



THE HISTORY OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE TASHKENT MILITARY COURT COMMISSION IN F.K. GIRS' REPORTS

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ANNOTATION: This article provides information on the history and activities of the Military Court Commission operating in Tashkent within the Turkestan General-Governorship, based on the reports of the emperor's secret advisor F.K. Girs. It discusses the unlawful rulings of the commission, as well as its negligence in handling criminal cases.

KEYWORDS: Military Court Commission, F.K. Girs' reports, Turkestan General-Governorship, Mayor Pokrovskiy.

The activities of the Russian Empire's Military-Sud commissions, which hold a special place in the history of colonial Uzbekistan, continue to attract the interest of many researchers. In this context, questions about the operational activities, structural composition, powers, and the level of transparency of the judicial processes of these military-court commissions can be somewhat answered by the reports of Feodor Karlovich Girs, the secret advisor who inspected Turkestan on behalf of the emperor. In his inspection reports, Girs provided insights into the operating procedures, staffing issues, financial conditions, number of cases handled, and other aspects of the six military-court commissions operating in the region. The following section focuses on the activities of the Tashkent military-court commission.

The Tashkent Military Court Commission was established under the command of the military governor of the Syr Darya province and operated continuously. The commission was chaired by Mayor Pokrovskiy, with seven auditors working as part of the court. According to Girs' official report, between 1880 and 1882, the commission received 310 cases involving civilian administration personnel. These were added to 34 pending cases from 1879, resulting in a total of 344 cases under consideration. Of these, 233 cases were judged. By December 1, 1882, 111 cases remained unresolved, but by July 1, 1883, this number had decreased to 92. Only 8 of these 92 cases had been delayed for objective reasons beyond the Commission's control, while the rest were delayed due to internal issues within the commission itself.

The inspection report notes that between 1881 and 1882, the long-term illness of two auditors and the death of a third auditor caused delays in the consideration of 24 cases. Despite 44 people being held in custody, these delays seriously hampered the judicial process. Some cases, which had recently been filed, were not assigned to auditors. However, document checks revealed that seven of these cases were filed in the commission by November 17, 1882, and the eighth case was presented on December 10, 1882, indicating that the explanations given in the official records were not accurate.

There were also instances where unrelated criminal cases were combined inappropriately. For example, a case involving document forgery and one involving murder were merged, even though they were completely unrelated. This combined case had 17 accused individuals, five of whom were held in custody. Only one of these was accused of murder,



while the others were charged with document forgery. This case was not resolved because one accused individual had not been presented to the commission. The commission did not notify higher authorities about this issue until May 28, 1883, even though the case had been presented to the commission back in April 1882.

In addition, three unrelated theft cases from 1881 in Tashkent and 1882–1883 in the Qurama district were merged into one case, involving 10 accused individuals, five of whom were held in custody. Some of the delays were explained by ongoing investigations in the Khojand district. However, brief and unclear comments such as "not considered," "comparing cases," and "copy is being prepared" were made regarding many unresolved cases. The review considered these explanations as unfounded and attributed them to the negligence of the commission chairman and his lack of attention to duty. Given the presence of seven auditors, the review noted that appointing temporary replacements for the sick auditors was within the chairman's responsibilities and would not have been a difficult task.

The review suggested that the merging of unrelated cases might have been an intentional tactic to delay proceedings. This assumption was confirmed in the analysis of the cases of Magizov and Abdulvaliyev. These individuals were accused of the murder of Izmailova and were tried by the Tashkent Military-Court Commission on April 17, 1882. Initially sentenced to seven years of hard labor, they were later imprisoned, but on August 12, the district staff returned the case for additional investigation. Subsequently, the commission combined the case of murder with another involving the forgery of postal money orders. As a result, Magizov, who had no connection to the forgery case, was kept in custody until the case was resolved, which took much longer due to the added complexity of the case.

The inefficiency of the Tashkent Military Court Commission becomes even more apparent when compared to the operations of other commissions. In 1882, the Tashkent commission handled 225 cases, which means that each of the seven auditors processed an average of 32 cases. In contrast, the Samarkand Military Court Commission handled 126 cases in the same year, and the Margilan Commission handled 76 cases. These figures show that the Tashkent commission's performance was nearly four times less efficient than those in Samarkand and Margilan.

The review attributed these inefficiencies to the negligence of the commission chairman, Mayor Pokrovskiy, who failed to properly oversee the auditors' activities, as well as the lack of sufficient supervision by the provincial military commander. According to the law, the military commander was required to regularly inspect the work of the commission and approve the case lists. The review focused on the case of Tsedeyko, showing that verdicts in the commission often depended not on the real content of the case files but on external factors.

Tsedeyko, a Meschian from Khojand, was accused of embezzling state funds in 1878. Initially, he was arrested, and after a partial investigation, the case was sent to the Tashkent Military Court Commission. The case was mishandled, with multiple contradictory verdicts being passed over five years. Eventually, Tsedeyko was acquitted, showing that the entire investigation and trial process was conducted one-sidedly, with an emphasis on protecting the responsibility of the accused's superiors. The review also highlighted procedural errors in the case.

Similar inefficiencies and delays were seen in the Abdulin case, where prolonged detentions and unjustified delays occurred. Abdulin was kept in custody for more than six years due to the commission's inefficiency.



In conclusion, the activities of the Tashkent Military Court Commission were characterized by systemic inefficiencies, organizational disorder, and violations of procedural law, all of which led to the violation of the rights of the accused, contrary to the principles of judicial fairness.

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