

## Internal Political Administration In The Khiva Khanate In The Late 18th And Early 19th Centuries

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**Abstract:** In this article, the author examines the characteristics of the system of internal political administration that developed in the Khiva Khanate in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

**Keywords:** Khiva, the Kungrat dynasty, khan, inak, large landowners, centralised state administration, tribal chiefs, bi, administrative and political reforms, machit-kavm, vilayat (province).

**Аннотация:** В статье автор освещает особенности системы внутреннего политического управления, сложившейся в Хивинском ханстве в конце XVIII — начале XIX веков.

**Ключевые слова:** Хива, династия Кунгратов, хан, инак, крупные землевладельцы, централизованное государственное управление, родоплеменные вожди, бий, административно-политические реформы, мачит-кавм, вилайат (область).

The profound internal political crisis that arose in the Khiva Khanate in the second half of the 18th century completely disrupted the khanate's economic and cultural development. The interference in Khiva's internal affairs by the emirs of the neighbouring Bukhara Khanate, the devastating raids by nomads, and the conquest of Khorezm by the Iranian Shah Nader Shah—who for a time turned it into one of his provinces—significantly exacerbated the crisis of political power in the Khiva Khanate. Furthermore, the leaders of the Turkmen Yomud tribe, who ruled the khanate for three years (1767–1770), plundered the country and brought it to complete ruin.

V. V. Bartold wrote that in the 18th century ‘the Khiva Khanate had to endure an even more severe crisis than Bukhara. After the death of Anush Khan, power passed into the hands of the inaks, analogous to the title of ataliks in Bukhara. Most often, they invited representatives of the Chingizids from the Kyrgyz-Kazakh steppes and enthroned them.’ [1].

In the struggle of the settled population of Khiva against the rule of the Turkmen-Yomuds, Muhammad Amin Inak emerged onto the political scene. He was a representative of the major feudal landowners of Khiva. Shermuhammad Munis, in his historical work “Firdaws-ul-Ikbal”, provides the following account of Muhammad Amin Inak: ‘He possessed such grandeur and strength of spirit that anyone who saw him began to tremble’. In courage and bravery, he had no equal in his time, and in generosity and nobility, he was one of a kind” [2].

Muhammad Amin's ancestors, having served as officials under the former Khiva khans, defended the interests of the leaders of the nomadic tribes. However, they had long since separated from the tribes from which they originated, both economically and ethnically, and had become representatives of a new class of feudal nobility who owned vast tracts of land. They were in a state of open confrontation with the leaders of the old nomadic tribes.

In the struggle for power within the khanate, those who rallied around Muhammad Amin-inak were natives of regions that had long been engaged in agriculture, particularly Khazarasp. The information regarding Muhammad Amin-inak's inner circle is particularly noteworthy. The Khorezm historian Muhammad Yusuf Bayani writes in his work “Tarikh-i Khorezm” (“History of Khorezm”): ‘When Muhammad Amin-inak set out to seek help from the Emir of Bukhara, Daniyal, he took 63 of his close associates with him. Among them was Avaz-mirab—the father of Shermuhammad Munis, who at that time held the post of mirab (head of water distribution) and later became a kushbeg. Most of Muhammad Amin Inak's followers belonged to the new nobility: Shamurad-bek, Abdukarim-bek, Shanyaz-bek, Muhammad Riza-bek (son of Ashurbay), Baynazar-bay, Bobo-bek (son of Niyaz-parvanachi), Naiman Rahimberdi-bek,

Oloberdi Udaychi (son of Khudayberdi-jarchi). Among those accompanying Muhammad Amin Inak to Bukhara were also three wealthy merchants and other individuals' [3].

Relying on the support of new large landowners, merchants and the clergy, Muhammad Amin Inak placed on the throne those he wished and deposed those he did not favour. Those who ascended the throne were merely nominal khans, acting at the inak's behest; consequently, the inak ruled the country single-handedly on behalf of these khans. The reason why Muhammad Amin managed affairs on behalf of so many 'puppet' khans was that the large landowners, having seized power, did not dare to violate the ancient sacred custom. According to this custom, only a descendant of Genghis Khan had the right to sit upon the khan's throne or to assume it. However, in order to enthrone and proclaim a khan, the feudal lords sought out, first and foremost, individuals among the descendants of Genghis Khan who were good for nothing, leading idle lives, short-sighted, weak, and lacking in initiative, yet at the same time loyal and obedient to them. Often the choice fell on nomads from the distant steppes, for example minors such as Abulgazi V, or on cowardly and narrow-minded individuals. In this way, Inak and his associates were able to easily implement the policies they required in the name of these 'khans'. Between 1770 and 1804, the Inaks placed more than ten Chingizids on the Khiva throne; these ruled for only a short time, at best 1–2 or 3 years, and sometimes for a very brief period—1 or 5–6 months. Among them were Bulak Khan, Akim Khan, Abdulaziz Khan, Artik-Gazi Khan, Abdullah Khan, Akim Khan, Abulfayz Khan, Yigdyr Khan (three times), Fulad-Gazi Khan, Abulgazi Khan IV and, finally, Abulgazi Khan V, who ascended the throne twice.

Nevertheless, Muhammad Amin, himself a descendant of the Kungrat clan, founded the Inak dynasty, whose members hailed from major Uzbek clans, including the Kungrats.

After Muhammad Amin's death, his son Avaz-Inak, who ruled Khiva just as his father had done between 1790 and 1804, did not take the Khiva throne himself, but acted on behalf of the khan whom he had placed on the throne. Finally, Avaz-inak's son, Eltuzar Khan, overthrew the Chingizid Abulgazi V, proclaimed himself Khan of Khiva, and set about his task with zeal, striving to create a great state akin to the renowned realm of the Khorezmshahs, which had once been so powerful. Thus, Eltuzar Khan founded the dynasty of Khans from the Kungrat clan in Khiva.

The Russian scholar V. Bartold writes that Eltuzar Khan bore the title of Khorezmshah: 'Khorezmshah is the title of the rulers of Khorezm. This title existed even before the Arab conquest of Khorezm. And during the Islamic period, this title was retained by the Khorezmian rulers. The fact that this pre-Islamic title did not lose its significance in modern times is a unique phenomenon for Central Asia.' The only source attesting to the emergence and succession of the pre-Islamic Khorezm-shahs is Abu Rayhan al-Biruni's work "Monuments of Past Generations" [4].

Following the tragic death of Eltuzar Khan in 1806, Muhammad Rahim Khan I ascended the throne. He put an end to the rule of the inaks and, proud of his true lineage, sought to remove from power and administration all those who yearned for the old order and supported it. By decree of the khan, a Supreme Council (Oliy Kengash) was established in the khanate under his chairmanship. The first member of the council was the khan's trusted aide, Muhammad Yusuf-mehtar; the second was the highly intelligent, brave, kind-hearted and affable vizier, Muhammad-yar Kushbegi. Another member of the council was the khan's beloved and respected brother, Kutlug Murad Inak.

The Russian captain N.N.Muravyov, who arrived in Khiva in 1819, wrote: "In each clan, there were 32 officials under the inak, including biys and their equivalents. They possessed special rights, privileges and duties and were held in high esteem" [5].

Muhammad Rahim Khan abolished their system of governance, but, so as not to turn the people against him, retained the titles themselves.

The eminent historian M.Yu.Yuldashev, in his work 'Feudal Landownership and the State Structure in the Khiva Khanate', writes: 'He left the lands belonging to the clans, as well as the property of these people, in their possession' [6].

In carrying out administrative reforms, Muhammad Rahim Khan put an end to the tribal system of governance among the former nomadic Uzbeks, who had adopted a sedentary way of life and firmly settled on the land. He assigned the population to 'machit-kavmas' (communities attached to mosques), and the mosques to administrative regions (vilayets). Large landholdings in Khiva were established not through the confiscation of land belonging to the tribal nobility, but by seizing land belonging to the lower strata of those

same tribes. For this reason, Muhammad Rahim Khan's reforms provoked discontent among the broad masses of the people. The majority of peasants in agricultural regions took an active part in the wars of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. These wars inevitably led to consequences that were undesirable for the ruling classes, as the peasants, especially the landless poor, rose up to fight for land.

Muhammad Rahim Khan realised, even at the beginning of his reign, just how strong the anger and indignation of the people could be.

Muhammad Yusuf Bayani writes in his work "Tarikh-i Khorezm": 'In the month of Jumadal-Awwal 1221 (August 1806), the bulk of the Beshkala dehkans rose up against the khan and marched on Khiva'. Although the khan crushed this disorganised popular militia, fearing similar events, Muhammad Rahim Khan once again placed the Chingizid Abulgazi Khan V, who had been deposed by Eltuzar Khan in 1804, on the Khiva throne, whilst he himself remained as inak to the khan" [7]. Muhammad Rahim-inak ruled the country on his behalf for some time. About five months later, the Khiva emirs once again proclaimed Muhammad Rahim as khan in place of Abulgazi Khan. N. I. Veselovsky writes: 'Muhammad Rahim Khan not only consolidated his power in the country, but also enhanced the khanate's prestige. He achieved this by eliminating rebellious relatives, pacifying the Uzbeks who had raised their heads following the death of Eltuzar Khan, forming kinship ties with the descendants of the Sayyids (by marrying their daughter), and organising military campaigns" [8].

By this period, the growth in the number of large, wealthy feudal landowners and the widespread circulation of money in regions where a subsistence economy had previously prevailed inevitably led to changes in the distribution system, as well as exacerbating social inequality and intensifying the contradictions between the rich and the poor. The dispossession of the dekhans continued both before and after the annexation of the Khiva Khanate to Russia. The process of dispossession and deprivation of land among the poorest ('adna') and middle-class ('avsat') dekhans became widespread in the region. The growth of large landholdings contributed to the development of trade, which, in turn, led to the further consolidation of the feudal economy. Ultimately, this led to the destruction of the old institutions of political governance and the creation of new ones.

As their economic position strengthened, large landowners increasingly concentrated wealth in their own hands, which prompted them to make more active use of political power in their own interests.

Thus, the restoration and consolidation of a centralised feudal state in Khiva were driven by the needs of economic development. This objective was realised during the reign of Muhammad Rahim Khan and the subsequent khans of the Kungrat dynasty.

'It can be said that Muhammad Rahim Khan created an entirely new state,' writes N. N. Muravyov, 'and now this state ranks among the most powerful khanates in Asia' [9].

To sum up, it can be said that by the beginning of the 19th century in Khiva, as a result of the rule of the khans of the Kungrat dynasty, the significance and authority of the central government had increased considerably. In essence, the needs of economic development in an agrarian country urgently demanded precisely this level of centralisation of the khan's power.

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