

## THE TRAGEDY OF FERGHANA AND ITS NEGATIVE ASPECTS

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### Abstract:

The article analyzes the tragedy of Ferghana that took place in the Ferghana region in the last years of Soviet power, the causes of these inter-ethnic problems with the help of primary sources, periodicals and scientific literature.

**Keywords:** Ferghana region, Ferghana tragedy, Meskhetian Turks, interethnic conflict, colonialism, food problem.

### Introduction

Ferghana Valley has the highest population density in the republic. For example, if we analyze the population growth index in Ferghana region alone, in 1979 the number of the population of the region was 1,149.4 people (66.3 percent) per thousand people, and in 1989 it was 1,451 people (67.4 percent) [1]. It can be seen that the population of the region grew faster than other regions. In Naita, the food they need for their daily needs is getting less and less land and housing. At the end of the 1980s, there were 292 people per square kilometer in Ferghana region [2]. This was the highest indicator not only in the republic, but also in the Union. This situation certainly created a number of difficulties in providing housing needs of the population.

### RESEARCH METHODS

A month before the bloody tragedy in Ferghana, that is, in 1988, more than 70,000 applications and complaints were received by the heads of local authorities. Most of these complaints were related to the issue of housing. For example, S. Alimbaeva, the mother of 5 children, who lived in the Komsomol stronghold of Ferghana, lived with her husband in a one-room house with a total of 7 people and only 17 square meters. After this issue was not resolved positively at the regional level, he turned to the republican government and only then managed to expand his home [3].

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Under the conditions of cotton monopoly in the valley, not only housing, but also all aspects of socio-economic life were in decline, and the problems were increasing rapidly, so that it became difficult to solve them. Especially as a result of the lack of planning of some leaders who thought about the future without any program, and the hasty adoption of many

decisions of various contents during the period of "reconstruction", in turn, it consisted only of determining a set of measures, and no attention was paid to the implementation of these decisions. This greatly aggravated the situation of the region, which was in a difficult socio-economic situation. Ferghana region is among them, where cotton was planted on 80-85% of the available areas. Excessive expansion of cotton fields has drastically reduced soil reclamation and natural fertility. As a result, 66 percent of the cultivated areas became very low-yielding [4].

Although the riots in Kuvasoy, which started the Ferghana tragedies, were caused by domestic violence between the youth of Uzbek and Meskhetian Turks, its essence was as follows: "I think that at that time, apparently under the instructions of the center, many publications, television and radio covered the tragic events on the surface, attached a label to these events with chauvinistic phrases, and limited them to describing "terrible scenes" [4] said the first leader of Uzbekistan. After all, "The sources and reasons of this tragedy were much deeper. Socio-economic problems have accumulated and have not been solved for years. For example, if we look at the condition of the villagers, they made up more than half of the population, and several generations lived on the same plot of land. Considering the fact that the people who lived on a generous land that could produce crops three times a year became increasingly impoverished, the national traditions and way of life were humiliated, and in some places were completely persecuted, and the cotton monopoly reached the level where the farmer who grows this cotton could not get the necessary amount of income, it is natural that it becomes clear under what conditions these tragic events took place"[6].

In the following years, disagreements between the youth of mosque Turks and the local population, efforts to exert influence on the region increased, and the security and law enforcement agencies, as well as the leaders of the regional party and power organizations, knowing this, did not determine the measures to prevent it or eliminate such a situation in time and did not draw the necessary conclusions. In the town of Kuvasoy, where the tragedy began, hooliganism became more intense, a group consisting of some young bullies from the mosque of Turks treated the representatives of the local people, especially the youth, rudely. M.V., who took the nickname "Boss" and influenced the situation in the whole of Kuvasoy, and even used violence against human rights organizations. The misbehavior of the group led by Dursunov was not curbed. In this regard, the general director of Kuvasoy agro-industrial complex Kh. Olimov stated the following: "This "boss" belonging to the Turkic nationality was really the "governor" of Kuvasoy. Everyone, including the internal affairs officers, was afraid of him. After the death of "Boss", he was succeeded by his brother. Cinemas in the city were not easily accessible. These hooligans were the organizers of the fights near the canteens and beer halls around the theater. Police and other law enforcement officers did not take any action against them. On the contrary, in many cases they helped them. How to evaluate the fact that there is no representative of this gang among those who were punished for hooliganism, theft, violation of the order in the following years. I would like to condemn the behavior of a group of hooligans, not the mosque of the Turkish people" [7].

If we give information about the leader of this criminal group, M.V. Dursunov (born in 1959), a Turk by nationality, has been convicted several times, nicknamed "Boss", the group has continuously created disturbances, humiliated local nationalities and sought their rights. At the same time, he carried out criminal activities around Kuvasoy and established control over the activities of cafes, beer bars and household service institutions in the city, and received a lot of money in return. Police authorities did not take any action in this regard, instead they patronized them. For example, it is noted that A. Sodikov, an employee of the city's criminal investigation department, worked with him [8]. This criminal group consisted mainly of young people of Turkish origin, in particular Rustam, the brother of "Boss", who was convicted several times, dangerous criminals Fayzi and Nasir. According to the periodical press publications, in August 1988, M.V.Dursunov was involved in a car accident and died along with three members of the group. After that, the internal struggle to become the head of the criminal group started [9]. At this time, Marat Zololiddinov (his father's mosque is Turkish, his mother's Tatar) who was known for several riots in the city of Kuvasoy, insulted the local youth and waged regular wars with his accomplices. His main goal was to become the "Boss" of the group. Egamberdi Oripov, Anvar Mominov and Sergey Boldunov were injured as a result of his disturbances in a beer hall near the station on May 16, 1989. The next day, he caught A. Mominov in front of the station and beat him again, and on May 18, he came with his comrades and inflicted serious injuries on this person under the slogan "hit Uzbeks wearing hats". Unfortunately, these criminal incidents were not recorded in the police book at all. However, the witness S. Yakubova called the police during the fight, but the police did not arrive at the scene. Over the years, not a single representative of the Turkish nationality was prosecuted for disorderly conduct or law-breaking crimes in the Kuvasoy Department of Internal Affairs. Small quarrels like these have created discord between the two nations and created a national conflict.

The incident in Kuvasoy started on May 20 with a small quarrel between Uzbek and Turkish youths, and on May 23, this conflict situation was repeated again. The service providers, who were under the full control of the Meskheta Turks youth, and most of the Uzbeks who visited the restaurant, were severely insulted by them. In order to respond to the insult, the Uzbek youth went in groups to the places where the mosques live. As a result, 6 people were injured and brought to the hospital[10]. But the quarrel between the two did not end there, and drastic measures aimed at preventing it were not taken in time [11]. The next day, on May 24, at 11 o'clock, about 200 people from mosque Turks gathered on Lenin Square and demanded to solve their national issue and punish those who were guilty of the group conflict. Groups belonging to the Uzbek nationality also gathered on this square, they were around 500 people, mostly young people. In order to prevent further quarrels between these groups, police forces and dignitaries from both sides were deployed, resulting in the dispersal of the crowd at 1.30 am. However, around 7 o'clock, groups of young people belonging to the Uzbek nationality began to gather on the square again [12]. Arslan Toshtanov, one of the prominent people of the Mosque of the Turks, addressed the gathering and apologized to the crowd for the actions of his fellow countrymen without deep

consideration. After that, the party and Soviet workers spoke out and called for calmness, order, and against the law that would lead to tragic consequences. But these appeals did not influence the young people enough, and they went to Temiryolchilar Street, where Turks live. About 150 of their residents gathered near Meskheti, a neighborhood inhabited by Turks, and as a result, a clash took place. In this fight, 58 people were injured, 32 people were hospitalized. One of the victims, Abdurahmonov Ikrom, born in 1969, living in the Valik village of Kuvasoi, Tajik nationality, died in the hospital [13]. However, during the subsequent events, the edited photos and voices mentioned that an Uzbek youth was killed in the events in Kuvasoy, not a person of Tajik nationality. There was a specific purpose in this too. In the "inter-ethnic conflict" planned to take place in the Ferghana Valley, the conflict between the large number of Uzbeks and the small number of Meskheti Turks, rather than the inter-ethnic conflict between a small number of peoples - Tajiks and Meskheti Turks, would effectively help to achieve the intended goal. In general, the causes of the Kuvasoy incident are complex[14]. Due to the inability of the political leadership of the republic to correctly and rationally evaluate the situation, mass demonstrations of young people and inter-ethnic clashes took place.

The commission investigating the Ferghana tragedies, formed in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, evaluated such negligence as follows: "These events were the result of serious defects and mistakes made by the bureau of the regional party committee, the regional executive committee, the party, the Soviet and law enforcement authorities"[15].

One of the causes of these tragedies can be considered the fact that the administrative court came without solving the social and environmental problems accumulated in the region over the years. By the end of the 1980s, Kuvasoy became the most polluted area in the USSR. In 1987 alone, industrial enterprises released 44,500 tons of toxic chemicals into the air[16]. Here, the level of provision of drinking water, gas, radio and telephone communications to the population was also in a deplorable condition. Residents of Kokilon, Taliq Muyan, Qaqir villages of Kuvasoy city were not provided with gas, telephone and clean drinking water at all.

For many years, the economy of the Ferghana Valley was dominated by the "B" branch (production of consumer goods) rather than the "A" branch (production of production tools). In particular, in the mid-80s of the 20th century, the share of light industry was 53.1 percent [17]. This has become one of the main obstacles in solving the problem of employment of the population.

For information, it can be said that mosque Turks were active in the socio-economic life of Kuvasoy city. 233 Meskhetian Turks worked at the Kuvasoy porcelain factory, and the head of the factory, heads of workshops and craftsmen were mainly representatives of this nationality [18]. At the same time, 186 Turks were working in the city's matlubot society, and most of them were chief accountants, economists, store managers, and sellers. The given information confirms that the claim that the mosque was involved in "black affairs" of the Turks is groundless [19]. In addition, the details of the tragedy that happened in Kuvasoi

were not fully communicated to the common people in time, and as a result, various rumors spread among the residents of the region and this tragedy became more acute. But trying to artificially aggravate such a delicate situation, poisoning people's minds, using malicious methods such as deliberately assigning and distributing various photos about the conflicts in Kuvasoy, in short, deceiving and misleading the people, led to the rapid spread of riots and bloody tragedies throughout the region.

Soon after the bloody events in Kuvasoy, there were clear reports that riots of this nature could be repeated in Tashlok, and the district leadership informed the relevant higher authorities about this. But at that time, many leaders and internal affairs officials in the region, who were busy with the events of Kuvasoy, did not pay enough attention to it. On June 3-4, 1989, the usually peaceful streets and squares of Tasloq were filled with young people and teenagers who were walking in crowds. Mysterious people appeared among them, unknown to the rock dwellers. They tried to explain the events in Kuvasoy differently to those gathered, distributed various photos, pretended to be "participants" and misinterpreted the events. But the partisans were dispersed by the action of volunteers and the public. The next day, Sunday, the events took a sharp turn again, the situation was out of control. A large crowd had gathered within two miles. Among them, thugs armed with sticks and pieces of iron, knives and axes showed "heroism" in the name of the people. In those days, the building of the district party committee, where people came to ask for help and justice, became a fortress of salvation for the mosque. Because a day ago, as soon as a serious danger arose, about 700 mosque Turks were moved to the building of the district party committee [20]. The former first secretary of the district party committee, O. Sobirov, and the former chairman of the executive committee, A. Hajimurodov, appeared in front of the crowd and tried to explain the situation. However, those who gathered in the crowd said that those detained for committing criminal acts during yesterday's riots would be released from prison, if their demands were not met, they would attack the building of the district party committee and massacre the Turks in the mosque there. After that, 4 people from among the people entered the police building with the second. Because their demands were not met, the thugs again gathered in front of the building of the district party committee under new demands. In order to coordinate the situation and prevent the massacre, O. Sobirov went to the crowd, but without any result, the situation became extremely difficult and eventually led to the victims of innocent people. O. Sobirov, the former first secretary of the district party committee, explained that the echoes of the conflict that started in Kuvasoy were observed in Tashlok as follows: "I think there are many reasons for the bloody events that took place, and they still need to be studied in depth. It is not correct to look for the root causes of this only in Tashloq district. First of all, the events that happened half a month ago in Kuvasoi, the reasons for its origin, and the fact that the culprits were not publicly disclosed, caused the spread of various rumors, damaged people's national feelings and increased their anger". The sad part is that when these events started, the party and authorities in the region ignored it. Long before the tragedy of Ferghana, it was known that the residents of the district raised social-ecological issues and held rallies several times. Even



two days before the beginning of these events, the residents of Qaqir village of the "Aq Oltin" community appealed to the executive committee about the lack of gas, telephone communication, and drinking water being unfit for consumption. At the same time, it is known to everyone that the rally held on June 3-4 started in this way, and in a similar situation, secret forces used it for their own interests.

Fake photographs deliberately falsifying tragedies in Tashlokh were distributed by "ambassadors" roaming in every village, and they showed scenes such as events that did not happen at all (kidnapping of children, touching the honor of girls). Moreover, the path of those who narrated the events as if they happened in reality was not blocked, and as a result, ordinary people followed them. As a result, ignorance, bloodthirstiness and human humiliation prevailed instead of humanity and love for nations in Tasloq region, where representatives of more than 18 nationalities live. Here are some results of such a tragedy: by June 5, with the help of internal affairs troops and local residents, 1,000 Turkish residents of the district were placed in a refugee camp. Also, until June 5, 16 people, namely 11 Turks and 5 Uzbeks, were killed. A total of 462 people were checked, 20 people were caught, 4 were arrested, 46 people were hospitalized with various injuries. By June 12, the consequences of the tragedy in Toshloq district were as follows. All mosques of Turkish families - 192, of which 163 lived in private houses, 29 of them lived in communal houses, 171 damaged houses, 43 of which were burned, 57 people received medical assistance, 27 people were hospitalized, 10 burned cars and 12 motorcycles and mopeds, 3 thousand mosques were moved from the Turkish region .

Officials did not pay serious attention to the economic, social, ecological and youth employment problems of Toshloq region, where the above-mentioned events took place. It is sad that 20-25% of the working population here are not engaged in gainful employment or 12.2% are unemployed. More than 2,000 people were unemployed in "Aq Oltyn" community alone, and 800 of them were young people . Most of the young people of Toshloq used to work in industrial enterprises in the cities of Ferghana and Margilan. Since 1988, they have been deprived of this opportunity. Personally, on the initiative of the former chairman of the executive committee of Ferghana city council A.G. Likhlat, a decision was made not to attract workers from rural areas to industrial enterprises, institutions and organizations in Ferghana city. A fine of 3-4 thousand rubles was also imposed on the leader if the village population was employed by the organizations in the city. Later, following this rule, the residents of Margilan also banned the employment of young people in the industrial enterprises here. Perhaps this decision was beneficial for cities in Russia. However, A. Likhlat applied this useless method used in the central regions to the Ferghana Valley without taking into account the local conditions, and the socio-economic situation here became more acute. Housing, medical, commercial, communal-household, transport and cultural services for the rural population were far behind compared to the city. Here, centralized heat supply accounted for 5 percent, sewerage for 2.2 percent, natural gas for 12 percent, and drinking water supply for 48 percent .

In 1989, 102,600 people lived in Toshloq district. By January 1990, there were 4 hospitals in the region with 900 beds. According to the information from archival sources, health care and medical services here were in a very difficult condition. 9,679 people lived in the unit village council, where 1 doctor and 13 nurses worked [21]. Also, there were no medical centers in Soyboyi, Tajik village, Boy village and Kipchak village. 850 households from Naimancha village of Tasloq district, 420 households from Birlik village, 1085 households from Varzak, 691 households from Akhshak lived in need of drinking water. There was no natural gas in Kirov and Naiman, Boston Village Council areas at all. 7027 people in the village of Sadda, 1479 people in Birlik, 1351 people in Nayman were not connected to their homes. The fact that such economic, social and ecological problems were not eliminated in time was the main reason for the escalation of events.

On June 6, 1989, the youth of Rishton went to a rally in Margilon in 3 buses, but when entering the city, the post officers turned them away to Kogan, saying that the rally was over and that there was a clash between Turks and Uzbeks at the Kokand Mosque. At this time, the situation in Kokand was peaceful, and no clashes occurred. When it was reported by the police officers that 3 buses of young people were going to Kokand, they were stopped on the road and 76 people were arrested, and 23 of them escaped and managed to inform the young people of the surrounding regions about it. But the people of Kokand were completely unaware of these events.

Despite the riots on the outskirts of the city, all roads into the city were open on June 7. On this day, people armed with various objects and tools came to the city from the surrounding districts of Kokand and demanded the release of 76 arrested young men, forcing the residents of the city to help, at that time there were no law enforcement officers. In a similar case, one of the police officers suddenly shot and killed a 16-year-old boy. Enraged by this, the people stoned the police officers. This conflict resulted in 20 deaths and 77 injuries. Surgeon Shavkat Sadikov, the chief physician of the city hospital, who witnessed these events, described his eye-witnesses as follows: "I was in the hospital when the shooting started. Suddenly, gunshots were heard, and soon the wounded and dead were brought. We soon went into operation. But the wounded were brought in one after the other, many of them were serious, in 20 minutes they brought 40 young men covered in blood. We took 11 doctors and ran to Lenin Square. We went to the middle and addressed the soldiers and police officers. They thought for a moment, then stopped firing. We appealed to the people and asked them to disperse" .

It is worth saying that this tragedy on June 7 caused everyone's anger. Protesting people, they overturned cars and newsstands on the road, and set some of them on fire. On June 8, people who came to the city party committee building wanted to hold a peaceful meeting to express their grievances to the city leaders and demand that those who shot the people be held accountable. More than 5 thousand people participated in this meeting. Those gathered handed over a written request consisting of 6 points to the former first secretary of the city party committee H.N. Musabekov, while answering the request, the senior lieutenant of the N-military unit Maksimovich ordered to cut off the machine guns. The soldiers fired at the

sky and at the people. The leaders of the authorities entered the office. According to official data, 21 people died here, more than 112 people were injured. There were also dead and wounded people in Uzbekistan, Frunze, Kirov, Leningrad, Baghdad, Rishton regions. For example, it was officially recorded that 23 people were injured in Rishton district alone [38]. In general, 102 people were killed, 1009 people were injured and 650 houses were set on fire as a result of the inter-ethnic clashes and their firing by the military in the period of June 3-12 in Ferghana region. The analysis of the information related to the tragedy of Ferghana shows that for Meskheti Turks, this conflict was needed as an excuse to return to their motherland, which was forcibly abandoned during the war due to the fault of the authoritarian regime. The local population naturally joined this conflict. Because the socio-economic problems of the population were not paid attention to, unemployment among the local youth increased, the standard of living of the population decreased, the population was not provided with housing, plots were not allocated for building houses, the cotton monopoly, ecological problems were not solved, bribery and lawlessness were on the rise. The events in Kokand could have been prevented, if the authorities had taken measures in time, if they had released the arrested people with receipts, if the party and Soviet authorities had not lost consciousness in the face of such events, such tragedies would not have happened among the people. According to many participants of the tragedy, including A. Olimov, M. Yunusov, I. Mamatov (from the village of Zohidan, Rishton district), the crowd raised more economic, social and environmental problems. They also demanded to end the cotton monopoly and increase the purchase price of cotton. However, the killing of a 16-year-old boy by a police officer and the shooting of civilians made the situation very tense. Extremist forces who took advantage of this situation turned the course of the event to harsh pressure on the Turks. In addition, the shooting of civilians has fueled youth anger against military personnel and the police. Distrust of government bodies has arisen among the younger generation. It was from this that the situation became more complicated. In addition, the events in Kokon were fundamentally different from the events in Kuvasoy and Tashlok, and it gained socio-economic importance. However, due to the mistakes made by the internal affairs bodies and the leaders of the administrative court, these events became more intense.

In our opinion, there are many opinions about the tragedies that happened in Kokand. These events were mainly related to the problems of social, economic and environmental stress. The residents' written requests to the authorities included the following: closing the Yangi-Kurgan chemical plant, employing the unemployed, increasing the monthly wages, increasing the purchase price of cotton and reducing its planting, or ending the cotton monopoly, and holding accountable those who shot at civilians on June 7.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, it should be said that the tragedies of Ferghana happened as a direct consequence of the gross violation of the national policy of the CPSU and the Soviet government, the policy of grand statism and chauvinistic violence. In the conditions of



restructuring, the efforts that started to end the sad consequences of the national policy took a serious turn, and the leaders of the party and the authorities lost themselves in such a situation and could not prevent it. Because of this, various violent people, serious criminals, black groups, conspirators, foreign peoples, especially the people of Uzbekistan, could not see peace. They masterfully used these elements.

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