THE INSTITUTIONAL ROLE OF THE SOVIET CONGRESSES AND THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT IN THE INTRODUCTION OF THE EIGHT-HOUR WORKDAY IN THE TURKESTAN ASSR

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Abstract: *In the article, the author scientifically analyzes the historical and evolutionary process of the issue of introducing an eight-hour working day in the Soviet era. During the research, it is scientifically demonstrated that this issue was relevant in labor relations of that time, and was discussed at a number of Soviet congresses and meetings with the aim of its legal regulation. The author also reveals the socio-economic significance of this issue and presents the results of the analysis based on scientific methods and methodology.*

Keywords: *Labor law, labor relations, Turkestan ASSR, declaration, nationalization, labor control, unemployment, child labor.*

Introduction

In every state, establishing labor legislation and regulating labor relations in a structured manner is a pressing task in addressing social challenges. These measures are essential for strengthening social partnership, avoiding labor-related conflicts, and guaranteeing fair working conditions as well as economic

stability. Therefore, examining how such processes unfolded in the history of the Turkestan ASSR, along with the role played by the congresses of soviets and governmental institutions, holds significant contemporary scientific and practical value. As is known, in late 1917 and early 1918, the Soviet government, as one of the main ways to preserve state power, the Bolsheviks, began to rebuild the country's economic foundations. These measures were not just reforms, but a political path aimed at radically changing the existing socio-economic system at that time. Initially, one of the most problematic issues facing the Soviet government was the regulation and provision of labor rights for workers, who constitute the backbone of the country's population. In particular, “how many hours should a worker work per day?” As a legal answer to this important question, on October 29, 1917, the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR (CPC) adopted the Decree “On the Eight-Hour Working Day” in Petrograd. This document served as the first normative legal document regulating labor relations by the state. This document consisted of 26 articles, and according to Article 2 of it, it was determined that “working hours determined by the internal regulations of enterprises should not exceed 8 working hours per day and 48 hours per week; this time also includes the time spent on cleaning machines and putting the workplace in order [1. P. 10-13].” Thus, at that time, a 6-day work week was in effect, with Sunday as a day off. At the same time, according to the new order, preparation and cleaning work were also recognized as part of the main work. According to this decree, the time from 9 pm to 5 am is considered night time (Article 5). The use of labor by women and men under the age of 16 at night is prohibited (Article 6). The following rules were established for the employment of minors (under 18 years of age): a) Minors under 14 years of age are not allowed to work, b) Working hours for those under 18 years of age should not exceed 6 hours per day (Article 9). The procedures set forth in this document were very strong legal protections aimed at protecting the personal time of workers and employees [2]. Within the

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framework of labor relations, the Soviet state considered it the most important task to abolish the capitalist relations established during the former Russian Empire, that is, to establish “workers’ control” over production and distribution by transferring the country's economy, which was based on private property, a free market, trade, production, and entrepreneurship, to state management. To this end, on November 14, 1917, the Central Executive Committee of the All-Russian Soviets of Workers’, Peasants’ and Soldiers’ Deputies (CEC) approved the draft Law “On Workers' Control” [3. P. 78-82]. According to paragraph 1 of the Regulation adopted on the basis of this document, in the interests of planned regulation of the national economy, it was noted that in all industrial, trade, banking, agricultural, transport, cooperative, manufacturing companies and other enterprises that employ hired workers or employ domestic workers, workers' control over the production, purchase and sale of products and raw materials, their storage, as well as the financial side of the enterprise will be introduced [4. P. 35]. This "control" was the initial stage of the process of seizing privately owned land, factories, factories, commercial enterprises and banks, converting them into state property as public property and subsequently nationalizing them (taking them over to the state).

Results

The above-mentioned decrees also began to be implemented in Turkestan. It should be noted that previously the working day in the country lasted 10-12, and even 12-18 hours, and wages were very low. The average annual wage of a worker was 180 rubles (120-130 rubles in cotton factories). In Central Russia, this figure was 280 rubles. Women and adolescents were paid less for equal work than men, and workers of local nationality received 1.5-2 times less than their Russian colleagues [5. P. 50-54]. At this point, it should be noted that the main workforce of the country's industrial sector was represented by representatives of the Russian-speaking nation, and the local

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population mainly worked as ordinary workers in agriculture and partly in the industrial sector.

The issue of the 8-hour working day in Turkestan was raised much earlier, that is, before the October coup. In particular, from the first days of March 1917, Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (mostly from Russians) were formed in Turkistan. They demanded a reduction in the working day to 8 hours at all large enterprises of the country and declared strikes. Under the influence of these soviets, labor issues were also discussed at the congresses of soviets. For example, at the final (April 15) session of the First Congress of the Turkestan Region Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, held in Tashkent from April 7 to 15, 1917, the report of the working section was discussed, and a resolution "On the introduction of an 8-hour working day" was adopted. According to the resolution, the congress considered it important to legally introduce an 8-hour working day (or 7 hours on the eve of Sunday) in all areas of labor, to ensure one day of rest per week, and to prohibit overtime work. In this regard, a proposal was submitted to the Provisional Government to adopt a decree "On the introduction of an 8-hour working day." At the same time, the congress adopted resolutions on workers' issues such as wages, the establishment of conciliation chambers, strikes, factory inspection, child and women's labor, hospital funds and workers' insurance, labor exchanges, and trade unions, and it was necessary to achieve equal rights for men and women [6. P. 363-365]. However, the majority of delegates in the Sejd, consisting of Labor-Mensheviks, opposed the rapid introduction of the 8-hour working day and the establishment of workers' control in enterprises [7. P. 13].

On November 15, 1917, the III Regional Congress of Soviets of Turkestan began its work in Tashkent. On November 19, the congress adopted a declaration "On the organization of power". According to this document, the Regional Soviet of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies was considered the highest authority of the region and was renamed the Council of People's

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Commissars of Turkestan (CPC). F.I. Kolesov (Bolshevik) was elected chairman of the CPC of Turkestan, and the government was determined to consist of 15 commissariats (communications, post and telegraph, public education, food, justice, water use, civil and administrative part, finance, military, foreign affairs, trade, production, labor, crops, health care) [8. P. 178-179]. Although this government did not include representatives of the local population, within the framework of the newly formed system, the People's Commissariat of Labor took a number of measures to regulate labor relations in the country and formulate legislation. In particular, on December 27, 1917, this commissariat developed the “Regulation on the Compulsory Organization of Labor Exchanges in the Turkestan Region” in order to solve the problem of unemployment and regulate the supply and demand for labor. On this basis, the Turkestan Regional Labor Exchange was actually opened in Tashkent in January 1918. Its first chairman was V.D. Votintsev [9. P. 13]. By May of that year, local labor exchanges also began operating. With the establishment of labor exchanges, all private intermediary agencies and employment bureaus were abolished. These exchanges also served as labor distribution bodies.

On January 19, 1918, the IV (extraordinary) Regional Congress of Soviets of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies opened in Tashkent. Although the agenda mainly included political issues, the issue of unemployment was also discussed [10]. Based on the above instructions, all enterprises and farms in Turkestan were repeatedly required to strictly observe the 8-hour working day. However, in practice, these measures were not fully implemented. An example of this is the order of the People's Commissariat of Labor dated May 9, 1918. This order stated: "Among some professions in Turkestan, the 8-hour working day is being exceeded. Taking into account the unemployment in the country, I order all labor commissars: 1) Take measures to introduce (conduct) a maximum 8-hour working day; 2) In the event of unemployment, labor commissars must strictly monitor work performed outside working hours...

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[11]". The Soviet government also made good use of trade unions in establishing its power in Turkestan and mobilizing the labor force for it. Looking at the history of these organizations in the country, they were first established in 1905 by railway and communications workers [12]. May 19, 1918 - The Turkestan Workers' and Peasants' Union published the "Regulations on the Insurance Council", according to which the Insurance Council was established under the People's Commissariat of Labor [13].

From October 5 to 15, 1918, the Extraordinary VI Congress of Soviets of the Turkestan Republic was held in Tashkent. The "current situation" on labor relations in the social sphere and reports on the activities of the republic's highest authorities were discussed. At the second session of the congress, held on October 6, 1918, a resolution on the current situation, prepared by the communist faction, was adopted. This document analyzed the complex political situation at that time and decided to organize "committees of the poor" in all places where Soviets existed and to soon introduce "general labor obligation" [14].

Discussion

The reports of the Central Committee and the Central Committee of the USSR on the agenda of the congress were hotly debated. At the same time, the report of the People's Commissariat of Labor was also heard at the meeting. The main attention was paid to regulating the demand for labor, creating standard working conditions in production, and forming a system of labor protection. The report also covered social protection issues, and it was noted that, based on the decree of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet of November 29, 1917, the Insurance Council was established under the commissariat to deal with state insurance issues. It was noted that this structure had completed the work on introducing a social insurance system covering disability, old age, pregnancy and postpartum [15. P. 38]. The Congress listened to the report of the Council of People's Commissars (CPC) of Turkestan, took stock of the work done, and

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sharply criticized the activities of the People's Commissariats of Justice, Internal Affairs, National Affairs, Agriculture, Industry, and Health. At the end of the meeting, a resolution of the Communist faction on the reports of the Central Committee and the CPC was adopted. The resolution noted the formation of a new structure of the CPC and assigned the necessary tasks to the 11 reorganized CPCs (education, finance, food, labor and social security, military affairs, etc.). In this regard, the Commissariat for Labor and Social Security was tasked with the task of fully registering all unemployed persons through existing labor exchanges in order to identify "non-working elements" and separate them from society, and in addition, to develop and implement a republic-wide regulation on social security for persons who have lost their ability to work and their family members, as well as for military personnel who died or became disabled in the cause of the "revolution" and their families [16].

On October 15, 1918, at the final, sixth session of the congress, the first Constitution of the Turkestan Republic (the text was prepared in Uzbek and Russian) was adopted [17. P. 22-29]. However, this Basic Law did not include a separate paragraph (article) expressing the equal rights of women and men, that is, their equality in state and public administration and other spheres, in particular, in labor relations. On March 7, 1919, the Extraordinary VII Congress of Soviets of the Turkestan Republic began its work in Tashkent. The agenda included issues related to the economic, military and financial spheres. In particular, issues such as the organization of the poor and land and water committees, providing farmers with seeds and food, and organizing the labor of workers and employees were considered. The congress conducted its work divided into sections. In particular, at the meeting of the Labor and Social Security Section on March 15, 1919, the report of the Commissar of Labor and Social Security on labor protection and the introduction of an 8-hour working day for representatives of intellectual labor was heard. The section on labor protection adopted the following resolution: “Since the Commissariat of Labor

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has not introduced new regulations in this area since its establishment, the Commissariat has acted on labor protection issues solely based on the instructions developed by the First Constituent Congress of Trade Unions held in Tashkent on June 22, 1918. Therefore, the Section on Labor and Social Security considers it necessary to propose to the Commissariat of Labor to develop a normative regulation on labor protection in the shortest possible time [18. P. 6].” This resolution also indicated the need to establish a commission that would determine the norms of working hours for professions, taking into account age, gender, health status and specific working conditions. As for the length of the working day, the section resolution noted that the working day for hired labor should not exceed 8 hours and that the measure of limiting daytime working hours also applies to hired peasant workers in agriculture. The resolution also set out instructions on social security, the organization of workers' communes and artels, and the payment of wages. It approved the “Regulations on Workers' Communes” previously adopted by the Commissariat of Labor and obliged each district trade union to organize a model commune based on it. As for wages, the section considered it necessary to establish equal rates for all regions, cities, volosts and villages of Turkestan [19. P. 21-22].

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Conclusion

Overall, during the Soviet period, the social and legal dimensions of labor in the Turkestan ASSR were marked by significant complexity and internal contradictions. These challenges stemmed largely from the region’s historically uneven socio-economic development, which influenced both the structure and dynamics of labor relations. A pronounced imbalance became evident in the allocation of labor roles across different ethnic groups within the republic. The indigenous peoples (Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kazakhs and others) – were engaged predominantly in agricultural work and, to a limited degree, in industrial sectors. Their participation was largely confined to lower-level,

physically demanding tasks, with only a small portion of the native population entering administrative or managerial spheres.

Conversely, the Russian-speaking population occupied a dominant position within the labor hierarchy. They were disproportionately represented in leadership, supervisory, and specialized technical roles, thereby exerting substantial influence over decision-making, administration, and the overall direction of economic activities. This structural imbalance not only reflected the broader colonial characteristics of Soviet nationalities policy but also deepened social stratification within the republic. As a result, the labor system of the Turkestan ASSR during this era demonstrated clear signs of inequality, institutional bias, and limited social mobility for the indigenous population, all of which had long-term implications for regional development and interethnic relations.

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