



## ABOUT LOCAL ADMINISTRATION OF TASHKENT CITY EXAMPLING SEBZAR DISTRICT AT THE END OF THE XIX TH AND BEGINNING OF THE XX TH CENTURY

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**Abstract.** This article was concerned local administration of Tashkent city exempling Sebzar district at the end of the XIX th and beginning of the XX th century. In article illuminated themes administration of local politics, administration of legality and controlling perspectives, as such social and material condition of population.

**Keywords:** Daha, mahalla, aksakal, ellikbashi, kazi, a'lam, mufti, yigit, security, election.

After Tashkent was occupied by the colonizers of the Russian Empire in 1865, the tradition of governing the city by dividing it into four districts (dahas) continued. In order to consolidate its colonial policy, the Tsarist government also began constructing the "European" part of the city. The ancient Tashkent, inhabited by the local population and consisting of the Shaykhontohur, Beshyoghoch, Kukcha, and Sebzar districts, came to be known as the "Old City". However, the local residents of Tashkent referred to the area where the four districts were located — surrounded by the city's historic twelve gates — simply as the "City," as noted by the Russian historian N.G. Malitsky. He also reports that, according to his information, the local people referred to the new part of the city, where Russians were settling, as "Gorut," a local adaptation of the Russian word "Gorod" (meaning "city")<sup>1</sup>.

By the end of the 19th century, the four districts (dahas) and the "New City", which had begun to be built for Europeans, together made up the city of Tashkent. The Sebzar<sup>2</sup> district was also considered an essential part of the city. According to N.G. Maev's information, in the 1870s, Sebzar consisted of 38 neighborhoods (mahallas) with 2,230 households and approximately 18,650 inhabitants. It is also noted that in the district there were the Beklarbegi, Qizilqorgon, and Baroqkhan madrasahs, along with ten large mosques<sup>3</sup>. Relying on Muhammad Solikhkhoja's work *"Tarikhi Jadidai Toshkand"* (*The New History of Tashkent*), historian U. Sultanov emphasizes that other madrasahs such as Mahmud Dasturkhonchi, Shukurkhon, Muyi Muborak, Yunuskhonja Khalifa, Muhammad Karimkhonja Khalifa, and others were also located in the Sebzar district<sup>4</sup>. According to election results shown in the 1880

<sup>1</sup> Mallitskiy N.G. Toshkent mahalla va mavzelari. – Toshkent. 1927. – B. 3.

<sup>2</sup> "Sebzor" is a Persian term meaning "apple orchard" in Uzbek. This part of the city is sometimes referred to as the Qaffol Shoshiy district, as the tomb of this esteemed figure is located here.

<sup>3</sup> Маев Н.Г. Азиятский Ташкент. – Санкт-Петербург. 1876. – С. 264-265.

<sup>4</sup> Sultonov O\*. Muhammad Solihxo'ja va uning "Tarixi jadidiyi Toshkand" asari. – Toshkent:O'zbekiston, 2009. – B.150-162.



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archival data, there were 48 neighborhoods in Sebzar<sup>5</sup>. By 1889, this figure had risen to 61 neighborhoods<sup>6</sup>. Mallitsky, who conducted research on the neighborhoods of Tashkent, lists 79 neighborhoods in Sebzar<sup>7</sup>. Considering that he accounted for neighborhoods up until 1917, it can be understood that there were certain structural changes and expansions in the district over time. In the 1905 archival records, 65 neighborhoods were reported in Sebzar<sup>8</sup>.

During the rule of the Tsarist government, governance based on the system of aksakals (elders) was established in the Sebzar district of Tashkent, as in the other districts. According to the temporary regulation of 1867, an aksakal elected through the ellikboshi (neighborhood leaders) elections was responsible for managing the district<sup>9</sup>. According to A. Dobrosmyslov, on February 23, 1868, in Sebzar, a district aksakal, a “kazi” (judge), an “ariq aksakal” (irrigation elder), and a representative from the district for the city's general economic administration were elected. In this system, the aksakal was responsible for civil administration, the kazi oversaw the judicial system, and the ariq aksakal managed the irrigation system of the district. The ellikboshis, who elected these officials, held the right to govern the neighborhoods. They were elected by representatives from each household and began fulfilling their duties accordingly. A clear example of this system is the 1905 election for the position of ellikboshi in the Tarnovboshi neighborhood of the Sebzar district. In that election, out of four candidates, Zokirjon Dustkhojaev succeeded in receiving 43 out of 55 household representatives' votes. The other candidates — Mirsaid Mirsodikhov, Nurinboy Alimuhamedov, and Alimuhammad Turdiboev — received 26, 21, and 15 votes, respectively<sup>10</sup>. This demonstrates that elections for ellikboshi were conducted strictly and systematically within the neighborhoods. All the aforementioned positions were elected for a term of three years.

According to the Regulation on the Administration of Turkestan adopted in 1886, the system of managing the districts (*dahas*) of Tashkent city was preserved. In the 1887 elections for local positions, a total of 78 “ellikboshi”s (neighborhood leaders) were elected across the 44 neighborhoods of the Sebzar district<sup>11</sup>. In the largest neighborhoods, where the population was particularly dense, up to twelve “ellikboshi”s could be appointed to their positions. Following the order No. 22 issued by the head of Tashkent city on March 24, 1887, the “ellikboshi”s were tasked with electing the district *aksakal*, the *kazi* (judge), and their candidates on April 9 of the same year<sup>12</sup>. Based on the results of these elections, Kalonbek Normuhammad Okhund oglı, aged 42, was elected as the Sebzar district “*aksakal*”, winning 60 out of 78 votes among six candidates<sup>13</sup>. For the position of “*kazi*” of the Sebzar district, Muhiddinkhoja was elected, receiving 69 out of 77 votes from the “ellikboshi”s among four candidates<sup>14</sup>. One “ellikboshi”

<sup>5</sup> National Archive of Uzbekistan (CSA of Uz). Fund 36, file 1586, papers 221.

<sup>6</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 3106, papers 9-17.

<sup>7</sup> Mallitskiy N.G. Toshkent mahalla va mavzeleri. – Toshkent. 1927. – B.13-14.

<sup>8</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 4195, papers 4-5.

<sup>9</sup> Добросмыслов А.И. Ташкент прошлом и настоящем. – Ташкент, 1912. – С. 98.

<sup>10</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 4195, paper 81.

<sup>11</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 2707, papers 50-53.

<sup>12</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 2707, paper 17.

<sup>13</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 2707, paper 55.

<sup>14</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 2707, paper 54.



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did not participate in the election for the “*kazi*”. According to the law, elections could be held as long as two-thirds of the eligible voters were present.

The “*aksakal*” (district elder) who took control of the administration of the Sebzar district was directly subordinate to both the Tashkent “*aksakal*” and the city head (mayor). Through such a system of governance, the Tsarist government ensured that the local population was brought under the direct authority of the Russian administration. Based on his authority, the “*aksakal*” was responsible for resolving all issues within the district. In particular, when appointing any positions, he had to appeal to the city head, submit his proposals, and nominate candidates. The district “*aksakal*” received a government salary of 54 soums and 16 kopecks per month, amounting to 650 soums annually<sup>15</sup>. Under his command, he had his own *mirza* (scribe) and ten *yigit* (assistants) to ensure strong governance within the district<sup>16</sup>. The *mirza* (who earned a monthly salary of 25 soums) and the “*yigits*” were appointed upon the *aksakal*’s recommendation and with the approval of the city head. An example of this procedure is seen in the notification sent by the Sebzar *aksakal* to the Tashkent city governor in January 1891: *Respectful report from the Sebzar aksakal to the Honorable Tashkent city governor: I hereby inform Your Excellency that I request your order to appoint Mullo Rahmatullo Botaboy oglı to the service position of yigit in place of Mirhalil Ernazar oglı, effective from January 25. Sebzar Aksakal Kalonbek Normuhammad Okhund oglı. January 19, 1891*<sup>17</sup>.

In Tashkent city, the “*yigit*” (assistant) was considered the main support force for the “*aksakal*” (district elder) in maintaining internal administrative order and asserting authority over the population. Therefore, the district “*aksakal*”s appointed only their most trusted individuals to these positions. “*Yigit*”s were generally required to have knowledge of laws and, in particular, the principles of Sharia law. Their monthly salary was 15 soums, totaling 180 soums annually<sup>18</sup>. During the early period of the Tsarist Empire’s rule in Tashkent, this position was originally referred to as *qorovul* (guard). For instance, in 1869, the Sebzar district *aksakal* Nadir Muhammad appealed to Tashkent’s city head, Rossitsky, proposing the addition of 35 more guards to the existing 70 *qorovuls* to better prevent theft and maintain order<sup>19</sup>.

Additionally, a chief *mirshab* (chief of night patrol), subordinate directly to the district and city *aksakals*, also operated in the district. The chief *mirshab* was assisted by two mounted *yigits* and seventeen foot *yigits*. According to 1891 records, the chief *mirshab* of the Sebzar district was Saifullo Mirazimov<sup>20</sup>. His monthly salary was 25 soums, totaling 300 soums annually. The mounted *yigits* earned 20 soums per month, while foot *yigits* earned 15 soums monthly<sup>21</sup>. Thus, throughout his term, the *aksakal* maintained control over the city’s internal order by relying on the *mirshab* (the “commander of the night”) and the *yigits*.

In Sebzar, the legal system was regulated through the courts of the *kazi* (Islamic judge). The *kazi* was elected for a three-year term by the *ellikboshis* (neighborhood leaders) of the district. His appointment had to be confirmed by the military governor of Syrdarya Province. Once in office, the *kazi* would establish the composition of the *kazikhana* (court), which he then

<sup>15</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 3306, papers 1-2.

<sup>16</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 3306, paper 5.

<sup>17</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 3306, paper 16.

<sup>18</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 3306, paper 5.

<sup>19</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 346, paper 4.

<sup>20</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 3306, papers 1-5.

<sup>21</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 3306, papers 1-5.



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reported to the city head. For example, after the 1887 election, the newly appointed Sebzar *kazi*, Muhiddinkhoja Hakimkhoja oglı, informed the Tashkent governor about the composition of the *kazikhana*. According to the document, Mullo Abdushukur Alam and Mullo Ibrahim Mahzum were appointed as *muftis*, while Ahmadkhoja was appointed as another *mufti*<sup>22</sup>.

In the structure of the *kazilik* (Islamic judicial) court, one *a'lam* (chief jurist) and two *muftis* operated, playing a central role in interpreting *shar'i* (Islamic) rulings. Their primary responsibilities included reviewing cases related to family matters, property disputes, and offenses among the population. After their review, cases and their suggested judgments would be submitted to the *kazi* (judge) for final adjudication. During this period, Muhiddinkhoja held a prominent and highly respected position as the *kazi* of the Sebzar district. His father, Hakimkhoja Eshan, son of Norkhoja Eshan, had earlier been appointed as the *kazi* of Tashkent city by the Kokand Khan Sultan Sayidkhan<sup>23</sup>. Muhiddinkhoja's descendants continued to serve in the *kazilik* of Sebzar until the establishment of Soviet rule. For example, in the 1914 Sebzar *kazilik* elections, Said Mahmudkhan Muhiddinkhojaev won by securing 65 out of 71 votes, while Eshan Muhammad Muhiddinkhojaev, another candidate, received 60 votes<sup>24</sup>. This reflected the trust and choice of the people. At the same time, the city governor issued an order prohibiting close family ties among the members of the *kazilik* courts. In line with this directive, according to an 1880 document, the *kazi* of Sebzar submitted the following petition to the city head:

*"In accordance with your order regarding the positions of a'lam and muftis, previously the a'lam was Azizlarhon, son of Oykhoja Eshan, and the muftis were Ibrohim Mahzum, son of Domullo Sultonboy, and Ahmadkhoja, son of Muhammadkhoja Eshan. However, as per your instruction to avoid appointing close relatives or kin, I hereby propose the following individuals for your approval: Ibrohim Mahzum for the a'lam position, and Abduraufkhoja, son of Abdurahimkhoja, along with Mullo Abdulmawla, son of Mullo Abdussattor, for the mufti positions. I humbly submit this for your consideration. — Sebzar Kazi Muhammad Muhiddinkhoja<sup>25</sup>."*

If an *a'lam* (chief jurist) or *mufti* passed away, the *kazi* (judge) was required to directly appeal to the city governor to appoint a new person to the position. This procedure was part of the Tsarist administration's broader strategy to strengthen its colonial control over the local population. An example of such a request from the Sebzar *kazi* to the city governor reads as follows:

*"To the honorable city governor,*

*I respectfully inform you that Mullo Abdushukur a'lam, son of Mullo Boyshukur, who was serving under me, passed away on March 6. At present, there is no acting a'lam serving in the Sebzar district. The deceased also worked as a teacher (mudarris) at the neighborhood madrasa of Sebzar.*

*The waqf (endowment) income allocated for this madrasa is insufficient to support two teachers. Regarding the position previously held by the deceased (referring to his teaching role), I await your instructions.*

<sup>22</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 2707, papers 67.

<sup>23</sup> Sebzor hadasi qozisi faoliyatiga oid hujjatlar (Tuzuvchilar G'. Karimov, P. Sartori, Sh. Ziyodov. – Toshkent: O'zbekiston, 2009. – B.3.

<sup>24</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 6016, paper 6.

<sup>25</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 3106, paper 69.



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*Concerning the a'lam position, I propose Ghanilarjon Eshan, who, prior to my judgeship, served under me as both a'lam and mufti. If it pleases you, I request that you appoint him to the a'lam position.*

— March 8, 1888<sup>26</sup>.

In the district, custodians (mutawalli) were responsible for the management of madrasas and mausoleums. Their duties included overseeing the financial affairs, revenues, expenses, and general maintenance activities of these institutions. The activities of mutawallis were monitored by traveling judges and the educated segments of the population. At times, dissatisfaction led to complaints being filed with the city governor. For example, several educated residents around the Hazlarkhan, Parchabof, and Hazrat Imam cemeteries in Sebzar petitioned the city governor, S.R. Putintsev, to dismiss the then-mutawalli, Saidvalikhan, son of Abdusalikhan, citing a lack of public trust. They requested that Mullo Zohirkhan, son of Abdurahmon Mahzum, be appointed in his place<sup>27</sup>.

In Sebzar, the aksakal (elder) played a key role in promoting public health initiatives among the population. For instance, according to an archival document, in 1877, the district aksakal Mirniyozboy organized mass vaccination campaigns and informed the city governor that Kabirkhan, son of Abdurahmonkhoja, would oversee the task<sup>28</sup>. Community work (khashar) was also actively conducted in the district. These efforts included cleaning streets and public spaces, digging canals, and other activities that benefited the collective. Special public work days called “shanbalik” were organized, and the aksakal would report these events to the city governor<sup>29</sup>.

Although the governance system in the Sebzar district appeared to have a local structure, the ultimate authority remained with the city governor, the representative of the Tsarist government in the city. All local officials, from the highest officeholders to the common citizens, could directly address their complaints to the city governor. This governance method, through which the colonial regime imposed its control, sowed division among the population, weakening social cohesion. We can observe this in the conflicts and disagreements among the *aksakal* (elder), neighborhood *ellikboshis* (community leaders), *kazi* (judges), *mutawalli* (custodians), and even mosque imams.

Such a system is a classic example of the colonial strategy of “divide and rule,” a policy aimed at weakening the unity of the society.

Despite the existence of a local governance structure in Sebzar, one of the ancient districts of Tashkent, as we've seen, these structures were all established by the Tsarist government to keep the population under control. In doing so, the Russian Empire expanded its colonial system, creating an environment where the local population was placed under its direct rule. In the context of the colonial system, although the Sebzar district, one of the ancient centers of Tashkent, had a local governance structure, as we have seen above, all of these were established by the Tsarist government to maintain control over the population. By doing so, the Russian Empire created conditions for its independent rule over the population, thus expanding the colonial system.

<sup>26</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 2707, paper 94.

<sup>27</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 346, paper 27.

<sup>28</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 1330, paper 3.

<sup>29</sup> CSA of Uz. Fund 36, file 2345, paper 88.