

The Torgay uprising. Repressed Generations

Suppression of the peoples' spirit opens a way to desperate aspiration, and, if necessary, open struggle for independence. It is a natural and regular phenomenon for any society. From the modern point of view it is impossible to delete national liberation uprising in Torgay region in 1918 and names of its leaders Amir Abdigapar and Amangeldy Imanov from the pages of Kazakhstan history.

The name of Amankeldy Imanov as a batyr and leader of the national liberation uprising in Torgay is mentioned in Soviet historiography, while the name of Abdigapar Zhanbossynov, a real coordinator of the uprising, elected by people, has been preserved only thanks to scarce stories. Historically, he is known as a sworn enemy of the Soviet state.

Abdigapar Zhanbossynov

In 1916 Orynbor, Kostanay, Shalkar, Irgiz and Torgay uyezds formed the Torgay region. For tsarist government Torgay steppes were like golden gates to the Great steppe. Telegraph, starting from St.-Petersburg, was wired up to Torgay district through Kazan, Orenburg and Shalkar. In Karatorgay volost the number of young people, grouped around their leader, was increasing day by day; by the end of September 1916 it amounted to three thousand people. A major part of the locals announced that they were ready to follow Abdigapar. In Sarytorgay the number of grouped youth reached 1500 people.

The biggest movements started in Zhetyssu, Torgay and Irgiz. The governor immediately started sending military units to eliminate seats of the uprising. On the last days of July rebels tried to attack Verny. 350 soldiers in Chimbulak shot rebels in sight; and in 4-5 days biys and volost rulers caught Bekbolat Ashekeyev and called him a "rebel". At the time he was 70 years old, but despite his age he was sentenced to death by hanging.

Rebels under leadership of Abdigapar Zhanbossynuly and Amangeldy Uderbayuly maintained resistance to tsar's punitive units in fierce battles in the environs of Torgay, Taty, Batpakkara and Dogal-Urpek.

Disturbances in Torgay-Irgiz regions were intensifying day by day and by the arrival of punitive units they turned into universal uprising. Men, who had not tolerated outrages of rich volosts since long ago, acted overtly and started agitation against "tsar's resolution".

Angered by non-Russian people, tsarist Russia sent General Laverntiyev's punitive expedition to Torgay steppes on September 27. From October 13 till 16 the punitive army was being replenished with additional forces from Kazansky military district, special units from Ural, Orenburg and Astrakhan. A joint punitive army possessed 17 infantry companies, 19 squadrons, 14 cannons and 17 assault rifles. Overall strength of the joint punitive army made 30 thousand.

The army intended to attack Torgay district and "destroy it completely". Around 200 mounted Kazakhs, 100 infantrymen were concentrated in Torgay fortress, and dwellers were armed as well. On October 22 140 mounted soldiers came to the aid, but heavy cannon and rifle fire did not let the army approach the quarters.

Not having proper arms, rebels were compelled to retreat, only Keyki, Amankeldy and Zhagypar managed to take a dozen of enemies under fire. Having foreseen such outcome of the battle, Abdigapar rushed to the charge; according to his assumption it was necessary to encircle the fortress, fight and annihilate only those who would be willing to leave. Without hay stocks and

water, with telegraph-wire cut, the city would not be able to stand for long. Winter came. The uprising made both Orenburg's governor and the head of Russian staff get really troubled. People glorified military strategy of Abdigapar.

In the end of November the elders from 13 volosts of eastern part of the Torgay uyezd gathered near Zhaldama River and held council with the participation of military leaders Abdigapar, Amankeldy and Umen. In compliance with all traditions, the elders unanimously elected Abdigapar the leader and declared him a khan of the uprising. Council, which was to solve military, economic, or legal issues, was established. Thus, a simple democracy system started functioning. The council's main tasks were to preserve and protect country from its enemies. Laws against such acts as theft and horse stealing were ordained. Amangeldy and Keyki established snipers' detachments and started teaching firing methods to them.

On October 21, Kazakh squadron confronted quite a big group of Kirghizes two times. Last ones had casualties, i.e. killed and wounded. Also, due to threat, having arrived to Irgiz, the governor sent a squadron of Cossacks with machine guns to aid the joint army. Besides, he addressed Military District Commander for the second time, asking to provide additional forces, because otherwise it was impossible to annihilate Kirghizes' groups. Telegraph line with Torgay was cut.

On February 22 a group of punitive forces, under Turgenev's command, which was heading for khan's headquarters to destroy Abdigapar's forces and choke a fire of the uprising, was met in the environs of Dogal. Abdigapar and Amankeldy put up a fight, having waited in one of the passages through sands, they divided joint army and after arriving to Kamysbay locality near Batpakkara, they fraudulently escaped through lowland.

Angered tsar's forces shot ten innocent people in Kamysbay. Having traced the first squadron's commander, Keyki killed him with a shot. Finally, out of rage Keyki batyr killed one of soldiers in sight, so in revenge soldiers kicked a guide Moldakhmetuly Idris, and having bypassed Torgay, they headed for Dogal. A Kazakh who happened along, was not spared.

Before this last battle for Dogal, Amankeldy had stationed 200 snipers of Keyki and Omen in thick bulrush along the roads and in forests. About 10 enemies were killed during one of the first clashes under hidden snipers' fire. Soldiers retreated, but later they returned fire. The fight lasted till noon. Having augmented the fire, the enemy started encircling snipers. Amankeldy ordered his army to retreat and withdrew forces, located along the river, into steppe. Abdigapar's younger brother Zhagypar supported ten left snipers. They did not leave positions even after the third order to retreat. Having run out of cartridges, they plunged themselves into hand-to-hand combat. None of them survived.

The Dogal-Urpek war was over on February 23, 1917.

Zhagypar, Abdigapar's younger brother and around 70 deceased warriors were delivered to their homes. The enemy sustained great losses as well; soldiers took 15 sledges loaded with bodies, to its headquarters. Having concealed casualties, local authorities reported, that "two soldiers and two horses died. Abdigapar's aul and Horde were annihilated".

That period matched with February revolt in Russia and on March 11, 1917 news about tsar's fall reached Karatorgay. Abdigapar said Torgay rulers that he would not reject the Provisional government. In March 1918 Abdigapar and Amankeldy took part in the Ist session of Council of Torgay region, as a result neither Soviet nor Alash party policy was recognized. In the period of 1918-1919, when power was being passed from one hands to others, Amankeldy was killed. On November 25, 1919 Abdigapar was shot as well.

Abdigapar's condemnation as a "public enemy" brought hardships upon his descendants.

Saduakas, the younger brother of Abdigapar, was in the very centre of national liberation uprising of 1916-1917. In the beginning of the 1930th he was arrested because of his kinship with the khan. Later he was sentenced to death by shooting without trial.

Uali, Abdigapar's elder brother, was a tysyatsky in liberation army during the uprising in 1916. He was arrested in 1930 and transported to Almaty under guards, only to be sentenced to death. Gapbas, Uali's son, at the age of 10 had to serve 10 years' sentence in Karlag camp as "the son of public enemy". He was released only in 1940, but violence and grief would remain his seal for the rest of his life.

Mazgum, the son of Abdigapar, was born in 1910 in Karatorgay volost. In 1928 he graduated from Red Officers School in Orenburg. In 1929 was arrested and one year later was shot in prison.

His brother Nazar, aged 31, was killed by Red Army soldiers while trying to escape.

Kali was the elder son of Abdigapar. In 1930 he was arrested and spent 4 years in prison for making a complaint about lawlessness of the aul Council.

Rustem, the younger son of Abdigapar took part in suppressing the White Guards' uprisings in Orenburg, Astrakhan and khan's horde. In 1918-1919 he commanded international reconnaissance unit of the Red Army. In 1937 was put in prison together with Akhmet Baytursynuly. Eventually he was shot.

Myrzagaly was born in 1910. Having witnessed persecutions of his parents and relatives, he moved to Uzbekistan and saved his family.

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