

Also, university students and their faculty are regularly mobilized for participation in official events, such as presidential elections, referenda, national celebrations, officially organized public meetings, rallies, and conferences. For example, in January 2003 on the eve of the referendum on constitutional amendments, the Ministry of Education delayed the beginning of winter break at the related universities so as to keep students on campuses to be marshaled to the referendum. The Ministry also ordered the universities to set up "groups to clarify the referendum's goals and purposes, organize talks, discussions, roundtables, and other special events among students and faculty" (*Vechernii Bishkek* 2003).

Another characteristic of the policy process in higher education is its high degree of centralization restricted to interactions mainly among the four institutions: 1) Presidential Administration, 2) Ministry of Education, 3) Parliament, and 4) major universities. I maintain that a more open and pluralistic policy-making process (with institutionalized involvement of non-governmental groups) is necessary to make the policy decisions more rational and their implementation more effective. Such change, in its turn, requires further liberalization of the political and administrative system of Kyrgyzstan.

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## The Soviet Policy of Economic Nationalization in Uzbekistan and its Consequences, 1917-1940

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This report presents preliminary findings of dissertation research started in 2000 at the Institute of History of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences. The research is funded in part by a Central Asia Research Initiative (CARI) grant designed to support the research and teaching interests of young faculty. This study aims to provide a comprehensive examination, through critical analysis and objective evaluation, of the Soviet policy towards private property and its owners in Uzbekistan in the period 1917-1940. The study also investigates the policy's consequences, especially its effect on the democratic

rights of citizens. I pay particular attention to the relationship between authorities and private property ownership, and to the status of property owners in Turkestan (and from 1925, in Uzbekistan) in the first decades of Soviet rule.

Since independence Uzbekistan has been driven to reform its society. As part of the reform, economic liberalization has been designed to develop a class of private property owners by reducing the government's regulatory functions, providing more freedom to businesses, strengthening the private sector, and promoting small- and

medium-size enterprises. The entirely opposite economic policy of 1917-1940 attracted the interest not only of historians, but also economists and other social scientists (Nepomnin 1957, Ul'masov 1960, Aminova 1963, Alimov 1974, Golovanov 1992). From 1917 to 1940, the Communist Party's positions on "class enemies," elimination of private property in the means of production, and creation of communal property determined Soviet economic policy. The implementation of this policy was possible only through the forcible alienation of the means of production from private property owners, and the eradication of the prosperous strata of society.

Favorable conditions for objective historical analysis and reevaluation of history emerged only after Uzbekistan's independence in 1991. Many previously closed archives were opened and scholars received access to the works of foreign researchers. Since independence many studies contributing to the formulation of an accurate history of Uzbekistan have been published (e.g., Golovanov 1992; Aminova 1993, 1995, 2000; Shamsutdinov 2001). However, my research is the first comprehensive study of economic "nationalization" in 1917-1940.

The commonly accepted methods of historical inquiry form the basis of my research, which is shaped by the concept of national independence with its preference for humanistic values. The research pays significant attention to archival materials from the Central State Archives of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the State Archives of Tashkent, the State Archives of Tashkent Province, and the State Archives of Samarqand Province. Brochures, decrees, and orders issued by the ruling authorities, as well as responses of various social groups in the form of letters, complaints, and direct actions have exceptional value. During archival work I traced private property owners' civil rights records. I am interested in determining how well the property owners' economic and other civil rights were observed.

Along with archival documents, I also studied published materials, such as monographs and multi-volume histories. I compared formerly unavailable archival documents with published materials using critical-analytical, comparative-historical, and logical methods of inquiry. I use three guiding principles. First, I use the principle of historicism, examining documents within their historical context. Second, I use the objectivity principle, which directs historians to examine the facts apart from *a priori*

arguments or pre-established conceptions. I study both positive and negative sides of events independent of my personal attitude towards them. Third, I approach social history through the prism of individual and social interests, considering the motivations of each social group. I hold that such a multi-layered approach produces the best analysis by creating an accurate picture of events, examining consequences, and revealing the influences of policies on different strata of society and on individuals as well.

The most difficult task in carrying out this research is to deal with the discrepancies between the statistics reported in the archival documents and those in published materials. The discrepancies appeared due to pressure by the Soviet authorities to readjust statistics to fit predetermined schemes. In such cases, I assign priority to the archival documents, and proceed with their systematization and deep data analysis.

### *Research Findings*

This research reveals that economic reforms in Turkestan began with the nationalization of factories and workshops. Following the metropole's interests, nationalization covered primarily industries associated with cotton. On February 26, 1918 the Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom) of Turkestan issued a decree confiscating all cotton processing in the region, and pronouncing it the property of the workers-and-peasants' government. The decree also indicated that, "in case of resistance by owners, they should be subject to drastic measures right up to immediate execution by shooting." Following the cotton industry, the food oil industry was nationalized at the end of March 1918 through the same repressive method.

It should be noted that foreign entrepreneurs established a number of enterprises in Turkestan, such as the Belgian "Tashkent Tram" and the American "Singer Company." In December 1918, ignoring all the norms of international law, the Bolshevik government declared them nationalized. From 1917 to 1918, 330 enterprises of the leading industries in Turkestan were transferred into the hands of the Soviet authorities. By the end of 1919 more than 700 enterprises were nationalized.

During the nationalization process, Turkestani leaders did not take into account the interests of the peoples in the region, and did not consider the economic viability of their actions. After nationalization, the leadership failed to organize

properly the operations of nationalized enterprises. An overwhelming majority of the nationalized enterprises, especially the cotton-cleaning factories, remained idle as they lacked raw materials, fuel, funding, personnel, and customers. The employees of these enterprises left their jobs en masse. The property of nationalized enterprises was stolen and damaged. As of January 1, 1921, the Central Council of the National Economy (CCNE) of Turkestan controlled 861 enterprises, including 405 that were not operational.

Nationalization failed to produce any clearly positive economic results. Instead, it led to a decline in production in a number of industries. In 1920 the total production output in the Turkestan region was 80% lower than in 1914. The general economic crisis in the Soviet Union, the worsening political situation, and fear of losing power forced the Bolsheviks to adopt the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921. Some of the principal elements of NEP were replacement of the surplus-requisitioning system (*prodrazverstka*), i.e., forcible requisitioning of food products, by a tax in kind; legalization of commerce; private initiative in manufacturing, services and crafts; and partial restoration of market regulation mechanisms. In the countryside, following the transition to the tax in kind the government leadership tried to raise production through state-controlled land leasing, and by establishing production contracts with small farmers (*dehqons*). In some regions, these measures created stable conditions for farming. However, this "democratization" of the economy had a superficial and ambiguous character. Only the light- and small-scale processing industries grew, while benefit to small farms was artificially restrained. Furthermore, the political monopoly of the Bolshevik Party remained. The one-party dictatorship held the levers of the economy in one hand and free private business in the other hand, resulting in irreconcilable contradictions.

Despite positive results and economic stabilization, NEP was rejected because it threatened to break the monopoly and dictatorship of the one-party system. The Communist Party leadership viewed such an outcome as unacceptable. The breakdown of NEP at the end of the 1920s resulted in the full nationalization of agriculture and manufacturing. After NEP, Soviet economic policy called for rapid industrialization and forced collectivization. Its purpose was to eliminate the multi-structured economy, nationalize all forms of ownership, re-distribute property, and implement the

principles of total egalitarianism. A war was waged against private property owners ending with the victory of the government. Under the state's monopoly on property ownership, people were moved further away from property ownership, product management, public production planning, profit distribution, and other key functions.

Previous studies examined various stages of Soviet economic policy in Central Asia, including War Communism (1918-1920), the New Economic Policy (1920s), and collectivization and industrialization (1930s) in isolation. This research is the first of its kind as it conducts a comprehensive examination of Soviet economic policy in Uzbekistan in the period 1917-1940. My intention is to close gaps in the historiography of Central Asia by revealing the mistakes of nationalization and its effects on different social strata. The individual is the main subject of my study. It was the fate of individuals who were successful entrepreneurs and farmers to suffer at the hands of the government and its ideology. A retrospective analysis of this controversial period allows me to identify the mistakes and obstacles on the path of economic reform, and I hope this will help my country to avoid them in the future.

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