

MEASURES TO COMBAT INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN TURKEY IN  
THE PERIOD OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE*D.D.Toshtemirov**Doctoral student of KarSU*

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**Abstract**

As we know, although the Republic of Turkestan lived for a short time, it got its place in the history of Uzbekistan. The difficult conditions in the republic, that is, the derailment of the economy due to political contradictions, the fact that social problems have become extremely acute, and the country has become the center of various epidemics, demanded special attention to health care. The Soviet government established the system based on its ideals. This process took place in Turkestan in a very complicated situation.

**Keywords:** Russian Empire, Turkestan, "Yustinianova plague", Epidemic, Ichterlama, "Black Death", "Spanish flu", Tashkent, Andijan, trachoma, leprosy.

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The epidemic of 541-580 years known as "Justinian Plague" originated in the Eastern Roman Empire, spread throughout the Middle East and killed about 1 million people. In 1346-1353, 50 million people died in the epidemic known as "Black Death" in Europe. more than one person will be a victim. After the First World War, about 100 million people died from the "Spanish flu" epidemic.<sup>1</sup> The population of Central Asia has also suffered from epidemics since ancient times. Especially due to the hot climate, cholera is common. For example, the malaria epidemic was one of the real disasters for the Turkestan region, which caused frequent recurrence of epidemics. In 1881, there was a malaria epidemic in Yangi Margilon, in 1894 in Tashkent uezd, and 35 percent of the population died in Toytepa. Whole families died because of this disease<sup>2</sup>.

The fight against epidemics is one of the issues in the attention of all countries, and measures to fight against them have been constantly organized. In particular, certain works were carried out in this regard in Turkestan during the Soviet period. The measures to establish the health sector were carried out together with sanitary-epidemic work. In this period, extremely complex historical conditions prevailed, political, socio-economic problems in the country intensified, the living conditions of the population finally became impoverished, civil war, due to natural disasters, drought and, as a result, famine among the people.

In order to prevent the spread of infectious diseases and epidemics among the population, the Soviet state adopted the decrees "Measures on internal sweating", "Anti-epidemic measures", "On the establishment of a special commission to improve the sanitary conditions in the republic". On May 23, 1918, the special order No. 162 of the government of the Turkestan ASSR on the fight against cholera was published<sup>3</sup>.

In Turkestan, the establishment of the health sector has become important in the fight against epidemics. The employees of the newly established health departments and treatment facilities were

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<sup>1</sup> ru.m.wikipedia.org

<sup>2</sup> National Archives of Uzbekistan, fund R-40, list 1, case 400, page 92.

<sup>3</sup> National Archives of Uzbekistan, fund R-40, list 1, case 400, pages 92-99.

entrusted with tasks such as the establishment of local medical service networks, sanitary education, and the fight against epidemics. Arrangements were also made to establish a military-sanitary department in Turkestan.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, the fight against epidemics was at the center of the activities of the health departments of the country. The danger of epidemics demanded that the military-sanitary department be charged with complex tasks and constantly monitor the situation.

A special commission was established in the republic to coordinate anti-epidemic measures. The commission included one representative from the People's Commissariat of Health of Turkestan, the sanitary department of Turkestan, the health department of Tashkent city, the central council of the trade union, the central council of the national economy, the commissariat of internal affairs. The members of the commission were entrusted with the task of developing a systematic plan to combat the epidemic. In this way, a single epidemiological statistical center was formed thanks to the joint action of Turkestan CIS and Turkfront.

Unfavorable socio-political situation in the country, economic impotence prevented large-scale organization of healthcare work. In particular, due to factors such as poor sanitary condition of cities, narrow and dirty city streets, garbage thrown everywhere, shortage of drinking water, population use of various open water bodies, various infectious diseases spread and turned into epidemics.<sup>5</sup> Garbage heaps in cities collected various microbes and spread toxic air around. There were no garbage dumps in the cities. This had a negative impact on the work of the city sanitary system. As a result, the sanitary condition of the cities worsened, and the process of spreading various epidemics occurred frequently in the villages<sup>6</sup>. Cities became the center of epidemics of diseases such as smallpox and malaria. Epidemics of various infectious diseases were spreading in almost all regions of Turkestan. In large cities like Andijan, Fergana, Tashkent, Samarkand, dangerous infectious diseases such as diarrhoea, typhoid fever spread widely. These epidemics required the government to urgently take measures, to allocate large funds for the fight against it, and to increase the number of medical personnel. On the border of Turkestan, there was a constant risk of the spread of extremely dangerous diseases such as cholera and malaria. For example, in March 1918, tropical malaria spread widely in the villages located on the southern side of the city of Samarkand, and the death rate among the patients was very high.<sup>7</sup> In April of this year, cholera spread to all regions of Turkestan. This disease spread especially in Syrdarya, Samarkand and Fergana regions.

In the spring of 1918, a typhus epidemic spread to almost all regions of Central Asia. As a result, from July 1, 1918 to January 1, 1919, 2,771 people with diarrhoea, and 910 people with cholera were registered in Turkestan. Epidemics spreading in the country have affected even industrial and agricultural work.<sup>8</sup> In the following years, the situation worsened. For example, in 1921 only in Samarkand region, diseases such as typhus, scurvy, smallpox (trachoma), scurvy, penidial ulcer, diphtheria, smallpox, cholera and especially malaria spread widely, and the number of patients increased. In the same year, 1,471 people with internal sweating, 1,443 people with repeated sweating, 2,005 people with wounds, 1,596 people with mumps (trachoma), 113 people with cholera, and 38,846 people with malaria were registered in the region.<sup>9</sup> More than 700 patients with penidial ulcer were registered. Therefore, the analysis shows that infectious diseases that occur in hot climates in the country in many cases have become epidemic.

Epidemics often spread in densely populated cities. Therefore, in 1918, the government of the

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<sup>4</sup> National Archives of Uzbekistan, fund R-25, list 1, case 333, page 11.

<sup>5</sup> National Archives of Uzbekistan, fund R-61, list 1, case 57, pages 3-17.

<sup>6</sup> История Бухарской Народной Советской Республики. Сборник документов. (1920-1924 гг.). – Т., 1976. – С. 420.

<sup>7</sup> Самарканд шахрининг 2750 йиллик юбилейига бағишланган. Б. 147.

<sup>8</sup> National Archives of Uzbekistan, fund R-13, list 1, case 24, pages 24, 55-60.

<sup>9</sup> Арипова Т. У. Здравоохранения и здоровье населения Самаркандской области. – С.14-20.

Republic of Turkestan took measures to improve the sanitary condition of the city. For the first time, the position of sanitary inspector was introduced in cities. The sanitary inspector carried out work on the improvement of city sanitation, carried out industrial sanitation and food sanitation control.<sup>10</sup> Also, the sanitary inspector established control over the population's residences and the supply of clean drinking water. They also recorded birth and death rates.<sup>11</sup> The introduction of the position of sanitary inspector in the cities of the country has become important in preventing the spread of epidemics.

Sanitation control for utilities and food was strengthened in cities. For example, in May 1918, 40 homeowners were fined 19,405 rubles according to the report of the doctors of the Samarkand City Sanitary Commission. Sanitary education among the population has been strengthened. In April 1918, in the theater building of Samarkand, V.M. Deich's lecture on diarrhoea.<sup>12</sup>

The government of Turkestan tried to use all possibilities in the fight against epidemics. The People's Commissariat of the Republic of Turkestan carried out measures to mobilize all medical workers for the fight against epidemics. The hospital council of Tashkent city forced all the doctors who retired from the military field into treatment. V.O. Voyno-Yassnetsky, Ya. B. Magnetstein, Matveev, Zhuravlev, Urumyanits, Uspenskaya, Bernadsky, A.P. Shishov, A.A. Experienced doctors such as Blum and Nikiforov returned to work.<sup>13</sup> In the fight against epidemics in the country, the involvement of European medical workers became important. Experienced doctors entered the population and selflessly fought to end epidemics.

Instead, the state of epidemics in the country was discussed at the conferences of the health sector. Conferences on the fight against epidemics were held frequently, and the issues of eliminating infectious diseases were discussed. On March 1, 1920, the documents of the second meeting of the All-Russian Union of Medical Workers stated: "Probably, no other work after the military front has produced as many victims as ours. The consequences of the four-year war brought humanity to several million invalids and a number of epidemics. We show all the determination and citizens We must direct all the experiences of the war to the fight against epidemics."<sup>14</sup>

In the same year, the head of the sanitary-epidemic department of Turkestan health commissariat, Kanovalov, took part in the conference on sanitary-epidemic issue in Moscow.<sup>15</sup> At such conferences, medical specialists from different parts of the country shared their experience in fighting epidemics.

From September 1921, the sweating epidemic increased. 30% of people in Avliyoota district, up to 25% in Samarkand district (Zarafshan workers) were infected with infectious diseases. The reason is that by this time, a very complicated situation had arisen in the healthcare sector of Turkestan. Due to the poor medical service, harsh living and working conditions, cholera, malaria, shingles, trachoma, leprosy and other infectious diseases spread widely among the population, and the population in some places was not given any help in fighting them<sup>16</sup>.

In the Amudarya region itself, 84 people with infectious diseases were registered, 71 of them died. During this period, 2,152 patients with infectious diseases were registered in Turkestan only in the summer months, of which 1,294, that is, 55%, died.<sup>17</sup>

The Health Commissariat needed a large amount of money to prevent infectious diseases from

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<sup>10</sup> National Archives of Uzbekistan, fund R-40, list 1, case 77, page 41.

<sup>11</sup> National Archives of Uzbekistan, fund R-61, list 1, case 57, page 12.

<sup>12</sup> Княжинский Б.П. Очерки по истории медико-санитарного дела в Самарканде и Самаркандской области (1868-1937 гг).—С. 96-104.

<sup>13</sup> Мобилизация врачей // Наша газета, 1918, №117, 12 июня.

<sup>14</sup> National Archives of Uzbekistan, fund R-25, list 1, case 333, page.

<sup>15</sup> National Archives of Uzbekistan, fund R-25, list 1, case 333, page 11.

<sup>16</sup> Хайдаров И. Ўзбекистонда Иқтисодий кенгашлар фаолияти(1917-1934-йиллар).-Б.40-41.

<sup>17</sup> Отчет о деятельности СНК и Экономического Совета Туркеспублики на 1 октября.-Т., 1922.-С.174

spreading to this extent and to set up public health work. For this purpose, the Commissariat calculated the amount of necessary funds and handed it over to the Economic Council of Turkestan (TIK). However, TIK's capabilities in this matter were limited, and it could not allocate the required amount from the budget. Because the budget of the Turkestan ASSR was ruthlessly cut by the Center, the raw materials obtained in this country were more important for the Center than the health of the population.

Therefore, at this time, the aid provided by the Center for the fight against the epidemic was a very small amount - only 7 titanium water boilers and 3 bathroom equipment and 3,700 gold rubles.<sup>18</sup>

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