

Legal and historical aspects of establishment and development of the Government in the Republic of Tatarstan

The foundations of contemporary Tatarstan were laid in 1920.

The Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia, the appeal “To All the Working Muslims of Russia and the East”, the first Constitution of the RSFSR of 1918 and other acts became the legislative basis for the national policy at the initial stage of the Soviet state formation.

The decision to establish an autonomous Tatar Republic was taken at a meeting of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party on January 26, 1920. The allocation of territorial autonomy was aimed at the organisation of governance with due account for the specific ethnic, local, and linguistic features of the population.

At the end of February 1920, the Regulations on the Tatar SSR were published, which defined its status, territory, and governing bodies.

The establishment of the Tatar Republic and its government took place in three stages, the landmark dates were: May 27, June 25, and September 28, 1920. Each date was of crucial importance.

On 27 May 1920, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People’s Commissars of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic adopted a joint resolution “On the Establishment of the Autonomous Tatar Socialist Soviet Republic”, which consolidated the foundations of the republic’s State legal status and determined the structure of supreme authorities and local bodies.

The resolution was the first step towards the establishment of State administration bodies – the Council of People’s Commissars and people’s commissariats. For organising such work during the transition period prior to convocation of the First Constituent Congress of the Councils of the autonomy, all the fullness of power in the republic was transferred to the Provisional Revolutionary Committee.

On June 25, 1920 the Act on Transfer of Powers to the Provisional Revolutionary Committee was signed by the Kazan Provincial Executive Committee. From that day on, the “transitional government” took up its duties, and the Kazan Provincial Executive Committee was dissolved. June 25 can be considered the beginning of the transition from the province to the republic.

June 25, 1920 was declared the day of proclamation of the Autonomous Tatar Soviet Socialist Republic by the resolution of the Presidium of the Kazan Provincial Executive Committee. From 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. a large-scale clean-up event was organised, the beginning of which was announced by a cannon shot. On that day, the

building of the Tatar Soviet Theatre and the monument to Mullanur Vakhitov were laid, the parade of troops of the Kazan garrison and a rally at the Suyumbike Tower were held. At 7 p.m., a ceremonial meeting of the Plenum of the Council of Deputies, members of various commissions, executive committees, and trade unions was held, followed by a concert. In the evening, an electric cinema was working on Vakhitov Square.

The festive events were held in all major settlements of the republic.

The Provisional Revolutionary Committee acted as a legislative and executive body, consisting of 7 persons. Its work was headed by Sahibgaray Said-Galiyev, a veteran of the First World War and the Civil War. The Committee incorporated heads of departments, who later became People's Commissars. Each of them was responsible for the state of affairs in his area of governance.

Major organisational issues were considered by the Council convened on the initiative of its Chairman. In total, 28 meetings of the Council were held. In addition, decisions on urgent issues were taken by its Presidium.

Decisions of the revolutionary committee were formalised by resolutions binding on the territory of the Republic. During the period of the Committee's work, a total of 30 resolutions were adopted.

The main task of the Provisional Committee was to organise the First Constituent Congress of the Councils of the Autonomous Tatar Soviet Socialist Republic, which took place on September 26 and 27, 1920. At the Congress, the Central Executive Committee (CEC ATSSR) was established. Its powers included the establishment of the Council of People's Commissars.

On September 28, 1920, the Protocol on Approving the Composition of the Council of People's Commissars of the Tatar Republic was adopted. This day is the official day of establishing the Government of the Republic.

The first resolution of the Council of People's Commissars was dated September 30, 1920.

On December 3, 1920, the Regulations on the All-Tatar Central Executive Committee were approved.

In turn, the 5th CEC (December 3-5, 1925) adopted the "General Regulations on People's Commissariats of the Tatar ASSR", which defined the structure, functions, and authorities of people's commissariats.

To directly govern certain branches of State administration, people's commissariats were established as autonomous entities or united with corresponding people's commissariats of the RSFSR.

The united commissariats were obliged to be governed by the orders of the corresponding People's Commissariat of the RSFSR, while the autonomous ones were independent.

The People's Commissar was the sole decision maker on all issues assigned to the commissariat. But the commissariat also had a board, which in case of disagreement with the decision of the People's Commissar, could appeal against it to the Council of People's Commissars or the ATSSR CEC Presidium.

In order to represent the interests of the republic with all-Russian bodies, a representative office of the Tatar ASSR was established at the RSFSR People's Commissariat for Nationalities.

The representative office was headed by a representative of the Republic appointed by the ATSSR CEC Presidium. It aimed to represent the interests of the Tatar Republic at the meetings of the RSFSR bodies, where issues related to the Republic were discussed.

At the meeting of the 6th CEC of the ATSSR (September 10-17, 1926), the "Regulations on the Council of People's Commissars of the TSSR" were approved for the first time, according to which the Council of People's Commissars was responsible for the general management of the republic.

Its decrees and resolutions were binding on the entire territory of the Tatar Republic. But both the CEC and its Presidium also performed some governing functions. The lack of a clear division of powers resulted in parallelism in the activities of the CEC and the Council of People's Commissars.

The legal status of people's commissariats was established by regulations on them, which were approved by the All-Tatar CEC. For example, "Regulations on the People's Commissariat of Justice of the Tatar Soviet Socialist Republic" was approved as early as in 1920, granting it the status of the "supreme body of legal protection in the Tatar SSR".

Some people's commissariats have become sectoral leaders on a national scale. For example, People's Commissar of Agriculture Yunus Validov, based on the Agrarian Code of 1922, launched activities to radically transform backward agriculture; economically prosperous, new agricultural settlements of the republic became an example for the entire rural sector of the country. In the republic, People's Commissar of Justice Gimaz Bogautdinov formed a network of institutions for training qualified personnel for the Volga and the Urals regions. An important

component of the work started was the expansion of the Tatar language, training of personnel and their involvement into management structures: the republic headed the development of the system of national education and science. According to contemporary scientists, largely owing to the initiative of the republic's leaders, the Soviet state was building new republics on the model of the ATSSR.

In the 1920s, there was a discussion at the level of the centre and autonomies about raising the status of autonomous republics and the division of powers between central and local authorities. In 1922, on the eve of the 10th All-Russian Congress of Soviets, there was a struggle for the inclusion of autonomous republics in the USSR directly, independently from the RSFSR. On December 26, Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Tatar Republic Kashaf Mukhtarov spoke on this issue in Moscow. However, no major changes have been made.

In order to adapt the federal laws of the RSFSR to the conditions of the republic, the supreme bodies of the Tatar ASSR had the right to make amendments to them corresponding to its specific ethnic and local features. These amendments were approved by the supreme bodies of the RSFSR. Using this right, the Tatar ASSR submitted additions to the Civil, Criminal, Land and other codes of the RSFSR, which were later approved by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee. For example, the Resolution of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR "On Amendments to the Civil Procedural Code for the Autonomous Tatar SSR", approved on August 11, 1924, established that the writ of execution should be issued in one of the republic's official languages.

The formation of the new Soviet political and governance system was directly related to the Basic Law. The 1918 Constitution of the RSFSR proclaimed the Russian Soviet Republic as a federation of Soviet national republics, but without defining the legal status of national republics and their governments. Further on, regulation of this issue was reflected in the 1925 Constitution of the RSFSR, where Chapter 4 appeared, devoted to autonomous republics and regions. This chapter also contained provisions on the republics' governments.

According to the 1925 Constitution of the RSFSR, the republics could adopt their own constitutions provided that they were preliminary approved by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Congress of Soviets of the RSFSR.

In the Tatar Republic, the first draft Constitution was developed in 1926, it consisted of 5 sections, 7 chapters and 91 articles, fixing the current territorial composition of 12 cantons.

The Government status was also reflected in the draft. According to Article 41, general management and administration was carried out by the Council of People's Commissars. The Government consisted of its Chairman, his Deputy and People's

Commissars. It also included representatives of the all-Russian people's commissariats and departments with the right of deciding or consulting vote.

However, the draft Constitution of 1926 was not finally approved by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee and the Congress of Soviets of the RSFSR.

The first Constitution of the TASSR of the Soviet period which officially came into force was the Constitution of 1937.

The Constitution consisted of 11 chapters and 114 articles. The Republic was proclaimed a socialist State of workers and peasants. It consisted of 60 districts and two cities directly subordinate to the Republic: Kazan and Zelenodolsk.

The Council of People's Commissars ceased to be an executive body of the CEC, it took over the majority of managerial competencies. Its importance in the system of State bodies of the autonomous republic increased, but not a single autonomous people's commissariat remained in the TASSR government: all of them were directly subordinated to the corresponding people's commissariats of the RSFSR.

During the Great Patriotic War, the structure of power in the country was changed by creating the State Defence Committee, an extraordinary body with full military, political, and economic power in the USSR. In October 1941, the Kazan Defence Committee appeared, which was headed by First Secretary of the Tatar Regional Committee of the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks Aleksandr Alemasov. In close cooperation with the Committee, the Government was engaged in the formation of country's military and industrial support base, the development of defence industries.

The Evacuation Department at the Council of People's Commissars of the TASSR was in charge of the planned placement of the evacuated population and various industrial enterprises. The Committee for Recording and Distribution of Labour Force was also established. Structural reorganisation and optimisation started at the level of ministries and departments to meet the needs of the front.

During the war, the TASSR became a republic of heavy industry and mechanical engineering. The results of industrial transformation achieved during the war period predetermined the further development of the region.

The post-war history of Tatarstan is characterised by rapid modernisation processes, which also affected the Republic's Government. On 15 March 1946, as part of the All-Union reform, the Council of People's Commissars was transformed into the Council of Ministers of the Tatar ASSR, and People's Commissariats into ministries.

The Council of Ministers retained the status of the supreme executive and administrative State power authority in the TASSR. It organised and controlled the work of republic's ministries and other economic institutions.

Since 1955, the sphere of activity of the Government began to expand, but it lacked powers. The response to the challenges of time was the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the TASSR No.261-a of May 10, 1966 "On Establishment of the Bureau to the Council of Ministers of the Tatar ASSR". Structural changes allowed the government to reorganise its work to respond to emerging problems in a quick and timely manner.

The Government issued resolutions and orders. The resolutions came into force after their publication in the Tatar and Russian languages in the newspapers "*Sovet Tatarstany*" and "*Sovetskaya Tataria*". Urgent and important resolutions of the Council of Ministers were subject to wide and immediate publication by radio or by telegraph.

The next stage of the Government formation was associated with the adoption of the USSR Constitution of 1977 and the constitutions of constituent and autonomous republics.

A new Constitution of the TASSR was adopted in 1978. It was the last Constitution of the Soviet period; it comprised 10 sections, 16 chapters and 161 articles. Chapter 12 was devoted to the Council of Ministers, which was authorised to resolve all issues of public administration attributed to the jurisdiction of the TASSR.

The competence of the Council of Ministers and its Presidium, their rules of procedures, as well as the list of ministries, State committees and other public administration bodies were determined by the Law on the TASSR Council of Ministers, which was adopted on August 23, 1979.

The Law defined the Government as the supreme executive and administrative body of State power in the Tatar ASSR, and its authorities in the following areas: economy, social development and culture, finance, credits and prices, labour and wages, science and technology, legality, security and defence capabilities of the country. The Law also listed 16 ministries and 9 State committees. To resolve economic disputes between enterprises and organisations, the Council of Ministers operated the State Arbitration Court of the TASSR.

Presidium of the TASSR Council of Ministers acted as a permanent body for the implementation of public administration plans.

The new political course of the country in the late 1980s and early 1990s served as a catalyst for civic activity of the peoples, and the question of political reform of society was put on the agenda. In April 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR

significantly expanded the rights of autonomies. On August 30, 1990, the Supreme Soviet of TASSR adopted the “Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Tatar Soviet Socialist Republic”, which initiated fundamental changes in the State structure of Tatarstan: in 1991, the post of President was established, and in 1992, the Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan was adopted.

In the new Constitution, the Government is no longer called the “supreme” body, and the top management functions have been transferred to the President. However, this did not mean diminution of its status: the Government, like the President, represents the Republic.

On July 5, 1991, by resolution of the Supreme Council of the TASSR, the Council of Ministers was transformed into the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Tatarstan, which included the Prime Minister, 2 first deputy prime ministers, 6 deputy prime ministers (two as “double-hats”), the head of the Secretariat of the Cabinet of Ministers, 14 ministers, and 10 heads of State committees.

At present, the structure of executive bodies is approved by a Presidential Decree.

In 2002, the Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan was redrafted. Chapter 3 is devoted to the Government of the Republic defining the general basis of the Cabinet of Ministers’ activities. Under the Constitution, the President of the Republic of Tatarstan heads the system of executive State power bodies in the Republic, while the Cabinet of Ministers is held accountable to the President.

The legal status of the Cabinet of Ministers is set out in Law of the Republic of Tatarstan No. 64-ZRT dated April 6, 2005 “On Executive State Power Bodies in the Republic of Tatarstan”; the procedure for exercising authorities is set out in the Government Regulations (*Resolution No. 563 dated December 05, 2005 “On Approving the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Tatarstan - Government of the Republic of Tatarstan and the Statutes on the Office of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Tatarstan - Government of the Republic of Tatarstan”*).

The competence of the Cabinet of Ministers covers almost all spheres of life. Over centenary period of its history, our republic has passed an uneasy way to become one of the most rapidly developing constituent entities of the Russian Federation. The history of the republic is a chronicle of dramatic and glorious events, labour achievements of several generations, which created it with their mind, work, talent and dedication.