In 1923, the Fourth Kurultai of Soviets elected a new TSIK. The BCP underwent a final purge at the same time the workers

99. Ibid., p. 73.

100. Wheeler, n. 38, p. 120.
and peasant members were actively recruited.\textsuperscript{101}

In October 1923, the Fourth All Khorezm Kurultai assembled. It adopted a new constitution and proclaimed the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic into Khorezm SSR. The constitution declared that Khorezm is a Republic of Soviets of workers, Red Army and Peasants, Republics. All power centrally and locally, belong to these Soviets.\textsuperscript{102} Bukhara was proclaimed a Socialist Republic considerably later, although the orientation of its policies in that direction started towards the end of the 1923 itself. On September 19, 1924, the Fifth All Bukhara Kurultai proclaimed the formation of the Soviet Socialist Republic in Bukhara. This Kurultai also spoke about the establishment of 'dictatorship of the proletariat of the working and exploited masses of workers and poorest peasantry in Bukhara.\textsuperscript{103} By 1924, all the

\textsuperscript{101} Becker, n. 94, p. 308.


internal and external dangers which threatened the stability of the Soviet regimes in Turkestan, Bukhara and Khorezm had been removed and the adoption of Socialist policies by these republics was fully ensured. In process of achieving this goal, both the Government of the RSFSR and the Russian Communist Party had established multiple links with the Central Asian Republics. Though centralisation had become dominant trend in all policies followed by the Central Asian Republics, care was taken, however, to ensure that those policies in the region were implemented by the indigenous themselves. The first of the struggle of the Party for implementation of its Leninist nationality policy was over. The situation was now ripe for carrying out national delimitation of Soviet Central Asia which created the requisite preconditions for development of national statehood of the major Soviet Central Asian nationalities.