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Soviet Nation-Building in Central Asia

The making of the Kazakh and
Uzbek Nations

Grigol Ubiria



Soviet Nation-Building in Central Asia

The demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 resulted in new state-led nation-building projects in Central Asia. The emergence of independent republics spawned a renewed Western scholarly interest in the region's nationality issues. Presenting a detailed study, this book examines the state-led nation-building projects in the Soviet republics of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

Exploring the degree, forms and ways of the Soviet state involvement in creating Kazakh and Uzbek nations, this book places the discussion within the theoretical literature on nationalism. The author argues that both Kazakh and Uzbek nations are artificial constructs of Moscow-based Soviet policymakers of the 1920s and 1930s. This book challenges existing arguments in current scholarship by bringing some new and alternative insights into the role of indigenous Central Asian and Soviet officials in these nation-building projects. It goes on to critically examine post-Soviet official Kazakh and Uzbek historiographies, according to which Kazakh and Uzbek peoples had developed national collective identities and loyalties long before the Soviet era.

This book will be a useful contribution to Central Asian History and Politics, as well as studies of Nationalism and Soviet Politics.

Grigol Ubiria is a Research Associate at the Australian National University's Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies (the Middle East and Central Asia), Australia.

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Abbreviations

| | |
|------------|--|
| AO | Autonomous <i>Oblast</i> (province) |
| ASSR | Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic |
| BPSR | Bukharan People's Soviet Republic |
| CC | Central Committee |
| CEC | Central Executive Committee |
| CP | Communist Party |
| CPSU | Communist Party of the Soviet Union |
| KASSR | Kyrgyz (that is, Kazakh) Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, renamed KazASSR in 1925 |
| KazASSR | Kazak/Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic |
| KhPSR | Khorezm People's Soviet Republic |
| KhSSR | Khorezm Soviet Socialist Republic |
| Likbez | All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for the Liquidation of Illiteracy |
| Narkomnats | People's Commissariat of Nationalities |
| Natsburo | National Bureau |
| N.S. | New Style |
| Politburo | The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union |
| PSR | People's Soviet Republic |
| RCP | Russian Communist Party |
| RCP(B) | Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) |
| Revkom | Revolutionary Committee |
| RSDWP | Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party |
| RSFSR | Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic |
| RYBP | Revolutionary Young Bukharan Party |
| Sovnarkom | Council of People's Commissars |
| Sredazburo | Central Asian Bureau |
| SSR | Soviet Socialist Republic |
| TASSR | Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic |
| TSFSR | Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic |
| TSR | Turkestan Soviet Republic |
| Turkburo | Turkestan Bureau |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Turkkomissia | Turkestan Commission |
| USSR | Union of Soviet Socialist Republics |
| Zhenotdel | Women's Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU |

Note on transliteration

The US Library of Congress transliteration system has been used throughout this book, with the following modifications: *ë* is rendered as ‘e’ (instead of: *ë*), *й* is rendered as ‘i’ (instead of: *й*), *ц* is rendered as ‘ts’ (instead of: *ts*), *э* is rendered as ‘e’ (instead of: *è*), *ю* is rendered as ‘iu’ (instead of: *iu*), *я* is rendered as ‘ia’ (instead of: *ia*). In addition, established English spellings of some well-known Russian names and terms have been preserved in the text and notes: Tolstoy (rather than ‘Tolstoi’), Dostoevsky (rather than ‘Dostoevskii’), Pokrovsky (rather than ‘Pokrovskii’), Yeltsin (rather than ‘El’tsin’), Barthold (rather than ‘Bartol’d’), *glasnost* (rather than *glasnost*), *oblast* (rather than *oblast*). Direct quotations from other sources also have retained their original spellings.

Introduction

Soviet nationality policies in Central Asia—namely in the republics of Karakalpakstan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—have long attracted the attention of researchers working in the areas of politics, history, ethnography, economy, and other fields. For example, Soviet scholars have published a great number of articles and books on the subject, generally making highly positive assessments of Soviet nationality policy goals, practices, and achievements in the region. They highlighted the success of the Soviet regime in solving nationality-related issues in Central Asia based on the Marxist-Leninist principles of ‘national self-determination’, ‘equality of peoples’ and ‘proletarian internationalism’, transforming the local feudal and semi-feudal indigenous communities into the socialist nations by bypassing the capitalist stage of development, developing their national cultures and educational systems, and modernizing their economies.¹ Although censored and politically biased, these Soviet publications provided an important framework for understanding the nature and dynamics of Soviet nationality policies.

In Western (English-language) scholarship on the subject before the 1990s, the Cold War-influenced treatment of Soviet nationality policies dominated the academic discourse. Conventional writings on Soviet Central Asia in the West of that period stressed the colonial character of Moscow’s rule over the local Muslim peoples, equating Soviet nationality policies in the region with the *divide et impera* strategy that was aimed at the ultimate Russification of the natives.² Within this framework, Central Asian republics were described as ‘tactical nation states’,³ serving ‘as a transitional stage to a completely centralized and supra-national world-wide Soviet state’.⁴ And the titular (eponymous) nationalities of these republics—Karakalpaks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyzs, Tajiks, Turkmen, Uzbeks—were all depicted as artificial creations of the Kremlin.⁵ Although some scholarly arguments were made in support of this assertion, no in-depth studies were conducted on the actual processes of nation-building in Soviet Central Asia.

The demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the emergence of independent Central Asian republics spawned a renewed Western scholarly interest in the region’s nationality issues. This revival of interest was primarily the result of new state-led nation-building projects that were launched in each of these republics

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almost immediately after gaining independence. The nationalizing governments of post-Soviet Central Asian republics have sought to remould and strengthen the national identities of their respective titular nations through the creation of new symbols of statehood and nationhood, promotion of de-Sovietized national cultures and rewritten romanticized ethnohistories, as well as reassertion of the dominant position of titular languages in all spheres of public life. The official ideologies of these newly emerged states have portrayed the Russian (both Tsarist and Soviet) past as the period of interruption of their centuries-old statehood traditions as well as of suppression of their languages, cultures, religion and identities.⁶

While the great bulk of the post-1991 Western scholarship on Central Asian nationality issues has been mainly concerned with these post-Soviet nation-building processes in the region, a number of fascinating revisionist studies have also appeared on both Soviet nationality policies in general, and on their relations with Central Asia specifically. These revisionist writings have questioned the long-held conventional view in Western Sovietology that throughout its existence the Russocentric Soviet regime was engaged in a deliberate and premeditated effort to wither away non-Russian nations of the Soviet Union. Instead, they have argued that the Soviet state itself, willingly or inadvertently, had greatly contributed to the consolidation (and in the case of Central Asia even to the emergence) of national identities of the numerous (titular) peoples of the Soviet Union. For instance, according to Ronald Suny, Yuri Slezkine and Rogers Brubaker, who were among the first to develop this revisionist view, the Kremlin, despite its doctrinal support for the merger of nations, had actually reinforced national consciousness of its indigenous minority peoples by granting them their 'own' ethnoterritorial homelands within the Soviet federal system, institutionalizing their ethnonational identities, supporting their national cultures and native-language education systems, and recruiting, training and promoting the native cadres to the various leadership positions.⁷

If the works of the above authors were based on published sources, Terry Martin, using the newly declassified Soviet archival materials, provided ample documentation and comprehensive analysis of how the Soviet regime, throughout the 1920s and 1930s, supported the formation of national territorial units, elites, languages, and cultures in the Soviet borderlands, including Central Asia.⁸ Francine Hirsch, also basing her study on archival research, illustrated the extensive utilization of 'ethnographic knowledge' both in establishing ethnonational categories in the census, and in delineating national-republican boundaries in Central Asia during the 1920s.⁹ Arne Haugen undertook a detailed examination of the decision-making processes that preceded the actual national-territorial delimitation of Soviet Central Asia in 1924.¹⁰ And Adrienne Edgar was the first to conduct an in-depth case study on Soviet nation-building in Central Asia, focussing specifically on the Turkmen case.¹¹

In contrast to the traditional view of the 'Soviet era' Western scholarship that nation-building in Soviet Central Asia was entirely a Kremlin-planned and -directed process, Edgar, Hirsch and Haugen, in their respective works, highlighted

the active role of local native elites in shaping Soviet nationality policies in their republics. Edgar has even asserted that the national identities of Turkmens were not constructed by the Soviets from scratch but built on a long-existing ‘sense of “Turkmen-ness” based on genealogy’.¹² Similar observations have also been made for the Kazakhs. Martha Olcott, for example, has claimed that despite being politically fragmented along various tribal conglomerations, pre-Soviet ‘Kazakhs were one people, with a common language, culture, and economy’.¹³ Others have maintained that it was not the Soviets but local Muslim Central Asian reformists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who sought to develop modern national identities in the region for the first time.¹⁴

Numerous other Western scholars of Central Asia, over the course of the last two decades, have also addressed different aspects of Soviet nationality policies in the region or in particular republics. Among them are Soviet policies towards Islam, emancipation of native Muslim women, collectivization and sedentarization, educational, cultural and language reforms. Contrary to the ‘Soviet era’ Western Sovietology’s one-sided negative assessment of Soviet nationality policies in the region, this post-1991 Western research in the field has been highly polarized. Scholars on the region, for example, disagree about the nature of the Soviet rule in Central Asia—that is, whether it was colonial/imperial.¹⁵ In general, post-1991 Western scholarly publications on the Soviet experience of dealing with nationality issues in the region not only significantly enhanced our understanding of the question but also set a new context for further research.

The present book seeks to build on and contribute to this growing scholarly literature on Soviet nationality policies in Central Asia by conducting a detailed study of state-led nation-building projects in the Soviet republics of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In particular, it aims to explore the degree, forms and ways of the Soviet state involvement in creating Kazakh and Uzbek nations.

There are several important reasons for selecting these two nations as case studies. First, historically up until the 1920s, Central Asia was home to two radically different lifestyles and cultures, sedentary and nomadic. While the territories of modern-day Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan were generally inhabited by the nomadic peoples, the sedentary population of the region was mainly concentrated in what today are Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.¹⁶ Islam was the dominant religion in Central Asia; however, nomads were traditionally less strict in observing religious rites than their sedentary neighbours.¹⁷ Because of these (and other) differences, implementation of nation-building projects among tribal nomadic (Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Karakalpak, and Turkmen) and settled (Uzbek and Tajik) indigenous communities of the region posed different challenges, and accordingly demanded different responses from Soviet policymakers. Soviet Kazakh and Uzbek cases of nation-building perhaps best illustrate these differing challenges and tasks, and thus are most interesting to explore. Second, most of the controversial Soviet nationality policies in Central Asia, such as forced sedentarization of the nomads and Muslim women’s unveiling campaign, which various scholars in the field have debated long and hard, had a greater impact on Kazakh and Uzbek nation-buildings than on others in the region.

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Finally, focussing on Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan—the region's two most populous, ethnically heterogeneous, and politically and economically most influential republics—will provide a better framework for understanding general paradigms of Soviet nation-building in the whole region.

The main argument of this book is that both Kazakh and Uzbek nations are artificial constructs of Moscow-based Soviet policymakers of the 1920s and 1930s. Although this argument is not new, previous scholarship upholding this perspective neither adequately substantiated it nor did it provide in-depth individual or comparative case studies on how Soviet nation-makers forged these previously non-existent nations. Moreover, in recent years, as discussed above, the view that the process of the formation of Soviet Central Asian nations and their respective republics was entirely the Kremlin's endeavour has come under strong criticism from some revisionist scholars, who on their part have stressed the important role of indigenous Soviet officials in these nation-building projects. This book seeks to challenge this dominant revisionist view in current Western scholarship by bringing some new or alternative insights into the subject matter. The book also aims to critically examine post-Soviet official Kazakh and Uzbek historiographies, according to which Kazakh and Uzbek peoples had developed national collective identities and loyalties long before the Soviet rule. Achieving these research objectives requires a theoretical discussion of nationalism, and a historical approach to the Kazakh and Uzbek peoples' pasts.

The book is structured in three parts. The first part of the book (Chapter 1) will present a brief, but comprehensive, overview of theories of nationalism and define key concepts that are most relevant to this book.

The second part of the book (Chapters 2–4) will provide a thorough historical and social analysis of pre-Soviet Central Asia. Organized chronologically, the chapters in this part of the book will build on a discussion of major political developments, identity formations (such as religious, tribal, clan and regional), and complex sociocultural and demographic changes taking place in the region before its Sovietization in 1917–24. The main objective of these chapters is to demonstrate that not only did pre-Soviet Kazakhs and Uzbeks lack national consciousness and identities, but did not even constitute either solid territorial units or single ethnic groups.

The third part (Chapters 5–14) of the book will be mainly concerned with Soviet nation-building policies and practices in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. It will first (Chapter 5) briefly describe the history of the formation of the Soviet Union and the nature of its ethnofederal system. Then Chapters 6 to 13 will provide a detailed analysis of those Soviet nationality policies, primarily focussing on the period of the 1920s and 1930s, which determined the successful creation of Kazakh and Uzbek nations, their collective identities, cultures and national republics. Finally, based on the examples of Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, Chapter 14 will examine the development of Soviet nationality doctrine and policies from the early years of the Soviet state until its demise in 1991.

Notes

- 1 For examples of such works, see O. O. Shikhmuradov, *Torzhestvo Leninskoi natsional'noi politiki v Turkmenistane* (Ashkhabad: Turkgosizdat, 1958); N. Kiikbaev, *Torzhestvo Leninskoi natsional'noi politiki v Kazakhstane* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstan, 1968); R. Kh. Abdushukurov, *Torzhestvo Leninskoi teorii perekhoda otstalykh stran k sotsializmu i kommunizmu, minuia kapitalizm* (Tashkent: Fan, 1972); S. B. Beisembaev, ed. *K sotsializmu, minuia kapitalizm: Istoricheskii opyt KPSS po sotsialisticheskomu stroitel'stvu v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane v 1917–1937 gg.* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1974); G. E. Trapeznikov, *Rastsvet i vzaimovliianie natsional'nykh kul'tur respublik Srednei Azii (1959–1972 gg.)* (Frunze: Ilim, 1975); Z. Kh. Arifkhanova and V. G. Chebotareva, *Reshenie natsional'nogo voprosa v Uzbekistane* (Tashkent: Fan, 1979).
- 2 For example, see Olaf Caroe, 'Soviet Colonialism in Central Asia', *Foreign Affairs* 21, no. 1 (1953): 135–144; Walter Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies* (London: G. Philip, 1952); Michael Rywkin, 'Central Asia and the Price of Sovietization', *Problems of Communism* 13, no. 1 (1964): 7–15; Hugh Seton-Watson, *The New Imperialism* (London: The Bodley Head, 1961), 58–59; Baymirza Hayit, *Soviet Russian Colonialism and Imperialism in Turkistan as an Example of the Soviet Type of Colonialism of an Islamic People in Asia* (Cologne: n.p., 1965); Robert Conquest, ed. *Soviet Nationalities Policy in Practice* (London: The Bodley Head, 1967); Daniel Pipes, 'The Third World Peoples of Soviet Central Asia', in *The Third World: Premises of U.S. Policy*, ed. W. Scott Thompson (San Francisco: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1983), 155–174.
- 3 Gregory J. Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919–1929* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 58.
- 4 Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917–1923*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 296.
- 5 For example, see Geoffrey Wheeler, *The Peoples of Soviet Central Asia* (London: Bodley Head, 1966), 14; Olaf Caroe, *Soviet Empire: The Turks of Central Asia and Stalinism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1967), xiv–xv, xx–xxi, 146–149; Alexandre Bennigsen and Chantal Lemerrier-Quelguy, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, trans. Geoffrey Wheeler and Hubert Evans (London: Pall Mall Press, 1967), 130–134; Alexandre Bennigsen and Marie Broxup, *The Islamic Threat to the Soviet State* (London: Croom Helm, 1983), 138–140.
- 6 On nation-building processes in the post-Soviet Central Asian republics, among many others, see Mariya Y. Omelicheva, ed. *Nationalism and Identity Construction in Central Asia: Dimensions, Dynamics, and Directions* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014); Laura Adams, *The Spectacular State: Culture and National Identity in Uzbekistan* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Sally N. Cummings, ed. *Symbolism and Power in Central Asia: Politics of the Spectacular* (London: Routledge, 2010); Marlene Laruelle, 'The Return of the Aryan Myth: Tajikistan in Search of a Secularized National Ideology', *Nationalities Papers* 35, no. 1 (2007): 51–70; Edward Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics: The Power of 'Blood' in Kazakhstan and Beyond* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004); Ahmet T. Kuru, 'Between the State and Cultural Zones: Nation Building in Turkmenistan', *Central Asian Survey* 21, no. 1 (2002): 71–90; Kirill Nourzhanov, 'The Politics of History in Tajikistan: Reinventing the Samanids', *Harvard Asia Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (2001): 21–30; Reuel R. Hanks, 'A Separate Space?: Karakalpak Nationalism and Devolution in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan', *Europe-Asia Studies* 52, no. 5 (2000): 939–953; Charles Kurzman, 'Uzbekistan: The Invention of Nationalism in an Invented Nation', *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 8, no. 15 (1999): 77–98.
- 7 Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 84–126; Yuri

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- Slezkine, 'The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism', *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (1994): 414–452; Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). These authors have been criticized by Gorenburg for downplaying the other side of Soviet nationality policy that was aimed at Russification of the non-Russian peoples of the USSR. Dmitry Gorenburg, 'Soviet Nationalities Policy and Assimilation', in *Rebounding Identities: The Politics of Identity in Russia and Ukraine*, ed. Dominique Arel and Blair A. Ruble (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006), 273–303.
- 8 Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001).
- 9 Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge & the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).
- 10 Arne Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics in Soviet Central Asia* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).
- 11 Adrienne Lynn Edgar, *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).
- 12 *Ibid.*, 6.
- 13 Martha B. Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, 2nd ed. (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1995), 11.
- 14 For example, see Adeeb Khalid, 'Islam in Contemporary Central Asia', in *Islam in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives*, ed. R. Michael Feener (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), 137–138; Steven Sabol, *Russian Colonization and the Genesis of Kazak National Consciousness* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Kemal H. Karpat, 'The Roots of Kazakh Nationalism: Ethnicity, Islam or Land?', in *In a Collapsing Empire: Underdevelopment, Ethnic Conflicts and Nationalisms in the Soviet Union*, ed. Marco Buttino (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1993), 313–333.
- 15 See, for instance, Mark R. Beissinger, 'Soviet Empire as "Family Resemblance"', *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (2006): 294–303; Adeeb Khalid, 'Introduction: Locating the (Post-) Colonial in Soviet History', *Central Asian Survey* 26, no. 4 (2007): 465–473; Laura Adams, 'Can We Apply Postcolonial Theory to Central Eurasia?', *CESR* 7, no. 1 (2008): 2–7; Edward J. Lazzerini, "'Theory, Like Mist on Glasses...': A Response to Laura Adams", *CESR* 7, no. 2 (2008): 3–6.
- 16 Jed C. Snyder, 'Introduction', in *After Empire: The Emerging Geopolitics of Central Asia*, ed. Jed C. Snyder (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1995), xiv. Please note that I am not referring here to the Russian/European population of Central Asia, who settled in the region in the wake of the nineteenth century Tsarist conquest of the region and had little or no contact with the indigenous peoples.
- 17 *Ibid.*

Part I

Theory of nationalism

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1 Theorizing modern nationalism

General paradigms and concepts

The importance of nationalism in every country's history and generally in modern world politics has been an undeniable factor for social scientists. It has also become a subject of great scholarly interest over the last several decades. At first glance, the abundant literature on the subject seems to have captured every aspect of this powerful social phenomenon. However, the fact is that the more the theory of nationalism has been researched, the more puzzling and contested it has become.

Conceptualizing nationalism has proved to be the most challenging task for scholars. Although the vast scholarship on nationalism has produced numerous explanations of such key terms as 'ethnicity', 'nation' and 'nationalism', it has failed to develop generally accepted definitions. In various contexts, those often overlapping definitions are understood in different, sometimes even contradictory ways. For example, the term 'nationalism' can mean: the demands in Catalonia for greater autonomy or even full independence from Spain; discriminatory policies ensuring ethnic Fijians political supremacy over Fiji's non-indigenous communities; and the expression of happy emotions during the singing of their nationalist song, 'Flower of Scotland', by the Scottish audience at the Murrayfield Stadium in Edinburgh before the rugby match against England.

Apart from the terminological quagmire, scholars of nationalism cannot agree on the genesis of nation and nationalism. What appeared first—nation or nationalism—is still debated. There is no precise answer to the question of how an ethnic group differs from nation or when the former becomes the latter and what the criteria are for this transformation. Moreover, while it is widely admitted that the idea of nationalism is a Western phenomenon, there has been disagreement over whether social developments in other parts of the world should be explained from Western experiences. In short, those conceptual problems in the theory of nationalism have caused significant confusion among scholars.

The purpose of this chapter is to briefly review some of the major works on nationalism that will provide a general theoretical perspective for the definition and conceptualization of the phenomenon, as well as to clarify some closely related concepts, such as 'ethnicity' and 'nation-building'. In general, the concepts and definitions to be discussed in this chapter will serve as a useful framework for understanding basic processes of group identity formation in pre-Soviet

Central Asia and, most importantly, Soviet Kazakh and Uzbek nation-building projects.

Ethnicity discourse

In social sciences the term ‘ethnicity’ is a relatively new concept that only emerged in the 1950s as an attempt to substitute for such politically discredited terms as ‘race’ and ‘tribe’. It also subsumed many attributes of what the general term ‘culture’ had previously implied. Since the term’s introduction, two major approaches to the study of ethnicity have been established in social sciences, particularly primordialism and constructivism.

Primordialists, influenced by the ideas of German nineteenth-century romanticism, maintain that group attachments and ethnic identities are natural phenomena deeply etched into history which have the ability to consistently maintain their primary attributes, such as culture, customs, language, religion and even biological features over generations. For example, according to Burkhard Ganzer, ‘No member [of an ethnic group] can escape the ascription of ethnicity; it occurs “from above” and is *objective*. Changing sides is impossible, and attempts to do so are considered as only “fooling around”.’¹ Harold Isaacs likewise maintains that ethnicity is automatically ascribed to each individual from the very first day of his/her life. A newborn child is immediately endowed with ethnic identity and cultural heritage (including religion, language and social mores) of a community of which his/her family is a part. All these, concludes Isaacs, in conjunction with the geographical environment of the child’s birth-place, will form ‘the outlook and way of life upon which the new individual enters from his[/her] first day’.²

From the extreme primordialist perspective, ethnicity is seen as a sociobiological rather than a cultural category. For example, Pierre van den Berghe proposes to understand ethnicity as an extension of kinship that is grounded in ‘the biology of nepotism’.³ A strong affinity towards co-ethnics and their preference over others, according to van den Berghe, should be explained by genetic kinship among the members of an ethnic group.⁴

Soviet scholarship on the subject strongly upheld the primordialist perspective on ethnicity (or *ethnos* – in Soviet terminology), defining it as ‘a historically formed community of people characterized by common, relatively stable cultural features, certain distinctive psychological traits, and the consciousness of their unity as distinguished from other similar communities’.⁵ In addition, Soviet scholars had to ensure that their theory of *ethnos* followed the Marxist grand evolutionary scheme (as codified by Stalin in his 1938 work *Dialectical and Historical Materialism*), according to which all human societies went through five stages of socio-economic development: primitive communism, slavery, feudalism, capitalism and socialism.⁶ Consequently, Soviet theorists formulated an evolutionary scheme of ethnicity, which claimed that in primitive social formations, a dominant form of *ethnos* was a tribe; in slave-owning and feudal social formations, a *narodnost’* (peoplehood); and under capitalism and socialism, it

gradually evolved into a *natsiia* (nation).⁷ The idea of the scheme was to prove that ethnicity had continuity throughout all stages of human development.

In contrast to the primordialists' arguments, the constructivist approach sees ethnicity as a social construct rather than given or fixed. It does not share primordialists' belief in the immutable and enduring character of ethnic identities, but argues that they are manipulated by elites, and therefore are subject to change. For example, Michael Fischer emphasizes the fluidity of ethnic identity. For him, ethnicity is not a stable category that is passed on from one generation to the next; quite the contrary, it is a subject of a constant alteration. In Fischer's words, 'ethnicity is something reinvented and reinterpreted in each generation by each individual'.⁸ Similarly, Joane Nagel, who considers ethnicity to be a social construct, suggests that 'the location and meaning of particular ethnic boundaries are continuously negotiated, revised and revitalized, both by ethnic group members themselves as well as by outside observers.'⁹ Another constructivist scholar Paul Brass treats ethnicity as a political category. According to him, the political importance of ethnicity is considerably raised in the process of elite competition for power, wealth and prestige, especially in societies that experience significant social changes. For self-benefit, Brass argues, elites manage to create and transform ethnic groups.¹⁰

The debate on the features defining ethnicity is no less controversial. Richard Schermerhorn, for example, names the following major characteristics of ethnic groups: real or assumed common ancestry, historical memories and one or more identity marker elements that might include 'kinship patterns, physical contiguity... religious affiliation, language or dialect forms, tribal affiliation, nationality, phenotypical features, or any combination of these'.¹¹ Anthony Smith expands Schermerhorn's characteristics by adding three more features to *ethnie* (his preferred French term for ethnic community), namely a collective name for a group, attachment to homeland (not necessarily in the physical terms) and sense of unity.¹² Ethnic features described by Schermerhorn and Smith include nearly all variables generally named during the ethnicity discourse. However, considering the fluid and situational character of the phenomenon, specific features may be ascribed to ethnicity, depending on a particular case study.

Approaches to nationalism

Classical theories of nationalism have examined nation and nationalism primarily from a historical standpoint. Particularly, the debate in the scholarship has mostly been around the causes leading to the origin of the phenomena, or about defining the timeframe during which those processes took place. In this regard, scholars, as in the discourse on ethnicity, have either considered nations as immemorial entities, or have predominantly treated them as the products of modernity. The modernity itself has been associated with those events or changes that were brought about by such various factors as the emergence of capitalism, industrialism, development of communication technologies and the modern state. Overall, four major approaches can be identified in the academic discourse

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on nationalism, namely, primordialism, perennialism, ethnosymbolism and modernism.¹³

The primordialist approach treats nations from the same perspective as it does ethnicity. It advocates a natural formation of nations rather than their socially constructed nature. Proponents of this approach argue that ‘nations are organically grown entities and that the world is inevitably and fatally divided into nations. It believes that there are national spirits or essences and that nations are collective answers to the call of the blood’.¹⁴

The primordialist approach differs from perennialism primarily in the question of ‘natural givenness’ of nations. In contrast to the former, perennialism concedes the formation of nations through sociohistorical processes, while at the same time asserting that they have been around since ancient times. Perennialism also argues that those ancient communities that developed a sense of ethnonational consciousness have been able to maintain it firmly throughout history.¹⁵ A particularly interesting illustration of this perspective is official Armenian historiography which detects the foundations of the modern Armenian national identity back in the sixth century BC.¹⁶ According to Suny, ‘The very constancy that makes up the Armenian nature in such accounts is a reading back of the present national existence or consciousness into the whole past.’¹⁷

Primordialist and perennialist scholars are mainly criticized for equating contemporary understanding of nation with earlier human communities. According to modernist and ethnosymbolist approaches, premodern societies were largely fragmented along social, ethnic, language and/or cultural lines. In such societies, it is hard to find any unifying bond for all strata. Nor is there a strong drive that would link a particular ethnic group, culture and territory/state as a single entity. Even if a ruling class possesses some sorts of common cultural or national attributes, they are mostly alien to the majority of the population. On the other hand, while in contemporary Western scholarship on nationalism primordialist and perennialist approaches hold relatively limited niches, it is hard to ignore the strength of their practical application in official historiographies as well as in daily politics. Even those nations that are the products of the state-led nation-building projects of the twentieth century—such as Central Asian nations—put enormous efforts in their official historiographies to prove the antiquity of their roots. There is some kind of universal strife among many nationalist politicians, as well as academicians, to illustrate the deep rootedness of their nations by emphasizing the richness of their common cultural heritage and long shared historical past, which is aimed at reinforcing the national coherence and raising national pride among their population. In addition, the ‘ancientness’ of the nation is often referred to by nation-builders, with the goal of demonstrating the nation’s historical belonging, and consequently legal claims, to the territory they occupy at present or inhabited sometime in the past.

The ethnosymbolist approach to nationalism, which posits a midway position between the primordialist-perennialist and modernist approaches, recognizes that the nation is a modern phenomenon rather than a natural or ever-existing entity. However, the modernity of nations, according to ethnosymbolism, does not

imply that they are created from scratch, but rather that they have developed on the basis of premodern 'ethnic cores'. Anthony Smith, a founder of the ethno-symbolist approach, argues that 'most nations, including the earliest, were based on ethnic ties and sentiments and on popular ethnic traditions, which have provided the cultural resources for later nation-formation'.¹⁸ For Smith, *ethnie* provides the basic foundation for the nation formation. The scholar defines nation

as a named and self-defined human community whose members cultivate shared myths, memories, symbols, values, and traditions, reside in and identify with a historic homeland, create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe shared customs and common laws.¹⁹

The ethnosymbolist approach offered by Smith has been criticized for putting too much emphasis on the cultural aspects of premodern *ethnies*, nations and nationalism, while downplaying the importance of legal, socio-economic and political factors in nation-formation. Historian John Breuilly, for example, questions Smith's argument about the strength of ethnic group consciousness as well as the significance of appeals made by some members of the elite on behalf of *ethnie* in premodern times. In Breuilly's words, 'It is ... impossible to know what meaning such statements, and associated myths and symbols, had for the majority of the people who in some way participated in those institutions'.²⁰ Breuilly also doubts the factual objectivity of such myths and symbols, arguing that many of them have been invented or recast by modern nationalists for their own ends.²¹

From the modernist perspective, nations do not evolve naturally from *ethnies*, but rather are products of states/elites/intelligentsias' deliberate efforts. Those nation-building efforts include such policies as promotion of cultural homogeneity, creation of national symbols and rituals, politicization of ethnonationality by declaring it as an individual's official identity marker, and raising awareness among the population about their belonging to a particular national community. The means for achieving national cohesion are a universal education system, communication technologies and state institutions in general. Generally, proponents of the idea of modernity of nationalism and nations situate the emergence of these phenomena no earlier than the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Modernist Ernest Gellner, probably the most quoted scholar in the field, explains the emergence of nationalism and nations by fundamental structural changes of social organization that were brought about with the transition from agrarian to modern industrial society. It is a requirement of a new industrial society, Gellner argues, to have a state and homogenized culture mingled into one entity, which is achievable through nationalism doctrine. Hence, he defines nationalism as 'primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent'.²²

Pre-industrial, 'agro-literate' societies, Gellner argues, neither had sufficient resources nor determination to generate the idea of nationalism. Such societies

were marked by deep cultural and social divisions between the minority literate ruling class and the large majority of food-producing communities. The latter ones, Gellner asserts, were culturally fragmented even among themselves through such barriers as a multitude of language dialects. For elites, who possessed 'high-culture', there were no significant incentives to eradicate the existing cultural alienation of the lower strata. On the contrary, they were interested in maintaining such vertical social structures for their own benefit. Clergies might have been the only exception in this regard. However, they lacked the resources to promote some sort of unified culture for all social strata. In short, Gellner excludes any possibility of having cultural homogenization within state borders (the precondition of nationalism) during the agrarian era.²³

With a shift to the industrial stage of human development, an economic need has emerged for high levels of social, geographical and occupational mobility. Consequently, linguistic and cultural barriers had to be eliminated in order to sustain a new type of labour mobility. For this purpose, a single literate language was institutionalized throughout a state, which, according to Gellner, was made possible through introduction of universal education.²⁴ In a modern society, 'high-culture' is no longer the exclusive property of ruling classes. Industrialization undermines social structure and folk-transmitted culture of the traditional agrarian society, gradually inducting food-producing masses into a school-transmitted 'high-culture' of elites.²⁵ In other words, a shared national culture is enforced by the state on all segments of society. In Gellner's words, 'nationalism is, essentially, the general imposition of a high culture on society, where previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority, and in some cases of the totality, of the population'.²⁶

Benedict Anderson, another prominent modernist theorist of nationalism, maintains that examining nationalism as an ideology is principally misleading. He argues that it should be treated as an anthropological concept, the same as kinship and religion. Hence, Anderson defines nation as 'an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'.²⁷ According to Anderson, it is imagined because it is impossible to personally know all the members of one's community, yet nationalism encourages them to regard themselves as belonging to the same nation; it is limited because no nation (unlike religion) aims to encompass within itself all humankind; and finally nation is sovereign because it strives to exercise its freedom within its own state.²⁸

For Anderson, the juncture of the emerging factors of capitalism such as the invention of print technology (what he refers to as 'print-capitalism') and standardization of vernacular languages for administrative usage created conditions for 'national imagination'. Namely, with the expansion of media market in the era of capitalism, Anderson argues, it became possible for members of a given community, who had never met each other, to become vicarious participants in shared experiences, thus providing conditions for the emergence of common national consciousness.²⁹

In addition, while analysing European colonial policies in Southeast Asia, apart from 'print-capitalism', Anderson identifies a set of institutions that played

significant roles in the process of nation-formation in the region such as the census, the map and the museum. Censuses, Anderson writes, were used by colonial powers to create registered identities for local populations. According to their arbitrary judgements, colonial administrations categorized local populations through surveys along ethnic, religious, regional or other identities. In a similar vein, borders were delimited according to colonists' political interests and drawn on the maps. Those arbitrarily created 'logo-maps' attached populations to particular colonial state formations. Gradually, those cartographical ascriptions 'penetrated deep into the popular imagination'.³⁰ The visible expression of the colonial determination, Anderson argues, were the museums, which hosted material culture founded within the boundaries of those political units. Consequently, states were depicted as the guardians of those national treasures. In such a way, a strong link was created between people with the same identity, particular territory, culture and state. Disregarding the fact that such a type of imagining was initiated by the colonial powers for their administrative purposes, it later became one of the key factors that facilitated nation-building in the region, notes Anderson.³¹

As the brief overview of some of the key theories of nationalism suggests, it is quite difficult to examine the concepts of 'nation' and 'nationalism' from a single theoretical angle. Breuilly rightfully observes that the multidimensional character of nationalism requires a separate analysis for each form of the phenomenon.³² Likewise, since each community goes through a more or less distinct route of nation-building, it is somewhat problematic to delineate universal attributes that are common to all nations. There may always be exceptions in an attempt to draw such general features of nations. For example, common language, which is often cited as one of the most significant factors in many nation-building projects, can be irrelevant in some cases, such as Switzerland. Connor even argues that national characteristics are of secondary importance, because they are essentially intangible. For him, 'The essence of the nation is ... psychological, a matter of attitude rather than of fact'.³³ Perhaps this difficulty of conceptualizing nation prompted a well-known historian, Hugh Seton-Watson, to conclude that 'no "scientific definition" of a nation can be devised; yet the phenomenon has existed and exists'.³⁴

For the purposes of this book, the arguments put forward by the modernist scholars, especially those that stress the role of states in nation-building processes, will be most applicable. Accordingly, the 'nation' will be viewed here as a recent historical phenomenon that only emerged during the modernization period, when intellectual elites' efforts and/or state-led nation-building policies, generated by various circumstances, created conditions for mass 'imagination' of belonging to a particular nation. The term 'nation' will be defined as primarily a territorial political community, the unity of which is articulated to the largest extent in a common culture (notwithstanding regional dimensions). The presence of some attributes, such as common language, religion and belief in a shared ancestry, can all serve as assets in reinforcing the national consciousness. The term 'nationalism', depending on a specific context, will denote an ideology,

political movement, practical nation-building or combination of all or any two of them. Regardless of the situation, the phenomenon of nationalism is always interlinked with the idea of nation. As regards the concept of 'national identity', it essentially refers to the sense of belonging to a particular nation. However, this sense is only materialized if it is acknowledged by other members of that national community.

Nation-building defined

Considering the difficulties with the conceptualization of the term 'nation' discussed in the section above, defining nation-building is not straightforward either. It can mean different things in different settings, subsequently taking various forms. In general, three forms of nation-building can be distinguished: nation-making, nation-maintaining and nation-reshaping.

Nation-making implies top-down strategies of elites (political and intellectual) aimed to create a single coherent national community out of previously loosely-linked particular ethnic/regional communities and social strata. Despite having a common goal, nation-making projects can vary depending on numerous factors, such as whether a nation-building community: already possesses a state (for example, French, English and Dutch); is under the subordination to a foreign power (for example, Georgians and Finns under the Tsarist Empire); is undertaken in multi-ethnic communities (for example, Malaysia and Singapore); or in more or less homogenous ones (such as Japan and Norway).

Once nation-formation has been largely completed, it is essential to ensure the preservation and development of the achieved national cohesion. As Renan puts it, 'A nation's existence is ... a daily plebiscite'.³⁵ In other words, nation, nationhood, national identity and consciousness are not everlasting natural phenomena; rather they require sustainability on a daily basis through nation-maintaining policies. Hence, nation-maintaining infers those nationalizing policies that aim to sustain and reinforce national coherence. A state-sponsored programme promoting national folk culture can be cited as an example of such nation-maintaining activities.

Nation-reshaping, the third form of nation-building, occurs during important social and political transformations, when, for example, national ideology, symbols and myths have to be remade and adjusted to make them responsive to new realities. For instance, the post-Soviet Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have successfully engaged in the de-Sovietization activities aimed at getting rid of symbols from the communist period. Particularly, they have been replacing many Soviet-era memorials and monuments with ones that commemorate and glorify historical events that occurred prior to the Soviet occupation of the region in 1940.³⁶ Regardless of the scope and depth of nation-reshaping activities, they always go hand-in-hand with nation-maintaining policies.

All three forms of nation-building require an implementation of a set of policies that would entail creation, preservation or reconfiguration of nationhood, national consciousness, and national identities. Historically, nation-builders have

used diverse methods to achieve their set goals, including wars, repressions and forced assimilation policies. With the rising importance of human rights norms in international politics since the second half of the twentieth century, state leaders have been relatively cautious and limited in the use of brutal methods in their nation-building projects. However, subscribing to human rights standards, as Kymlicka observes, cannot guarantee ethnocultural justice for all minority communities, even in Western democratic societies.³⁷ In general terms, achieving some sort of national unity in the process of nation-building always implies both consent and restrictions for all targeted groups, though minority groups might be expected, or even compelled, to sacrifice more (for example, in terms of language rights) for achieving national unity in a majority-dominated nation-building project.

Overall, defining nation-building strategies largely depends on a particular case study and historical context. Here is a non-exclusive list of nation-building policies and tools employed in almost all state-led nation-building projects:

Official language policy has been central to nearly all nation-building projects, whether nation-builders tried to promote and institutionalize their own native language(s) or to retain the language of a former colonial master as a state language. In order to achieve some sort of national coherence, it is essential for nation-builders to ensure that a significant majority of a targeted community are able to communicate with one another both orally and in writing. Even those communities that officially recognize multilingualism within their national borders (for example, India and the Republic of South Africa) require *de facto lingua franca* that will enable them to achieve some form of linguistic unity in diversity. Consequently, language planning, especially in the education system, has a tremendous significance for a nation-building process. In addition, some nation-building projects have utilized ‘language’ as a tool for reinforcing national unity by treating it as a symbol of national identity, pride and uniqueness of a given nation. For instance, Georgian national narrative is based on a myth (created by a tenth-century Georgian monk, Ioane Zosime) that asserts that the language of Judgment Day will be Georgian; thus giving to its only speakers, the Georgian people, a special divine mission.³⁸

Official national history (re)writing is one of the key instruments in the hands of nation-builders to persuade members of a particular community (including themselves) that they all historically belong to a distinct nation. Central governments, usually having a monopoly over writing, editing and issuing official history textbooks for schools and in some states even for universities, ensure that national histories are written in a way that enables them to reinforce beliefs among fellow nationals in having a shared history and fate. Moreover, whatever historical accounts might suggest, official historiographies subjectively judge, interpret, select, and as Hobsbawm argues, often invent historical facts and events in order to justify and promote their national claims and interests.³⁹ Many national histories also try to boost national pride by highlighting ‘deep primordial’ roots of their nations and their ancestors’ contributions to world civilization. An illustrative example of this is official Greek historiography that regards

Modern Greeks as the direct heirs of the ancient Greek civilization and as such the founders of democracy, the Olympic Games, Western philosophy and literature, just to name a few.⁴⁰

National symbols, images and rituals are used by nation-builders to convey information about the history, culture and the homeland of the people representing a nation. Those nation-building tools mainly have an ideological dimension, used to strengthen and consolidate a collective consciousness of belonging to a particular nation. For Anderson, a good example of this is tombs of Unknown Soldiers, which are intentionally ‘saturated with ghostly *national* imaginings’.⁴¹ These tombs are not just commemorations of unidentifiable heroic warriors. Rather, they represent the calculated attempts of nation-builders to generate a sense of acknowledgement among members of a national community of a significant national sacrifice, consequently promoting fetishization of the nation itself. Important national symbols such as flags, coat of arms and currencies might depict, for example, a country’s landscape or honourable national figures that have a nationwide appeal. In such a way, according to Fox and Miller-Idriss, national symbols ‘are neatly packaged distillations of the nation: they are the linchpins that connect people to the nation’.⁴²

Communication systems (such as television, radio, newspapers, Internet) are powerful means of constructing, preserving and promoting national identities. Drawing on Anderson’s print-capitalism theory, Wayne Norman observes that technological advancements in the twentieth century made it possible on one side for nation-builders to carry national messages (for example, regarding national history, culture and values) to every member of their national community, and on the other side for co-nationals to have a greater (in)direct interaction with one another. In other words, technological progress has enabled ‘fellow nationals [to] share common sources of information, common stories, and ... be more aware of each other’s existence’.⁴³

Promotion of national culture (such as literature, folk music, performing and plastic arts) is a necessary element of every nation-building project. Nationally defined cultures allow fellow nationals to express and celebrate their values, history, achievements, diversity and unity, and at the same time to distinguish themselves from other communities. They are the basic cornerstones around which nation-builders try to construct national consciousness and identities. It should be noted that national cultures are not stable and fixed categories, but rather subject to permanent change, renewal and reinterpretation. Nation-builders subjectively select, reconstitute and promote those ethnic/regional cultural features as national that will be most applicable for the reinforcement of national unity. For example, in order to generate love towards one’s nation from early childhood, students in schools are taught selected lyrics, poems and novels of native writers that praise national language, traditions, heroic historical figures and the motherland.

National sports policies have been employed in many nation-building projects as a powerful tool to promote national unity and social integration, as well as to popularize national symbols, such as flags and anthems. For example, state-sponsored sport competitions allow representatives from all regions of a country

to participate in nationwide events, and to compete for national sporting titles. States' support for their national teams participating in international sporting events, such as the Olympic Games and Football World Cup, is even greater. Those prestigious international sporting gatherings are seen by nation-builders as an opportunity to foster a sense of national pride among fellow nationals and to stress their national distinctiveness. Overall, they 'provide explicitly national parameters for the organization and experience of collective belonging'.⁴⁴

Nation-building versus state-building

In recent years, nation-building has often been used to describe—especially in the US media and government statements—the US led state-(re)building activities in Afghanistan and Iraq. As Fukuyama remarks 'What Americans refer to as *nation-building* is rather state-building – that is, constructing political institutions, or else promoting economic development.'⁴⁵ While nation-building is mostly concerned with forging a common national identity, state-building in general implies establishment of state institutions and legal systems, such as forming line ministries and departments, adopting a constitution and legal codes, collecting taxes, and creating defence and law enforcement forces. One of the fundamental features of successful state-building is a central government's ability to possess within its jurisdiction 'the *monopoly* of the *legitimate* use of physical force'.⁴⁶

Throughout the world, state leaders engaged in state-building activities long before the invention of modern nations in Europe. For example, the Kingdom of France had developed strong political institutions prior to the French Revolution (often cited as the birth of the French nation), although the French Valois (1328–1589) and Bourbon (1589–1792) monarchs had done little or nothing to forge a common national identity among their subjects. The difference between state-building and nation-building projects is well illustrated in the famous statement by Massimo D'Azeglio, one of the leaders of the Italian Risorgimento movement. At the first session of the parliament of a newly unified Italy in 1861, D'Azeglio stated: 'We have made Italy; now we must make Italians.'⁴⁷

In modern times, nation-building and state-building often go side-by-side. 'The state may create institutions, such as a Ministry of Education, but the curricula it will direct schools and higher education to teach', Kuzio writes, 'will be reflected in the nation-building priorities of the state leadership.'⁴⁸ While acknowledging that those two phenomena are often interlinked, the success or failure of the one does not automatically imply the same result for the other. For instance, disregarding the fact that Haiti is widely considered to be a failed state, the formation of a distinct Haitian national identity has been generally acknowledged. On the contrary, although Belarus has managed to establish quite stable state institutions after gaining independence from the Soviet Union, its political leaders have done little or nothing to promote and reinforce Belarusian national identity, as distinct from Russian.

Artificialness of nations explained

Disregarding modernist scholars' claims that all nations are, in some aspect, artificial constructs of elites, there are some nations that are distinguished in nationalism literature as being particularly artificial in their form of construction. For example, scholars often describe African, Middle Eastern and Central Asian nations as artificial constructs; while relatively little emphasis has been made on the artificialness of Western European nations. If all nations, including European ones, are in general 'imagined' or 'invented' communities, then what makes, for example, sub-Saharan African or Central Asian nations so different?⁴⁹

Contemporary sub-Saharan African states are the products of European colonial politics of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries. When fixing the colonial boundaries in the region, European colonial mapmakers were for the most part concerned about their own political and economic interests in the region rather than any type of nation-making. Therefore, they had little if any concern while placing various ethnic, tribal or regional groupings, largely having no common bond with each other even at the elite level, under a particular colonial domain. Hence, with the decolonization processes in the 1950s and 1960s, leaders of Africa's newly independent states engaged in nation-making processes—within their respective state borders established in colonial times—that they had never attempted before. For example, if not for British colonial policies, there is no basis to argue that, for instance, the Hausa, Igbo, Fulani and Yoruba people would ever attempt to create a common state or nation, which is today known as Nigeria. Thus, sub-Saharan African nation-buildings can be treated as *post factum* nation-building projects or as Norman calls them 'post-colonial, tabula rasa nation-building' implying forging a nation 'more or less from scratch in a multi-ethnic state when a new state is created within the arbitrary boundaries carved out by former colonial masters'.⁵⁰

While sub-Saharan African leaders mostly managed to preserve their state boundaries, they have in many cases failed to forge a coherent national identity, which would supersede, following Smith, any other allegiance whether tribal, clan or regional.⁵¹ From the ethnosymbolist perspective, artificialness of those African (quasi) nations and consequently their nation-building failures can be explained by the absence of common historical or cultural roots. As to the modernist point of view, it can be explained by such factors as lack of resources for modernization, poor education systems, rampant corruption, nepotism, and clan and tribal politics.

In the case of Central Asia, before Russia's occupation of the region in the nineteenth century, neither local intellectuals nor ruling classes in the region had held an idea of creating modern nations in the way they are known at present. As in sub-Saharan African countries, the borders of present-day Central Asian republics were delineated by their foreign (Moscow-based Soviet) rulers in the 1920s and 1930s. However, in contrast to the African postcolonial nation-building, the whole process of nation-making and even nation-maintaining in the Soviet Central Asia was mainly projected in the Kremlin and then implemented

by local elites under the direct supervision of their Soviet masters. In other words, titular Central Asian nations were first 'imagined' and then 'nurtured' by the decision of Soviet Russia's policymakers. In short, in this book the artificialness of Central Asian nations will imply the fact that their creation in the 1920s and 1930s was initiated and driven by Soviet leaders in Moscow rather than by local intellectual elites.

Nationalism and Islam

Accommodating a country's mainstream religion(s), and correspondingly, religious identities, within a projected secular model of nationhood has been one of the major challenges in nearly all nation-building projects. As Froese rightly observes, 'In cooperation, religious and political ideologies can meld to create powerful feelings of nationalism, but in conflict they may produce violent exchanges between political and religious institutions.'⁵² Successful incorporation of religion into a secular nation-building project has been especially difficult in Muslim-dominated societies where polities were historically regarded as religious communities and Islam as a primary identity of every individual born in a Muslim family. Accordingly, dealing with the Islamic factor has been one of the fundamental aspects of Soviet nation-building projects in predominantly Muslim Central Asia. While Soviet religious policies in Central Asia will be thoroughly examined in Chapter 9 of this book, at this point it is more pertinent to briefly discuss the interrelationship between Islam and nationalism in general.

Islam is a trans-ethnic/national/cultural/border religion, which embraces every individual who follows its principles into the universal Muslim community of *ummah*. It posits that Islamic identity should override all other identities including the national one, therefore, challenging nationalism's aspiration to ensure prime allegiance of all co-nationals towards the nation/state. For example, Sayyid Qutb, one of the leading ideologists of the radical Sunni Islamic movement, maintains that 'a Muslim has no country except that part of the earth where the Shari'ah [Islamic law] of Allah is established and ... a Muslim has no nationality except his belief'.⁵³ Because of such a narrow interpretation of Islam by some Muslim leaders and political movements, it has been quite a difficult task for secular nation-builders in many parts of the Islamic world to attract conservative Muslim clerics and intellectuals as partners in their secular nation-making projects.

Although the concept of *ummah* may have posed great obstacles to the completion of nation-building projects, existing strong regional and ethnic diversities and affiliations in the Islamic world have been no less obstructive to achieving a worldwide Muslim unity. In fact, throughout most of its history, the Islamic world has been divided among numerous, often rival, polities, many of which had little or no actual connection with one another. Claims for cultural, ethnic or political superiority, and existing antagonisms, for example, between Arabs, Persians and Turks, or Shi'as and Sunnis, have been significant factors for further fragmentation of the Muslim *ummah*. Even those fundamental sources of Islam,

which provide the basis for regulation of the Muslim way of life, such as Qur'an, *hadith* and shari'ah, because of their rigid and opposed interpretations have often become major root causes of conflicts sometimes within the same branch of Islam. As Piscatori notes, there is only one concept in Islam that Muslims do not question, that is, 'there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger'. The rest of Islamic concepts and doctrines, according to Piscatori, have largely been subject to conflicting explanations.⁵⁴ In other words, in practice Islamic principles *divide* as much as they *unite* the world Muslim community.

In the twentieth century, the emergence of territorially-bounded sovereign states and spread of nationalism ideology in the Islamic world have triggered a new phase of identity formation among Muslims, which presented a huge challenge to *ummah* identity. Like in other parts of the world, Muslim state leaders engaged in nation-building projects aimed at forging territorially-based national identities among their populations and bringing them under a specific national framework. In particular, they were promoting their own standardized national languages, glorious historical past (including the pre-Islamic era), as well as institutionalizing national identities. National identities created within Muslim dominated countries may not necessarily have always superseded *ummah* identity, but in many cases ensured that both have been equally important to members of a particular Muslim national community. In this regard, the Kemalist laicist model in Turkey is a good example of state-managed Islamic identities, which do not come into conflict with coexisting national identities.

What is, perhaps, the most interesting in the relationship between political Islam and modern nationalism is that even those regimes that officially proclaim Islamic universalism in their politics have never been free from a nationalist bias. For example, despite being at odds with the phenomenon of nationalism, after gaining state power in Iran in 1979, the Islamic revolutionary government led by Ayatollah Khomeini could not entirely afford to reject using the tools of nationalism in its *realpolitik*. This became especially evident during the Iran-Iraq war (1980–88), when the regime's pan-Islamic ideology was massively absorbed into Iranian nationalistic fervour.⁵⁵ Moreover, in contradiction to the declared policy of *ummah* unity, the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran has underlined that Shi'a Islam in particular and not Islam in general is the primary source of Iranian identity and politics. Elsewhere, the constitution has stipulated a requirement of an Iranian ethnic background for Iranian citizens to be able to run for the post of President of the republic.⁵⁶ As time progressed, new leaders of the Islamic republic have also gradually renewed utilization of the country's pre-Islamic Persian cultural heritage to reinforce Iranian national identity and to stress the antiquity and greatness of the distinct Iranian civilization. Hence, as Shaw and Wong remark, 'despite its pan-Islamic rhetoric, Iranian nationalism is actually Persian nationalism with a fanatical Islamic focus'.⁵⁷

To conclude, pan-Islamic revolutionary slogans and an anti-nationalist stance are important ideological instruments in the Islamists' political toolkit used for appealing and gaining support of the wider Muslim community. However, as soon as those Islamist groups assume state power, their policy decisions become

heavily influenced by national interests and pragmatism rather than concerns about creating a utopian *ummah*. This is because in the era of nation-states, it is hard to imagine that any Islamic government will be able to retain state power without implementing nationally-shaped policies. Thus, theoretically Islam might decline principles of nationalism, but in practice Islamic politics are in greater need of nationalism than the other way around. In Barakat's poignant words, 'Every age has it [*sic*] particular philosophy, vision, and reality. The present reality is one of nation-states rather than a community of believers dispersed in different and distant societies.'⁵⁸

Notes

- 1 Quoted in Carsten Wieland, *Nation State by Accident: The Politicization of Ethnic Groups and the Ethnicization of Politics: Bosnia, India, Pakistan* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2006), 34, emphasis in original.
- 2 Harold R. Isaacs, 'Basic Group Identity: The Idols of the Tribe', in *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience*, eds. Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 32.
- 3 Pierre L. van den Berghe, 'Ethnies and Nations: Genealogy Indeed', in *When is the Nation?: Towards an Understanding of Theories of Nationalism*, ed. Atsuko Ichijo and Gordana Uzelac (London: Routledge, 2005), 114.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Yu. Bromley, 'The Term Ethnos and Its Definition', in *Soviet Ethnology and Anthropology Today*, ed. Yu. Bromley (The Hague: Mouton, 1974), 66.
- 6 J. V. Stalin, *O dialekticheskom i istoricheskom materializme* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1950).
- 7 Yu. Bromley, *Ocherki teorii etnosa* (Moscow: Nauka, 1983), 383–384.
- 8 Michael M. J. Fischer, 'Ethnicity and the Post-Modern Arts of Memory', in *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 195.
- 9 Joane Nagel, 'Constructing Ethnicity: Creating and Recreating Ethnic Identity and Culture', *Social Problems* 41, no. 1 (1994): 153.
- 10 Paul R. Brass, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Theory and Comparison* (New Delhi: Sage, 1991), 25.
- 11 R. A. Schermerhorn, *Comparative Ethnic Relations: A Framework for Theory and Research* (New York: Random House, 1970), 12.
- 12 See Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 22–31.
- 13 Those four approaches have been drawn from Anthony Smith's typology of perspectives on nationalism. Smith also names a fifth perspective, postmodernism, which I have combined within a modernist approach. See Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1998), 223–225.
- 14 Guntram H. Herb, 'National Identity and Territory', in *Nested Identities: Nationalism, Territory, and Scale*, eds. Guntram H. Herb and David H. Kaplan (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 14.
- 15 Anthony D. Smith, *Myths and Memories of the Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5.
- 16 See Varazdat Arutiunian, *Kamennaia letopis' Armianskogo naroda* (Yerevan: Sovetakan Grokh, 1985), 20.
- 17 Ronald Grigor Suny, *Looking toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 4.

24 *Theory of nationalism*

- 18 Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 13.
- 19 Anthony D. Smith, *The Cultural Foundations of Nations: Hierarchy, Covenant and Republic* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 19, emphasis in original.
- 20 John Breuilly, 'Approaches to Nationalism', in *Mapping the Nation*, ed. Gopal Balakrishnan (London: Verso, 1996), 151.
- 21 *Ibid.*
- 22 Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 1.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 9–12.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 34.
- 25 *Ibid.*, 36.
- 26 *Ibid.*, 57.
- 27 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 2006), 6.
- 28 *Ibid.*, 6–7.
- 29 See *ibid.*, Chs 2 and 3.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 175.
- 31 See *ibid.*, Ch. 10.
- 32 Breuilly, 'Approaches to Nationalism', 2.
- 33 Walker Connor, *Ethnonationalism: The Quest for Understanding* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 42.
- 34 Hugh Seton-Watson, *Nations and States: An Enquiry into the Origins of Nations and the Politics of Nationalism* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977), 5.
- 35 Ernest Renan, 'What Is a Nation?', in *Becoming National: A Reader*, ed. Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 53.
- 36 See Dovile Budryte, *Taming Nationalism?: Political Community Building in the Post-Soviet Baltic States* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2005).
- 37 Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 69–90.
- 38 See Zviad Gamsakhurdia, *The Spiritual Mission of Georgia* (Tbilisi: Ganatleba, 1991).
- 39 Eric Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 13.
- 40 On this, see Theodore G. Zervas, *The Making of a Modern Greek Identity: Education, Nationalism, and the Teaching of a Greek National Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).
- 41 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 9, emphasis in original.
- 42 Jon E. Fox and Cynthia Miller-Idriss, 'Everyday nationhood', *Ethnicities* 8, no. 4 (2008): 545.
- 43 Wayne Norman, *Negotiating Nationalism: Nation-Building, Federalism, and Secession in the Multinational State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 43.
- 44 Fox and Miller-Idriss, 'Everyday nationhood', 547.
- 45 Francis Fukuyama, 'Introduction: Nation-building and the Failure of Institutional Memory', in *Nation-Building: Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq*, ed. Francis Fukuyama (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 3, emphasis in original.
- 46 Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, trans. Ephraim Fischhoff, vol. 1 (New York: Bedminster Press, 1968), 54, emphasis in original.
- 47 Roger Griffin, 'Italy', in *European Political Cultures: Conflict or Convergence?*, ed. Roger Eatwell (London: Routledge, 1997), 139.
- 48 Taras Kuzio, 'The Nation-Building Project in Ukraine and Identity: Toward a Consensus', in *Dilemmas of State-Led Nation Building in Ukraine*, ed. Taras Kuzio and Paul D'Anieri (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 10.
- 49 This question was raised by historian Adrienne Edgar, who criticized Olivier Roy and Paul G. Geiss's works for the overemphasis on the 'unique artificialness' of Central

- Asian nations. See Adrienne Lynn Edgar, 'The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations, and: Nationenwerdung in Mittelasien', *Kritika: Explorations in Russian & Eurasian History* 3, no. 1 (2002): 182–190.
- 50 Wayne Norman, 'From Nation-Building to National Engineering: The Ethics of Shaping Identities', in *Democracy, Nationalism, and Multiculturalism*, eds. Maíz Ramón and Ferran Requejo (London: Routledge, 2005), 84.
- 51 Smith, *Myths and Memories*, 189.
- 52 Paul Froese, "'I Am an Atheist and a Muslim": Islam, Communism, and Ideological Competition', *Journal of Church and State* 47, no. 3 (2005): 473.
- 53 Sayyid Qutb, *Milestones* (Birmingham: Maktabah, 2006), 132–133.
- 54 James P. Piscatori, *Islam in a World of Nation-States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 3.
- 55 See Saskia Gieling, *Religion and War in Revolutionary Iran* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1999).
- 56 See *The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran* (Tehran: Islamic Propagation Organization, 1990).
- 57 R. Paul Shaw and Yuwa Wong, *Genetic Seeds of Warfare: Evolution, Nationalism, and Patriotism* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 151.
- 58 Halim Barakat, *The Arab World: Society, Culture, and State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 147.

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Part II

Historical framework

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2 Central Asia before the Russian annexation

Ethno-social context

Central Asia from ancient times until the Shaybanid Uzbek and ‘Kazakh’ conquests

From the earliest times to the recent past, the territory of modern Central Asia has been the scene of numerous invasions, conquests and migrations of diverse peoples that over the centuries have inevitably led to the recurrent reshaping of the social fabric of the region. Although supposedly originally home to proto-Dravidian-speaking peoples, from the first millennium BC, Central Asia became predominantly populated by Iranian peoples, such as Sakas, Bactrians and Sogdians.¹ However, with the successive influx of nomadic Turkic and Turko-Mongolic tribes from the sixth century AD onwards, the demographic composition of Central Asia, especially in the steppe zone in the north, gradually became more Turkic. Already in the mid-sixth century, a powerful Kok Turk Khanate had been established in the northern tier of the region, roughly comprising the territories of present-day Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia.² Those early east-Iranian and Turkic peoples of Central Asia practised a number of polytheist religions. Zoroastrianism was the dominant faith in the oasis lands of southern Central Asia, or in Transoxiana,³ though followers of Buddhism, Manichaeism, Christianity and numerous pagan beliefs were also present in considerable numbers. As for the nomadic Turkic peoples of the steppes, they were mainly shamanists, animists or adherents of various local cults.⁴

The Arab conquest of Transoxiana and subsequent introduction of Islam at the end of the seventh and early eighth centuries marked one of the most important turning points in the history of the region. With the gradual spread of Islam across Transoxiana, or Mawarannahr as it became known after the Arab occupation, the region would eventually become one of the greatest centres of Islamic civilization, while its contribution to the development of Islamic learning and culture would be eminent for centuries to come. The Arab invasion of Transoxiana (Mawarannahr) was followed by the resettlement of several thousand Arab families in the region.⁵ However, Mawarannahr was never subject to ethnic or cultural Arabization, perhaps with the exception of adopting Arabic, the language of the Qur’an, as a medium of Islamic discourse, rituals and prayers. As Islam prevailed in Mawarannahr, all other religions in the region

came under increasing pressure, leading to the virtual extinction of many. The Arab conquerors especially suppressed Zoroastrianism, destroying many of its pre-Islamic Sogdian texts and artefacts.⁶

Apart from Islamization, Arab dominance in Mawarannahr was remarkable for another important process, the cultural and linguistic Persianization of the local Turkic and eastern-Iranian populations, especially of the elites. The Persianized Abbasid Caliphs of Baghdad, under which Mawarannahr finally became subjugated to Arab rule in the mid-eighth century, not only advanced the new Islamic faith in the region, but spread it through western-Iranian (Persian) culture. Under the Abbasids Persian influence was so prominent that a number of Caliphate institutions were based on models drawn from the fallen Persian Sassanid Empire (224–651), and many pre-Islamic Persian cultural elements were integrated into a new Muslim culture. In addition, having absorbed many Arabic words, Farsi (middle Persian) gradually replaced the majority of the east-Iranian languages/dialects spoken in Central Asia.⁷ Bernard Lewis notes that under the Abbasids even Islam became so transformed that to some extent, it was ‘a second advent of Islam itself’.⁸ Thus, it was largely a Persian version of Islam and culture to which Central Asia was exposed under the Arabs.

The advance of Islam and Persian culture in the region was further extended under the local Iranian dynasty of Samanids who ruled much of present-day Central Asia and adjacent regions on behalf of the Abbasids between 875 and 999. The Samanid era, often regarded as a Golden Age of Islamo-Persian culture, witnessed the flourishing of Iranian literature, art and Islamic philosophy. For instance, it was under Samanid patronage that the great medieval Iranian poets, Rudaki and Ferdowsi, produced their finest literary works, which laid the foundation of modern Persian literature and language. The Samanids also strongly promoted trade, development of irrigation systems, and construction of mosques, *maktabs* and *madrasas* (Islamic primary and secondary schools respectively). The political and economic stability of the Samanid realm allowed Central Asian cities along the Silk Road to flourish as never before. As an example, the Samanid capital, Bukhara, like Baghdad, was regarded by contemporaries as a cultural and intellectual centre of the Muslim world. The eleventh century Arab writer, al-Tha’alabi, described it as ‘the focus of the splendour, the shrine of empire, [and] the meeting place of the most unique intellects of the age’.⁹ In addition, the Samanids were actively engaged in jihad (Muslim ‘holy’ war) campaigns in the steppes of northern Central Asia, or Turkistan.¹⁰ Although the Islamic faith did not spread widely among the pagan Turkic steppe nomads as a result of these raids, the enslaved Turkistani war captives became an important source of the Samanid military manpower.

The situation in the Samanid realm dramatically changed for the worse in the second half of the tenth century as a result of frequent internal unrests and the dynasty’s rising dependence on Turkic slave soldiers. The weakening of the Samanid power invited attacks from the outlying nomadic Turkic tribes and confederations. By the end of the tenth century the Samanids were no longer in a position to repulse these incursions on their land, and in 999, Bukhara, their

capital fell under the Muslim Karakhanid Turks. The Samanids' collapse, Wheeler writes, marked both the end of dominance of Iranian dynasties and the beginning of a new era of Turko-Mongol rulers in Mawarannahr.¹¹

The establishment of the Karakhanid rule in Mawarannahr accelerated the demographic Turkicization of the region. The process became especially intense with the gradual transition of a large number of Turkic nomads to a sedentary lifestyle, resulting in the significant increase of permanent Turkic settlements in Mawarannahr.¹² In addition, being pious Muslims, the Karakhanids continued to advance Islam across the region, including the steppes. As Polonskaya and Malashenko note, 'Islam was an important catalyst promoting a synthesis of the cultures of settled Iranians and nomadic Turkis... [Nevertheless,] there remained major differences between the Moslem cultures of Central Asia's nomadic and settled peoples'.¹³ The Karakhanid rulers, following Samanid traditions, also promoted science, art and literature in the Khanate. For example, the appearance of the earliest Turko-Islamic as well as secular Turkic literary writings coincides with the Karakhanid reign in Mawarannahr.¹⁴

The Karakhanids' hegemony in Central Asia soon became contested by other powerful Muslim Turkic dynasties, such as the Ghaznavids (963–1187), the Seljuks (1040–1157), the Khwarizm-Shahs (1077–1231), and by the Buddhist Turko-Mongol Karakhitais (1124–1211).¹⁵ As those Turkic dynasties fought to acquire control over various parts of Central Asia during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, other nomadic Turkic tribes (such as Kipchaks) continuously penetrated into the region. The process of demographic Turkicization of Mawarannahr from the eleventh through the thirteenth centuries, however, did not result in the eradication of Iranian culture and languages. Quite the contrary, Persian remained widely spoken, not only by the Iranian peoples of Mawarannahr, but also by local Turkic elites. During this period, with the growing intermingling of Turkic and Iranian peoples, Mawarannahr became a place of cross-cultural (Irano-Turkic and sedentary-nomadic) influences, interactions and bilingualism.

From the late 1210s, Central Asia was overrun by invading nomadic Mongol hordes under the leadership of Genghis Khan. The Mongol incursion was in many respects a total disaster for Central Asia, notably for the sedentary population. The Mongols not only devastated the flourishing urban civilization of Mawarannahr, but also destroyed the vast irrigation networks and farming fields. The mass slaughter of the local population was especially staggering. According to different estimates, between two and four million Central Asians were killed during the Mongol inroads in the region.¹⁶ Surprisingly, despite all those atrocities, the Mongols, who were predominantly shamanists and animists, showed great tolerance towards other confessions. For example, they never forced the conquered Muslim Central Asians to adopt their religious beliefs, customs and/or language.¹⁷

The Mongol conquest led to another shift in the demographic and linguistic make-up of the Central Asian population. According to Bregel, 'The Mongol invasion brought to Central Asia much greater numbers of inner Asian nomads than ever before.'¹⁸ However, a vast majority of those new arrivals, Bregel notes,

‘were Turks, not Mongols; the latter formed only a social and military elite and were very rapidly linguistically assimilated by the Turks’.¹⁹ As a result of mass deaths among the local Iranian-speaking population (as well as pre-Mongol Turkic inhabitants) suffered during the Mongol raids, and with the subsequent settlement of Turko-Mongolic tribes in depopulated areas of Central Asia under the Mongol Chaghatayids (1227–1370), the dynasty that inherited the region and adjoining areas in the east after the death of Genghis Khan, the share of the Turkic element in the region’s demographic structure rose significantly.²⁰ Moreover, the decay of the Perso-Islamic cultural centres of Bukhara and Samarkand in this period contributed to elevating the importance of Turkic languages across the region. Turkicization went even further with the conversion of Chaghatayid Khan Tarmashirin to Islam during the 1330s, which considerably accelerated the fusion of the newly arrived Turko-Mongolic tribes into the local Muslim population of Mawarannahr. But not all Chaghatayid chieftains were happy with the Islamization and accompanying sedentarization of their nomadic tribesmen. In the 1340s, the continuing rivalry between these factions led to the split of the Chaghatay Khanate into two parts: Mawarannahr proper and Moghulistan (roughly covering present-day south-eastern Kazakhstan, northern Kyrgyzstan and parts of Chinese Xinjiang), where the local Chaghatayid rulers primarily maintained their shamanic and nomadic traditions.²¹

Following the political fragmentation of the Chaghatay Khanate in the mid-fourteenth century, Mawarannahr gradually came under control of the indigenous Muslim dynasty of Timurids. The founder of the dynasty, Timur (r. 1370–1405)—known as Tamerlane in the West—was a Turkicized Mongol from the Barlas tribe, which nomadized in the region of Kesh (modern-day Shahrisabz, Uzbekistan). Initially Timur gained recognition as a military commander under the Chaghatayid Khans; and by 1370 he, as an Amir (or Emir, ‘Prince’), was already governing Samarkand and parts of Mawarannahr. During the following 35 years of military campaigns, marked by unbelievable cruelty, carnage, terror and plunder, Timur created an empire that stretched from Delhi to Anatolia and from southern Russia to the Persian Gulf. In addition, Timur vigorously spread Islam among his subjects in Mawarannahr and elsewhere, leading to the eradication of nearly all non-Muslim communities in the region.²² According to Bregel, under Timur and his heirs nomadic Turko-Mongolic tribes of Mawarannahr not only were finally Islamized, but also increasingly adopted a sedentary life.²³

Certainly, Timur’s rule was enormously destructive for the conquered peoples; however, on the other hand, it created a cultural Golden Age for the heartland of the Empire, notably for Samarkand, the capital seat of the Timurids. With thousands of enslaved skilled artisans and craftsmen, and the loot amassed during his campaigns, Timur was able to fill Samarkand and adjacent regions with marvellous monuments.²⁴ Timur’s patronage of arts, literature and sciences, Soucek remarks, was enthusiastically carried on by successive Timurid rulers to a level ‘that makes the century of their rule, the fifteenth, the pride of Islamic civilization and of the peoples of Central Asia’.²⁵ The Timurid era is also distinguished for the formation of the Chaghatay-Turki literary language which the

Timurids actively promoted—along with Persian—as an official language of the court and literature.²⁶

In the first half of the fifteenth century, as the Timurid dynasty was losing its grip on the Empire, a powerful but loose *ulus* (confederation) of various Turko-Mongolic tribes—collectively known as Uzbeks—under Shaybanid rulers,²⁷ of Genghisid descent, began to penetrate into the eastern parts of the Dasht-i Kipchak (the Kipchak steppe).²⁸ Most of those tribes in the Uzbek *ulus* linguistically were speakers of Kipchak-Turkic dialects. As regards their religious beliefs, although the Shaybanid Khans were Sunni Muslims, not all tribes in the *ulus* followed the Islamic faith; some retained their ancestral, predominantly shamanist-animist, faith. By the 1440s, the Uzbek *ulus*, headed by Abul Khayr Khan, became the dominant power in the region, controlling vast territories from the Urals to the north bank of the Syr Darya River.²⁹

In the 1460s, due to growing internal tribal disputes within the Uzbek *ulus*, a number of tribes under the leadership of Janibek and Kerei Khans of the White Horde seceded from the confederation, and with the backing from the Chaghatayid rulers of Moghulistan Khanate moved to the Yeti Su (a Turkic word for Seven Rivers) region, the territory between the Chu and Talas Rivers in present-day Kazakhstan.³⁰ In the following decades, these rebellious tribes were joined by local Turko-Mongolic tribes of Yeti Su, as well as by other separatist tribes and clans fleeing from the Uzbek *ulus*, thus laying a foundation for the emergence of the ‘Kazakh’ Khanate.³¹

As regards to the original Uzbek *ulus* in the eastern Dasht-i Kipchak, it was largely disintegrated and weakened with the death of Abul Khayr Khan in 1468. During the following two decades, the Uzbek *ulus* was plunged into fierce internal strife and tribal rivalry. However, at the end of the fifteenth century, Muhammad Shaybani Khan, a grandson of Abul Khayr Khan, managed to end the chaos and restore the strength and unity of the Uzbek *ulus*.³² While remaining at war with ‘Kazakh’ tribes in the steppes, Muhammad Khan turned the Timurids’ Mawarannahr into the primary target of his conquering mission. Consequently, after gaining a series of victories over the Timurids in the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Shaybanid Uzbeks not only conquered Mawarannahr, but also migrated there en masse, making initially Samarkand and later Bukhara as their capital.³³ Interestingly, the rise of the Shaybanid dynasty in Mawarannahr did not result in the eradication of the Timurids’ political or cultural legacy in the region. On the contrary, the nomadic Shaybanid rulers soon began to adapt to the Timurid pattern of state rule, and even to use Persian and Chaghatay-Turki as the languages of their administration. The urban- and Persian-influenced Islamized culture of Mawarannahr made a considerable impact on many newly-arrived Shaybanid Uzbek steppe nomads, making them over time socioculturally different from their former nomadic kin tribes in the steppes—the ‘Kazakhs’.³⁴

Thus, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the northern tier of Central Asia became predominantly dominated by ‘Kazakh’ tribes, while Mawarannahr fell under the control of the Shaybanid Uzbeks.

‘Kazakh’ tribal unions: social structure, identities and sources of unity

Before briefly discussing the sociopolitical history of the ‘Kazakh’ Khanate, it is essential to clarify the application of the term ‘Kazakh’ when referring to the ancestors of modern-day Kazakhs, as they have been known by different names since the emergence of the unified ‘Kazakh’ Khanate in the sixteenth century. Particularly, after seceding from the Uzbek *ulus*, the mutinous tribes, led by Janibek and Kerei Khans, became generally referred to as Uzbek-Kazaks or Kazaks.³⁵ At that time, those terms primarily had a sociopolitical rather than ethnic or tribal connotation. The origin of the term ‘Kazak’ itself is largely disputed. According to the nineteenth-century ‘Kazakh’ folk tradition, the word ‘Kazak’ derived from the combination of Turkic words *kaz* (goose) and *ak* (white), relating it to the ‘Kazakh’ myth about a white goose that transformed into a princess and bore the first ‘Kazakh’.³⁶ The most popular scholarly version links the term ‘Kazak’ to the Old Turkic word *kazak* denoting free riders of the steppe, or in other words people pursuing a nomadic way of life.³⁷ According to Ivanov, the term ‘Kazak’ was employed towards those ‘who broke away from their state, tribe or clan and [were] compelled to pursue a life of adventurer’.³⁸ Consequently, Masanov argues, ‘Kazaks’ were the ones who fled the Abul Khayr’s centralized Uzbek *ulus* in order to retain their nomadic or ‘Kazak’ lifestyle.³⁹

As for using the term ‘Kazak’ as a collective group designator, according to Wheeler, it was only in the sixteenth century that ‘Kazaks’ were for the first time mentioned as a particular group of nomadic people residing in Central Asia by Russian sources.⁴⁰ However, from the end of the seventeenth century, when Russians actually began to interact with those nomadic people, they began to refer to them not as ‘Kazaks’ but either as ‘Kyrgyzs’, or ‘Kaisak-Kyrgyzs’.⁴¹ The designation of pre-Soviet Kazakhs as ‘Kyrgyzs’ by the Russian Tsarist administration later caused some confusion with another Central Asian nomadic people who also became known from the Soviet period as Kyrgyzs. The cause of this was that for Tsarist ethnographers and officials, the ancestors of modern-day Kyrgyzs were just a subgroup of the ‘Kazakh’ people, who they referred to as Kara-Kyrgyzs (Black-Kyrgyzs). In contrast to the Tsarist designations for Central Asian peoples, the Soviet nationality policymakers identified ‘Kazakhs’ and Kara-Kyrgyzs as separate nationalities. Thus, in order to avoid further terminological ambiguity regarding these peoples, in 1925 ‘Kazakhs’ were formally named both in the ‘Kazakh’ and Russian languages as ‘Kazaks’. However, since the term ‘Kazak’ in Russian was traditionally used for Cossacks, a decade later it was decided to adopt an alternative Russian designation for the Central Asian ‘Kazaks’, that is the *Kazakh*. This new Russian ethnonym, the *Kazakh*, was also reproduced in other non-Turkic languages, including English.⁴² Although the term ‘Kazakh’ was not employed in the English language until the 1930s, for the sake of terminological simplicity and clarity, I will refer to the pre-1925 Kazakhs throughout the book by their present English designation but will enclose the term within quotation marks.

During the reign of Kasim Khan, the son of Janibek who became the 'Kazakh' Khan in 1511, a strong 'Kazakh' Khanate emerged, successfully challenging the hegemony of the Shaybanid Uzbeks in northern Central Asia. Kasim not only expanded the Khanate's territories in the eastern Dasht-i Kipchak at the expense of the Shaybanid Uzbeks, but also increased the number of his tribesmen by accepting other Turko-Mongolic tribes, such as Kipchaks, Naimans and Argyns, into the Khanate. Supposedly under Kasim the population of the 'Kazakh' Khanate reached around one million people.⁴³ Overall, the 'Kazakh' population was a mix of various nomadic tribes, clans and families—many possessing a distinct origin from the others—which could be described in modern-day terminology as a highly multi-ethnic society. In addition, while the founders of the 'Kazakh' Khanate were Sunni Muslims of the Hanafi School, the vast majority of 'Kazakh' tribesmen, including the upper class, had little or no understanding of Islamic teachings and practices.⁴⁴

Thus the emergence of the 'Kazakh' Khanate was not an outcome of some type of irredentist movement of a yet unformed 'Kazakh' people nor a determination of the Janibek and Kerei Khans to establish an independent state for a particular group of people, who perceived themselves as one cultural-political entity distinct from other nomadic tribes remaining in the Shaybanid Uzbek *ulus*. Rather, the 'Kazakh' Khanate was a political union that evolved both in response to specific political circumstances (that is rivalry within Shaybanid Uzbek *ulus*) and Janibek and Kerei Khans' ability to bring those tribes that fled from Abul Khayr's rule under one political umbrella. Had the political situation in the eastern Dasht-i Kipchak developed along rather different lines, those various nomadic tribes that joined the 'Kazakh' Khanate, as Diener rightly observes, 'might have easily been absorbed by an alternative confederation'.⁴⁵

Furthermore, it is hard to identify any sociocultural features that significantly distinguished the tribes of the newly-formed 'Kazakh' Khanate from those that remained in the Shaybanid Uzbek *ulus*. Tribes in both confederacies were steppe nomads and predominately speakers of Kipchak dialects. For example, according to Allworth, there were at least 20 tribal groupings in both Uzbek and 'Kazakh' confederacies that shared the same tribal names, such as Qirq, Jalayir, Alchin and Argun.⁴⁶ In other words, people of the same tribal origin were present in large numbers in both political unions. Schatz also names several tribes within the 'Kazakh' Khanate, the subdivisions of which were found in different tribal confederations existing in Central Asia at the time. Namely, subdivisions of the Adai, Naiman and Argyn tribes constituted parts not only of the 'Kazakh' Khanate, but also of the Karakalpak, Kara-Kyrgyz and Turkmen tribal unions respectively.⁴⁷

Following the death of Kasim Khan in 1523, the 'Kazakh' Khanate was led by a series of weak Khans, unable to maintain the degree of centralized authority of the Kasim's period. As a result, in the mid-sixteenth century, the nominally unified 'Kazakh' Khanate was administratively decentralized into three practically independent tribal conglomerations of the hordes (*zhuzes* in Kazakh): the Great Horde, the Middle Horde and the Small Horde. Each of those hordes

occupied one of the three major eco-geographical areas of the Khanate, rich in both the summer and winter pastures necessary for sustaining a pastoral nomadic economy. In particular, the Great Horde gained control over the Yeti Su region, the Middle Horde dominated northern and central areas of the ‘Kazakh’ Khanate, and the Small Horde occupied the territories roughly between the Aral and Caspian Seas.⁴⁸ According to Dave, the hordes’ designations did not reflect the size or strength of a respective ‘Kazakh’ tribal union, but derived from the ‘Kazakh’ myth about Alash and his three sons, allegedly founders of the ‘Kazakh’ people.⁴⁹ As the various ‘Kazakh’ tribes and clans comprising each horde did not share a common ancestral background, the decision to align with a particular horde was primarily based on economic and political interests rather than on kinship or larger tribal affiliation.⁵⁰ In short, the hordes were basically large tribal unions chiefly created for a greater security and regulation of their dwelling and pastoral territories. By joining one of the hordes, ‘Kazakh’ tribes and clans were better able to survive economically in the steppes, coexist without constant fighting, and defend themselves against common enemies. In the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, despite the fact that the tribal composition of each horde changed periodically, the ‘Kazakh’ hordes gradually became more or less stable—but loose—political unions.⁵¹

As regards the social structure of the ‘Kazakh’ hordes, each was governed by a Khan elected from among the Sultans, rulers of various clans and representatives of the highest strata of the ‘Kazakh’ aristocracy, known as ‘white bone’, who claimed direct descent from the Genghisid Khans. Another social group with ‘white bone’ status were *khojas*, allegedly descendants of Muslim Arab conquerors of Central Asia tracing their lineage to the Prophet Muhammad. The rest of the ‘Kazakh’ nomadic population (except slaves) belonged to so-called ‘black bone’ social strata, composed of two social groups, ‘black bone’ elite (consisting of nobility and military commanders) and their subjects (commoners).⁵²

Despite having seemingly well-established hierarchical social and administrative structures, in fact, the unity of each ‘Kazakh’ horde and the authority of Khans over their subjects remained quite fragile and limited. For instance, clan leaders enjoyed far more authority in matters of taxation than their respective Khans.⁵³ Besides, the centrality of the Khans’ power was reduced by the existence of different autonomous tribal alliances within each horde—the number of the tribes in such alliances changed systematically depending on their power—which competed among themselves for influence and better pastoral lands. In Geiss’s words, ‘the Kazakh hordes did not form states whose rulers could enforce commands among subjects. They, however, represented tribal confederacies whose leaders depended on tribal following’.⁵⁴ As a rule, for ‘Kazakh’ nomads, allegiance to a particular tribe or clan was much more important than affiliation with alternative group identities or loyalties, such as horde or khanate. Accordingly, because of strong particularistic and often competing interests, it was extremely difficult for ‘Kazakh’ tribes to establish lasting coherent political entities with strong centralized authorities.

Depending upon the time and situation, inter-horde relations were characterized by both cooperation (for instance, during the emergence of common security threats) and armed conflicts (for acquiring the supremacy in the steppes). For example, until the end of the 1720s, 'Kazakh' hordes maintained cooperation on a range of matters of mutual interests such as establishing migratory roots and protecting the tribal territories.⁵⁵ Nonetheless, the existence of such cooperation among the hordes does not necessarily imply that they were part of one common state with a single recognized leader. Rather the 'Kazakh' Khanate, at least after the emergence of the hordes, was a political-geographical zone, where three large tribal conglomerations (hordes) from time to time and to some degree coordinated their economic and military actions. The authority of a single ruler was only recognized when a strong Khan would subjugate other 'Kazakh' hordes. However, such cases were very rare. And even when powerful Khans, such as Tauke (r. 1680–1715) and Ablay (r. 1774–81), succeeded in unifying all three hordes for brief periods, they, Geiss writes, 'owed their influence to the military threat caused by the Oirats [or Jungars] and the need for centralised defence'.⁵⁶ Yet, in many instances even a common external threat was not a good enough reason for the hordes to unify.

In general, since their formation both the 'Kazakh' Khanate and the hordes were a type of multilevel tribal confederacies, the political unity of which largely depended on the existence of either a powerful Khan or a common security threat. For forging such a political union, especially at the Khanate level, there was no need for different 'Kazakh' tribes and clans to consider themselves as one people/*ethnie*. Throughout the history of Central Asia or other regions in the world, tribes from different ethnic stock have often united against a common enemy, but that has not made them one people/*ethnie* either then or in the future. As regards the attempts of a few powerful 'Kazakh' Khans to bring the hordes under their control, it was not because of a patriotic unificatory ideology of gathering 'Kazakh' nomads under one political roof, but because of their political ambition to expand their power and influence in the region. Whenever possible, powerful 'Kazakh' Khans attempted to dominate 'Kazakh' tribes and tribes from other tribal confederacies in Central Asia, such as the Yenisei Kyrgyzs and Karakalpaks.

Attempts in Kazakh historiography to present all those loosely related nomadic tribes comprising 'Kazakh' hordes as one ethnic group or even a nation—who were split into three hordes (not mentioning numerous tribal alliances within them) either because of harsh historical destiny (for example, feudal particularism⁵⁷), or, on the contrary, as evidence of the great 'Kazakh' steppe/military democracy allowing self-governance at all levels of social structure⁵⁸—are largely a deliberate misinterpretation of the history. As a rule, such claims are aimed at asserting the primordial roots of the modern-day Kazakh nation, or as Diener puts it, at establishing 'a pattern of Kazakh "national" unity before the modern state-centered era'.⁵⁹ In fact, there is no sufficient evidence to suggest that during the Russian penetration into the 'Kazakh' steppe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a significant number of 'Kazakh' tribes and clans perceived themselves as one people/*ethnie*. For example, the most frequently used argument asserting ethnic unity among pre-Tsarist 'Kazakh' tribes is that

they spoke similar dialects. However, such an argument is largely irrelevant to defining the pre-Tsarist 'Kazakhs' as a single nomadic group, since they had never projected their unity as based on a shared language. In ethnic identity construction, as Haarmann stresses, it is not the correlation between ethnicity and language that matters so much, but the use of language as an instrument for forming, shaping and reinforcing ethnic identity.⁶⁰ Since the 'Kazakh' tribes had no written tradition, they were less inclined to reflect on language as an important symbol of either their identity or unity. In addition, Kipchak dialects spoken by 'Kazakh' tribes were not markedly different from the ones used by many other tribes (for example, Karakalpaks) nomadizing in the steppes,⁶¹ thus making it difficult (even philologically) to treat the pre-Tsarist 'Kazakhs' as a distinct ethnolinguistic group in the region.

Neither can the tradition of passing on tribal genealogical information—often referred to as the basis for the formation of group identity among pastoral nomadic societies—serve as evidence for the existence of a common ethnic consciousness among the numerous tribes comprising the Great, Middle and Small Hordes. First, those oral genealogical records were primarily genealogical stories of individual families, tribes or a number of tribes, and not a proof that the vast majority of 'Kazakh' nomads acknowledged their 'Kazakhness' and distinctiveness collectively from other nomadic peoples of Central Asia. For instance, Tsarist General Grodekov, who conducted some research about the 'Kazakh' and Kara-Kyrgyz nomads in the 1880s, noted that unlike an aristocracy, poor nomads (most likely the vast majority of the steppe nomads) did not have any clue 'about the distant branches of kinship'.⁶² Second, the accuracy of those oral genealogical records cannot be verified. Many of them might have been invented or periodically altered, for example, to suit the emerging interests of a particular tribal leadership. Finally, 'Kazakh' genealogical structures did not have a real relevance to the existing political order in the steppes, as major 'Kazakh' political unions (the hordes) were largely segmented, and their leaders often were unable to exercise their authority among their nominal subjects.

As regards the above mentioned 'Kazakh' myth of Alash, claiming the common origin of the hordes and respectively of the 'Kazakh' people, it is purportedly an eighteenth century invention, and supposedly (but not necessarily) aimed at raising the security awareness of leaders of the 'Kazakh' hordes about common dangers stemming from the Oirat invasions. Or, it could have been just a popular legend (the circulation and degree of popularity of this legend among all 'Kazakhs' is unknown), which later became popularized and nationalized by Kazakh historians and intellectuals. According to Olcott, '[Until] the mid-19th century, it [Kazakh epics and folklore] showed no evidence of political consciousness, or even sub-national loyalties. It was very parochial, dealing only with families.'⁶³ Besides, the appearance or invention of a myth of common descent does not necessarily mean that it reflects the majority sentiments in the community; it could be elites' attempt to make it so.

The fact that prior to Russian occupation various tribes and clans comprising the 'Kazakh' hordes had lacked an overarching ethnic consciousness and identity

does not imply that many of them—especially those nomadizing in the vicinity of each other—had no common sociocultural features, at least at the elite level. From the sixteenth century on, the ability of the ‘Kazakh’ tribes to maintain continuous control over roughly the same territorial space in the steppes, and consequently to have a long experience of eco-political cooperation (for instance, in regulating pastoral migratory routes), and coexistence in one political-geographical zone, gradually resulted in the development of a number of common sociocultural features. For example, similar social and hierarchical structures existed in the hordes. Those common features ultimately made them socioculturally relatively more alike to each other than to other nomadic peoples of Central Asia. However, this comparative sociocultural resemblance of ‘Kazakh’ tribes primarily stemmed not from their *ethnocultural* unity, but rather from the *geocultural* framework, which they were part of from the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries onwards. These common sociocultural features existing among the various ‘Kazakh’ tribes later became the basis for Russian ethnographers and statisticians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to categorize many of them as one ethnic/nomadic group. But most importantly, as argued later in the book, they became raw material based on which several ‘Kazakh’ intellectuals in the late Tsarist era began to ‘imagine’ different ‘Kazakh’ tribes as one people, and later the Soviet nation-makers crafted the modern Kazakh nation.

Mawarannahr under Uzbek dynasties: demography, prevailing identities and Islam

The conquest of Mawarannahr by the Shaybanid Uzbeks in the early sixteenth century brought to the region a fresh wave of Turkic nomads, whose numbers were further increased during the following two centuries by migration of other Turkic tribes such as Kipchaks, Karakalpaks and Manghits.⁶⁴ During this period, many of those Shaybanid Uzbek and other newly-arrived nomadic tribes gradually settled and adapted to a sedentary way of life, eventually merging with the local Iranian and Turkic peoples. Consequently, communities in Mawarannahr became so heterogeneous that only a few areas remained completely settled by people either of Iranian or Turkic origin.⁶⁵

The demographic make-up of Shaybanid Mawarannahr was also complicated due to the sociocultural and linguistic diversity of the local population. In different parts of the region, during the fusion of various Iranian and Turkic peoples, many people of Turkic descent became culturally and/or linguistically partially/fully Iranized, while many local inhabitants of Iranian descent became Turkicized.⁶⁶ Furthermore, the existence of different settlement patterns (nomadic and sedentary) across the Shaybanid state led to the formation of distinct social and cultural groups even among people of the same origin. For example, sedentary Turkic people of Mawarannahr had more in common with the largely sedentary Iranian population than with the nomadic and semi-nomadic Turkic peoples of the region. In addition, the various Turkic peoples

inhabiting Mawarannahr differed from each other by speaking diverse Turkic languages/dialects. For instance, linguistically Kipchak-speaking Shaybanid Uzbeks were closer to ‘Kazakh’ tribes than to the Chaghatay-Turki-speaking population of Mawarannahr.⁶⁷ Similarly, the Iranian-speaking population was divided between speakers of ‘Farsi-Tajik’ and of several distinct eastern-Iranian Pamir (or Galcha) dialects.⁶⁸

As Shaybanid Uzbek tribes dispersed across Mawarannahr, the name ‘Uzbek’ gradually lost its former connotation, and in the course of time, Allworth maintains, became predominantly used—often pejoratively—as a term of reference for those Shaybanid tribes that maintained their nomadic way of life, and were reluctant to obey the Khans’ centralizing policies.⁶⁹ Schoeberlein-Engel offers a different perspective on the application of the term ‘Uzbek’ in Shaybanid Mawarannahr, arguing that it was primarily associated with the ruling elites. However, proceeds Schoeberlein-Engel, it was also used as a general self-identification term by a number of people who—irrespective of their Turkic or Iranian origin, or sedentary or nomadic way of life—considered themselves subjects of Uzbek dynasties.⁷⁰ In general, the term ‘Uzbek’ was largely conditional, having different meanings in different contexts. By the nineteenth century it was predominantly used as one of the many terms denoting certain groups of Turkic peoples living in Mawarannahr.

As regards the sedentary population of Mawarannahr, they came to be collectively designated by two general and in some way synonymous terms: ‘Tajik’ and ‘Sart’. The origin and early application of those two terms, both by the local population and foreigners, have been harshly disputed by scholars. Nevertheless, it is largely acknowledged that initially neither had a linguistic or ethnic connotation, and that both terms could have been equally applied towards people of either Iranian or Turkic descent. However, between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, the meaning of both terms went through some changes. At the end of the nineteenth century, under the Tsarist administration, the term ‘Tajik’ became primarily applied only to the Iranian-speaking inhabitants of Central Asia; while the term ‘Sart’ was narrowed down to refer predominantly, but not exclusively, to the Chaghatay-Turki speaking settled population of Mawarannahr.⁷¹ In any case, this ‘Tajik’-‘Sart’ sociolinguistic categorization of the settled population did not coincide with its ‘ethnic’ composition, as many, especially in urban areas, were bilingual. Besides, there were many groups of people, particularly in Bukhara, claiming to be Uzbek or Sart, but commanding only ‘Farsi-Tajik’.⁷² As Abashin observes:

These people could not be classified as being of one single cultural or language type—what we now refer to as an ethnic group. Cultural or linguistic distinguishing features were not permanent, but fluid, and a person could easily move from one category to another.⁷³

Moreover, in the identity structure of the pre-Tsarist sedentary population of Mawarannahr being a Sart, Uzbek or a Tajik had little or no importance. The

local sedentary population neither distinguished themselves from each other through these vague concepts, nor used them as their ethnonym.

Prior to Russian occupation, ethnic group consciousness and self-ascription were practically unknown in Mawarannahr. Communities who spoke the same languages, shared the basic culture, and had some shared history (for example, because of living in the same geographical area for a century or more) did not necessarily organize or 'other' themselves as a group along ethnic lines. As Francis observes, 'ethnicity is not just the composition of language, culture and history, but also about perception of identity by groups, family and community or attribution by outsiders'.⁷⁴ In other words, for the emergence of a common ethnic consciousness it is not enough to have static common sociocultural features, which might have automatically arisen while living side by side during several generations, but it is necessary that those common features are mobilized, activated, elaborated and emphasized in the framework of a collective ethnic identity. According to Smith, in order to 'qualify ... as an ethnic community or *ethnie* ... there must also emerge a strong sense of belonging and an active solidarity, which in time of stress and danger can override class, factional or regional divisions within the community'.⁷⁵ Otherwise those shared sociocultural characteristics of given premodern societies are just ethnographic materials, convenient for contemporary anthropologists and historians *ex post facto* subjectively to categorize ancient and medieval communities along ethnic lines. But in actual historical and social context, these common features might be largely unimportant in a hierarchy of individual or group identity attachments. The latter applies to the sedentary population of Mawarannahr, for whom, as Barthold argues, 'belonging to a particular [ethnic] stock [was] of no significance'.⁷⁶ Rather, the most common form of identities among sedentary Mawarannahrians was belonging to a supraethnic Islamic *ummah*, and to subethnic identities such as tribe, clan, city or region. For instance:

When asked to identify himself, a native of Bukhara would more commonly reply that he was a Bukharan, rather than asserting that he was an Uzbek or a Tajik. On the other hand, if a non-Muslim asked the same native of Bukhara to identify himself, the Bukharan would be likely to reply that he was a Muslim, again drawing no ethnic or national distinction.⁷⁷

But 'even if you had found people who identified themselves as Uzbeks, Tajiks, or Turkmen', Edgar remarks, 'the label wouldn't necessarily have meant what we imagine it does'.⁷⁸ Those collective group designations, as is examined later in the book, largely acquired ethnic and national connotations—in the form they are known today—only during the Soviet period. Further, as Edgar notes, 'there was no historical relationship between ethnicity and statehood in the region... The notion that a state should exist for the benefit of a single ethnic group was unfamiliar'.⁷⁹ Accordingly, neither formation of political entities (khanates) in Central Asia, nor their internal or external policies were attributed to a particular ethnic group.

Traditionally, political formations in Mawarannahr were based on allegiance to ruling dynasties and Islam.⁸⁰ However, unlike a number of medieval Christian kingdoms (for instance, Georgia, Russia or Sweden), where monarchs and especially official state Churches served as primary generators of basic ethnic sentiments among their respective populations and parishes, political and Islamic religious institutions of Mawarannahr never performed such a function. For instance, ruling dynasties of Mawarannahr had never attempted to ethnicize the political spaces in which they operated, whether through ethnicization of the dominant 'high-culture' or religion, and consequently to encourage awareness of common ethnic identity at least among higher social classes. Furthermore, the Shaybanids and their successor various Uzbek dynasties never created an official ideology, articulated either in a written ethnohistory of Uzbeks or oral myths of common descent, which would have linked Uzbek elites (composed of representatives of various tribes and clans), their subjects (at least those who migrated with them from the steppes), and the territory they occupied as one inseparable entity. Nor did the local ulama (a body of Muslim legal scholars) express even a slight interest in the ethnicization of Hanafi Sunni Islam, for example, by promoting the idea of divinely chosen Uzbek or Tajik Muslim people (ethnoreligious community), distinguished within the universal *ummah*, who occupied the sacred land of Mawarannahr. Besides, the use of the 'holy' Arabic, largely inaccessible to the masses, instead of 'sanctified' local vernaculars for conducting Islamic sermons and rituals, prevented the possibility of the formation of any statewide coherent ethnolinguistic community.

To conceptualize, in premodern political entities, in Gellnerian terms, for persisting collective ethnic identities and consciousness to emerge among economically and territorially dispersed populations, it is necessary that there are social structures/institutions in which top-down 'messages' of *belonging to/constituting a particular people* are repeatedly disseminated and emphasized. During the premodern era, in the absence of modern communication systems or an all-inclusive statewide educational system, two institutions could have performed such a task: highly centralized state administration and a hierarchical religious institution having its representatives in most of the settled areas of a given political or cultural unit. However, as discussed earlier, neither the ruling Muslim dynasties of Mawarannahr nor dominant Sunni religious establishments, which lacked a clerical hierarchy, were interested in mobilizing local Muslim population along ethnolinguistic and/or ethnoreligious lines. Consequently, in pre-Tsarist Mawarannahr, in the absence of an elite-driven ideology promoting the emergence of territorially- and/or linguistically-defined ethnic-based communities and solidarities, it was practically impossible for the largely illiterate lower strata (the masses)—who were territorially and economically fragmented across the region, and, due to limited means of communication, had little or no knowledge about one another—to produce among themselves a shared sense of ethnic consciousness. Therefore, had any ethnic type identity emerged in Mawarannahr, it would have been definitely bound to a restricted geographical area or to a particular tribal group. Considering the territorial expanse of

Mawarannahr, and the numerous politically autonomous or semi-autonomous tribal unions and principalities existing in the region, the number of such quasi-ethnic communities would have possibly amounted to several hundred.

The Shaybanid dynasty governed most of Mawarannahr throughout the sixteenth century. However, they largely failed to form a strong centralized system of governance, and the state soon broke up into small, often rival, semi-independent principalities, rulers of which only nominally acknowledged the central authority of the Shaybanid Khans in Bukhara.⁸¹ The political decentralization of Mawarannahr was followed by an economic stagnation of the region, as its transit function declined considerably with the discovery of new marine routes connecting the European powers with India and China. Besides, the establishment of Shi'a Islam as the state religion of Safavid Iran (1501–1722), which caused a serious theological and political backlash with predominantly Sunni Central Asian political entities, geographically and culturally cut Mawarannahr off from the rest of the Sunni-dominated Islamic centres of the Middle East and North Africa.⁸² As a result, from the sixteenth century up until the Russian occupation, Central Asia became largely isolated from the mainstream sociopolitical and cultural developments taking place around the world.

In 1599 after the death of the last influential Shaybanid leader, Abdullah Khan, control over Mawarannahr was passed on to the Ashtrakhanid dynasty. However, the shift of power did not result in significant changes to the political landscape of Mawarannahr. The Ashtrakhanids, like the Shaybanids, were largely unable to restore the authority of central government over powerful regional leaders.⁸³ An increasing political fragmentation of Mawarannahr finally led to the emergence of three independent political entities: the Emirate of Bukhara, and the Khanates of Kokand and Khiva.

The Emirate of Bukhara was the largest and most powerful of the Khanates of Mawarannahr. Although its boundaries had never been stable or fixed, the Emirate mostly controlled large parts of the territories between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya Rivers, including the Zaravshan Valley. In addition, the two major historical centres of Central Asia, Samarkand and Bukhara, fell within the borders of the Emirate.⁸⁴ A vast majority of the Emirate's highly diverse population were Sunni Muslims. However, there were also a considerable number of the Ismaili Shi'a Muslims, mainly among the east-Iranian-speaking population of the Pamir Mountains, and relatively small communities of Hindus and 'Farsi-Tajik'-speaking Jews.⁸⁵

According to Soucek, the Manghit rulers, who assumed power in Bukhara in 1785, were relatively more successful in achieving sociopolitical stability in the Emirate than their Ashtrakhanid predecessors.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, there were still a number of provinces (for example, Shahr-i Sabz, Hisar and Kulab) where the Emir's authority was very weak.⁸⁷ The power of the central government was more acknowledged in those parts of the Emirate where the Emir was also regarded as the supreme Islamic leader.⁸⁸ Overall, the conservative theocratic and extremely autocratic Manghit regime, Soucek notes, was unable to implement reforms that would have led to the political and economic modernization of the Emirate.⁸⁹

The Khanate of Kokand, ruled by the Uzbek tribal dynasty of Ming (1710–1876), emerged as an independent political entity after seceding from the Bukhara Emirate at the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was located in the western parts of the Ferghana Valley and Tashkent oasis. At the height of its power, the Kokand Khanate roughly comprised the territories of what is today eastern Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, northern Tajikistan and parts of southern Kazakhstan. The population of the Khanate, as in Bukhara, was extremely heterogeneous, consisting of Uzbeks, Tajiks, ‘Kazakhs’, Kara-Kyrgyzs, Kipchaks, and other Turkic peoples.⁹⁰ However, in comparison to the Bukhara Emirate, the Kokand Khanate’s population—despite a number of important urban centres in the Khanate, notably the city of Tashkent—was predominantly tribal and less Islamized. Therefore, the Ming Khans’ power often depended on, or was challenged by, leaders of strong tribal unions within the Khanate.⁹¹

The Khanate of Khiva was situated south of the Aral Sea, approximately comprising the territories of modern-day north-western Uzbekistan and eastern Turkmenistan. It was established by the Yadigarid Shaybanid dynasty in the early sixteenth century. The Yadigarids were able to maintain control over the Khanate until 1804, when they were replaced by another Uzbek dynasty of the Kungrats, who ruled the Khanate until its fall to the Russian Bolshevik power in 1920.⁹² Similarly to the Kokand Khanate, a significant portion of the population of the Khiva Khanate was nomadic and semi-nomadic, originating from different tribal backgrounds such as Turkmens, Uzbeks, Karakalpaks and ‘Kazakhs’.⁹³ The leaders of various tribes (especially Turkmens) of the Khanate were often reluctant to acknowledge the central authority of the Khivan Khans. They only recognized the supremacy of the central government when they were either militarily subordinated by powerful Khans or voluntarily agreed to participate in the Khans’ military campaigns, hoping to acquire rich booty. In other cases, the strong tribal groupings within the Khanate were largely able to maintain their political autonomy. As for the Khanate’s settled population (Sarts), they were the most loyal subjects of the Khivan Khans as they often required the central government’s protection against tribal intrusions.⁹⁴

Apart from the lack of internal cohesion and stability, the Emirate of Bukhara and the Khanates of Kokand and Khiva were engaged in never-ending conflicts both among themselves and with other neighbouring powers. Continuous political instability and chaos led to a further economic and cultural decline of Mawarannahr, consequently lagging significantly behind the emerging regional power, Tsarist Russia.

Notes

- 1 See Richard N. Frye, *The Heritage of Central Asia: From Antiquity to the Turkish Expansion* (Princeton, NJ: Marcus Wiener, 1996).
- 2 Svat Soucek, *A History of Inner Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 51–54.
- 3 Transoxiana, literally meaning the land beyond the river, was the ancient name used for the area between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya Rivers in Central Asia, roughly

- corresponding to the territory of modern-day Uzbekistan and adjacent parts of Tajikistan, southern Kyrgyzstan and south-eastern Kazakhstan.
- 4 On pre-Islamic religions in Central Asia, see James Thrower, *The Religious History of Central Asia from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press), 50–91.
 - 5 *Ibid.*, 103.
 - 6 Peter Roudik, *The History of the Central Asian Republics* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 28–29.
 - 7 Robert L. Canfield, ‘Introduction: The Turko-Persian Tradition’, in *Turko-Persia in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert L. Canfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 4–5.
 - 8 Bernard Lewis, *From Babel to Dragomans: Interpreting the Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 44.
 - 9 Quoted in David Christian, *A History of Russia, Central Asia and Mongolia*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 322. For a broader account on the Samanid rule in Mawarannahr, see N. N. Negmatov, ‘The Samanid State,’ in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, ed. M. S. Asimov and C. E. Bosworth, vol. 4 (Paris: UNESCO, 1998), 80–93.
 - 10 Turkistan or *Bilad al-Turk* (meaning ‘Land of the Turks’) was a term used by the Arab invaders to differentiate Mawarannahr from the Central Asian steppes (lying north to the Syr Darya River), which was occupied by Eurasian nomadic Turkic tribes. After the Russian occupation of Central Asia in the nineteenth century, the term ‘Turkistan’ changed to ‘Turkestan’. However, in comparison to the Arabs, the Tsarist administration employed the term ‘Turkestan’ to describe not the steppe regions, but the territories comprising Mawarannahr and northern Khorasan, an area encompassing parts of present-day Turkmenistan and eastern Uzbekistan. See Soucek, *History of Inner Asia*, 14.
 - 11 Geoffrey Wheeler, *The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964), 23.
 - 12 A. M. Khazanov, ‘Nomads and Oases in Central Asia,’ in *Transition to Modernity: Essays on Power, Wealth, and Belief*, ed. John A. Hall and I. C. Jarvie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 76.
 - 13 Ludmila Polonskaya and Alexei Malashenko, *Islam in Central Asia* (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 1994), 13.
 - 14 Carter Vaughn Findley, *The Turks in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 75–77.
 - 15 For a good summary of Central Asia under these Turkic dynasties, see Yuri Bregel, *An Historical Atlas of Central Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 26–34; G. A. Khidoiatov, *Moia rodnaia istoriia* (Tashkent: Ukituvchi, 1990), 109–131.
 - 16 Rafis Abazov, *The Palgrave Concise Historical Atlas of Central Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 50.
 - 17 Roudik, *History of the Central Asian Republics*, 39.
 - 18 Yuri Bregel, ‘Turko-Mongol Influences in Central Asia’, in *Turko-Persia in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert L. Canfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 60.
 - 19 *Ibid.* See also S. P. Tolstov *et al.*, eds., *Narody Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana*, vol. 1 (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1962), 87–88.
 - 20 Bregel, ‘Turko-Mongol Influences’, 61.
 - 21 Beatrice Forbes Manz, *The Rise and Rule of Tamerlane* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 24.
 - 22 On Timur, see *ibid.*
 - 23 Bregel, ‘Turko-Mongol Influences’, 61.
 - 24 V. V. Barthold, *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, trans. V. and T. Mironsky, vol. 2 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1958), 40–41.

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- 25 Soucek, *History of Inner Asia*, 126.
- 26 Beatrice Forbes Manz, 'The Development and Meaning of Chaghatay Identity', in *Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of Identity and Change* ed. Jo-Ann Gross (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 41–42.
- 27 Despite having the same ethnonym, the medieval Shaybanid Uzbek tribal confederacy and different local Uzbek dynasties that emerged after its disintegration in Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand in the seventeenth century should not be directly linked with the modern-day Uzbek nation, which was only formed during the Soviet period. As regards the origin of the name 'Uzbek', allegedly it derived from Uzbek Khan (1312–41), the ruler of the Turko-Mongol Golden Horde. See Edward Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present; A Cultural History* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1990), 32–33. For a list of the constituent tribes and clans of the Uzbek *ulus*, see T. I. Sultanov, *Kochevye plemena Priaral'ia v xv–xvii vv.: Voprosy etnicheskoi i sotsial'noi istorii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1982), 8.
- 28 In medieval texts, the term 'Dasht-i Kipchak' was used as a reference to the vast steppe lands of Eurasia, stretching from Crimea in the west to the Irtys River and Lake Balkhash in the east. The Central Asian part of the Dasht-i Kipchak later (from the eighteenth century) became known as the Kyrgyz ('Kazakh') steppe.
- 29 Allworth, *Modern Uzbeks*, 35–38.
- 30 Under the Russians, Yeti Su became known by its Russian translation, Semireche.
- 31 See K. S. Karazhan *et al.*, eds., *Istoriia Kazakhstana* (Almaty: Zan Adebieti, 2009), 90–92; A. N. Nusupbekov *et al.*, eds., *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR: S drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei*, vol. 2 (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1979), 258–259, 263.
- 32 P. P. Ivanov, *Ocherki po istorii Srednei Azii (xvi-seredina xix v.)* (Moscow: Vostlit, 1958), 47–48.
- 33 A. A. Askarov *et al.*, eds., *Istoriia Uzbekistana (xvi – pervaiia polovina xix veka)*, vol. 3 (Tashkent: Fan, 1993), 31–36.
- 34 Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: Geopolitics and the Birth of Nations* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 7.
- 35 Bregel, *Historical Atlas of Central Asia*, 44, 50.
- 36 Olcott, *Kazakhs*, 4.
- 37 Wheeler, *Modern History of Soviet Central Asia*, 11; Nurbulat Masanov, 'Perceptions of Ethnic and All-National Identity in Kazakhstan,' in *The Nationalities Question in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan*, ed. Nurbulat Masanov, *et al.* (Chiba, Japan: Institute of Developing Economies, 2002), 21.
- 38 Ivanov, *Ocherki*, 38.
- 39 Masanov, 'Perceptions of Ethnic and All-National Identity,' 22.
- 40 Wheeler, *Modern History of Soviet Central Asia*, 11.
- 41 *Ibid.*
- 42 See John Schoeberlein-Engel, 'Identity in Central Asia: Construction and Contention in the Conceptions of "Özbek," "Täjik," "Muslim," "Samarqandi" and Other Groups' (PhD Thesis, Harvard University, 1994), 31–33.
- 43 Olcott, *Kazakhs*, 4, 9.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 19.
- 45 Alexander C. Diener, 'National Territory and the Reconstruction of History in Kazakhstan,' *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 43, no. 8 (2002): 641.
- 46 Allworth, *Modern Uzbeks*, 34.
- 47 Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics*, 32.
- 48 Paul Georg Geiss, *Pre-Tsarist and Tsarist Central Asia: Communal Commitment and Political Order in Change* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 114; Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics*, 30–31.
- 49 Bhavna Dave, *Kazakhstan: Ethnicity, Language and Power* (London: Routledge, 2007), 32.
- 50 Olcott, *Kazakhs*, 10–11.

- 51 Ibid., 11.
- 52 See Sultanov, *Kochevye plemena*, 98–102; Bakhytnur Otambaeva, ‘A Brief History of the Kazak People’, *Nationalities Papers* 26, no. 3 (1998): 425.
- 53 Olcott, *Kazakhs*, 15.
- 54 Geiss, *Pre-Tsarist and Tsarist Central Asia*, 116.
- 55 Ibid., 113.
- 56 Ibid., 115.
- 57 See, for example, Nusupbekov *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 2, 282–286.
- 58 See, for example, Otambaeva, ‘Brief History of the Kazak People’, 425; Zhanylzhan Dzhunusova, ‘The Democratic Tradition of Kazakhstan in Historical Context’, in *Democracy and Pluralism in Muslim Eurasia*, ed. Yaacov Ro’i (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 15–16; S. E. Tolybekov, *Kochevoe obshchestvo Kazakhov v xvii-nachale xx veka: Politiko-ekonomicheskii analiz* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1971), 235.
- 59 Diener, ‘National Territory’, 641.
- 60 Harald Haarmann, *Language in Ethnicity: A View of Basic Ecological Relations* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1986), 257–266.
- 61 See Lawrence Krader, *Peoples of Central Asia* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1963), 34–40.
- 62 Quoted in A. M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, trans. Julia Crookenden, 2nd ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 143.
- 63 Quoted in Dave, *Kazakhstan*, 41, definitions given in brackets belong to Dave.
- 64 Bregel, ‘Turko-Mongol Influences’, 62.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Krader, *Peoples of Central Asia*, 81–82.
- 67 Allworth, *Modern Uzbeks*, 37–38.
- 68 ‘Farsi-Tajik’ here refers to the variation of the Farsi (Persian) language spoken in medieval Central Asia, which later became the basis for the modern literary Tajik language.
- 69 Allworth, *Modern Uzbeks*, 42.
- 70 John Schoeberlein-Engel, ‘The Prospects for Uzbek National Identity’, *Central Asia Monitor*, no. 2 (1996): 13.
- 71 For a thorough review of the theories explaining the usage of the terms ‘Sart’ and ‘Tajik’ in pre-Soviet Central Asia, see Sergei Abashin, ‘Vozvrashchenia Sartov? Metodologiia i ideologiia v postsovetskikh nauchnykh diskussiiakh’, *Antropologicheskii Forum*, no. 10 (2009): 252–278; Yuri Bregel, ‘Recent Publications on the Sarts: A Review Article’, *Journal of Asian History* 42, no. 2 (2008): 196–206.
- 72 Khazanov, ‘Nomads and Oases’, 77.
- 73 Sergei Abashin, ‘The Transformation of Ethnic Identity in Central Asia: A Case Study of the Uzbeks and Tajiks’, *Russian Regional Perspectives Journal* 1, no. 2 (2003): 32.
- 74 David J. Francis, *Uniting Africa: Building Regional Peace and Security Systems* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 77.
- 75 Smith, *Ethnic Origins*, 30, emphasis in original.
- 76 W. Barthold, ‘Sart’, in *E. J. Brill’s First Encyclopaedia of Islam, 1913–1936*, ed. M. Th. Houtsma *et al.* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 176.
- 77 Andrew Segars, ‘Nation Building in Turkey and Uzbekistan: The Use of Language and History in the Creation of National Identity’, in *Central Asia: Aspects of Transition*, ed. Tom Everett-Heath (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 91.
- 78 Adrienne Lynn Edgar, ‘Identities, Communities, and Nations in Central Asia: A Historical Perspective’, *Caucasus and Central Asia Newsletter* 1 (2001–2002): 9.
- 79 Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 18.
- 80 Roy, *New Central Asia*, 2–3.
- 81 Askarov *et al.*, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, vol. 3, 56–57.
- 82 Caroe, *Soviet Empire*, 27–28.
- 83 E. K. Arifdzhanov *et al.*, eds., *Istoriia Uzbekistana* (Tashkent: AMVD, 2012), 119.

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- 84 Ivanov, *Ocherki*, 118–121.
- 85 Seymour Becker, *Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia: Bukhara and Khiva, 1865–1924* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 7.
- 86 Soucek, *History of Inner Asia*, 180.
- 87 Becker, *Russia's Protectorates*, 5.
- 88 Geiss, *Pre-Tsarist and Tsarist Central Asia*, 136.
- 89 Soucek, *History of Inner Asia*, 180.
- 90 Askarov *et al.*, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, vol. 3, 213–215.
- 91 Geiss, *Pre-Tsarist and Tsarist Central Asia*, 153–156.
- 92 Soucek, *History of Inner Asia*, 181–187.
- 93 Khidoiatov, *Moia rodnaia istoriia*, 232.
- 94 Geiss, *Pre-Tsarist and Tsarist Central Asia*, 137, 143–146.

3 Tsarist Central Asia

Russian conquest and administrative-territorial reorganization of Central Asia

The annexation of the Muslim Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan by Tsar Ivan the Terrible in the 1550s marked the beginning of the prolonged Russian expansion eastward. Over the course of the next two centuries, the Russian Empire was able to extend its control over the vast territories of Siberia and northern flanks of Central Asia, thus reaching out to the areas traditionally nomadized by ‘Kazakh’ tribes. The Russian appearance in the region coincided with a devastating weakening of the ‘Kazakh’ hordes, which suffered tremendous territorial and human losses from the Oirat and Bashkir invasions. Unable to organize an effective resistance to the intruders, leaders of the ‘Kazakh’ hordes one after another appealed to the Russian Empress Anna (r. 1730–40) to place them under Russian *poddanstvo* (suzerainty). In its turn, the Russian government, which was quite interested in further extending its influence in the steppes and ensuring the security of its southern borders and trade routes, was happy to provide such ‘protection’. In 1731, Abul Khayr, the Khan of the Small Horde, swore allegiance to the Russian throne, thus granting the Tsar the right to appoint the Khan of the Small Horde in exchange for Russian protection of its territory. Fearing the strengthening of the Small Horde, the Middle and a section of the Great Horde also declared themselves to be vassals of the Russian Empire between 1734 and 1742.¹

What was unique about the Russo-‘Kazakh’ *poddanstvo* treaties was that they were interpreted significantly differently by each party. While for the steppe nomads the notion of *poddanstvo* simply meant entering into an alliance with the Tsarist Empire, and not becoming Russian subjects, for Tsarist policymakers, it implied a legally binding agreement, which they could use whenever needed to assert full sovereignty over the ‘Kazakh’ hordes.² The extension of the Russian *poddanstvo* to the ‘Kazakh’ hordes was not, however, immediately followed by their incorporation into the Empire, and in the following decades the hordes remained only nominally subjects of the Russian Tsar. Depending upon their interests ‘Kazakh’ Khans and various tribal chieftains often shifted allegiances from the Russians to the Chinese Qing dynasty, Oirats or the Kokand Khanate.³

With the ascendance of Catherine II to the Russian imperial throne in 1762, Russia actively resumed its eastward expansion. Russia's growing military and economic interests in the region drove a new imperial strategy of imposing direct rule over its 'Kazakh' protectorates. By the 1820s, the Russian influence in the 'Kazakh' steppe was so strong that the Tsarist government began to gradually abolish the 'Kazakh' hordes. The Russians first abrogated the Middle Horde in 1822, and then the Small Horde in 1824. In 1848, the Bukei (Inner) Horde, created by the Tsarist administration back in 1801 by splitting the Small Horde, was deprived of its autonomy. Finally, in the 1860s, full control was established over the Great Horde, which at that time officially recognized the suzerainty of the Kokand Khan.⁴ For administrative purposes the territories formerly controlled by the 'Kazakh' hordes, together with some adjacent areas of western Siberia, were organized by the Russians into three separate territorial-administrative subdivisions: the Orenburg Kyrgyz, the Siberian Kyrgyz and Semipalatinsk *oblasts* (provinces), each governed by the Russian military administration.⁵

The subjugation of the 'Kazakh' hordes by the Tsarist Empire was not conditioned only by Russian military superiority over the steppe nomads, but was also a result of the extremely poor collaboration among the 'Kazakh' tribes against the common foe. Although several 'Kazakh' leaders attempted to resist the establishment of the Tsarist direct rule in the steppes during the first half of the nineteenth century, they largely failed to turn these anti-Russian revolts into all 'Kazakh' affairs. For example, a rebellion led by Khan Kenesary Kasymov from 1837 to 1847, regarded in contemporary Kazakh historiography as one of the most remarkable episodes of the Kazakh national-liberation movement against Tsarist colonialism,⁶ largely lacked the support of the majority of 'Kazakh' tribal chieftains. During the rebellion Kenesary Khan spent more time and energy fighting against other 'Kazakh' tribes than against Tsarist troops.⁷

Once the Tsarist government established its stronghold in the 'Kazakh' steppe, the Russians began to advance into Mawarannahr. The Bukhara Emirate's attempt to resist the Russian advance into the region resulted in a heavy military defeat and loss of the Samarkand city in 1868. Subsequently, the Emir of Bukhara was forced to accept a Russian protectorate, which significantly restricted his decision-making power both in the internal and external affairs of the Emirate. The Khiva Khanate, which was forced to become a Russian protectorate in 1873, was even forbidden from conducting an independent foreign policy, though it—like the Bukhara Emirate—was allowed to maintain its quasi-independence until the mid-1920s. As for the Kokand Khanate, after its annexation in 1876 it was abolished entirely, and placed under direct rule of the Tsarist administration. Finally, with the conquest of the Turkmen tribes in the mid-1880s and the eastern Pamirs in 1900, the entire Central Asian region was brought under full control of the Russian Empire.⁸ The Russians soon legitimized their new frontiers in Central Asia by signing bilateral border demarcation agreements with neighbouring regional powers, such as China (in 1860), Iran (1887) and British India (1895, 1907).⁹

In the second half of the nineteenth century, as Russia was expanding territorially deep into Mawarannahr, the Tsarist government carried out several important territorial-administrative reforms in the region. In 1867 the governor-generalship of Turkestan—renamed Turkestan *krai* (region) in 1886—was formed, with Tashkent as its capital. By 1900 the Turkestan *krai* covered a great part of present-day Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and southern parts of Kazakhstan. Russian Turkestan was administratively divided into five *oblasts*: Syr Darya, Semireche, Zaravshan (changed to Samarkand in 1887), Ferghana (from 1876) and Transcaspia (from 1899). The ruler of Russian Turkestan, the governor-general, who was also in charge of dealing with the Russian protectorates of Bukhara and Khiva, was responsible to the Tsarist War Minister.¹⁰ As for the ‘Kazakh’-populated territories (excluding Syr Darya and Semireche), they were divided in 1868 into four *oblasts*: Uralsk, Turgai, Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk. The Uralsk and Turgai *oblasts*, comprising the north-western territories of modern-day Kazakhstan, were incorporated into Orenburg governor-generalship and were directly ruled by the Russian Ministry of the Interior; while the Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk *oblasts* were placed under the jurisdiction of the Western Siberia governor-general. In 1882, after reorganizing the Western Siberia governor-generalship, its former *oblasts* of Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk, together with the former Turkestan *oblast* of Semireche, formed a new administrative unit, the governor-generalship of the Steppe (also known as the Steppe *krai*), governed from the Russian city of Omsk. In 1898, with the transfer of Semireche *oblast* from the Steppe *krai* back to the Turkestan *krai*, Tsarist Central Asia received its final territorial organization.¹¹

As regards the territorial organization of the *oblasts*, they were subdivided administratively into several *uezds* (districts), governed by Russian military officers. The *uezds* were divided into *volosts* (counties), with each of them containing a number of villages (*auls* among the nomads, and *uchastki* among the sedentary population), usually run by native officials. And the regions bordering the protectorates of Bukhara and Khiva were territorially arranged into military-administrative entities: *okrugs*, *otdels* and *raions*.¹²

During the territorial rearrangement of the steppe and Turkestan territories by the Tsarist government, borders of new administrative units were not demarcated along ‘ethnic’ or linguistic lines. Consequently, the populations within these newly-formed provinces remained largely heterogeneous.¹³ In addition, the Tsarist territorial-administrative reforms did not take into consideration either the pre-Russian political-administrative framework of Mawarannahr or the system of seasonal intra-regional migration of nomads in the steppes.¹⁴ Rather, the political-administrative rearrangements instituted in Central Asia from the 1860s were primarily aimed at strengthening St. Petersburg’s control of the region, and in some instances to satisfy the corrupt and ambitious interests of the Russian military administration.¹⁵

Tsarist colonial policies in the Turkestan krai

Following British and Dutch practices of colonial rule, the Tsarist government adopted a two-tier system of colonial administration in Turkestan. While the Russian administration maintained central control over the region, at a lower level it established—or in many instances maintained—a subordinate tier of local indigenous administration.¹⁶ However, in contrast to other colonial domains of the Empire (for example, the Baltic provinces and Tsardom of Poland), the Tsarist government largely abstained from integrating/elevating the local aristocracy into the imperial nobility. Turkestan Muslims (as well as the steppe nomads) were regarded not as ordinary subjects of the Empire, but as *inorodtsy* (aliens, non-Russian/Slavic population), or in other words second-class imperial subjects, with limited legal rights. On the other hand, as *inorodtsy*, they were unintentionally privileged (though legally segregated) by being exempt from conscription into the Russian imperial army as untrustworthy.¹⁷ Another important Tsarist legislative act impacting on the legal status of thousands of Central Asians was the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the region.

Hoping not to provoke jihad against ‘infidel’ Tsarist rule similar to the decades-long North Caucasian Muslim resistance (1830s–54) under Imam Shamil,¹⁸ the first governor-general of Russian Turkestan, Konstantin von Kaufman (1867–82), adopted a policy of *ignorirovanie* (non-interference, disregard) with respect to Muslim institutions and religious practices in the region. Within the framework of *ignorirovanie*, Kaufman not only tolerated Islamic practices but also strongly discouraged any attempt at proselytism in Turkestan by the Russian Orthodox Church.¹⁹ With regard to the Muslim religious establishment, as long as the Turkestan ulama did not attempt to challenge Russian colonial rule, they were allowed to preserve their vast *waqf* (Islamic endowment) properties, to run *maktabs* and *madrasas*, and to administer the shari’ah legal system (with some amendments suitable for the colonial administration) for local Muslim populations.²⁰

Although on the one hand Kaufman preserved certain economic and social privileges for the ulama, on the other hand, he sought to limit their political influence by abolishing several Islamic offices in Tashkent such as the *sheikh ul-Islam* (a supreme religious dignitary), and the *kazi kalan* (chief shari’ah judge). Overall, Kaufman’s approach towards Islam in the region was well formulated in his revised provisional *Statute on the Administration of the Turkestan Region* (1871), which stipulated that ‘the Muslim faith in Turkestan will henceforth be tolerated but not protected’.²¹ Interestingly, while the policy of *ignorirovanie* was largely guided by the fear of possible Islamic unrest in Turkestan, Kaufman did not foresee Islam as a serious threat to Tsarism in the long run. He firmly believed that Russia’s progressive rule over Turkestan would eventually lead to the final decay of the Muslim faith in the region.²²

Another aspect of the *ignorirovanie* policy was that the Tsarist government made little or no attempt to spread Russian culture and language among the Turkestan Muslim population on a mass scale. A number of Russian officials may have hoped for a gradual cultural incorporation of Turkestan Muslims into

the Russian civilization, but at that time, as Khalid remarks, the Tsarist government 'had neither the means nor the will' to engage in such a large scale project.²³ However, for the Russian colonial administration to operate efficiently in a vast and demographically and linguistically heterogeneous region, it was necessary to prepare a sufficient number of skilled cadres of Turkestanis to co-opt them in colonial civil service, and most importantly to educate them in the Russian language. For this purpose, a small number of so-called Russian-native schools were opened for children of local Muslim elites in several urban areas of Central Asia. These schools offered classes in the Russian language, mathematics, geography and other secular subjects, all taught in Russian. In addition, local mullahs were invited to teach students (the vast majority of whom were boys) basics of the Muslim faith, and one of the local languages.²⁴

From a contemporary perspective, the introduction of a secular education system in Central Asia (notwithstanding its colonial purpose) should be viewed as a progressive event in the sociocultural development of the region. However, in Tsarist Turkestan, Russian-native schools were largely unpopular among local Muslim elites, who were dissatisfied with the number of hours dedicated to the teaching of Islam. For instance, in order to avoid sending their children to the Russian-native schools, according to Zenkovsky, some of the wealthy Turkestanis 'hired the children of their poorer countrymen and substituted them for their own in the schools'.²⁵ Overall, Turkestani conservative Muslim elites overwhelmingly preferred to educate their children in religious *maktabs* and *madrasas* than in Russian-sponsored partially secularized schools.

In general, the Muslim resentment of Russian rule and its 'civilizing' activities in Turkestan proved significantly stronger than was initially expected by Kaufman. This became especially evident during the 1892 Tashkent Cholera Riot and the 1898 Andijan uprising in Ferghana Valley. For instance, the leaders of the Andijan uprising aimed to end the 'infidel' Russian rule over Muslims and to restore the Islamic khanate in the Ferghana Valley. Although both uprisings were easily quelled, they raised substantial questions about the overall success of Tsarist progressive rule in Turkestan.²⁶

Tsarist colonial policies in the steppes

In contrast to Kaufman's precautionary approach to governing Russian Turkestan, Tsarist colonial rule in the steppe *oblasts* was quite rigid and more centralized.²⁷ The geographical proximity of these provinces to Russian Siberia allowed the Tsarist government to implement colonial policies in the steppes, which were less compromising to the socio-economic interests and traditions of the local nomadic populations compared to those in relatively remote Turkestan. For instance, the Tsarist administration, which was less concerned with a possible Islamic resistance in the steppes, did not refrain from proselytizing activities among the 'Kazakh' nomads.

Initially, however, rather than encouraging the spread of Orthodox Christianity among the largely shamanist/animist steppe nomads, St. Petersburg, under

Catherine II, fostered the Islamic faith in the region. From the Empress Catherine's perspective, Islam 'was a "reasonable" religion, better fitted "to civilise" the "wild Asian populations" than Orthodox Christianity'.²⁸ By converting 'Kazakhs' to Islam, Dave notes, the Tsarist government hoped to 'encourage them to settle down and thus make the Kazakhs more governable'.²⁹ For this purpose Muslim Volga Tatars, who served as primary economic and political agents for the Russian government in the east, were commissioned to engage in Islamic missionary work among the steppe nomads. Subsequently, through the efforts of Tatar mullahs, Islam gradually began to spread among the nomadic 'Kazakhs'. Nonetheless, the Muslim faith had never become as deeply rooted in the sociocultural life of the majority of the steppe nomads as it traditionally was among the sedentary Turkestanis.

One of the interesting aspects of the Tatar-led Islamization of the steppe nomads was that it went in parallel with the cultural and linguistic Tatarization of local elites. For example, during the 1840s and 1850s, Russian-native schools in the steppe *oblasts* taught in Tatar rather than in local languages. Tatar was also used as a language of communication between the colonial administration and the local population of the steppes.³⁰

In the 1860s, when Tsarist power was not only well-established in the 'Kazakh' steppe but also successfully continuing its expansion in the rest of Central Asia, the need for Tatar middlemen in pursuing economic and diplomatic activities in the region significantly diminished. Further, Tatarization and Islamization in the steppes were then seen by Russian officials as more harmful than useful for the Empire's long-term interests in the region. In addition, some representatives of 'Kazakh' elites, especially those with a Russian education and serving in the Tsarist imperial service such as Chokan Valikhanov (1835–65), expressed concerns about the rising influence of Volga Tatars among the 'Kazakhs', and appealed to the government to reconsider its support for Muslim missionaries in the steppes.³¹ Consequently, it was decided by St. Petersburg to reverse Catherine's policy of promoting Islam and its accompanying Tatarization in the steppes by encouraging 'Kazakh' nomads to convert to Orthodox Christianity and to substitute Tatar schools with Russo-'Kazakh' ones.

In 1868, in order to limit the influence of Muslim Tatars on the steppe nomads, 'Kazakhs' were removed from the authority of the Orenburg Muslim Spiritual Assembly. Tsarist administration also reduced the number of officially licensed Tatar mullahs in the steppes. In parallel to those state-led anti-Tatar/ Islamic activities, Russian missionaries propagated conversion to Orthodox Christianity among the steppe nomads. As a result of the new Tsarist Muslim policy in the steppe *oblasts*, both Islamization and Tatarization were slowed down in the region. Despite this, Russian officials largely failed in their efforts to convert 'Kazakhs' to Christianity. Namely, although most of the 'Kazakhs' were superficially Muslims, due to the centuries-long interaction with Islamic faith and culture in general, the impact of the Muslim faith on the sociocultural life of 'Kazakhs' was much stronger than had initially been expected by the Tsarist government. Besides, Christian proselytizing activities in the steppes

were hindered by the shortage of Orthodox missionaries commanding the local languages. The frequent seasonal migration of 'Kazakh' nomads across the steppes also complicated Russian missionary work. In addition, Muslim clerics covertly but actively propagated against Christianization of the steppe nomads.³²

As regards the new schooling policy among the steppe nomads, it was based on the recommendations of a prominent Russian educator and Turkologist, Nikolai Ilminskii. Ilminskii maintained that the best way of spreading the Orthodox faith among 'Kazakhs' was by providing education (implying imposition of Russian Orthodox culture and values) to them in their own language, written in Cyrillic script (instead of Arabic), and ultimately taught by native teachers. Ilminskii believed that 'internal Russification, the assimilation of Orthodoxy, would eventually lead to external Russification, fluency in the Russian language.'³³ In the 1870s, with the efforts of Ilminskii and his 'Kazakh' student Ibrahim Altynsarin, several Russo-'Kazakh' primary schools were opened for the children of 'Kazakh' elites. To implement the Ilminskii method of teaching in those schools, Altynsarin was tasked with creating the Cyrillic-based 'Kazakh' script, which he successfully completed in 1879. At the beginning of the twentieth century there were already 128 Russo-'Kazakh' schools functioning in the 'Kazakh' steppe.³⁴ Graduates of those schools were primarily employed by the colonial administration, with some of them later sent to study at Russian universities.

The establishment of Russo-'Kazakh' schools in the steppes, however, did not trigger a massive spread of Russian culture and Orthodoxy among steppe nomads, as originally presumed by Ilminskii. Particularly, since the Tsarist government did not sponsor mass education among 'Kazakhs', instead providing primary education to a limited number of students, the direct and immediate impact of several hundred graduates (in total) of Russo-'Kazakh' schools on the rest of the nomadic population was very limited or absent. Nor did the Altynsarin's Cyrillic-based 'Kazakh' alphabet gain wide acceptance among literate steppe nomads, a large majority of whom preferred to continue using the Arabic script. But what is most interesting is that Altynsarin himself favoured retention of the Arabic script. In his opinion, since many valuable texts for 'Kazakhs', especially religious ones, had already been written in Arabic script, it would have been more advisable to retain the Arabic alphabet than to adopt the Cyrillic.³⁵

Despite the above, the Ilminskii educational reform had a far-reaching consequences for 'Kazakh' society. It significantly contributed to the emergence of a new generation of 'Kazakh' secular intellectuals and the gradual development of the 'Kazakh' literary language.³⁶ For example, with the support of the Tsarist regime, not only were the first 'Kazakh' textbooks issued, and foreign literary works translated into 'Kazakh', but most importantly the first 'Kazakh' written literature began to appear. Abay Kunanbaev (1845–1904), a prominent Russian-educated 'Kazakh' poet and thinker, is generally regarded as the founder of the 'Kazakh' written literature. In addition, several Russo-'Kazakh' and 'Kazakh' language newspapers (such as *Dala Ualaiati*, *Aikap*, *Kazak* and *Serke*) emerged

at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. In those newspapers, ‘Kazakh’ intellectuals actively discussed major contemporary sociopolitical issues facing the Tsarist Empire as a whole and ‘Kazakh’ people in particular. Some of them, for example, emphasized the necessity of protecting ‘Kazakh’ cultural traditions from the Russification.³⁷ In Benedict Anderson’s terms, one might interpret these discourses in the press as an attempt to ‘imagine’ the ‘Kazakh’ community through printed texts. However, because of the underdevelopment of the printing industry in the region, and high levels of illiteracy among the local nomadic population, the (cultural-) elite discourse of ‘Kazakhness’, had practically no resonance among the ordinary ‘Kazakhs’, or the masses.

The Tsarist census policy

In 1897, the Tsarist government, drawing on the experiences of other colonial powers, decided to conduct the first universal census, which sought formally to categorize the entire population of the Empire across ethnic or *narodnost*’ lines.³⁸ The objective of the census was ‘to reduce the empire’s ethnic complexity to the simplicity of numbers’,³⁹ which according to Collins, was believed to enhance the Tsarist regime’s capacity to establish better control over its conquered peoples.⁴⁰ However, the implementation of this strategy was quite challenging in many parts of the Empire, particularly in Central Asia, where ethnic/national identification was not known or practised among the native population. Therefore, the census-organizers decided to ask the individuals taking the survey, not about their ethnic background, but rather about their native language, which was regarded by the Tsarist scholars and statisticians as the main determinant of *narodnost*’. This was thought to facilitate the census-analysts’ task to establish the *narodnost*’ of all the respondents, whether with or without developed ethnic consciousness. On the other hand, Tsarist statisticians were well aware of the possibility that the response on native language was not always necessarily indicative of one’s authentic *narodnost*’. Hence, the accuracy in determining the census-respondents’ ethnic backgrounds was sought to be achieved by comparing the answer on language to those on *soslovie* (social entity) and religion.⁴¹

Despite the objective to determine the precise ethnolinguistic composition of the Tsarist Empire, the 1897 census was far from complete due to the numerous mistakes and inconsistencies in the survey process, at least in Central Asia. For example, while the imperial census distinguished the speakers of Kaisak-Kyrgyz (that is, Kazakh) and Kara-Kyrgyz languages as separate ethnolinguistic communities, in some parts of the region, speakers of both languages were classified under the general category Kyrgyz.⁴² In Russian Turkestan, the Tsarist census recognized the existence of the Sart ethnolinguistic community as distinct from Uzbek and Tajik, though, in fact, there was no Sart language as most of the settled peoples in the region spoke either different Turkic dialects or ‘Farsi-Tajik’.⁴³ The 1897 census also employed the general category *Tiiurk* (Turk) to denote the several hundred thousand Turkic-speaking inhabitants of Central

Asia. According to Khalid, this might have been an effort to differentiate the Uzbeks from Turks, but the problem was that the very same category *Tiurk* was also used in the census to designate different (non-Central Asian) Turkic peoples of the Empire.⁴⁴

In general, according to the 1897 census report, the total population of the steppe and Turkestan *oblasts* stood at 7,746,718, of which native 'Kazakh' speakers made-up 3,787,222 (48.9 per cent), Sarts 968,008 (12.5 per cent), Uzbeks 726,414 (9.4 per cent), *Tiurks* 439,930 (5.7 per cent), and Tajiks 350,326 (4.5 per cent). Other important Turkic ethnolinguistic groups in these *oblasts* were: Turkmens (248,767 or 3.2 per cent), Kara-Kyrgyzs (201,671 or 2.6 per cent), Karakalpaks (104,271 or 1.3 per cent), and Tatars (60,197 or 0.8 per cent). The number of Slavic peoples (consisting of Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians) living in the steppe and Turkestan *oblasts*, based on the 1897 census, was 690,432 (8.9 per cent).⁴⁵ The 1897 census did not cover the Bukhara Emirate and Khiva Khanate. However, according to Tsarist sources, at the end of the nineteenth century, the total population of Bukhara Emirate was around two million, while of Khiva Khanate 600,000.⁴⁶

Despite a number of shortfalls, the 1897 census had a certain impact on the introduction of collective ethnolinguistic identities in Tsarist Central Asia. Namely, the imperial census delimited the native-speaking communities of the steppe and Turkestan *oblasts* into countable and distinguishable entities, the way they had never projected themselves. For example, as mentioned earlier, 'Kazakhs' had never defined their clan/tribal, and individual or common (all three) horde identities in terms of ethnicity and/or language. They had certainly differentiated themselves from, for instance, the urban Sarts. However, this 'othering' was not arrayed along a divide between, on one hand, the entire 'Kazakh' nomadic population ('us'), and on the other hand, all the Sarts of the Russian Turkestan ('them'). This was because there was no conscious, all-inclusive 'Kazakh' or Sart group identities and solidarities. In this regard, the same was true of all other Central Asian native peoples, such as Uzbeks and Tajiks. Thus, through the census-categorization, Russian policymakers formally determined Central Asia's 'ethnolinguistic' communities, and in this manner attempted to reconstruct or, better to say, reprofile the sociodemographic make-up of the region in accordance with the colonial interests of the Tsarist Empire. By formally establishing legible *narodnost*' categories in Central Asia for administrative purposes, the Tsarist government did indeed, at some level, reshape the social reality of the region. For example, for official use, the category 'Kazakh' no longer meant the steppe nomadic population in general, but rather implied a specific, countable group of people, who spoke the same language, and based on this was formally distinguished from other indigenous communities of the region.

Nonetheless, as much as the Tsarist regime was interested in delimiting its population into manageable ethnolinguistic entities, it was quite careful in transforming the latter into coherent national polities. This became especially evident in the wake of the aborted 1905 Russian Revolution, when the question of

ethnic/national group rights became considerably politicized in the Tsarist Empire.⁴⁷ The colonial administration, for example, never attempted to reify the 1897 census-defined ethnolinguistic categories among the masses by altering ‘the social structures of the region, either by eliminating traditional clan elites or by [diminishing the role of] Islam’;⁴⁸ and, at the same time, encouraging the native population to attach their primary loyalties to their state-defined ethnolinguistic communities. Being classified, for instance, as ‘Kazakh’, Uzbek or Sart in the census did not have any enduring socio-economic implications on one’s life, either positively or negatively. Native Central Asians were still regarded as *inorodtsy* under imperial law.

Tsarist migration policies in Central Asia: the 1916 revolt

The Tsarist territorial expansion into the ‘Kazakh’ steppe was accompanied by a gradual movement of Russian settlers into the newly occupied territories, though until the mid-nineteenth century, their overall number in the region was quite insignificant. However, with the final Tsarist conquest of the ‘Kazakh’ steppe, and the abolishment of serfdom in the Empire in 1861, the scale of Russian peasant migration into northern Central Asia increased dramatically. Thousands of newly emancipated but impoverished landless Slavic (mainly Russian and Ukrainian) peasants from European parts of the Empire tried to escape extreme poverty and starvation by moving spontaneously into Siberia and Central Asia in the hope of acquiring a free plot of land.⁴⁹

Initially, concerned with a possible decrease in the labour force in European Russia, Tsarist officials tried to regulate and even restrict Slavic peasant migration eastward, though with little success. However, in the 1890s, officials in St. Petersburg had to acknowledge the problem of rising peasant unrest, and decided to solve the agrarian question in the Empire by encouraging hundreds of thousands of Slavic peasants to resettle in Central Asia, especially on the territories of present-day Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.⁵⁰ Slavic peasant migration was also permitted in Russian Turkestan, but since most of the arable land in the region (unlike the steppe territories) was already used by the local sedentary population for farming, the number of European immigrants in Turkestan (apart from Semireche *oblast*) was relatively insignificant.⁵¹ Instead, Tsarist government sought to pursue its economic interests in Turkestan *krai* by promoting cotton cultivation, thus hoping to attain self-sufficiency in the cotton industry. Overall, through its resettlement and agricultural policies in Central Asia, St. Petersburg hoped not only to solve a number of socio-economic problems of the Empire, but also to accelerate the integration of the region.

In the late 1890s and early 1900s, in order to organize the Slavic peasant colonization and establish the quantity of available arable land for prospective settlers, several government commissions, headed by Sherbin, Rumiantsev and Pahlen respectively, were sent to the steppes. All these commissions concluded that the steppe nomads possessed surplus land, which could be allocated to Slav settlers. Tsarist officials stressed that appropriation of ‘Kazakh’ surplus land was

a legally justifiable act as after the ‘Kazakh’ Khans submission to the Russian throne, their land automatically became the property of the Russian monarch.⁵²

The mass migration of Slavic peasants into the steppes, which started in the 1890s, reached its peak between 1906 and 1912, when approximately 1.5 million new Slav migrants poured into the region.⁵³ Dave estimates that by 1916 there were nearly three million European settlers on the territory of modern Kazakhstan.⁵⁴ In addition, between 1881 and 1883 the Tsarist government also allowed around 45,000 Uighurs and 5,000 Dungans from the Chinese Xinjiang province to resettle in Semireche *oblast*.⁵⁵

Losing access to most of the fertile pasture areas in the north, which were now farmed by Slav settlers, was a devastating blow to the ‘Kazakh’ nomadic economy. Many nomads had no choice but either to adapt to the sedentary life-style, or to move southward in search of new grazing lands for their herds. Even the shift to farming brought little relief for socio-economically struggling ‘Kazakhs’, as they lacked agricultural skills. In addition, as modern Kazakh historians assert, farming plots allocated to them were often useless for cultivation, while settlers were given larger and more fertile tracts.⁵⁶

Another important aspect in regard to the sedentarization of some ‘Kazakhs’ is that it did not always necessarily lead to their detribalization, since most of the newly established ‘Kazakh’ villages were settled by ex-nomads deriving from the same clan or tribal origin.⁵⁷ Consequently, the primary identity of ‘Kazakhs’ still revolved around their immediate clan or tribe. As for the pan-horde identities, they were significantly weakened with the abolition of the hordes, since no alternative institution remained to sustain them.

Overall, not only did the inflow of thousands of Slav settlers to the ‘Kazakh’ steppe once again change the demographic structure of the region, it also resulted in the emergence of two broad and distinct cultural groups. The first was composed of representatives of various Muslim ‘Kazakh’ tribes, including both pastoral nomads and newly sedentarized farmers, who were speakers of ‘Kazakh’ dialects, and physically exhibiting Mongoloid features. Broadly, the first group also covered other steppe nomads (and ex-nomads) such as Kara-Kyrgyz and Karakalpak tribes, who were culturally and racially akin to ‘Kazakhs’, and were perceived and treated as such by Russians too. The second group was comprised of Russian-speaking Slav agriculturists, primarily followers of the Orthodox Christian faith, who were physically and culturally significantly different from the steppe nomads. The existing sociocultural gap between those two groups was exacerbated by Tsarist colonial policies, which not only privileged the Slav settlers over the steppe nomads (for example, during land distribution), but also legally segregated the latter as belonging to the inferior *inorodtsy* category. On their part, ‘Kazakhs’ and other steppe peoples perceived the Slav population in the region as agents of the Tsarist colonialism, and hence equally responsible for their socio-economic problems. On the other hand, this sociocultural division significantly reinforced a sense of collective group identities among both steppe nomads and Slav settlers. Particularly, as most ‘Kazakhs’, whatever their tribe or horde, collectively experienced the enduring effects of Slav peasant colonization

and segregation policies, this made them more conscious about their group status and identity ('us'), especially vis-à-vis the Russian settlers ('them'). However, the rise in group consciousness among 'Kazakhs' through 'othering' the Slav settlers, did not necessarily involve the existence of either a strong group solidarity or the 'Kazakh' elite-formulated national strategies/ideas of collective action. The latter, as discussed below, was especially evident during the 1916 revolt in Central Asia.

The Tsarist land policies, negatively affecting the socio-economic conditions of the steppe nomads, led to numerous conflicts between the 'Kazakhs' and Slav settlers. In 1916 an already tense situation was further aggravated by Petrograd's⁵⁸ decision to revoke the exemption from military service for *inorodtsy* and to draft them to work in labour units behind the front lines in World War I. All these factors combined soon provoked a revolt in the steppe territories, followed by uprisings in Russian Turkestan (particularly in the Samarkand and Ferghana regions) and Khiva. The rebels especially targeted Slav settlers, destroying their properties and communication systems. Despite its initial success, the revolt was brutally suppressed by Tsarist troops at the end of 1916. As a result of Tsarist punitive expeditions thousands of nomads were killed, and hundreds of *auls* (nomadic encampment) burned down. Nearly 300,000 'Kazakh' and Kara-Kyrgyz nomads had to flee to China to escape punishment.⁵⁹

Although in contemporary Kazakh historiography the 1916 revolt (similar to the Kenesary Khan's rebellion) is depicted as national-liberation uprising,⁶⁰ it was in fact neither supported by a majority of the 'Kazakh' aristocracy or educated classes (apart from some Muslim clerics). On the contrary, many of them even assisted Tsarist troops in containing the uprising.⁶¹ The 1916 revolt was rather a spontaneous rising with no centralized leadership and no 'national' objectives. Strong anticolonial and anti-settler sentiments among the steppe nomads were effective tools for the rebellion's leaders to mobilize their supporters. However, they never attempted to employ those public sentiments either to advance a sense of nationhood among 'Kazakhs' or to assert a right of the latter to self-determination within the 'historical' borders of the 'Kazakh' hordes. Despite having many common interests (for instance, taking back control over fertile pasturelands in the steppes), inter-horde/tribal divisions and class conflicts among the 'Kazakhs' were still too pervasive to allow all-'Kazakh' 'ethnonational' unification to take place. This was especially complicated by the absence of a relevant ideology and 'nationally' minded leadership enjoying the popularity among the majority of 'Kazakhs'.

As in the Steppe *krai*, the 1916 revolt in Russian Turkestan was mostly fragmented and did not have the full support of local elites. For instance, Bukhara's Emir, Sayyid Alim Khan, actively cooperated with the Tsarist administration in putting down the rebellion.⁶² In addition, despite the rebellion's explicit anti-Russian and anticolonial content, it largely lacked an ethnonational component. Rebel leaders appealed not to ethnic sentiments but to pan-Islamic ones, calling on fellow Muslims to join in jihad against the 'infidel' Russian rule. But even if they had attempted to mobilize their followers along ethnic or ethnolinguistic

lines, not only would it not have succeeded, it would also have further split the rebels. In particular, as outlined in the previous chapter, indigenous Turkestanis were extremely diverse ‘ethnically’, culturally and linguistically among themselves, with no clear-cut ‘ethnic’ territorial boundaries between them. Such diversity, Roshwald notes, ‘made it particularly difficult for would-be political activists to construct sharply delineated cultural and geographical frameworks of national identity or even to agree upon common idioms for the dissemination of their ideas’.⁶³ Therefore, for many educated Turkestanis, overarching pan-Islamic and pan-Turkic ideologies seemed more effective tools in reinforcing the group identity awareness of Central Asian Muslims, than for example nationalism.

The Muslim reformist movements in Russian Turkestan: the Jadids

In the second half of the nineteenth century, exposed to the influence of Western modernism, and, on the other hand, acknowledging that Muslim polities lagged behind the Western societies in terms of educational, economic and technological development, a number of reformist movements emerged across the Islamic world, including the Muslim parts of Tsarist Russia. As a primarily educational and cultural movement in its origin, Russia’s Muslim reformist movement, led by Tatar educator Ismail Bey Gasprinskii (1851–1914), aimed at bringing social change among the Muslims of the Empire by improving the standard of education available to them. In addition, Gasprinskii strongly advocated for the spiritual and linguistic unity of all Turko-Muslim communities of Russia, which would, in his opinion, shield them against assimilatory Russification. Gasprinskii and his followers propagated their ideas through the newspaper *Tarjuman (The Interpreter)*, printed in Gasprinskii-modified Ottoman-Turkish, which he hoped would become a literary language of Russian Muslims.

Reforming the traditional Muslim education system was a key component of the Gasprinskii-led movement. To this end, Gasprinskii established a network of schools, where he introduced a method of phonetic teaching of reading instead of simple memorization of meaningful religious texts, a method traditionally used in *maktabs*. In addition, he revised the traditional curriculum of Muslim schools by including such secular subjects as history, geography, natural sciences, Russian and native languages. By 1916 there were around 5,000 schools throughout the Tsarist Empire employing Gasprinskii’s ‘new method’ of teaching, known in Arabic as *al-usul al-jadid*.⁶⁴ Subsequently, supporters of this ‘new method’ of teaching became known as Jadids; however, Russia’s Muslim reformists generally referred to themselves as *taraqqiparwarlar* (progressives).⁶⁵

In Central Asia, the first Jadid schools were opened in the 1890s. By 1911, the number of Jadid schools in Turkestan reached 63 with 4,106 students enrolled in total.⁶⁶ Despite the increase in numbers, the new method schools in Central Asia largely failed to win popularity over the ulama-run schools. For comparison, there were more than 7,000 ulama-run *maktabs* and *madrasas*

functioning in Russian Turkestan in 1908.⁶⁷ The Jadid school reform in the region was strongly opposed and hindered by the Kadimists (conservative ulama), who felt threatened by the possibility of losing control not only over the Muslim education system, but also of the economic and social privileges stemming from it. Some Kadimists even accused the Jadids of assisting Russian policymakers in their anti-Islamic and Russification policies. For instance, the Kadimists of Bukhara Emirate strongly condemned the practice of using blackboards and benches in the Jadid schools, which, in their opinion, was simply an imitation of the Russian-native schools and therefore anti-Islamic.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Jadidist ideas had a significant impact on the emerging educated Muslim urban middle-class in the region as well as on representatives of the moderate clergy, who filled the ranks of Central Asian Jadids.

In Central Asia, the Jadids' activities tended to be most intense in the major urban centres of Russian Turkestan, Bukhara Emirate and Khiva Khanate. Largely lacking any commitment to peasant communities, the Jadid intellectuals had no social base in rural areas.⁶⁹ Besides, Jadidism did not have much success among the less-Islamized nomadic population of Turkestan such as Turkmens, and it was practically absent among the 'Kazakhs' living in the Steppe *krai* and Orenburg governor-generalship.⁷⁰ Overall, Jadidism in Central Asia, as in the rest of Russia, was not a unified movement, but rather a series of reformist movements, 'each with its own concerns rooted in local social struggles'.⁷¹

A common objective of these Jadid-reformist movements in Central Asia was to wrench Muslim communities of the region from socio-economic and spiritual backwardness, which, from their perspective, was largely a direct outcome of enduring negligence by local corrupt elites, both ulama and aristocracy. By making the traditional elites and not the Tsarist government their primary targets of criticism, Haugen maintains, Central Asian Jadids sought to compete for the social space that St. Petersburg left for the former to control.⁷² This largely explains why most of Central Asian Jadids expressed their support for the 1916 draft resolution, and abstained from participating in the revolt of the same year.⁷³ In spite of this cooperative attitude towards the Tsarist regime, the Jadids failed to become a power base for St. Petersburg in the region. The Tsarist government, which was quite anxious about increasing revolutionary activities in the Empire preferred to sympathize with conservative Muslim elites than with Jadid-reformers, whom they suspected of pan-Islamist and pan-Turkic aspirations.⁷⁴

Indeed, Jadidism in Central Asia had a quite accommodative stance towards Islam. Turkestani Jadids had never advocated secularization of the public sphere, but placed their ideology within the framework of Islamic teachings and identity. For example, despite inclusion of secular subjects in school curriculum, the Jadid schools still dedicated around half the timetable to teaching of religious subjects. From the Jadids' perspective, Islam was not an obstacle to modernization, but a source of progress and spiritual purity. What impeded the overall development of the Islamic system, the Jadids maintained, was the ulama's adherence to orthodox scholastic thinking, and reluctance to embrace technoscientific innovations brought by modernity, particularly those from the West/Russia. The solution to the problem

for the Jadids was found in releasing Islam from the chains of blind religious dogmatism. Accordingly, the Jadids called for reforms within Islam.⁷⁵

One of the important measures undertaken by Turkestanian Jadids in this respect was opening several co-educational schools in Tashkent, where Muslim boys and girls were educated together. As Alimova notes, 'This was indeed a revolutionary step, considering the level of religiosity of [local] population.'⁷⁶ However, the fact that a few young Turkestanian girls were allowed to receive primary education with boys at Jadid schools, Alimova continues, does not mean that Turkestanian Jadids were for the full emancipation of women and gender equality. Rather, by providing basic education to girls, the Jadids sought to make them better mothers of tomorrow who had to bring up future generations.⁷⁷

Turkestanian Jadids' modernist activities were also extended to development of the local press. Modelled on *Tarjuman*, they published a number of periodicals and newspapers, such as *Taraqqi*, *Khurshid* and *Shuhrat*. For the Jadids, the printing press served not only as a medium for spreading and discussing their ideas, but also as an important sign of modernization.⁷⁸ Another medium of modernization that Jadids enthusiastically endeavoured to popularize among the Muslim population of the region was modern theatre. The Jadids' plays (performed by male actors only) addressed those social ills that were causing a moral decline of the Turkestanian Muslim population, such as prostitution, pederasty, alcoholism, gambling and carelessness.⁷⁹

Alongside their educational and cultural reform activities, the Jadids of Central Asia attempted to reconfigure the existing traditional collective and territorial identities of the local Muslim population. In the framework of Gasprinskii-advocated pan-Turko-Muslim unity within the Tsarist Empire, a number of Central Asian Jadids promulgated (though vaguely) an idea of a Turkestanian Muslim community (*millet*), which transcended tribal and clan bonds.⁸⁰ The Turkestanian *millet* they envisioned was primarily composed of the region's sedentary Muslim population. Accordingly, for them the cultural pillars of the *millet* rested on the sedentary (Muslim) culture of Turkestan.⁸¹ The 'imagination' of a Turkestanian *millet* in the Jadid writings, Khalid notes, was also made by 'othering' its Muslim members from the Jewish and Christian Armenian communities living in the region.⁸² In addition, the written language that Turkestanian Jadids promoted within the *millet* (through their publications and schools) was not the Gasprinskii-created Turkic but the Chaghatay-Turki.⁸³ In general, Turkestanian Jadids, while being an indispensable part of Russia's Muslim reformist movement, in their sociocultural activities were above all concerned with issues relating to their immediate community, rather than the whole Muslim community of Russia.⁸⁴ This position has often been mistakenly interpreted in the scholarship on Central Asia as nationalistic, with the Jadids consequently being treated as the first Muslim intellectuals to advance the concepts of modern national identity and nationhood in the region, and to raise the national self-consciousness of the local population.⁸⁵

In fact, as Roy rightly observes, although the *millet* and *milli* concepts, advanced by Turkestanian Jadids, are today translated as nation and national

respectively in the Turkic and Persian languages, prior to 1914 they basically meant a religious community, with no reference to a state. Accordingly, Jadidism, Roy writes, ‘was not a nationalist movement in the modern sense of the term, because it defined a “nation of Muslims” on religious and cultural criteria without reference to a state or a given territory’.⁸⁶ Moreover, as Findley remarks, supracommunal identities propagated by Turkestanian Jadids often ‘oscillated among Muslims of Turkistan, Muslims of the Russian Empire, or Muslims in general’.⁸⁷ In other words, Turkestanian Jadids did not have a well-formulated position about the (would-be) Muslim community, which they projected in their writings and discourses. For example, history taught in the Jadid schools before 1917 was not a ‘national’ (ethnicized) history of Turkestanian Muslims or Turkic peoples of the region, but rather a general history of Islam and Muslim dynasties,⁸⁸ incapable of reinforcing a particular ethnic-based community.

As regards to the confession-based ‘otherings’ of Turkestan’s population in the Jadids’ writings, they do not serve as convincing evidence of their ‘imagination’ of a Turkestanian Muslim nation. Actually, the ‘othering’ within a territorial/political community on a religious basis had been practised in Islamic political entities since the emergence of Islam. For instance, various Muslim dynasties imposed a special poll tax (*jizya*) on their non-Muslim subjects. As for Turkestanian Jadids’ preference for Chaghatay-Turki over Gasprinskii-created Turkic as their literary medium, it was not because of their patriotic motivation to preserve their native language, but simply because the latter was quite hard for literate Central Asians to understand.⁸⁹ In other words, this was more a matter of convenience rather than an attempt to strengthen a local ethnolinguistic (Chaghatay-Turki) identity.

Neither the fact that many Turkestanian Jadids primarily acted as spokespersons advocating the interests of Central Asian Muslim communities, rather than for all Muslims of Russia, is a compelling argument to suggest that the former conceived a Turkestanian nation. Jadidism in the Tsarist Empire, like any pan-movement spreading across different eco-cultural zones, was compelled by the constraints of regional interests and peculiarities. The effects of Russian colonial rule varied considerably among the geographically dispersed and culturally different Muslim communities (Crimean, Volga-Ural, Caucasian and Central Asian) within the Empire. Accordingly, problems/challenges faced in different Muslim communities often required different responses from the respective Jadid groups acting locally. Besides, since Jadidism was not a centralized movement, most Jadids in Central Asia preferred to concentrate their efforts on regional (‘winnable’) issues, which would advance their quest for establishing themselves firmly as new second-tier cultural and political elites in the region.

Until the fall of the Tsarist regime in 1917, the question of independence from Russia was hardly ever present in the Jadids’ rhetoric. For instance, Jadids from the Turkestan *krai* had never even demanded the same level of quasi-independence that was enjoyed in the Russian protectorates of Bukhara and Khiva. It is also important to keep in mind that the Jadids’ discourses on the necessity of sociocultural reforms in the region, including their attempts to redefine existing group and

territorial identities, were largely unknown to the majority of the Turkestani Muslim population. Central Asian Jadids never tried to speak and act in the name of the masses (one of the key requisites of modern nationalism), but remained an elitist movement, lacking a wider base of support in the region.⁹⁰

Turkestani Jadids' actual interest in reinforcing ethnic, in parallel with Muslim identities among the local population appeared only after the Russian February Revolution in 1917. Nevertheless, the ethnic identity envisioned by the Jadids in the wake of that Revolution was not of a national character, but rather pan-Turkic (or supranational), standing for the unity of all Turkic peoples. Consequently, in the Jadids' new formulation of the *millet*, Turkestan was no longer regarded as the homeland of all Muslims, whether Turkic, Iranian, or Arabic in origin, but first and foremost as the land of Turkic peoples. Jadid publications also began to pay special interest to outstanding Turkic Muslim leaders such as Amir Timur. Despite the Jadid movements' increasing pan-Turkic aspirations, its revised ideology did not exclude non-Turkic Muslims of Turkestan, especially those of mixed origin and bilinguals, notably Sarts. On the contrary, the Jadids maintained that 'all inhabitants of Central Asia were "really" Turks; if they did not speak Turkic, it was because they had forgotten it'.⁹¹ Hence, the Jadids sought to reabsorb those 'quasi-Turks' into a Turkic 'high-culture'. Within this pan-Turkic model of Jadidism, 'Farsi-Tajik', a centuries-old literary language of the Turkestani elites, and still the administrative medium in Bukhara Emirate and Khiva Khanate,⁹² had to be replaced by the Chaghatay-Turki. Because of this, a number of influential 'Farsi-Tajik'-speaking Jadids, such as Abdurauf Fitrat, switched to Chaghatay-Turki.⁹³ According to the modern Tajik historian Masov, these 'Tajik' intellectuals, 'contaminated with pan-Turkist ideas', aimed to establish a common Turkic nation based on Islam as its prime pillar.⁹⁴

Khalid names three major reasons for the Turkestani Jadids' strengthened interest in pan-Turkic ideology. First, the Jadids' failure to challenge the ulama's monopoly on the interpretation of Islam in Turkestan drove them to seek alternative ideologies for achieving their reformist goals. Second, the liberalization of censorship after the February Revolution made it possible for the Jadids to openly discuss issues (such as pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism) that had been strictly banned under Tsarism. Finally, Ottoman army advances in the Caucasus in 1918 significantly raised pan-Turkic and separatist tendencies among many Turkestani Jadids.⁹⁵ However, the Turkestani Jadids' bet on pan-Turkic irredentism shortly turned into a huge disappointment for them. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, a new leader of the Ottoman Turks and founder of the Turkish Republic, rejected both pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism as the basis of the new Turkey's foreign policy and for his nation-building project aimed at crafting a modern (Anatolian) Turkish nation. Nevertheless, the Jadids' hopes and ambitions to gain favourable positions in the socio-economic and political space of Central Asia, and to modernize the Turkestani Muslim community, did not entirely fade. In pursuit of their goals the Jadids unexpectedly acquired a new powerful ally, the Russian Bolsheviks, who would greatly assist Turkestani Muslim reformers to realize

many of their aspirations, though apparently only to eliminate them altogether during the Soviet purges of the 1930s.

The Bolsheviks: the national question in Marxist movement, 1848–1917

The Bolsheviks originally were a faction (formed in 1903) within the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party (RSDWP). However, in 1912, because of the increasing disagreement with the Mensheviks (another major faction within the RSDWP) over the Party's organizational structure and the timing of the socialist revolution in Russia, the Bolsheviks established an independent political party—RSDWP (Bolsheviks), which in 1918 was formally renamed the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), or RCP(B).⁹⁶ The Bolsheviks' call for violent revolution to overthrow the Tsarist regime made them primary targets of the Russian government. Many of their activists were arrested and imprisoned for revolutionary activities, while the Bolshevik leader Vladimir Lenin had to remain in exile for years in Switzerland before returning to Russia in April 1917.

While in exile, Lenin sought to develop the Bolshevik Party's 'winnable' political strategy that would assist them to advance the cause of the proletarian revolution in largely rural Russia. Lenin understood that no such a strategy would have been successful in the multi-ethnic Russian Empire without addressing the nationality question. However, he had little theoretical foundations or practical advice from the classical Marxism on which to base the Bolshevik Party's nationality policy.

The founders of Marxism, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, subordinated the national question to the international proletarian struggle against their oppressors, the bourgeois, arguing that 'the working men have no country.'⁹⁷ They regarded nationalism as a false consciousness stemming from bourgeois ideology, which was aimed at the manipulation and division of the working classes along national lines. Hence, for Marx and Engels, nation/state-bounded ideology of nationalism was incompatible with the greater cause of proletarian internationalism. They argued that with the increasing expansion of the capitalist market across states, and with its accompanying swelling ranks of proletariat, 'national differences and antagonisms between peoples [would gradually disappear, and eventually] the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to'.⁹⁸ Accordingly, Marx and Engels came to the conclusion that nation-states would have no place under the highest form of socialism: communism.⁹⁹

Unlike Marx and Engels, who were theoreticians more than practitioners, European and Russian Marxist political groups of the time understood that nationality and secessionist demands could not have been mitigated only by stressing the common interests and destiny among workers of different nationalities. For example, the Austro-Marxists, aiming to preserve the unity of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, took a clear statist approach to national problems, asserting that they had to be solved not through the proletarian revolution but through granting principal ethnonational minority groups considerable non-territorial cultural

autonomies. Karl Renner, one of the leading Austro-Marxists, suggested conferring upon every state-recognized national community in the Habsburg Empire the right to administer their cultural and educational affairs in their native languages. On the other hand, he stressed a non-territorial character of those communities. According to Renner, none of the nations of Austria-Hungary had a right to claim any part of the state as its national territory, or impose its language on national-minority groups living among them. In Renner's opinion, a nationality declared by each person had to be officially registered and recognized as his/her legal status. In such a way, individuals of each nationality were to be able to enjoy their cultural rights irrespective of their places of residence.¹⁰⁰

The Austro-Marxist model of resolving the national question was overwhelmingly rejected by the pre-revolutionary Bolshevik leadership as being politically infeasible in the case of the multi-ethnic Tsarist Empire. In their opinion, introduction of extraterritorial national-cultural autonomies in Russia would trigger the nationalization of the proletariat, thus deterring them from the cause of internationalism.¹⁰¹ Lenin was particularly mindful of the fact that the Austro-Marxist scheme envisaged the organization of Marxist parties along national lines, which, if adopted, could have threatened the Bolshevik Party unity. Alarmed by such possibilities, Lenin commissioned Joseph Stalin, a rising Georgian Bolshevik, to conduct a theoretical analysis of the national question with the objective of refuting the Austro-Marxist concept of national-cultural autonomy. Accepting this challenge, Stalin in 1913 produced an essay entitled 'Marxism and the National Question', which would later significantly shape Soviet scholarship on the topic.

Based on Marxist principles, Stalin conceived a nation as a transient historical category that developed only in the era of industrial capitalism. He defined a nation as '*a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture*'.¹⁰² Absence of any of these characteristics, maintained Stalin, disqualified a community in question from being a nation. Stalin then went on criticizing the Austro-Marxist scheme of national-cultural autonomy, which, from his perspective, was ill-equipped to fully implement the principles of self-determination because of its limited focus on the protection of cultural rights of national minorities. In Stalin's view, the best way of deriving the right to self-determination was to introduce regional autonomies within Russia for such definite territories as Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine and the Caucasus. In contrast to the Austro-Marxist scheme, regional autonomy, maintained Stalin,

does not divide people according to nations, it does not strengthen national barriers; on the contrary, it breaks down these barriers and unites the population in such a manner as to open the way for division of a different kind, division according to classes.¹⁰³

As for the protection of national minorities in those regional autonomies, they would have legally been entitled to have equal rights (for example, to use their

own language in public) with other nationalities. In conclusion, Stalin stressed the applicability of the principles of regional autonomy to the party structure, allowing regional (not national) party branches within a single-party framework.¹⁰⁴

Although Lenin praised Stalin for his essay, he considered the need for further elaboration on the question of national self-determination to make it more adequate to the immediate political tasks of the Bolshevik Party. Connor notes that Lenin understood that the mere endorsement of the right to self-determination would not have distinguished the Bolsheviks in the eyes of national minority members from other mainstream parties in Russia, the majority of which also incorporated this right into their platforms.¹⁰⁵ Hence, Lenin decided to come up with an alternative formulation of the concept of self-determination, which regarded it as a genuine right only if it acknowledged the right to secession as an inalienable right for national minorities.¹⁰⁶ That being said, Lenin, on the other hand, stressed that the right to secession was not absolute but had to be 'subordinated to the interests of the class struggle'.¹⁰⁷ Put simply, Lenin was willing to support the independence movements of the oppressed nations in the Tsarist Empire as long as they served the interests of the proletariat rather than bourgeois classes. In Lenin's opinion, in post-revolutionary Russia secession would take place only in the most extreme and unbearable political situations; but overall, working masses of small nations, who were well aware of the economic benefits stemming from belonging to large states with bigger domestic markets, would opt for further integration rather than for separation.¹⁰⁸

Lenin's over-optimism that the Bolshevik Party's formal recognition of the right to secession would not trigger secessionist movements across the Tsarist Russia was not shared by many of his comrades. For example, a German Marxist, Rosa Luxemburg, who was the biggest opponent of Lenin on this issue, questioned Lenin's assumption that those nations that were to use their right to secession from Russia would later volunteer to rejoin it.¹⁰⁹ Such concerns were probably legitimate, but as Page remarks, in pre-revolutionary Russia, when the Bolsheviks had no real power to grant independence to subject peoples of the Tsar, Lenin could easily offer such a pledge without actually making any political concession.¹¹⁰

The political rationality behind the advancement of the right of Bolshevik self-determination is well evident when it is analysed in conjunction with Lenin's model of the party organization, known as 'democratic centralism'. In particular, Lenin emphasized the necessity for a highly centralized party structure, disallowing national factions within it. Under this model, the Bolshevik Party, in accordance with democratic principles, would hold open discussions of any emerging issue until the final decision was made by the central committee based on a majority vote. However, once the decision was adopted by the Party leadership it had to be accepted by every member of the Party, irrespective of his/her personal position. In Lenin's opinion, the system of 'democratic centralism' would have also ensured the rights of national minority groups since their

representatives were to be involved in the Party's decision-making processes at all levels.¹¹¹ However, hypothetically, it was difficult to imagine that the majority of the internationally minded Bolshevik Party leadership would ever let small nations within a proletarian state exercise their right to secession.

Notes

- 1 See Karazhan *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 142–147.
- 2 Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*, trans. Alfred Clayton (Harlow, UK: Pearson Education, 2001), 187.
- 3 Olcott, *Kazakhs*, 31–34.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 57–58.
- 5 Richard A. Pierce, *Russian Central Asia, 1867–1917: A Study in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 21.
- 6 For example, see A. Kuzembaiuly and E. Abilev, *Istoriia respubliki Kazakhstan* (Astana: Foliant, 2000), 207–211; Karazhan *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 185–192; G. V. Kan, *Istoriia Kazakhstana* (Almaty: Adilet, 2002), 116–121.
- 7 See Yuriy Malikov, 'The Kenesary Kasymov Rebellion (1837–1847): A National-Liberation Movement or "a Protest of Restoration"?', *Nationalities Papers* 33, no. 4 (2005): 582–586.
- 8 For a detailed account of the Russian conquest of historical Mawarannahr, see Becker, *Russia's Protectorates*, 25–121.
- 9 Galina M. Yemelianova, *Russia and Islam: A Historical Survey* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 66.
- 10 See Nadira A. Abdurakhimova, 'The Colonial System of Power in Turkistan', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 34, no. 2 (2002): 241; R. Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics: A Study in Soviet Nationalities Policy, 1917–1936* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1967), 31–32.
- 11 See Pierce, *Russian Central Asia*, 54–58.
- 12 S. N. Abashin, D. Iu. Arapov and N. E. Bekmankhanova, eds., *Tsentral'naia Aziia v sostave Rossiiskoi imperii* (Moscow: NLO, 2008), 92–93, 105–113; Abdurakhimova, 'Colonial System of Power', 241–250.
- 13 Vaidyanath, *Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 35–36.
- 14 Dave, *Kazakhstan*, 36.
- 15 See Vaidyanath, *Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 36–37.
- 16 Roy, *New Central Asia*, 32–33.
- 17 On the category *inorodtsy*, see John W. Slocum, 'Who, and When, Were the *Inorodtsy*? The Evolution of the Category of "Aliens" in Imperial Russia', *Russian Review* 57, no. 2 (1998): 173–190.
- 18 On this, see M. Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan* (London: F. Cass, 1994).
- 19 Daniel R. Brower, *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 33–35.
- 20 Kappeler, *Russian Empire*, 198.
- 21 Quoted in Brower, *Turkestan*, 34.
- 22 Serge A. Zenkovsky, 'Kulturkampf in Pre-Revolutionary Central Asia', *American Slavic and East European Review* 14, no. 1 (1955): 19.
- 23 Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 16.
- 24 Zenkovsky, 'Kulturkampf', 25.
- 25 *Ibid.*
- 26 On the Tashkent and Andijan uprisings, see Brower, *Turkestan*, 90–97; Pierce, *Russian Central Asia*, 221–233.

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- 27 In the steppe *oblasts*, I mean those ‘Kazakh’ provinces that constituted the governor-generalships of Orenburg and Western Siberia (later the Steppe *krai*).
- 28 Bennigsen and Broxup, *Islamic Threat*, 17–18.
- 29 Dave, *Kazakhstan*, 35.
- 30 Serge A. Zenkovsky, *Pan-Turkism and Islam in Russia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 59.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 59–60; Tomohiko Uyama, ‘A Particularist Empire: The Russian Policies of Christianization and Military Conscription in Central Asia’, in *Empire, Islam, and Politics in Central Eurasia*, ed. Tomohiko Uyama (Sapporo: Hokkaido University, 2007), 27–28.
- 32 On the Russian Christian missionary activities in the steppes, see Uyama ‘Particularist Empire’, 32–40.
- 33 Wayne Dowler, *Classroom and Empire: The Politics of Schooling Russia’s Eastern Nationalities, 1860–1917* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2001), 47.
- 34 Zenkovsky, *Pan-Turkism*, 64.
- 35 Dowler, *Classroom and Empire*, 140.
- 36 Olcott, *Kazakhs*, 105.
- 37 See *ibid.*, 115–118.
- 38 The term *narodnost’* (plural *narodnosti*) was coined by Russian poet Piotr Viazemskii in 1819 in an attempt to translate the French *nationalite* (nationality) into Russian. It is derived from the Russian word *narod* signifying people and literally is translated as peoplehood. In late nineteenth century Russia, the term *narodnost’* was used as a rough equivalent for the Western concepts of ethnicity and (cultural) nationality. See Nathaniel Knight, ‘Ethnicity, Nationality, and the Masses: *Narodost’* and Modernity in Imperial Russia’, in *Russian Modernity: Politics, Knowledge, Practices*, ed. David L. Hoffmann and Yanni Kotsonis (New York: Macmillan Press, 2000), 48–64.
- 39 Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 202.
- 40 Kathleen Collins, *Clan Politics and Regime Transition in Central Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 78.
- 41 Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 38–42; Juliette Cadiot, ‘Searching for Nationality: Statistics and National Categories at the End of the Russian Empire (1897–1917)’, *Russian Review* 64, no. 3 (2005): 440–442.
- 42 Peter Sinnott, ‘Population Politics in Kazakhstan,’ *Journal of International Affairs* 56, no. 2 (2003): 107; Abashin, Arapov, and Bekmankhanova, *Tsentrāl’naia Aziia*, 388–389.
- 43 Roy, *New Central Asia*, 56.
- 44 Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 202.
- 45 Adapted from Abashin, Arapov and Bekmankhanova, *Tsentrāl’naia Aziia*, 382–389.
- 46 S. Z. Zimanov, *Ot osvoboditel’nykh idei k Sovetskoi gosudarstvennosti v Bukhara i Khiva* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1976), 16.
- 47 See Cadiot, ‘Searching for Nationality’, 446–447.
- 48 Collins, *Clan Politics*, 78.
- 49 Apart from Slavic peasants, European migrants into Central Asia during the Tsarist era also included such groups as Russified or Russian-speaking Jews, Poles, Germans, Tatars and Armenians. For the sake of simplicity, throughout the book I will refer to both Slavic and non-Slavic European immigrants into Central Asia (unless specified) as Slavs.
- 50 Seymour Becker, ‘The Russian Conquest of Central Asia and Kazakhstan: Motives, Methods, Consequences’, in *Central Asia: Its Strategic Importance and Future Prospects*, ed. Hafeez Malik (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 31–32.
- 51 Pierce, *Russian Central Asia*, 127–128.
- 52 Michael Rywkin, *Moscow’s Muslim Challenge: Soviet Central Asia* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1982), 16–17; Karazhan *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 207.

- 53 Robert J. Kaiser, 'Ethnic Demography and Interstate Relations in Central Asia', in *National Identity and Ethnicity in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, ed. Roman Szporluk (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 238; Becker, 'Russian Conquest', 32.
- 54 Dave, *Kazakhstan*, 38.
- 55 Kan, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 133.
- 56 See Karazhan *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 208.
- 57 Geiss, *Pre-Tsarist and Tsarist Central Asia*, 212.
- 58 In 1914, while engaged in a war against Germany, the Tsarist government decided to rename its capital St. Petersburg as Petrograd since the former sounded too German. In 1924, the city was renamed after Lenin and called Leningrad until 1991, when its historical name, St. Petersburg, was restored.
- 59 On the 1916 revolt in Central Asia, see Edward D. Sokol, *The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1954); Kh. T. Tursunov, *Vosstanie 1916 goda v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Tashkent: Uzgosizdat, 1962).
- 60 For instance, see M. Kh. Asylbekov *et al.*, eds., *Istoriia Kazakhstana s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei*, vol. 3 (Almaty: Atamura), 636–651; A. K. Akishev *et al.*, eds., *Istoriia Kazakhstana s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei: Ocherk* (Almaty: Daur, 2006), 272–277; Kan, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 154–159.
- 61 See Karazhan *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 240.
- 62 Becker, *Russia's Protectorates*, 207–208.
- 63 Aviel Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires: Central Europe, the Middle East and Russia* (London: Routledge, 2000), 26.
- 64 On Gasprinskii and his reforms, see Alan W. Fisher, 'A Model Leader for Asia, Ismail Gaspirali', in *The Tatars of Crimea: Return to the Homeland*, ed. Edward Allworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 29–47; Edward J. Lazzarini, 'Ismail Bey Gasprinskii (Gaspirali): The Discourse of Modernism and the Russians', *ibid.*, 48–70.
- 65 D. A. Alimova, *Istoriia kak istoriia, istoriia kak nauka*, vol. 2, Fenomen dzhadidizma (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 2009), 9.
- 66 *Ibid.*, 12.
- 67 Vitaly V. Naumkin, *Radical Islam in Central Asia: Between Pen and Rifle* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 13.
- 68 Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, *Islam and the Russian Empire: Reform and Revolution in Central Asia*, trans. Quentin Hoare (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 86.
- 69 Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 221–222, 283.
- 70 See Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 33; Saidakbar Agzamkhodjaev, *Istoriia Turkestanskoi avtonomii (Turkiston mukhtoriati)* (Tashkent: Toshkent Islom Universiteti, 2006), 38.
- 71 Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 93.
- 72 Haugen, *Establishment of National Republics*, 67.
- 73 Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 241.
- 74 Robert P. Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2001), 277–296; Haugen, *Establishment of National Republics*, 67.
- 75 Alimova, *Istoriia kak istoriia*, vol. 2, 71; Agzamkhodjaev, *Istoriia Turkestanskoi avtonomii*, 35–36.
- 76 Alimova, *Istoriia kak istoriia*, vol. 2, 13.
- 77 *Ibid.*, 61–62.
- 78 Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 121–127; Agzamkhodjaev, *Istoriia Turkestanskoi avtonomii*, 41; Alimova, *Istoriia kak istoriia*, vol. 2, 18.
- 79 Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 129–132, 145–147.
- 80 *Ibid.*, 191.
- 81 Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 33.

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- 82 Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 191–193.
- 83 Ibid., 213–214; Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 33.
- 84 Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 93.
- 85 For examples of such works, see *ibid.*, 190–192; Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 33; Haugen, *Establishment of National Republics*, 62–66; Alimova, *Istoriia kak istoriia*, vol. 2, 74–76; Agzamkhodjaev, *Istoriia Turkestanskoi avtonomii*, 30–31, 47–48; S. A. Abrarov, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, vol. 1 (Tashkent: TGTU, 2007), 134.
- 86 Roy, *New Central Asia*, 36–37.
- 87 Findley, *Turks in World History*, 153.
- 88 See Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 191.
- 89 Zenkovsky, *Pan-Turkism*, 32–33.
- 90 Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 222.
- 91 Adeeb Khalid, ‘Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia: The Transformation of Jadidism, 1917–1920’, in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 157.
- 92 As regards the Turkestan *krai*, since its establishment, the Russian colonial officials had always preferred to use Turkic languages, primarily Tatar and Chaghatay-Turki, to deal with local Muslim populations. Hence, ‘Farsi-Tajik’ had no function within the Russian colonial administration in the region. Paul Bergne, *The Birth of Tajikistan: National Identity and the Origins of the Republic* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 15.
- 93 Ibid., 16–17.
- 94 R. M. Masov, *Istoriia topornogo razdeleniia* (Dushanbe: Irfon, 1991), 13.
- 95 Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 291–292.
- 96 In this book, the terms ‘Bolshevik’ and ‘communist’ are used interchangeably.
- 97 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1967), 102.
- 98 Ibid.
- 99 Ibid., 103–105.
- 100 Karl Renner, ‘State and Nation’, in *National Cultural Autonomy and Its Contemporary Critics*, ed. Ephraim Nimni (London: Routledge, 2005), 15–47.
- 101 Stanley W. Page, ‘Lenin and Self-Determination’, *The Slavonic and East European Review* 28, no. 71 (1950): 350.
- 102 J. V. Stalin, ‘Marxism and the National Question’, in *Works*, vol. 2 (Moscow: FLPH, 1953), 307, emphasis in original.
- 103 Ibid., 375.
- 104 Ibid., 376–378.
- 105 Walker Connor, *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 33.
- 106 V. I. Lenin, ‘The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination. Theses’, in *Collected Works*, vol. 22 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), 146.
- 107 V. I. Lenin, ‘The Right of Nations to Self-Determination’, in *Collected works*, vol. 20 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), 410.
- 108 Ibid., 423.
- 109 See Rosa Luxemburg, *The Russian Revolution*, trans. Bertram Wolfe (New York: Workers Age Publishers, 1940), Ch. 3.
- 110 Page, ‘Lenin and Self-Determination’, 351.
- 111 Lenin’s seminal works on the party organization are V. I. Lenin, ‘What is to Be Done? Burning Questions of Our Movement’, in *Collected Works*, vol. 5 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1961), 347–529; ‘A Letter to a Comrade on Our Organisational Tasks’, in *Collected Works*, vol. 6 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1961), 231–252; ‘One Step Forward, Two Steps Back (The Crisis in Our Party)’, in *Collected Works*, vol. 7 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1961), 203–425.

4 Central Asia from the February Revolution until the Russian-Bolshevik reoccupation

The Russian Provisional Government and the Bolsheviks

On 27 February (by the Julian calendar, and 12 March by the Gregorian or new style (N.S.) calendar¹) 1917, accused of being responsible for Russia's humiliating defeats in World War I, Tsar Nicholas II was forced to abdicate. After Nicholas's abdication, in what later became known as the February Revolution, the Russian Provisional Government was set up in Petrograd headed at first by Prince Georgy Lvov, and from July by socialist Alexander Kerensky. The Provisional Government—chiefly composed of Socialist Revolutionaries, Constitutional Democrats and Mensheviks—was to rule the newly declared Russian Republic until the election of the Constituent Assembly in November 1917.

The coalition Provisional Government, however, proved a fractious alliance. Inter-party rivalry within the coalition prevented them to unite around many pressing issues affecting Russia. The Government's position was further weakened by its unpopular decision to keep the country in the war. Despite its unstable situation, the Provisional Government enacted some liberal reforms, which were unprecedented in Russian history. Namely, it granted all Russian citizens such civil liberties as freedom of press, speech, religion, public assembly, and a right to form associations, and also formally abolished all Tsarist legislative acts discriminating against Jews and the *inorodtsy*.²

Enthusiastic about the democratic reforms pledged by the Provisional Government, Muslim intellectual and political activists in different parts of the former Tsarist Empire began to establish their own political organizations. For instance, in Turkestan *krai*, the Jadids and other reform-minded groups organized themselves into Shura-yi Islamiya (the Islamic Council), while the Kadimists were mostly grouped into Ulama Jamiyati (the Society of Clerics).³ In the Steppe *krai*, a number of Russian-educated 'Kazakh' intellectuals, who since 1913 had collaborated in the newspaper *Kazak*, in March 1917 formed the Alash Orda (Horde of Alash) Party, which became the dominant political organization among the steppe nomads.⁴ In roughly the same period, several Muslim congresses were held in Central Asia and elsewhere to discuss the future of Muslim communities in post-Tsarist Russia. For example, during the First All-Russian Muslim Congress, convened in Moscow in May 1917, one group of delegates

(mostly Tatars) strongly lobbied for forming a single Muslim nation, under a centralized Muslim administration, within the Russian state. Nevertheless, the majority of the delegates, including those from Central Asia, opted for the creation of regional Muslim autonomies.⁵

The Provisional Government, however, was somewhat reluctant to bring radical political changes to the Muslim-populated regions of Russia. For example, in Central Asia, Petrograd hesitated to change the Tsarist colonial structure both in the Steppe and Turkestan *krais*, and to enhance the representation of local Muslim elites in the decision-making processes. Consequently, in the Turkestan *krai*, the authority of the governor-general was simply replaced by a Provisional Executive Committee, while the Steppe territories remained under the direct rule of Petrograd.⁶

Meanwhile, the Russian Bolsheviks greatly increased their influence within the Russian army and proletariat with their anti-war and populist slogans. On 7 April 1917, the Bolshevik leader Lenin proclaimed his so-called April Theses, where he urged the end of the imperialist war, transfer of the state power from the Provisional Government to the workers' councils (Soviets), and redistribution of land to the peasants.⁷ Despite the growing support for the Bolsheviks, they definitely were not the most popular political force in Russia at the time.⁸ Nevertheless, on 25 October (7 November, N.S.) 1917, with the support of the Petrograd-based army and fleet detachments, the Bolsheviks toppled the Provisional Government in the capital. This Bolshevik-led *coup d'état* later became 'glorified as the October Revolution by the Soviet propagandists'.⁹

With the Bolshevik takeover, Russia was torn by Civil War, the consequences of which also extended to Central Asia. The absence of a single political centre in Russia significantly undermined the stability of Russian colonial administration both in the Steppe and Turkestan *krais*. Russian military and administrative personnel, as well as European settlers in the region, were deeply divided between supporters of the Bolshevik power, the Siberian Cossack government in Orenburg under Ataman Alexander Dutov, and the Provisional All-Russian Government in Omsk headed by Admiral Alexander Kolchak. While these rival Russian factions fiercely fought over power in the region and the rest of Russia, each also sought to gain the local indigenous elites' support in the Russian Civil War. For their part, the various local elites of Central Asia were quite keen to exploit the political chaos in Russia and to secure or improve their position in the political framework of post-Civil War Russia by manoeuvring between those adversary parties.

The Bolsheviks, who had a minimal power base among Muslims of the former Tsarist Empire, attempted to attract the non-Russian population's support by reiterating the Party's pre-revolutionary pledge of safeguarding minorities' right to self-determination. In particular, on 2 (15) November 1917, the Bolshevik government adopted the *Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia*, which stipulated 'the equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia' and their right to 'free self-determination, even to the point of secession and the formation of an independent state'.¹⁰ Shortly after this, on 20 November (3 December,

N.S.) 1917, the Bolshevik government also issued an appeal—signed by Lenin and Stalin, then a Commissar (Minister) of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities (Narkomnats)—addressed specifically *To All the Toiling Muslims of Russia and the East*. In the appeal, the Bolshevik leaders not only condemned the Tsarist anti-Muslim policies but also expressed their sympathy for all oppressed Muslims and formally undertook to protect their rights.¹¹ The tactical reasoning behind the November appeal was to ensure that Russia's Muslims would not turn against the Soviet forces during the Civil War, though in reality, the Bolsheviks had little intention of fulfilling their pledges to the non-Russian population of the former Tsarist Empire. As evidence of this, on 15 January 1918, exactly two months after the *Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia* was issued, Stalin delivered a speech at the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets, where he stated that the principle of the right to national self-determination was applicable only to proletarian nations, not to the bourgeois ones.¹² In addition, as Zenkovsky notes, the November appeal also demonstrated an attempt to conceal the nature of the Bolsheviks' Marxist-Leninist ideology, which had no respect for any religion, including Islam.¹³ However, apart from Tashkent, Lenin's government did not then have sufficient power to extend its influence in Central Asia, which was mainly controlled by anti-Bolshevik (White) forces.

The Bolsheviks in Turkestan

The dual policy of the Bolsheviks on the question of self-determination in Central Asia became evident shortly after they seized power in Tashkent and surrounding areas in November 1917 and established a new administrative organ for the region, the Turkestan Council of People's Commissars (Sovnarkom), under Fyodor Kolesov. In particular, some Turkestani Muslim political factions, who were not satisfied with the changes implemented by the Provisional Government, attempted to advance their causes by collaborating with a new Bolshevik administration in Tashkent. For example, leaders of the Ulama Jamiyati proposed the Third Regional Congress of the Soviets to form a coalition government with local Muslim organizations. However, this offer was immediately rejected on the flimsy pretext that there are no indigenous proletarian cadres from which to draw personnel for the Turkestani Sovnarkom.¹⁴ Disappointed with the Bolsheviks, Ulama Jamiyati members moved to the city of Kokand, where a special regional kurultai (congress) was to take place.

The Fourth Extraordinary Regional All-Muslim Kurultai was convened in Kokand on 26 November 1917. The delegates to the Kokand Kurultai represented different Muslim and non-Muslim factions active in Turkestan, such as the Shura-yi Islamiya, Ulama Jamiyati, Ittifak, Bukhara Jewish Society and the Turkestani Bureau of Tatars. After a couple of days of debates, the delegates decided on 27 November to proclaim the establishment of the Turkestan *mukhtoriati* (autonomy, also known as the Kokand autonomy), as a counter-force to the Turkestan Sovnarkom, within Russia. They envisioned the boundaries of the Turkestan *mukhtoriati*

as largely within the borders of the former Kokand Khanate, and chose Muhammad-jan Tynyshpaev, soon replaced by Mustafa Chokay, to head it.¹⁵ As for the political structure of the *mukhtoriati*, its leaders sought to make it compliant with Islamic shari'ah law.¹⁶ The Kurultai delegates also expressed their goodwill towards accommodating representatives of the non-Muslim population by offering them one-third of the seats in the legislative assembly.¹⁷ Zenkovsky rightly suggests that this was mostly forced on them by a shortage of educated local Muslim cadres;¹⁸ however, fear of alienating anti-Bolshevik Russian military groupings in the region was a no less compelling factor.

Even though the delegates to the Kokand Kurultai devoted some efforts to working out a juridical basis for forming a Muslim autonomy in Turkestan, the existence of the Turkestan *mukhtoriati* itself was no more than a fiction. The Turkestan *mukhtoriati* leaders, whose power never reached beyond the old city of Kokand, failed in all their subsequent attempts to receive assistance from the anti-Bolshevik forces existing in Central Asia (such as from Ataman Dutov and the Bukharan Emir), or to achieve recognition from Soviet Petrograd.¹⁹ Besides, chronic disputes between the representatives of Shura-yi Islamiya and Ulama Jamiyati within the *mukhtoriati* government made it highly dysfunctional. Subsequently, in mid-February Chokay's government was ousted by Irgash Bey, a leader of the Kokand Muslim militia, who called for the creation of an Islamic state and secession from Russia.²⁰

Although the establishment of the Turkestan *mukhtoriati* was in full compliance with the Bolshevik principle of each people's right to self-determination, the Turkestan Sovnarkom considered its creation to be of counter-revolutionary character. Consequently, on 18 February (N.S.) 1918, the Bolshevik Red Army corps stormed Kokand, thus ending the Turkestan *mukhtoriati*'s short-lived existence.²¹ Leaders of the *mukhtoriati* who managed to escape the Bolshevik troops either fled abroad or began to organize guerrilla (Basmachi) warfare against the Soviets.

In the weeks after the fall of the Turkestan *mukhtoriati*, the Bolsheviks successfully managed to expand their control over large parts of the former Turkestan *krai*; and on 30 April 1918, by the decision of the Fifth Regional Congress of Soviets, set up a Turkestan Soviet Republic (TSR) as an autonomous unit within the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR).²² On 9 August 1918, Uzbek, 'Kazakh' and Russian were declared official languages of the TSR;²³ and shortly afterwards, on 15 October 1918, the Sixth Regional Congress of Soviets of Turkestan adopted the republic's constitution.²⁴ The TSR's central administration was predominantly staffed by non-indigenous, mainly Russian, Bolsheviks. For example, both the Central Executive Committee (CEC) and Sovnarkom of the TSR were headed by Russian Bolsheviks P. Kobozev and F. Kolesov respectively.²⁵

The extension of Bolshevik rule to the Steppe *krai*

After the Bolshevik coup in Petrograd, large numbers of White forces regrouped in Siberia and the 'Kazakh' steppe. Consequently, the territory of present-day

Kazakhstan became one of the major battlegrounds of the Russian Civil War. While resisting the Red Army advance beyond the Urals, the White forces also sought to ensure that the Bolsheviks did not build a stronghold in the steppes, and, if possible, to recruit additional manpower from among the 'Kazakhs' and Kara-Kyrgyzs. The latter, however, was extremely difficult to achieve, considering the steppe nomads' rising dissatisfaction with the Provisional Government's inability or unwillingness to return Tsarist-confiscated pasture lands to them. In order to win the trust of the steppe nomads, leaders of the anti-Bolshevik forces decided to negotiate mutually beneficial alliances with influential 'Kazakh' and Kara-Kyrgyz political groups. In particular, the White commander Ataman Dutov offered assistance to leaders of 'Kazakh' and Kara-Kyrgyz political organizations in establishing an autonomous self-governing authority, which would administer considerable parts of the 'Kazakh' and Kara-Kyrgyz populated areas in the steppes, in exchange for their support in the anti-Bolshevik struggle.

Subsequently, under the auspices of Ataman Dutov, the Second All-'Kazakh'-Kara-Kyrgyz Congress was held in Orenburg from 5 to 13 (18–26, N.S.) December 1917. On 10 (23) December, encouraged by the Siberian Cossack government, the Congress delegates, dominated by the Alash Orda Party members, proclaimed their decision to form the Steppe autonomy, governed by 'Kazakhs' and Kara-Kyrgyzs, within the Russian state. The new autonomy was to be named after the mythical Alash. Besides, the Provisional People's Council (known as Alash Orda), consisting of 25 members, including 10 non-natives, was to be set up under the leadership of Alikhan Bukeikhanov.²⁶ The Congress delegates agreed that the authority of Alash Orda government was to extend over the territories of the former Steppe *krai*, the 'Kazakh'-populated regions in Transcaspia and Turkestan, and Kara-Kyrgyz-inhabited areas of Fergana, Samarkand and Amu Darya *oblasts*. The delegates also stressed that the question of incorporation of Turkestani 'Kazakh' and Kara-Kyrgyz populated territories within the prospected Alash autonomy must be decided by the respective communities themselves. Therefore, it was decided to postpone official proclamation of the autonomy until after consultations with the leaders of the Turkestani 'Kazakh' and Kara-Kyrgyz communities. Semipalatinsk was chosen as the centre of the autonomy.²⁷

With a rapidly changing military situation in the region in favour of the Bolsheviks, many of the Orenburg Congress's decisions were never realized. For example, Bukeikhanov's provisional administration was unable to conduct negotiations with the Turkestani 'Kazakhs' and Kara-Kyrgyzs about their inclusion into the Alash autonomy. Hence, as Olcott argues, the Alash Orda government, formed in January 1918, declared its authority only over the steppe territories,²⁸ though, according to Kendirbay, the formation of the Alash autonomy 'was in fact never [formally] announced'.²⁹

Although, after the Tsarist conquest of the 'Kazakh' steppe, the establishment of the Alash autonomy (initiated by the Whites) was the first fair attempt to bring all 'Kazakh' tribes under a single 'Kazakh' administration, the newly-established government had no means of enforcing its will over the numerous 'Kazakh' and

Kara-Kyrgyz tribes scattered all around the steppes, a territory larger than the whole of Western Europe. Among the pastoral nomadic societies, individual tribal interests still played a decisive role in creating any type of alliance and maintaining loyalty to it. For example, because of ancient tribal enmities, some 'Kazakh' tribal and political leaders preferred to collaborate with the Bolsheviks than with Alash Orda.³⁰ In addition, the Alash Orda government did not have any authority over the Russian-European population of the steppes, who comprised the vast majority of urban residents.³¹

Overall, Alash Orda had no tangible impact on the consolidation of either the 'Kazakh' or 'Kazakh'-Kara-Kyrgyz population into one people. In fact, the Alash Orda government was simply installed by the White forces as a mechanism for ensuring steppe nomads' support in their war against the Bolsheviks. Other than that, Caroe notes, 'The Alash Orda ... was never much more than a committee which held congresses and issued manifestos'.³² Since its establishment, the Alash autonomy hardly ever had a single centralized administration. Regional tendencies were considerably strong even among the Alash leaders. Consequently, an actual split within the Alash leadership was officially legalized in September 1918 with the creation of another Alash Orda government in the western 'Kazakh' steppe, chaired by Zhansha Dosmukhamedov and based in the village of Zhambeity in Uralsk *oblast*, while the eastern Alash Orda government, under Bukeikhanov, moved from Semipalatinsk to Zhana-Semei.³³

Both Alash Orda governments proved so ineffective that the Whites saw them as of little or no use and in November 1918 decided to abolish them. However, leaders of both governments were quite reluctant to give up their authority; many of them changed sides and sought an alliance with the Bolshevik government, which was quickly making its way in the steppes, and by July 1919 had already created alternative Soviet government, the Kyrgyz (that is, Kazakh) Revolutionary Committee (Revkom), chaired by Polish Bolshevik Stanislaw Pestkowski.³⁴ At the end of 1919, with the subsequent defeats of the White forces in the steppe territories, both Bukeikhanov and Dosmukhamedov recognized Soviet authority. Consequently the Alash autonomy was abolished *de jure* in March 1920.³⁵

On 26 August 1920, after the final establishment of Soviet power in the steppe territories, and within the framework of the Bolshevik concept of self-determination, the Kyrgyz (that is, 'Kazakh') Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) was founded within the RSFSR.³⁶ Seitkali Mendeshev became the first chairman of the CEC of the 'Kazakh' ASSR (KASSR), while Viktor Ratus-Zenkovich was appointed to take charge of the Republic's Sovnarkom. The KASSR initially comprised the territories of Semipalatinsk, Akmolinsk, Turgai and Uralsk *oblasts*, the Mangyshlak *uezd*, parts of the Krasnovodsk *uezd* in the Transcaspian *oblast*, and the Sinemorskoy *volost* in the Astrakhan *oblast*.³⁷ The Kara-Kyrgyz-populated territories, along with Verny (modern Almaty) and its adjacent areas, were transferred to the TSR.³⁸ However, on 22 September 1920, by decision of Moscow,³⁹ the Orenburg region was incorporated into the KASSR, and the city of Orenburg declared its

capital.⁴⁰ This transfer was explained by Pestkowski as due to the lack of industrial centres in the KASSR, which may have hindered the realization of Bolshevik policies in the Autonomy.⁴¹

Sovietization of the Khiva Khanate

In the Khanate of Khiva, after the February Revolution, Asfandiyar Khan, whose authority had been significantly weakened by the Turkmen uprisings during 1912–16, was forced to yield to the demands of the Khivan Soviet (formed by local Russian workers) and the Jadids (known as the Young Khivans) to reform the Khanates' political system. In April 1917, a Majlis (representative assembly) and a Council of Nazirs (Ministers) were formed, thus somewhat limiting the Khan's power. However, these political concessions turned out quite ephemeral. During the summer of 1917, Asfandiyar Khan, with the help of Russian General Mirbadalov, managed to reassert his influence in Khiva. He also lessened the Turkmen threat to his power by reaching an agreement with an influential Yomut Turkmen tribal leader Junaid-Khan, who was granted considerable power within the Khan's government. Subsequently, Asfandiyar not only dissolved the Majlis, but also imprisoned many Young Khivans.⁴²

With the outburst of the Russian Civil War, Russia's suzerainty over Khiva became progressively more nominal. Since most local Russian residents and the few military personnel stationed in the Khanate were predominantly anti-Bolshevik, there was no direct danger of a Bolshevik takeover. Consequently, Asfandiyar Khan, with the support of Junaid-Khan, actively resumed his anti-Jadid repressions. Those Young Khivans fortunate enough to escape the Khan's terror, mostly fled to Soviet Tashkent, where they formed the Young Khivan Revkom in exile. Although both the Jadid and the Bolshevik threat to the Khan's rule were minimized at the time, Asfandiyar nevertheless became a victim of a villainous plot instigated by Junaid-Khan, who, in September 1918, organized his assassination and installed Sayyid Abdullah, the murdered Khan's uncle, as a puppet ruler.⁴³ Junaid-Khan was not, however, able to assert his authority firmly over the rest of the Khanate. His policies soon antagonized many Turkmen tribes, and some of the Uzbek-Sart population. This eventually led to a new Turkmen revolt. Its leaders appealed for help to the Soviet Turkestan's leadership, which had a quite uneasy relationship with Junaid-Khan and had been long awaiting an opportunity to act against him. In December 1919, Red Army units under the pretext of supporting of rebels invaded the Khanate. Junaid-Khan fled to the Kara-Kum desert, and began to organize an anti-Bolshevik resistance movement. On 2 February 1920 Khan Sayyid Abdullah abdicated, thus ending the Kungrat dynasty's rule of the Khiva Khanate.⁴⁴

On 4 April 1920 the Communist Party (CP) of Khiva was founded on the basis of the Young Khivan Party. From 26 to 30 April 1920, the First Kurultai of the People's Representatives of Khiva was held. It proclaimed the establishment of the People's Soviet Republic (PSR) of Khorezm, and also adopted a provisional constitution for it. Although this constitution was largely patterned on that

of the RSFSR, there were a number of important differences between them. For example, the former retained the shari'ah court system, and proclaimed dictatorship of the people rather than of the proletariat.⁴⁵ Palvan-Niaz Iusupov, a former Young Khivan, was elected as the first chairman of the Khorezm PSR (KhPSR), which on 13 September 1920 signed a union treaty with the RSFSR that formally acknowledged Khorezm's independence.⁴⁶

Since the Bolshevik-imposed Soviet government in KhPSR largely lacked popular support, its existence was totally dependent on the Red Army's presence. Besides, Iusupov's administration was unable or unwilling to stop bloodshed between the rival Turkmen and Uzbek tribes, which significantly undermined the Republic's stability. Regular raiding by Junaid-Khan's armed groups' also significantly hindered full implementation of Soviet policies in the KhPSR. In order to prevent an anti-Bolshevik takeover, Soviet Russia's involvement in Khorezm's internal affairs grew daily. For instance, Moscow replaced KhPSR's leaders several times in the following years, and also gradually abolished all the Republic's state symbols (such as army and currency), which had made it at least nominally look sovereign.⁴⁷ In October 1923, with the KhPSR's transformation into Khorezm Soviet Socialist Republic (KhSSR) and adoption of a new Soviet constitution, Khorezm's full Sovietization became an irreversible process.

The downfall of the Bukhara Emirate

Although formally the Emirate of Bukhara was not part of Russia, many Bukharan Jadids (known as Young Bukharans) were quite hopeful that the Russian Provisional Government would also put pressure upon Emir Sayyid Alim Khan to adopt broad sociopolitical reforms. Indeed, shortly after the Revolution, Alex Miller, a former Tsarist official in the Emirate, was instructed by Petrograd to draft, after consulting with different social groups in Bukhara, a list of recommended reforms to be proposed to the Emir. From Miller's perspective, the intended reforms were to be gradual and modest in character. He did not share the Young Bukharans' demands for immediate and drastic changes, which he believed would be doomed to rejection by the Emir and Kadimists. Such pressure on the Emir could also have endangered Russia's position in the Emirate.⁴⁸

On 30 March (N.S.) 1917 Emir Alim Khan reluctantly agreed to the manifesto prepared by Miller that envisaged reforming the judicial and tax systems, encouraging industrialization and trade, establishing a printing house and promoting education in full accordance with shari'ah law, granting amnesty to detainees, and founding an elected council of honourable Bukharans to look after hygiene and health issues in the Emirate. The signing of the manifesto was immediately protested by the Kadimists, who felt insulted by the fact that the projected reforms were drawn up by a non-Muslim Miller, and urged the Emir not to implement them. The Young Bukharans under Faizullah Khojaev, on the other hand, welcomed the manifesto, and on 8 April, attempted to hold a rally in the centre of Bukhara in support of the announced reforms. However, they were

soon violently dispersed by a much larger crowd that had already gathered in support of the ulama. The Bukharan Jadids, who were accused of provoking violence, became almost immediately hunted by the Emir's police, and many, including Khojaev, were forced either to flee from Bukhara or to seek asylum in its Russian districts. The 8 April incident proved that the Young Bukharans did not enjoy popular support. Consequently, Miller suggested Petrograd refrain from endorsing the Jadids' activities in the Emirate in order to avoid further inflaming anti-Russian sentiments among Bukharan Muslims.⁴⁹

The Bolshevik seizure of power in Petrograd, and shortly thereafter in Turkestan, raised the Young Bukharans' expectations of gaining a new partner in their struggle against the Emir's regime. Since Emir Alim Khan was not sympathetic to the Bolsheviks and actively backed the White forces in the region, Khojaev appealed to Kolesov, the chairman of the Turkestan Sovnarkom, to intervene in the Emirate, assuring him that he and his supporters could mobilize around 40,000 armed men to topple the Emir's regime. Kolesov enthusiastically agreed to the plan and began to assemble troops close to Bukhara, and on 1 March 1918, sent an ultimatum to Emir Alim Khan demanding he immediately implement the reforms in exchange for retaining his position with limited rights. Initially the Emir was inclined to consider the Bolsheviks' demands, but a sparking of anti-Russian riots made peaceful agreement impossible. Kolesov then attempted to occupy Bukhara militarily, but was forced to retreat with heavy losses. The Soviet government, struggling on several fronts to maintain power, could not afford to concentrate on Bukhara at the time, so for tactical reasons decided to recognize Bukharan independence, and signed a peace treaty with the Emir's representatives at Kizil-Tepe on 25 March 1918.⁵⁰

It soon became clear that the Bolsheviks were not going to tolerate the Bukharan regime for a long time. In April 1918 the Soviet Turkestan government was tasked to establish a power base among Bukharan refugees and dissidents by urging them to join the Bolshevik ranks. Many Bukharans sheltering in the TSR welcomed the Soviet initiative, and in September 1918 a number of former Young Bukharans and Socialist Revolutionaries established the Bukharan CP in Tashkent. The majority of Young Bukharans formed the Revolutionary Young Bukharan Party (RYBP) under Khojaev in January 1920. While the Bukharan CP was tasked to ensure support for the Soviet government among the Emirate's poor, the RYBP aspired to mobilize representatives of the Bukharan middle class, who were harshly critical of the Emir's regime, but did not share communist principles.⁵¹

On 29 August 1920 Red Army units commanded by Mikhail Frunze began to invade Bukhara. As in the Khiva Khanate, the official motive for the invasion was as a response to a plea for assistance by the people in rebellion. The Bukharan forces were too weak to provide effective resistance, and on 2 September Bukhara fell. Emir Alim Khan first escaped to eastern Bukhara, and then sought refuge in neighbouring Afghanistan.⁵² By conquering the Bukhara Emirate, the Bolsheviks largely completed the reincorporation of the former Tsarist-occupied territories in Central Asia.

Following the capture of Bukhara, the Bolsheviks set up a Provisional Bukharan Revkom, chaired by A. Abdusaidov, to administer the Emirate until the election of a new government. On 11 September 1920, the RYBP formally merged with the Bukharan CP, making the latter the only political party in the Emirate. On 6 October 1920, by decision of the All-Bukharan Kurultai of People's Representatives, the Emirate was transformed into the Bukharan People's Soviet Republic (BPSR). Faizullah Khojaev was chosen as the chairman of the Bukharan Council of Nazirs, and Abdukadyr Mukhitdinov was appointed to the position of the chairman of the Bukharan Revkom.⁵³

On 4 March 1921, Soviet Russia signed a union treaty with the BPSR, and formally recognized its independence. However, the treaty also significantly restricted the Bukharan leadership's decision-making authority in economic and foreign affairs, which were to be largely monitored by Moscow. The treaty also legalized the Red Army's presence in the BPSR.⁵⁴ Khojaev's government, having failed to attract locals into the forming Bukharan army, became totally dependent on the Russian military forces. For example, out of 40,000 Red Army soldiers deployed in the BPSR in 1922, only 400 were Bukharans.⁵⁵

In September 1921 the Second All-Bukharan Kurultai of the Soviets adopted the Constitution of the BPSR, which introduced a number of democratic changes, at least on paper. In particular, Bukharans were granted the rights to freedom of speech, assembly and religion, and women received the same rights as men. Considering the high religiosity of the local Muslim population, the Bolsheviks refrained at the time from full secularization of the public sphere. For example, the constitution stipulated that all legislative acts adopted in the BPSR had to be in agreement with Islamic teachings.⁵⁶ In addition, both the Soviet Bukharan state flag and coat of arms depicted the crescent, a symbol of Islam, as well as the Soviet Red Star.

The Second All-Bukharan Kurultai also acknowledged the Turkmen problem in the Republic. As mentioned earlier, nomad Turkmen tribes had long resisted the centralizing policies of the Uzbek dynasties both in the Khiva Khanate and the Bukhara Emirate. The Turkmen resentment of Uzbek rule persisted well after the Sovietization of both political entities. Therefore, in order to mitigate the Turkmen opposition to the new Bukharan government, the Kurultai decided to establish a special Turkmen division within the Soviet Bukharan CEC.⁵⁷ Later, in October 1923, an autonomous Turkmen province was also created (out of the Chardzhou and Kerki provinces) within the BPSR.⁵⁸

In contrast to the Turkmen issue, the Soviet Bukharan leadership's attitude towards the 'Farsi-Tajik'-speaking population was considerably different. In particular, most of the leaders of the BPSR (as well as in Soviet Turkestan and Khorezm) were former Jadids, and for them cultural and linguistic Turkicization of the Iranian-speaking peoples of the region was still an attractive idea. Besides, after the October Revolution, Chaghatay-Turki had become the language of local Jadids-turned-Bolshevik revolutionaries, while 'Farsi-Tajik' was stigmatized by former Jadids as the language of the Emir's court and a Basmachi insurgency, especially strong among the east-Iranian peoples of Central Asia.⁵⁹ As a result,

in the aftermath of the Soviet occupation, 'Farsi-Tajik' was replaced by Turki as the official administrative language of Bukhara. According to Masov, the Soviet Bukharan government disregarded not only the 'Farsi-Tajik' language but also the entire Tajik population, who were largely excluded from employment opportunities in state organs unless they registered as ethnic Uzbeks.⁶⁰ Thus, it should come as no surprise that in such a context the question of Tajik self-determination was not on the agenda at the ex-Jadid-dominated Second all-Bukharan Kurultai in 1923.⁶¹

As Moscow was strengthening its grip on Central Asia at the beginning of the 1920s, its control over the Bukharan and Khorezm puppet Soviet governments was becoming increasingly tighter too. For example, the Bukharan Soviet government was largely unable to implement key policies without first obtaining approval from Moscow. Khojaev's initiatives to establish diplomatic relations with neighbouring Muslim countries were also immediately blocked by the Kremlin.⁶² On 2 February 1922, the Bukharan and Khorezm CPs were merged with the RCP. The party/political centralization was followed by the removal of all major economic decision-making powers from the Bukharan and Khorezm leadership and transferring them to the Central Asian Economic Council, formed in January 1923. Many Central Asian communists, who were dissatisfied with the Kremlin's centralizing activities in the region, were also expelled from the Party.⁶³ On 19 September 1924 the BPSR was renamed the Bukharan SSR. However, this was mainly a cosmetic change, as the days of Bukhara's formal independence were numbered.

The anti-Soviet Basmachi insurgency in Central Asia

The Red Army's advances in Central Asia during 1918 and 1920 proved that the local Muslim armed forces and militias were no match for it in conventional warfare. Therefore, immediately after being ousted from the power many former leaders, employees and servicemen of the Turkestan *mukhtoriati*, the Khiva Khanate and the Bukhara Emirate began to organize guerrilla forces to resist the establishment of Soviet rule. In an attempt to enlarge the guerrilla ranks, Emir Alim Khan and many influential Muslim clerics appealed to the local Muslim population to join the jihad against the 'infidel' Bolsheviks. In the following years, with implementation of Soviet socio-economic and religious reforms, the number of anti-Bolshevik insurgents in the region grew considerably. Many Central Asian Muslims, disadvantaged or oppressed by the new regime, either joined established paramilitary groups or formed their own. The anti-Bolshevik Muslim insurgency in the region was also empowered in 1921 by the arrival of General Enver Pasha, former Ottoman Minister of War and a great champion of pan-Turkic unity, who took command of an 'Islamic Army' in eastern Bukhara. By November 1922, the number of Muslim insurgents in Central Asia was estimated to be between 60,000 and 70,000.⁶⁴

In order to discredit and demonize the anti-Bolshevik Muslim movement in Central Asia, official Soviet propaganda from the very start of the insurgency

vigorously depicted the Muslim rebels as ‘gangs of robbers and bandits’ or Basmachis.⁶⁵ The term ‘Basmachi’ was later adopted both by official Soviet and pre-1991 Western historiographies, though their assessments of the insurgency varied significantly. While the former unanimously treated it as ‘class struggle waged by the overthrown exploiters against the victorious revolution, proletarian dictatorship, and power of the working people’,⁶⁶ the latter predominantly interpreted it as the Muslims’ response to Soviet colonial policies.⁶⁷ Since the demise of the Soviet Union, historians in Central Asia have begun to re-examine the nature of the Basmachi revolt. While in all the historiographies of the region opinions differ on the question, the official Uzbek historiography has fully rehabilitated and eulogized the Basmachis as national-liberators.⁶⁸ Uzbek historians have also stressed the inappropriateness of using the term ‘Basmachi’ in regard to the Muslim insurgents of the 1920s and 1930s. For example, according to Uzbek academic Soyibjon Tillaboev:

Referring to the insurgents as Basmachis is conceptually incorrect, since the term implies an act of committing an attack/aggression on someone. Uzbeks neither attacked Russians nor invaded the Russian territory. On the contrary, it was the Russian Red Army units who attacked/invaded our people. The local population had no choice, but to defend themselves. Therefore, it is the Soviet forces which should be regarded as real Basmachis.⁶⁹

Such a perspective on the term ‘Basmachi’ certainly has a sound and arguable basis. On the other hand, this term has already become widely accepted in non-Central Asian conventional scholarship to designate the anti-Bolshevik Muslim rebels in the region. Therefore, throughout this book I will use the term ‘Basmachi’ in reference to the Central Asian Muslim insurgents as a neutral expression, freeing it from its Soviet-given derogatory connotation.

In Central Asia, there were three major hotbeds of the Basmachi insurgency: the Ferghana Valley (the longest-lasting and most widespread), the former Khiva Khanate (organized by Junaid-Khan and comprising mostly Turkmen tribes), and the eastern parts of the former Bukhara Emirate (led by supporters of Emir Alim Khan and other important tribal chieftains, such as Ibrahim Bek), largely having no connection with one another. Even within these major areas there were numerous paramilitary units acting against the newly-established Soviet governments in the region, but not coordinating their operations. Therefore, it is somewhat problematic to present the Basmachi insurgency either as a single regional movement or as three simultaneous but separate consolidated movements in Central Asia during the early Soviet era.

The social make-up of the Basmachis was not confined to any particular social group, but comprised representatives of all strata, each having different motives for joining the insurgency. For instance, while for Emir Alim Khan the anti-Soviet resistance was about restoration of his authority, Enver Pasha saw it as an opportunity to realize his pan-Turkic aspirations and form a Turko-Muslim Empire in the region. For the majority of Kurbashis (leaders of local militias)

Basmachism was largely about providing security to their respective communities during the anarchy that evolved after Bolshevik Russia's reoccupation of the region. But as Nourzhanov points out, not all Kurbashis were benign community defenders, but rather were typical plunderers or mercenaries.⁷⁰ Those criminal gangs, whom neither the Emir, Khan or Tsarist governor-general would have tolerated when in power, unintentionally became useful partners to all anti-Bolshevik forces in the region, as a potential source of additional manpower. Finally, many ordinary Muslim peasants turned into Basmachi gunmen for different reasons, such as religious (support for jihad), economic (because of confiscation of their property by the Bolsheviks), clan and/or tribal solidarity.

Although at some point most Basmachis may have sought to drive out the foreign forces from their immediate territories, or even from the whole region, it is largely a mistake to regard them as national-liberators as is asserted in the contemporary Uzbek historiography. Presenting them as such legitimately triggers a number of questions, which Uzbek historians might find difficult to answer and accommodate within the currently-accepted Uzbek historical framework. For instance: (i) which nation(s) did Basmachis from the Ferghana Valley or former Bukhara Emirate seek to liberate from Soviet rule? (ii) was there, for example, a Bukharan or Turkestanian Muslim nation/coherent community group separate from the Uzbek nation/community at the time? (iii) if yes, then how does this fit into contemporary Uzbek historiography tracing the formation of the Uzbek nation back to the tenth-eleventh centuries?⁷¹ (iv) or, if the Basmachis sought to free the Uzbek nation, then why did their leaders never appeal to Uzbek ethnic sentiments, but only call for jihad?

In fact, the Basmachis, who fought in the name of *Allah*, 'had no "national" project such as the creation of an independent Muslim [national] state'.⁷² Factional interests and loyalties were much more important for the Kurbash-warlords, than the interests of the Bukharan, Ferghanan or regional Muslim community. Furthermore, while acting against the common Bolshevik enemy, different Basmachi groups often fought one another to protect their clan or tribal interests. From time to time, some Kurbashis did not even hesitate to side with Red Army units conducting punitive operations against other Basmachi factions.⁷³ In other words, though all Basmachi leaders might have utilized Islam as a driving ideology of the insurgency, *ummah* solidarity came to be of secondary importance when it clashed with particular tribal/clan/personal interests. Therefore, rather than treating the Basmachis as national-liberators, it would be correct to view them as groups of anti-Bolshevik Muslim insurgents, often accidentally allied to each other, trying to defend or advance either their tribal, clan, economic, sectarian, personal and/or criminal interests under the banner of Islam.

The height of the Muslim insurgency in Central Asia came in early 1922, when the Basmachis, under Enver Pasha, managed to establish control over large parts of eastern Bukhara. However, the Bolsheviks were soon able to regain control over those areas, and to force Enver to retreat towards the Pamir Mountains. Subsequently, in early August Enver Pasha was killed by Soviet troops in an ambush near Baljuan (in modern-day Tajikistan). Although his death further

degraded and significantly weakened the insurgency, the various Basmachi groups, often with the local population's support, continued to pose serious security problems to the Soviet regime. Therefore, the Bolsheviks had to put forth huge efforts not only to restore order, but most importantly to minimize the social base of support for the Basmachis.

In an attempt to win the hearts and minds of Central Asian Muslims, the Bolsheviks began to implement measures such as returning some of the confiscated *waqf* properties to the ulama, significantly reducing taxes, issuing amnesty to insurgents, and increasing the proportion of locals employed in Soviet governmental structures.⁷⁴ In addition, the Soviet propaganda machine actively promoted stories depicting the successful reintegration of former Basmachi leaders into Soviet society.⁷⁵ Although the Soviets actively endorsed these 'carrot' policies, they never abandoned their 'stick' approach towards those suspected of collaborating with the Basmachis. The Bolsheviks' harsh punitive measures (executions, abductions, destruction of wells) compelled many local communities to refrain from supporting the insurgents. Consequently, with the 'carrot-and-stick' strategy, the Soviets were able to gradually strengthen their positions among the native Muslim communities, who were largely exhausted by years of war, disorder, starvation, pillages and atrocities committed by both sides.⁷⁶

By the mid-1920s, the Basmachi insurgency had already been largely broken, though sporadic and weak guerrilla activities continued until the early 1930s. Deprived of popular support, many Basmachis either escaped abroad (mainly to Afghanistan) or turned into bandits.⁷⁷ With the rooting out of Muslim insurgency in Central Asia, the Bolsheviks were able to fully engage in their great experiment of building socialism and modern nations in the region.

Notes

- 1 Russia officially adopted the Gregorian calendar on 31 January 1918.
- 2 See Robert Paul Browder and Alexander F. Kerensky, eds., *The Russian Provisional Government, 1917: Documents*, vol. 1 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1961), 194–195, 212–214.
- 3 Zenkovsky, *Pan-Turkism*, 227.
- 4 Kan, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 164.
- 5 Gulnar Kendirbay, 'The National Liberation Movement of the Kazakh Intelligentsia at the Beginning of the 20th Century', *Central Asian Survey* 16, no. 4 (1997): 500–501.
- 6 Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, 'The Fall of the Czarist Empire', in *Central Asia, 130 Years of Russian Dominance: Historical Overview*, ed. Edward Allworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 215.
- 7 V. I. Lenin, 'The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution', in *Collected Works*, vol. 24 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), 19–26.
- 8 This became especially evident after the 1917 Russian Constituent Assembly elections, when the Socialist Revolutionary Party gained over twice the number of seats in the Assembly than the Bolsheviks. However, Lenin was unwilling to transfer authority to the Socialist Revolutionaries and forcefully dissolved the assembly. On this, see Oliver H. Radkey, *The Election to the Russian Constituent Assembly of 1917* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1950).

- 9 Charles E. Ziegler, *The History of Russia* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1999), 79. There is a vigorous debate in the scholarship whether the Bolshevik takeover was a *coup d'état* or a revolution. For a good review of the major scholarly interpretations of the Bolshevik seizure of power, see Edward Acton, *Rethinking the Russian Revolution* (London: E. Arnold, 1990).
- 10 For the full text of the November 1917 Declaration, see S. S. Studenikin, ed. *Istoriia Sovetskoi konstitutsii (v dokumentakh) 1917–1956* (Moscow: Gosiurizdat, 1957), 57–58.
- 11 For the full text of the appeal, see *ibid.*, 66–68.
- 12 J. V. Stalin, 'Report on the National Question,' in *Works*, vol. 4 (Moscow: FLPH, 1953), 31–33.
- 13 Zenkovsky, *Pan-Turkism*, 161.
- 14 Marco Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot: Sredniaia Aziia mezhdu padeniem tsarskoi imperii i obrazovaniem SSSR*, trans. Nikolai Okhotin (Moscow: Zven'ia, 2007), 204–205.
- 15 Agzamkhodjaev, *Istoriia Turkestanskoi avtonomii*, 188–194; Buttino, *Revoliutsiia naoborot*, 239–243.
- 16 Paul Bergne, 'The Kokand Autonomy, 1917–1918: Political Background, Aims and Reasons for Failure', in *Central Asia: Aspects of Transition*, ed. Tom Everett-Heath (London: Routledge, 2003), 38.
- 17 *Ibid.*; Agzamkhodjaev, *Istoriia Turkestanskoi avtonomii*, 193.
- 18 Zenkovsky, *Pan-Turkism*, 235.
- 19 Bergne, 'Kokand Autonomy', 31, 40–41; Sergey Abashin *et al.*, 'Soviet Rule and the Delineation of Borders in the Ferghana Valley, 1917–1930', in *Ferghana Valley: The Heart of Central Asia*, ed. S. Frederick Starr (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2011), 97.
- 20 S. A. Abrarov, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, vol. 2 (Tashkent: TGTU, 2007), 12–13.
- 21 *Ibid.*; Agzamkhodjaev, *Istoriia Turkestanskoi avtonomii*, 223–237.
- 22 *Pobeda Oktiabr'skoi revoliutsii v Uzbekistane: Sbornik dokumentov*. vol. 2 (Tashkent: Fan, 1972), 251–252.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 418.
- 24 For the full text of the 1918 TSR Constitution, see *S"ezdy sovetov: Sbornik dokumentov, 1917–1936 gg.* vol. 1 (Moscow: Gosiurizdat, 1959), 279–289. The Bolshevik leadership in Moscow was not informed by the Turkestan Sovnarkom of this decision and thus the 1918 TSR Constitution entered into force without being ratified by the central government. The agreed constitution of the republic was only adopted by the Ninth Congress of Soviets of Turkestan in September 1920 (which also renamed the TSR as the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (TASSR)), and was finally ratified by the RCP CEC on 11 April 1921. This has led a number of scholars to suggest that legally the autonomous republic of Soviet Turkestan was formed not in 1918 but only in 1920 or 1921. On this, see Sh. Z. Urazaev, *V. I. Lenin i stroitel'stvo Sovetskoi gosudarstvennosti v Turkestane* (Tashkent: Fan, 1967), 189–216, 429–454.
- 25 D. A. Alimova and R. Ia. Radzhapova, eds., *Turkestan v nachale xx veka: K istorii istokov natsional'noi nezavisimosti* (Tashkent: Shark, 2000), 116–117.
- 26 Zenkovsky, *Pan-Turkism*, 213; Karazhan *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 252.
- 27 Olcott, *Kazakhs*, 139–140; Kendirbay, 'National Liberation Movement', 506–507.
- 28 Olcott, *Kazakhs*, 140.
- 29 Kendirbay, 'National Liberation Movement', 508.
- 30 Bennigsen and Lemerrier-Quelguez, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, 24.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 93.
- 32 Caroe, *Soviet Empire*, 104.
- 33 Karazhan *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 254.
- 34 See *Obrazovanie Kazakhskoi ASSR: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Alma-Ata: AN KazSSR, 1957), 122–130.
- 35 Karazhan *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 254.
- 36 See *Obrazovanie Kazakhskoi ASSR*, 251–255.

- 37 Zh. O. Artykbaev, *Istoriia Kazakhstana* (Kostanay: Tsentral'no-Aziatskoe Knizhnoe Izd-vo, 2006), 267–268.
- 38 Roy, *New Central Asia*, 59.
- 39 In March 1918, the Bolshevik government moved Russia's capital from Petrograd to Moscow.
- 40 Artykbaev, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 268. On the demarcation of the KASSR's borders with the west Siberian regions of Russia during 1919–22, see E. Sydykov and M. Malysheva, *Sibir' i Kazakhstan (natsional'no-territorial'noe razmezhevanie Sibiri i Kazakhstana, 1919–1922 gg.)* (Semey, Kaz: SGU, 2010).
- 41 Artykbaev, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 265.
- 42 See A. I. Pylev, *Politicheskoe polozhenie Bukharskogo emirata i Khivinskogo khanstva v 1917–1920 gg.: Vybor putei razvitiia* (St. Petersburg: Peterburgskoe Vostokovedenie, 2005), 98–104; Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 288–291.
- 43 Pylev, *Politicheskoe polozhenie*, 109–110.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 155–157; Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 302–305.
- 45 For the full text of the 1920 KhPSR Constitution, see *S'ezdy sovetov: Sbornik dokumentov, 1917–1936 gg.* vol. 2 (Moscow: Gosizurizdat, 1960), 503–508.
- 46 For the full text of the 1920 treaty between the RSFSR and the KhPSR, see Studenikin, *Istoriia Sovetskoi konstitutsii*, 237–240.
- 47 See Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 612–628.
- 48 Carrère d'Encausse, *Islam and the Russian Empire*, 128–131; Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 285–286.
- 49 Carrère d'Encausse, *Islam and the Russian Empire*, 132–136; Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 286–288.
- 50 See Pylev, *Politicheskoe polozhenie*, 105–126; Sarfraz Khan, *Muslim Reformist Political Thought: Revivalists, Modernists and Free Will* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 108–111.
- 51 Pylev, *Politicheskoe polozhenie*, 140–150; Khan, *Muslim Reformist Political Thought*, 112–114; Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 310–314.
- 52 On the Soviet Russia's occupation of the Emirate of Bukhara, see V. Genis, *S Bukharoi nado konchat'...: K istorii butaforskikh revoliutsii; dokumental'naia khronika* (Moscow: MNPI, 2001).
- 53 See Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 326–28.
- 54 For the full text of the 1921 treaty between the RSFSR and the BPSR, see Studenikin, *Istoriia Sovetskoi konstitutsii*, 271–274.
- 55 Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 555.
- 56 For the full text of the 1921 BPSR Constitution, see *S'ezdy sovetov*, vol. 2, 566–579.
- 57 See *ibid.*, 564–566.
- 58 Masov, *Istoriia topornogo razdeleniia*, 20–21.
- 59 Bergne, *Birth of Tajikistan*, 18.
- 60 Masov, *Istoriia topornogo razdeleniia*, 23. According to Masov, the Tajiks were discriminated in Soviet Turkestan too. *Ibid.*, 6–19.
- 61 According to Kunitz, however, at that time the Tajiks 'were too busy fighting with or against the Basmachi to attempt anything constructive along the lines of national self-determination'. Joshua Kunitz, *Dawn over Samarkand: The Rebirth of Central Asia* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1936), 162. Between January 1922 and May 1924, Eastern Bukhara was administered by the Extraordinary Dictatorial Commission of the BPSR CEC. Bergne, *Birth of Tajikistan*, 32.
- 62 K. Radzhabov, 'Bukharskaia i Khorezmskaia narodnye respubliki: Demokraticheskie formy gosudarstvennosti', in *Ocherki po istorii gosudarstvennosti Uzbekistana*, ed. D. A. Alimova and E. V. Rtveladze (Tashkent: Shark, 2001), 187–188.
- 63 On this, see Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 568–581; Shoshana Keller, 'The Central Asian Bureau, an Essential Tool in Governing Soviet Turkestan', *Central Asian Survey* 22, no. 2–3 (2003): 287–294.

- 64 Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 169.
- 65 Ibid., 165, 198, 241. The term ‘Basmachi’ stems from the Old Turkic verb *bosmok/basmak* meaning to attack, plunder, raid. The Basmachis, however, referred to themselves as *beklar hareketi* or freemen’s movement. See *ibid.*, 165–166.
- 66 A. I. Zevelev, Iu. A. Poliakov, and A. I. Chugunov, *Basmachestvo, vozniknovenie, sushchnost’, krakh* (Moscow: Nauka, 1981), 3.
- 67 For an interesting review of the Soviet and Western historiographies treatment of the Basmachi insurgency, see Kirill Nourzhanov, ‘Reassessing the Basmachi: Warlords Without Ideology?’, *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 31, no. 3 (2008): 41–57; Will Myer, *Islam and Colonialism: Western Perspectives on Soviet Asia* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), 78–82.
- 68 For example, see Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 164–243; Abrarov, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, vol. 2, 14; K. Usmanov and M. Sadikov, *Istoriia Uzbekistana (1917–1991 gody)* (Tashkent: Shark, 2008), 40–48.
- 69 A note from the personal interview with Dr S. Tillaboev, the Institute of History of Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 4 December 2009, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- 70 Nourzhanov, ‘Reassessing the Basmachi’, 61–62.
- 71 See, for example, Askarov et al., *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, vol. 3, 37; Abrarov, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, vol. 1, 24.
- 72 Roy, *New Central Asia*, 46.
- 73 See Nourzhanov, ‘Reassessing the Basmachi’, 62; Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 223.
- 74 See Rywkin, *Moscow’s Muslim Challenge*, 42; Niccolò Pianciola and Paolo Sartori, ‘Waqf in Turkestan: The Colonial Legacy and the Fate of an Islamic Institution in Early Soviet Central Asia, 1917–1924’, *Central Asian Survey* 26, no. 4 (2007): 484–492.
- 75 Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 189.
- 76 According to modern Uzbek historiography, only in the Ferghana region, something like one million people died of hunger and another half a million in fighting between 1918 and 1923. *Ibid.*, 192.
- 77 Rywkin, *Moscow’s Muslim Challenge*, 42–43.

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Part III

From Lenin to Gorbachev

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5 The formation of the Soviet Union

The Soviet federal system

Before assuming power in 1917, the Bolshevik leadership had constantly rejected federalism as a viable system of state organization for post-revolutionary Russia. From their perspective, the federal arrangement of the state would have impeded the unity of the proletariat and amalgamation of different nationalities into a homogenous socialist society.¹ Instead, the Bolsheviks advocated the formation of a centralized unitary state, offering limited regional autonomies to some minority nations within the framework of the Leninist concept of self-determination.² Since this projected socialist state had to be based, in theory at least, on a voluntary union of peoples, Lenin, as discussed earlier, defended the right of minority nations in Russia to secede, though he was convinced that most of them would rather opt for integration than separation in the wake of a successful socialist takeover. However, as political developments in post-Tsarist Russia demonstrated, Lenin was largely wrong in his prediction.

Following the October Revolution, former Tsarist provinces in Eastern Europe (Poland, Finland, Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Belorussia) and Transcaucasia (Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan) soon began to successfully assert their independence from Russia. Separatist and autonomist tendencies were also increasing in Russian Far East, Siberia and Central Asia. Hence, the Bolsheviks' endorsement of the right of national self-determination, which was a tactically winning political platform while in opposition, suddenly became an ideological burden on their government that threatened to fragment Russia into numerous political entities. In an attempt to deter such a possibility, Aspaturian notes, 'federalism was eagerly seized upon as both salvation and solution; the Party was forced to adopt federation in order to stop separation'.³ Lenin tried to justify the Bolshevik Party's drastic revision of policy on federalism by arguing that it was 'merely a transitional step towards really democratic centralism'.⁴

The first Constitution of the RSFSR, adopted on 10 July 1918, formally introduced a federal system in Russia. Article 2 of Chapter I of the Constitution stipulated that 'the Soviet Russian Republic is established on the basis of a free union of free nations, as a federation of Soviet national republics'.⁵ The 1918 Constitution, however, did not address the question of the right of national minorities to secede from the RSFSR. Rather, the Bolshevik leadership sought to deal with

the secessionist movements individually based on pragmatic political and military considerations. As Conquest puts it, Lenin was willing to recognize as independent states only those secessionist entities against which 'the direct use of force was not immediately practical, owing to the strategic requirements of the Civil War'.⁶ Yet as soon as circumstances allowed it, the Kremlin vigorously attempted to reassert its control over them. For instance, by mid-1921, after their short-lived independences, Ukraine, Belorussia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia were all forcefully Sovietized by invading Red Army forces. In order to avoid accusations of committing aggression against the sovereign states, the Kremlin did not incorporate these newly Sovietized states into the RSFSR, but rather allowed them to retain their nominal independences (similar to those of the Bukharan and Khorezm Soviet republics) as allies of Soviet Russia.

The rest of the non-Russian provinces of the former Tsarist Empire, where the Bolsheviks managed to extend their power, were directly annexed to the RSFSR, a number of them to be granted different levels of autonomy. For example, between 1918 and 1923, 17 administrative-territorial autonomous units were organized within the RSFSR, including the Turkestan and 'Kazakh' republics.⁷ For the Bolshevik leadership, the autonomization of the RSFSR did not mean a departure from or modification of the Party's centralist policy. On the contrary, it was interpreted as a mechanism facilitating greater unity and cohesion among the Soviet republics. Stalin explicitly clarified the Kremlin's position on this issue while addressing the Congress of the Peoples of the Terek region in November 1920: 'Autonomy means not separation, but union between the self-governing ... peoples and the peoples of Russia'.⁸

At the beginning of the 1920s, with the end of the Civil War approaching and further consolidation of the Bolshevik rule in Russia, it was decided to form a closer political union between the RSFSR and its allied Soviet republics of Ukraine, Belorussia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bukhara, Khorezm and the Far East. For this purpose, in August 1922, Stalin was tasked to head a special commission that would work out suggestions on how to develop future relations between these republics. Within a couple of weeks, Stalin proposed a union project that envisaged the incorporation of the independent Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs) of Ukraine, Belorussia, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan into the Russian federation as autonomous republics without the right of secession. As regards the integration of the Bukharan, Khorezm and Far Eastern PSRs into the RSFSR, it was recommended that this question should be left open for the time being, and meanwhile to continue cooperation with them in such areas as customs, trade, foreign and military affairs.⁹

Stalin's 'autonomization plan' caused a huge controversy among the Bolshevik leadership both in Moscow and the regions. For example, a group of Georgian and Ukrainian communists (later denounced by the Stalinist regime as 'national deviationists') openly opposed the adoption of Stalin's plan on the grounds that it would have undermined the sovereignty of their republics. Rather they proposed a loose union of independent SSRs and RSFSR based on confederative principles. The rivalry between these groups became so acute that Lenin

had to intervene and work out a middle ground model that became widely known as the federal compromise. In particular, Lenin harshly rejected Stalin's 'autonomization plan' regarding it as contradictory to the Bolshevik doctrine of self-determination, accusing its supporters of Great Russian chauvinism.¹⁰ Instead, he suggested that since all these independent Soviet republics were equal in their legal status, they should have joined a new federal union on an equal rights basis, though they had to modify the degree of their sovereignty, in order to make a federation possible. As Lenin put it, 'The important thing is not to provide material for the "pro-independence" people, not to destroy their *independence*, but to create another *new storey*, a federation of *equal republics*.'¹¹ Lenin's compromise proposal sought somewhat to combine his long-advocated principles of self-determination and democratic centralism. Consequently, Stalin was compelled to abandon his 'autonomization plan' and to present a new draft under which the RSFSR, Ukrainian SSR, Belorussian SSR and the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (TSFSR), comprising Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian SSRs, would form the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR, or the Soviet Union), each of them retaining the right to secede, while the existing autonomous republics would remain within their respective SSRs; the Far Eastern PSR would be abolished and its territory merged with the RSFSR; as for the Bukharan and Khorezm PSRs' status, they would remain outside of the projected union until their transformation into socialist republics.¹²

On 30 December 1922, the Treaty of Union was ratified at the Tenth All-Russian (First All-Union) Congress of Soviets, which formally established the USSR.¹³ The Congress also appointed the commission to draft a constitution for the Soviet Union. Consequently, the first USSR Constitution came into force on 6 July 1923, though it was not formally ratified by the Second All-Union Congress of Soviets until 31 January 1924, ten days after the death of Lenin. The newly-formed USSR was not to limit its membership to its founding four republics, but rather was constitutionally open for admission to all other existing or future socialist republics.¹⁴ And already in May 1925, the Turkmen and Uzbek SSRs (formed out of the parts of the abolished Bukharan and Khorezm SSRs and the Turkestan ASSR in 1924) were accepted into the USSR as the fifth and sixth Union-republics. In 1929, the Tajik ASSR, formed in 1924 within the Uzbek SSR, was elevated to SSR status and transformed into the seventh Union-republic. Another great administrative-territorial reshuffle was carried out in the USSR with the adoption of its second constitution in 1936, which dissolved the TSFSR and raised its former constituent republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia as well as the Kazakh and Kyrgyz ASSRs of the RSFSR into the rank of Union-republics.¹⁵ In 1940, the number of Union-republics was gradually increased from 11 to 16: in March the former Karelian ASSR of the RSFSR, merged with the annexed Finnish territories, formed the Karelo-Finnish SSR; in August the Moldovan SSR was formed out of the occupied Romanian Bessarabia and parts of the former Moldavian ASSR of the Ukrainian SSR; and finally, the independent Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were forcefully

incorporated into the USSR as Union-republics. In 1956, with the reversion of the Karelo-Finnish SSR back to the status of the Karelian ASSR, the Union-republics' total and final number was brought to 15.¹⁶

The ethnoterritorial federal system of the USSR, centrally administered by the all-Union government in Moscow, was divided into several levels of administrative hierarchy. At the top level of this structure were the 15 constituent Union-republics (RSFSR and 14 SSRs), each identified with a particular titular nationality after which they were named. In constitutional terms, the Union-republics were considered as sovereign nation-states,¹⁷ having the same equal legal rights, including the right to secede from the Soviet Union. These republics were also entitled to their own state organs and constitutions, modelled on the acting Constitution of the USSR. In addition, the Union-republics possessed a number of attributes of sovereign states, such as citizenship, demarcated borders, symbols (flags, coat of arms, and anthem), and a native-language (of titular nationality) education system. Each Union-republic also had representation within all-Union federal government structures.¹⁸ The necessary formal conditions for a particular ethnically-defined republic to acquire the status of SSR were set up by Stalin in 1936, namely: (i) the republic under consideration had to be a frontier republic of the USSR, in order to be able to exercise (if desired) its constitutional right to secession from the Union; (ii) its titular nationality had to be a solid majority within its borders; and (iii) the entire population of the republic had to be at least one million.¹⁹ In practice, however, these conditions were not always followed. For example, at the time of its formation in 1940, the population of the Karelo-Finnish SSR was less than one million; and irrespective of the fact that from the late 1930s ethnic Kazakhs became a minority titular nation in the Kazakh SSR, the status of the republic was never relegated to ASSR.²⁰

Next in the Soviet federal hierarchy were the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics (ASSRs), which were established within some of the Union-republics. Generally, ASSR status was granted to those state-recognized indigenous nationalities, which within their national territories failed to meet Stalin's aforementioned three criteria in order to qualify for the SSR status. The ASSRs enjoyed many of the rights (though in somewhat limited form) of the Union-republics, such as their own constitutions, administrations, territories and native language education systems. However, they were not viewed as sovereign entities and therefore had no right to secede either from their respective Union-republics or the USSR. Moreover, despite possessing internal self-rule, administratively they were subordinated to the Union-republic government.²¹ In Soviet Central Asia, after the adoption of the 1936 USSR Constitution, there was only one ASSR, the Karakalpak ASSR within the Uzbek SSR.

At the bottom level of the Soviet federal hierarchy were two types of ethnoculturally defined units: autonomous provinces (*oblasts*) and autonomous districts (*okrugs*). Unlike ASSRs, they were not viewed as states but only as ethnoterritorial self-administrative units within the SSRs. Their major function was to promote the socio-economic and cultural development of the communities for

whom they were designed.²² In Central Asia, the only region given the status of an autonomous *oblast* (AO) was Gorno-Badakhshan in the Tajik SSR. However, it was not formally organized on cultural or linguistic lines, and its East-Iranian-speaking (Pamiri) population was regarded as part of the titular Tajik nationality.²³ Finally, in terms of the local self-government proper, which was out of the Soviet federal system, the entire USSR was administratively divided into *raions* (counties), cities/towns and villages.

The important aspect of the Soviet federal system was that it was organized and functioned strictly on the principles of 'democratic centralism', where all decision-making power laid with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU; the former RCP),²⁴ the only legal party, the members of which occupied all the key positions in state organs at all levels. The organizational structure of the CPSU somewhat resembled the USSR's federal system. In particular, the CPSU, performing the function of the all-Union Party, was hierarchically structured along territorial lines, corresponding to the administrative units within the USSR. For example, every Union-republic (apart from the RSFSR) had its own CP organization,²⁵ headed by a First Secretary, generally chosen from among the titular nationality. The titular nationals were also privileged at lower levels of Party and government administration (for example, at *oblast*, *raion* and city levels) within their 'own' home (native) republics.²⁶ However, unlike the Soviet federal system, the Union-republics' CPs were not even nominally independent political organizations, but rather regional branches of the highly centralized CPSU. Accordingly, Union-republic First Secretaries, Tarr notes, 'functioned as envoys from the central government rather than as representatives of regions in which they ruled'.²⁷ In addition, the post of the Second Secretary, who was responsible for monitoring the local CP apparatus as well as law-enforcement organs, was generally held by a Moscow-appointed non-indigenous bureaucrat of Slavic (mainly Russian) origin.²⁸

The CPSU's central organ was the Central Committee (CC), which was elected at the Party congresses. In its turn, the CC elected a Politburo, a supreme administrative organ mostly staffed by ethnic Russians, which was headed by a General Secretary, the *de facto* head of the USSR. Regardless of the federal character of the USSR, the CPSU's central organs could intervene in the work of lower levels of government and, if necessary, revise or revoke their decisions. A high degree of centralization of military, the security services (KGB), the police and economic administration ensured Moscow's firm control over the Union-republics.²⁹ Overall, as Chubarov writes, this meant that 'the USSR was in fact a unitary state with a measure of administrative devolution. Genuine federalism was not viable where the ruling party wielded absolute power'.³⁰

Notes

- 1 See V. I. Lenin, 'A Letter to S. G. Shahumyan', in *Collected Works*, vol. 19 (Moscow: Progress Publishers), 499–502; J. V. Stalin, 'Against Federalism', in *Works*, vol. 3 (Moscow: FLPH), 25–33.

- 2 See V. I. Lenin, 'Critical Remarks on the National Question', in *Collected Works*, vol. 20 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), 45–51.
- 3 Vernon V. Aspaturian, 'The Theory and Practice of Soviet Federalism', *The Journal of Politics* 12, no. 1 (1950): 25.
- 4 V. I. Lenin, 'The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government', in *Collected Works*, vol. 27 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), 207.
- 5 For the full text of the 1918 RSFSR Constitution, see Studenikin, *Istoriia Sovetskoi konstitutsii*, 142–158, quote from page 143.
- 6 Conquest, *Soviet Nationalities Policy*, 24.
- 7 D. A. Chugaev, ed. *Istoriia natsional'no-gosudarstvennogo stroitel'stva v SSSR, 1917–1936* (Moscow: Mysl', 1968), 233–277.
- 8 J. V. Stalin, 'Congress of the Peoples of the Terek Region', in *Works*, vol. 4 (Moscow: FLPH, 1952), 415.
- 9 V. I. Lenin, *Collected works*, vol. 42 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), 602–603.
- 10 For a concise account on the controversies among the Bolshevik leadership on the organization of the Soviet Union, see Pipes, *Formation of the Soviet Union*, 263–293.
- 11 V. I. Lenin, 'On the Establishment of the U.S.S.R.', in *Collected Works*, vol. 42 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), 422, emphasis in original.
- 12 J. V. Stalin, 'The Question of the Union of the Independent National Republics', in *Works*, vol. 5 (Moscow: FLPH, 1953), 145; 'The Union of the Soviet Republics', in *Works*, vol. 5 (Moscow: FLPH, 1953), 154.
- 13 For the full text of the treaty, see Studenikin, *Istoriia Sovetskoi konstitutsii*, 394–398.
- 14 For the full text of the 1924 Soviet Constitution, see *ibid.*, 458–473.
- 15 *Konstitutsiia (osnovnoi zakon) Soiuza Sovetskikh Sotsialisticheskikh Respublik* (Moscow: TsIK SSSR, 1937).
- 16 See Aryeh L. Unger, *Constitutional Development in the USSR: A Guide to the Soviet Constitutions* (London: Methuen, 1981), 85–86.
- 17 The only exception in this regard was the RSFSR, which in contrast to other Union-republics, was regarded not as a nation-state but as a sovereign multinational federal state.
- 18 See F. J. M. Feldbrugge *et al.*, eds., *Encyclopedia of Soviet Law*, 2nd rev. ed. (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985), 797–799.
- 19 J. V. Stalin, 'On the Draft Constitution of the USSR', in *Problems of Leninism* (Moscow: FLPH, 1947), 562–563.
- 20 Unger, *Constitutional Development*, 86.
- 21 See Feldbrugge *et al.*, *Encyclopedia of Soviet Law*, 73–74.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 71–73.
- 23 S. Z. Zimanov and I. K. Reitor, *Teoreticheskie voprosy Sovetskogo natsional'no-gosudarstvennogo stroitel'stva* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1987), 67.
- 24 Between 31 December 1925 and 1952, the CPSU was known as All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks).
- 25 Until June 1990, the CP organizations in the RSFSR were directly subordinated to the CPSU.
- 26 See John H. Miller, 'Cadres Policy in Nationality Areas', *Soviet Studies* 29, no. 1 (1977): 3–36.
- 27 G. Alan Tarr, 'Creating Federalism in Russia', in *Comparative Federalism in the Devolution Era*, ed. Neil Colman McCabe (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002), 151.
- 28 See Miller, 'Cadres Policy in Nationality Areas'.
- 29 Alexander Chubarov, *Russia's Bitter Path to Modernity: A History of the Soviet and Post-Soviet Eras* (New York: Continuum, 2001), 65. For a thorough description of the Soviet political system and the role of CPSU within it, see D. Richard Little, *Governing the Soviet Union* (New York: Longman, 1989).
- 30 Chubarov, *Russia's Bitter Path*, 65.

6 The national-territorial delimitation of Central Asia, 1924–36

Historiography of the Soviet delimitation of Central Asia

The national-territorial delimitation of Central Asia during the 1920s and 1930s refers to the Kremlin's project-venture aimed at the establishment of territorially clearly-defined national units (SSRs, ASSRs and AOs) for state-recognized titular nationality groups in the region. The determination of the Soviet government's real motives and objectives for delimiting Central Asia along ethno-national lines as well as its strategies and criteria for its implementation have been one of the most hotly debated themes in conventional scholarship on the region. Various scholars in different times have proposed a large spectrum of explanations as to the rationale of the Kremlin to redraw the internal borders of Central Asia.

Up until the end of the Cold War, in much of Western scholarship, the Soviet delimitation project in Central Asia had been mainly described as part of Moscow's divide-and-rule strategy aimed at eliminating existing or possible pan-Turko-Islamic threats in the region by abolishing all pre-Soviet political entities and splitting the local Muslim communities along national-republican lines. The underlying hypothesis of this theory was that Soviet nation-makers, guided primarily by geopolitical and colonial concerns, often ignored the ethnocultural realities of Central Asia and calculatedly set inter-republican borders in such a way as to prevent any attempt at unification or secessionism, and thus to facilitate Moscow's rule in the region. For example, Olaf Caroe described the Soviet delimitation as a split 'by a jigsaw puzzle of convoluted lines' that deliberately left large ethnic minority enclaves in each newly-formed Central Asian republic.¹

Although the importance of the pan-Turko-Islamic factor in the Kremlin's decision to delimit Central Asia had never been denied in 'Soviet era' Western research, some of the Western academics of that period emphasized that it was not necessarily a primary motive behind Moscow's undertaking in the region. For example, according to Geoffrey Jukes, 'the [Bolshevik] Party's commitment to self-determination (short of secession) for the non-Russians of the Empire was of long standing, and ... could therefore hardly have been motivated [solely] by fear of Islamic traditionalism'.² Another renowned Western academic, Alexander Park, wrote that the necessity to demarcate Central Asia along national-territorial lines

was recognized not only in the Kremlin, but also among the Soviet officials in Central Asia. The Bolshevik leadership, Park argued, believed that it was necessary to get rid of the feudal nature of the Bukharan and Khorezm republics before they would have joined the USSR.³

The divide-and-rule explanation of the Soviet delimitation of Central Asia has not lost its explanatory value for many post-Soviet-era researchers working on the region. Olivier Roy is probably the most quoted academic, who has been credited with revitalizing this approach in the late 1990s. Roy argues that Soviet officials merely ‘amused themselves’ by purposely exacerbating already complicated border realities of the region by drawing a number of irrational administrative borderlines, which had to ensure impossibility of the new republics’ independent developments.⁴

With the opening of the Soviet archives in the 1990s, a number of Western scholars began to question the validity of the divide-and-rule theory in explaining the Soviet delimitation process in Central Asia. For example, Francine Hirsch, the most salient representative of this revisionist approach, based on her archival research in Russia, has claimed that far from being the intentional top-down imposition of irrational boundaries upon the Muslims of Central Asia, the Soviet delimitation of the region was ethnographically and economically a well-planned project, implemented after intense consultations with numerous experts from different fields (economists, Orientalists, ethnographers) and the indigenous Soviet Muslim elites. She has also largely downplayed the argument that the decision-making process in regards to the determination of inter-republican borders in Central Asia was influenced by attempts at averting the possibility of pan-Turko-Islamic unity in the region. In fact, according to Hirsch, the guiding principles for drawing the borders for the new republics in the region were essentially the same principles that had been used in non-Muslim areas of the Soviet Union, namely in Ukraine and Belorussia.⁵ Overall, for Hirsch and other Western scholars supporting this contention, the Soviet delimitation of Central Asia was not the Kremlin’s Machiavellian plot directed at inciting divisions among local Muslim populations, but rather, above all, a part of the general Soviet nationality policy aimed at forging cohesive national communities in the region.⁶ As for ‘the strange borders or the seemingly illogical divisions which often resulted’, Kreindler argues, ‘were more the outcome of the complexity of the task – intermingled, illiterate populations, unstudied dialects – rather than a deliberate policy to weaken the Muslim Peoples.’⁷

This revisionist view of the Soviet national-territorial delimitation has, without question, significantly increased the understanding of the Soviet nationality policies of the 1920s and 1930s in English-language scholarship on the subject. However, on the other hand, it can hardly be regarded as a new perspective. What these revisionist scholars have presented as a new interpretation of Soviet strategy of delimiting Central Asia and methods of its execution had always been a mainstay in Soviet scholarship. Numerous Soviet publications on the topic emphasized that the delimitation of Central Asia was implemented with great thoroughness based on ethnographic and economic considerations. For

example, a prominent Soviet ethnographer, Tatiana Zhdanko, noted that before embarking on the process of national-territorial delimitation in 1924, the Soviet government had sent several scientific expeditions to Central Asia to examine the region's ethnodemographic and socio-economic structures.⁸ Soviet writings also underlined that the Territorial Commission of the RCP CEC, which was in charge of determining borders for the projected Soviet republics in the region, consisted of a number of specialized subcommissions (political, economic, statistical and national) staffed by representatives of indigenous Soviet officials.⁹ A number of special research works were also produced in which Soviet academics sought to 'unmask' Western 'bourgeois' scholars attempts to falsify the true objectives of the Soviet nationality policy in Central Asia, including the decision to delimit the region. All those works emphasized that the Soviet delimitation was not a colonial-type irrational partition of the region under Moscow's directives, but rather the recognition and realization of rights of the local nationalities to exercise self-determination.¹⁰ Furthermore, already in 1925, Stalin, General Secretary of the CP (1922–53) and one of the key architects of the delimitation project, was criticizing Western media for regarding the Soviet delimitation of Central Asia as 'Bolshevik cunning'. In Stalin's words, 'The delimitation of Turkestan [was], above all, the *reunion* of the scattered parts of these countries in independent states.'¹¹

Thus, from this short review of the Soviet interpretation of the delimitation of Central Asia in the 1920s and 1930s, it becomes apparent that the Western revisionist scholars' arguments do not as much invalidate the traditional divide-and-rule theory as they verify/reinforce the standard Soviet official and scholarly view on the subject. From this statement, however, it should not be inferred that Western revisionist and Soviet scholars treat the subject from the same angle. They take completely different approaches in their examinations of the objectives of the Soviet delimitation. Namely, the revisionists take an instrumentalist approach, analysing the Soviet border demarcation activities in Central Asia, for example, in the framework of conflict minimization, sound administration, and elite settlement; while Soviet scholars, irrespective of their personal views, had to support the official version, that is upholding the right of Central Asian nations to self-determination.

Since the key argument of this book is based upon the contention that modern Kazakh and Uzbek nations are artificial constructs of the Soviet nation-makers in the 1920s and 1930s, the question of the national-territorial delimitation of Soviet Central Asia deserves particular attention.

The Kremlin and the Turkestan Muslim national communists

The former Turkestan *krai*, as discussed earlier, became the first political unit in Central Asia that was formally organized as an autonomous unit—Turkestan Soviet Republic (TSR)—within RSFSR in April 1918. The establishment of the TSR fell within the Bolsheviks' long-advocated principle of the regional territorial

autonomy. Namely, the TSR was not associated with any particular titular ethnic group, but represented a concrete economic and geographic unit with a multi-ethnic population. However, in 1919, with the Bolsheviks' sudden shift in policy to adopt an ethnofederal system for Soviet Russia, it also became necessary to re-examine the principles of the territorial arrangement of the TSR. Lenin was reluctant to entrust this task to the TSR government, since it largely ignored the Kremlin's strategy of integrating native Muslims into Soviet organs and the CP ranks, and continued to rely heavily on Slav cadres. Lenin rightfully feared that such chauvinistic attitudes towards Turkestan Muslims would have further alienated them from the Bolshevik regime, consequently drifting many of them towards the Basmachism.

To tackle the 'Great Russian chauvinism' of the TSR government and to work out recommendations for implementing ethnofederal principles in the republic, in October 1919, Lenin sent a special Turkestan Commission (Turkkomissiiia) to Tashkent, consisting of Sh. Eliava (head), Ia. Rudzutak, M. Frunze, V. Kuibyshev, G. Bokii and F. Goloshchekin. Shortly after their arrival in Tashkent, the Turkkomissiiia began to purge the local CP ranks and promote native Muslim cadres through the Soviet structures. For example, the Turkkomissiiia endorsed Turar Ryskulov's—the head of the RCP Regional Muslim Bureau—candidacy for the post of the chairman of the TSR CEC. With regard to the ethnoterritorial structure of the TSR, on 15 January 1920, the Turkkomissiiia adopted a resolution proposing 'the administrative regrouping of Turkestan according to the ethnographic and economic conditions of the region'.¹² It also outlined three major groupings of people which could form the basis for new ethnopolitical units in the TSR: the Uzbek, 'Kazakh', and Turkmen.¹³

Under 'Uzbeks', the members of Turkkomissiiia supposedly referred collectively to an urban and sedentary Turkic (and possibly some 'Farsi-Tajik')-speaking population of the TSR, such as those who (or whose predecessors) were defined in the 1897 imperial census as Sarts, Uzbeks and *Tiiurks*. Presumably, they adopted the general term 'Uzbek', as a designator of these Turkic-speaking communities of the republic, from the Tashkent-based native Bolsheviks, many of whom were former Jadids. Later, the term 'Uzbek' was also formally adopted by the central Bolshevik government in Moscow as an ethnonym for a to-be-forged titular nationality of the projected Soviet republic of Uzbekistan.¹⁴ As regards the 'Kazakhs', these were mainly the 1897 imperial census-defined Kipchak-'Kazakh' speaking nomads of the steppes, including Semireche and Syr darya; while 'Turkmen' was a collective name used to denote different Eastern Oghuz Turkic-speaking pastoral nomadic tribes of the region who traced their roots to the legendary Oghuz-Khan.¹⁵

Unexpectedly, however, the Turkkomissiiia's decision was met with fierce opposition from a group of native Bolsheviks, the so-called Muslim national communists, led by a newly promoted Ryskulov. Instead of delimiting Turkestan along ethnonational lines, Ryskulov called for the establishment of a single, genuinely autonomous, national republic (Turkic Soviet Republic) for all Turkic peoples in the region, as well as forming a Turkic CP independent from the RCP.

Ryskulov maintained that the formation of the Turkic Soviet Republic would help the eradication of the leftovers of the Tsarist colonialism in the region, and encourage the spread of the Bolshevik revolution in the east. Ryskulov's proposals were soon fully endorsed first by the Fifth Regional CP conference and then by the Third Regional Muslim CP Conference, both held in Tashkent in January and February 1920 respectively.¹⁶

Ryskulov's pan-Turkic project was a huge blow to the Kremlin's attempts to hinder the solidification of Turko-Muslim unity in Central Asia and beyond, especially while still engaged against the Basmachi insurgents. The Turkkomissii immediately denounced Ryskulov's initiative as anti-Soviet and subversive, accusing its supporters of being national-deviationists. The Turkkomissii also emphatically reconfirmed its support for the delimitation of the TSR. On this decision, Valerian Kuibyshev, an important Soviet official and a member of the Turkkomissii, later remarked that the question of delimiting the TSR had not been on top of the agenda for the Soviet government at the beginning of 1920, but with the rise of pan-Turkic aspirations among the Turkestan Muslim Bolsheviks it became a matter of serious consideration.¹⁷

Unwilling to give up his plan entirely, Ryskulov, with his supporters N. Khojaev and G. Bekh-Ivanov, in May 1920 travelled to Moscow to negotiate the issue with the central government. In Moscow, the TSR delegation presented to the RCP CC a special report on the situation in Turkestan, in which they accused the Turkkomissii of abusing its power by interfering in the internal affairs of the republic. The Turkestan Bolsheviks demanded an end to the violations of the republic's rights as well as transferring real power in the TSR to representatives of the native (Muslim) proletariat. They also suggested that instead of exercising a hierarchical power relation with Tashkent, Moscow enter into a state-to-state relationship with the TSR, similar to those signed with the allied 'sovereign' Soviet republics such as Ukraine.¹⁸ Moreover, arguing against the Turkkomissii's recommendation to demarcate the Turkestan into separate national-territorial units, the TSR delegation sought to prove its inadmissibility based on ethnolinguistic and economic considerations of the Turkestan Muslim population. The delegation members maintained that the 'Kazakh', Uzbek and Turkmen were all dialects of a single Turkic language, and that their speakers not only easily interacted and intermingled with one another but they also strived to develop a common literary language. Thus, according to Turkestan Bolsheviks, the top-down division of the TSR would have been not only impractical but also a very sensitive issue for the native Muslim populations. But most importantly, the TSR delegation stressed that the delimitation could have an especially negative impact on Turkestan's socio-economic development, since it represented a single economic unit with shared irrigation and communication systems.¹⁹

To examine the dispute between the Turkkomissii and Ryskulov's group over the future of Turkestan, Lenin formed a new commission under the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs, Georgy Chicherin. After reviewing arguments of both sides, the Chicherin commission passed its findings and

suggestions to the Politburo of the RCP CC for consideration. On 29 June 1920, the RCP leadership issued its final resolution on the Turkestan question. The resolution acknowledged the structural persistence of Russian ethnocentrism in the administrative and CP organs of Turkestan and the continuing ignorance of Muslim cadres. To address this problem, the RCP CEC instructed a recall from the TSR of all the communists who were ‘contaminated with colonialism and Great Russian nationalism’.²⁰ However, the TSR delegation’s key demands (the formation of the Turkic republic and CP) were stoutly rejected by Moscow as contradictory to the aims of the October Revolution. As for the national-territorial delimitation of Turkestan, the RCP CEC approved the Turkkomissiiia’s January (1920) resolution in principle, ruling that:

It is acknowledged as necessary to grant the Turkestan’s national groups a possibility to organize themselves into autonomous republics and its national minorities into municipalities. The Turkestan CEC is obliged to convoke a congress of Soviets of Uzbek, [‘Kazakh’] and Turkmen workers for final resolution of the question of their organized forms of existence. However, until the convocation of these congresses, it should administratively organize Turkestan into ethnoterritorial *oblasts*.²¹

On this issue, no less important was Lenin’s comments made on the draft of the RCP CEC resolution that the national-territorial delimitation of Turkestan should not commence until the necessary ethnographic groundwork was conducted. For this purpose, Lenin directed the Turkkomissiiia ‘(1) to complete a map (ethnographic and otherwise) of Turkestan divided into Uzbek, [‘Kazakh’], and Turkmen parts; (2) to conduct an in-depth investigation of conditions for merging or demarcating these three parts’.²²

To facilitate the Turkkomissiiia’s task of implementing the RCP CEC’s resolutions, the Soviet leadership decided to broaden its rights and responsibilities by transforming it into a state organ. The Turkkomissiiia had to coordinate its activities with the newly-formed Turkestan Bureau (Turkburo) of the RCP CEC, which was in charge of monitoring the local Party members.²³ Thus, the national-territorial delimitation of Turkestan, remark Uzbek historians Rahimov and Urazaeva, was decided by the unilateral decision of Moscow largely ignoring the TSR government’s position on the issue.²⁴

Disappointed in Lenin’s and the RCP CEC’s rulings, Ryskulov and many of his followers in the TSR administration resigned their positions. They were soon replaced by more moderate local CP members, who strictly followed the Kremlin directives such as A. Rakhimbaev, K. Atabaev and B. Khojaev.²⁵ In September 1920, the Kremlin ratified a new constitution of the renamed Turkestan ASSR (TASSR), which reinforced the autonomous status of the republic within the RSFSR.²⁶

Following the June 1920 RCP CEC resolution on the question of delimitation of Turkestan, the TASSR CEC soon engaged in preparatory work for administrative redivision of the republic based on the ethnic principle. In April 1921, the

Turkestan CEC reorganized its Transcaspiian *oblast* into the Turkmen *oblast*,²⁷ thus laying the foundation for the first ethnationally-defined Turkmen political unit in Central Asia. In April-June 1922, the Turkestan CEC also took steps to establish a Kara-Kyrgyz Mountainous *oblast* within the TASSR, but this plan was soon abandoned because of the failure to reach an agreement among the various tribal Kara-Kyrgyz factions. In addition, the establishment of a separate Kara-Kyrgyz Mountainous *oblast* was strenuously opposed by a number of 'Kazakh' communists, both from the KASSR and the TASSR. In their view, Kara-Kyrgyzs represented a part of the 'Kazakh' people and therefore, there could have been no discussion on their separate national self-determination.²⁸ Finally, on 15 August 1923, the Turkestan government transformed its East Iranian-speaking Pamir *raion* into an *oblast*.²⁹

Apart from the TASSR, under Moscow's direction, the right to self-determination for native peoples was also sought for implementation in the nominally independent Khorezm and Bukharan Soviet republics. Namely, in March 1921, special Turkmen and 'Kazakh'-Karakalpak divisions were created within the Khorezm CEC to advise the government on appropriate policies and measures to improve the overall sociocultural and economic conditions of these previously disadvantaged peoples. In October 1923, the Fourth All-Khorezm Kurultai of Soviets endorsed a plan for the ethnoterritorial *oblastization* of the republic. As a result, in the north of the KhSSR, the 'Kazakh'-Karakalpak *oblast* was created to safeguard the rights of the 'Kazakh' and Karakalpak peoples. Predominantly Turkmen populated areas were merged into the Tashauz *oblast*, while Uzbek settlements formed the Novo-Urgench *oblast*. Likewise, the BPSR government—as mentioned in Chapter 4—in 1923 established an autonomous Turkmen province centred in Chardzhou. Later, in May 1924, the Bukharan CEC also granted semi-autonomous status to its Eastern Bukhara province, which was predominately populated by the Iranian-speaking population. However, the Bukharan leadership refused to grant the same rights to its 'Kazakh' population.³⁰

As for the substantial non-indigenous communities (primarily Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians) in Central Asia and particularly in the KASSR, they were equally entitled to exercise the right to national self-determination in terms of cultural and linguistic development, but were denied the right to political-territorial autonomy, even at the level of *oblast* administration. This was because all these principal Slavic groups in the region already possessed their 'own' national republics within the USSR named after them—that is, the (Russian regions of the) RSFSR, and the Ukrainian and Belorussian SSRs.

Broadly speaking, the 1920–23 administrative reforms in the Turkestan, Bukharan and Khorezm republics served the dual objective of (i) accelerating the process of consolidation of ethnolinguistically similar groups by means of granting a limited measure of self-government in the form of national *oblasts*, while at the same time (ii) assuaging persisting intertribal conflicts over land by demarcating clear administrative boundaries. Apart from this, the Soviet Central Asian governments were also tasked to develop national cultures and languages

of the region's state-defined titular communities in order to kindle their national awareness and identities.³¹ Overall, all these measures, coordinated by the RSFSR Narkomnats, were thought to facilitate further implementation of Soviet nation-building policies in the region.

The delimitation project and the reaction of the Soviet Central Asian elites

By 1924, the Soviet regime had significantly consolidated its power in Central Asia. At that point, it had largely mitigated the threat of the Basmachi insurgency as well as politically neutralized Muslim national communists in the region by demoting or transferring them to other locations. Accordingly, the Kremlin was then less compelled to make unfavourable compromises with the region's native elites and could more vigorously pursue its political agenda in Central Asia, including the question of partitioning the TASSR. Furthermore, with the growing confidence of Soviet officials in their ability to fully control developments in the region, it was now considered possible that the process of national-territorial delimitation could have also been applied to the sovereign republics of Bukhara and Khorezm. As regards to the KASSR, there was no compelling need to break it up into several national republics, since from its foundation in 1920 it had been defined in ethnic terms; unless, of course, it was decided that rather than forging a single 'Kazakh' nation, to work out a plan for constructing, for example, three distinct 'Kazakh' national republics based on traditional horde divisions of the steppe nomads. Nonetheless, the boundary redrawing that took place during the delimitation period also had a significant impact on the KASSR's borders.

The actual first step towards the national-territorial delimitation of the Central Asian republics was taken on 31 January 1924, when the Organizational Bureau of the RCP CEC discussed the matter in its special session. The CEC assigned Ian Rudzutak, then chairman of the Central Asian Bureau (Sredazburo) of the RCP CEC,³² to further examine the details of the delimitation project in preliminary consultations with the governments of the TASSR, BPSR and KhSSR, and report for final action thereon.³³

Following the RCP CEC's instruction, Abdullo Rakhimbaev, a deputy chairman of the Sredazburo, was dispatched to the BPSR to personally discuss the planned delimitation with local officials. The Bukharan authorities were swift in approving Moscow's directives. Already on 25 February 1924, the delimitation question was brought up on the BPSR CC's special plenum, and after some formal discussions and procedures, it was legally enforced by its Executive Bureau on 10 March. In the BPSR CEC's final resolution on the matter, the decision to endorse the delimitation project was explained as a necessity overriding the extremely multinational composition of the artificially formed state formations of Central Asia, which had hindered the process of nation-state formation in the region. The resolution also included recommendations regarding the planned delimitation, envisaging the formation of the Uzbek and Turkmen

Soviet republics on the basis of the TASSR, BPSR and KhSSR. It also called for the establishment of the Tajik *oblast* within the prospective Uzbekistan and transferring the 'Kazakh' populated Semireche and Syr Darya *oblasts* of the TASSR to the KASSR.³⁴

On 10 March 1924, under the initiative of the Sredazburo, the question of the national-territorial delimitation was discussed at the special session of the Soviet Turkestani leadership in Tashkent. At this session, Rakhimbaev, a key speaker, urged his CP comrades to uphold the delimitation plan as an important means to facilitate the implementation of the right to exercise national self-determination. He also described the delimitation proposal as a solution to interethnic disputes in the region by placing it within the Marxist framework of class struggle. Particularly, Rakhimbaev stated that:

From the viewpoint of our Party, organizing this affair is advantageous, because if an Uzbek pauper fights an Uzbek kulak [(a wealthy peasant)], a Turkmen pauper fights a Turkmen kulak, and a Kyrgyz pauper fights a Kyrgyz kulak, then our class struggle will not be concealed by ethnic issues.³⁵

Although, at the session, more Turkestani communists spoke in favour of the delimitation plan, there were also a number of strong opponents. For example, S. Khojanov, S. Asfandiiarov and N. Paskutskii, instead of delimiting the Turkestan, Bukharan and Khorezm republics along national lines, proposed to combine all three of them into a single federation, similar to that of the TSFSR. Khojanov even questioned the whole idea of forming national republics for Uzbeks and Turkmens, since, according to him, there were no such nations and introduction of such categories would have been an artificial act.³⁶ Another Turkestani communist, Mamayev, was especially critical of the intention to abolish the Bukharan PSR, on the grounds that it had a centuries-old tradition of statehood and possessed a special place in the Muslim world.³⁷ Since the session failed to reach a unanimous decision, it was decided to empower the Turkestan CP CEC to make a final judgement on this matter. Shortly after on 23–24 March 1924, the Plenum of the Turkestan CP issued a resolution endorsing the blueprint for national-territorial delimitation, though only within the framework of the TASSR. The resolution recommended the establishment of Uzbek, Turkmen and 'Kazakh' national autonomous republics on the territory of the TASSR, and also suggested the formation of the Tajik and Kara-Kyrgyz *oblasts*.³⁸

Similar to the TASSR leadership, the delimitation plan was not immediately wholeheartedly embraced by Soviet Khorezm officials. On 3 March 1924, on the Khorezm CP gathering, the representatives of the Sredazburo failed to gain full support to their proposed project of delimitation. The influential Uzbek factions of the Khorezm government did not mind the secession of the Turkmen-populated areas from the KhSSR, but they were mindful of merging its Uzbek-areas into the projected Uzbek republic. Nevertheless, in the middle of March, supposedly under strong pressure from the Sredazburo, the Khorezm government was compelled to

adopt a resolution favouring the delimitation plan. However, as Vaidyanath notes, it was extremely reluctant to enforce it on the ground.³⁹

Thus, during a two-month period, the Sredazburo successfully secured legal approvals from the governments of the TASSR, BPSR and KhSSR to proceed with the Kremlin's delimitation plan in the region. And, on 5 April 1924, Rakhimbaev was ready to report on this important matter to the RCP Politburo in Moscow. Although the Politburo gave its consent on the delimitation, it postponed its endorsement of the plan until May 1924, in order to enable the Sredazburo to prepare a detailed scheme for the territorial reorganization of Central Asia.

In late April 1924, the Sredazburo formed a special commission dealing with the tasks of the Politburo meeting. Within this commission, Turkmen, Uzbek and 'Kazakh' subcommissions were appointed to represent the interests of their respective communities. During the work of the Sredazburo commission, the 'Kazakh' subcommission raised the question of establishing the Central Asian Federation, which was, expectedly, rejected. Likewise, the Sredazburo bluntly dismissed the proposal of the Khorezm CEC, which agreed on the delimitation of the Khorezm republic along national-territorial lines but requested to retain its statehood due to its geographical remoteness and economic considerations. On 11 May 1924, the Sredazburo commission rounded up its work by formulating recommendations for the consideration of the RCP Politburo. It recommended the Soviet central leadership to carve out from the territories of the TASSR, BPSR and KhSSR two republics, the Uzbek and Turkmen SSRs; and also to establish autonomous *oblasts* for the Tajik and Kara-Kyrgyz communities. The commission, however, refrained from transferring the Semireche and Syr Darya *oblasts* of the TASSR to the 'Kazakh' ASSR, and rather proposed to form the 'Kazakh' autonomous entity within Turkestan.⁴⁰

On 12 June 1924, after canvassing the Sredazburo recommendations on the delimitation of the Central Asian republics, the RCP CC Politburo adopted a decree stating the following: (1) to establish an independent Turkmen republic out of the Turkmen areas of the TASSR, BPSR and KhSSR; (2) an independent Uzbek republic out of the Uzbek areas of the BPSR and TASSR; and (3) to preserve the KhSSR within the borders to be determined after the secession of its Turkmen areas; (4) to amalgamate the 'Kazakh' areas of the TASSR with the KASSR; (5) to form the Kara-Kyrgyz *oblast* within the RSFSR,⁴¹ and (6) the Tajik *oblast* within the Uzbek SSR; and finally (7) to conclude treaties between the USSR and the to-be-formed Uzbek and Turkmen Soviet republics on their entrance into the Soviet Union. In addition, the Politburo advised Sredazburo to form a special provisional Territorial Commission, which would determine borders for all new Central Asian republics and *oblasts* by October 1924.⁴²

Thus, the RCP Politburo decree largely accepted the Sredazburo's recommendations, with two important modifications: (i) it did not give consent on the establishment of the Tukestani-'Kazakh' autonomy, and most importantly, (ii) did not dissolve the Khorezm republic, though significantly shrunk its borders. Edgar suggests that one of the possible reasons why the Politburo disagreed with

the Sredazburo on these matters could have been the strong lobbying pressures from the 'Kazakh' and Khorezm-Uzbek Soviet officials.⁴³ However, Edgar's argument is not persuasive. For example, it is quite doubtful that Soviet officials in Moscow would have sacrificed their strategic objectives in Central Asia to the Khorezm-Uzbek communists' ambitions to maintain the political influence within their 'own' republic, rather than sharing it with the Bukharan, Tashkent, and Samarakandi Soviet Uzbek elites within the projected Uzbek SSR. In fact, by June 1924, the Kremlin had a clear plan to liquidate the TASSR, BPSR and KhSSR, and any temporary deviation from it was simply a pragmatic step aimed at maintaining the appearance of legality for its ultimate objectives in the region. Particularly, in order to avoid possible accusations from foreign governments that it was seeking to abolish independent Muslim states of Bukhara and Khorezm against the will of their governments and peoples, the Kremlin sought to ensure that all the legal formalities were observed and that it was just responding to the will of these republics on the matter. Not surprisingly, such will was expressed by the Khorezm CP CEC on 26 July 1924 during a 'friendly' visit to Khiva of the vice-chairman of the Sredazburo O. Karklin, who explicitly warned the local communist elites on the political and economic consequences of opposing the delimitation plan. Consequently, in August 1924, first the Sredazburo and then the RCP Politburo 'kindly' agreed to approve the Khorezm SSR's appeal to fully delimitate the republic and to merge its Uzbek areas with the projected Uzbek SSR.⁴⁴

From the previous analysis it is apparent that the Kremlin initiative to unify Uzbek populated areas of Central Asia into a single Uzbek national republic was not received well by the Soviet Uzbek elites in the TASSR and KhSSR. The only 'Uzbek' political group that was in full support of the Kremlin's Uzbek nation-state project from the beginning was the Soviet Bukharan leadership under Faizullah Khojaev.

There are different opinions in conventional scholarship about the real motivations that drove the Soviet Bukharan elites, and particularly Khojaev, to support the Kremlin's Uzbek project so vigorously that they were more than ready to liquidate the Bukharan statehood for its realization. Masov, for example, maintains that the BPSR's leadership, most of whom were the former Young Bukharan Jadids, simply sought to revitalize their pre-Soviet pan-Turkic dreams within the framework of the Uzbek SSR.⁴⁵ Masov's pan-Turkic argument may have some weight, but it is not entirely convincing. The fact is that although the Young Bukharans shared some common interests with other regional Jadid groups of Central Asia such as reforming Muslim religious education, their political agenda traditionally differed significantly from that of the Russian Turkestan's Jadids and the Young Khivans. Namely, the Young Bukharans, operating within the political landscape of the Bukhara Emirate, were primarily concerned with the Emirate's sociopolitical affairs rather than of an entire Central Asia. Their political objective had never been to liberate their Turkic 'co-ethnies' from the Tsarist direct rule, but rather to replace the Emir's regime by their own. For example, not only did Khojaev's team demonstrate indifference toward the

independence of the Turkestan *mukhtoriati*, but even actively collaborated with the Turkestan Sovnarkom that sacked Kokand in 1918.

Another interesting explanation for why Khojaev's team upheld the Kremlin's Uzbek project is offered by Soviet Foreign Commissar Chicherin, who, in his classified letters to the RCP Politburo, states that this was largely conditioned by the commercial interests of the Bukharan Uzbek bourgeois, who sought 'to get rid of poor areas [of the BPSR] and create a large cotton-producing region [of Uzbekistan]'.⁴⁶ In other words, according to Chicherin, for Bukhara's political and economic elites, the Kremlin-led national-territorial delimitation of Central Asia was not about the gathering of the Uzbek people or lands, but about acquiring control over the most fertile agricultural areas in the region.

And finally, the third sufficiently potent reason for Khojaev to strongly endorse the national-territorial delimitation project could well have been his awareness of its significance to the Kremlin, as well as his understanding or intuition that no matter what obstacles may have arisen during its implementation, it would have still been executed in a manner that suited Moscow's strategic interests in the region. For example, at his trial in 1938, Khojaev commented on the subject that: even though he was opposed to the national-territorial delimitation of Central Asia, he chose to support it because otherwise this would have put him in direct opposition to the Soviet regime, which he could not do.⁴⁷

Hence, unlike the Soviet Khorezm leadership, Khojaev and his associates, based on pragmatic calculations, did not even attempt to forestall or delay the delimitation process. Quite the contrary, hoping to secure a special political position in the future Uzbek SSR, the Bukharan PSR leadership became the most vocal and committed advocate of the Kremlin project in the region. It is also quite plausible that for their support of the delimitation project they received some kind of guarantee from officials in Moscow about securing their dominant positions in the prospective Uzbek republic, which basically was to be a new Bukharan republic with larger and richer territories.⁴⁸

The very same reason why the Soviet Bukharan officials were favouring the formation of Uzbekistan deterred many other influential Soviet Uzbek groups in Tashkent and especially in Khiva from actively supporting the Kremlin's Uzbek project. Namely, they were reluctant to engage in the Soviet delimitation plan, which could have potentially undermined their established political positions within the TASSR and KhSSR and ultimately turn them merely into provincial elites of the Uzbek SSR, subordinated to other Uzbek clans. Thus, for the Soviet Tashkent, Khivan or Bukharan Uzbek elites, the decision whether to support or oppose the national-territorial delimitation of Central Asia was based on their assumptions about the likelihood of enhancing, retaining or losing their political positions in the Uzbek SSR. To be more precise, it was all about a power struggle among the various Uzbek elites/clans rather than about Uzbek nationalist/irredentist aspirations, which were non-existent at that time.

The work of the Sredazburo Territorial Commission: conflicting historical interpretations

In July 1924, the Sredazburo appointed a special Territorial Commission, under Isaak Zelenskii, a Russian-Jewish Bolshevik, to determine the fixed boundaries of the prospective Central Asian republics and *oblasts* as well as of the existing 'Kazakh' ASSR. All the work of the Territorial Commission was supervised from Moscow by Stalin personally.

The goal of the planned delimitation was not to create ethnically homogenous political units, but rather to ensure that in every newly-formed republic and *oblast*, the titular nationality would form a numerical majority. The guiding criterion for the Territorial Commission to determine projected inter-republican borders in Central Asia was to be a national principle. However, the Commission also had to consider other important factors, such as socio-economic principles. For example, according to Zhdanko:

During the implementation of national delimitation, an economic delimitation ... of factories, plants, agricultural areas, livestock, and cultural-educational establishments was also carried out in order to make sure that after the delimitation each of these new republics would possess sufficient material resources necessary for successful economic and cultural development.⁴⁹

The Territorial Commission itself consisted of the Uzbek, Turkmen, 'Kazakh', Kara-Kyrgyz, Tajik and Karakalpak National Bureaus (Natsburos).⁵⁰ Each of these was tasked to prepare, by 12 August 1924, an ethnoterritorial map depicting concrete external boundaries of its future republic/*oblast* for consideration by the Territorial Commission. Since members of each Natsburo were greatly interested in securing maximum territory, with better economic potential, for their future national republics/*oblasts*, the draft maps submitted by them were highly overlapping, with hardly reconcilable boundaries.⁵¹ In addition to the conflicting borders in the region, Haugen notes, it was no less problematic to delimit the indigenous population along national lines, since many of them hardly affiliated themselves with any of the Soviet-government-defined titular ethnonationalities. Accordingly, proceeds Haugen, it was often up to the Territorial Commission to arbitrarily determine the national belonging of various population groups, which as a rule led to long and raging debates among the representatives of the Natsburos.⁵²

Delimitation of the 'Kazakh'-Turkmen and the Uzbek-Turkmen boundaries

Since there were not many 'ethnically' mixed 'Kazakh'-Turkmen and Uzbek-Turkmen provinces, the Territorial Commission had relatively little problem in delimiting Turkmen sections of the 'Kazakh' ASSR and the projected Uzbek

SSR borders.⁵³ Another important reason for this was that most of the territory that was thought to be allocated to the future Turkmen republic was desert, practically with no urban centres, and thus economically less attractive to ‘Kazakhs’ and Uzbeks. Nevertheless, national-territorial delimitations among these republics were not without difficulties. For example, both the ‘Kazakh’ and Turkmen Natsburos claimed the pasture-rich Mangyshlak *uezd* for their ‘own’ republics. Besides, in the projected border between the future Turkmen and Uzbek SSRs, there were a number of groups who could not clearly identify themselves either with the Turkmen or Uzbek people, because their collective identities had primarily been defined by clan/tribe allegiance and/or religious belongings. In many cases, neither linguistic nor tribal-genealogical criteria could have effectively suggested their ‘national’ affiliation, since many spoken-dialects in the disputed areas were cross-cutting and claimed genealogical descent/ties quite vague.⁵⁴

In the above situations, the Territorial Commission sought expert advice from Soviet ethnographers, who since 1920 had been actively engaged in collecting ethnographic data on Central Asian societies. Namely, Soviet scholars, based on the Tsarist archives and recent fieldwork observations in the region, had to subjectively conclude whether a group, clan or tribe in question was to be more easily assimilated culturally and/or linguistically, for example, either into a to-be-forged Uzbek, ‘Kazakh’ or Turkmen nation. In other words, it was up to Soviet ethnographers to prescribe nationality to those nationless-*ethnies*, which, in theory, had to facilitate Soviet nation-makers’ task to carve out nations from numerous clan, tribal and ethnic groups in the region. For example, according to Russian ethnographer Vasilii Barthold, who was advising the Soviet government on the determination of ‘nationalities’ for numerous indigenous communities in Central Asia, the whole nation-building project in the region was an artificial process, involving the distortion of historical facts, and aimed at creating nations based on Western European model, which was totally alien to the region.⁵⁵

Scholarly construction of defining nationalities in Central Asia was evident in a number of cases. For instance, despite the fact that members of a tribe ‘Turkman’ claimed to be of Turkmen descent, Russian scholars from Moscow decided for them that they were in fact ethnic Uzbeks.⁵⁶ If the ethnographic conclusions were not acceptable for one of the Natsburos, its members then sought to justify their claims on the disputed territories by appealing to economic factors. For example, the city of Tashauz in Khorezm SSR, which was largely populated by an Uzbek population, was allocated to prospective Turkmen SSR on the grounds that the latter lacked urban areas, necessary for building a socialist state.⁵⁷

The ‘Kazakh’-Uzbek border delimitation

One of the most challenging tasks for the Territorial Commission was to delimit borders between the ‘Kazakh’ ASSR and prospective Uzbek SSR. As mentioned above, there was a long-standing conflict between the ‘Kazakh’ and Turkestan ASSRs’ leaderships over Semireche and Syr Darya *oblasts*. Although the 12 June

RCP Politburo decree clearly ruled the incorporation of the 'Kazakh'-populated areas of the TASSR into the KASSR, representatives of the 'Kazakh' and Uzbek Natsburos significantly disagreed on where exactly to draw the demarcation line between the two republics. The resolution of the 'Kazakh'-Uzbek territorial dispute was also directly connected with establishing nationalities for a number of nationless-*ethnies*, such as Kurama, Turki and Kipchak, who were claimed by both 'Kazakhs' and Uzbeks. For example, the 'Kazakh' Natsburo sought to assert the Kurama people's 'Kazakhness' based on etymological, anthropological and genealogical arguments; while, the Uzbek Natsburo successfully emphasized their Uzbekness by referring to their sedentary lifestyle, which significantly distinguished them from the traditionally nomadic 'Kazakhs'.⁵⁸ According to Haugen, the settled-nomad dimension was the most important determinant of nationality for the would-be 'Kazakh' and Uzbek groups.⁵⁹

Another area of discord between the 'Kazakh' and Uzbek Natsburos was Tashkent. It was largely an Uzbek city, but its countryside was mostly 'Kazakh'.⁶⁰ Therefore, it was up to the Territorial Commission to decide which criterion to prioritize, national or economic. The 'Kazakh' Natsburo urged that guiding principle in this case should have been Lenin's earlier statement that 'to cut the towns off from the villages and areas that economically gravitate towards them, for the sake of the "national" factor, would be absurd and impossible.'⁶¹ In addition, the 'Kazakh' representatives sought to justify their claim on Tashkent by arguing that the KASSR necessitated a new capital city, since geographically-remote Orenburg could not serve as a politico-economic and cultural centre of the vast republic, especially after the planned inclusion of the Turkestani-'Kazakh' territories.⁶² The Soviet 'Kazakh' leaders presumably knew by that time that Moscow was planning to enclose Orenburg and its surrounding territories into the Russian Federation proper. As for the Uzbek Natsburo's argument, it was more straightforward: Tashkent was an ethnically Uzbek city and therefore should have been included within the Uzbek SSR.⁶³

Trying to avoid deterioration of the 'Kazakh'-Uzbek relationship, the Sredazburo, under Stalin's personal directive, decided not to proceed with the polemics on the matter, and arbitrarily ruled Tashkent's allocation to the Uzbek republic.⁶⁴ This decision was later explained by Soviet historians as being due to economic considerations: Tashkent city, despite being largely surrounded by Kazakh settlements, economically gravitated more towards other Uzbek populated provinces than towards the KASSR.⁶⁵ As a compensation for Tashkent, however, several largely Uzbek-populated cities, also surrounded by 'Kazakh' settlements, such as Chimkent and Turkestan, were incorporated within the KASSR.⁶⁶

The Karakalpak case

With the planned abolition of the Khorezm and Turkestan republics, the Soviet government also had to decide the future of the Karakalpak people, who populated parts of the border regions of both republics across the Amu Darya River. The option was either to assimilate Karakalpaks with the prospective 'Kazakh',

Turkmen or Uzbek nations, or to grant them the right to develop as a separate nationality. Eventually, the second option was chosen, probably because that Khorezmian Karakalpakhs were already organized, with ‘Kazakhs’, as an autonomous political entity—the ‘Kazakh’-Karakalpak AO. Subsequently, Soviet policymakers agreed to form a separate Karakalpak AO from the Karakalpak-populated areas of the Khorezm and Turkestan republics, and to incorporate it into the KASSR, with which it shared the Aral Sea and was linked by close economic and transport ties.⁶⁷ However, according to contemporary Russian scholars, Puzanov and Khliupin, the decision to allocate the projected Karakalpak AO to the ‘Kazakh’ republic was part of the bargaining agreement between the ‘Kazakh’ and Uzbek Natsburos regarding the division of the Tashkent city proper and Tashkent *uezd*, comprising 31 *volosts*. According to this agreement, the city of Tashkent and 21 *volosts* of the Tashkent *uezd* were given to Uzbekistan, while Kazakhstan received the Karakalpak AO and rest of the Tashkent *volosts*.⁶⁸

Boundary delimitation between the Uzbek and Kara-Kyrgyz republics

The nature and content of the border dispute between the Uzbek and Kara-Kyrgyz Natsburos over the agricultural resource-rich territories in the Ferghana Valley was quite similar to that between the ‘Kazakh’ and Uzbek ones. Members of the Kara-Kyrgyz Natsburo acknowledged the fact that nearly all towns in the Ferghana Valley were predominantly populated by sedentary Uzbek-Tajik populations. At the same time, however, they stressed the need for incorporating some of the region’s major urban centres (Andijan, Osh, Namangan and Kokand) into the prospective Kara-Kyrgyz AO in order to enable the latter to realize its economic and social potential.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the Kara-Kyrgyz Natsburo, like its ‘Kazakh’ counterpart, sought to validate its claims on certain towns and provinces by referring to Lenin’s above mentioned statement on consideration of ethnographic composition of countryside in solving the nationality question. The Kara-Kyrgyz representatives maintained that all towns in question were surrounded either by Kara-Kyrgyz or some nationless-*ethnie* (such as Turki) settlements, who were ethnically more akin to Kara-Kyrgyzs than to Uzbeks.⁷⁰ On its part, the Uzbek Natsburo urged the Territorial Commission on the necessity to protect the rights of all Uzbek communities in Kara-Kyrgyz-Uzbek disputed areas to self-determination as well as to respect their desire to be included within the territories of the prospective Uzbek SSR. The boundary demarcation between the future Kara-Kyrgyz AO and Uzbek SSR was finally settled by the Territorial Commission on 20 August 1924, which resulted in attaching most of the disputed towns, *volosts* and *uezds* in the Ferghana Valley to the latter. Nevertheless, some of the predominantly Uzbek urban areas such as Osh and Jalal-Abad were allocated to the Kara-Kyrgyz AO.⁷¹

According to official Soviet historiography, the Kara-Kyrgyz-Uzbek boundary demarcation was a result of a mutually acceptable agreement that was based on both the national principle and economic rationality.⁷² This view,

however, is not shared either by modern Uzbek or Kyrgyz historiographies. For example, according to Uzbek historians, Rahimov and Urazaeva, those Uzbek towns and *volosts*, which were unjustly, against their will, incorporated within the Kara-Kyrgyz AO, were in fact the victims of the economic principle of the Soviet delimitation, which sought to build urban-based, economically sufficient, republics for the traditionally nomadic communities in the region. The Uzbek scholars also emphasize the political and cultural discrimination that Uzbeks had to endure for years in Soviet Kyrgyzstan.⁷³ However, seen from a Kyrgyz historiographical perspective, it was not Uzbeks, but Kyrgyzs who suffered most from Soviet delimitation, which basically legalized Shaybanid and Tsarist era Uzbek colonial-settlements on Kyrgyz native lands. Besides, the Territorial Commission, Kyrgyz historians argue, principally failed to take into consideration the migratory pattern of the Kyrgyz nomads, whose demographic distribution in the disputed areas shifted along their planned seasonal relocations, thus leaving Uzbeks periodically in a numerical majority in certain Kyrgyz territories, which were successfully claimed by the Uzbek Natsburo as Uzbek. Finally, to reinforce Kyrgyzstan's victimization argument, Kyrgyz scholars stress the fact that no other republic in Central Asia was left after the delimitation with as many foreign enclaves on its territory as Kyrgyzstan, while, the latter, was largely denied the right to claim sovereignty over ethnic-Kyrgyz enclaves in bordering Soviet republics.⁷⁴

The establishment of the Uzbek-Tajik border, 1924–29

Despite all the difficulties in drawing the borders of the projected Uzbek SSR with the Turkmen SSR, 'Kazakh' ASSR and Kara-Kyrgyz AO, one of the facilitating factors for the Territorial Commission to make decisions was the traditional settled-nomadic dichotomy of the Central Asian population. Namely, sedentary nationless-*ethnies* in border disputed areas were predominantly counted as Uzbek, while the nomadic ones either (respectively) as Turkmen, 'Kazakh' or Kara-Kyrgyz.⁷⁵ However, the application of the sedentary-nomadic principle in demarcating the borders of the Tajik *oblast* within the prospective Uzbek SSR was largely unfeasible, because the Iranian-speaking Tajiks, like the Turkic-speaking Uzbeks, had also practised a sedentary lifestyle for centuries. Therefore, national-territorial delimitation between the Uzbeks and the Tajiks, in theory, should have been organized primarily along their ethnolinguistic frontier. Yet, in practice, this was quite difficult to enforce, since the geographical distribution of the Turkic, Iranian and bilingual (Turkic-Iranian) speaking sedentary population (with no national identity) in many parts of south-east Central Asia often followed a chessboard-like pattern. Besides, it would have been quite difficult to determine the nationality for bilingual urban nationless-*ethnies* (such as Sarts) as well as for the linguistically 'Uzbekized'-Tajik and 'Tajikized'-Uzbek communities.

The resolution of the Uzbek-Tajik border issue, which by all parameters should have been the most difficult task for the Territorial Commission to

arrange, surprisingly, turned out to be the easiest one, largely because of the absence of any disagreement between the Uzbek and Tajik Natsburo members over the projected mutual borders. Faizullah Khojaev's proposal to form the Tajik AO out of the BPSR's eastern mountainous regions (the Matchi, Guzar, Karategin and Garm), and to allocate Samarkand and Bukhara cities as well as several other predominantly 'Farsi-Tajik' speaking provinces to the future Uzbek SSR, was readily accepted by the Tajik Natsburo members, Chinor Imamov, Abdurahim Khojibaev and Muhtar Saidjanov.⁷⁶ The outcome of the Uzbek-Tajik agreement was that most of the 'Farsi-Tajik' speakers of the region were left beyond the borders of the projected Tajik AO.

The Tajik Natsburo's position regarding the proposed borders of future Tajikistan was so odd that Sultanbek Khojanov, the 'Kazakh' Natsburo member, even questioned the whole idea of Tajik self-determination. This is what he stated: 'The cultural centres of the Tajiks remain within the Uzbek republic, while the mountainous and inaccessible areas are being made into a separate *oblast*... What kind of autonomy is this if 800,000 of 1,200,000 Tajiks remain outside the *oblast*?'⁷⁷ While acknowledging Khojanov's point that a large number of Tajiks would have been left outside the Tajik AO after the delimitation, the Tajik Natsburo members stressed the impossibility of uniting all Tajik-populated areas into a single Tajik administrative unit. For example, in Imamov's and Khojibaev's opinions, natural geo-economic isolation and socio-cultural inequality between the plain and mountainous Tajik provinces made their unification impracticable, at least for the time being. Besides, they emphasized that the organization of the Tajik autonomy within a 'Great Uzbekistan' was to have an enormous political and economic significance for Tajiks.⁷⁸

A general perception that may be derived from the Tajik representatives' above comments is that rather than being an independent subcommission with a remit of protecting Tajik interests, the Tajik Natsburo was more an extension of its Uzbek counterpart. The only proposal advanced by the Tajik Natsburo that can be regarded somewhat pro-Tajik was its appeal to the Uzbek Natsburo to fulfil national self-determination of Tajiks within the Uzbek SSR not in the form of AO but of ASSR. Consequently, the Tajik petition was approved first by the Uzbek Natsburo on 4 October 1924, and then by the Second Session of the RSFSR CEC on 14 October 1924.⁷⁹ After upgrading Tajikistan's autonomous status from *oblast* to republic, the Kremlin also decided to enlarge its administrative borders by transferring to the Tajik ASSR some additional territories of the former Turkestan ASSR, such as Ura-Tube and Panjakent provinces. In January 1925, the Tajik ASSR was also given the Pamir *oblast*, which was later renamed into the Gorno-Badakhshan AO.⁸⁰

Thus, while every Natsburo sought to acquire as much territory and population as possible (almost regardless of whether or not their claims to such lands or nationless-*ethnies* could have been reasonably justified on ethnic or economic grounds) for its future national republic/*oblast*, the Tajik Natsburo members made no attempt to claim even some of the predominantly 'Farsi-Tajik'-speaking economically-rich territories, which were directly incorporated into the Uzbek

SSR proper. The result of this was that the Tajik ASSR was formed out of rugged mountainous provinces with little or no economic potential, whereas its newly declared capital, Dushanbe (known as Stalinabad during 1929–61), was literally a village with only 283 residents.⁸¹

Even though the Tajik Natsburo members gave formal reasons for their position at the Territorial Commission meetings, scholars have found it difficult to explain the exact motives behind their decision to enforce Khojaev's plan for the 'Greater Bukhara' at the expense of the projected Tajik AO/ASSR, which they were to govern themselves following delimitation. This difficulty largely stems from the fact that the leaders of the Tajik ASSR, including those who represented the Uzbek Natsburo at the 1924 Sredazburo Territorial Commission such as Abdullo Rakhimbaev and Abdukadyr Mukhitdinov, drastically changed their position regarding the status and boundaries of Tajikistan shortly after the delimitation agreement went into force. For example, by the end of the 1920s, not only was the Tajik leadership asking the Kremlin to withdraw Tajikistan from the Uzbek SSR, but also claimed such Tajik-populated areas of Uzbekistan proper as Khojent district, parts of Surkhan-Darya *oblast*, and cities of Samarkand and Bukhara.⁸² In mid-June 1929, the Kremlin created a special Commission to examine the secession of Tajikistan from the Uzbek SSR. The Commission concluded that the Tajik ASSR had achieved the level of socio-economic and cultural development that was necessary for the elevation of its political status. Consequently, in December 1929, the Tajik ASSR, based on the Commission's recommendations, was indeed upgraded to the status of a separate Union-republic within the USSR.⁸³ However, the territorial demands of newborn Soviet Tajik 'patriot' officials were largely rejected, with the exception of the Khojent district, with a sizable Uzbek minority.

Interestingly, some Western scholars have argued that the Kremlin's decision to separate Tajikistan from Uzbekistan in 1929 was not influenced as much by rising Tajik nationalism in the second half of the 1920s, but rather by new or emerging Soviet foreign policy objectives in the region, particularly in Afghanistan. According to this contention, Soviet foreign policymakers had been for some time attempting to exploit cross-border ethnic ties between groups (such as Tajik and Uzbek) in Soviet Central Asia and Afghanistan for their geopolitical ends in the region. In January 1929, when rebellious Afghanistani-'Tajik' tribal factions under the leadership of Habibullah Kalakani (known as Bacha-ye Saqao) managed to seize power in Kabul, the Kremlin thought that this was the right time to play with a 'Tajik card', and decided to create a 'sovereign' national republic (SSR) for ethnic Tajiks, with the aim of influencing the new masters of Afghanistan.⁸⁴ This well-adopted Soviet foreign policy tactic, labelled Piedmont Principle by Terry Martin, was based on the belief that the elevation of the political rights of certain nationalities in the border areas of the Soviet Union would have encouraged their *co-ethnies* in bordering countries to strive to integrate with the USSR.⁸⁵ For Carlisle, however, it was not a foreign but a domestic policy objective that prompted the Kremlin to establish the Tajik SSR. According to Carlisle, by the late 1920s, the Bukharan Uzbek political elites, under

Khojaev's leadership, were becoming so powerful, that Moscow decided to weaken them by detaching the Tajik ASSR from the Uzbek SSR as well as by transferring the Uzbek capital from Samarkand to Tashkent.⁸⁶ As Kolarz explains, 'It was much easier to keep Uzbek nationalism in check from Tashkent with its strong Russian population than from Samarkand where the number of Russians was negligible.'⁸⁷

The newly-formed Tajik SSR leadership, however, was not satisfied with the central Soviet government's ruling with regard to their territorial claims and continued to demand the revision of the Tajik-Uzbek border. To finally resolve territorial disputes between these two republics, the Kremlin decided to appoint another commission, under Iakov Peters. Unlike the 1924 Sredazburo Territorial Commission discussions on Tajikistan, the sessions of the Peters Commission became the scene of acrimonious debates between the Soviet Uzbek and Tajik officials. The biggest discord between the two parties emerged during the analysis of the 1926 all-Union census results, which, in contrast to all previous census materials, indicated that most of the Tajik claimed-territories of the Uzbek SSR were predominantly populated by ethnic Uzbeks. The Tajik representatives asserted that this was a result of the Uzbek government's chauvinistic policies, which compelled the local Tajik population to register as Uzbeks. While denying this allegation, the Uzbek officials stressed that compared to all pre-Soviet censuses, the 1926 census provided the most accurate demographic picture of both republics. Their argument rested on the claim that under the pan-Tajik Bukharan Emirs, many Uzbek subjects (in Tajik-Uzbek disputed territories) were compelled to adopt Tajik as the language of public life. However, despite the linguistic Tajikization, those Uzbeks managed to retain their ethnic identity, which, according to the Uzbek representatives, was confirmed by the 1926 census. To obtain a neutral opinion from the Tajik and Uzbek representatives on the matter, the Peters Commission even sought advice from a number of prominent Russian scholars of Central Asia, but they were unable to come to an agreed conclusion. The end result was that the Peters Commission failed to provide clear and specific guidance on how to proceed, thus leaving both Uzbekistan and Tajikistan within the borders delineated by the June 1929 CEC Commission.⁸⁸

According to Soviet historiography, the decision to incorporate largely Tajik-speaking areas of Central Asia, particularly Samarkand and Bukhara, within the Uzbek SSR was based on Lenin's recommendation suggesting reflection on the ethnic composition of countryside, rather than of cities, when delineating new administrative-national borders.⁸⁹ However, this argument is quite questionable, since Soviet nation-makers did not always follow the same principle in other similar cases, such as the 'Kazakh'-Uzbek dispute over Tashkent.

Modern Tajik historians generally explain the loss of Tajik 'national' territories in the 1920s as a direct result of a massive anti-Tajik conspiracy of Russian and (pan-Turkic) Uzbek (former-Jadid) Bolsheviks. Some of them, however, are no less critical of the Tajik Natsburo members as well as of the 'Tajik' communists representing the Uzbek side at the Territorial Commission, particularly

Khojaev, Rakhimbaev and Mukhitdinov.⁹⁰ For example, Masov directly accuses these pro-Uzbek ‘Tajik’ communists of betraying the interests of their nation for the sake of high governmental posts within the Uzbek republic.⁹¹ Masov goes even further by arguing that the Kremlin’s plan during the 1924 delimitation process was to create a maximum of two economically self-sufficient Union-republics in Central Asia. While one of them was thought to be the Turkmen SSR, a choice for the other was to be made between the Uzbek and Tajik alternatives. The Tajik project, Masov argues, was even supported by a number of Soviet ethnographers, Orientalists, as well as by Soviet Foreign Commissar Chicherin. However, it was never advanced beyond the draft stage due to the treacherous position of certain Tajik communists. If not for them, Masov concludes, there was a real possibility in 1924 to establish, instead of the Uzbek SSR, the Tajik SSR (comprising an entire BPSR, Samarkand *oblast* and several Tajik provinces in the Ferghana Valley), within which Uzbekistan would have been incorporated as an autonomous republic.⁹²

To reinforce the above argument, Masov and Abdulov cite an interesting comment allegedly made by Babajan Gafurov, a well-known Soviet Tajik historian and senior CP figure: Gafurov recalled that in 1948, he personally complained to the Soviet leader Stalin about the detachment of ancient Tajik territories from Tajikistan during the territorial delimitation of Central Asia in the 1920s, and even asked him to allot Samarkand to the Tajik SSR. On this, Stalin’s answer was that in 1924, it was Tajik communists themselves who were not only indifferent in the Tajik-Uzbek disputed territories, but also did everything to prevent the formation of the separate Tajik SSR.⁹³

The unjust loss of Samarkand and Bukhara to Uzbekistan has become a central element of the revised (de-Sovietized) Tajik national narrative since gaining independence in 1991. The official Tajik narrative overtly regards these two still pre-dominantly Tajik-speaking cities of Uzbekistan as the heartland of the (allegedly) first unified and centralized Tajik state of Samanids, or of the ‘historical Tajikistan’. Furthermore, within this national narrative, Tajiks are portrayed as the original inhabitants of Central Asia, tracing their ethnic roots to the ancient Iranian peoples of the region, particularly to the Aryans. For instance, under Tajik President Emomali Rahmon’s (in office since 1992) initiative, a distinguished Samanid Amir Ismail Samani (r. 887–907) has been promoted as the most important historical figure of the Tajik people. In 1999, the Tajik government also organized the nation-wide celebrations of the 1,100th anniversary of the Samanid state, and later, in 2006, celebrated the year of the Aryan Civilization.⁹⁴

On their part, contemporary Uzbek historians accuse their Tajik colleagues of distorting the historical truth by identifying the indigenous population of the disputed territories as Iranian and regarding the Samanid realm—centred in Bukhara city—as the first Tajik nation-state. For example, an Uzbek scholar, E. Khasanov, writes that while it is a well-known fact that since the days of the Bronze Age Central Asia has been a land of Turkic peoples, Tajik historians, under the influence of pan-Iranism, wrongly credit the Tajiks as being the only

aboriginal people of the region. For Khasanov, the spread of Iranian language in Central Asia was connected with the Persian, Macedonian and Arabic conquests of the region, which led to the linguistic Iranization of state-bureaucracy, who traditionally served under the ethnic-Turkic rulers. Otherwise, the Uzbek and Tajik-speaking peoples living between the rivers of Amu Darya and Syr Darya, Khasanov asserts, belonged to the same Central Asian anthropological group, unlike the mountainous Pamiri-Tajiks who fell under a different anthropological category. Therefore, proceeds Khasanov, the fact that many Samarkandis and Bukharans speak Tajik, apart from Uzbek, does not necessarily imply that they are ethnic Tajiks. Finally, Khasanov asks a rhetorical question: if pre-Soviet Tajik educated elite possessed a high national consciousness, as asserted by Tajik historiography, then why did their best representatives, such as Rakhimbaev, serve to the Uzbek cause rather than to their own people?⁹⁵

Another Uzbek historian, G. Khidoiatov, goes even further by claiming that the so-called Uzbekistani (plain) Tajiks have nothing in common with the real (mountain) Tajiks of the Tajik republic. According to Khidoiatov, the term 'Tajik' was traditionally implied towards the 'backward' mountainous Galcha people, who migrated to Central Asia from northern India and claimed to be the descendants of Aryans. As for the plain Tajiks, Khidoiatov asserts that they were actually Persians, locally known as Eronis, who had always rejected attempts of the 'racially inferior' Galcha-Tajiks to integrate with them. For Khidoiatov, the problem of confusing these distinct peoples with one another started during the Tsarist era, when Russian officials often mistakenly classified them as one people. But in reality Eronis and Galcha-Tajiks had never merged with one another. Thus, for Khidoiatov, Tajik scholars' and politicians' claims that Samarkand and Bukhara are historical Tajik cities are absolutely unfounded, since ancestors of modern Tajiks (the Galchas) had never lived in these areas. Finally, Khidoiatov recommends to his Tajik colleagues that instead of criticizing the Soviet delimitation policies, they should be grateful to the Bolshevik regime not only for creating the first-ever Tajik state in the 1920s, but also for granting the historical Uzbek-territories of Khojent and Ura-Tube to Tajikistan.⁹⁶

In mainstream Western scholarship on the Soviet delimitation of Central Asia in the 1920s, Tajiks have traditionally been depicted as the most extreme victims of Soviet arbitrary border-drawings in the region, which resulted in the incorporation of the Tajik cultural centres of Bukhara and Samarkand with substantial Tajik populations within the Uzbek SSR, while Tajikistan itself was left with the poorest mountainous areas with a considerable Uzbek minority on its territory.⁹⁷ In the last couple of decades, however, some revisionist scholars on the subject started to question the aforementioned Western scholarly view, which, like the Tajik historiography, treats the pre-1924 Muslim population of Samarkand and Bukhara from a static standpoint, that is, 'Farsi-Tajik' speakers were ethnic Tajiks and Turkic-speakers were Uzbeks.⁹⁸

From the revisionist perspective, determination of ethnic composition of pre-1924 Bukhara and Samarkand, and accordingly the cities' Tajikness or Uzbekness, through ethnolinguistic criterion is untenable, since the local Muslim

population of those cities, most of whom were bilinguals, did not necessarily identify themselves principally as part of either the Tajik or Uzbek ethnic communities. Rather, their identities, revisionists argue, were still fluid and multidimensional, combining urban-based both Tajik and Uzbek aspects. For example, according to Abramson, prior and during the delimitation process in 1924, for most of the Muslim Bukharans and Samarkandis choosing their nationality between Uzbek and Tajik was a mere 'bureaucratic artificiality', because these identities as yet had no real meaning or importance in their everyday lives.⁹⁹ While reiterating Abramson's position, Haugen also maintains that in the Uzbek-Tajik frontier in the early 1920s, for the 'Farsi-Tajik'-speaking urban population the affiliation with their Turkic-speaking co-residents was more important than with their prospective co-nationals in mountainous-rural areas of eastern Bukhara. For Haugen, this was one of the reasons why the Tajik and Uzbekized-Tajik officials in the Territorial Commission (all with urban backgrounds) supported inclusion of Samarkand and Bukhara within the Uzbek SSR proper.¹⁰⁰ Overall, from the demographic perspective, assert revisionists, both Bukhara and Samarkand could have been successfully allocated to either newly-formed Uzbek or Tajik republics, because the national identities of these city-dwellers were still under the formation.

While fully agreeing with the revisionists' contention that pre-1924 identities of Muslim residents of Samarkand, Bukhara and other disputed areas along the projected Uzbek-Tajik frontier were in flux and that no static approach should be applied in describing their ethnicity *ex post facto*, this solid anthropological argument is not sufficient to explain the Soviet nation-makers' decision to enclose them within the Uzbek rather than Tajik republic. In particular, it is not important whether Muslim residents of these contended areas identified themselves more as Uzbek or Tajik or equally both, but rather how they were perceived/categorized by the Soviet administration. As discussed above, a number of Soviet officials during the Territorial Commission meetings always defined both Bukhara and Samarkand largely as Tajik cities, and there were no objections to this claim from other representatives. The demographic Tajikness of these cities at the time of the delimitation was also acknowledged by the later Soviet Russian historiography.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, the Sredazburo decided to allocate Bukhara and Samarkand cities, with their surroundings, to the Uzbek SSR.

The revisionists' position is more useful in explaining the indifference of the Tajik Natsburo members towards the future borders of the Tajik AO/ASSR. Particularly, it is largely a mistake to treat Khojibaev, Imamov and Saidjanov as Tajik nationals representing interests of the 'Farsi-Tajik' speaking population of the region. Rather they should be regarded as representatives of one of the Bukharan PSR clan groupings, who in collaboration with other clans of the republic (such as self-ascribed Uzbek Soviet leaders under Faizullah Khojaev's leadership) sought to secure economically-rich territories for the projected Uzbek SSR, and not for the Uzbek or Tajik peoples. The national self-determination of the Tajik people, whatever it implied at that time, had never

been a top priority on their political agendas. They did not ask for it either prior to or after the establishment of Soviet rule in the region. Moreover, in the Territorial Commission, they participated not as popularly elected officials of the Tajik people, but rather as direct appointees of the RCP, tasked to represent the Kremlin's Tajik project. And one of the possible motives for the Kremlin to initiate this project in 1924 could have been its attempt to pacify an extremely volatile east BPSR's mountainous region, a hotbed of the Basmachi insurgency, by granting it some level of political autonomy. Finally, it is often missed by the scholars that the delimitation of the Uzbek–Tajik borderline in 1924 was not between the two equal political entities, but rather an administrative territorial arrangement within one Union-republic. Neither AOs nor ASSRs, as discussed earlier, were treated by the 1918 RSFSR or 1924 USSR Constitutions as important political units within the Soviet federal system. Future leaders of the projected Tajik AO/ASSR were to be the integral parts of the political establishment of Soviet Uzbekistan, with a full right to ascend the highest career ladder within the Uzbek SSR.

But then the question arises what prompted the Tajik representatives at the Territorial Commission to change their position so radically in the second half of the 1920s. Haugen asserts that it was a result of Tajik minority-nationalism, which developed in response to Samarkand's (the capital of the Uzbek SSR during 1924–30) assimilation policies aimed at 'Uzbekization' of the Tajik-speaking population of the republic, which commenced after the 1924 delimitation.¹⁰² Schoeberlein-Engel, on the other hand, points to the existing personal rivalries among the Soviet Uzbek and Tajik leaders, particularly between Khojaev and Mukhitdinov, which ultimately led to the strengthening of the centre-periphery (Samarkand-Dushanbe) cleavage.¹⁰³

Both these arguments have their value, but what both authors are missing is the Soviet Tajik nation-building-project, which commenced in parallel with the Uzbek one. Namely, it was not only Samarkand (under the Kremlin's guidance) that was engaged in crafting Uzbek national identity, symbols, culture, as well as inventing a 'great historical past' for the Uzbek nation; the Tajik ASSR elite was also tasked to engage in a similar process for the Tajik people. Not surprisingly, these two Soviet nation-building projects often came into contradiction with each other, especially when it came to the question of determining the 'rightful heir' of the cultural heritage of the historical Mawarannahr, both of them claiming it as their own. Unquestionably, the Uzbek nation-builders had an upper hand in this dispute, since most of the contended cultural material artefacts were under their direct administration, while Tajik nation-builders had to solely rely on their intellectual and cultural elite's skills to primordialize not only the roots of the Tajik national identity, but also 'historical' Tajikistan's ('imagined') boundaries. In addition, with the advancement of nation-building processes in both republics, the clan rivalries among the Soviet Uzbek and Tajik political elites became increasingly ethnicized too. Although formally internationalists, their rhetoric against each other was often full of nationalist fervour. Dushanbe, for example, sought to discredit the Uzbek government in the eyes of the

Kremlin by accusing it of violating the national self-determination rights of the Tajiks in Samarkand and Bukhara regions.¹⁰⁴

It is also quite possible that the Dushanbe's anti-Uzbek statements and demands for separation from the Uzbek SSR were encouraged by the Kremlin itself, which, as mentioned earlier, was at the time becoming increasingly interested in political developments in neighbouring Afghanistan, and was eager to further its own interests there by using a 'Tajik card'. Hence, supposedly, informed in advance on planned elevation of the Tajik ASSR into SSR status, Tajik elites sought to secede from the Uzbek SSR with as much economically prospective territories and politico-cultural centres as possible, because for them, there was no longer an incentive in contending for the political dominance in Soviet Uzbekistan. This should be considered as one of the important factors for the 'nationalization' of the Tajik Soviet elites, and accordingly for the shift in their rhetoric from stressing the support for the Khojaev's 'Greater Uzbekistan' plan in 1924 to the openly anti-Uzbek statements at the end of the 1920s.

Finalization of the Soviet Central Asian political map, 1924–36

The Territorial Commission largely completed its work on 6 September 1924, and its decisions were passed for ratification to the affected governments of Central Asian republics. By the end of September 1924, the project for national-territorial delimitation of Central Asia was adopted by the respective legislative assemblies of the Turkestan (on the 16th),¹⁰⁵ Bukharan (on the 20th)¹⁰⁶ and Khorezm (on the 29th)¹⁰⁷ republics. The delimitation project finally went into force on 27 October 1924, when it was approved by the Second Session of the CEC of the USSR.¹⁰⁸ Shortly after in November 1924, the Turkestan, Bukharan and Khorezm republics were all formally dissolved, and their functions were transferred to special national Revkoms, which were tasked with organizational work for the establishment of new Soviet republics and *oblasts* in Central Asia. Consequently, on 17 February 1925, the First Uzbek Council of Soviets, summoned in Bukhara, adopted a resolution on the formation of the Uzbek SSR.¹⁰⁹ And shortly after, on 20 February, in Poltoratsk (modern Ashgabat), the Turkmen Council of Soviets proclaimed the formation of the Turkmen SSR.¹¹⁰ Finally, both Uzbek (encompassing the Tajik ASSR) and Turkmen SSRs officially entered the USSR as Union-republics on 13 May 1925.¹¹¹ Later in the same month, on 25 May, the Kara-Kyrgyz AO, which was formed within the RSFSR on 14 October 1924, was renamed the Kyrgyz AO; its status was upgraded to that of an ASSR on 1 February 1926.¹¹²

In September 1924, the special commission under the Politburo of the RCP CC, which was tasked to review the Sredazburo's project on the national-territorial delimitation of Central Asia, recommended to the Soviet leadership that the KASSR be elevated to Union-republic status. However, this proposal was declined by the majority of Politburo members on the ground that the 'Kazakh' republic was not yet politically and economically ready for this step.¹¹³

Thus, the national-territorial delimitation of 1924 did not affect the political status of the KASSR, but nevertheless it significantly altered its territorial boundaries. In particular, the KASSR's territory was enlarged by the addition of Syr Darya and Semireche *oblasts*, and several 'Kazakh'-populated districts of the Samarkand *oblast*. On the other hand, by the decision of the RCP CEC of 6 April 1925, a part of the Orenburg region, including the city of Orenburg, was detached from the KASSR and incorporated within the RSFSR proper.¹¹⁴ Consequently, the capital of the KASSR was moved from Orenburg to Ak-Mechet (literally White Mosque). On 15–19 June 1925, the Fifth 'Kazakh' Council of Soviets, gathered in Ak-Mechet, and decided to rename the republic—which until then was formally known as the Kyrgyz ASSR, both in the 'Kazakh' and Russian languages—as Kazak ASSR (KazASSR). The Council also decided to change the new 'Kazakh' capital's Islamic name to Kzyl-Orda (Red Centre).¹¹⁵ However, Kzyl-Orda only remained the republic's capital until 30 May 1927, when Alma-Ata (formerly Verny, and modern Almaty) was established as the new capital city of the KazASSR.¹¹⁶ In February 1936, the Russian spelling of the Kazak ASSR was changed to the Kazakh ASSR.¹¹⁷ Later the same year, on 5 December, Kazakh ASSR, along with the Kyrgyz ASSR, became full Union-republics of the Soviet Union. According to S. Dimanshtein, one of Stalin's main advisors on nationalities affairs, the transformation of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan into full-fledged Union-republics was aimed at impressing neighbouring states like China, Iran and Afghanistan with the USSR's successful solution of nationality question in Central Asia.¹¹⁸

As regards to the Karakalpak AO, which was organized within the 'Kazakh' republic in 1924, it was transferred to the RSFSR proper in 1930. According to Soviet historians, the chief reason for this transfer was that the Kremlin was not satisfied with the progress of building socialism in the Karakalpak *oblast*. Therefore, to address this problem, it was decided to subordinate the Karakalpak AO directly to the RSFSR administration, which had more capabilities, than the KazASSR, to guide the *oblast* toward socialism.¹¹⁹ In March 1932, the Karakalpak AO was first raised into ASSR status, and then in December 1936 was incorporated within the Uzbek SSR. Interestingly, the same Soviet historians, who justified Moscow's decision to attach Karakalpakstan to the RSFSR in 1930, explained the need for its transfer to the Uzbek SSR in 1936 by the fact that the Karakalpak ASSR did not have common borders with the Russian Federation. Therefore, these Soviet historians argued, it was thought advisable to attach the Karakalpak republic to one of the Central Asian Union-republics, and since Karakalpaks were closest to Uzbeks in economic, territorial and cultural terms, it was decided to incorporate the Karakalpak ASSR into the Uzbek SSR.¹²⁰ This questionable official Soviet version of transferring Karakalpakstan to Uzbekistan has not been revised by modern Uzbek historiography, and is still taught in Uzbek schools.¹²¹

Thus, the year 1936 marked the final arrangement of the political map of Soviet Central Asia, which codified the existence of six Soviet national republics, each with its own state-recognized titular nationality: the Uzbek (incorporating the

Karakalpak ASSR), Kazakh, Turkmen, Tajik and Kyrgyz SSRs. From then until the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991, the political status as well as external boundaries of these Central Asian republics had largely been intact.

Concluding remarks

The national-territorial delimitation project of Central Asia was initiated arbitrarily by the communist leadership in Moscow at the end of 1919 with the planned reorganization of Soviet Russia (and later of the USSR) along ethnofederal lines, which was formally explained as the realization of the Leninist principles of national self-determination. Since all constituent parts of the Soviet state were to be organized along ethnoterritorial lines, the existing Central Asian republics simply could not have been left with their feudal- and Tsarist-era political-territorial structures. In other words, the Soviet delimitation project for Central Asia initially appeared on the Kremlin's agenda not because of the special political consideration of the region such as fear of pan-Turkism, but largely because of the newly adopted general Soviet administrative and nationality policy strategies. However, this does not suggest that the pan-Turko-Islamic factor did not have its influence on the Soviet delimitation of Central Asia. Quite the contrary, as it was confirmed by Kuibyshev, the growing pan-Turkic aspirations of the Muslim national communists, led by Ryskulov, in the region was the major factor in prioritizing this important—but certainly not the pressing—project on the Kremlin's agenda. It was also a primary reason for the Soviet leadership to categorically decline the proposals advanced by some Central Asian communists to form a single Turkic republic or a federation out of the then existing republics in the region.

The Soviet government's imposition of national-territorial delimitation upon Central Asian indigenous communities is evident from the fact that none of the influential local elite groups (both pre-Soviet and Soviet) had ever projected the establishment of those ethnonationally-defined republics, which were formed by Moscow in the region during the 1920s. In fact, as discussed earlier, the initiative to form the 'Kazakh', Turkmen and Uzbek national-republics in Central Asia was for the first time formally raised by the Turkkomissiiia and then endorsed by the RCP leadership in Moscow in 1920. When first informed of the planned political-territorial reorganization of the region, the leaders of the Turkestan ASSR and the Khorezm SSR demonstratively declined to support it. For their resistance, they were soon either demoted or purged from government positions and the RCP ranks. As for those who decided, or were compelled, to approve the delimitation project, such as Khojaev's Bukharan clan, they were typical power-seekers and political opportunists interested in securing/improving their sociopolitical positions, which they fully owed to the Soviet regime. Neither Khojaev nor his followers suggested the formation of an Uzbek national state either prior to 1920 while in opposition or when coming to power in the BPSR.

As for the revisionist scholars' argument that the delimitation process itself was not arbitrarily implemented by the Kremlin but rather reflected the positions

and proposals of the representatives of the indigenous Soviet elites at the Sredazburo Territorial Commission, it entirely misses the point that none of those members of the Natsburos had a mandate or authority to speak for the communities they claimed to represent. Apart from their clans or tribes, those native communists largely had no power base in their respective republics/*oblasts*. Had it not been for the presence of the Red Army in the region, the Soviet governments of Central Asia would most probably have been overthrown in short order by other rival tribal, clan, clerical or royal factions. Besides, as discussed earlier, even the native communists themselves were largely split on the desirability of abolishing the Bukharan and Khorezm republics for the sake of establishing separate national-republics. Putting it differently, supporters of the national-territorial delimitation in the region were minorities within a minority. Of course, this does not deny the possibility that minority (for example, a group of intellectuals or influential figures)-driven nationalist political programmes can ultimately become popularly-supported policies. For instance, most of the nationalist movements in the nineteenth century Europe and the early twentieth century non-European world were largely elitist, initially with no real popular support, but nevertheless many of them were eventually quite successful in realizing their agendas. However, the application of this type of elitist model of nationalism to the Soviet Central Asian case is quite problematic, because the idea to create ethnationally-defined republics derived not from the native communist leaders but rather from their masters in the Kremlin, which the former were instructed to follow.

The fact that prior to engaging in the process of national-territorial delimitation, the Soviet government had consulted with prominent Russian scientists on the plausible ethnic make-ups of the prospective titular Central Asian nations does not really lessen the artificialness of the Soviet nation-making products in the region, compared, for example, to the European-colonial ones in Africa, Middle East or Southeast Asia. Employment of ethnographic and statistical knowledge in the delimitation of Central Asia by Soviet officials was not a mere bureaucratic procedure aimed at final reverification of the generally accepted 'given objective reality' in the region, that is the existence of the established Karakalpak, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, Turkmen and Uzbek ethnonational communities with their well-defined national territories. Had this been an 'objective reality', then there would not have been fierce debates between the members of different Natsburos about the 'nationality' of a number of nationless-*ethnies*. Rather, as mentioned in this chapter, the application of the scholarly knowledge in delimiting Central Asia was thought to help Soviet officials to regroup numerous indigenous clan, tribal and cultural groups in the region along a few, more or less, rational sociocultural and linguistic communities, which would have been relatively easier for them subsequently to transform into viable and cohesive nations. As for the reason why the Kremlin took such a cautious and detailed approach to the projection of the Central Asian nation-building projects, this may be explained by the fact that Central Asia, unlike the European colonial territories in Africa and Asia, was an

integral part of the Soviet Union and it was to be the Soviet central government itself that would have to deal with its consequences.

Moreover, taking into consideration the ethnodemographic fabric of the 1920s Central Asia and level of irredentist or secessionist sentiments (both public and elite) among the indigenous communities in the region, Soviet nation-makers could have easily and successfully advanced significantly different nation-building projects (both in content and quantity) from the ones that they embarked upon. For instance, among a few possible alternatives, there could have been the following Soviet nation-building projects: (i) the 'Small Horde' (also with a possible merger with the Karakalpak tribes); (ii) the 'Great Horde' (merged with Kara-Kyrgyz tribes); (iii) the 'Middle Horde'; or (iv) a 'Greater K'-nation, constructed from the 'Kazakh' hordes, Karakalpak and Kara-Kyrgyz tribes. And then later, as Roy notes, it would have been 'left to the [Soviet] anthropologists, linguistics experts and historians to explain how this virtual people had been waiting for centuries for its political incarnation to be achieved'.¹²²

Finally, although there were a number of senior Soviet officials who can be credited for advancing the Soviet nation-territorial delimitation project in Central Asia such as Lenin and the members of the Turkkomissii and Sredazburo, the most important figure responsible for overall development, shaping and implementation of this Kremlin venture was probably Stalin. For example, according to Viacheslav Molotov, one of the most influential Soviet politicians in the 1920s and later the Soviet Foreign Minister (1939–49, 1953–56):

The formation of the Central Asian Republics was entirely his doing, a Stalinist cause! He skillfully mastered the matter of borders and the very discovery of entire nations. No one at the center had been interested in or really knew anything about these peoples, because all of us, including Lenin, had not gone into this matter and lacked the time.¹²³

Thus, the national-territorial delimitation of Central Asia, which regrouped the region's indigenous communities into the state-projected six titular nationalities, each with clearly-cut administrative-territorial boundaries, was a cornerstone of the Soviet nation-building projects in the region. However, it was only a part of its nation-making mission. The full realization of these projects was dependent on the successful implementation of a set of Soviet nationality policies (discussed further on), which had to transform these politically 'imagined' Central Asian communities into modern nations, based on Western European models.

Notes

- 1 Caroe, *Soviet Empire*, xiv. For examples of other earlier scholars holding this view, see Conquest, *Soviet Nationalities Policy*, 45–46; Carrère d'Encausse, *Islam and the Russian Empire*, 184; Wheeler, *Peoples of Soviet Central Asia*, 66–69; Massell, *Surrogate Proletariat*, 58–63; Connor, *National Question*, 302–303.
- 2 Geoffrey Jukes, *The Soviet Union in Asia* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1973), 37.

- 3 See Alexander G. Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan, 1917–1927* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), 87–108.
- 4 Roy, *New Central Asia*, 68. For other scholars sharing this perspective, see Muriel Atkin, ‘Religious, National, and Other Identities in Central Asia’, in *Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of Identity and Change*, ed. Jo-Ann Gross (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 48; Michael Rywkin, *Moscow’s Lost Empire* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1994), 36, 125–129, 169–170; Stephen Blank, *The Sorcerer as Apprentice: Stalin as Commissar of Nationalities, 1917–1924* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1994), 139–140; Steven Sabol, ‘The Creation of Soviet Central Asia: The 1924 National Delimitation’, *Central Asian Survey* 14, no. 2 (1995): 226, 236–238; Gregory Gleason, *The Central Asian States: Discovering Independence* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997), 49–50; John Glenn, *The Soviet Legacy in Central Asia* (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 1999), 5.
- 5 See Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 160–186.
- 6 See, for example, Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 6, 46–48, 51–69; Haugen, *Establishment of National Republics*; Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), 62–63; Adeeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 66–67, 213, note 19.
- 7 Isabelle T. Kreindler, ‘Soviet Muslims: Gains and Losses as a Result of Soviet Language Planning’, in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, ed. Yaaqov Ro’i (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 191.
- 8 T. A. Zhdanko, ‘Natsional’no-gosudarstvennoe razmezhevanie i protsessy etnicheskogo razvitiia u narodov Srednei Azii’, *Sovetskaia Etnografiia*, no. 5 (1972): 21–24. See also Tolstov *et al.*, *Narody Srednei Azii*, vol. 1, 104–106; S. Mirkhasilov and T. Faiziev, ‘Natsional’no-gosudarstvennoe razmezhevanie Srednei Azii’, *Sovetskaia Etnografiia*, no. 6 (1964): 7.
- 9 See Arifkhanova and Chebotareva, *Reshenie natsional’nogo voprosa*, 28; S. B. Baishev, ed. *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR: Epokha sotsializma* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1967), 224; A. N. Nusupbekov *et al.*, eds., *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR: S drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei*, vol. 4 (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1977), 352.
- 10 For example, see E. Shteinberg, ‘Sredneaziatskoe razmezhevanie i protsess natsional’noi konsolidatsii’, *Revoliutsiia i Natsional’nosti*, no. 12 (1934): 47–54; Kh. Sh. Inoiatov, *Otvet fal’sifikatoram istorii Sovetskoi Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana* (Tashkent: Uzgosizdat, 1962); Dzh. A. Rzaev, *O fal’sifikatorakh istorii Sovetskoi Srednei Azii* (Frunze: Kyrgyzgosizdat, 1962); K. N. Novoselov, *Protiv burzhuaiznykh fal’sifikatorov istorii Srednei Azii* (Ashkhabad: Turkgosizdat, 1962); A. Nusupbekov and Kh. Bisenov, *Fal’sifikatsiia istorii i istoricheskaiia pravda* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstan, 1964).
- 11 J. V. Stalin, ‘The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East’, in *Works*, vol. 7 (Moscow: FLPH, 1954), 139, emphasis in original.
- 12 Quoted in M. G. Vakhobov *et al.*, *Torzhestvo Leninskikh idei kul’turnoi revoliutsii v Uzbekistane* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1970), 137.
- 13 *Ibid.*
- 14 There are several different explanations why Soviet officials chose the term ‘Uzbek’ in preference to other possible alternatives, such as ‘Sart’ and ‘Chaghatay’. For instance, according to one such explanation, mostly advanced by Tajik historians, the term ‘Uzbek’ was strongly lobbied by the Turkestan (former Jadid) Bolsheviks, who, after failing to get approval from the Kremlin to create a single Turkic republic in the region, sought to realize their pan-Turkic ideal through a different tactic. Namely, in order not to be accused of pan-Turkic leanings, the Jadid-Bolsheviks simply replaced the word ‘Turk’ in their ideological platform with the politically more acceptable term ‘Uzbek’; nonetheless, their overall objective remained largely the same. See Karim Abdulov, *Siyosatnoma of XXI Century* (Dushanbe: Adib,

- 2005), Ch. 5, available at: www.abdulov.tj/bk1_2.php. (last accessed 26 May 2013). Another explanation for the choice of the term 'Uzbek' is given by a German Turkologist, Ingeborg Baldauf, who claims that unlike the former, all other possible ethnonyms were largely unacceptable for the Soviet government for political or other reasons. For example, the designation 'Sart' was disapproved based on the statements of some local Bolsheviks that it denoted a 'merchant class' who exploited the Uzbek village-workers. As regards 'Turk', 'Chaghatay' and 'Muslim', they were unacceptable because of their association with pan-Turkism, Turkestanism and pan-Islamism respectively. The term 'Uzbek', on the other hand, was perceived as less controversial in ideological terms. In addition, it was believed that compared to other alternatives, 'Uzbek' would have been more acceptable as an ethnonym for the majority of the would-be Uzbek nationals. Ingeborg Baldauf, 'Some Thoughts on the Making of the Uzbek Nation', *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* 32, no. 1 (1991): 81–92. A third possible explanation is proposed by an Uzbek scholar, Alisher Ilkhamov, according to whom, the designation 'Uzbek' was chosen over 'Sart' primarily because of its longer history and richer symbolic content (such as its association with Shaybanid Uzbeks), thus, making it a more suitable ethnonym for the construction of national identity. Alisher Ilkhamov, 'Archaeology of Uzbek Identity', *Central Asian Survey* 23, no. 3–4 (2004): 304–305.
- 15 For more on the pre-Soviet Turkmen tribes, see Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 20–22.
 - 16 See Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 153–154; Vaidyanath, *Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 107–109.
 - 17 Urazaev, *Lenin*, 461.
 - 18 Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 157–158.
 - 19 Mirzohid Rahimov and Galina Urazaeva, *Central Asian Nations & Border Issues*, Central Asian Series (Camberley: CSRC, Defence Academy of the UK, 2005), 3–4.
 - 20 V. I. Lenin, 'Zamechaniia na proekte resheniia TsK o zadachakh RKP(b) v Turkestane', in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, vol. 41 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1981), 434.
 - 21 *Ibid.*, 435.
 - 22 *Ibid.*, 436.
 - 23 Keller, 'Central Asian Bureau', 283–284.
 - 24 Rahimov and Urazaeva, *Central Asian Nations*, 4.
 - 25 Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 159–160.
 - 26 For the full text of the 1920 TASSR Constitution, see *S'ezdy sovetov*, vol. 1, 445–463.
 - 27 Urazaev, *Lenin*, 357.
 - 28 See V. M. Ploskikh, ed. *Istoriia Kyrgyzov i Kyrgyzstana* (Bishkek: Ilim, 2000), 198–200.
 - 29 B. A. Antonenko, ed. *Istoriia Tadzhikskogo naroda*, vol. 3, Pt. 1 (Moscow: Nauka, 1964), 136.
 - 30 Vaidyanath, *Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 145–147.
 - 31 *Ibid.*, 154.
 - 32 The Sredazburo was formed in January 1922 to replace the Turkburo. Unlike the Turkburo, the Sredazburo oversaw economic, administrative and CP matters not only of the Turkestan ASSR but of all Central Asian republics. It was finally dissolved in 1934. See Keller, 'Central Asian Bureau', 281–297.
 - 33 Chugaev, *Istoriia natsional'no-gosudarstvennogo stroitel'stva*, 394.
 - 34 See Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 641–644.
 - 35 Quoted in *ibid.*, 645.
 - 36 Chugaev, *Istoriia natsional'no-gosudarstvennogo stroitel'stva*, 395.
 - 37 Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 645.
 - 38 *Ibid.*, 645–646. The Turkestani leadership preferred the establishment of another 'Kazakh' administrative entity out of Syr Darya and Semireche *oblasts*, than transferring the TASSR's 'Kazakh' populated territories to the KASSR.

- 39 Vaidyanath, *Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 166–167.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 171–172; Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 57–58. According to Soviet sources, however, the Sredazburo commission in fact supported the merger of the TASSR's 'Kazakh' areas into the KASSR. See S. I. Iakubovskaia, *Stroitel'stvo soiuznogo Sovetskogo sotsialisticheskogo gosudarstva, 1922–1925 gg.* (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1959), 347.
- 41 Apart from the RSFSR, another republic that was under consideration for incorporating the future Kara-Kyrgyz *oblast* was the KASSR. Although there were a number of influential pro-'Kazakh' Kara-Kyrgyz elements such as R. Khudaikulov, the majority of the Kara-Kyrgyz communists opted for the Russian alternative. Their argument against the KASSR option was that most of the Kara-Kyrgyzs had a deep-rooted animosity toward the 'Kazakhs', which was the product of the legacy of the centuries-old oppression under the Great Horde, the Kokand Khanate, and Kenesary Kasymov. See Ploskikh, *Istoriia Kyrgyzov*, 201–202.
- 42 See E. Iu. Iusupov, *Natsional'naia politika KPSS v deistvii: Deiatel'nost' kompartii Uzbekistana po osushchestvleniiu Leninskoii natsional'noi politiki v respublike* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1979), 130–131.
- 43 Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 58.
- 44 See Vaidyanath, *Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 180–182.
- 45 See Masov, *Istoriia topornogo razdeleniia*.
- 46 Hasan Ali Karasar, 'Chicherin on the Delimitation of Turkestan: Native Bolsheviks versus Soviet Foreign Policy. Seven Letters from the Russian Archives on Razmezhevanie', *Central Asian Survey* 21, no. 2 (2002): 207.
- 47 *Sudebnyi otchet po delu 'antisovetskogo pravo-trotskistskogo bloka' rassmotrennomu voennoi kollegiei verkhovnogo suda SSSR, 2–13 marta 1938 g.* (Moscow: NKIu SSSR, 1938), 118.
- 48 For a 'Greater Bukhara' argument, see Donald S. Carlisle, 'Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan and Its Neighbours', in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, ed. Yaacov Ro'i (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 74–75; Roy, *New Central Asia*, 72–73.
- 49 Zhdanko, 'Natsional'no-gosudarstvennoe razmezhevanie', 27.
- 50 The Tajik and Karakalpak Natsburos were only created in August 1924.
- 51 Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 59.
- 52 Haugen, *Establishment of National Republics*, 139.
- 53 *Ibid.*; Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 59.
- 54 Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 59.
- 55 V. V. Barthold, 'Po voprosu ob istoricheskikh vzaimootnosheniakh Turetskikh i Iranskikh narodnostei Srednei Azii', *Vostok*, no. 5 (1991): 165–166.
- 56 Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 61.
- 57 *Ibid.*, 62–63; Haugen, *Establishment of National Republics*, 185–186.
- 58 Haugen, *Establishment of National Republics*, 140–144; V. I. Puzanov and V. N. Khliupin, 'Kazakhstan – Uzbekistan: Konfliktnyi potentsial Tsentral'noaziatskogo prostranstva', in *Respublika Kazakhstan: Geopoliticheskie ocherki*, ed. A. V. Novikov (Moscow: Pskov, 1997), 73.
- 59 Haugen, *Establishment of National Republics*, 141.
- 60 According to the 1926 Soviet census, there were 169,748 ethnic Uzbeks and only 1,972 ethnic Kazakhs living in Tashkent city proper. Tashkent also had a considerable Slavic population (104,737 Russians and 8,313 Ukrainians). Iakubovskaia, *Stroitel'stvo soiuznogo sovetskogo sotsialisticheskogo gosudarstva*, 346.
- 61 Lenin, 'Critical Remarks', 50.
- 62 Haugen, *Establishment of National Republics*, 196.
- 63 *Ibid.*, 197.
- 64 Feliks Chuev, *Molotov Remembers: Inside Kremlin Politics; Conversations with Felix Chuev* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1993), 196.
- 65 See Iakubovskaia, *Stroitel'stvo soiuznogo Sovetskogo sotsialisticheskogo gosudarstva*, 350.

- 66 Haugen, *Establishment of National Republics*, 199, 203.
- 67 R. Zh. Bazarbaev, 'Iz istorii natsional'no-gosudarstvennogo razmezhevanii v Karakalpakstane', *Nauchnyi Mir Kazakhstana*, no. 4 (2010): 84.
- 68 Puzanov and Khliupin, 'Kazakhstan – Uzbekistan', 73.
- 69 Rahimov and Urazaeva, *Central Asian Nations*, 188–189; Abashin *et al.*, 'Soviet Rule and the Delineation of Borders', 107–108.
- 70 Arslan Koichiev, 'Ethno-Territorial Claims in the Ferghana Valley During the Process of National Delimitation, 1924–7', in *Central Asia: Aspects of Transition*, ed. Tom Everett-Heath (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 49–55.
- 71 Abashin *et al.*, 'Soviet Rule and the Delineation of Borders', 108.
- 72 See Kh. S. Sulaimanova and A. I. Ishanov, eds., *Istoriia Sovetskogo gosudarstva i prava Uzbekistana*, vol. 2 (Tashkent: AN UzSSR, 1963), 125–126.
- 73 Rahimov and Urazaeva, *Central Asian Nations*, 10–11.
- 74 See Ploskikh, *Istoriia Kyrgyzov*, 204; N. A. Alymkulov, "'Zakrytye temy", "belye piatna" v istorii Sovetskogo Kyrgyzstana i problemy ikh izucheniia', *AUCA Academic Review*, no. 2 (2004): 37. There are six enclaves on the territory of modern Kyrgyzstan: two Tajik (Vorukh and Kairagach) and four Uzbek (Sokh, Shakhimardan, Kalacha, and Jangy-Aiyl). The Kyrgyz exclave Barak and Tajik exclave Sarvak are found within Uzbekistan.
- 75 Haugen, *Establishment of National Republics*, 139–149.
- 76 Masov, *Istoriia topornogo razdeleniia*, 41–42.
- 77 Quoted in *ibid.*, 45.
- 78 See *ibid.*, 42–47.
- 79 Alimova and Radzhapova, *Turkestan*, 663–664.
- 80 Masov, *Istoriia topornogo razdeleniia*, 61–62.
- 81 N. N. Mikhailov, *Po stopam ispolina* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1967), 549.
- 82 S. N. Abashin, *Natsionalizmy v Srednei Azii: V poiskakh identichnosti* (St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 2007), 190–194; Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 175–176.
- 83 Antonenko, *Istoriia Tadzhijskogo naroda*, vol. 3, Pt. 1, 215–218.
- 84 See Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, 283–285; Roy, *New Central Asia*, 67.
- 85 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 8–9, 274–282.
- 86 Carlisle, 'Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan', 77.
- 87 Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, 276.
- 88 For a thorough review of the Peters Commission's work, see Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 176–186.
- 89 For example, see Zhdanko, 'Natsional'no-gosudarstvennoe razmezhevanie', 27; Iusupov, *Natsional'naia politika KPSS*, 135–137.
- 90 For instance, see Masov, *Istoriia topornogo razdeleniia; Tadziki: Vytesnenie i assimiliatsiia* (Dushanbe: Irfon, 2003); Ochil Zohidov, 'Construction and Deconstruction of Nations in Central Asia: Anti-Roy', paper presented at the Sixteenth Annual REE-CAS-NW Conference, The University of Washington, 17 April 2010, available at: <http://ellisoncenter.washington.edu/resources/reecas-nw-conference/reecas-nw-2010/> (last accessed 23 August 2014). Khojaev, Rakhimbaev and Mukhitdinov were typical representatives of the bilingual Sart population of Central Asia, with no clear ethnic identities until the establishment of the Soviet power in the region. With the institutionalization of national identities in Central Asia in the 1920s, they declared themselves as ethnic Uzbeks. While Khojaev asserted his Uzbekness until his death, Rakhimbaev and Mukhitdinov in the second half of the 1920s decided not only to change their Uzbek nationality into Tajik, but also to become fierce champions of 'a Greater Tajikistan' project. In modern Tajikistan, Rakhimbaev and Mukhitdinov are regarded as important Tajik figures, who, despite their earlier mistakes, later strongly defended the interests of their republic against Soviet Uzbek officials. For an interesting attempt in modern Tajik historiography to justify Rakhimbaev's 'anti-Tajik' actions during the early 1920s, see Abdulov, *Siyosatnoma of XXI Century*, Ch. 5.

- 91 Masov, *Istoriia topornogo razdeleniia*, 48.
- 92 Masov, *Tadzhiki*, 85.
- 93 Masov, *Istoriia topornogo razdeleniia*, 25; Abdulov, *Siyosatnoma of XXI Century*, Ch. 5.
- 94 See Laruelle, 'Return of the Aryan Myth', 51–70.
- 95 E. Khasanov, 'Istoriia Tadzhikov i ee sovremennye fal'sifikatory,' *Tsentraziia*, 9 February 2010, available at: www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1265669040 (last accessed 6 March 2015).
- 96 G. A. Khidoiatov, 'Vot tak Gal'cha stali Aritsami (otvet poklonnikam i pochitate-liam Samanidov)', *Tsentraziia*, 19 October 2007, available at: www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1192745880 (last accessed 6 March 2015). For an interesting review of the polemics between the Uzbek and Tajik historians, see Slavomír Horák, 'In Search of the History of Tajikistan', *Russian Politics and Law* 48, no. 5 (2010): 65–77.
- 97 For example, see Roy, *New Central Asia*, 61, 178; Khalid, *Islam after Communism*, 148; William Fierman, *Language Planning and National Development: The Uzbek Experience* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1991), 45.
- 98 For example, see David Abramson, 'Identity Counts: The Soviet Legacy and the Census in Uzbekistan', in *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity and Language in National Censuses*, ed. David I. Kertzer and Dominique Arel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 188; Haugen, *Establishment of National Republics*, 155.
- 99 Abramson, 'Identity Counts', 188.
- 100 Haugen, *Establishment of National Republics*, 156.
- 101 For example, see Zhdanko, 'Natsional'no-gosudarstvennoe razmezhevanie', 27.
- 102 Haugen, *Establishment of National Republics*, 159–161.
- 103 Schoeberlein-Engel, 'Identity in Central Asia', 287, note 78.
- 104 For example, see A. Mukhitdinov, 'Tadzhiki ili Uzbeki naseliatui gorod Bukharu i ego okrestnosti (v poriadke obsuzhdeniia)', *Za Partiiu*, no. 9 (1928): 67–70.
- 105 Studenikin, *Istoriia Sovetskoi konstitutsii*, 482–483.
- 106 *Ibid.*, 485–487.
- 107 *Obrazovanie Turkmenskoi SSR i sozдание Kompartii Turkmenistana, 1924–1925 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov* (Ashkhabad: Turkmenistan, 1966), 87–89.
- 108 Studenikin, *Istoriia Sovetskoi konstitutsii*, 489.
- 109 *Ibid.*, 493–495.
- 110 *Ibid.*, 495–498.
- 111 *Ibid.*, 547–548.
- 112 *Obrazovanie Kirgizskoi avtonomnoi SSR: Materialy i dokumenty* (Frunze: Oblispolkom KAO, 1927).
- 113 Iakubovskaia, *Stroitel'stvo soiuznogo sovetskogo sotsialisticheskogo gosudarstva*, 355.
- 114 According to Soviet historiography, the transfer of Orenburg region to the Russian Federation proper was caused by the fact that it was predominantly populated by ethnic-Russians and was also economically more integrated with the Russian/Ural regions than with the 'Kazakh' ones. See Nusupbekov *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 4, 357–358.
- 115 *KPSS i Sovetskoe pravitel'stvo o Kazakhstane, 1917–1977 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstan, 1978), 78.
- 116 *Ibid.*, 89.
- 117 Nusupbekov *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 4, 358.
- 118 See Kolarz, *Russia and Her Colonies*, 258.
- 119 I. M. Muminov, ed. *Istoriia Karakalpakskoi ASSR*, vol. 2 (Tashkent: Fan, 1974), 162.
- 120 *Ibid.*, 191.

- 121 For example, see D. A. Alimova, ed. *Istoriia Uzbekistana (1917–1991 gg.): Ucheb-nik dlia uchashchikhsia 10 klassov obshcheobrazovatelnykh shkol* (Tashkent: Shark, 2005), 219–220.
- 122 Roy, *New Central Asia*, xv.
- 123 Quoted in Chuev, *Molotov Remembers*, 196.

7 Soviet census and passport policies

Institutionalizing Kazakh and Uzbek national identities

By 1924, after carefully examining the political, security, socio-economic and demographic context of Central Asia, the Soviet government finally settled upon what titular nations should be formed in the region out of numerous indigenous groups. The end result of this political ‘imagination’ was the identification of the Kazakh, Uzbek, Turkmen, Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Karakalpak ethnonational communities, followed by the territorial delimitation of their respective national administrative jurisdictions, a process which laid the foundation for Soviet nation-making in Central Asia.

It was, however, one thing to establish national-republics in Soviet Central Asia for the state-defined nations, but quite another to make the local indigenous population groups or individuals within them believe that they were the members of one of these ethnonational communities, and accordingly the bearers of the corresponding national identities. These state-defined national categories had no meaningful significance for most of the native Central Asians, who continued to identify themselves primarily with their religion, tribe, clan, city and/or region. Hence, in order to reify these politically ‘imagined’ ethnonational communities in the region, the Soviet government embarked upon another ambitious nation-making endeavour of formally delimiting and categorizing the native population along nationality lines. The objective was twofold: (i) to determine the ethnonationality of every native Central Asian, and in turn the exact population stock of each state-defined nation in the region; and (ii) to encourage the native Central Asians to identify themselves, first and foremost, along these state-introduced national categories. The strategy by which this twofold goal was to be achieved included the institutionalization of the state-approved ethnonational identities through statistical means, such as census, survey, identification cards and numerous other administrative records. In this regard, the first all-Union census of December 1926 was instrumental in instilling national identities in Soviet Central Asia, as it sought, for the first time, to categorize the entire population of the region (and the rest of the USSR) according to ethnonational lines.

Previously, in the Tsarist censuses/surveys, as discussed in Chapter 3, information on the ethnic origin of the Empire’s subjects was established on the basis of native language, religion and *soslovie*. However, the application of the same methodology in determining the ethnonational composition of the USSR

population, as Hirsch notes, was not sufficient for Soviet census-makers due to the following reasons: (i) the Bolshevik regime 'delegitimized' religion and therefore it could not have been used as an individual's formal identity marker; and (ii) Tsarist colonial policies resulted in the linguistic Russification of many of its non-Russian peoples, and for that reason, the correlation between native language and nationality could not have always been the case.¹ According to Hirsch, neither the existing Bolshevik theoretical analyses of nationality question nor their definitions of nation would have been practicable for the intended all-Union census, because they hardly applied to economically and socioculturally less-advanced Soviet peoples with no national consciousness, such as native communities of Central Asia, Northern Caucasus and Siberia.² Consequently, there was an emerging need for the Soviet census-designers to come up with new 'objective' determinants of nationality for the purpose of the census, which should have facilitated individuals without ethnonational identification to ascribe themselves to one of the state-approved nationality categories in the census questionnaire.

The issue of defining the category of nationality was directly related to the choice of terminology to be used in the census poll. Soviet scholars advising the Central Statistical Administration on the matter largely disagreed over the preference between the two Russian terms for nationality: *narodnost'* and *natsional'nost'*. While some scholars maintained that both terms were largely synonymous, others, stemming from the Marxist evolutionary scheme of historical materialism, asserted that they accorded with peoples' different levels of historical and sociocultural development. According to the latter group of Soviet academics, *narodnost'* referred to a more primitive society with a weak collective consciousness such as ethnic group, while *natsional'nost'* implied a people with a higher level of group and sociocultural consciousness such as national community.³ Eventually, the 1926 census-designers decided to adopt the term *narodnost'*, defining it as 'a group of persons unified and differentiated from other such groups by certain common biological characteristics and by a common language'.⁴ The logic behind such a decision was that the categorization of its population according to *narodnost'*, rather than along *natsional'nost'* lines, would have enabled the Soviet government to establish a more comprehensive ethnodemographic picture of the USSR. Besides, as Kozlov notes, it was believed that a substantial part of the Soviet population, particularly those with no national affiliation, would more easily associate themselves with a *narodnost'* than with a *natsional'nost'*.⁵ In addition, for political and practical reasons, it was agreed that for certain 'advanced' peoples, such as Ukrainians, the 1926 census would employ the category *narodnost'* synonymously with *natsional'nost'*; while for the socioculturally relatively 'backward' peoples, such as indigenous Central Asians and North Caucasians,⁶ *narodnost'* would also be used alongside such categories as tribe and clan. Nevertheless, in either case, the census-takers would enter the respondents' answers under the general column of *narodnost'*.⁷

The process of defining what it meant to be a *narodnost'* in the 1926 census also involved determining which groups of people were to be recognized as

such, and which were to be aggregated into other culturally and linguistically akin groups, and consequently not to be included in the census list of state-recognized *narodnosti*.⁸ This was not an easy task, considering the complex ethnolinguistic pattern of the USSR. In the end, however, based on existing ethnographic knowledge and political considerations, the 1926 census-organizers regrouped around 530 officially-identified identities (ethnic and tribal) of the Soviet Union into less than 200 state-approved *narodnosti*.⁹

In Central Asia, one of those identity groups that became disapproved by the Soviet government was the Sarts. The formal explanation of this decision was that the designation 'Sart' denoted not an ethnicity but a people with particular socio-economic characteristics, and having close connections with Uzbeks. For example, Magidovich's commission on administrative-territorial regionalization (*raionirovaniye*) of Central Asia in 1924 concluded that the Sarts were not a separate people different from the Uzbeks, and that there was not a separate Sart language different from Uzbek.¹⁰ This conclusion was shortly thereafter reiterated by Russian ethnographer Ivan Zarubin, who served as one of the key advisors to the Soviet authorities on nationality issues in Central Asia. In his report, Zarubin argued that the Sarts were Turkic-speaking people of Iranian origin, affiliating themselves with the Uzbeks, and they should have been recorded as such in official statistics.¹¹ Consequently, on the basis of these recommendations, more than a million Muslim Central Asians, whose formal (based on the 1897 census classification) or one of the informal identities were Sart, were mainly registered in the 1926 census as members of the Uzbek *narodnost'*. Apart from the Sarts, the same destiny was reserved for such Central Asian communities as Laqay, Karluk and Chaghatay, who were not recognized by the Central Statistical Administration as separate *narodnosti* and were subsumed within the category of Uzbek in the 1926 census.¹²

The 1926 census-organizers also acknowledged the fact that not all the representatives of the native peoples in the Soviet east, including Central Asia, would be able to clearly and convincingly identify themselves in the census with any or a single particular state-recognized *narodnost'*. For instance, a Muslim Naiman (one of the Turkic tribal identities in Central Asia that was not recognized by the Soviet government as a distinct *narodnost'*) from the Jizzakh *uezd*, who equally mastered two or more regional languages/dialects (for example, Kazakh and Kipchak-Uzbek), may have had serious difficulties in responding persuasively to the question of his/her *narodnost'*. There were also many native Central Asians who equally self-identified with two official *narodnosti* (at least with their designations), such as Uzbek and Kurama, or Kazakh and Kipchak. For many of them, the 'Uzbek', 'Kazakh' or 'Kipchak' category meant not the ethnonational belonging but a tribal affiliation or a social way of life. To manage such cases, Soviet ethnographers and statisticians designed a list of regionally specific supplementary questions, such as on mother tongue, secondary language, religion, kinship and place of residence. They also worked out a special explanatory manual describing the ethnographic characteristics of each state-recognized nationality. Combined data received from interviewing and ethnographic observation should have assisted the census-takers to determine the nationless

respondents' 'authentic' *narodnosti*, which then was to be inscribed in their official identification documents.¹³

And what about those native Central Asians who had ready answers for the census question on *narodnost'*, had they all actually developed a sense of national consciousness by 1926? Or, did their formally-declared *narodnosti* carry a special emotional meaning to their lives at that time? Not necessarily. The truth of the matter was that in the first all-Union census, as well as in all subsequent Soviet censuses, the response to the question on ethnonationality was mandatory for every Soviet citizen. In particular, during the census interview, every respondent, irrespective of whether he/she possessed a developed national consciousness or not, was obliged to declare (or claim or choose) his/her 'authentic' *narodnost*. Otherwise, as mentioned above, it was up to census-takers to determine respondents' *narodnosti* based on the special ethnographic manual worked out by the Central Statistical Administration.¹⁴ Consequently, having no option, many native Central Asians were keen themselves to provide answers on their *narodnosti*. However, their declared *narodnosti* should have been plausible for census-takers to believe. For instance, no census-taker would have classified a native Muslim Central Asian person with Mongoloid features as Russian national even if he/she asserted to be one. Generally, most indigenous Central Asians declared as their *narodnost'* the one that they had most associations with, for example, kinship, cultural, linguistic, sentimental or simply a terminological/semantic one. But for many, especially those with a mixed ethnic/tribal/linguistic background or the ones affiliating themselves with two or more official *narodnosti* simultaneously, the choice of a *narodnost'* in the census was also a matter of pure pragmatism: the best identity was the one that would ensure better social and economic opportunities in comparison to other possible alternatives. Such cases were particularly prevalent in the most racially and socioculturally intertwined parts of the region, such as the Ferghana Valley, as well as across nearly all the inter-republican border areas in Soviet Central Asia.

However, for many Central Asians, particularly those not belonging to the titular nationalities of the region, or belonging but residing outside their home republic, the 1926 census was not mainly about a formal declaration of their 'authentic' *narodnost'*, or about an independent (subjective rational) choice of their national identity, but rather about a means to avoid ethnic harassment from the local government. In particular, after the completion of the territorial delimitation of Central Asia, the governments of newly-formed Soviet national republics, under the guidance of the Kremlin leadership, launched nation-building projects, which often involved discriminatory policies towards the members of non-titular nationalities, especially in the labour sphere. In a highly heterogeneous Central Asia, this ethnicization of politics often caused exacerbation of relations between the various distinct communities, residing in the same localities, over the distribution of economic resources. For example, disputes over land frequently led to demands from the representatives of the titular nationalities to expel ethnic minorities from their 'own' native republics. Consequently, out of fear of oppression and exile, members of minority communities were

often forced to hide their 'real' *narodnost*, and to declare themselves belonging to a titular nationality of the republic of their residence in the census. For instance, some 'Kazakh' and Uzbek residents of the Turkmen SSR declared their *narodnost* to be Turkmen because of fear of expulsion from the republic.¹⁵ In the Uzbek SSR, many representatives of the Uighur, Taranchi and Kashgari communities, despite the fact that they were recognized by the Central Statistical Administration as distinct *narodnosti*, were for some reasons classified as Uzbeks in the 1926 census reports.¹⁶ In some cases, minorities were even compelled against their will to ascribe themselves to the titular nationality group. The most vivid case of this was in Uzbekistan, where thousands of Tajiks (or 'Farsi-Tajik'-speakers) were forced to self-identify as Uzbek in the census.¹⁷ For example, according to the Tajik scholar, M. Shokuri:

To the census agents' question, "Who are you?", people often replied "Alhamdollah [Thank God], I am a Muslim." In response they were told to go to Arabia. At a second attempt, the answer might be, "I am a Persian speaker." "Then go to Iran," they were told. "I am a Tajik": "Then get out of Uzbekistan." "But Bukhara (or Samarkand) is my native town." "Then declare yourself an Uzbek."¹⁸

The result of this assimilatory pressure was that official number of Tajiks in Uzbekistan proper dropped significantly. For instance, while the 1920 Samarkand city data reported 44,578 Tajik and 3,311 Uzbek residents, the 1926 census counted 10,716 Tajiks and 43,304 Uzbeks.¹⁹

In addition to establishing citizens' ethnonationalities, the Soviet censuses also sought to determine their native languages. For this purpose, the Central Statistical Administration provided the census-takers with special instructions on how to establish the respondents' native language. For example, instructions for the 1926 all-Union census defined native language as one that a respondent commands the best or speaks generally.²⁰ The instructions also specified that it was permissible that for an individual's *narodnost* and native language not to coincide.²¹ Overall, according to Hirsch, 'the census questions about nationality and native language were supposed to shed light on the Union's "ethnographic dynamic" and on the current distribution of language'.²²

Eventually, the first all-Union Census of 1926 came up with the list of 194 *narodnosti* living within the borders of the USSR, including Kazakh and Uzbek.²³ According to the census data, 3,968,289 people throughout the Soviet Union identified themselves as Kazakhs.²⁴ Of this number, 3,713,394 Kazakhs resided in their home republic and constituted 57.1 per cent of the total population of the KazASSR (6,503,006). Other important *narodnost*' groups in Kazakhstan based on the 1926 census report were as follows: Russians (19.7 per cent), Ukrainians (13.2 per cent), Uzbeks (3.3 per cent), Tatars (1.2 per cent) and Germans (0.8 per cent).²⁵

In comparison, the first all-Union census reported 3,904,622 million self-identified Uzbeks living within the borders of the Soviet Union, out of who

3,475,340 resided in the Uzbek SSR and accounted for 66 per cent of the entire population of the republic (5,272,801), including the Tajik ASSR. As regards the minority population of Uzbekistan, compared to the KazASSR, it was largely composed of Turkic and Iranian peoples, such as Tajiks (18.4 per cent), Kazakhs (2 per cent), Kyrgyzs (1.7 per cent), Tatars (0.5 per cent) and Karakalpaks (0.5 per cent); while the share of the European/Slavic population was less than 6 per cent of the total population.²⁶ In Soviet Central Asia, apart from the titular nationalities of the region, the 1926 census also recognized a number of other distinct indigenous *narodnosti*, such as Kipchak, Kurama, Ishkashim, Wakhi, Shugnan and Yaghnobi.²⁷

Immediately after releasing the official list of the 1926 census-recognized *narodnosti*, the Soviet nation-engineers, Tishkov writes, engaged in 'scholarly ethnographic processing and political manipulations that ... [sought] to redefine the list by declaring some identities dialectal, sub-ethnic, or local variants of larger *ethnoses*'.²⁸ As a result, already in the next all-Union census, conducted in 1939,²⁹ many of those formerly recognized non-titular Central Asian *narodnosti* were absent from the list of official nationalities. For example, people who identified themselves as Kipchaks in the 1926 census were reclassified in the following Soviet censuses primarily as Kazakhs or Uzbeks, depending on their spoken language.³⁰ As for the Kurama people, they were recorded mostly as Uzbeks, while all Pamiri peoples (Ishkashim, Vakhans and Shugnans) and Yaghnobs were categorized in the post-1926 all-Union censuses as Tajiks.³¹ The similar 'ethnographic processing' was also observed in other parts of the Soviet Union. For example, while the 1926 all-Union census reported that there were 194 *narodnosti* in the USSR, the 1939, 1959 and 1970 all-Union censuses registered 97, 126 and 119 nationalities respectively.³²

According to Arakadii Isupov, a distinguished Soviet statistician, one of the key reasons that the number of officially-recognized distinct nationalities in the Soviet Union declined considerably over time was due to the fact that, unlike the first all-Union Soviet census all other successive censuses classified population not along *narodnost*' lines but according to *natsional'nost*'. Hence, many of those *narodnosti* that were classified separately in the 1926 census were automatically subsumed within their *natsional'nost*' categories (a wider community) in post-1926 censuses.³³ Most Soviet scholars, however, emphasized the ongoing process of fusion of distinct *narodnosti*, which was taking place under socialist construction in the Soviet Union. Proponents of this perspective underlined that with the progress of Soviet nationality and modernization policies many smaller (and/or 'backward') communities had been gradually amalgamating with larger and more developed national communities.³⁴ The latter theoretical approach derived from the Leninist-Stalinist view on the temporary/transitional character of nations, and their ultimate merger into a single Soviet community.

The practical scope of the census can be quite broad and hence very useful for any modern state, but, as Abramson remarks, it is 'particularly important for a new state because it is the means by which a government [for the first time] can take inventory of its national stock'.³⁵ In this regard, the 1926 census was

certainly an invaluable means for the Soviet nation-makers to acquire comprehensive data on the peoples of the Soviet Union, including Central Asia. The census-gathered information, for example, on nationality, language and age distribution in each republic of the USSR allowed Soviet officials to assess the need for altering or adjusting those nationality policies that were already in operation or planned, as well as to work out new ones. For instance, the census data on Kazakh school-age children in the KazASSR, such as their numbers and regional distribution, enabled the Soviet policymakers to estimate the number of required Kazakh-language primary schools, teachers and textbooks, with the objective not only to spread literacy among the youth, but also to enhance their national consciousness through education.

Aside from pure policy planning purposes, Hirsch notes, the Soviet republican elites, particularly of Uzbekistan, also sought to use the 1926 census as a political tool to legitimize—by any means, including the falsification of census figures—the dominant position of the titular nations within their respective home republics, and to retain or gain control over the disputed territories and resources.³⁶ For example, as it was discussed in the previous chapter, the leaders of both the Soviet Uzbek and Tajik republics strenuously sought to interpret the 1926 census data on ethnodemographic composition of Samarkand and Bukhara in such a way as to prove their right to these cities and their surrounding areas based on their predominantly Uzbek or Tajik ethnic make-up respectively. Besides, having a statistically acknowledged demographic majority status for a titular nation within its ‘own’ republic, regardless of whether based upon true or forged results of the census, was thought to be a great asset at the disposal of any nationalizing republican government. For example, the 1926 census data, confirming the ethnic Uzbek majority in the Uzbek SSR, considerably facilitated the Soviet Uzbek government’s nation-building efforts to nativize (or Uzbekize) its territory through state-sponsored history-writing and myth-making projects, producing narratives exclusively linking the territory of Uzbekistan to the dominant nationality it was named after.

The 1926 census-taking was also a very useful tool for the Soviet nation-builders to artificially accelerate the process of consolidation of different smaller identities (tribes and clans) into broader (national) entities. For instance, the 1926 census had a considerable impact on Uzbek nation-making, since it institutionally imposed the collective Uzbek national identity, initially at least the common ethnonym, onto various distinct sedentary Turkic- (and some Iranian) speaking peoples of Central Asia, most importantly the Sarts. Similarly, the 1926 census was an effective nation-building tool in enforcing a single Kazakh national identity upon the different indigenous steppe (mostly nomadic) peoples of Central Asia. It must be emphasized that disregarding the possibility that many of those the 1926 census-defined Kazakh nationals might have previously also identified themselves as being ‘Kazakhs’ in addition to their immediate tribal/clan identities, this should in no way be interpreted as an existence of ethnic Kazakh consciousness at that time, perhaps with an exception among the few Russian-educated intellectuals. As Masanov explains, in pre-Soviet Central

Asia, the term ‘Kazakh’ only had a sociocultural connotation—that is, being a nomad or pursuing a nomadic lifestyle. It was only in the process of institutionalization of national identities under the Soviet regime during the 1920s and 1930s that the term ‘Kazakh’ gradually acquired an ethnonational meaning. Consequently, Masanov continues,

Kazakhs have become all of those who define their group membership not in accordance with their ... way of life, as it has been for many past centuries, but in accordance with the record [in the census-report and] in their passports.³⁷

One of the most important implications of the first all-Union census, as Hirsch points out, was that it triggered an ‘activation of official nationality categories “on the ground”’.³⁸ Namely, the 1926 census, which was an all-inclusive project taking place simultaneously in all parts of the USSR, mandated native Central Asians, en masse, for the first time to define themselves in national terms. In this way, Hirsch argues, Soviet citizens were taught that everyone should have a nationality.³⁹ Moreover, since the ‘clarification of nationality’ for census (bureaucratic) purposes was a novelty for most indigenous peoples of Central Asia, not to mention the fact that for many the formal affiliation to a particular *narodnost*’ could have potentially had consequences for their long-term social well-being, it is no surprise that in the days prior to the 1926 census day a nationality issue had become a subject of popular discourse in the region. Accordingly, people from the same localities in private and/or group conversations often exchanged their opinions about their future choice of *narodnost*’. This, in turn, significantly contributed to the generation of awareness of belonging to a particular (state-recognized) nationality, among the indigenous Central Asian population. Certainly, it would be naive to suppose that by responding to the question of *narodnost*’ in the 1926 census one ‘magically came to believe [his/]her own personal role in a collective national trajectory’; but rather what the census achieved, Abramson writes, was that it ‘reflected and even reinforced the experience of belonging to a nationality’.⁴⁰ For example, no matter how much importance self-declared Kazakhs and Uzbeks attached to their *narodnosti*, the 1926 census formally made/recognized/incorporated them as members of the state-configured Kazakh and Uzbek national communities respectively, each possessing its own national territory, government, symbols and so forth.

Thus, the census-taking became one of the first political mechanisms through which the Soviet nation-builders in Moscow embarked upon engineering national consciousness (both personal and collective) in the minds of native Central Asians. However, as useful as the 1926 census was in introducing national identities in Soviet Central Asia, it had its limitations in making these administratively-imposed categories meaningful and persistent to their bearers throughout their lifetimes (at least until the final merger of all Soviet nations); because it (census-taking) is not a daily social practice. In this regard, one of the most important nationality policy decisions adopted by the Soviet government in

the early 1930s, Brubaker argues, was to decouple the concept of nationality from that of (all-inclusive Soviet) citizenship, and to institutionalize the former, at individual level, as 'an obligatory and mainly ascriptive *legal category*, a key element of an individual's legal status'.⁴¹ For example, the Kremlin made it a requirement that nationality (that is, ethnonational origin) be cited in all personal identification documents, such as birth certificate, and most importantly the Soviet internal passport, introduced in 1932 and issued to citizens reaching age 16.

The reason for detaching formal nationality from citizenship in the Soviet Union was due to the fact that the Soviet regime exercised an ethnic, rather than civic, model of nation-building in all constituting republics of the USSR, including Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Accordingly, the Soviet system formally interpreted nationality not as a politico-legal and cultural construct, but rather as a primordial and biological category, acquired by descent rather than by residence. This implied that an individual's nationality in the Soviet Union was formally established only according to the one's parents' ethnonational identity. 'There [was] no individual choice', Karklins writes, 'except if the parents belong[ed] to different ethnic groups. In this instance, the youngster getting his or her first internal passport ... may [have chosen] between the two alternatives'.⁴² However, once nationality was recorded in the passport, it was legally forbidden to modify it thereafter, unless the court could establish that a given nationality entered in the passport was a typo by the passport issuing authority.⁴³ Thus, parental ethnonationality became a key determinant of every Soviet citizen's formal nationality during the lifetime, even if one no longer had any sentimental attachment to his/her ancestral culture, language and/or territory because of assimilation into another cultural group. For example, an ethnic Azerbaijani, permanently living in Soviet Uzbekistan, irrespective of the level of his/her integration/assimilation into the Uzbek national community, under the Soviet law, would have never been formally recognized as an Uzbek ethnonational, and for that reason not allowed to change his/her passport-nationality from Azerbaijani to Uzbek, if desired. On the other hand, however, this implied that extraterritorial national minorities were legally protected from forced assimilation into the dominant titular nationalities of their 'host' republics.

A nationality inscribed in the so-called 'fifth paragraph' of the Soviet internal passports, Karklins writes, was not a mere biographical datum on the passport-holders, but rather an important 'regulatory device used by Soviet bureaucracy'.⁴⁴ Namely, the Soviet system required that nationality (one that was recorded in a passport) be cited in all official documents, such as applications for housing, work and residence permits, library cards, marriage certificates and so forth.⁴⁵ No other identity, which used to define, for instance, indigenous Central Asians' communal belongings prior to the Soviet era, such as Islam and/or clan/tribe, was endowed with any formal status or function (for example, legal, administrative and/or social) within the Soviet system. Apart from a class identity, which after the 1930s became increasingly less relevant in its own right,⁴⁶ the only formal identity of the Soviet citizens' that had a valuable social and

legal dimension in the USSR was an individual's nationality. Thus, in an 'absolutist bureaucratic state' such as the USSR, where nearly every aspect of social life was controlled by the totalitarian regime, a passport nationality became a mandatory formal identity of every Soviet person, in many ways regulating their relations with the state.⁴⁷

Nationality designation in the Soviet passport was not an abstract administrative legal category, free of ethnonational and cultural baggage. On the contrary, it was an important classificatory tool that served to: reinforce ethnonational self-identification among, for instance, the formerly nationless peoples of Central Asia; as well as to raise the latter's consciousness of belonging to respective (state-defined) national communities (comprised of people with the same nationality entry in their internal passports), and to attach their collective loyalties to their home republics. The significance of passport nationality in strengthening and maintaining national consciousness and identities among the indigenous peoples of Soviet Central Asia is best understood when analysed in conjunction with the earlier discussed politics of ethnofederalism practised in the Soviet Union. For example, within the framework of the Soviet federal system, Soviet Kazakh republic was viewed as the exclusive homeland of Kazakh nationals (that is, those with Kazakh nationality entry in their passports), regardless whether they resided in Kazakhstan or not, or whether they, as a group, formed a majority population on their land. As regards to non-Kazakh permanent residents of Kazakhstan, such as the people of Ukrainian ethnic descent, they were formally, according to their passports, regarded as Ukrainian nationals, whose homeland was considered not the republic of their domicile but of their ancestral forebears, that is, Ukraine. Thus, the Soviet ethnofederalism formally bounded each state-recognized Central Asian titular nationality as a group, as well as their members individually irrespective of their residence status, to a particular, clearly delineated, national territory. This very decision to institutionalize ethnonationality on the personal/group and territorial levels, Brubaker underlines, was a major Soviet nation-building exercise that 'established nationhood and nationality as fundamental social categories' in the USSR,⁴⁸ in general, and Soviet Central Asia, in particular.

Indeed, notwithstanding the artificial character of their formation, the institutionalization of ethnically-defined and territorially-based national communities in Central Asia made them political and geographical realities of the region. On the other hand, the territorialization of state-imposed national identities, regardless of the meaningfulness to their bearers at the beginning, had a huge impact on the restructuring of systems of the traditional individual and collective identities of the native Central Asians. Within the new sociopolitical and economic constraints established by the Soviet system in the region, the state-mandated territorialized national identities emerged as tangible alternatives to the formerly predominant supranational (Islamic *ummah*) and subnational (tribal, clan, village and regional) identities of the Central Asian Muslim peoples.⁴⁹ In addition, a whole set of Soviet nationality policies, which were implemented in Soviet Central Asia by the Kremlin since the mid-1920s, induced the native population

to identify themselves primarily with their state-defined national identities, communities and republics. For example, from the very establishment of the Soviet ethnofederal system, the Soviet government *de facto* entitled representatives of the titular indigenous nationalities with certain privilege rights and positions within their native territories. The Kremlin, for instance, informally employed nationality-based quota schemes favouring titular nationals in employment and educational fields within their home republics. Under such schemes, Soviet Kazakh and Uzbek nationals enjoyed considerable advantages, for example, in being hired into upper-level *nomenklatura* positions in their ‘own’ republics. However, if they resided outside of their home republic, then, as Masanov notes, they ‘would completely lose their *nomenklatura* privileges and would join the rank-and-file ethnic group’.⁵⁰ Overall, this meant that formal ethnonationality, authenticated mainly by internal passport, became an important lifelong identity marker of every Soviet Kazakh and Uzbek, determining and influencing their career and educational opportunities, both positively or negatively, depending on their place of residence.

Notes

- 1 Francine Hirsch, ‘Towards a Soviet Order of Things: The 1926 Census and the Making of the Soviet Union’, in *Categories and Contexts: Anthropological and Historical Studies in Critical Demography*, ed. Simon Szreter, Hania Sholkamy and A. Dharmalingam (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 128.
- 2 *Ibid.*
- 3 *Ibid.*, 129–130; Lenore A. Grenoble, *Language Policy in the Soviet Union* (New York: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), 39–40.
- 4 The Soviet Government Newspaper *Izvestiia* (of 9 December 1926) as quoted in R. F. K., ‘The Recent Russian Census’, *Foreign Affairs* 6, no. 2 (1928): 333. For official purposes, the term *natsional’nost’* was then defined as ‘*narodnost* plus culture plus state organization’. *Izvestiia* (of 18 February 1927) as quoted in *ibid.*, 333, emphasis added.
- 5 V. I. Kozlov, *Natsional’nosti SSSR: Etnodemograficheskii obzor* (Moscow: Finansy i Statistika, 1982), 235.
- 6 Note that in this book, the use of the term ‘backward’ in reference to the Central Asian communities of the 1920s and 1930s is not meant to imply any derogatory evaluation of the level of their sociocultural and political development at that time. Rather, the term is primarily used to reflect the official Soviet view on the matter. In particular, prior to engaging in their modernization activities in the USSR, Soviet policymakers classified all Soviet peoples into two main categories according to their sociocultural development—‘advanced’ and ‘backward’. According to this classification, practically all eastern Soviet communities, including the Kazakhs and Uzbeks, were formally regarded as socioculturally ‘backward’ compared to more ‘advanced’ Russian and some Western Soviet nationalities, such as Ukrainians, Georgians, Armenians, Jews and Germans. See Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 23, 126–127, 167, Table 21.
- 7 R. F. K., ‘Recent Russian Census’, 333.
- 8 Grenoble, *Language Policy*, 39.
- 9 Valery Tishkov, *Ethnicity, Nationalism and Conflict in and After the Soviet Union: The Mind Aflame* (London: Sage, 1997), 15.
- 10 *Materialy po raionirovaniu Srednei Azii*, vol. 1, pt. 1 (Bukhara: Komissiiia po raionirovaniu Srednei Azii, 1926), 174.

- 11 I. I. Zarubin, *Spisok narodnostei Turkestarskogo kraia* (Leningrad: RAN, 1925), 14–16.
- 12 Schoeberlein-Engel, ‘Prospects for Uzbek National Identity’, 14–15.
- 13 Hirsch, ‘Towards a Soviet Order of Things’, 130–131, 135–136.
- 14 According to Tishkov, Yelena Peschereva, a Soviet ethnographer who worked as a census-taker in Central Asia for the first all-Union census, years later, after her retirement, admitted that during the 1926 census, she personally ‘‘‘‘had given birth to thousands of Tajiks’’’ by simply registering them as such’. Tishkov, *Ethnicity*, 20. However, elsewhere Tishkov writes that Peschereva said this about the Uzbeks. See Valery Tishkov, ‘Posle mnogonatsional’nosti’, *Znamia*, no. 3 (2003): 190.
- 15 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 70–71; Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 200–201.
- 16 Ian Murray Matley, ‘The Population and the Land’, in *Central Asia, 130 Years of Russian Dominance: A Historical Overview*, ed. Edward Allworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 106.
- 17 Masov, *Istoriia topornogo razdeleniia*, 78–80, 86–87; Bergne, *Birth of Tajikistan*, 105–110.
- 18 Quoted in Guissou Jahangiri, ‘The Premises for the Construction of a Tajik National Identity, 1920–1930’, in *Tajikistan: The Trials of Independence*, ed. Mohammad-Reza Djalili, Frédéric Grare, and Shirin Akiner (Richmond: Curzon, 1998), 35, note 12, emphasis in original.
- 19 R. R. Rakhimov, ‘Ivan Ivanovich Zarubin (1887–1964)’, *Sovetskaia Etnografiia*, no. 1 (1989): 118.
- 20 Kozlov, *Natsional’nosti SSSR*, 236. In all the successive all-Union censuses, the determination of one’s native language was left entirely up to a census-respondent. However, as Kozlov notes many Soviet citizens interpreted this question as asking for their ethnonationality. For instance, despite the high degree of linguistic Russification in Kazakh society, the absolute majority of Kazakhs declared Kazakh as their native language in census surveys. See *ibid.*, 240, Table 36. The same was the case with the linguistically-Russified Uzbeks.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 235.
- 22 Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 126.
- 23 See *Programmy i posobiia k razrabotke vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1926 goda*, vol. 7, *Perechen’ i slovar’ narodnostei* (Moscow: TsSU, 1927).
- 24 *Statisticheskii spravochnik SSSR za 1928* (Moscow: Statizdat, 1929), 32, Table 5.
- 25 N. L. Krasnobaeva, ‘Dinamika chislennosti i etnicheskii sostav naseleniia Kazakhstana po dannym I vsesoiuznoi perepisi 1926 g.’, *Izvestiia Altaiskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta* 4, no. 34 (2004): 19, Table 3.
- 26 *Statisticheskii spravochnik SSSR*, 32, 36–39, Table 5.
- 27 See *Programmy i posobiia*, vol. 7.
- 28 Tishkov, *Ethnicity*, 31, emphasis in original.
- 29 An all-Union census was also conducted in 1937, but when it reported a significantly lower Soviet population (162 million) than anticipated by Stalin in 1934 (up to 180 million) its results were soon suppressed and its organizers imprisoned as saboteurs. On the 1937 all-Union census, see V. B. Zhiromskaia, I. N. Kiselev, and Iu. A. Poliakov, *Polveka pod grifom ‘sekretno’: Vsesoiuznaia perepis’ naseleniia 1937 goda* (Moscow: Nauka, 1996).
- 30 Kozlov, *Natsional’nosti SSSR*, 290; Schoeberlein-Engel, ‘Prospects for Uzbek National Identity’, 16.
- 31 Mirkhasilov and Faiziev, ‘Natsional’no-gosudarstvennoe razmezhevanie’, 10–11; Roy, *New Central Asia*, 71.
- 32 I. P. Tsamerian, *Teoreticheskie problemy obrazovaniia i razvitiia Sovetskogo mnogonatsional’nogo gosudarstva* (Moscow: Nauka, 1973), 156. According to Isupov, the fact that the 1939 census listed fewer *natsional’nosti* (nationalities) than all the subsequent censuses was a result of the serious mistakes made by the Soviet

Central Statistical Administration, which was then under the negative influence of Stalin's personality cult. Particularly, a few years earlier, in 1936, while presenting the draft of the Soviet Constitution, Stalin stated that there were around 60 *natsional'nosti* and *narodnosti* living in the Soviet Union. Consequently, Isupov suggests that the organizers of the 1939 all-Union census, being reluctant to disagree with Stalin's above assertion, in their final census report intentionally reduced the number of existing nationalities in the Soviet Union. A. A. Isupov, *Natsional'nyi sostav naseleeniia SSSR: Po itogam perepisi 1959 g.* (Moscow: Statistika, 1961), 13. It is possible that the fate of the 1937 census-administrators served as a deterrent for the 1939 census-organizers not to dispute the government's official projection of the population growth in the Soviet Union.

33 Isupov, *Natsional'nyi sostav*, 12–13.

34 For example, see Tsamerian, *Teoreticheskie problemy*, 156–159; Mirkhasilov and Faiziev, 'Natsional'no-gosudarstvennoe razmezhevanie', 10–14.

35 Abramson, 'Identity Counts', 195.

36 Hirsch, 'Towards a Soviet Order of Things', 127, 139.

37 Masanov, 'Perceptions of Ethnic and All-National Identity', 23.

38 Hirsch, 'Towards a Soviet Order of Things', 127.

39 *Ibid.*, 138.

40 Abramson, 'Identity Counts', 176.

41 Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 31, emphasis in original.

42 Rasma Karklins, *Ethnic Relations in the USSR: The Perspective from Below* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 32.

43 *Ibid.*

44 *Ibid.*, 31.

45 *Ibid.*, 31–32.

46 The diminishment of the importance of class identity in the Soviet communist state, pursuing a class-based Marxist-Leninist ideology, was conditioned by the following factor: after assuming power in 1917, the Bolsheviks, in the name of the proletariat, engaged in brutal 'class war' against the 'exploiter classes' of the former Tsarist Empire, such as nobility, clergy, bourgeoisie and kulaks. Throughout the following two decades, the representatives of the above mentioned 'enemy classes' were literally eliminated, suppressed, forced to emigrate, exiled and/or deprived of their properties by the Soviet government. Finally, after the implementation of the economic policies of nationalization and collectivization, and establishment of the centrally planned economic system during the late 1920s and the early 1930s, there remained no classes in the USSR whose income was derived from property ownership. Accordingly, all Soviet citizens' legal income, at least on paper, came only from wage labour. Consequently, with the abolition of private ownership of the means of production, according to the official Soviet view, the exploitation of one class by another became a matter of the past in the USSR. Proud of this achievement, at the time of the adoption of the 1936 Constitution, Stalin formally announced that the class problem in the Soviet Union was successfully solved. Thereafter, the Soviet regime recognized the existence of only two friendly socialist classes in the USSR, the urban proletariat and collective farm (*kolkhoz*) peasant-workers, and a special stratum of intelligentsia, composed of Soviet intellectual elite groups, such as writers, artists and scientists. See Stalin, 'On the Draft Constitution of the USSR', 540–568. Since there were no longer antagonistic classes in the USSR, and because everyone was formally regarded as an equal member of Soviet society, this meant that class differentiation was of no practical importance anymore for both upward and downward individual social mobility. Nonetheless, this did not imply the end of class rhetoric in the Soviet Union. The official Bolshevik/communist ideology still continued to assert that working class interests were above any other interests, including those of nations. Class background was even recorded in the Soviet internal passports until removed in 1974. But, as mentioned above, it possessed no real implications for

one's life opportunities, as everyone was equal in the class status under the communist regime. Thus, during the 1920s and 1930s, suggests Suny, 'with the artificial manipulation of class categories and official restrictions on autonomous class activity, [the Soviet regime itself] undermined [people's] identification with and loyalty to class'. Suny, *Revenge of the Past*, 120. While during the same period, a nationality, which according to the Marxist-Leninist doctrine was to be withered away with the development of socialism, as a result of its institutionalization at personal and territorial levels, gained considerable practical significance for Soviet citizens.

47 Apart from nationality, Soviet passports also showed the bearer's *propiska* (a residence permit), which was one of the important tools in the hands of the Soviet regime to control internal migration. In particular, those wanting to change the place of their residence—whether within the same SSR/ASSR/AO or to a different one—they should have first obtained a *propiska* from a desired location. Without a *propiska* in a new location, one could not apply for a job or accommodation there. Since obtaining a permanent residence permit in another republic or region was a difficult process, the *propiska* system to some extent became a barrier to assimilation processes among the Soviet peoples. On *propiska*, see Victor Zaslavsky, *The Neo-Stalinist State: Class, Ethnicity, and Consensus in Soviet Society* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1982), 139–154.

48 Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 23.

49 Suny, *Revenge of the Past*, 110.

50 Masanov, 'Perceptions of Ethnic and All-National Identity', 24, emphasis added.

8 The *korenizatsiia* campaign in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

During the consolidation of Soviet power in Central Asia (1917–22), the Bolsheviks, lacking a solid social and political base among the predominantly agropastoral native population, had to rely heavily on the sympathetic local Russian proletariat and (partly) colonial settlers. While Lenin was less concerned about the rightfulness of the ‘class-conscious’ minority of the proletariat to exercise dictatorship over the majority population of Central Asia, as elsewhere,¹ he, writes Kolstoe, ‘understood that in the long run it was impossible to build Soviet power in the borderland on the support of the local Russians only’.² Without rapid ethnic diversification of the Russian-dominated Soviet state apparatus in the region, the Bolshevik rule might have been interpreted by non-Russians as a covert continuation of Great Russian imperialism, which might have had significant repercussions for the Soviet regime.

Lenin’s concerns were not without foundation. In Soviet Central Asia, as discussed earlier, many Russian Bolsheviks displayed a chauvinistic attitude towards the natives, hindering their recruitment into state and CP organs, and thus widening the gap between the Soviet government and the non-Russian/Slavic population of the region. For the Party that publicly claimed to be pursuing internationalist principles of the working class, the tolerance of Russian ethnocentrism within its ranks was not only ideologically impermissible but also raised serious questions about the prospects of entrenching the Soviet regime in non-Russian regions of the forming Soviet state. Hence, ‘in order to secure the survival of the revolution and of the state, it was essential to woo the allegiance of the indigenous groups as well.’³

With this objective in mind, during the 1920s and early 1930s, the Soviet government adopted a set of nationality policies, collectively known as *korenizatsiia*, literally meaning rooting, and variously translated as indigenization or nativization.⁴ *Korenizatsiia* was aimed at popularizing the Bolshevik regime among non-Russian peoples through the affirmative action programmes, which was thought to give the Soviet power a ‘native’ character and application in every political administrative unit in the Soviet state. Put simply, the goal was to make each non-Russian group within the USSR believe that the Soviet regime was not alien, imposed upon them by force, but rather an indigenous one, serving their national interests equally with those of others, including the Russians.

The *korenizatsiia* programme in the non-Russian Soviet peripheries, including Central Asia, involved three interrelated courses of policy action, discussed in detail below: first, nurturing the local roots for the Soviet government by co-opting indigenous cadres into the Soviet apparatus (administrative *korenizatsiia*); second, spreading mass literacy and education in the native languages (education and linguistic *korenizatsiia*); and third, fostering and institutionalizing titular cultures to central positions within their territorial jurisdictions (cultural *korenizatsiia*). In Central Asia, all three of these dimensions of *korenizatsiia* were largely complementing the Soviet government's administrative-territorial reorganizations of 1924–36, examined earlier in the book.

Before proceeding to the discussion of the actual Soviet nativization policies, it must be emphasized that *korenizatsiia* in Central Asia should not be viewed as some sort of a forced political concession by the Kremlin to the pressures stemming from the indigenous popular masses or the political elites. In fact, none of the *korenizatsiia* policies in the region were necessarily implemented as an attempt to reflect the demands of the targeted population groups. For example, in 1923, the Soviet decision to develop a secular Uzbek national culture for the state-defined not-yet-formed Uzbek nation can hardly be regarded as a mere fulfilment of long-established or emerging nationalist aspirations of mainly illiterate, conservative-religious would-be Uzbek nationals. It is worth reminding that just a few years before the Sovietization of Central Asia, most of the latter people showed an absolute indifference to the quasi-secular educational and cultural undertakings initiated by the local Jadids. Rather, the *korenizatsiia* policies for Central Asia, which were conceived and carefully planned by Soviet officials in Moscow, derived from the Soviet government's ideological and strategic objectives in the region. They were an integral part of general Soviet nationality and modernization policies of the time, which aimed to accelerate and support building modern, Western-style societies and national communities out of fragmented, traditional semi-feudal agrarian/nomadic communities in the Soviet east, including Central Asia.⁵ Finally, it must be kept in mind that notwithstanding their nationalistic outlook, the *korenizatsiia* policies came with clear strings attached: the development of national cultures and literary languages for the state-recognized nationalities in Central Asia were justifiable and admissible as long as they served the purpose of the rooting of communist ideology and principles in the respective communities.

Administrative *korenizatsiia*

Soviet officials in Moscow hoped that indigenous peoples of non-Russian regions, including Central Asia, would more easily accept Bolshevik power if their local governments at village, city, *oblast* and republican levels were primarily staffed by the natives, with knowledge of languages and cultural peculiarities of their respective constituencies.⁶ Consequently, in an attempt to encourage non-Russian peoples of the USSR to cooperate with the Soviet regime, the Kremlin established a preferential hiring policy whereby the representatives of

the titular nationalities received priority in employment and promotion within their 'own' republics. For example, on 17 September 1925, the Sredazburo of the RCP CC instructed governments of Central Asian republics to introduce fixed nationality-based quotas for the titular nationals in government employment.⁷ Similar quotas were put in place also for employment in other occupational fields, particularly in the industrial sector. Here, the goal was to stimulate the emergence and growth of the proletarian class among traditionally agrarian/nomadic native peoples of Central Asia, so as to create a social base for the Bolshevik Party/government in the region. However, as industrial jobs in Soviet Central Asia were then scarce and those existing mainly occupied by formerly-privileged Russians, this meant that many of the latter had to be made redundant in order to open job opportunities for titular nationals. As a result, for instance, in Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, hundreds of Russian/Slavic administrative and factory workers were dismissed from their positions in favour of Kazakhs and Uzbeks during 1923–26.⁸ In addition, preferential nationality quotas were put in place for admission in higher educational institutions with an objective to speed up the preparation of skilled non-Russian native cadres for the CP apparatus and Soviet administration in general.⁹ Because at the time of launching the *korenizatsiia* campaign in 1923 the higher education system was not as yet well-established in Soviet Central Asia, a great number of indigenous Central Asian students were also annually sent to Russia proper to study in major Russian universities and institutes.¹⁰

Another important aspect of the administrative *korenizatsiia* in Central Asia was the Kremlin's decision to mandate the use of local titular languages, in addition to Russian, in state bureaucracies in their respective jurisdictions. Although many of those languages, along with Russian, had already been declared as official administrative languages by the Soviet government, the problem was that this was only on paper. For example, in both the 'Kazakh' and Turkestan ASSRs, most administrative paperwork was still conducted only in Russian, as an absolute majority of Soviet European officials, working in these republics, had no knowledge of local titular languages. This was significantly complicating the task of bringing the Soviet government closer to the region's indigenous population, only a small fraction of whom could speak Russian. Hence, the decision to put indigenous titular languages on par with Russian for administrative use was sought to open up government jobs to non-Russian-speaking natives, which was believed would facilitate the establishment of channels of communication between the Soviet administration and the local population.

Consequently, on 29 August 1923, the Turkestan ASSR CEC and Sovnarkom adopted a decree calling for the Uzbek, 'Kazakh' and Turkmen languages to be used on equal terms with Russian in state bureaucracies.¹¹ On 22 November 1923, a similar decree was issued by the KASSR CEC stipulating a gradual introduction of the 'Kazakh' language, in parallel with Russian, for administrative purposes in the republic.¹² A year later, on 31 December 1924, after formally dissolving the TASSR, a newly-formed Soviet Uzbek government also passed a decree establishing Uzbek and Russian as official languages for state

affairs within the Uzbek SSR.¹³ Although the above resolutions significantly enhanced the role of the Kazakh and Uzbek languages within their jurisdictions, the retention of Russian as another official language meant that the application of these titular languages in areas compactly inhabited by the Slav population was to be quite limited.¹⁴

Inasmuch as it was important for the Bolsheviks to nativize Soviet structures in Central Asia, it was equally difficult for them to find the required number of qualified native personnel in the region. For instance, upon the establishment of Soviet rule in the region, literacy among the Kazakhs and Uzbeks stood at 2 per cent and 1.6 per cent respectively, while the same figure among the Tajiks, Kara-Kyrgyzs and Turkmens was less than 1 per cent.¹⁵ As training of qualified and reliable native cadres was to take some time, the Sredazburo instructed the local Russian-speaking CP and administrative personnel, particularly those having the most frequent interaction with the native population, to learn the titular language of the republic of their workplace.¹⁶ A working knowledge of the titular language(s) was thought to enable Russian and other non-local Bolsheviks actively engage with the indigenous population, to earn their trust, and as well as educate them in Marxist-Leninist ideals. To assist them to study the local titular languages, the Soviet government opened several educational centres in the region offering classes in these vernaculars. In addition, as a motivation to others, those Bolsheviks of European-origin, who would become proficient in one of the region's major native languages, were given a monthly bonus equal to 30 per cent of their base salary.¹⁷

Despite the Kremlin's genuine interest, at least in the first years of *korenizatsiia*, in inducing its European staff in Central Asia to learn the local titular languages, this objective was never fully realized. Its failure was caused by such explicit reasons as: (i) inability/reluctance of the local Russian/European personnel to learn titular Central Asian languages; (ii) the shortage of equally qualified indigenous staff who could replace the former.¹⁸ Nonetheless, the effects of administrative *korenizatsiia* became visible shortly after its implementation. In particular, official Soviet data showed a steady increase in the number of Kazakhs and Uzbeks in the CP and state organs of the Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan during 1925–30. During this period, for instance, the share of Kazakhs in the Kazakh CP membership rose from 36.5 per cent to 43 per cent,¹⁹ while Uzbek representation in the Uzbek CP rose from 43.8 per cent to 52.1 per cent.²⁰ The same period also saw a significant rise of titular representation in 'elected' People's Councils in all administrative-territorial units in the KazASSR and Uzbek SSR. For example, by the late 1920s, Kazakhs dominated nearly all People's Councils in the KazASSR, apart from those in cities, which were heavily populated by Slavs.²¹ In both Soviet republics, the only sphere of the Soviet government where the nativization of the staff was less successful was the administrative apparatus. In 1929, Kazakhs and Uzbeks, respectively, occupied only 13.3 per cent and 22.2 per cent of administrative-executive positions available within their republics.²² This was explained by the continuing shortage of skilled Kazakh and Uzbek cadres to staff those positions, especially those requiring technical education.

Although the practice of intentional discrimination against Russians in the labour sphere in non-Russian regions of the USSR was formally discarded in the early 1930s, according to Brubaker, 'local patterns of preferential treatment for titular nationalities persisted, and were generally tolerated by the center'.²³ Even the Kremlin's massive purges of native communists in every constituent republic of the USSR during 1937–38 did not affect the practice of preferential national quotas. As Slezkine remarks, those purged native cadres were simply 'replaced by their social betters from the same nationality'.²⁴ According to Carlisle, those social betters, or in his terms, 'the class of 1938', were a totally new type of elite, represented primarily by Soviet-educated young people under 35 who had no affiliation with any pre-revolutionary power group, and who owed their status and positions solely to the Soviet regime, and thus were politically more reliable agents of the Kremlin in Central Asia than for example the purged Jadids-turned-Bolsheviks.²⁵

The covert nationality quota schemes (varied over time) continued to be used until the very demise of the Soviet Union to regulate, for example, enrolment in higher educational establishments and employment in certain administrative and professional positions. For instance, a number of top economic-managerial positions allocated to the representatives of the titular nationalities often exceeded their demographic share in their 'own' republics. Titular nationals also generally dominated governmental structures of the corresponding republics, especially low- and mid-level administrative positions. This became the case particularly during the Brezhnev period (1964–82).²⁶ One point that should be stressed here is that unlike the 1920–30s, when a large number of undereducated and incompetent Central Asian titular nationals were recruited in Soviet structures simply because of their ethnic origin and loyalty to the regime, their employment and/or promotion in any position in any field was not necessarily without merit in the post-*korenizatsiia* period. The establishment of a state-sponsored mass education system in the Soviet Union during the 1920s and 1930s led to the rise of a new, educated professional stratum among all Soviet nationalities, including the Kazakhs and Uzbeks, many of whom could easily succeed in their fields even without the preferential quota systems.

While all Central Asian titular nationalities benefited from the nativization policies, administrative *korenizatsiia* was perhaps least successful, in relative terms, in Kazakhstan. For example, compared to all other Soviet Central Asian republics, Dave writes, Kazakhs were most disadvantaged in terms of staffing the major CP posts in their home republic: from 1925 until 1991, out of 13 CP First Secretaries of Soviet Kazakhstan, only three of them were ethnically Kazakh;²⁷ while, in comparison, a great majority of the CP First Secretaries of the Uzbek SSR were Uzbeks.²⁸ Much of this disadvantage was due to the unfavourable demographic situation of titular Kazakhs in their republic, who since the late 1930s constituted less than half of the total population of the Soviet Kazakhstan.²⁹ Nevertheless, overall, similar to other Soviet Central Asian republics, Dave remarks, the *korenizatsiia* campaign has had an important lasting impact on Kazakhstan: that of 'institutionalizing the notion of titular primacy within republics'.³⁰

Soviet language and education policies during *korenizatsiia* and beyond

The cornerstone of the *korenizatsiia* campaign in Central Asia was the Soviet government's endeavour to eradicate mass illiteracy among the local indigenous population. Soviet officials in Moscow understood that without solving the literacy problem, it was highly unlikely that the socialist modernization/transformation would take hold in the region. The support for native-language education was also fundamental to the Soviet nation-making efforts in the non-Russian borderlands, as language, according to Bolshevik theoreticians, was the basis around which fragmented societies were to be consolidated into modern nations. For these ends, in the early 1920s, the Bolsheviks designed special literacy programmes aimed at promoting literacy and education among the Central Asian masses in their native languages. The successful implementation of the native-language literacy and educational programmes in Central Asia, however, first required the formation of standardized literary languages for each state-defined nationality in the region, including that for the Kazakhs and Uzbeks.

Standardization of the Uzbek and Kazakh languages

Prior to the Sovietization of the region, literate 'Uzbeks' had long used 'Farsi-Tajik' and Chaghatay-Turki as their spoken and written languages, both based on the Arabic script. However, adoption any of them as an official national language of the Uzbeks was problematic: 'Farsi-Tajik' was not viable because the people making the Soviet-projected Uzbek *narodnost*' were predominantly speakers of the Turkic dialects,³¹ while the Turkic Chaghatay was quite distinct from the other major Turkic dialects (such as Kipchak, Karluk and Oghuz) spoken by the majority of the targeted population. Therefore, Soviet language planners had to arbitrarily decide which regional Turkic dialect to use as the foundation for the 'new' Uzbek national language. Consequently, in 1923, Soviet (Russian) linguists agreed to base a 'new' Uzbek language on the region's Iranized urban Turkic dialects, lacking a euphonic vowel harmony. However, in 1927, after adopting the Latin script for Uzbek, Soviet language planners revised the earlier decision and decided to codify the Uzbek language based on a more pure Turkic dialect of the town of Turkestan (modern Turkistan, located in Kazakhstan). A decade later, this dialect was also abandoned, and the contemporary Uzbek language was finally standardized on the basis of Iranized Tashkent dialect, though employing the grammar of the Ferghana Turkic dialect.³² The primary reason why the dialect basis of the standard Uzbek language was changed several times, Sengupta asserts, was the Soviet government's intention to distance it from other neighbouring Turkic languages. According to Sengupta, this was part of the general Soviet nation-building policy in Central Asia aimed at forming separate nationalities with distinct identities, including through the means of promoting their unique national languages.³³

The process of standardization of the Uzbek language also involved the development of its vocabulary. Uzbek dialects, like other Central Asian indigenous vernaculars including Kazakh, lacked modern scientific and technical terminologies. Traditionally, the local Turkic vocabularies had borrowed largely from the Persian and Arabic languages. However, this was no longer an option, as the Bolsheviks, concerned with pan-Islamism, sought to maximally diminish the influence of the Arabo-Persian culture over Soviet Central Asia. Some Uzbek Bolsheviks, such as former Jadids Fitrat and Elbek, advocated the expansion of the Uzbek vocabulary by adopting words from old-Turkic texts as well as by borrowing some terms from other Turkic languages, such as Ottoman Turkish. This initiative, however, found no support in the Soviet government, since it was thought that it may have strengthened pan-Turkic tendencies in the region.³⁴ Eventually, the issue of modernizing the Uzbek vocabulary was resolved by adopting a large number of Russian and Russified 'international' loanwords, many of which also displaced Uzbekized Arabic-Persian words. For example, according to some studies, between 1923 and 1940, while the proportion of Arabic and Persian words in Uzbek periodical literature fell from 37.4 per cent to 25 per cent, the Russian component increased from 2 per cent to 15 per cent.³⁵ Although the influx of Russian 'international' words in the Uzbek language had considerable impact on its lexicon, the overall influence of Russian on Uzbek, Akiner writes, was less far-reaching than sometimes assumed, as those foreign borrowings 'were thoroughly assimilated into the grammatical and syntactic structure of the [Uzbek] language'.³⁶

Unlike Uzbek, the development of the Kazakh literary language, as discussed earlier in the book, began in the nineteenth century under Tsarist auspices. Yet, Kazakh was far from standardized at the time of establishment of the 'Kazakh' ASSR in 1920. Soviet linguists of the period 'characterized the state of written Kazakh as failing to have attained the level of a codified norm, arguing that the language showed a mixture of literary and colloquial Kazakh and Tatar, along with an inconsistent use of terminology'.³⁷ Consequently, in an effort to codify the Kazakh language, during the 1920s and 1930s, the Soviet government set up a number of linguistic commissions tasked with developing a standardized literary Kazakh as well as preparing the Kazakh-language textbooks.³⁸ The work of these commissions significantly contributed to the overall development of the Kazakh written language. In addition, the Kazakh lexicon, as in the case of Uzbek, was considerably 'enriched' by Russian loans for meeting a new political and economic reality.³⁹

The alphabet reform was probably the most difficult and controversial part of the Soviet language policy in Central Asia. This was due to both linguistic and political reasons. Namely, prior to Sovietization, all written local indigenous languages had employed the Arabic alphabet, regarded by Muslims as the holy script of the Qur'an. In pure linguistic terms, however, the Arabic orthography was phonetically largely unsuitable for the region's Turkic languages, thus complicating their codification.⁴⁰ A practical alternative was to shift to the Latin alphabet, generally considered by linguists as the most convenient writing

system for Turkic vernaculars. Yet, in the early days of the Soviet rule in Central Asia, such a move would have been too risky security-wise. It would have most likely been interpreted by Basmachis and their supporters as a deliberate attack on Islam, allowing them to further inflame local sentiments against the Soviet regime and its policies, a risk that the Bolsheviks could not afford at that time. For a similar reason, the option of Cyrillicization of the Arabic-based scripts was not even considered by the Soviet regime at this stage.⁴¹ Therefore, the 1921 Tashkent Language and Orthography Congress, discussing the question of reforming the existing Arabic alphabet, proposed to simplify it to make it phonetically adaptable to the languages in question. Although some steps were taken in this direction during the following years, the suggested modified form of the Arabic alphabet was never fully implemented in practice.⁴²

From the start it was clear that the Tashkent Congress resolution was a temporary compromise on the way to more drastic language reforms in Central Asia. Indeed, as soon as the Soviet regime became securely established in the region in the mid-1920s, Soviet language planners and policymakers began to urge the complete abandonment of the Arabic orthography for the Latin one. Their justification for the need of Latinization was that it was too difficult for the Islamic peoples of the Soviet Union to learn the Arabic script, and that this was significantly halting the spread of literacy among them.⁴³ For example, the First Secretary of Uzbek CP, Akmal Ikramov, argued that the printing in Latin, in comparison to Arabic, was considerably cost-effective, and the shift to the former was to make Soviet publications more accessible and affordable to the masses.⁴⁴ In addition, Soviet ideologists held the Arabic alphabet, with its religious connotations, responsible for the cultural backwardness of the Muslim peoples of the Soviet Union, while portraying the Latin script as the symbol of modernity and scientific progress, which was said to become the universal writing system of the future world communist society.⁴⁵ Finally, the call for discarding the Arabic alphabet certainly had a political agenda: to weaken the influence of Islam on Soviet Muslims, and to hinder their access to pre-revolutionary religious literature. For example, the Third Plenum of the CP CC of Uzbekistan emphasized that unless all publications in the Uzbek language were switched to the Latin script, timely elimination of religious literature would not be attainable.⁴⁶ Subsequently, on the basis of the recommendations of the 1926 First All-Union Turkological Congress,⁴⁷ the Soviet government formally declared the adoption of the unified Latin-based alphabet, named as the 'New Turkic Alphabet', for all Turkic languages in the USSR, including for Kazakh and Uzbek. The process of transition to the Latin script started in 1927, and was largely completed by the end of the decade.⁴⁸

The Soviet fascination with Latinization, however, did not last long. By the mid-1930s, Soviet policymakers and linguists were openly discussing the shortcomings of the New Turkic Alphabet, the advantages of Cyrillic, and the need for Cyrillicization of Soviet non-Slavic languages in the USSR.⁴⁹ Grenoble explains this by the shift in general Soviet language policy, which was marked by the tacit abandonment of the *korenizatsiia* campaign in 1934, and subsequent

promotion of Russian as a second language among non-Russian peoples of the USSR.⁵⁰ In line with this, Comrie notes, it was also suggested that Cyrillicization of Latin alphabets of Turkic and other Soviet nationalities would make it easier for them to be educated in two languages simultaneously, the native and Russian.⁵¹ There was also a political motive for promoting the Cyrillic script. By the 1930s, Comrie remarks, the hopes for international socialist revolution had been dimmed, and the Soviet Union, surrounded by unfriendly regimes, was becoming more and more concerned with ‘a consolidation of internal unity, and demarcation from outside forces, both of which functions were served by the Cyrillic alphabet’.⁵² For example, in the period of mobilization for World War II, it was crucial that Central Asian and other non-Russian conscripts had at least a basic knowledge of the Russian language/script to understand orders from their superior Soviet officers.⁵³

In addition, in mainstream scholarship on the subject, it has often been pointed out that one of the possible reasons for the Cyrillicization of Soviet Turkic languages in the 1930s might have been the Soviet government’s fears of pan-Turkic ideology emanating from Latinized Turkey. According to proponents of this theory, the shift from the Latin script to Cyrillic was intended to curtail Soviet Turkic peoples’ access to a new pan-Turkic literature printed in Turkey in the wake of the Latinization of the Turkish script in 1928.⁵⁴ However, this argument is ill-founded. In all Soviet secondary schools, the learning of one non-Soviet foreign language was mandatory from the fifth through to the eleventh grade. English, German and French—all based on the Latin alphabet—were major foreign languages instructed in Soviet schools.⁵⁵ Therefore, a considerable number of literate Soviet citizens of Turkic ethnicity had, at least from the 1930s onwards, some knowledge of the Latin script, which was not the case with the Arabic. In other words, Cyrillicization of Soviet Turkic languages in the late 1930s did not imply that Soviet Turkic peoples would be denied the right to acquire a general reading knowledge of the Latin alphabet.

The Kabardian Latin-based script was the first to be affected by this emerging, new Soviet language policy and shifted to Cyrillic in 1936. From then until 1940, the Soviet government, without much public discourse on the matter, switched nearly all existing Latin-based alphabets in the USSR, including Kazakh and Uzbek, to Cyrillic.⁵⁶

The process of constructing the standardized Kazakh and Uzbek languages was also accompanied by the Soviet state’s efforts to create and promote the indigenous secular literatures and publishing in these ‘new’ languages. Trusted native Kazakh and Uzbek writers were encouraged/commissioned by the Soviet authorities to produce literary works on national and socialist themes. Those writings were intended to serve the regime’s goals of developing a shared cultural bond among the members of each titular nationality as well as instilling communist principles in the masses. A similar function was attributed to the expanding, state-sponsored Kazakh- and Uzbek-language press, which were not only effective vehicles for communist propaganda but also useful sources for forging ‘imagined’ national communities of the Kazakhs and Uzbeks. For

example, whereas in 1925 there were 17 Uzbek-language newspapers and magazines published in the Uzbek SSR, by 1932 there were 167.⁵⁷ In Soviet Kazakhstan, already by the end of the 1930s, there were total of 206 periodical titles (newspapers, bulletins and magazines) published in the Kazakh language.⁵⁸ Lastly and most importantly, these titular languages were imbued by Soviet nation-builders with strong ideological contents: they were promoted within their respective nationally-organized communities as principal symbols of their unity, carriers of their collective cultures, histories and identities.

All these measures, together with the implementation of standard Kazakh and Uzbek in educational and administrative structures of Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan respectively, provided an effective means for the dissemination of these literary languages among the targeted national communities. The state-imposition of the literary Kazakh and Uzbek languages also led to the weakening and even to the erosion of various regional Turkic dialects spoken by the state-defined Kazakh and Uzbek peoples. This was particularly important in the case of Uzbekistan, where the language standardization also served as some sort of a melting-pot, linguistically homogenizing the speakers of distinctive Uzbek dialects.

Overall, the Soviet language strategies of the 1920s and 1930s significantly contributed to the emergence of self-conscious Kazakh and Uzbek national-linguistic communities. The Soviet-devised languages of Kazakhs and Uzbeks became principal channels through which their collective identities and cultures were built and shaped. For the first time in the history of these peoples, the native language gained an important ethnosymbolic value: linking ethnicity/nation, culture and territory. Even after the 1950s, when many native Central Asians, especially urban Kazakhs, became linguistically Russified, the national languages of the region never lost their ethnosymbolic dimension in their communities. For example, in the Soviet censuses, as mentioned earlier, most of the Russian-speaking Kazakhs still claimed Kazakh as their native language. Language issues also became a political imperative in the late 1980s, when all Soviet Central Asian republics demanded privileged statuses for their national languages in relation to Russian, consequently declaring them as state languages within their respective territorial jurisdictions.

The establishment of universal education: the spread of mass literacy

Notwithstanding the frequent changes and alterations in the alphabets of Soviet Central Asia (from Arabic to the modified Arabic, then to Latin, and finally to Cyrillic) over a mere two-decade timeframe, the overall success of the Soviet literacy campaign in the region during this period and thereafter has been impressive. More precisely, on 19 June 1920, the Soviets formed an All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for the Liquidation of Illiteracy (known as Likbez), charged with directing the implementation of literacy programmes statewide.⁵⁹ In September of the same year, Lenin signed the decree on establishment of the first university in Central Asia in Tashkent, Turkestan State University, for

preparing the local cadres for the Soviet administrative and CP structures.⁶⁰ In addition, the Uzbek, 'Kazakh' and Tatar institutes for enlightenment were opened in Tashkent for the training of native school teachers. Already in 1921, the number of such pedagogical establishments on the territory of modern Uzbekistan increased to seven, and by 1923 to 11.⁶¹ In the same period, a number of teacher-training vocational colleges for the natives were also organized in the 'Kazakh' ASSR.⁶² In addition, during the first half of the 1920s, hundreds of Likbez schools and special literacy centres were opened throughout Central Asia to teach literacy to the native masses in their languages. In 1927/28, there were 3,911 such schools in Kazakhstan, and 1,966 in Uzbekistan.⁶³ Although the quality of these schools was far from satisfactory, they nevertheless managed to achieve a fair amount of success in a few years' time. For example, between 1920 and 1926, the literacy rate among the Kazakhs rose from 2 per cent to 7.1 per cent, while among the Uzbeks from 1.6 per cent to 3.8 per cent.⁶⁴

From 1926 onwards, the Soviet education system became more comprehensive due to improvements in school funding, and an increased availability of textbooks and trained native-language teachers. In 1930, the Soviets were in a position to introduce universal, compulsory secular four-year primary education for both genders in the USSR, including Central Asia. In 1952, it was extended from four to seven years, in 1969 to eight years, and in the 1970s to ten years.⁶⁵ Although initial attempts to enrol Muslim Central Asian girls in Soviet secular schools met stiff opposition from local conservatively-minded segments of society, over the time, the Soviets were able to overcome the traditional socio-cultural boundaries set for the native women, and gradually, but steadily, to increase their schooling.

The implemented reforms (Latinization of scripts, introduction of compulsory public education and increasing levels of schooling) soon led to a substantial overall rise in literacy throughout Central Asia. For instance, from 1926 to 1939, the literacy rate of the total population of the Uzbek SSR rose from 11.6 per cent to 78.7 per cent, while in Kazakhstan from 25.2 per cent to 83.6 per cent.⁶⁶ By 1959, according to official Soviet statistics, the literacy rates in both the Kazakh and Uzbek SSRs, as in other Soviet republics, were near-universal.⁶⁷

The Soviet literacy campaign during *korenizatsiia*, in general, and the introduction of universal education, in particular, was not only pivotal in eliminating illiteracy among the native Central Asians, but it also had a crucial input in achieving Soviet nation-making objectives in the region. The establishment of mass public native-language schooling, along with the development of native printing presses and literatures, provided an effective means of fostering the state-created new Kazakh and Uzbek literary languages. No less important was the centralized history and literature curricula implemented in native-language schools, which were particularly geared toward the cultivation of national identities and consciousness among the members of titular nationalities from young ages.⁶⁸ For example, the Kazakh and Uzbek national history textbooks were specifically written in a way to generate a sense of a shared past and belonging among the respective national communities and to strengthen their emotional

attachment to their (Soviet-delineated) national territories. Likewise, the contents of Kazakh and Uzbek literature textbooks were largely glorifications of their national cultural and literary products, which were presented, for each nation, as a common heritage/possession of their people and a source of their national identity and unity. On the whole, public native-language schooling was one of the most important institutional vehicles of national acculturation, through which common values, identities, and literary languages were disseminated among the young generations, and their perceptions/interpretations of their 'ancient' histories and cultures were shaped.

Introduction of higher education and research systems

While in the first years of *korenizatsiia* the priority was to provide the basic numeracy and literacy skills to as many natives as possible in the shortest possible period—primarily for the purpose of broadening the recruitment base of the Soviet government in Central Asia—the long-term goal of nativizing the Soviet regime in the region required the preparation of highly qualified native personnel in all fields and at all levels. Since before the establishment of Soviet rule, Central Asia had no tradition of secular higher education, the Bolsheviks had to develop national academic and research systems for each Soviet republic in the region literally from scratch.

The first steps towards this end, as mentioned earlier, were taken in the early 1920s, when the Turkestan State University and several pedagogical institutes were established in Tashkent. This process became more formalized and intensive from the late 1920s. In the Uzbek SSR, for example, the Samarkand Pedagogical Institute was founded in 1927, which was transformed into the Uzbek State University in 1933. A number of additional specialized academic and vocational training institutions (such as textile, machinery and medical) were also opened in the major cities of Uzbekistan during the 1930s. By 1939, there were already 28 higher educational and 98 vocational institutions functioning in Uzbekistan.⁶⁹ The first higher educational institute to be opened in Soviet Kazakhstan was the Kazakh State Pedagogical Institute, established in 1926. In the following years, the veterinary (in 1928), agricultural (1930), and medical (1931) institutes were also founded in Alma-Ata. The Kazakh State University was created in 1934.⁷⁰ By 1940, there were 20 institutions of higher learning functioning in the Kazakh SSR.⁷¹ Initially, given the absence of qualified Kazakh and Uzbek academic personnel with expertise in different areas, these institutions had to be staffed mainly by lecturers invited from other Union-republics, largely from Russia proper, who taught the local students through interpreters. This practice lasted until the 1940s, when the first waves of native scholars with the requisite credentials began to appear.⁷²

In 1932, the Kazakh and Uzbek Committees for Sciences were established, which were charged with managing the scientific research activities in Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan correspondingly. On the basis of these Committees, first the Kazakh (in 1938) and Uzbek (in 1940) Branches of the USSR Academy

of Sciences, and later independent Academy of Sciences of the Kazakhstan (in 1945) and Uzbekistan (in 1943) SSRs were founded.⁷³ Each of these Academies of Sciences consisted of more than 30 specialized scientific institutes, employing thousands of researches and supporting personnel.⁷⁴ In terms of nation-building, the most important of those research institutions were those particularly dedicated to the studies of histories, ethnographies, archaeologies, cultures, arts and languages of the titular Kazakh and Uzbek nations. Native academicians, working in those institutions, were assigned to produce (under the supervision of Moscow) the formal histories of the Kazakh and Uzbek peoples, interpret their folk cultures, promote their native-language literatures, develop curricula and so forth. These intellectual elites or intelligentsia, to paraphrase Kurganov, were the state-designated guardians of their nations' historical memories and cultural traditions, instilling their co-nationals with an 'official' understanding of their common national heritage, and thus contributing to their national consolidation and the development of their collective consciousness and identities.⁷⁵

In general, the Soviet-established universities and academic institutions in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were the major hubs for producing required native skilled manpower as well as new national-secular intellectual elites drawn from all social strata, who were willing to accept the principles of the Soviet regime. In other words, the development of higher education system in these Soviet republics had an important impact on social stratification in the titular Kazakh and Uzbek communities. It provided greater opportunities for upward social mobility to the traditionally disadvantaged groups—or the masses—such as peasants, workers and women. To conceptualize, in the emerging new sociopolitical framework in Soviet Central Asia, the right to lead a politically-organized community/territory, to control its wealth and/or to create its 'high-culture' was no longer a prerogative of traditional hereditary aristocracy, landlords, chieftains and ulama, who were disempowered and oppressed by the new regime. Rather, these rights and privileges became a common good potentially accessible to one and all, thus forming the basis for closer social cohesion within ethnationally defined communities, a prerequisite for a modern nation to emerge or exist.

Cultural *korenizatsiia*: Soviet cultural revolution

From the very outset of its establishment, the central Soviet government, as a political gesture of distancing itself from the Tsarist colonialism, formally committed to its non-Russian minority nationalities/peoples to respect not only their cultures and languages but also to create institutional conditions for their progressive development. Along with their other political commitments, this was considered a necessary step for defusing anti-Russian sentiments among those non-Russian communities, who had especially suffered under the Tsarist autocracy and its sponsored Orthodox ideology. However, what Soviet policy of cultural *korenizatsiia* aimed to achieve was certainly not a reinforcement of archaic, feudal value/cultural systems and practices of the non-Russian peoples, including those associated with Islam, which hardly fitted within the socialist society

that the Bolsheviks envisaged to construct. Nor did it seek to encourage the 'bourgeois' cultural development, which could have potentially strengthened the ethnonationalist separatism in the borderlands. Rather, the objective of the cultural *korenizatsiia* was to nurture and promote socialist national cultures of the peoples of the Soviet Union, or as Stalin put it, the cultures that were to be 'national in form and socialist in content'.⁷⁶ These new socialist national cultures were not to be built from scratch, but as Lenin argued, they had to be developed on the basis 'of the best models, traditions and results of the *existing* culture[s]'.⁷⁷ Overall, Soviet cultural policy of the period, as defined by Lenin and Stalin, distinguished two forms of traditional cultural practices and customs: progressive and feudal-religious/bourgeois. The former, after being ideologically 'purified' and filled with socialist content, was to be institutionalized as national cultures of the respective Soviet nationalities. While the latter, especially those activities associated with religion, was to be formally classified as reactionary and backward, and for that reason strongly discouraged, and in some cases even banned.⁷⁸

What is also notable is that for Lenin and Stalin, the advancement of individual national cultures, as with their ideological shift from centralism to ethnofederalism, was not a retreat from their formally declared ultimate goal of merging all Soviet nationalities into a single community. On the contrary, it was thought that the state support for non-Russian national cultures, which were to be filled with a socialist content, would rather hasten their integration into a superior, concurrently developing (Russian-dominated) all-Union socialist culture. In other words, according to the Leninist-Stalinist nationality project, the Soviet cultural policy was to stimulate not only *rastsvet* (blooming) of the national cultures of the Soviet peoples, but also their simultaneous *sblizhenie* (rapprochement, drawing together), thus gradually paving the way towards their final *sliianie* (fusion, merger).⁷⁹

While the massive state-sponsored cultural schemes were required to develop individual socialist national cultures for every official nationality in the USSR, including the Russians,⁸⁰ the task was especially challenging in the case of native Central Asian peoples. The titular nationalities of the region, such as Kazakhs and Uzbeks, whose cultures the Kremlin intended to develop, were themselves recent—or still in progress—administrative-constructs of the Soviet nation-building projects. Accordingly, at the time of launching the *korenizatsiia* campaign in 1923, neither 'Kazakhs' nor Uzbeks possessed a homogeneous unified culture, binding and defining their respective collective identities as distinct from others. Considerable cultural variations, generated along regional and/or tribal lines, existed among the different subgroups within each of these state-organized nationalities. This, however, should not be interpreted as a complete absence of cultural commonalities within each of them. As discussed in the previous chapters, the Soviets purposefully reorganized highly fragmented Central Asian native communities in ways that would have facilitated their task of forging modern nations in the region. For instance, people, who were formally designated by the Soviet state as Kazakh nationals, through census or other statistical means, were practically exclusively current or former (at least through recent

ancestry) pastoral nomads of the steppes. Hence, their personal and group identities as well as cultural practices, irrespective of their tribal and geographical affinities, were significantly influenced by nomadism. As in the case of the Uzbeks—as defined by the Soviet state and comprised of such groups as the Sarts, Shaybanid Uzbeks, Laqays and Karluks—these diverse people shared certain cultural practices linked with traditional Hanafi Islam of the region. For example, they observed similar marriage and funerary ceremonies. Nonetheless, in both cases, the existing cultural commonalities were not necessarily consciously acknowledged and reinforced by the members of the respective communities as meaningful symbols defining their group identity/unity. And even if they had, neither nomadism nor Islam in totality as cultural and value systems, on their own terms, were suitable and/or sufficient for the construction of the projected Kazakh and Uzbek socialist societies and cultures. Finally, the above mentioned tribal and regional cultural variations were also exacerbated by the significant gaps existing between the ‘high-cultures’ practised by traditional/literate elites of diverse ‘Kazakh’ and Uzbek subgroups and of the ‘low-cultures’ pursued by the illiterate and impoverished masses.

Hence, in the absence of unified Kazakh and Uzbek cultures, the additional challenge for Soviet nation-makers was to determine what ‘progressive’ cultural traits of these peoples to promote as their primordial national cultures under the rubric of *korenizatsiia*, for the purpose of giving them a sense of national unity as well as creating some foundations for the construction of the new socialist cultures. In addition to this, since the socialist culture-building in itself implied the formation of modern, Western-style societies, in the case of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, its successful realization required the ‘enrichment’ of local cultures with main forms of European/Russian ‘high-culture’, such as symphony orchestra and modern painting. This was thought not only to bring the Kazakhs and Uzbeks culturally closer to the ‘advanced’ Western Soviet nationalities, particularly with Russians, but also to distance them further from their neighbouring non-Soviet Muslim societies. In general, this meant that there was a need for a greater restructuring of the fundamental cultural bases of these two state-defined nationalities, requiring considerable political, economic and intellectual efforts from Soviet policymakers. How these two dimensions of the Soviet cultural policy in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were accomplished is examined in turn further on.

Codification of ‘primordial’ national cultures

The process of determining, or better to say, inventing unified ‘primordial’ Kazakh and Uzbek cultures, involved such measures as: first, the arbitrary selection—and in some cases even fabrication—of the folk elements, material objects, symbols, written/oral narratives and myths from the traditional cultures of targeted communities, as well as of those of pre-sixteenth century (that is, pre-Shaybanid Uzbek and ‘Kazakh’) Central Asians; second, the elaboration, formalization and promotion of those state-casted ‘progressive’ cultural elements

as official, historically-rooted national cultures of the Kazakhs and Uzbeks through such means as state-sponsored literature, museum exhibits and history writing. The intent was to establish a conventional wisdom within state-defined Kazakh and Uzbek national communities that they were not recent artificial constructs of Soviet nation-makers, but rather historically evolved politico-cultural entities with long-standing unified cultural heritages, distinct and unique from others. This was thought to facilitate the nurturing of the sense of common origin and collective belonging among the members of each of these nationalities respectively, and thus stimulating the emergence of their national identities, loyalties and consciousness.

A very important part of Soviet cultural policy of preserving and developing traditional cultures of native peoples in Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan was the state patronage of Kazakh and Uzbek folk cultures. From the early Soviet years, Soviet ethnographers and folklorists were commissioned to collect and study traditional folklore (such as songs, dances, music, crafts and tales) of various Kazakh and Uzbek subgroups.⁸¹ The casted folk arts, after their ideological cleansing, were promoted as genuine all-Kazakh and all-Uzbek national traditional cultures. For example, a state-selected Uzbek *shashmaqam* genre of symphonic music from the northern parts of the former Bukhara Emirate, which was traditionally performed at local village weddings and was largely unknown to the vast majority of Uzbeks from other provinces of Central Asia, was no longer a mere regional curiosity. Rather, it became institutionalized by the Soviet government as the national cultural heritage of all Soviet-defined Uzbek nationals, irrespective of their place of residence.⁸²

In order to make the targeted nationalities conscious of their 'own' common traditions, a great number of folk-ensembles were set up throughout Soviet Central Asia, including Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, each performing their (state-selected) 'national' folk songs, music and dances at various state-organized multicultural festivals.⁸³ Apart from popularizing 'national' folklore, those professional folk-ensembles, each dressed in their distinct 'national' costumes, were also effectively used by Soviet nation-builders in constructing visibly different traditional cultures and objectified ethnographic images for each state-defined nationality in the region.⁸⁴ In general, state-sponsored folk activities were utilized as instruments for evoking feelings of (positive) ethnocultural distinctiveness among the titular nationalities of Central Asia, and thus reinforcing and codifying the official national lines drawn by Soviet nation-makers in the region.

It must be noted that the official Kazakh and Uzbek folklores that the Soviets claimed of reproducing in original forms, were quite distinct from the 'authentic' folk traditions of these two peoples. As Hoffmann points out, 'Soviet folklore was ... exoticized in the sense that it reflected nationalities' cultures not as they existed in everyday life but rather as colorful, aestheticized, and superficial cultural forms'.⁸⁵ For example, the so-called national costumes that were worn by Soviet Kazakh and Uzbek folk artists, notwithstanding the fact that they incorporated some elements of various traditional dresses of the local peoples, were

largely improvisation of contemporary Soviet costume-designers. Those folk costumes were designed and sewn particularly for stage performances, and they were fairly different from those dresses that had been traditionally worn by the local noble and/or especially low classes at any point in pre-Soviet Central Asia. Furthermore, ‘national’ Kazakh and Uzbek folk dances as performed by professional folk-ensembles were practically entirely the recent choreographic creations of Soviet dance-masters. For instance, masculine-type Uzbek dances were basically the 1920s’ Soviet invention, as Uzbek men—aside from those tea-house- and court-entertainment boy-dancers (so-called *bachas*) dressed in women’s clothes—traditionally did not take part in choreographic performances. Neither had there been a strong tradition of women’s dance in the region before the Soviet era. Native Muslim women were not customarily allowed to dance in public, particularly in the presence of men.⁸⁶ Accordingly, the whole repertoire of Uzbek women’s (pseudo-)folk dances, which the modern Uzbek culture especially prides itself for, was largely created by the imagination of Soviet choreographers.⁸⁷ Similarly, in Kazakhstan, based on the ethnographic observations of the local pastoral nomads, Soviet choreographers invented such ‘traditional’ Kazakh folk dances as *Eagle and Fox*, and *Akku*.⁸⁸ In other words, many Kazakh and Uzbek ‘ancient’ folk cultural traditions, which were ‘revived’ and developed under cultural *korenizatsiia*, were, in fact, entirely modern Soviet cultural inventions. In spite of this, those invented folk traditions of the Kazakhs and Uzbeks, overtime, became successfully absorbed into simultaneously developing mainstream cultures of these nationalities, becoming one of the forms of exemplification of their (depoliticized) national cultural heritages and identities.

The final point that should be emphasized here is that the Soviet patronage of the folklore in no way implied a reinforcement of traditional cultural patterns in Central Asia, and thus a departure from the declared goal of socialist modernization. Quite the contrary, as Hoffmann underlines, ‘Soviet folklore was ... very much in keeping with Soviet nationality policy and with Stalin’s formulation regarding cultures: “national in form, socialist in content”’.⁸⁹ For example, the Kremlin’s support for the national folk-ensembles was as much the expression of formal respect to ‘national traditions’ of Soviet peoples as one of the political means to develop their modern Soviet cultures. To put it differently, those ensembles, often portrayed by the regime as carriers of authentic national traditions, were not remnants of the pre-Soviet past, but integral parts of the official Soviet cultural establishment—many of whose members were also active communists—creating absolutely novel mediums of group cultural expressions in the region. In addition, while the Soviet regime actively sought to foster ethno-national cultural differentiation among the Central Asian nationalities through state-sponsored national folk-ensembles, in particular through their distinct national music/dance performances and costumes, the Bolsheviks strongly discouraged the indigenous population of the region from wearing their traditional clothes outside of cultural events. The public wearing of traditional clothes was seen by Soviet authorities as a symbol of backwardness and resistance to socialist modernity. Instead, in order to become ‘genuinely cultured and socialist’, the

native Central Asians were encouraged, and even expected, by the Soviet regime to wear modern, European/Russian-style clothing.⁹⁰

Apart from the folklore, in codifying the official 'primordial' cultures of the Kazakhs and Uzbeks, no less important were the Soviet state's efforts to nativize (that is, to Kazakhize and Uzbekize) historical and archaeological material objects existing/discovered on the territories of Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The nativization of historical/archaeological material objects is generally regarded as one of the most efficient tools used by nation-builders to establish an exclusive historical connection between a given territory and a respective titular nationality/people. The richer a national territory is with such ancient cultural material objects, the more material there is for nation-builders to elaborate on—or if necessary to manufacture—stories about the glorious past of a given nation, with the goal of generating and reinforcing a sense of a collective, territorially-bounded cultural legacy as well as of a national pride among its members. In this regard, compared to all other titular nationalities of the region, Uzbeks certainly were in a privileged position as all the major historical cultural and urban centres of Central Asia (Tashkent, Bukhara, Samarkand and Khiva) were incorporated within the administrative borders of their 'own' native republic. As Adams notes, 'This gave Uzbekistan a default historical legacy upon which to draw in later years, allowing the Uzbeks to claim a tradition which built up their group at the expense of other nationalities, especially the Tajiks.'⁹¹ Indeed, all the finest monuments (predominantly religious in nature) located within the territory of Soviet Uzbekistan proper, such as the Registan complex in Samarkand, were declared by Soviet historians as great architectural achievements, often ignoring their religious content, of the Uzbek people.⁹² And this was irrespective of the fact that those areas, where the Uzbekized architectural monuments were located, had always been home to ethnically diverse peoples, not even mentioning that many of those great pieces of architecture had been constructed long before the Shaybanid Uzbeks' conquest of Mawarannahr.

Unlike the Uzbek SSR, however, there were few if any important historical architectural objects remaining within the borders of Soviet Kazakhstan,⁹³ traditionally inhabited by wandering steppe nomadic tribes with no architectural traditions. Nevertheless, this did not preclude writers of the official Kazakh histories from creating historical narratives about significant architectural attainments of the ancestors of the Kazakh people. For instance, official Soviet historiography claimed that the nomadic ancestors of the Kazakhs 'were not quite nomads, that in fact some of them were "semi-nomads," and that they included some sedentary [agricultural and urban] groups'.⁹⁴ Moreover, numerous studies were done and published that claimed to document the historical existence of important ancient Kazakh urban cultural and trade centres. All major archaeological remains excavated in the territory of Soviet Kazakhstan—many of them dating as far back as the prehistoric era, or in other words, centuries before the appearance of the 'Kazakh' tribes in Central Asia—were classified as ethno-national heritage of the Kazakh people.⁹⁵

In addition, in both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the Soviet state, acting in Benedict Anderson's terms as a guardian of national heritage, opened a great number of ethnographic and archaeological museums, preserving and exhibiting cultural objects of the Kazakh and Uzbek pasts. For example, already in 1940, there were 26 and 17 public museums in Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan respectively.⁹⁶ Those museums, along with official history writing, also served as effective instruments for instilling a sense of collective memory and identity among each of these titular nationalities.

The Soviet policy of 'reviving' and supporting traditional cultures of the titular nationalities of the USSR also involved the promotion of their pre-Soviet 'national' literatures. In particular, since the Bolshevik theoreticians viewed a nation primarily as an ethnolinguistic community, it was some sort of an ideological requisite that every Soviet-approved nationality had to have its own body of pre-revolutionary classical writers and literary works in national languages, the more ancient the better. This was supposed to serve as legitimate proof of their 'nationness', as well as of their 'civilized' pasts. However, finding such classical and ideologically acceptable writers and works for the newly created Kazakh and Uzbek nationalities was not an easy task for reasons discussed below.

The Kazakh written literary tradition, for example, only emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century. This meant that at the time of promulgation of *korenizatsiia*, there were not many literary works written or published in the Kazakh language, which could have genuinely been regarded as classical works of literature either in terms of antiquity or quality. Therefore, with the aim of rooting the Kazakh literary heritage in a deeper past, Soviet nation-builders decided to accentuate oral folk literature (such as poems, myths and tales) of the ancestors of the nomadic 'Kazakh' subgroups, many of whose authors and dates of origin were unknown or uncertain. This gave them a flexibility not only to assign suitable dates to those arbitrarily-casted and standardized oral narratives, but also to alter and adapt their contents to suit ideological interests of the CP. Indeed, during the 1920s and 1930s, a number of such 'ancient' Kazakh oral poems and stories were successfully recast into written Kazakh national literary pieces, and published for wider audiences.⁹⁷

As for defining the official list of pre-Soviet 'classical' Kazakh writers, since there was not much choice, the Soviets put major emphasis on those handful of Russian-educated 'Kazakh' publicists and authors of the Tsarist period, who had published their literary works in local press. One of such state-handpicked authors was Abay Kunanbaev, who was not only enshrined by the Soviet regime as an outstanding national Kazakh writer and public figure, but was also placed on the highest pedestal of the official Kazakh culture. Within the Soviet literary canon, Abay was praised for enriching Kazakh poetry with elements of Russian critical realism associated with such venerated Russian writers as Pushkin, Lermontov and Tolstoy, and for paving the way for the development of the former into a world literature.⁹⁸ Among those 'classical' 'Kazakh' authors, who were also included in the state-approved pantheon of national writers of Kazakhstan

and celebrated throughout the Soviet era, were such literary figures of the nineteenth century as M. Utemisov, Ch. Valikhanov, I. Altynsarin, D. Babataev, S. Kubeev and S. Toraigyrov.⁹⁹

In deciding what to canonize as ‘classical’ Uzbek literature, the problem was not a shortage of medieval literary works, produced in the part of Central Asia that became the Uzbek SSR. Rather, the issue was that the bulk of the oldest and most distinguished pieces of those writings were written in ‘Farsi-Tajik’, which could not have served as a national language literature to the Turkic-speaking Uzbeks. As regards pre-Soviet Turkic-language writings, particularly those in Chaghatay-Turki, it was quite difficult to assign them exclusively to the Uzbek people. Namely, Chaghatay-Turki, along with ‘Farsi-Tajik’, was used for centuries as the regional literary language of various Turkic elites of Central Asia. Consequently, in the region, where ethnicity was not practised by the masses up until the Soviet conquest, all Soviet-created Central Asian Turkic nationalities could have equally sought to (mis)appropriate many of those Chaghatay texts as part of their national literary legacies. Nonetheless, Soviet nation-builders in Uzbekistan were most successful in asserting the Chaghatay literary heritage as Uzbek. For instance, already in the early 1930s, the term ‘Chaghatay-Turki’ was formally reclassified in Soviet publications as ‘Old Uzbek’, to emphasize the Uzbekness of the language. Consequently, the Timurid-era writers, such as Navoi, Lutfi, Sakkaki, Durbek and Babur (fourteenth–sixteenth centuries), who had written their major works in Chaghatay, were proclaimed as the creators of the Golden Age of the Uzbek national literature. From among the authors of the following centuries (seventeenth–nineteenth), who were also canonized as national Uzbek writers, were Mashrab, Gulkhani, Khorezmi, Turdi, Mukimi and Furkat.¹⁰⁰ The fifteenth-century Chaghatay poet Alisher Navoi, his Uighur origin and Herat (in modern-day Afghanistan) domicile notwithstanding, was selected to be enshrined as a symbol of Uzbek national culture, receiving the status of the greatest Uzbek poet of all time.¹⁰¹ Thus, by the creativity and rulings of Soviet culture policymakers of the 1920s and 1930s, the Uzbeks were formally ascribed nearly the entire Turkic literary/written tradition of historical Mawarannahr as their own national property.

Similar to the purposeful utilization of folk culture elements in Soviet nation-building projects, the Soviets also skilfully managed to induct selected feudal and Tsarist-period writers of aristocratic or bourgeois origin into forming official cultures of the Soviet Kazakh and Uzbek nationalities without running into an ideological contradiction with Bolshevik orthodoxy. Soviet culture policymakers in charge creatively revised images and biographies of the state-approved pre-revolutionary ‘classical’ ‘Kazakh’ and ‘Uzbek’ authors, portraying them as the people’s writers of their eras, creating light amidst feudal and/or bourgeois darkness, and thus being the forerunners of communism. Their literary output was formally claimed as part of the Soviet literary heritage. Accordingly, within this context, the Soviet-held annual public jubilees of national Kazakh and Uzbek ‘classical’ authors, particularly of Kunanbaev and Navoi, not only were commemorations of these famed poets of the past, but, first and foremost, the celebrations of the glories of the Kazakh and Uzbek Soviet cultures.

In order to educate people about their rich legacy of 'national' literature, in Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, selected writings of pre-Soviet 'Kazakh' and 'Uzbek' authors were incorporated into their respective national-language secondary and higher education curricula. Every year, a variety of state-sponsored events were organized throughout both republics celebrating the works and anniversaries of the distinguished national literary figures of the past. Those authors were heralded as the creators and chroniclers of their people's distinctive spiritual-cultural heritages, reflecting in their works the collective identities, experiences, emotions and aspirations of their contemporary co-nationals, and passing on that knowledge to future generations. In general, this was intended to provide each of these Soviet-created nationalities with a sense of having a centuries-old, unbroken historical and cultural continuity with the ancestral past, exemplified by the long national-language literary tradition.

The Soviet cultural policy of fostering (selected and/or invented) 'traditional' cultures of the Kazakhs and Uzbeks had an important nation-making function of cultivating among each of these state-created nationalities a sense of possessing a shared, historically-rooted and territorially-bounded unique cultural legacy, which was to facilitate their consolidation into homogenized national communities. In addition to this, the above policy also served the political goal of establishing an image of the Bolshevik regime as the protector of minority cultures, which was thought to help them in winning the sympathies of the indigenous peoples in Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. On the other hand, the institutional support for the development of 'traditional' cultures of the Kazakhs and Uzbeks did not at all undermine the principal Soviet objective of achieving a full socialist cultural transformation of these peoples. Quite the reverse, Soviet-created national folk-ensembles, Soviet-constructed museums of 'guardians of the pasts' and Soviet-nativized 'classical' writers/writings of the Kazakhs and Uzbeks were all actively employed in the service of the Soviet cultural revolution. They were all used by Soviet cultural officials as raw materials and mediums for inventing, creating and developing new Soviet, 'national in form, socialist in content' Kazakh and Uzbek cultures.

Creation of modern Kazakh and Uzbek 'high-cultures'

Cultural *korenizatsiia* in Central Asia meant not only the state's support for pre-revolutionary 'progressive' cultural elements of the native population, but also creation and development of new forms of (Western/Russian-borrowed) national 'high-cultures' in the region. This had three main purposes: (i) to orient local traditional agro-pastoral Muslim societies toward Western-style modernization, and accordingly toward their transformation into modern socialist nations; (ii) to create additional cultural mediums for each titular nationality for expressing their national cultural identities and uniqueness, and thus to widen the space for ethnonational differentiation in the region;¹⁰² and at the same time, (iii) to establish similar and effective channels of cross-cultural communication and socialization at the all-Union level among ethnoculturally highly heterogeneous peoples

of the USSR. All these, in turn, were to contribute to both the *rastsvet* and *sblizhenie* of the national cultures of different Soviet nationalities.

To implement the aforementioned strategy, Soviet culture policymakers of the period, from the start, took active measures for implanting Western/Russian-style 'high-culture' forms into forming official cultures of the titular nationalities of Central Asia. During the 1920s and 1930s, numerous professional artists, performers and arts specialists in general from Russia proper were assigned to Soviet Central Asian Republics with the task of laying the foundations for the development of new forms of modern national cultures. In parallel, many artistically talented native students, through state-funded educational schemes, were sent to leading Russian arts, musical and theatrical institutions for professional training. In addition, in order to create a solid foundation for the Soviet cultural revolution in the region, large-scale state-sponsored cultural infrastructure projects were undertaken throughout major urban centres in Central Asia. Consequently, already by the end of the 1930s, every Soviet republic in the region, including Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, had its own architecturally distinguished cluster of modern cultural centres such as theatres, opera and ballet houses, concert halls, museums and art galleries. In the same period, a wide network of educational-cultural institutions, such as conservatories and art schools, was also established within each of these republics for preparing trained national cadres in cultural work.¹⁰³

These state-led initiatives in Central Asia soon bore rich and enduring fruit in every field of (official) cultural activity. By the mid-1930s, for example, Central Asian-based composers, both native and of Slavic origin, were producing the first local Westernized musical dramas and operas, based generally on themes drawn from traditional folk sources, and incorporating elements of local music. For instance, *Kyz-Zhibek* became the first Kazakh opera, staged in 1934, which was based on the Kazakh oral epic with the same title. Other Kazakh operas, created during the next decade, were *Zhalbyr* (1935), *Er Targyn* (1937) and *Abay* (1944).¹⁰⁴ The earliest Uzbek-language operas were *The Storm* (1939), *Leili and Medjnun* (1940) and *The Great Canal* (1941).¹⁰⁵ The repertoires of the Kazakh and Uzbek opera houses also included works written in Russian and other European languages. Likewise, the repertoires of their national ballet companies contained European-Russian classical performances as well as locally choreographed ones. For example, the first Kazakh ballet with local plot was *Kalkan and Mamy*, debuted in 1938, and followed by *Koktem* in 1940. The Uzbek ballets of this period were *Cotton* (1933), *Shahida* (1939) and *Guliandom* (1940).¹⁰⁶

Quite impressive was the Soviet success in the development of modern theatre in both republics. By the end of the 1930s, nearly all urban centres of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan had their own professional theatrical companies, the most important ones being the national state theatres located in their capital cities. Along with foreign (including Russian) classical plays translated into the local titular languages, the Kazakh and Uzbek theatres also staged a great number of plays written by native dramatists, such as *The Bey and the Servant*

by Uzbek Hamza Niyazi, and *Enlik-Kebek* by Kazakh Murat Auezov. Themes of those locally produced theatrical plays were primarily concerned with the positive aspects of ongoing socialist transformation in the region, for example state's efforts to emancipate Muslim women. There were also many plays addressing selected episodes from the respective histories of the Kazakh and Uzbek peoples from an official Soviet historical perspective.¹⁰⁷ The same themes were also effectively exploited and visualized by national cinematographies of Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. This is well evident even from the titles of the first Uzbek films: *A Muslim Woman* (1925), *Second Wife* (1927) and *Hijab* (1927).¹⁰⁸ *Amangeldy* was the first full-length film made in Kazakhstan in 1938, which dealt with the anti-Tsarist Kazakh rebellion of 1916, led by pro-Bolshevik Amangeldy Imanov.¹⁰⁹ In general, apart from their cultural significance, theatre and cinema presented an important instrument in the hands of Soviet culture policymakers for indoctrinating the native populations of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, as well as of other Union-republics, with communist ideology.¹¹⁰

The Bolshevik regime, as briefly discussed in the section on Soviet language policy, also paid a great interest to the development of new, Soviet—'national in form'—Kazakh and Uzbek literatures. For example, Soviet Kazakh and Uzbek writers, brought under the state-organized Writers' Unions of their 'own' republics, were urged to produce literary works reflecting, emphasizing and shaping national characters, symbols and cultures of their peoples. In other words, they were assigned a specific task of contributing to the Soviet-led Kazakh and Uzbek nation-making/maintaining projects by stimulating the emergence and solidification of national identities and consciousness among their co-nationals through their writings.¹¹¹ Irrespective of their literary quality, newly-produced Kazakh and Uzbek literatures were enthusiastically published by the Soviet authorities in great numbers as to reach as many (to-be-nativized) readers as possible. The interest in the success of this project was so high that Soviet policymakers went so far as to fabricate literary works for some 'people's writers' in the Soviet Union. For example, according to one of the foremost Soviet Russian composers Dmitri Shostakovich's interview with journalist Solomon Volkov, poems and songs of Jambyl Jabayev (1846–1945), the most celebrated Soviet Kazakh *akyn* (bard), were entirely the fabrication of Russian poets and writers in Moscow. According to Shostakovich, Jabayev's literary output was always first published in Russian as translations from the 'original Kazakh texts'; however, the problem was that there were no 'original texts' in Kazakh, because they simply did not exist. Jabayev could not have even told his folk poetry to the so-called Russian translators as neither side spoke a word of each other's languages.¹¹²

The period of *korenizatsiia* also coincides with the appearance of a number of new literary genres in Kazakh and Uzbek, such as novel, short story and modern poetry. For instance, the first ever novel written in Uzbek, including Chaghatay-Turki, was *Bygone Days* (1925) by Abdulla Kadyri. Other important Soviet Uzbek writers of the period were H. Niyazi, G. Guliam, A. Kahhar, Kh. Alimjan, A. Umari and Zulfiya.¹¹³ As regards to the first generation of Soviet Kazakh

writers, among them were M. Auezov, S. Seifullin, I. Zhansugurov, S. Mukanov, B. Mailin and G. Mustafin.¹¹⁴

Finally, an important long-term effect on the national consolidation of the Kazakhs and Uzbeks respectively, as well as on changing their traditional lifestyles, had the modern sport culture introduced and popularized in Central Asia after the establishment of Soviet power. Sport, as discussed in the theoretical chapter, has been one of the most effective tools employed in nearly all modern nation-building projects for achieving national cohesion, permeating the targeted communities with a sense of collective belonging, achievement, co-ownership and identity. As Riordan notes, professional sport ‘unites wider sections of the population [more] than probably any other social activity. It is easily understood and enjoyed, cutting across social, economic, educational, ethnic, religious and language barriers’.¹¹⁵ These advantages made sport particularly suitable for being utilized in the Soviet Kazakh and Uzbek nation-building projects, because it had more potential in achieving more immediate results in forging senses of Kazakhness and Uzbekness among the respective predominantly illiterate peoples or the masses, than for example Kunanbaev’s or Navoi’s poetry.

Accordingly, during the *korenizatsiia* period and thereafter, a wide range of modern sport forms, for both genders, were established and numerous sport facilities were constructed in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. The younger generations, particularly children, were actively encouraged to enrol in local sport clubs, and the most talented ones to pursue professional sport careers. In addition, each Soviet republic was given the right to hold its national (republic-wide) sport competitions, meeting venues for the members of ‘imagined national communities’. The best athletes and professional sport clubs from both republics also regularly participated in various all-Union-wide competitions, such as Spartakiads, representing their national republics and competing with the representatives of others.¹¹⁶ These sporting venues served as important agents for both national self-determination and self-othering. For example, the most successful Central Asian football clubs, Pakhtakor Tashkent and Kairat Almaty, competing in the top Soviet football leagues for decades, were no doubt sources of national pride of the entire Uzbek and Kazakh nations respectively.

To sum up, during *korenizatsiia* and afterwards, the Soviets successfully implanted a great variety of Western/Russian ‘high-culture’ forms into the emerging new Kazakh and Uzbek cultural landscapes, many of which, over time, gradually became major means and modes of their national cultural productions and expressions. The important feature of this policy was that, despite being heavily infused with socialist contents, these imported cultural forms, particularly their themes and productions, were not detached from the local sociocultural settings. Quite the opposite, they were indigenized so as to specifically reflect the histories, natural sceneries, cultural backgrounds and experiences of the nationalities they served. In other words, the Soviet-introduced new cultural forms in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, as well as in other republics of Central Asia, served the function of constructing, developing and maintaining unique and distinct cultural identities for each titular nationality of the region.

The ‘enrichment’ of the Kazakh and Uzbek official cultures with the Western/Russian ‘high-culture’ forms was also instrumental in setting these agrarian and pastoral Muslim societies toward the Western-style cultural modernity, and thus bringing them closer to the European Soviet nationalities. Probably the biggest achievement in this respect was the Soviets’ ability to successfully furnish the native communities with a new ‘canonized’ view of a hierarchy of culture in which Western/Russian art forms were regarded as the most prestigious, bearing in Adams words, ‘the status of “international culture,” the mark of civilization’.¹¹⁷ Indeed, for the Soviet-born and -educated new Kazakh and Uzbek generations, particularly those of the post-1930s vintage, these Soviet-imported cultural forms were not coercively-imposed alien practices but rather organic parts of their modern (socialist) national ‘high-cultures’, the practices of which placed them on a level with other ‘civilized’ nations.

Overall, the most essential and lasting results of Soviet cultural policies in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were the formation and development of the unified and homogenized ‘high-cultures’ of the Kazakhs and Uzbeks. For the first time in the history of Central Asian peoples, a ‘high-culture’ was no longer the exclusive domain of the elites, but rather a common property of all members of a given territorially-defined national community.

In conclusion it must be stressed that the secret of the success of the *korenizatsiia* campaign in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan was not only in the above progressive Soviet ‘carrot’ policies aimed at developing literary languages, ‘high-cultures’, mass education and increased employment opportunities for the native indigenous peoples. But it was also largely due to the Soviet regime’s effective and non-compromising application of the ‘stick’ policies such as forced secularization, sedentarization and urbanization. Without the latter, it would have been practically impossible to effectively implement any *korenizatsiia* policy on the ground. For example, in a conservative Muslim Uzbek society, where women traditionally were veiled and secluded, no matter how benign was the Soviets’ intention to introduce compulsory schooling for the native women or to create national female folk-ensembles, their realization would not have been possible without the state’s coercive imposition of secularism and Western-style modernity. This complex nature of the Soviet nation-building and modernization projects in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan is the main concern of the following three chapters of the book.

Notes

- 1 See V. I. Lenin, ‘The Constituent Assembly Elections and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat’, in *Collected Works*, vol. 30 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), 274; ‘Speech On The Role Of The Communist Party’, in *Collected Works*, vol. 31 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), 235–239.
- 2 Paul Kolstoe, *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics* (London: C. Hurst, 1995), 73.
- 3 *Ibid.*
- 4 The *korenizatsiia* programme/campaign was first formally enunciated in the Resolution on Nationality Question adopted by the Twelfth Party Congress of the RCP in

- April, 1923. See *Dvenadtsati s"ezd RKP(b), 17–25 aprelia 1923 goda: Ste-nograficheski otchet* (Moscow: Politizdat), 691–697.
- 5 A note of clarification is needed here. In the Soviet sense, the construction of modern Western-style societies in Central Asia, or elsewhere in the USSR, did not imply the establishment of a liberal democratic political system or a market-oriented economy (the bases of modern Western societies and their institutions) in the region. Rather, for the founders of the Soviet Union, the modernization of the state, and particularly of the county's eastern societies, first and foremost, implied 'industrialization, urbanization, secularization, education, universal literacy, and territorial nation-hood'. Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 126. Although these latter elements are also integral parts of Western modernization, they are largely incomplete without the former two, liberal democracy and especially capitalism, which, in the Soviet case, was replaced with a one-party communist system and planned economy. In other words, the Soviets sought to emulate Western modernization without liberal democracy and market capitalism. Hence, according to this model, modern Soviet societies (or society) were to be Western in outlook though based on the Marxist-Leninist principles of socialist internationalism, and this is what the expression Western-style societies (or communities, or nations) is meant to convey in this book when discussing the Soviet nation-building and modernization policies.
 - 6 *Dvenadtsati s"ezd RKP(b)*, 696–697.
 - 7 For the text of the decree, see *KPSS i Sovetskoe pravitel'stvo ob Uzbekistane: Sbornik dokumentov (1925–1970)* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan), 159–161.
 - 8 See Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 132–154; Matt Payne, 'The Forge of the Kazakh Proletariat? The Turksib, Nativization, and Industrialization during Stalin's First Five-Year Plan', in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 223–252.
 - 9 *KPSS i Sovetskoe pravitel'stvo ob Uzbekistane*, 169.
 - 10 Beisembaev, *K sotsializmu*, 329.
 - 11 *Ibid.*, 141.
 - 12 For the text of the decree, see *Sotsialisticheskoe stroitel'stvo v Kazakhstane v vosstanovitel'nyi period (1921–1925 gg.): Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Alma-Ata: AN KazSSR, 1962), 96–97.
 - 13 Sulaimanova and Ishanov, *Istoriia Sovetskogo gosudarstva*, vol. 2, 24.
 - 14 An 'official language' in the USSR implied not the 'state language', a language having *de jure* superiority over other spoken languages, but an eponymous language used for administrative purposes in a given SSR/ASSR/AO. See E. Glyn Lewis, *Multilingualism in the Soviet Union: Aspects of Language Policy and Its Implementation* (The Hague: Mouton, 1972), 266–267. Until the late 1980s, no language, including Russian, in the Soviet Union was granted the status of a 'state language', whether at an all-Union or republican level. Formally, the Russian language only served as the medium of interethnic communication between the peoples of the USSR.
 - 15 Z. S. Chertina, 'The Bourgeois Theory of "Modernization" and the Real Development of the Peoples of Soviet Central Asia', *Russian Social Science Review* 22, no. 2 (1981): 76.
 - 16 *KPSS i Sovetskoe pravitel'stvo ob Uzbekistane*, 163–164.
 - 17 S. Kenzhebaev, *Sovety v bor'be za postroenie sotsializma: Istoriia Sovetskogo stroitel'stva v Kazakhstane, 1917–1937 gg.* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstan, 1969), 255, 257.
 - 18 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 144, 174–175; Fierman, *Language Planning*, 173–185.
 - 19 See Z. Golikova, P. Pakhmurnyi and T. Pozniakova, *Kompartiiia Kazakhstana za 50 let. (1921–1971 gg.)* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstan, 1972), 59, 100.

- 20 See N. T. Bezrukova, ed. *Kommunisticheskaia partiia Uzbekistana v tsifrah (sbornik statisticheskikh materialov 1924–1977 gg.)* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1979), 21, 53.
- 21 Romeo A. Cherot, ‘Nativization of Government and Party Structure in Kazakhstan, 1920–1930’, *American Slavic and East European Review* 14, no. 1 (1955): 46–47.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 50, Table 6.
- 23 Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 38.
- 24 Slezkine, ‘USSR as a Communal Apartment’, 441.
- 25 Donald S. Carlisle, ‘Modernization, Generations, and the Uzbek Soviet Intelligentsia’, in *The Dynamics of Soviet Politics*, ed. Paul Cocks, Robert V. Daniels and Nancy Whittier Heer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 239–264.
- 26 See Steven L. Burg, ‘Central Asian Political Participation and Soviet Political Development’, in *The USSR and the Muslim World: Issues in Domestic and Foreign Policy*, ed. Yaacov Ro’i (London: Allen & Unwin, 1984), 40–62.
- 27 Dave, *Kazakhstan*, 75, 77.
- 28 See Collins, *Clan Politics*, 109, Table 4.1.b.
- 29 For more on this, see Ch. 12 of this book.
- 30 Dave, *Kazakhstan*, 77.
- 31 ‘Farsi-Tajik’ was institutionalized by the Soviet government as the national language of the state-defined Tajik *narodnost*. Subsequently, the entire ‘Farsi-Tajik’ literature of the region was proclaimed by Soviet cultural officials as the Tajik national heritage. For example, see I. S. Braginskii, *Ocherki iz istorii Tadzhikskoi literatury*, vol. 2 (Stalinabad: Tadzhikgosizdat, 1956).
- 32 Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 59.
- 33 Anita Sengupta, *The Formation of the Uzbek Nation-State: A Study in Transition* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), 147.
- 34 A. Ginzburg, ‘Vmesto vvedeniia. K izucheniiu etnopoliticheskoi situatsii Uzbekistana. Istoricheskii aspekt’, in *Uzbekistan: Etnopoliticheskaia panorama. Ocherki, dokumenty, materialy*, ed. A. I. Ginzburg (Moscow: IEA RAN, 1994), 13.
- 35 T. N. Kary-Niiazov, *Ocherki istorii kul’tury Sovetskogo Uzbekistana* (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1955), 276.
- 36 Shirin Akiner, ‘Uzbekistan: Republic of Many Tongues’, in *Language Planning in the Soviet Union*, ed. Michael Kirkwood (London: Macmillan, 1989), 105.
- 37 Grenoble, *Language Policy*, 150.
- 38 Martha B. Olcott, ‘The Politics of Language Reform in Kazakhstan’, in *Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Soviet National Languages: Their Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Isabelle Kreindler (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1985), 192.
- 39 S. K. Kenesbaev, ed. *Progressivnoe vlianie Russkogo iazyka na Kazakhskii* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1965), 105–106.
- 40 Bernard Comrie, *The Languages of the Soviet Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 23.
- 41 M. I. Isayev, *National Languages in the USSR: Problems and Solutions*, trans. Paul Medov (Moscow: Progress, 1977), 243.
- 42 William Fierman, ‘Language Development in Soviet Uzbekistan’, in *Sociolinguistic Perspectives on Soviet National Languages: Their Past, Present, and Future*, ed. Isabelle Kreindler (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1985), 209–210.
- 43 See *Pervyi Vsesoiuznyi Tiurkologicheskii s’ezd, 26 fevralia – 5 marta 1926 g.: Ste-nograficheskii otchet*, (Baku: Nagyl Evi, 2011).
- 44 A. I. Ikramov, *Izbrannye Trudy*, vol. 1 (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1972), 521.
- 45 In the aftermath of the October Revolution in 1917, the Bolshevik leadership was quite optimistic that a proletarian revolutionary wave would soon advance in other parts of the world. In March 1919, Lenin even established the Communist International (the Comintern), an international communist organization tasked with

- assisting the spread of proletarian revolutions worldwide. The goal of establishing the international Soviet republic also raised the question of the need for a single unified writing system for the projected state. Many leading Bolshevik statesmen of the time—such as Anatoly Lunacharsky, the first Soviet People’s Commissar for Enlightenment (1917–29)—believed that the Latin alphabet was best suited to the task. See V. M. Alpatov, *150 iazykov i politika, 1917–1997: Sotsiolingvistichekii problemy SSSR i postsovetskogo prostranstva* (Moscow: IVRAN, 1997), 65; Grenoble, *Language Policy*, 50.
- 46 T. S. Saidbaev, *Islam i obschestvo: Opyt istoriko-sotsiologicheskogo issledovaniia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1984), 178.
- 47 See *Pervyi Vsesoiuznyi Tiurkologicheskii s’ezd*, 514–525.
- 48 Isayev, *National Languages*, 244.
- 49 See *ibid.*, 262–270.
- 50 Grenoble, *Language Policy*, 54.
- 51 Comrie, *Languages of the Soviet Union*, 32.
- 52 *Ibid.*, 32–33.
- 53 Olcott, ‘Politics of Language’, 196.
- 54 For example, see Rywkin, *Moscow’s Muslim Challenge*, 94; Glenn, *Soviet Legacy*, 81–82; Elizabeth E. Bacon, *Central Asians under Russian Rule: A Study in Culture Change* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1966), 191–192.
- 55 See Nicholas De Witt, *Education and Professional Employment in the USSR* (Washington, DC: National Science Foundation, 1961), 114–117.
- 56 The only indigenous peoples of the Soviet Union who were allowed to retain their traditional Latin-based alphabets were Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians and Karelians. In addition, the Georgian and Armenian languages, with their ancient and unique alphabets, were affected neither by Latinization nor Cyrillicization. Alpatov, *150 iazykov*, 82–83.
- 57 Vakhobov *et al.*, *Torzhestvo Leninskikh idei*, 105, 172.
- 58 Baishev, *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, 448.
- 59 For the full text of the decree, see *Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti*, vol. 9 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1978), 239–240.
- 60 For the full text of the decree, see *Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti*, vol. 10 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1980), 136–137.
- 61 Vakhobov *et al.*, *Torzhestvo Leninskikh idei*, 111–112.
- 62 Kenzhebaev, *Sovety v bor’be*, 261–262; Kan, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 185.
- 63 *Narodnoe obrazovanie, nauka i kul’tura v SSSR: Statisticheskii sbornik* (Moscow: Statistika, 1971), 54–57. Until 1928, the Soviets also allowed the continued existence of several hundred *maktabs* and *madrasas* in Central Asia. According to Beisembaev *et al.*, this was a part of the Soviet strategy aimed at appeasing the local Muslim population. Beisembaev, *K sotsializmu*, 321.
- 64 Kozlov, *Natsional’nosti SSSR*, 225, Table 33.
- 65 Brian Holmes, Gerald H. Read and Natalya Voskresenskaya, *Russian Education: Tradition and Transition* (New York: Garland, 1995), 8–9.
- 66 *Narodnoe obrazovanie*, 21–22. Literacy data for Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan during the 1930s and 1980s is not available by nationality.
- 67 *Ibid.*
- 68 While every Soviet titular language education system, including Kazakh and Uzbek, had its own school curricula and textbooks for teaching language, literature, and history of a respective titular nationality; textbooks in sciences and mathematics were standard for all secondary schools in the USSR, and were generally reprints of the Russian ones.
- 69 M. Musaev, *Uzbekskaiia SSR: Kratkii istoriko-ekonomicheskii ocherk* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1959), 85.
- 70 Baishev, *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, 348–349, 456–457.

- 71 *Narodnoe obrazovanie*, 157.
- 72 Akiner, 'Uzbekistan', 108.
- 73 N. N. Negmatov and A. Ia. Vishnevskii, *Istoricheskii progress sotsialisticheskikh natsii* (Moscow: Mysl', 1987), 124–128.
- 74 See *Narodnoe obrazovanie*, 245–249.
- 75 Ivan Kurganov, 'The Problem of Nationality in Soviet Russia', *Russian Review* 10, no. 4 (1951): 256.
- 76 J. V. Stalin, 'Political Report of the Central Committee to the Sixteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.)', in *Works*, vol. 12 (Moscow: FLPH, 1954), 380, 394.
- 77 V. I. Lenin, 'Rough Draft of a Resolution on Proletarian Culture', in *Collected Works*, vol. 42 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1971), 217.
- 78 A theory that every national culture contained rival 'progressive' and 'reactionary' elements was first advanced by Lenin in 1913. See Lenin, 'Critical Remarks', 23–33.
- 79 The three stage scheme '*rastsvet-sblizhenie-sliianie*' of the development of Soviet peoples was first developed by Lenin in 1916, while defending his thesis of 'self-determination' against the Polish Social-Democrats. See V. I. Lenin, 'The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up', in *Collected Works*, vol. 22 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), 320–360.
- 80 At the time of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the Russian national consciousness was already well advanced. However, with the establishment of the new socialist regime—which was largely hostile to Tsarist ideology, and most especially to the Orthodox faith, a fundamental pillar of the Russian national identity—there was a considerable need to reformulate Russianness too.
- 81 Iu. V. Keldysh, ed. *Istoriia muzyki narodov SSSR*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Sovetskii Kompozitor, 1970), 95, 195, 369–371.
- 82 In the multilingual Bukhara Emirate, *shashmaqam* songs were traditionally sung in a mixture of Turkic and 'Farsi-Tajik' languages. However, with the launching of the Soviet nation-building projects in Central Asia in the 1920s, Soviet cultural officials of the period began to artificially separate the Uzbek-language and Tajik-language *shashmaqam* songs, to create for each of these nationalities (Uzbek and Tajik) its own national musical tradition, distinct from one another. Theodore Levin, *The Hundred Thousand Fools of God: Musical Travels in Central Asia (And Queens, New York)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 46–47.
- 83 See Keldysh, *Istoriia muzyki*, vol. 1, 349–355, 369–372.
- 84 For the same purpose the Soviets also used other forms of arts and culture such as modern painting, cinematography, sculpture. On the use of decorative art in constructing the ethnographic images of Uzbeks during the *korenizatsiia* period, see Karen Kettering, 'Domesticating Uzbeks: Central Asians in Soviet Decorative Art of the Twenties and Thirties', in *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture, and the Museum*, ed. T. J. Barringer and Tom Flynn (London: Routledge, 1998), 95–110.
- 85 David L. Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917–1941* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 172.
- 86 See Langston Hughes, *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes*, vol. 9 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 127–131.
- 87 Adams, *Spectacular State*, 109.
- 88 Rafis Abazov, *Culture and Customs of the Central Asian Republics* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), 147.
- 89 Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values*, 173.
- 90 Peter A. Blitstein, 'Cultural Diversity and the Interwar Conjuncture: Soviet Nationality Policy in Its Comparative Context', *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (2006): 293. Although an increasing number of Central Asians began to adopt European-style clothing from the 1930s, a noticeable trend among the local masses towards

- 'modern' clothing emerged only in the 1960s. At this time, according to Abazov, home-production of traditional clothing in Central Asia became largely uneconomical because it could not compete with the rising productivity of industrially-produced Western-style clothing. In addition, Abazov asserts, the new generations of Central Asians were no more prone to dress in the outmoded traditional clothes of their ancestors. Abazov, *Culture and Customs*, 173–174.
- 91 Laura Adams, 'Invention, Institutionalization and Renewal in Uzbekistan's National Culture', *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 2, no. 3 (1999): 357.
- 92 For example, see Musaev, *Uzbeckskaia SSR*, 26.
- 93 One of the exceptions was the Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yassawi, built by the Timurids in the city of Turkistan during the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, or, in other words, prior to the migration of the 'Kazakh' nomadic tribes into the region.
- 94 Yuri Bregel, *Notes on the Study of Central Asia*, Papers on Inner Asia (Bloomington, IN: RIFIAS, 1996), 12. For examples of such works, see T. A. Zhdanko, 'Problema poluosedlogo naseleniia v istorii Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana', *Sovetskaia Etnografiia* no. 2 (1961): 53–62.
- 95 See A. Kh. Margulan, *Iz istorii gorodov i stroitel'nogo iskusstva drevnego Kazakhstana* (Alma-Ata: AN KazSSR, 1950); K. M. Baipakov and L. B. Erzhakovich, *Drevnie goroda Kazakhstana* (Alma-Ata: Nauka).
- 96 *Narodnoe obrazovanie*, 345.
- 97 See Martha B. Olcott, 'The Fabrication of a Social Past: The Kazakhs of Central Asia', in *Political Anthropology Yearbook I: Ideology and Interest: The Dialectics of Politics*, ed. Myron J. Aronoff (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1980), 202–211.
- 98 R. B. Suleimenov, *Leninskie idei kul'turnoi revoliutsii i ikh osushchestvlenie v Kazakhstane* (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1972), 117.
- 99 See L. I. Klimovich, ed. *Khrestomatiia po literature narodov SSSR* (Moscow: Gosuchpedgiz, 1959), 677–749.
- 100 *Ibid.*, 383–502.
- 101 See M. I. Sheverdin, ed. *Rodonachal'nik Uzbekskoi literatury: Sbornik statei ob Alishere Navoi* (Tashkent: UzAN, 1940).
- 102 The point 'II' is taken from Eden Naby, 'Tajik and Uzbek Nationality Identity: The Non-Literary Arts', in *The Nationality Question in Soviet Central Asia*, ed. Edward Allworth (New York: Praeger, 1973), 110.
- 103 See Johanna Spector, 'Musical Tradition and Innovation', in *Central Asia, 130 Years of Russian Dominance: A Historical Overview*, ed. Edward Allworth (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 478; David MacFadyen, *Russian Culture in Uzbekistan: One Language in the Middle of Nowhere* (London: Routledge, 2006).
- 104 Baishev, *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, 480–481.
- 105 Vakhabov *et al.*, *Torzhestvo Leninskikh idei*, 204.
- 106 Iu. N. Grigorovich and V. V. Vanslov, *Balet: Entsiklopediia* (Moscow: Sov. Entsiklopediia, 1981), 232, 235.
- 107 See Negmatov and Vishnevskii, *Istoricheskii progress*, 176–179.
- 108 Tolstov *et al.*, *Narody Srednei Azii*, vol. 1, 385.
- 109 Negmatov and Vishnevskii, *Istoricheskii progress*, 194.
- 110 On Central Asian cinematography, see Michael Rouland, Gulnara Abikeeva and Birgit Beumers, eds., *Cinema in Central Asia: Rewriting Cultural Histories* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2013).
- 111 Abazov, *Culture and Customs*, 93.
- 112 Volkov Solomon, *Testimony: The Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich*, trans. Antonina W. Bouis (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979), 209–211, 222. The authenticity of Volkov's book is highly disputed among scholars, some of whom believe that Volkov himself fabricated the entire interview with Shostakovich. On this, see

Malcolm Hamrick Brown, ed. *A Shostakovich Casebook* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

113 See Vakhobov *et al.*, *Torzhestvo Leninskikh idei*, 173–179.

114 See Nusupbekov *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 4, 581–588.

115 James Riordan, *Sport, Politics, and Communism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 53.

116 G. S. Sapargaliev *et al.*, *Kazakhskaia Sovetskaia sotsialisticheskaia respublika* (Alma-Ata: Kazgosizdat, 1960), 351–363; G. I. Kukushkin, ed. *Entsiklopedicheskii slovar' po fizicheskoi kul'ture i sportu*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Fizkul'tura i Sport, 1963), 423.

117 Adams, 'Invention, Institutionalization and Renewal', 363.

9 Soviet policy towards Islam in Central Asia

Karl Marx, in one of his letters, discussing the hardship of the working class under capitalism, referred to religion as ‘the *opium* of the people’, which, in his view, comforted the exploited masses spiritually in their earthly subjection by giving them the false hope of salvation in an afterlife.¹ This illusory hope of a heavenly reward, according to Marx, was to blame for the fact that the oppressed and the poor accepted their lot in this life rather than altering it for the better through revolution. Interestingly, for Marx, the atheist, the best way to deal with religion was not by directly attacking it, but rather by removing all those socio-economic and political conditions that rendered it as a consoler of the ‘abased, enslaved, abandoned, [and] contemptible’ masses.² In general, Marx was convinced that with the economic and scientific progress under socialism, religion, like states and nations, would in time wither away.³

For Lenin, however, Keller notes, religion was an ‘intolerable rival’ to be eliminated through ‘aggressive antireligious action rather than waiting for history to take its course’.⁴ The Bolshevik leader even paraphrased Marx’s above dictum about religion as ‘opium for the people’, regarding it as some kind of ‘spiritual booze’ that was purposefully disseminated by the ruling elites in order to make the working masses submissive to exploitation.⁵ Apart from doctrinal reasons, Lenin’s uncompromising stance toward religion was largely a result of the pre-revolutionary Bolsheviks intransigent opposition to the Tsarist regime, whose major ideological bulwark was the Russian Orthodox Church. Hence, for Lenin and other Bolshevik leaders, the anti-religious, and particularly anti-Orthodox, drive was an important part of their Party’s overall struggle against the autocracy of the Romanov dynasty.

Unlike Orthodox Christianity, Islam, irrespective of the fact that Asian parts of Tsarist Russia were predominantly inhabited by Muslim peoples, had little or no place in the pre-revolutionary Bolshevik discourse. There were two major reasons for this: (i) in contrast to the Russian Orthodox Church, Islamic institutions presented no barrier to the Bolsheviks in their struggle to topple the Tsarist regime, and for that reason, Islam was of less immediate interest to them; and (ii) the Bolshevik Party had practically no sociopolitical base among the Muslim communities of Russia, and therefore its leaders showed little interest in elaborating on the issues concerning specifically the Muslim subjects of the Empire,

including the question of their faith. Nonetheless, in general, the Bolsheviks were as unequivocal in their approach to the Islamic religion as they were to Orthodox Christianity. Within a Marxist-Leninist theoretical framework, Islam was cast as a reactionary force responsible for the oppression of the Muslim toiling masses, and was to be fought in the same manner as the Russian Orthodox Church.⁶

Consequently, it was not surprising that as one of the first legal acts that the new Bolshevik government, after taking power in October 1917, issued was against the religious establishment in Russia. The November *Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia* abolished all religious privileges in the country.⁷ On 16 (29) December 1917, the Bolshevik government decreed that a divorce could only be obtained through civil registry offices and courts.⁸ Another decree, issued two days later, provided that the Soviet state henceforth would only recognize the civil registration of births, marriages and deaths, thus curtailing the church one of its most important sources of revenue and of its social significance.⁹ On 20 January 1918, Lenin signed the decree on *Freedom of Conscience, Church and Religious Organizations*. While this decree proclaimed the faith as a private matter of citizens, it deprived the Church of its legal standing, of the right to own property, and the right to engage in any public religious education.¹⁰ And when in response to all these acts the Russian Orthodox Church pronounced an anathema on the Bolshevik regime, and then openly sided with the White forces during the Russian Civil War, Lenin's government showed no hesitation in launching a militant campaign against it. In the first years of the new order, hundreds of Orthodox Churches, as well as of other Christian denominations, were closed or demolished and a large number of the Christian clergy was persecuted by the Bolsheviks in their controlled territories of the former Tsarist Empire.¹¹ The goal of this terror was to considerably diminish the influence of the Orthodox Church and religion in the emerging Soviet state, as well as to free ideological space for the implantation of the teachings of communism, including the doctrine of atheistic materialism.

However, the Russian Civil War, which erupted soon after the October Revolution, left the Bolsheviks in no position to undertake a large anti-religious offensive against Islam in Muslim regions of the former Tsarist Empire, including Central Asia. On the contrary, in order to secure the support, or at least neutrality, of the Muslims in a bitter war with the Whites, the newly-formed Bolshevik government, as discussed in Chapter 4, immediately pledged to uphold the religious rights of all Muslim toilers of the east. Shortly after this, in December 1917, Lenin, as a sign of respect to the Turkestan Muslims, decreed the return of the valuable seventh-century Uthman Qur'an to Tashkent,¹² which had been confiscated by Tsarist authorities and was kept for decades in the imperial library of St. Petersburg. Lenin also openly criticized the Turkestan Soviet government for its chauvinistic attitudes toward the local Muslim population, and for rushing the implementation of radical secularization reforms and weakening the ulama through confiscation of *waqf* endowments and closing a number of religious courts in the republic. Lenin warned radicals in the Party that in the

current sociopolitical situation in Central Asia the forceful secularization could have alienated native Muslims from the Soviet government as they were under strong influence of mullahs.¹³ Therefore, Lenin urged for the need to exercise strategic patience in order 'to win the confidence of the natives; ... *to prove* that we are *not* imperialists, that we shall *not* tolerate any *deviation* in that direction'.¹⁴ To this end, the Kremlin instructed local Soviet governments in Central Asia to take active measures to co-opt moderate Muslim groups and individuals into the CP and state apparatus as well as to develop their cultures in their native languages.¹⁵ Moreover, in order to counteract the rising Basmachi insurgency, which was using religious appeals to mobilize local Muslims against Bolshevik power, the RCP CC, on 18 May 1922, issued a special decree *On Turkestan-Bukhara Affairs* directing the return of the expropriated *waqf* properties, restoration of shari'ah courts and legalizing Muslim religious schools (albeit with some restrictions) in the region.¹⁶

Although this moderate approach towards Islam and Islamic institutions in the first half of the 1920s did not preclude Bolshevik activists from engaging in anti-religious agitation and propaganda, the general line of the Soviet religious policy in Central Asia at this stage was clear: to restrain from aggressive enforcement of atheistic secularism. As Stalin clarified in 1920, the elimination of Islam in the Soviet state had to be achieved 'by indirect and more cautious ways'.¹⁷ This was necessary to avoid a possible radicalization of the region's Muslim communities, and consequently the Basmachi insurgency, which would have serious repercussions for the Soviet regime's efforts to entrench itself in Central Asia. Otherwise, early Soviet key policymakers regarded Islam of greater potential danger to their modernization and nationality policies than their main ideological rival the Russian Orthodox Church. In their view, Islam with its traditions and customs was the most backward, xenophobic, gender discriminatory, and utterly unprogressive of all the religions, standing in the way of the projected socialist transformation of the traditionally Muslim peoples of the USSR, including the Kazakhs and Uzbeks.¹⁸ In addition, the central and all-pervasive role that Islam occupied in the identity structures of the native Central Asian communities, was seen as one of the biggest challenges to the Soviet nation-builders' efforts to cultivate separate, overarching secular national identities for each state-created nationality in the region. All this meant that it was only a matter of time before the Soviets brought Islam under the same repressive conditions as the Orthodox Church.

Indeed, in the second half of the 1920s, with the successful containment of Basmachism and significant progress in penetrating Soviet power in Central Asia, there was a fundamental shift in the Kremlin's approach toward Islam, marked by a full-scale attack on Islamic institutions and traditions. More precisely, aside from the already discussed alphabet reform discarding the 'holy' Arabic script in favour of the Latin one in 1927, by the decision of the Soviet central government, all shari'ah courts in the region were abolished altogether and replaced by a uniform secular legal system. In line with this, civil registry offices were instituted as the only legally recognized authority regarding births,

deaths, marriages and divorces. In the same year, Soviet authorities also expropriated all *waqf* endowments in Central Asia. During 1927–28, nearly all Islamic educational establishments, including the Jadid ones, were closed down and their students transferred to secular public schools. By the end of the decade, a great number of mosques in the region were either destroyed or turned into various public clubs, museums and warehouses. During this anti-Islamic campaign, conservative Muslim clergy were particularly targeted for repression and elimination. This period also saw a significant increase in scientific-atheist propaganda among the Soviet Muslim population. Thousands of newly recruited and specially trained native CP members and activists, for instance, were fanned out all over Central Asia with the task of unmasking the class essence of Islam and its servants the ulama and educating people about socialism.¹⁹

The onslaught against Islam in Central Asia continued with more intensity in the 1930s, reaching its peak during the Stalinist purges of 1937–38, when, in addition to the ‘reactionary’ ulama, thousands of native communists were dismissed, imprisoned and/or executed for allegedly having pan-Islamic leanings and intentionally hindering the implementation of Soviet policies in their respective republics.²⁰ In Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, for example, the regime’s repressive apparatus particularly targeted those native CP and state officials who were formerly affiliated with the Alash Orda Party and various Jadid groupings in the region. These ex-Alash Orda and -Jadid Soviet personnel, whose support was so crucial in the early 1920s in expanding the new Bolshevik regime across Central Asia, were now deemed as counter-revolutionary elements and harshly persecuted.²¹ Consequently, as a result of this state-led terror, by 1938, more than half of the Central Asian CP leadership at all levels was replaced by the new class of more reliable native cadres, fully committed to the Soviet government in Moscow.²²

The outbreak of World War II, however, compelled the Kremlin to soften its violent policy toward religion, including Islam. In particular, eager to secure support from Soviet Muslims and mobilize them for the anticipated war with Nazi Germany, Stalin’s government decided to make certain limited concessions to their religious sensibilities. For example, in the early 1940s, the Soviet authorities reopened a number of mosques in the Muslim parts of the USSR, including Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and suspended open persecution of the ulama. The observance of Muslim rites, if not encouraged, was no longer a target of state repression. From 1944 onwards, a small number of Soviet Muslim dignitaries were also permitted to participate in the annual pilgrimage to Mecca.²³

On the other hand, in order to maintain organized control over Islamic issues, the Soviets reorganized the entire institutional structure of Muslim communities in the state. During 1943–44, the Kremlin established four Muslim Spiritual Boards (Muftiats), each responsible for administering the Islamic affairs of a particular geographical area in the USSR. One of these Muftiats was the Tashkent-based Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Central Asia, known by its Russian initials, SADUM.²⁴ The first Grand Mufti (the highest official) of SADUM was Eshon Babakhanov, a member of an old and honoured religious family from Uzbekistan, who was one of those ulama who had, in the aftermath

of the October Revolution, decided to adapt to the new Soviet regime rather than defy it. For his loyalty to the Soviet regime Eshon was duly rewarded by the authorities. For example, in 1945 Eshon was allowed to resume the functioning of the Mir-i Arab *madrassa* in Bukhara for training a limited number of Muslim clergy to serve in state-registered mosques in Central Asia and elsewhere in the Union.²⁵ Furthermore, at his death in 1957, with the approval of the Soviet regime, the post of the Grand Mufti of SADUM was first handed over to Eshon's son Ziiiauddin, and then, following the latter's death in 1982, to the grandson Shamsiddin, serving in this post until 1989.²⁶

In return for these concessions, state-approved Muslim clergy were assigned to provide unconditional and unstinted support for the regime's policies both domestically and internationally, which they actually did quite willingly and effectively until the very demise of the Soviet Union. For example, during the Soviet–German War (1941–45), the official ulama was actively involved in Soviet war propaganda, issuing *fatwas* (Islamic legal rulings) against the Nazi invaders and convening mass prayers for the victory of the Red Army.²⁷ During the weekly religious services in mosques, mullahs regularly praised the Soviet government 'as being given by Allah', and warned that those who opposed it opposed God himself.²⁸ Grand Muftis of SADUM were particularly notorious for issuing a variety of *fatwas* intended to facilitate the implementation of Soviet policies in Central Asia, such as declaring that the observance of fasting during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, one of the five mandatory obligations of Islam, was not compulsory for those whose job required physical work.²⁹ As Grand Mufti Ziiiauddin Babakhanov—a holder of the Soviet orders of the 'Badge of Honour' and 'Friendship of Peoples'—once stated, 'the religion of Islam [was] an active supporter of the building of the socialism and communism in the USSR', and that entire leadership of SADUM saw their main task in 'guiding Muslims on the path of Islam and socialism'.³⁰

With the start of the Cold War in the late 1940s, the Soviet regime also sought to use the official ulama in its diplomatic endeavours to establish better political ties with Muslim Third World countries. The representatives of the high-ranking Soviet Muslim clergy, for instance, were often sent on special propaganda missions to various Muslim states to promote a favourable image of the Soviet treatment of Islam and Muslims at home. For the same purpose, the Soviet ulama, particularly the Grand Muftis of SADUM, also systematically hosted various state-funded international Islamic conferences, most often in Uzbekistan.³¹ Central Asia, where the majority of Soviet Muslims lived and where the most important Islamic religious architectural monuments were located, was used as a showcase of successful socialist development for visiting foreign Muslim delegations, tourists and students.³² In short, the official Muslim establishment of Central Asia and of other Muslim areas of the USSR, in the words of Malashenko, 'became part of the [Soviet] politico-administrative machine'.³³ It can even be argued that the SADUM, and in particular the Babakhanov dynasty of Muftis, made no less contribution to the entrenchment of Soviet power in Central Asia than many well-known native atheist/secular communists from the region.³⁴

The relaxation of the Soviet anti-religious policy in the 1940s in no way implied Islam's, or for that matter any other religion's, accommodation within the communist ideology, but rather a shift from the militant to a noncoercive anti-Islamic campaign. According to this new strategy on religion, which remained relatively unchanged until the end of the Soviet era, the ultimate elimination of already much weakened Islamic institutions and values were to be achieved gradually through propaganda and indoctrination rather than through purges and executions. For example, in September 1944, when victory over Nazi Germany appeared in sight, Stalin's CC promulgated a decree calling on CP members to renew an anti-religious offensive in the country through 'scientific-educational' propaganda. In 1947, the regime also founded the Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge (known as *Znanie*), which became a leading Union-wide organ in promoting scientific-atheism throughout the state.³⁵ Moreover, like Stalin, every following Soviet leader from Nikita Khrushchev (1953–64) to Mikhail Gorbachev (1985–91) considered it his duty to emphasize the need for the intensification of anti-religious activism in the USSR, issuing special decrees intended to further lessen the hold of religion among the Soviet population.³⁶ To achieve this objective, the Soviet regime made use of a great range of propaganda means, such as mass media, cinematography, books, public lectures, and school and higher education curricula, all of them geared toward portraying religion as a superstitious belief and its believers as backward.³⁷ Those who still retained their attachment to the Islamic faith and dared to practise it openly were denied career opportunities not only in the CP and state apparatus, but also in the fully state-owned agro-industrial sector. In other words, as Froese remarks, 'religious commitment carried high social costs'.³⁸ As for those small numbers of official clergy allowed to function under the strict supervision of Soviet security organs, they had a very limited capacity (financial, informational and institutional) to compete with the state-sponsored atheism and secularism.

The overall result of the Soviet anti-Islamic policy in Central Asia was mixed as the regime failed to achieve its ultimate goal eliminating the Muslim faith altogether, which was an impossible mission from the beginning. Many believe in God, or some kind of Supreme Being, not because his existence is empirically proven or prophets/clergy/elders have said so, but because they have a spiritual necessity for faith for a variety of reasons, such as to attain an afterlife. Accordingly, while the atheist Soviet system offered a range of material and social rewards to Soviet Muslims in their lifetimes, such as free education and health care, it was incapable of providing them with an 'afterlife insurance', which, as Froese notes, could 'only be obtained through faith'.³⁹ In other words, the state-promoted communist ideology could not have served as a complete substitute for religion to those still in need of God.

On the other hand, however, what the Soviet regime, certainly succeeded in was to greatly diminish the influence of Islam as a social, cultural, legal and political force upon Central Asian Muslims, including Kazakhs and Uzbeks. In particular, the massive onslaught on the region's Islamic establishment during

the late 1920s and 1930s, followed by the creation of the official ulama, which often acted as a *de facto* ally of the regime's secular policies, significantly reduced Islamic knowledge and practice among the post-World War II Kazakh and Uzbek generations.⁴⁰ In addition to this, the parallel development of a universal secular education system, full secularization of the means of cultural production, and implementation of gender equality policies were central in bringing about the secular transformation of social lives in all its dimensions, of Kazakh and Uzbek peoples. In this respect, no less important was an increased socialization of Kazakhs and Uzbeks with the European non-Muslim population of the USSR, both in their 'own' native republics and beyond (for instance, in the army service), which in many ways affected their traditional, religiously grounded values and beliefs.⁴¹ For example, the consumption of alcohol, which is strictly banned in Islam, became quite widespread among the native Central Asians from the 1950s onwards,⁴² again with little or no protest from the official ulama. On this, William Douglas, an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court during 1939–75, who travelled to Soviet Central Asia in 1955, tells an interesting story of how the Grand Mufti Eshon Babakhanov himself offered to him several toasts in wine when visiting SADUM.⁴³

This noticeable secularizing trend among Kazakhs and Uzbeks (especially among urban-educated circles) from the 1950s onwards, nevertheless, did not necessarily imply their total departure from Islam. Most of them still regarded themselves as Muslims even if they did not practise it or were atheist.⁴⁴ For example, Islamic funeral and wedding rites and the Muslim tradition of circumcision continued to be widely observed in the whole of Central Asia throughout the Soviet era.⁴⁵ And since the demand for the clergy's services among Central Asian Muslims was considerably higher than the official ulama could satisfy, this resulted in the development of a wide, but unconnected, network of unofficial mullahs, especially in the countryside. However, the so-called unofficial Islam and continued practice of religious rites and ceremonies by many Kazakhs and Uzbeks never became a serious challenge to the state-led modernization and secularization policies in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. In particular, what was different in the Muslimness of these later generations of Soviet Kazakhs and Uzbeks, compared to that of their (pre-1917) ancestors, was that for them being a Muslim was primarily equated with identification with their cultural background and not necessarily with *Allah* and/or *ummah*.⁴⁶ In other words, Islam was no more a major source of identity of Kazakhs and Uzbeks, but rather one of the features defining their secularized national and cultural identities,⁴⁷ and from the nation-building perspective this can be regarded as one of the major accomplishments of the Kremlin-led nation-making endeavours in Central Asia.

Notes

1 Karl Marx, 'Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right: Introduction', in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: Norton, 1972), 11–12, emphasis in original, quote from page 12.

2 *Ibid.*, 18.

- 3 *Ibid.*, 11–23.
- 4 Shoshana Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca: The Soviet Campaign Against Islam in Central Asia, 1917–1941* (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2001), 49.
- 5 V. I. Lenin, ‘Socialism and Religion’, in *Collected Works*, vol. 10 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1962), 83.
- 6 Bennigsen and Broxup, *Islamic Threat*, 45.
- 7 Studenikin, *Istoriia Sovetskoi konstitutsii*, 57–58.
- 8 For the full text of the decree, see *Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1957), 237–240.
- 9 For the full text of the decree, see *ibid.*, 247–249.
- 10 For the full text of the decree, see *ibid.*, 371–374.
- 11 See Francis McCullagh, *The Bolshevik Persecution of Christianity* (London: John Murray, 1924); Dimitry V. Pospelovskiy, *Soviet Antireligious Campaigns and Persecutions* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1988).
- 12 See *Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti*, vol. 1, 195–196.
- 13 V. I. Lenin, ‘Report On The Party Programme’, in *Collected Works*, vol. 29 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), 172.
- 14 V. I. Lenin, ‘To A. A. Joffe’, in *Collected Works*, vol. 45 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), 298, emphasis in original.
- 15 See ‘Ob ocherednykh zadachakh partii v natsional’nom voprose’, in *Protokoly X s’ezda RKP(b): 8–16 Marta 1921 g.* (Moscow: Partizdat, 1933), 578–583.
- 16 Saidbaev, *Islam i obshchestvo*, 152–153.
- 17 Stalin, ‘Policy of the Soviet Government’, 376.
- 18 Bennigsen and Broxup, *Islamic Threat*, 46–47.
- 19 On the Soviet assault on Islamic institutions in Central Asia in the second half of the 1920s, see *ibid.*, 47–48; Mehrdad Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics in Central Asia* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1995), 20–25; Khalid, *Islam after Communism*, 71–73.
- 20 Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics*, 25–26; Ben Fowkes and Bülent Gökay, ‘Unholy Alliance: Muslims and Communists – An Introduction’, *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 25, no. 1 (2009): 14–15.
- 21 Artykbaev, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 260; Abrarov, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, vol. 2, 30–33.
- 22 Haghayeghi, *Islam and Politics*, 26.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 27–28; Saidbaev, *Islam i obshchestvo*, 189–191.
- 24 Other three Muftiats were of: (1) European USSR and Siberia, centred in Ufa; (2) North Caucasus and Dagestan, centred in Buynaksk (later moved to Makhachkala); and (3) Transcaucasia, centred in Baku.
- 25 In 1971, the Soviet government also agreed to open the Imam al-Bukhari Islamic Institute in Tashkent.
- 26 See A. Usmankhodzhaev, *Zhizn’ muftiev Babakanovykh: Sluzhenie vozrozhdeniiu Islama v Sovetskom Soiuz* (Nizhnii Novgorod: Medina, 2008).
- 27 R. A. Silantev, *Musul’manskaia diplomatiia v Rossii: Istoriia i sovremennost’* (Moscow: Rema, 2010), 135–136; Saidbaev, *Islam i obshchestvo*, 188–189.
- 28 Vasan-Girei Dzhabagi, ‘Sovetskii Soiuz i Islam’, *Vestnik Instituta po Izucheniiu Istorii i Kul’tury SSSR*, no. 3 (1954): 51.
- 29 I. P. Tsamerian, ed. *Stroitel’stvo kommunizma i preodolenie religioznykh perezhitkov* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), 56.
- 30 Quoted in N. Ashirov, *Evolutsiia Islama v SSSR* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1972), 77.
- 31 See Silantev, *Musul’manskaia diplomatiia v Rossii*, 150–159.
- 32 See M. G. Pikulin, *Uzbekistan i strany vostoka* (Tashkent: Fan, 1975).
- 33 Alexei V. Malashenko, ‘Religious and Political Change in Soviet Moslem Regions’, in *State, Religion, and Society in Central Asia: A Post-Soviet Critique*, ed. Vitaly Naumkin (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 1993), 165.
- 34 While in mainstream Western scholarship on Central Asia SADUM has been primarily portrayed as the state-installed puppet organization, acting as the mouthpiece of

- the Soviet government, some modern scholars have attempted to present a different interpretation of the so-called official ulama's motivation for their strong allegiance to the atheist regime. For example, according to Khalid, for many Soviet ulama, the cooperation with the regime was seen as the only means of saving the Islamic faith in the face of challenges posed by state-sponsored atheism and secularism. This collaborative strategy, Khalid notes, enabled them to restore a number of religious facilities in the region as well as to maintain some contacts with their counterparts in Soviet-friendly Muslim countries. Khalid, *Islam after Communism*, 110.
- 35 Philip Walters, 'A Survey of Soviet Religious Policy', in *Religious Policy in the Soviet Union*, ed. Sabrina P. Ramet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 18.
- 36 See *ibid.*, 19–28; John Anderson, *Religion, State and Politics in the Soviet Union and Successor States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- 37 See Bennigsen and Broxup, *Islamic Threat*, 47; Robert Conquest, *Religion in the U.S.S.R* (New York: Praeger, 1968), 77–80; David E. Powell, *Antireligious Propaganda in the Soviet Union: A Study of Mass Persuasion* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1975).
- 38 Paul Froese, *The Plot to Kill God: Findings from the Soviet Experiment in Secularization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 133.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 133–141, quote from page 133, emphasis in original.
- 40 Shirin Akiner, *The Formation of Kazakh Identity: From Tribe to Nation-State* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1995), 48.
- 41 Glenn, *Soviet Legacy*, 92–93; Douglas Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 347–357.
- 42 Khalid, *Islam after Communism*, 101.
- 43 William O. Douglas, *Russian Journey* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1956), 197.
- 44 Akiner, *Formation of Kazakh Identity*, 48; Khalid, *Islam after Communism*, 107.
- 45 Saidbaev, *Islam i obshchestvo*, 232–235.
- 46 See Akiner, *Formation of Kazakh Identity*, 48; Yaacov Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union: From the Second World War to Gorbachev* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 658.
- 47 Khalid, *Islam after Communism*, 98, 107.

10 Soviet emancipation of Kazakh and Uzbek women

Conflicting historical interpretations

The goal of the Soviet anti-religious campaign in Central Asia during the 1920s and 1930s was not only to dissolve the institutional foundations of Islam, but also to bring about fundamental changes in the social structures and value systems of the extremely patriarchal indigenous communities in which religious mores, as defined and fostered by the ulama, occupied a central position. The main emphasis in this intended social engineering was the emancipation of native women, considered by the Bolsheviks as the primary victims of Muslim orthodoxy. For example, such widespread regional Islamic or Islamized practices as polygyny, child marriage, *kalym* (a bride's dowry) and levirate were interpreted by Soviet policymakers as the basis for the oppression of Central Asian women. The custom of full veiling and seclusion of women, traditionally observed among the sedentary Uzbeks and Tajiks, was viewed as the most blatant expression of this religiously grounded patriarchal subjugation. To illustrate, Uzbek and Tajik females, upon reaching puberty, were compelled to wear the *chachvon* and *paranja* (the heavy veil and cloak, covering head-to-toe), and were forbidden to socialize with non-kin men.¹ The nomadic women of the region, such as Kazakhs, Karakalpaks and Turkmens, generally did not veil,² but that does not mean that they enjoyed the same rights as men. They, like Uzbek and Tajik women, were relegated to an inferior status to men, and were to be submissive to their husbands.³ Overall, for the Bolsheviks, the 'liberation' of Muslim women of the region from their 'oppressed' state was seen as the precondition for breaking the local 'backward' social order that was inimical to a modern, secular, socialist society, which they envisaged constructing. The Soviet authorities also held that it was 'impossible for the backward peoples [of Central Asia] to catch up with the advanced peoples of the Soviet Union without involving the masses of emancipated women in the [process of] cultural development and economic growth'.⁴

Western scholars, who have written on the subject, have posited rather different explanations of why the Soviets pushed the gender equality policy to the centre of their social engineering endeavours in Central Asia in the late 1920s. For example, Northrop claims that the whole purpose of this policy was to strengthen and widen the sociopolitical base for the Soviet regime in the troublesome region. According to Northrop, since the Marxist doctrine of proletarian

class struggle did not have much appeal to the native agro-pastoral communities of Central Asia, the CP leaders, as a strategic move, decided to substitute the concept of 'class antagonism' with 'gender liberation'. They, Northrop proceeds, believed that with the implementation of gender equality measures, the Soviet regime would win the mass support of the oppressed Muslim women, who were expected to flock the CP and Soviet structures.⁵ From the perspective of Massell, however, the Soviet gender policy in Central Asia was, in fact, aimed at making the Marxist theory of class struggle viable in the region. Massell maintains that since there was no native urban working class in significant numbers the Soviets sought to use emancipated Muslim women as the 'surrogate proletariat', who could act as revolutionary agents against both the exploiting class and reactionary Islam.⁶

The previous two arguments about the Soviets' perception of Muslim women as the potential principal source of support for the CP in Central Asia are questioned by Kamp and Edgar. Both of these scholars underline that the key social groups that the Bolsheviks sought to make as their main power base in the region were not women but the poor male peasants and landless farmers. Although Soviet officials in their speeches often referred to Muslim women as an important workforce, this type of rhetoric, Kamp notes, was used primarily as a justification for the gender policy.⁷ Edgar, for her part, observes that in the Sovietization of Central Asia, native women were not assigned the role of the 'surrogate proletariat' but only of the 'supplementary proletariat'.⁸ Moreover, for Edgar, the Soviet emancipation of Muslim women was part of the regime's general socialist- and -nation-building programme, which sought to impose the rapid and radical modernization on the traditional societies of Central Asia, rather than seeking to establish its main sociopolitical base or to promote individual human rights in the region.⁹ Unlike Edgar, however, Kamp sees the women's reform, particularly in Uzbekistan, not as the Kremlin initiative but as the one driven by the native Jadids-turned-Bolsheviks, who sought to use the regime's coercive power to put their pre-revolutionary modernizing ideas into practice.¹⁰

Kamp's point may have some validity, but there is no reason to conclude that the drive to emancipate native women in Central Asia was not the centre-imposed project for the following reasons: first, the Kremlin pushed gender equality norms in the region not because of the pressures deriving from the native reform-minded Soviet personnel, but because of its political stake in the project—to set the local societies towards Western-style modernization. Second, coercive methods employed in the implementation of this project and the utmost extent to what the Soviet-led secularization was pushed forward had never been requested or supported by most of the Jadids-turned-Bolsheviks, whether in the pre- or post-revolutionary periods. Even Kamp, herself, notes that the question of the veil had not been on the agenda of Central Asian Jadids until the establishment of Soviet order in the region.¹¹ Third, the question of women's emancipation had been part of Russian Marxist thinking long before the emergence of Muslim reformist movement in the region,¹² and it would still have been implemented in the same manner in Soviet Central Asia whether Jadids had championed it or not. Finally, it must be

stressed that whatever the real motives were and irrespective of who the main locomotives were behind the Soviet gender policy in Central Asia, it would have been practically impossible to achieve the genuine socialist modernization of the region without women's emancipation. Likewise, the Soviets would not have been able to successfully carry out any nation-building project in Central Asia, including the Kazakh and Uzbek ones, if they had excluded native women, at least half of the population of the region, from the projected sociocultural and politico-economic transformations.

First concrete efforts towards the emancipation of Central Asian and other Soviet women were already made in the early years of the Bolshevik rule, when the regime introduced a new legislative framework affirming women's equality with men in all fields of state, economic, cultural and social life. For example, the Family Code of 1918 granted all Soviet women equal rights in terms of marriage, divorce, child custody, alimony and marital property inheritance.¹³ However, because the position of Central Asian women, both in family and society, was considerably different (worse) from those of European nationalities, Soviet republican governments in the region thought it necessary to take additional legislative measures, specifically dealing with those local practices hindering the full emancipation of Muslim women. For instance, on 28 December 1920, the 'Kazakh' government issued a decree criminalizing *kalym*,¹⁴ and in January of 1921, it also outlawed polygyny and levirate.¹⁵ Likewise, on 14 June 1921, the Turkestan CEC decreed the practice of *kalym* illegal; and also set the minimum age of marriage at 16 for girls and 18 for boys.¹⁶ Two years later, the Turkestan government also banned polygyny.¹⁷ The 1926 Criminal Code of Uzbekistan criminalized forced marriage, polygyny, *kalym* and other 'survivals of primitive custom'.¹⁸ In Kazakhstan similar legislation was enacted in 1928.¹⁹

In parallel, Soviet authorities also actively sought to encourage Muslim women to enter public schools, pursue vocational and higher education, and to engage in wage labour outside the home in all professions. In every Soviet Central Asian republic within the framework of administrative *korenizatsiia*, fixed minimum quotas were introduced for native females within the state and CP structures.²⁰ As part of this affirmative action effort, in 1929, for example, Jahan Abidova, a young Uzbek woman, was appointed to the position of Deputy Secretary of the Uzbek CEC,²¹ while Kazakh Nagima Arykova was made Chair of the Supreme Court of the Republic Kazakhstan.²² In order to support mothers' employment, the Soviet government also took measures to develop a large network of preschool childcare facilities throughout the region. By 1940, there were already 2,230 and 1,057 preschools in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan respectively.²³ Moreover, women's right to maternity leave was assured by the 1936 Soviet Constitution (Article 122).²⁴ As Massell notes, 'the institutionalization of unprecedented female rights was seen not just a powerful boost to female mobilization but as a catalyst undermining both the traditional kinship [and family] system'.²⁵

The state-driven and imposed changes in the traditional social roles and statuses of Muslim women in Central Asia were not without their challenges and

oppositions. Conservative segments of society, including females, were especially slow and reluctant in adjusting to the changing patterns of social life. For example, in 1928, a group of Muslims in Ferghana city openly protested against the Soviet laws criminalizing local customary practices, such as marriage under the age of 16.²⁶ No Soviet gender policy, however, triggered as much controversy and resentment in the region as the Kremlin's decision to uproot the practice of veiling and seclusion of Muslim women, a policy action that became known as the *hujum* (attack or assault in Uzbek and Tajik). In particular, on 18 June 1926, the CP CC, after hearing reports from the representatives of the Sredazburo's Zhenotdel (the Women's Department of the CP), adopted a special resolution calling for the strengthening of the fight against still-persisting outdated social and cultural norms that kept native Central Asian women out of the public sphere.²⁷ In September of the same year, following the CC resolution, the Third Regional Plenum of the Sredazburo declared the *hujum* as a top priority of the Soviet gender policy in the region. And on 31 January 1927, the Sredazburo directed all CP members and activists in the region to concentrate their efforts on the ultimate ending of native women's seclusion by encouraging them to discard their *paranjas* and *chachvons* and join Soviet structures.²⁸ Interestingly, the Sredazburo leadership even assumed that the *hujum* would achieve its intended objective in a six-month period, which would give them another cause to commemorate the approaching tenth anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution in November 1927.²⁹

The Sredazburo's directive, however, did not meet with unanimous approval of the native communists, particularly of Uzbeks—including those living in the Uzbek-dominated areas of southern Kazakhstan—many of whose female family members observed veiling. The opponents of the *hujum* asserted that it would only stir up anti-Soviet sentiments among the Muslim population. In response to those internal dissents, Soviet authorities in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan issued a stern warning that they would not tolerate anyone in the ranks of the CP and Komsomol (Communist Youth League) who did not agree with the Party's line on the women's question. Moreover, the local administrative and CP personnel (mainly males) were called to set personal examples to further women's liberation by first unveiling their wives and daughters, if they wanted to retain their positions.³⁰ This was not an easy task though. Such an action may have alienated native communists and their families from their immediate social environment, such as neighbours and relatives. Nevertheless, having limited options, many of them, eventually, decided to tear the veils from their family members, even if it was against their will.³¹

During the first months of the *hujum* the main pressure was exerted upon the native Soviet personnel in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, however from the beginning of 1927, the Uzbek population as a whole became subjected to mass state-sponsored anti-veiling propaganda. Media (press and radio), 'high-culture' forms (films, theatre and paintings), educational institutions, and even medical doctors were all mobilized to create public opinion against the veiling and seclusion.³² Zhenotdel activists, most of them Russian, were sent throughout the Uzbek and

Kazakh republics to encourage, through both persuasion and threat, veiled Muslim women to defy established Islamic-patriarchal dogmas by casting off their *paranjas* and *chachvons*. Those who did so were granted certain social privileges, but those who refused risked their husbands losing their employment.³³ There were also scattered incidents of forced unveiling by Soviet officials.³⁴ In addition, Soviet authorities regularly organized public meetings, rallies and demonstrations protesting against women's exclusion from public life. For example, on 8 March 1927, International Women's Day, under the initiative of Zhenotdel, anti-veiling mass demonstrations were held in all major administrative centres of Central Asia in which thousands of veiled Muslim women, voluntarily or under pressure, publicly removed their veils.³⁵

The traditional Muslim clergy's and mainstream Uzbek men's reaction to the *hujum* was extremely severe. The conservative ulama, for example, accused unveiled women of committing blasphemy against Islam, equating them to prostitutes, and threatened their male relatives to be excluded from the *ummah*.³⁶ Unveiled women were regularly mocked and verbally abused in the streets by religious mobs. Some Uzbek men were even joking 'that they no longer had need of Russian prostitutes; they had their own now'.³⁷ There were also numerous cases of rape, mutilation and even murder of unveiled Uzbek females. What was most shocking was that in a number of isolated cases some native Soviet officials were themselves directly involved in crimes against unveiled women, including rape and sexual assault.³⁸ According to Soviet sources, during the first two years of the *hujum*, around 2,500 native women and Zhenotdel workers were killed in Uzbekistan.³⁹ Concurrently, similar atrocities were committed against unveiled Muslim women in the Uzbek-populated areas of Kazakhstan.⁴⁰ Out of fear of public humiliation, many recently unveiled women were often compelled to return to veiling. On their part, the Soviet authorities sought to use these crimes against women's bodies and rights as a justification for the need to intensify their efforts to emancipate native women.⁴¹ As a result, Northrop notes, 'Uzbek women were caught most squarely in the middle of this struggle [over the veil], and it was they who bore the brunt of social pressure'.⁴²

The backlash that followed the implementation of the *hujum* policy made it impossible to end the veiling and seclusion of Uzbek women in a six-month timeframe as anticipated by the Sredazburo. Nevertheless, the overall trend was clearly against these practices which were largely conditioned by the accompanying Soviet legislative, economic and educational reforms. Namely, from the 1930s, with the mass persecution of radical ulama and strengthening and enforcing laws against gender-based victimization, the clergy-incited violence towards unveiled women gradually and significantly decreased.⁴³ In addition, the Soviet drive to eliminate private ownership of the means of production from the late 1920s had a profound impact on the traditional socio-economic structure and values of Central Asian Muslim societies, including the role of native women in the labour force and family. For example, with the collectivization of agriculture in the 1930s, a vast majority of Uzbek men in the countryside were left with little choice in economic terms but to agree that their female family members

would enter state-owned *kolkhozes* (farms) and work alongside other men in fields and factories, where unveiling was often a precondition for employment.⁴⁴ By 1937, women accounted for 45 per cent of collective farmers in Uzbekistan.⁴⁵ The impact of collectivization—and the accompanying industrialization—on native women's employment outside the home was no less significant in Soviet Kazakhstan. During the 1930s, according to Mendikulova, 'Kazakh women tended to comprise a larger proportion of the female workforce than other native women in the Central Asian republics'.⁴⁶ Finally, the introduction of free and universal secondary education, where the wearing of the Muslim headscarf was prohibited, was important in accustoming conservative Central Asian Muslim societies to a new form of gender socialization, in which unrelated Muslim males and (unveiled) females interacted freely in public spaces from an early age. As a result, by the mid-1930s, the practice of veil wearing in Central Asia was on a rapid decline, and by the 1960s it completely vanished.⁴⁷

Scholars have taken different positions on who bears the main burden of responsibility for the violence against Uzbek women that occurred during the *hujum*. For example, Soviet Uzbek historians placed the entire blame for these incidents on the reactionary ulama, accusing them of provoking, directly or indirectly, many Uzbek men to physically abuse and even murder unveiled women, including their own family members.⁴⁸ In contrast, while positively assessing the general Soviet objective of emancipation of Muslim women, modern Uzbek historiography puts the whole responsibility for the *hujum*-related violence upon the Soviet authorities, who deliberately failed to consider the local sociocultural context and artificially accelerated the process of unveiling, without first conducting proper explanatory work among Uzbek men and elders.⁴⁹ Mustafa Bazarov, an Uzbek scholar of Islam, for example, writes that 'the emancipation of women in most cases was pursued in disregard of the social situation, since the party and Soviet workers as well as ordinary people could hardly envisage a woman not wearing a *paranja*'.⁵⁰ Bazarov also claims that the progressive members of the Muslim clergy were generally supportive of the Soviet women's reform and were ready to cooperate with the authorities on this issue—assuming that this would have made the implementation of the *hujum* less painful for the local society—but their good intention, stresses this Uzbek scholar, was totally neglected by Soviet officials.⁵¹ A similar point is made by another Uzbek historian, Erken Qosimov:

The ultimate goal of the *hujum* was progressive, but the way it was implemented caused a backlash. Rather than staging provocative public unveiling ceremonies, which incited many Uzbek men to violence, the Soviets should have introduced the *hujum* gradually, through organizing more public discussions on gender issues and carrying out appropriate educational and explanatory work among the masses. For example, the dress code of contemporary Uzbek women has changed drastically [became less conservative or Westernized – G.U.] in the last twenty years, but no one has assaulted any Uzbek female on this ground. This is because this transformation in women's physical appearance has occurred gradually.⁵²

Some female Uzbek scholars go even further by asserting that while the Soviet gender policy successfully ended the seclusion of Uzbek women from public life, at the same time it reinforced patriarchal norms and male dominance in Uzbek society and in many cases even worsened women's work burdens. For instance, Alimova and Azimova lament that most of the Soviet-emancipated, full-time working Uzbek women were still largely responsible for domestic duties and child rearing, thus carrying a 'double-burden' on their shoulders.⁵³ Thus, these Uzbek 'feminist' scholars, instead of holding their ancestors accountable for developing and practising a women-unfriendly culture for centuries and criticizing Uzbek men for not sharing household chores with their spouses, prefer to blame the Moscow-based Soviet regime for the still-persisting patriarchal values in Uzbek society.

This dual position of the contemporary Uzbek researchers in regard to the *hujum*, and the Soviet gender policy in general, can best be explained if analysed in the context of the post-Soviet Uzbek nation-reshaping project. In particular, the modern Uzbek nation-reshaping, which is geared towards the preservation of the Soviet-imposed secularism in the Uzbek society, is quite hostile to any signs of latent Islamization in Uzbekistan, for example, the re-emergence of such practices as veiling and the rising activities of unofficial Islamic groups like the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Hizb ut-Tahrir.⁵⁴ In accordance with this policy line, the state-controlled Uzbek historiography has tended to make a strong emphasis on the positive sides of the emancipation of Uzbek women from the traditional Islamic-patriarchal constraints during the 1920s and 1930s, though primarily crediting the native Jadids-turned-Bolsheviks for this achievement. On the other hand, the official Uzbek historiography has largely ignored or downplayed any positive impact of the Kremlin's direct rule on Uzbekistan. Uzbek history textbooks, both for schools and higher education institutions, attribute nearly all the sociopolitical and economic ills, which Uzbeks had to face during the last two centuries prior to Uzbekistan's independence in 1991, to the policies of the Soviet and the Tsarist regimes, portraying both of them as colonial powers, seeking to exploit Uzbek people and to destroy their ancient culture.⁵⁵ In general, this overall negative assessment of the Soviet and Tsarist legacy in the Uzbek historiography serves to underline the importance of the beginning of a new (post-Soviet) era in the history of Uzbekistan, which is allegedly heading towards the bright future under President Islam Karimov's leadership after nearly two centuries of Russian subjugation. Within this nation-reshaping paradigm, Uzbek scholars, writing on the Soviet gender policy, have to follow the official narrative in which the Kremlin's initiative to launch the *hujum* is viewed in terms of colonial policy, aimed at sowing dissent among the local Muslim population and turning Uzbek women into the new source of cheap labour, while presenting the 'progressive' parts of the Uzbek Soviet officials, intellectuals and clergy as true champions of Uzbek women's emancipation from the degrading customs of un-Uzbek fundamentalist Islam.

In contemporary Western scholarship which deals with the *hujum*, there are two major opposing views—which in some ways roughly reflect the previously

discussed difference between the Soviet and modern Uzbek historiographies—on the question why Uzbek society, particularly men, resorted to violence against unveiled women. The first view is best exemplified in the works of Northrop and Akiner. From Northrop's perspective, examining the Soviet gender policy in Uzbekistan through the lens of postcolonial theory, the anti-*hujum* reaction among local Muslims was an act of anticolonial assertion against the Soviet/Russian 'civilizing mission', which aimed to transform the Uzbek society along the Western pattern. In an attempt to defy this brutal intrusion into their culture and traditional identity, Northrop asserts, a great number of Uzbek women voluntarily embraced the veil, including the ones who did not observe it before, as a symbolic means of 'political and national resistance to an outside colonial power'.⁵⁶ For Northrop, the fact that many Uzbek women for a long time resisted the Soviet pressure to discard their *paranjas* and *chachvons* represents the clearest example of this anticolonial defiance. As for the cases of violence against unveiled Muslim women, in Northrop's view, they were mainly politically motivated, representing one of the socially constructed means of preventing local Soviet sympathizers in undermining the general Uzbek national cause of anticolonial resistance.⁵⁷ Although far from justifying these *hujum*-related crimes, for Northrop, it was unquestionably the Soviet regime that incited the Uzbek society to this violence.

Similar to Northrop, but not using anticolonial language, Akiner describes the Soviet unveiling campaign in Uzbekistan as something that was forced upon the local Muslim women against their will. She even goes so far as to argue that the veiled women in Central Asia were actually quite happy to wear the *paranjas* and *chachvons*, as they protected them 'against unwanted contact with strangers and also against the physical grime of the environment'.⁵⁸ But what was most important to them, Akiner writes, was that these garments symbolized and sustained an accepted social structure, particularly gender relations in family and community life. Therefore, for Uzbeks, Akiner maintains, the *hujum* meant nothing else but 'a defeat and a brutal rape', an infringement upon their 'honour and dignity'.⁵⁹ To reinforce her argument about the valuable religious and social meaning that the veil had for the Uzbek society, Akiner emphasizes the fact that 'no other measure of Soviet policy—not the closure of the mosques, the sedentarisation of the nomads, collectivisation or the purges—provoked such violent and outspoken resistance [in the region as did the *hujum*].'⁶⁰

The second view on the counter-*hujum* is best represented by Kamp, who rightly regards it as conservative Uzbek men's attempt to maintain the existing patriarchal structure and women's subordinate position. Kamp, for instance, writes that the murders of unveiled women, which were often incited by Kadimists, were not directed towards overthrowing the Soviet regime, but rather at terrifying other Uzbek women from doing the like.⁶¹ And it was exactly this fear created by the terror against the unveiled—and not the deliberate and symbolic act of anti-Soviet resistance, as posited by Northrop—why many Uzbek women, Kamp stresses, remained veiled or revealed during the *hujum* campaign (1927–30).⁶² She also harshly criticizes Northrop and especially Akiner for shifting the moral responsibility for the *hujum*-connected crimes from the actual

offenders to the Soviet government.⁶³ According to Kamp, while the Soviet authorities had certainly intended to undermine the social structure of Uzbeks, they had never meant to use the *hujum* to trigger violence among the Uzbeks.⁶⁴ But even had this not been so, 'why men's response to state intrusion into family life [had to] be to harm women', asks Kamp.⁶⁵

Whatever the Kremlin's underlying motives for enacting the *hujum* were and whether the methods used for its implementation were justified or not, it would be naive to think that without the state's coercive involvement, as some Uzbek scholars want us to believe, the deeply-entrenched Uzbek practice of secluding women from much of public life and the men's views would gradually disappear on its own. There is simply no compelling evidence to suggest the existence of such a trend in 1920s mainstream Uzbek society. Even Akiner, a strong critic of the Soviet *hujum* policy, as mentioned previously, notes herself that the reaction of the largely religious Uzbek population to the mass closure of their mosques was much less severe than the state's initiative to end the gender segregation and seclusion of Muslim women. This does not however suggest that for many Uzbeks of the period, including women, the Soviet-initiated unveiling, involving the re-evaluation of the traditional gender identities and values, should not have been a psychologically painful process to adjust. The point, rather, is that the counter-*hujum* was in its essence more inhumane, violent and anti-women than the goals of the *hujum*, the former standing for the oppressive Taliban type model of gender relations, whilst the latter for social, economic and gender equality. Indeed, as Kamp correctly points out, it was not the Soviet regime that executed women for refusing to unveil, but Uzbek men killing those who dared to challenge the patriarchy.⁶⁶ These so-called defenders of religious and traditional values, who were not brave enough to openly resist the Soviets' destruction of their mosques and sanctuaries, turned out to be strong enough to murder vulnerable and innocent women. Finally, it must be stressed that although the Soviet regime could be rightfully accused of numerous crimes, including those committed against humanity, but certainly not of worsening Central Asian women's overall position whether in family or society, rather quite the opposite.

From the 1930s onwards, the results of the Soviet gender policy in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan as well as in other Central Asian republics gradually began to show themselves. The state support for Kazakh and Uzbek women to pursue education and active professional careers significantly enhanced their visibility in all spheres of public life, such as in government, industry, medicine, science and culture.⁶⁷ For example, in 1940, women comprised about one-third of the wage-earning labour force in all sectors of Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan;⁶⁸ and by the 1970s and 1980s, this had grown to nearly 50 per cent, while female literacy in both republics was nearly universal.⁶⁹ Such an impressive accomplishment of the Soviet regime in the emancipation of women does not, however, suggest that the complete elimination of the problem of patriarchy was achieved among the native Central Asian communities. In both Kazakh and Uzbek societies, for example, men have largely retained their traditional social status of the head of the family. Yet, these societies are not the only cultures,

where irrespective of women's position in the public sphere, men still enjoy the dominant role in societal and family life. Societies with similar value systems can even be found in the contemporary Western world. The argument is rather that there was a significant positive change in the lives of Kazakh and Uzbek women compared to their pre-1920 status. This change however, was not a product of natural transformation of societal values brought about by grassroots movements, but rather a result of clear targeted top-down Soviet modernization policies.

The Soviet methods of achieving the gender equality and the price that Kazakh and Uzbek societies, particularly women, had to pay for the end result are highly controversial, but this is beyond the scope of this book. As far as the Soviet Kazakh and Uzbek nation-building projects are concerned, the Kremlin-driven gender reforms were invaluable for their successful realization. In both nation-building projects native women were principal participants of every means of cultural production, such as theatre, cinema, arts and folklore, all being important tools for constructing Kazakh and Uzbek national identities and consciousness.

Notes

- 1 I. S. Kulikova, ed. *Zhenshchiny strany sovetov: Kratkii istoricheskii ocherk* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1977), 126.
- 2 The exceptions were those living in predominantly Uzbek areas. Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, 'Islam and Nationalism: Central Asia and Kazakhstan under Soviet Rule', *Central Asian Survey* 2, no. 2 (1983): 45.
- 3 Kh. Shukurova, 'Predislovie', in *Velikii Oktiabr' i raskreposhchenie zhenshchin Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana (1917–1936 gg.): Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, ed. E. A. Astapovich (Moscow: Mysl', 1971), 6.
- 4 The quote is from the special statement issued by the Sredazburo on 31 January 1927, see Kh. T. Tursunov *et al.*, *Khudzhum: Znachit nastuplenie* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1987), 5.
- 5 Douglas Northrop, 'Languages of Loyalty: Gender, Politics, and Party Supervision in Uzbekistan, 1927–41', *Russian Review* 59, no. 2 (2000): 179–181, 184.
- 6 Massell, *Surrogate Proletariat*, 93–180.
- 7 Kamp, *New Woman*, 191–192.
- 8 Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 244.
- 9 Adrienne Lynn Edgar, 'Bolshevism, Patriarchy, and the Nation: The Soviet "Emancipation" of Muslim Women in Pan-Islamic Perspective', *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (2006): 263.
- 10 Kamp, *New Woman*, 9, 17.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 137.
- 12 See V. I. Lenin, *On the Emancipation of Women* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965).
- 13 For the full text of the 1918 Family Code, see *Dekrety Sovetskoi vlasti*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1964), 314–343.
- 14 For the text of the decree, see *Obrazovanie Kazakhskoi ASSR*, 311–312.
- 15 Baishev, *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, 171.
- 16 For the text of the decree, see Z. A. Astapovich, ed. *Velikii Oktiabr' i raskreposhchenie zhenshchin Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana (1917–1936 gg.): Sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Moscow: Mysl', 1971), 46–47.

- 17 Ibid., 46, note 1.
- 18 Sulaimanova and Ishanov, *Istoriia Sovetskogo gosudarstva*, vol. 2, 231.
- 19 S. Z. Zimanov and M. A. Binder, eds., *Istoriia gosudarstva i prava Sovetskogo Kazakhstana*, vol. 2 (Alma-Ata: AN KazSSR, 1963), 175.
- 20 Kulikova, *Zhenshchiny strany sovetov*, 128.
- 21 E. Iu. Iusupov, *Ocherki istorii kommunisticheskoi partii Uzbekistana* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1974), 237.
- 22 Gulnara Mendikulova, 'Kazakh Women: The Impact of Three Different Socio-Political Systems within Two Centuries', in *Gender Politics in Central Asia: Historical Perspectives and Current Living Conditions of Women*, ed. Christa Hämmerle (Cologne: Bohlau, 2008), 24.
- 23 See *Narodnoe obrazovanie*, 134–135.
- 24 *Konstitutsiia*, 30.
- 25 Massell, *Surrogate Proletariat*, 194.
- 26 Douglas Northrop, 'Subaltern Dialogues: Subversion and Resistance in Soviet Uzbek Family Law', *Slavic Review* 60, no. 1 (2001): 124. In contrast to the Soviet Civil Code, shari'ah law allowed Muslim parents to marry their daughters as young as nine.
- 27 For the full text of the resolution, see *KPSS i Sovetskoe pravitel'stvo ob Uzbekistane*, 68–70.
- 28 See Tursunov *et al.*, *Khudzhum*, 3–12, 29–32.
- 29 Northrop, 'Languages of Loyalty', 181.
- 30 Ibid., 182–184; S. Esova, 'Protiv parandzhi', in *Zhenshchiny v revoliutsii*, ed. A. V. Artiukhina (Moscow: Politizdat, 1959), 373.
- 31 Northrop, 'Languages of Loyalty', 183, 185.
- 32 Massell, *Surrogate Proletariat*, 239–240; Tursunov *et al.*, *Khudzhum*, 32–33; Esova, 'Protiv parandzhi', 374.
- 33 Shirin Akiner, 'Between Tradition and Modernity: The Dilemma Facing Contemporary Central Asian Women', in *Post-Soviet Women: From the Baltic to Central Asia*, ed. Mary Buckley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 269–270; Esova, 'Protiv parandzhi', 374–375.
- 34 P. M. Chirkov, *Reshenie zhenskogo voprosa v SSSR (1917–1937 gg)* (Moscow: Mysl', 1978), 185; A. Kh. Khamraev, *Iz istorii Uzbekistana, xix–xx v.v.: Sbornik nauchnykh trudov* (Tashkent: Gospedinst, 1975), 62.
- 35 Chirkov, *Reshenie zhenskogo voprosa*, 184–185.
- 36 Massell, *Surrogate Proletariat*, 275–284; Tursunov *et al.*, *Khudzhum*, 33–35; L. A. Tultseva, 'Iz istorii bor'by za sotsial'noe i dukhovnoe raskreposhchenie zhenshchin Srednei Azii (prazdnovanie 8 marta, 1920–1927 gg.)', *Sovetskaia Etnografiia*, no. 1 (1986): 19.
- 37 Herbert S. Dinerstein, 'The Sovietization of Uzbekistan: The First Generation', *Harvard Slavic Studies*, no. 4 (1957): 510.
- 38 See *ibid.*, 510–511; Tursunov *et al.*, *Khudzhum*, 65.
- 39 G. M. Kerimov, 'Islam in the USSR (1917–1945)', in *Secularization in Multi-Religious Societies: Indo-Soviet Perspectives*, ed. S. C. Dube and V. N. Basilov (New Delhi: Concept, 1983), 205.
- 40 Zimanov and Binder, *Istoriia gosudarstva i prava*, vol. 2, 174.
- 41 Ibid., 174–175; Chirkov, *Reshenie zhenskogo voprosa*, 186.
- 42 Northrop, *Veiled Empire*, 95.
- 43 Kamp, *New Woman*, 211–212.
- 44 Ibid., 218–220.
- 45 Kulikova, *Zhenshchiny strany sovetov*, 143.
- 46 Mendikulova, 'Kazakh Women', 24.
- 47 Kamp, *New Woman*, 222–228; O. V. Gorshunova, 'Vneshnii oblik Uzbekskoi zhenshchiny: Evoliutsiia esteticheskikh predstavlenii (konets xix – konets xx v.)', *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie*, no. 5 (2001): 24.

- 48 For example, see Kerimov, 'Islam in the USSR', 205; Iusupov, *Ocherki*, 237; Tursunov *et al.*, *Khudzhum*, 79.
- 49 For example, see Alimova, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, 190–193; Dilarom A. Alimova, 'A Historian's Vision of "Khudjum"', *Central Asian Survey* 17, no. 1 (1998): 150–151; N. R. Makhkamova and N. V. Mandralskaia, *Kurs leksii po kursu istoriia Uzbekistana* (Tashkent: TUIT, 2010), 88–89; Usmanov and Sadikov, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, 107–110.
- 50 Mustafo Bazarov, 'Soviet Religious Policies in Central Asia, 1918–30', in *Conflicting Loyalties and the State in Post-Soviet Russia and Eurasia*, ed. Michael Waller, Bruno Coppieters and A. V. Malashenko (London: F. Cass, 1998), 219.
- 51 *Ibid.*
- 52 A note from the personal interview with Dr Erken Qosimov, Nizami Tashkent State Pedagogical University, 23 November 2009, Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- 53 Dilarom Alimova and Nodira Azimova, 'Women's Position in Uzbekistan Before and After Independence', in *Gender and Identity Construction: Women of Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Turkey*, ed. Feride Acar and Günes-Ayata Ayse (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 293–295; Alimova, 'Historian's Vision of "Khudjum"', 152–153.
- 54 Although differing in their strategies, the declared ultimate goal of both the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and Hizb ut-Tahrir is to transform Uzbekistan and other predominantly Muslim Central Asian republics into a shari'ah-based Islamic Caliphate. On this, see Naumkin, *Radical Islam in Central Asia*, Chs 2 and 3.
- 55 For example, see Abrarov, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, vol. 2; Makhkamova and Mandralskaia, *Kurs leksii*; Alimova, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*.
- 56 Northrop, *Veiled Empire*, 13, 314–334.
- 57 *Ibid.*, 27.
- 58 Akiner, 'Between Tradition and Modernity', 271.
- 59 *Ibid.*
- 60 *Ibid.*
- 61 Kamp, *New Woman*, 187, 201, 231–233.
- 62 *Ibid.*, 201–202.
- 63 *Ibid.*, 186.
- 64 *Ibid.*, 188, 198.
- 65 *Ibid.*, 187.
- 66 *Ibid.*, 188.
- 67 See Tursunov *et al.*, *Khudzhum*, 38–90; Mendikulova, 'Kazakh Women', 24–26.
- 68 *Zhenshchiny v SSSR: Statisticheskii sbornik* (Moscow: Statistika, 1975), 35.
- 69 Nancy Lubin, 'Women in Soviet Central Asia: Progress and Contradictions', *Soviet Studies* 33, no. 2 (1981): 183.

11 Economic development of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan under Soviet rule

At the time of the Bolshevik reconquest of the former Tsarist Central Asia in 1920, the region was one of the least industrialized areas of the nascent Soviet state, with practically no indigenous proletariat. Agrarian and pastoral sectors still heavily dominated the economies of local societies, and the level of the urbanization of the native population was quite low, not to mention the fact that most of the Central Asian cities were hardly urban in the modern sense. For example, according to estimates of the 1926 census, only 2.1 per cent of Kazakhs and 18.3 per cent of Uzbeks, living in their home republics, were city-dwellers.¹ These figures were most probably lower in 1920. Furthermore, at this time, three-fourths of Kazakhs were not yet settled, still leading a nomadic or semi-nomadic way of life.² Hence, the overall socio-economic development of the Kazakh and Uzbek peoples, like of other native Central Asian communities, hardly created favourable conditions for the immediate socialist transformation of their economies. Nonetheless, the Soviets were strongly determined to bring about such a transformation by massive state economic interventionism in the existing socio-economic order of the region, targeted towards re-engineering its fundamentals. This was thought to enable Central Asian nationalities to arrive at socialism concurrently with other 'advanced' Soviet peoples. However, because of the wrecked conditions of the Russian economy as a consequence of World War I and the Civil War and the weak position of the Bolshevik regime in Central Asia during the height of the Basmachi insurgency, the Soviets were unable to embark upon any coherent 'revolutionary' economic policy in the region until the mid-1920s. In addition, as has been emphasized several times in this book, because of the security considerations in the first years of their rule in Central Asia, the Soviets largely refrained from implementing such drastic policy measures in the region that may have given rise to sociopolitical tensions among the native indigenous population.

This careful policy approach, however, was not applied to Tsarist-era Slavic settlers in Central Asia, many of whom sided with the Whites during the Russian Civil War. For example, on 22 June 1920, the RCP Politburo adopted a special draft decision on Turkestan instructing the TSR government to take vigorous measures for redressing the injustices of Tsarist colonialism in the region by 'equalising land tenure of Russians and newcomers with that of local people'

and 'overcoming, ousting and subordinating Russian kulaks'.³ Consequently, during 1921 and 1922, under the slogan of fighting the remnants of colonialism, more than 400,000 hectares of land in the Turkestan and 'Kazakh' republics, which had been appropriated by the Tsarist administration in favour of Slavic settlers, were confiscated and redistributed among the native poor.⁴ During the same period the Bolsheviks also forcefully expelled around half a million Slavic settlers from the 'Kazakh' territories.⁵ By these actions, Carrère d'Encausse notes, 'The Soviet regime proved that its desire for equality prevailed over the defense of Russian interests.'⁶

In 1925, the Soviet regime began to implement its first major agricultural reform in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan which sought to expropriate lands, live-stock, and water rights belonging to the traditional elites and allot them to the poorest Muslim peasants. This reform had two objectives: (i) to strengthen the legitimacy of the regime in the countryside, particularly among the poor; and (ii) to stimulate class struggle among the rural population. During 1925–28, for example, about 270,000 hectares of land was confiscated from the rich Uzbek landowners and ulama, and 698 wealthy Kazakh cattle-owners were deprived of their livestock—all to be distributed among the poor and dispossessed.⁷ In the same period, the Soviets also encouraged local peasants to form and join cooperative farms for improving the productivity of their crop-livestock, and many did so.⁸ In general, while this first Soviet agricultural policy experiment in Central Asia had grave consequences for the richest segments of the native population, it found considerable support among the middle and particularly poorest sections of the rural population, enabling them to somewhat recover from the ravages brought by the 1916 revolts, the Russian Civil War, and Basmachism.

This relatively moderate Soviet agricultural policy was, however, abandoned in December 1927, with the decision of the Fifteenth CP Congress to move to a more active phase of building socialism in the USSR by abolishing private ownership of all means of production, and bringing them under state control.⁹ In the agricultural sector, this implied a massive seizure of private farmlands, pastures, tools of production, livestock and combining them into the state-owned *kolkhozes*, in which respective village-dwellers had to work as wage-earners. For Kazakh and other nomadic tribes of the region, this also meant giving up their traditional lifestyles and settling in state-designated newly organized village *kolkhozes*.

Unlike the 1925–28 land-and-water reform, the drive for collectivization met fierce resistance in the countryside, especially from the wealthy and middle peasants, and pastoral nomads. Many preferred to slaughter their livestock altogether than to give them up to the *kolkhoz*.¹⁰ In the KazASSR, millions of herded animals also died because of severe weather conditions and starvation, which was caused by inadequate *kolkhoz* facilities for sheltering, feeding and watering livestock. For example, from 1929 to 1933, the number of all kinds of livestock in the KazASSR fell by more than two-thirds.¹¹ On their part, the Soviet authorities harshly repressed the opponents of the collectivization, particularly targeting

the kulaks and arresting/exiling/executing them as enemies of the people.¹² Furthermore, many Soviet officials in the region, afraid of being accused of not meeting the Kremlin's deadlines for completing the collectivization plan, sought to distinguish themselves by accelerating the sedentarization and collectivization processes as hard as possible. This was especially the case in Kazakhstan, where the First Secretary of the republic Filipp Goloshchekin (1925–33) initiated the so-called 'little October' programme, which was designed at transforming Kazakh pastoral-nomadic society into an agricultural one through rapid sedentarization largely disregarding possible human and economic repercussions of this action.¹³ Consequently, by the mid-1930s, more than 95 per cent of peasant households in both Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were collectivized.¹⁴

During the first years of collectivization (1928–34), the newly and hastily created *kolkhozes* not only failed to yield the expected economic results, but suffered tremendous decline in agricultural production, which had disastrous implications for the rural population of Central Asia, and especially for the Kazakhs. In particular, due to the perishing of the bulk of the livestock, and failure of the Soviet authorities to provide newly-made Kazakh *kolkhoz* farmers with sufficient material and administrative support during the transitional period from pastoral-nomadism to *kolkhoz*-based agriculture, a severe famine erupted in the steppe in the early 1930s, lasting for several years and ultimately resulting in the loss of around two million human lives.¹⁵ In addition to this, hundreds of thousands of Kazakhs permanently fled to neighbouring countries (mainly to China and Mongolia) and Soviet republics to escape the collectivization and/or hunger. For example, during the early 1930s, in total around 1.03 million Kazakhs out-migrated from Kazakhstan, from which only 414,000 returned to their home republic in the later years; around 416,000 permanently settled in neighbouring Soviet republics, while the rest remained abroad.¹⁶ The demographic consequence of this man-made tragedy was that the ethnic Kazakh population in Kazakhstan fell from 3,713,394 in 1926 to 2,181,520 in 1937,¹⁷ a drop of 41.2 per cent.

What is interesting is that up until the late 1980s, official Soviet sources, while acknowledging some errors and excesses of local officials that took place during the implementation of collectivization in the Soviet republics, totally ignored the collectivization/sedentarization-related mass starvation and deaths in Kazakhstan.¹⁸ In contrast, Cold War-era mainstream Western scholarship on collectivization and its related issues repeatedly emphasized the responsibility of the Kremlin in intentionally organizing the 'terror-famine' in the borderland countryside (particularly in Ukraine and Kazakhstan) in order to crush both local class and national enemies.¹⁹ In post-Soviet Kazakh scholarship, the famine of the 1930s has received considerable interest from historians, demographers and various academic and independent researchers. While Kazakh authors writing on the subject unanimously attribute the major responsibility for the demographic catastrophe of the Kazakh people in the early 1930s to the Stalinist regime, they disagree whether the mass famine in Kazakhstan was deliberately planned by the central Soviet authorities or developed spontaneously as a result of government mismanagement of the collectivization and sedentarization programmes.²⁰

The agricultural sector in Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan began to recover and show positive trends only in the post-World War II period, largely due to increased state investments in irrigation systems, *kolkhoz* infrastructure, and the mechanization of technology. Both republics were also allocated annual subsidies from the Kremlin for maintaining: low, state-fixed prices on the *kolkhoz* production; non-profitable *kolkhozes*; and employment in the countryside. In addition, all Soviet village-dwellers were given a right to have a small garden plot of land, attached to its dwelling, for subsistence production, and a few live-stock and poultry for personal use.²¹ This allowed Kazakh and Uzbek village-dwellers to sell their produce in local *kolkhoz* markets, which gave them extra income.²² Overall, there was a considerable improvement in the living standards for the majority of Soviet Kazakh and Uzbek rural populations, at least from the 1950s onwards.

Another important priority of the Soviet economic policy in Central Asia was to accelerate the industrialization of the region, which, apart from the overall economic development and modernization, was intended to promote the emergence of a local native industrial proletariat. Progress towards this objective began in the late 1920s and early 1930s. For example, the Turkestan-Siberian railway was completed in April 1930. During the 1930s, a number of food processing, textile, fertilizer and several other types of industrial enterprises were constructed in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.²³ In the same period, Soviet authorities also built or began constructing several thermal and hydro power plants across the region, including Kazakh and Uzbek republics and by the end of the 1940s, the electrification of both republics was largely completed.²⁴ The drive for industrialization in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan was especially intensified during the Nazi German invasion of the USSR, when hundreds of large industrial plants and factories were relocated (some permanently) from European parts of Russia to Central Asia; and many new ones were built.²⁵ The state support for industrialization programmes in the Kazakh and Uzbek SSRs continued in the post-World War II era, though primarily in the areas of mineral raw material production.²⁶

The process of industrialization in Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan was accompanied by rapid urbanization. In both republics, numerous new towns emerged and old ones expanded by attracting labour from the countryside. For example, in Kazakhstan, between 1926 and 1939, the number of townships almost doubled,²⁷ and the total urban population of the republic increased from 8.3 per cent to 27.8 per cent; while the share of Kazakhs living in urban areas rose from 2.1 per cent to 16.1 per cent.²⁸ By the end of the Soviet era, the urban population of Kazakhstan reckoned at 57.2 per cent of the total, while 38.3 per cent of Kazakhs were city-dwellers.²⁹ In comparison, although the Uzbek SSR, along with the Kazakh SSR, was the most industrialized republic in Central Asia, its population was still largely rural at the time of the Soviet disintegration. For example, according to the 1989 Soviet census only 40.7 per cent (compared to 23.8 per cent in 1926) of Uzbekistan's total population lived in urban areas. In the same year, the percentage of Uzbeks in Uzbekistan residing in urban areas amounted to only 30.5 per cent.³⁰

Insufficient industrialization and urbanization in Soviet Uzbekistan was not a deliberate policy of the Kremlin but was rather conditioned by the peculiarity of the republic's geographic context and high fertility rates among the native population. Namely, compared to northern territories of the Soviet Union, the warm climate of Uzbekistan was much more favourable to the development of the modern agricultural sector. Thus, the Uzbek SSR, being an integral part of the larger centralized economy of the USSR, was selected for agricultural production with a significant portion of the local population being employed in the *kolkhozes*, and accordingly residing in the countryside. As for the low rate of urbanization among the indigenous population of the Uzbek SSR, the main reason for this was a relatively higher and steady rural population growth, which dumped the overall share of native urban population.³¹

In order to meet the housing needs of the growing urban population in these republics, Soviet authorities carried out mass construction of multi-storey dwellings. The Soviets also heavily invested in administrative, educational and cultural infrastructure projects. For instance, as discussed in Chapter 8, a great number of educational and cultural facilities, such as universities, theatres and museums, were erected in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan during the 1920s and 1930s, and thereafter. It is interesting to note that the urban planning and architecture in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan followed the general Soviet-Russian ('European') norms; nevertheless, in each of these republics, Soviet architects sought to adapt them to local cultural contexts.³²

The Soviet collectivization and industrialization policies, and their accompanying sedentarization and urbanization processes, had a direct and profound impact on the realization of the Kazakh and Uzbek nation-building projects. These economic activities brought about fundamental changes in the traditional social structures and value systems of the Kazakh and Uzbek societies, impelling them towards the accelerated process of modernization and nation-formation. The collectivization policy, for example, principally undermined the centuries-old tribal and/or clan systems, a significant barrier to nation-building, in both societies. During its implementation, the traditional rural elites, such as landlords and chieftains, were eliminated through purges and expropriation of their properties, and their authorities were replaced by the newly created village councils and *kolkhoz* administrations, staffed mainly by the poorest segments of the Soviet co-opted peasants and pastoral nomads. Among the nomadic Kazakhs, for instance, the removal of tribal leaders, Esenova notes, led to the end of 'the invention of new tribes and clans with myths of origins and legitimized leaders. Thus, the institute of patronage, which is a basic tribal function, was transformed from the tribal structures to the Soviet power structures'.³³ In addition, larger tribal solidarities and identities of Kazakhs were further weakened by the administrative-territorial division of Soviet Kazakhstan, which, according to Yemelianova, 'either divided members of the same tribe, or allocated representatives of different tribes to one administrative unit'.³⁴ As the collectivization began to take root and define the socio-economic relations in the countryside, the old clan/tribal and regional affiliations of the Kazakhs and Uzbeks gradually

began to decline in importance and influence.³⁵ This trend became even stronger with the increased rates of population movement from rural to urban areas, which was induced by the Soviet industrialization drive. The urbanization process greatly fostered inter-regional/tribal/clan contacts, and ultimately their social acculturation into the emerging (state-sponsored) Kazakh and Uzbek unified national cultures. In addition, the traditional communal subidentities of the Kazakhs and Uzbeks were further weakened by the accompanying Soviet education, cultural and various other propaganda activities, which were all geared towards discrediting any claims to these 'outdated' identities. For instance, Soviet censors, Schatz notes, 'would only allow publication on themes of subethnicity that either depicted these divisions as disappearing from the new socialist order, or treated them historically'.³⁶

Although traditional clan/tribal and regional identities of the Kazakhs and Uzbeks did not completely disappear as a result of the above developments, they, along with religion, gradually transformed from being the primary identity markers and loyalties into silent, symbolic collective denominators within the overarching territorially-defined national identities. For example, among later generations of Soviet Kazakhs, everyone knew his/her family's clan/tribal/horde background, yet those ancestral identities were highly irrelevant to their daily lives. At the same time, traditionally strong kinship/family ties among Kazakhs and Uzbeks showed more resilience to the Soviet system, manifesting themselves through nepotism, cronyism and favouritism in government structures and state-owned enterprises. For example, during the 1970s and 1980s, corruption and patronage networks, built on kinship and personal relations, flourished in both Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

Another cardinal and positive change that collectivization and industrialization brought into the social structures of the Kazakh and Uzbek peoples was a transformation of traditional gender relations, particularly in terms of improving women's paid employment opportunities outside the domestic sphere, and subsequently elevating their role and status both in the family and society. For example, in Uzbekistan, as mentioned in the previous chapter, collectivization had significantly contributed to the emancipation of Muslim Uzbek women from the extreme seclusion forced upon them by patriarchy, justified through Islam. On the whole, economic emancipation along with increased educational opportunities made it possible for (post-1930s) Soviet Kazakh and Uzbek women to not only actively participate in social production but also become important agents of the state-led nation-building projects in their home republics.

In terms of nation-building, one of the most important consequences of industrial urbanization in Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan was the development of 'Westernized' urban Kazakh and Uzbek national intelligentsias—in all spheres, but especially in the educational and cultural—who were drawn from all regions and social strata of their respective societies. The major cities of both republics, housing the Soviet-established institutions of higher education, research and culture, became the centres in which Kazakh and Uzbek intellectuals were professionally engaged in: preserving and elaborating ('progressive') folk traditions;

developing new modern national cultural forms; preparing the next generations of educated professionals, and so forth.

As noted earlier, the Soviet radical socio-economic transformation programmes of the 1920s and 1930s in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, propelling these republics towards rapid modernization, industrialization and urbanization, came at a very high human cost to the titular Uzbek and particularly Kazakh populations. It must be stressed that no policy goal could justify the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Kazakhs as a result of mass starvation following the forced collectivization and sedentarization in the 1930s, a genocidal tragedy that could have been avoided or at least mitigated if these programmes had been properly implemented by Soviet authorities. However, on the other hand, it should also be acknowledged that without compelling steppe nomads to convert to sedentary lifestyle, it would have been practically impossible to realize the Kazakh nation-building project. For example, it would have made no sense to establish national schools, universities, theatres, museums and libraries for the Kazakh people, if majority of them remained pastoral nomads, migrating on a seasonal basis from one place to another. Thus, the sedentarization of the nomadic Kazakhs was a necessary precondition for their transformation into a modern nation.

The final point that should be made regarding Soviet economic policy in the borderlands, which largely conditioned the success of the regime's nationality policy, is that its strategy was oriented towards achieving and maintaining regional economic equality, in relative terms, within the Soviet Union. For example, when it was required, the Kremlin provided substantial financial subsidies both to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in order to avoid the emergence of any significant gap in socio-economic development between these republics and other parts of the USSR.³⁷ And what is most important, the Soviet system, unlike Tsarism, did not discriminate against Kazakhs or Uzbeks, whether in economic or political terms, in favour of Russians or Slavic populations in general, but rather formally endorsed the cause of social equality of all nationalities. Such an economic strategy of the Soviet government not only helped to reduce the likelihood of interethnic tensions based on economic grounds in the Kazakh and Uzbek SSRs for most of Soviet history, but also contributed to the adaptation of titular Kazakhs and Uzbeks to the Soviet political and socio-economic order.

Notes

- 1 A. M. Khazanov, *After the USSR: Ethnicity, Nationalism and Politics in the Commonwealth of Independent States* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 261, Table 4.2.
- 2 Kiikbaev, *Torzhestvo Leninskoi natsional'noi politiki*, 174.
- 3 Lenin, 'The Tasks of the R.C.P.(B.) in Turkestan', 198.
- 4 B. A. Tulepbaev, *Sotsialisticheskie agrarnye preobrazovaniia v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane* (Moscow: Nauka, 1984), 79.
- 5 Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 60.
- 6 H el ene Carr ere d'Encausse, *The Great Challenge: Nationalities and the Bolshevik State, 1917–1930*, trans. Nancy Festinger (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1992), 202.
- 7 Tulepbaev, *Sotsialisticheskie agrarnye preobrazovaniia*, 93, 101.

- 8 Ibid., 118–120.
- 9 See *XV s'ezd Vsesoiuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii (b): Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1928), 1290–1317.
- 10 Tulepbaev, *Sotsialisticheskie agrarnye preobrazovaniia*, 145.
- 11 Kiikbaev, *Torzhestvo Leninskoï natsional'noi politiki*, 171.
- 12 V. V. Kozina, *Demograficheskaia istoriia Kazakhstana (konets xix – nach. xxi vv.)* (Karaganda: KarGU, 2007), 39–40; Usmanov and Sadikov, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, 95.
- 13 Kuzembaiuly and Abilev, *Istoriia respubliki Kazakhstan*, 304–307.
- 14 Kiikbaev, *Torzhestvo Leninskoï natsional'noi politiki*, 166.
- 15 Kozina, *Demograficheskaia istoriia Kazakhstana*, 43.
- 16 Kuzembaiuly and Abilev, *Istoriia respubliki Kazakhstan*, 312.
- 17 Iu. A. Poliakov, ed. *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1937 goda: Obshchie itogi* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2007), 109.
- 18 For example, see Tulepbaev, *Sotsialisticheskie agrarnye preobrazovaniia*, 144–145; Kiikbaev, *Torzhestvo Leninskoï natsional'noi politiki*, 175–176.
- 19 For a good example of such a perspective, see Robert Conquest, *The Harvest of Sorrow: Soviet Collectivization and the Terror-Famine* (London: Hutchinson, 1986).
- 20 For such works, see M. K. Kozybaev, Zh. B. Abylkhozhin and K. S. Aldazhumanov, *Kollektivizatsiia v Kazakhstane: Tragediia krest'ianstva* (Alma-Ata: n.p., 1992); V. Mikhailov, *Khronika velikogo dzhuta: Dokumental'naia povest'* (Almaty: Zhalin, 1996); T. Omarbekov, *Golodomor v Kazakhstane: Prichiny, masshtaby i itogi (1930–1933 gg.): Khrestomatiia* (Almaty: Kazak Universiteti, 2011).
- 21 This right was even affirmed by the seventh article of the 1936 Soviet Constitution. See *Konstitutsiia*, 10.
- 22 Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, 54–57.
- 23 Usmanov and Sadikov, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, 88–89; Karazhan *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 281.
- 24 S. K. Ziiadullaev, *Promyshlennost' Uzbekistana i osnovnye ekonomicheskie problemy ee razvitiia* (Tashkent: Fan, 1967), 54–55, 65–68; Kiikbaev, *Torzhestvo Leninskoï natsional'noi politiki*, 134.
- 25 Usmanov and Sadikov, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, 136–142; Karazhan *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 304.
- 26 See Usmanov and Sadikov, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, 178–184; Kan, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 198.
- 27 Karazhan *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 282.
- 28 Khazanov, *After the USSR*, 261, Table 4.2.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ozod B. Ata-Mirzayev and Abdulkhakim A. Kayumov, 'The Demography of Soviet Central Asia and Its Future Development', in *Geographic Perspectives on Soviet Central Asia*, ed. Robert A. Lewis (New York: Routledge, 1992), 211; Richard H. Rowland, 'Demographic Trends in Soviet Central Asia and Southern Kazakhstan', *ibid.*, 229–232.
- 32 See B. V. Veimarn, ed. *Arkhitektura respublik Srednei Azii: Sbornik statei* (Moscow: Gosizdat, 1961); Greg Castillo, 'Soviet Orientalism: Socialist Realism and Built Tradition', *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 8, no. 2 (1997): 33–47.
- 33 Saulesh Esenova, "'Tribalism' and Identity in Contemporary Circumstances: The Case of Kazakhstan', *Central Asian Survey* 17, no. 3 (1998): 456.
- 34 Yemelianova, *Russia and Islam*, 119.
- 35 Martha B. Olcott, 'The Collectivization Drive in Kazakhstan', *Russian Review* 40, no. 2 (1981): 141.
- 36 Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics*, 57.
- 37 Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, 57.

12 Soviet population transfers

Changing ethnolinguistic and cultural landscapes of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

During the Soviet era both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan experienced several waves of large-scale state-organized migration and resettlement of Russian and other peoples, which considerably reshaped the ethnodemographic mosaic of these republics. It also had a direct bearing on the extent of changes in the linguistic and sociocultural practices of the titular Kazakh and Uzbek populations, and consequently on the processes of their national formation and development.

The first such wave of state-organized population transfer occurred during the industrialization and collectivization drives of the early 1930s, when hundreds of thousands of qualified technical and managerial personnel from European parts of the Soviet Union were sent to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to lead and facilitate the rapid implementation of these economic programmes. For example, during the 1930s, each of these republics received over half a million Slavic labour migrants.¹ In addition, while thousands of Kazakh and Uzbek alleged kulaks were exiled to remote places of the USSR (such as Russian Siberia and the Far East) to work in labour camps,² Central Asian republics, especially Kazakhstan, became a dumping ground for deported kulaks from other Soviet republics. For instance, more than 180,000 kulaks, mainly Russians and Ukrainians, were deported to KazASSR between 1930 and 1931.³ As a result of these population transfers, by the end of the 1930s in Kazakhstan, the total Slavic population swelled to over 3.14 million (or 51.2 per cent of the republic's total population of 6,151,102), while Russians became the largest group with a population of 2,458,687 (39.7 per cent), followed by titular Kazakhs with 2,327,625 (37.8 per cent).⁴ In the Uzbek SSR, according to the census of 1939, the number of Russians and Ukrainians were 727,331 (11.6 per cent) and 70,577 (1.1 per cent) respectively; whereas titular Uzbeks accounted for 65.1 per cent (4,081,096) of the republic's total population of 6,271,269.⁵

The next massive inflow of migrants and deportees in these republics took place just prior to and during World War II. In particular, both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan took a great number of war refugees from the Nazi-occupied Slavic republics of the USSR. For instance, during the war, Soviet Uzbekistan received around one million evacuees,⁶ while more than half a million people were moved to the Kazakh SSR.⁷ Many of these displaced people remained in these republics permanently after the war. In addition to this, several entire communities from

different parts of the USSR—either suspected as potential ‘fifth columnists’ (Koreans from the Russian Far East in 1937, Volga Germans in 1941 and Meskhetian Turks from Georgia in 1944), or directly accused of treason (Crimean Tatars, Chechens, Ingushs, Kabardins and Kalmyks in 1944)—were exiled en masse to the Kazakh and Uzbek SSRs. While Chechens, Ingushs, Kabardins and Kalmyks were rehabilitated in 1957 and allowed to return to their pre-deportation homes, other ‘punished peoples’ were denied such an opportunity.⁸

The last state-organized population transfer in Central Asia took place during the Virgin Lands campaign in the mid-1950s, and affected only Kazakhstan. Namely, with the aim to increase the overall grain production in the USSR, by the initiative of the Soviet leader Khrushchev, up to two million ‘volunteers’, mainly from Russia proper and Ukraine, were sent to northern Kazakhstan to bring previously uncultivated lands of the republic under plough.⁹ The influx of such a large number of Slavic peoples in Kazakhstan further consolidated their presence in the republic, especially in its northern *oblasts*. For example, according to the 1959 Soviet census, out of Kazakhstan’s total population of 9,309,847, Russians comprised 3,974,229 (42.7 per cent), Ukrainians 762,131 (8.2 per cent), Belarusians 107,463 (1.2 per cent) and Poles 53,102 (0.6 per cent). Combined with the largely Russified Germans (659,751 or 7.1 per cent) and Russian-Jews (28,048 or 0.3 per cent), representatives of the European/Slavic population constituted around 60 per cent of the aggregate population of Kazakhstan. At the same time, although the number of titular Kazakhs in Kazakhstan increased from 2,327,625 in 1939 to 2,794,966 in 1959, their proportionate share declined from 37.8 per cent to 30.2 per cent. Other important minority groups in the Kazakh SSR in this period were: Tatars (191,802 or 2.1 per cent), Uzbeks (136,570 or 1.5 per cent), Koreans (74,019 or 0.8 per cent) and Uighurs (59,840 or 0.6 per cent).¹⁰

In Soviet Uzbekistan, the influx of diverse Slavic and non-Slavic peoples between 1937 and 1945 also had a considerable impact on the overall demographic structure of its population. However, this shift in demographics did not significantly dilute the majority status of titular Uzbeks in their home republic, largely because of the high birth rates among the latter. For instance, according to the 1959 census, Uzbeks constituted 62.2 per cent (5,038,273) of the entire population of Uzbekistan (8,105,704), while Russians formed the largest minority group, making up about 13.5 per cent (1,090,728). Other significant non-Muslim minority communities in the Uzbek SSR in this period were: Koreans (138,453 or 1.7 per cent), Jews (94,344 or 1.2 per cent) and Ukrainians (87,927 or 1.1 per cent). Whereas, from the Muslim communities, the following ethnic groups were widely represented: Tatars (444,810 or 5.5 per cent), Kazakhs (335,267 or 4.1 per cent), Tajiks (311,375 or 3.8 per cent), Karakalpaks (168,274 or 2.1 per cent), Kyrgyzs (92,725 or 1.1 per cent) and Turkmens (54,804 or 0.7 per cent).¹¹

From the 1960s onwards there was a noticeable decline in migration to Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and from the late 1970s through the 1980s, the official statistics even indicated a net outmigration of European/Slavic populations from both republics, particularly Russians.¹² This reversal in migration patterns,

combined with higher fertility rates among the indigenous communities, led to a steady increase in the numbers and proportions of titular Kazakhs and Uzbeks in the overall populations of their republics. For instance, in Uzbekistan, the last Soviet census of 1989 placed Uzbeks at 71.4 per cent (14,142,475) of the republic's total population of 19,810,077, a gain of 9.2 percentage points from the 1959 census. Although the same census also indicated an overall decline in the proportion of the Slavic population of Uzbekistan, they were still represented in considerable numbers in the republic: Russians numbered 1,653,478 (8.3 per cent) and Ukrainians 153,197 (0.8 per cent).¹³ As regards demographic shifts in Soviet Kazakhstan between the census periods of 1959 and 1989, the share of titular Kazakhs had grown from 30.2 per cent to 39.7 per cent (6,534,616), replacing Russians as the numerically largest group for the first time since 1939. Nonetheless, at the end of the 1980s, considerable parts of Kazakhstan's population (16,464,464) were still European/Slavic: there were 6,227,549 Russians (37.8 per cent), 957,518 Germans (5.8 per cent), 896,240 Ukrainians (5.4 per cent), and 182,601 Belarusians (1.1 per cent).¹⁴

During the Soviet era, with the exception of the Virgin Lands campaign, the pattern of Slavic migration to Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan was principally urban-centred, resulting in the heavy concentration of Russian and other European populations in the major cities of both republics. In Kazakhstan, Russians remained the dominant group in urban areas throughout the Soviet period. For example in 1939, 40.2 per cent of Kazakhstan's Russian residents were urban, constituting 57.7 per cent of the republic's total urban population. In 1959, these figures were 59 per cent and 57.6 per cent respectively; in 1970, 69.1 per cent and 58.4 per cent; in 1979, 73.9 per cent and 56.4 per cent; and in 1989, 77.4 per cent and 51 per cent.¹⁵ If other Slavic groups are taken into account, the European Russian-speaking community dominance in urban Kazakhstan was even stronger. A somewhat similar demographic trend could be observed in Soviet Uzbekistan throughout the same period. Namely, 80.8 per cent of Russians living in Uzbekistan in 1939 were city dwellers (making up 35.5 per cent of the republic's urban population); 83.7 per cent (33.4 per cent) in 1959; 89.1 per cent (30.4 per cent) in 1970; 93.4 per cent (24.8 per cent) in 1979; and 94.9 per cent (19.3 per cent) in 1989.¹⁶ However, unlike Kazakhstan, as the above statistical data suggests, although the absolute majority of Russians in the Uzbek SSR were urban residents, they never constituted a majority of the republic's total urban population. Moreover, the percentage of Russians in the overall urban population of Soviet Uzbekistan had always been lower than that of the titular Uzbeks, while in Soviet Kazakhstan, it was the opposite.¹⁷

Another demographic characteristic that markedly distinguished Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan was the pattern of the geographic distribution of the Russian population within each republic. For example, in the Uzbek SSR, Russians were mainly concentrated in major industrial areas, such as Tashkent, Samarkand, Andijan, Namangan and Kokand. Of these, Tashkent city had the largest percentage of Russian residents. For example, in 1989, Russians accounted for 34 per cent of Tashkent's population, ranking second after the

titular Uzbeks with 44.2 per cent.¹⁸ By comparison, in Soviet Kazakhstan, Russians had a considerable presence not only in all the large urban centres but also in every *oblast* of the republic. For instance, demographically least Russified Kzyl Orda *oblast* in southern Kazakhstan, had over 10 per cent of Russian population. Whereas, in northern *oblasts* of Kazakhstan, as a result of the migration flows during the Virgin Lands campaign, Russians outnumbered titular Kazakhs by ratios of two-to-one, or greater.¹⁹ But what is most interesting is that Soviet Kazakhstan's capital, Alma-Ata, the main centre of Kazakh cultural, educational, scientific and social life, was chiefly a Russian city. For example, in 1989 Russians made up 59.1 per cent of Alma-Ata's total population, whereas Kazakhs nearly three times less (22.5 per cent).²⁰ This ratio between the Russian and Kazakh residents of Alma-Ata was even higher in the preceding decades.

The influx of a large number of Russian emigrants and evacuees to Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan during the late 1920s through the 1950s was accompanied by the development of educational and cultural infrastructure for the new arrivals. In the areas of compact Russian settlements in both republics, Russian-language kindergartens, schools, theatres and other facilities were set up to accommodate their educational and cultural needs. Other migrant and deportee communities, however, were not given the same treatment as Russians. For instance, few or no native language educational facilities were available for Ukrainian, Belarusian and Caucasian communities in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Consequently, many non-Russian migrants and deportees in these republics overwhelmingly chose for their children to be educated in Russian rather than titular language schools, which often led to their linguistic Russification.²¹ Furthermore, with the abandonment of linguistic *korenizatsiia* in the workplace in the early 1930s, Russians and other non-indigenous peoples were no longer expected or given any incentive to learn the language of the titular nationalities of the republics they resided in. Consequently, a very small number of them felt the need to study the respective titular language as command of Russian was more than sufficient for most types of employment. For instance, in 1989, only 4.6 per cent of Russians living in Uzbekistan claimed the knowledge of the Uzbek language, whereas in Kazakhstan, a mere 0.8 per cent of Russian residents were fluent in Kazakh.²² On the other hand, non-Russian communities of these republics, including the titular peoples, were actively encouraged by the state to acquire knowledge of the Russian language, especially from the late 1930s onwards when it became a mandatory subject in all non-Russian schools. Thus, it should come as no surprise that in such an environment, in both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, it was Russian rather than the titular Kazakh and Uzbek languages respectively that from the beginning of the Soviet-led industrialization and urbanization in the 1930s became the *lingua franca* for interethnic communication.

The multi-ethnic urban settings of Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan became the major centres of socialization between the indigenous communities and Russian-speaking European/Slavic populations. However, differences in urban representation of titular Kazakhs and Uzbeks in their republics resulted in qualitatively varying degrees of interethnic linguistic and cultural influences and

exchanges. Namely, at the time of launching campaigns for rapid industrialization and collectivization in the late 1920s, only a very small proportion of Kazakhs resided in the cities. For instance, in 1926 only 2.1 per cent of Kazakhs in Kazakhstan were urban residents (or 14.4 per cent of the republic's total urban population, in contrast to 52.8 per cent of Russians);²³ and they accounted for only 3 per cent of Alma-Ata's population in 1927.²⁴ The first significant inflow of Kazakhs into cities began in the early 1930s, when some forcefully-sedentarized former Kazakh nomads were brought to work as wage-labourers at the rapidly developing industrial sites of their 'own' republic. Even though the share of urbanized Kazakhs gradually increased throughout that decade; by 1939, they constituted a mere 21.9 per cent of Kazakhstan's urban population.²⁵

As discussed under the rubric of *korenizatsiia* the Soviets took active measures to develop a national-language education system for Kazakhs, codified Kazakh (along with Russian) as the language of administration, and gave privilege to Kazakhs in employment. Nonetheless, newly-urbanized Kazakhs found it extremely difficult to function at work or in other areas of public domain with the sole knowledge of Kazakh in an overwhelmingly Russian-speaking milieu. In addition, Kazakh urbanites were often the subject of racial stereotyping from their Slavic/European fellow city residents, who looked down upon them, regarding their language and traditional outfits as tribal and backward.²⁶ Thus, being under strong social pressure from the majority of their city counterparts, as well as understanding that there was little if any prospect for personal development without a good knowledge of Russian, many urban Kazakhs of the 1930s and 1940s made a rational choice to accede to the Russian-dominated urban culture. For instance, they refrained from speaking Kazakh in public; dressed in European clothing; and sought to enrol their children in Russian-medium secondary schools and higher institutions of learning, as it was widely believed that they provided better quality education than the Kazakh-language ones.²⁷ The ensuing decades consequently saw a gradual reduction in demand for schooling in the Kazakh language in urban Kazakhstan. For example, during the 1966–67 academic year, 47 per cent of all urban Kazakh school children were attending Russian-medium schools;²⁸ and in the 1970s there was only one Kazakh-medium school in the capital Alma-Ata.²⁹ As a result, already by the 1960s, Zhakupov notes, a new generation of Russian-educated Kazakhs appeared, for whom the Russian language and culture became part of their identity.³⁰ Since many of those 'Russified' Kazakhs worked in a predominantly Russian/Slavic environment, the Kazakh language became largely dysfunctional for them. They either had only a basic knowledge of Kazakh or did not speak it at all.³¹ According to observations made by some Kazakh scholars in the late 1980s, around 40 per cent of Kazakhs had no or very little knowledge of Kazakh, or in other words were Russian-speakers.³² In contrast, in rural southern Kazakhstan, where Kazakhs were the majority, proficiency in Russian among the natives was much lower and the Kazakh language was widely practiced.

With the growing rural-to-urban migration of Kazakhs during the 1970s and 1980s, the share of Kazakh-speaking element in the urban population of the

republic somewhat increased. Although this was not enough to reverse the hegemony of the Russian language in the public domain, the gradual process of demographic indigenization of the Kazakhstan's urban population significantly contributed to the emergence of a debate within Kazakh society over the declining importance of the titular language in the republic. For instance, through their works, some Kazakh writers, such as Olzhas Suleimenov, sought to raise public awareness among fellow ethnionationals about the bleak future of the Kazakh language.³³ There were also some high-ranking Kazakh CP functionaries who advocated the revitalization of the Kazakh language in all spheres of public life and state structures within the Kazakh SSR. Moreover, in the 1980s, with the progressive weakening of the Soviet economy and a growing competition for jobs between titular Kazakhs and non-Kazakhs in the republic, the language issue became increasingly politicized. In the late 1980s, for example, several newly-founded Kazakh nationalist organizations, such as *Kazak Tili* (Kazakh Language), pressed for measures to improve the schooling and publishing in Kazakh, as well as elevating the latter to the status of state language of the republic.³⁴ In order to appease the growing nationalist demands in Kazakhstan, the Soviet regime agreed to enhance the status of Kazakh, and on 22 September 1989 the Supreme Soviet of the Kazakh SSR adopted a new language law, which declared Kazakh as the only state language of the republic, while according Russian a much lower status of 'language of interethnic communication'.³⁵

Uzbekistan, on the other hand, was quite a different case. Unlike nomadic Kazakhs, ancestors of Soviet Uzbeks had resided in cities long before the Russian occupation of Central Asia in the nineteenth century. Under the Tsarist rule, Russian urban enclaves in Turkestan were established within existing urban centres, such as Tashkent and Samarkand, where the indigenous Muslim population comprised a solid majority.³⁶ During the Soviet period, with several waves of mass migration and deportation from European parts of the USSR to Central Asia, the number of Russians and other Slavs increased considerably in major urban areas of Uzbekistan, but so did the number of titular Uzbeks. For instance, in the demographically most Russified Uzbek city of Tashkent, as mentioned above, the proportion of Russian and Uzbek residents was largely the same. Consequently, linguistic Russification was less pronounced among urban Uzbeks than among the Kazakhs. Even among those Tashkent Uzbek residents who adopted Russian as their first language, there were relatively few who did not possess any knowledge of Uzbek. And the problem of linguistic Russification was practically non-existent in the Uzbek-dominated provincial cities of Uzbekistan, not to mention the countryside.³⁷ For example, according to the 1989 census, only 23.8 per cent of Uzbeks claimed fluency in Russian as a second language; while 12.9 per cent of urban and 32.9 per cent of rural Uzbeks were monolingual Uzbek-speakers with no knowledge of Russian at all.³⁸ In addition, throughout the Soviet era the Uzbek language held a strong position in Uzbekistan's education system, particularly at the secondary education level. For instance, in 1985 around 70 per cent of Uzbekistan's secondary schools were Uzbek, while nearly 10 per cent were Uzbek-Russian.³⁹ Nevertheless, despite the

absence of a real threat of linguistic Russification of the titular population, the language issue became one of the major political rallying points for Uzbek nationalist groups, such as *Birlik* (Unity), in the late 1980s.⁴⁰ For instance, between late 1988 and 1989, several mass demonstrations were held in Tashkent demanding the strengthening of the role and status of the Uzbek language in the republic.⁴¹ Subsequently, on 21 October 1989, the Supreme Soviet of the Uzbek SSR, following its counterpart in the Kazakh SSR, instituted Uzbek as the sole state language of the republic, while relegating Russian to the position of ‘language of interethnic communication’.⁴²

Thus, the analysis of the demographic-linguistic trends in Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan provided above suggests the following: (i) linguistic Russification (adopting Russian as the first or only language) of the Kazakhs and Uzbeks occurred mainly in urban areas with significant or predominantly Slavic populations; this was particularly the case in northern Kazakhstan, Alma-Ata, and partly in Tashkent; and (ii) the shift in language (from the native to Russian) among urban Kazakhs and Uzbeks was voluntary, in a sense that it was not imposed upon them by the Soviet regime. Naturally, a question arises whether the linguistic Russification described above actually led to ethnocultural Russification and consequently to the loss of ethnonational identities.⁴³ Definitely not, as first and foremost, those linguistically Russified Kazakhs and Uzbeks never considered themselves to be Russians; and neither were they perceived as such by Russians. Evidence supporting this argument can be found in the Soviet censuses, in which, as mentioned in Chapter 7, the vast majority of those Russian-speaking Kazakh and Uzbek census-respondents, who had little or no knowledge of Kazakh and Uzbek respectively, still claimed these languages as their mother tongues. In other words, despite the loss of native language or fluency in it, these linguistically Russified Kazakhs and Uzbeks still maintained strong ethnonational attachment and solidarity.⁴⁴ Furthermore, representatives of the Soviet Kazakh and Uzbek creative intelligentsia, who adopted Russian as their primary language, were not in the service of Russian culture but of their own nations. For example, the aforementioned prominent Kazakh writer, Olzhas Suleimenov, wrote his literary pieces in Russian. Nonetheless, in all his works Suleimenov addressed, cultivated and developed Kazakh national themes, or in other words produced a Kazakh national cultural product. In Soviet Kazakhstan’s case, it can even be argued that the contribution of the Russian-speaking Kazakh intelligentsia (writers, film directors, artists, composers, historians and scientists) to the overall development of modern Kazakh culture and science was no less, if not greater, than that of their Kazakh-speaking counterparts.

Another important implication of the Soviet demographic policies in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, which had a significant impact on the way Kazakh and Uzbek nations were formed and developed, was a strong penetration of the Russian/‘Western’ culture in these republics. In particular, although the goal of the Soviet Kazakh and Uzbek nation-building projects from the start had been the creation of Western-style nations—mobilizing for this purpose numerous resources and facilities such as educational, cultural and media—the massive

inflow of Slavic/European populations in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan made this goal easier to accomplish. Direct and increased interaction of Kazakh and Uzbek ethnionationals with the Slavic/European residents, living, studying and/or working among them in Russian-dominated areas of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, resulted in their greater exposure to Russian/Western cultural influence. For instance, with the organized Slavic population transfers to Central Asia during the 1930s and 1940s, Western-style clothing and table manners became increasingly common among Kazakhs and Uzbeks.⁴⁵ Had it not been for the significant demographic presence of Slavic/European people in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the extent of 'Westernization' and secularization of the Kazakhs and Uzbeks would have been considerably less. As an example, the 'Westernization'/modernization of Kazakhs and Uzbeks happened to a much greater degree in ethnically Russian-dominated and equally represented (Russian-titular) urban settings compared to rural Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, where interaction with Slavic/European people was relatively insignificant. This argument should not, however, be interpreted by any means as a justification of the state-organized population transfers in Soviet Central Asia, which, for example, made titular Kazakhs a numerical minority in their 'own' republic. Rather the point has been to illustrate the profound effects of these population movements on Kazakh and Uzbek nation-buildings.

Notes

- 1 Zharmukhamed Zardykhan, 'Russians in Kazakhstan and Demographic Change: Imperial Legacy and the Kazakh Way of Nation Building', *Asian Ethnicity* 5, no. 1 (2004): 64–65; T. S. Melnikova, *Formirovanie promyshlennykh kadrov v Uzbekistane* (Tashkent: Uzgosizdat, 1956), 80.
- 2 Yemelianova, *Russia and Islam*, 119; Usmanov and Sadikov, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, 95.
- 3 Kuzembaiuly and Abilev, *Istoriia respubliki Kazakhstan*, 307.
- 4 Iu. A. Poliakov, ed. *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1939 goda: Osnovnye itogi* (Moscow: Nauka, 1992), 75–76, Table 16. Aside from the Slavic immigration, the reduction in the percentage of Kazakhs in the overall population of Kazakhstan was also caused by the high loss of Kazakh population during the collectivization/sedentarization-related famine of the early 1930s.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 73, Table 16.
- 6 Usmanov and Sadikov, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, 129–132; Abrarov, *Istoriia Uzbekistana*, vol. 2, 42.
- 7 Karazhan *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 304.
- 8 On the deportations of these peoples to Soviet Central Asia, see A. M. Nekrich, *The Punished Peoples: The Deportation and Fate of Soviet Minorities at the End of the Second World War*, trans. George Sounders (New York: Norton, 1978); Robert Conquest, *The Nation Killers: The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities* (London: Macmillan, 1970).
- 9 See Olcott, *Kazakhs*, 224–229; S. B. Baishev, *Voprosy sotsial'no-ekonomicheskogo razvitiia Sovetskogo Kazakhstana* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstan, 1981), 147–188.
- 10 See *Naselenie SSSR 1987: Statisticheskii sbornik* (Moscow: Finansy i Statistika, 1988), 103–104.
- 11 See *Itogi Vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1959 goda: SSSR (svodnyi tom)* (Moscow: Gosstatizdat, 1962), 206, Table 54.

- 12 See G. Vitkovskaia, 'Vynuzhdennye migranty v Rossii', in *Byvshii SSSR: Vnutrenniia migratsiia i emigratsiia*, ed. Dzh. R. Azrael and Zh. A. Zaionchkovskaia, vol. 1 (Moscow: RAN, 1992), 79–80, Table 5.
- 13 See *Itogi vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1989 goda*, vol. 7 (Minneapolis: East View Publications, 1993), 192.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 296.
- 15 Khazanov, *After the USSR*, 261, Table 4.2.
- 16 *Ibid.*
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 See *Itogi vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1989 goda*, vol. 7, 264.
- 19 See *Itogi vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1989 goda: Natsional'nyi sostav naseleniia Kazahskoi SSR, oblasti i g. Alma-Aty*, vol. 2 (Alma-Ata: Respublikanskii informatsionno-izdatel'skii tsentr, 1991).
- 20 *Ibid.*, 144.
- 21 See Kolstoe, *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics*, 83; O. I. Brusina, *Slaviane v Srednei Azii: Etnicheskie i sotsial'nye protsessy. Konets xix–konets xx veka* (Moscow: Vostlit RAN, 2001), 125–127.
- 22 Kolstoe, *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics*, 89, Table 4.2. According to Brusina, most of those Uzbek-speaking Russians were from the ethnically mixed villages. Brusina, *Slaviane v Srednei Azii*, 151–154.
- 23 Khazanov, *After the USSR*, 261, Table 4.2.
- 24 Dave, *Kazakhstan*, 58.
- 25 Khazanov, *After the USSR*, 261, Table 4.2.
- 26 Dave, *Kazakhstan*, 61, 67.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 61–62.
- 28 Iu. D. Desheriev, *Razvitie obshchestvennykh funktsii literaturnykh iazykov* (Moscow: Nauka, 1976), 143.
- 29 Juldyz Smagulova, 'Language Policies of Kazakhization and Their Influence on Language Attitudes and Use', *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 11, no. 3–4 (2008): 444.
- 30 Zhumabai Zhakupov, *Shala Kazak: Proshloe, nastoiashchee, budushchee* (Almaty: n.p., 2009), 9–10.
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 S. Zimanov, 'O statuse iazyka', *Kazahstanskaia Pravda*, 31 August 1989.
- 33 Abazov, *Culture and Customs*, 47.
- 34 Dave, *Kazakhstan*, 3, 53.
- 35 See *Zakon Kazahskoi Sovetskoi sotsialisticheskoi respubliki o iazykakh v Kazahskoi SSR* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstan, 1989).
- 36 On the Russian urban enclaves of Tashkent and Samarkand, see Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent: 1865–1923* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007); Alexander Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand, 1868–1910: A Comparison with British India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).
- 37 Alpatov, *150 iazykov*, 102–103.
- 38 See Robert J. Kaiser, 'Social Mobilization in Soviet Central Asia', in *Geographic Perspectives on Soviet Central Asia*, ed. Robert A. Lewis (London: Routledge, 1992), 257, Tables 10.5 and 10.6.
- 39 Fierman, *Language Planning*, 262.
- 40 *Birlik* was formed in November 1988 under the leadership of Abdurahim Pulatov. In addition to the language issue, *Birlik* leaders also called for greater democratic, economic (diversification of the cotton-centred agriculture) and environmental (to save Aral Sea from evaporation) reforms in the republic. Because of its strong stance first against the communist government of Soviet Uzbekistan and later against the first government of the independent Uzbekistan, both headed by Islam Karimov, *Birlik* was banned for allegedly anti-state activities by Karimov's regime in 1992. See

Vladimir Babak, Demian Vaisman and Aryeh Wasserman, eds., *Political Organization in Central Asia and Azerbaijan: Sources and Documents* (London: Frank Cass, 2004), 352–359.

- 41 Jacob M. Landau and Barbara Kellner-Heinkele, *Politics of Language in the Ex-Soviet Muslim States* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2001), 61; Timur Kocaoglu, 'Uzbek Students Call for Uzbek to be Made the Republican State Language', in *Report on the USSR* (Munich: Radio Liberty, 1989), 21–22.
- 42 See *O gosudarstvennom iazyke Uzbekskoi SSR* (Tashkent: Matbuot, 1990).
- 43 A similar question was posed by Kaiser, 'Social Mobilization in Soviet Central Asia', 254.
- 44 See Akiner, *Formation of Kazakh Identity*, 52; L. M. Drobizheva, 'Natsional'noe samosoznanie: Baza formirovaniia i sotsial'no-kul'turnye stimuly razvitiia', *Sovetskaia Etnografiia*, no. 5 (1985): 3–16; Richard Pipes, 'Muslims of Soviet Central Asia: Trends and Prospects', *Middle East Journal* 9, no. 3 (1955): 304–306.
- 45 See Brusina, *Slaviane v Srednei Azii*, 149–150; Gorshunova, 'Vneshnii oblik Uzbekskoi zhenshchiny', 20–21.

13 Soviet construction of Kazakh and Uzbek national histories

The need for writing national histories for the Soviet-defined Kazakh and Uzbek as well as other Central Asian nations emerged shortly after the demarcation of their respective national republics in the mid-1920s. The goal was to design official historical narratives/myths portraying these newly created nations as primordial entities, inhabiting the territories of their republics since time immemorial, though managing to fully realize their national self-determination aspirations only with the arrival of Soviet power. Such histories were intended to provide a historical justification and legitimacy to the Kremlin's nation-making and border-drawing activities in the region. In addition, and most importantly, official national histories were to be utilized for instilling—and subsequently reinforcing—a sense of national identity, belonging, loyalty and pride among each of these national communities.

Although distortion of historical chronology, events and figures was a usual practice in Soviet historiography, there were a range of factual and methodological difficulties in forging convincing—and ideologically acceptable—national (pre)histories for the Kazakh and Uzbek peoples. Namely, since prior to the Soviet period there had never existed such ethnically or territorially defined political entities as Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, just as there had never been Kazakh and Uzbek nations, it was quite challenging to produce ethnopolitical histories for the Soviet-defined eponymous nations of these republics. For instance, despite the fact that various Uzbek dynasties (Shaybanid, Ming, Yadi-garid and Kungrat) had ruled different sections of historical Mawarannahr (Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand) from the sixteenth century onwards, none of these political entities could have been described as an Uzbek state in ethnic terms. Bukhara Emirate, for example, was as much Uzbek as Tajik. A more difficult challenge was to prove autochthonousness of the Uzbeks and Kazakhs in their 'own' homelands. As has been shown in this book, Dasht-i Kipchak Uzbek and 'Kazakh' tribes, whose descendants in the 1920s to a great extent constituted the Soviet-created Uzbek and Kazakh nations respectively, migrated into their current national territories no earlier than the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Furthermore, the Shaybanid ancestors of the Soviet Uzbeks were not only latecomers into the territory of future Uzbekistan, but they also were foreign invaders. As regards to 'Kazakh' tribes, as discussed in Chapter 2, they

settled into the territories that later became incorporated into Soviet Kazakhstan with the permission of Chaghatayid rulers of Moghulistan Khanate who controlled those areas at that time. Hence, the task for Soviet historians was to work out a historical framework that would attest the unbroken ethnopolitical and cultural presence of Kazakh and Uzbek peoples on the territories of their republics 'during the entire period covered by their newly written histories—that is, since palaeolithic times'.¹ Among other challenges that Soviet historians faced in writing ethnonational histories of Kazakhs and Uzbeks were questions of: how to divide a common political and cultural history of Central Asia (both pre- and post-sixteenth century) along national lines among the Soviet-defined titular nationalities of the region; and how to appraise the Tsarist/Russian occupation and rule of Central Asia.

The question of proving the autochthonous statuses of Kazakh and Uzbek peoples was solved in the easiest possible manner. Soviet historians, without much scholarly effort, identified the oldest indigenous inhabitants of the territories of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan as direct ancestors of Soviet Kazakhs and Uzbeks respectively. For instance, it was asserted that ethnogenesis of Kazakhs started with such ancient peoples of the region as Sakas, Wusun and Huns;² while the ethnic roots of the Uzbek people was traced to the ancient Sogdians, Bactrians and Khorezmians in the first millennium BC.³ In addition, while tracing the evolutionary path of these alleged proto-Kazakh and proto-Uzbek peoples towards their nationhood, Soviet historians either totally ignored or downplayed their ethnic intermingling with invading and/or immigrating foreign populations in their lands such as Persians, Arabs and various Turkic and Mongolic tribes. Instead, the focus was made on national struggles of these local indigenous peoples against foreign subjugation and exploitation. However, when it was suitable, Soviet historians utilized the so-called absorption strategy, claiming that certain population groups that were late arrivals in their new settlement/conquered areas of Central Asia were not alien in ethnic origin from the local indigenous population, but rather derived from the same ethnic/tribal/linguistic background as the latter. Consequently, it was argued that those late arrived ethnic-kin population groups were successfully absorbed into the indigenous communities, without bringing about any substantial shifts in the ethnic configuration of the latter. Such an explanation, for example, was applied to the Shaybanid conquest of Mawarannahr. In particular, in official Soviet historiography, Shaybanid Uzbek tribes were portrayed as of the same stock as those Turkic peoples living in their conquered territories of Timurid Mawarannahr that was to become the Uzbek SSR; or, in other words, it was claimed that these two peoples (newcomers and locals) were the same.⁴ In this way, to paraphrase Bregel, Shaybanid Uzbeks ceased to be latecomers to their new territory, and became legitimate ethnic heirs of the political and (Turkic) cultural heritage of the pre-sixteenth century Mawarannahr.⁵ Thus, according to the Soviet-constructed historical narrative, Kazakh and Uzbek peoples, known by/bearing various names in different periods of history before the sixteenth century, had always inhabited the territories of Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan respectively.

In order to further reinforce the above historical narrative, all major historical and cultural monuments located within the borders of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were declared as ethnonational heritages of the titular nationalities of these republics. Moreover, a number of state-selected prominent Central Asian medieval cultural figures and statesmen who were born or resided even for a short time on these territories, some of them even centuries before the appearance of Uzbek and 'Kazakh' tribal conglomerations, were posthumously ascribed Kazakh and Uzbek ethnonational identities. For instance, a renowned tenth-century Muslim philosopher of 'Turkic' descent, al-Farabi, who was born in the village of Wasij near the town Farab (an area that was later incorporated into Soviet Kazakhstan), but spent most of his life in the Middle East and wrote primarily in Arabic, was claimed by Kazakh scholars as a fellow countryman.⁶ And since no contemporary depiction of al-Farabi has survived, in all Soviet paintings of al-Farabi, in an attempt to make this great Muslim scholar look Kazakh in appearance he has been portrayed as a person with Mongoloid anthropological characteristics. Likewise, prominent Iranian-speaking Muslim scholars of the early Islamic era, who lived for some time in the part of historical Mawarannahr from which Soviet Uzbekistan was formed—such as the ninth-century mathematicians al-Farghani and al-Khwarizmi, the eleventh-century astronomer al-Biruni and physician Abu Ali ibn-Sina—were described as Uzbeks.⁷ In addition, the Soviet Uzbek people, as discussed earlier in the book, were also privileged to appropriate the entire Chaghatay Turkic literature as their own, and accordingly to 'Uzbekize' its best representatives such as Alisher Navoi. At the same time, however, Soviet history textbooks totally ignored those Central Asian Muslim scholars and thinkers who were mainly known for their works in Islamic theology, and as such, were politically and ideologically unacceptable to the Soviet censorship. For instance, Imam al-Bukhari (810–87), the most renowned Central Asian scholar in the Islamic world, was never considered by Soviet nation-builders as an appropriate candidate for 'Uzbekization' and, accordingly, for inclusion in the national pantheon of Uzbek cultural heritage.⁸

Similarly, ideological and political interests of the Soviet regime were taken into consideration when choosing chief Kazakh and Uzbek national heroes of the past. For example, the candidacy of Amir Timur, the most well-known political figure of Turko-Mongolic descent born on the territory that became Soviet Uzbekistan, who built the largest Turkic empire in the history, failed to qualify for the status of medieval Uzbek national hero because of the Soviets' concerns that this may have inspired pan-Turkic and/or pan-Islamic ideas in the region.⁹ Another and probably the most important reason for rejecting Timur's candidacy was that he had several times raided Russian lands, and once had nearly reached Moscow. Even though Timur's incursions into Russian territories were not directed against Russian principalities but against the Mongol Golden Horde, which ruled Russian steppes for more than two centuries, a Turko-Mongol leader, who sacked and plundered several Russian towns, could not have been promoted as a national hero of any Soviet nationality for understandable reasons. Consequently, Amir Timur was not only denied the right to acquire Soviet-codified Uzbek

ethnonationality posthumously, but he was demonized in official Soviet historiography as one of the most brutal and savage conquerors the world had known.¹⁰ Nevertheless, Soviet history books gave considerable space to those remarkable cultural and architectural achievements that took place on the territory of future Uzbekistan under Timur's rule, though crediting for this not the founder of the Timurid dynasty himself but the great Uzbek people in general.

One historical figure that was considered to be a safe choice for being officially enshrined as Uzbekistan's supreme medieval national hero was a Timurid ruler Ulugh Beg (r. 1409–49), a grandson of Amir Timur, who was known more for his contribution to astronomy than for the jihad campaigns. Although Ulugh Beg was a devout Muslim who built a magnificent *madrasa* on the Registan Square in Samarkand, Soviet historiography portrayed him as a secular leader who, by his scientific discoveries, challenged religious dogmas propagated by the reactionary ulama.¹¹ Moreover, even though Ulugh Beg was killed in an internal dynastic struggle by his own son, Soviet historians, Keller notes, 'had him murdered by obscurantist clergy'.¹² Thus, the image created for Ulugh Beg was one that was well fitted with the Soviet Uzbek nation-building project, that of a secular and scientifically minded national historical figure. As for choosing the main pre-Russian national hero of the Kazakh people, Soviet historians gave preference to Abul Khayr, the Khan of the Small Horde, who was praised in official publications for his wise decision to accept the Russian *poddanstvo* in the 1730s.¹³

The study of the Tsarist period in Central Asia was perhaps one of the most politicized topics in Soviet historiography on the region, an evaluation of which changed periodically with shifting priorities in Soviet nationality policy. In the 1920s, the Soviet government, in its efforts to woo the support of the Central Asian Muslim population as well as to disperse their fears over the possible resurrection of ethnic Russian imperialism, consistently sought to distance itself from the previous Tsarist regime, denouncing it and its policies as colonial and oppressive. In line with this official Soviet policy, a leading Bolshevik historian of the period, Mikhail Pokrovsky, advanced the theory of 'absolute evil', proclaiming incorporation of non-Russian territories into the Tsarist Empire as part of the Romanov dynasty's expansionist colonial policy, which brought nothing but humiliation and suffering to the conquered peoples, including the Kazakhs and Uzbeks. Accordingly, for Pokrovsky, national rebellions in non-Russian parts of the empire were to be treated as progressive, anticolonial struggles against Tsarist oppression.¹⁴ For nearly two decades, the 'absolute evil' theory served as the guiding framework for all Soviet historians writing on the Tsarist occupation and rule in Central Asia and/or other non-Russian territories of the former Empire. For instance, the works of Galuzo, Lavrentev, Rodnevich and Togzhanov on the topic all sought to demonstrate the exploitative nature of the Tsarist rule in Central Asia.¹⁵

In the second half of the 1930s, with the restructuring in Soviet nationality policy following the abandonment of *korenizatsiia*, the 'absolute evil' theory was dropped in favour of a new historical theory, that of 'lesser evil'. The new

theory deemed the Tsarist conquests of non-Russian territories as trivial compared to the potential threat of being occupied by other imperialist powers, such as Britain, Persia or the Ottomans.¹⁶ The argument with the 'lesser evil' theory was that with their incorporation into the Tsarist Empire, the conquered peoples came closer to advanced Russian 'high-culture' as well as to the revolutionary ideas of Russian Marxists. It was also noted that the Tsarist regime had introduced elements of capitalism in its eastern provinces, including Central Asia, which from the classical Marxism perspective was viewed as the necessary prerequisite for the socialist revolution.¹⁷ This revision in theory, however, in no way implied the rehabilitation of Tsarism in general, which continued to be vilified as a reactionary force. The revolts against Tsarist rule in the Empire's non-Russian borderlands, such as the 1837–47 Kenesary Khan's rebellion and the 1898 Andijan uprising, still received a positive treatment in official Soviet historiography; but they were described more in terms of class and anticolonial struggle and less in terms of national liberation.¹⁸

During the war with Nazi Germany, the Soviet regime, seeking to mobilize support of Russians (the largest group, comprising 58.4 per cent of the USSR population in 1939¹⁹) in defence of the country, had to resurrect Russian nationalism, which had been largely silenced during the *korenizatsiia* period. To this end, for instance, new history books were put in circulation that praised the heroic achievements of (state-selected) pre-revolutionary Russian military commanders (such as Nevsky, Donskoy, Suvorov and Kutuzov) and stressed the strong martial traditions of the Russian people.²⁰ In official statements and publications, Russian people also began to be regularly referred to as the 'elder brother' or 'the first among the equals' within the Soviet family of peoples.²¹ As these efforts aimed at inspiring patriotism among the Russian population were proving effective, Bregel writes, it was soon realized that non-Russian peoples of the USSR also required a similar vent to their fighting spirit.²² Consequently, revised school and university history curricula and textbooks were issued in every non-Russian republic, placing special emphasis on the respective titular nations' legacies of heroic struggles in defending their motherlands from ruthless intruders.²³ However, this concession to national sentiments of non-Russian peoples was 'abused' by some non-Russian Soviet historians who brought back the 'absolute evil' theory in the analysis of the Tsarist period in their countries' histories.²⁴ In the aftermath of the war, such deviations from the 'lesser evil' theory in non-Russian historiographies of the Soviet Union were formally denounced and censored.²⁵

At the beginning of the 1950s the 'lesser evil' theory fell out of favour with the increasingly Russocentric Kremlin ideologists, as it was thought that 'there was too much evil implied in it'.²⁶ Consequently, a new historical theory of 'absolute good' was enforced, highlighting only the positive role of the Tsarist rule in relation to the non-Russian peoples of the former Empire, such as an impressive progress achieved in education, agriculture and health care systems.²⁷ To lend further credibility to the 'absolute good' theory, Soviet historians were also instructed to present political and socio-economic settings in Central Asian

political entities immediately prior to their incorporation into the Tsarist Empire in the direst possible manner. For instance, it was asserted that from the Shaybaniid conquest in the sixteenth century up until the establishment of the Tsarist power in Central Asia, Uzbek people were experiencing the downfall and absolute stagnation in all aspects of socio-economic and cultural life; whereas, local Muslim rulers had neither the capacity nor political will to make necessary changes to reverse the grim conditions.²⁸ In the case of the Kazakhs, it was even claimed that Russians literally saved them from the threat of enslavement by the 'backward' feudal powers such as the Oirats and the Uzbek dynasties.²⁹ It was also argued that the incorporation of Kazakh hordes into the Tsarist Empire was not the forceful annexation but rather the voluntary union instigated by the Kazakh people themselves.³⁰ Since the Tsarist rule over non-Russian peoples was presented as 'absolute good', logically those local elements who had fought against it had to be demonized. Indeed, for instance, Kenesary Khan, who had previously been praised for his resistance to the Tsarist colonialism, was now presented as a reactionary leader who aimed to reinstate the backward medieval feudal-patriarchal system and distance the Kazakh people from Russians and the associated progress.³¹ Similarly, the Andijan uprising of 1898 was now to be regarded not as an anticolonial, national rebellion but as a Muslim fundamentalist plot that was encouraged by the Ottoman Sultan.³² In general, of all the revolts in Tsarist Central Asia, only a few minor peasant uprisings that were not secessionist in their objectives (such as the 1836–38 uprising of Bukei Horde nomads under the leadership of Isatai Taimanov and Makhambet Utemisov) were praised as progressive within the 'absolute good' framework.³³

With Khrushchev's ascendancy to the Soviet leadership in 1953, the theory of 'absolute good' became gradually somewhat relaxed. For example, it was again allowed to argue that incorporation of Central Asian political entities into the Tsarist Empire was not always a voluntary process. Nonetheless, as Rywkin notes, the key postulates of the 'absolute good' theory, such as the progressive significance of the unification of non-Russian peoples with Russia, remained untouched.³⁴ On the other hand, Khrushchev, as part of his de-Stalinization campaign, granted non-Russian titular intelligentsias relatively more freedom in exploring and examining their nations' pre-Tsarist pasts. Taking advantage of this opportunity, national historians in Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan began to accommodate a greater degree of nationalism (within the limits set by the regime) in writing ancient and medieval ethnohistories of their respective nations. For instance, compared to Moscow and Leningrad based Soviet Russian historians on Central Asia, Kazakh and Uzbek academics showed far more generosity in glorification—and for that matter in fabrication—of their primordial ethnocultural histories. Some Kazakh and Uzbek historians even sought to challenge certain historical theses on Central Asia then prevailing in official Soviet historiography. For example, many leading Soviet Russian historians on the region had maintained that the original population of Central Asia were mainly Iranian-origin.³⁵ While this view was well received among the Tajik scientific circles, academics in other (Turkic) Central Asian republics were not enthusiastic

about accepting the idea that an Iranian element was even present in the ethnic formations of their nations. Hence, a number of Kazakh and Uzbek historians began to publish works asserting—often without substantiation by facts and evidence—that the oldest autochthonous populations of their respective national republics were entirely of Turkic origin, whilst the Iranian ethnic groups were not only latecomers but also occupants on these territories.³⁶ Uzbek scholars also became engaged in heated debates with their Tajik counterparts, particularly with Professor B. Gafurov, over their attempts to trace the ethnogenesis of the Tajik people on the territory of Uzbekistan, as well as to claim certain ‘Uzbekized’ historical personalities, such as ibn-Sina, as ethnic Tajiks, and to regard Bukhara and Samarkand as ancient Tajik political and cultural centres.³⁷

The 1960s and 1970s saw a growing interest in the historical past of Central Asia, and a large number of volumes on national histories of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan started to appear, most of them authored by the native scholars. During this period, some native historians started to vehemently emphasize an important contribution that pre-Tsarist Central Asia had made to world civilization, a fact that had been downplayed in the publications of the previous decades.³⁸ Yet another group of local scholars even sought to refute the argument about the dire socio-economic conditions in the region prior to the Tsarist occupation, claiming that the situation was not quite as bad as had been described by the proponents of the ‘absolute good’ theory.³⁹

In the mid-1980s under Gorbachev, the rise of ethnonationalist movements across the Soviet Union sparked off a new wave of historical revisionism in Central Asia. In each republic, a plethora of new pseudo-scientific studies emerged tracing the history of the ethnonational formation of the respective titular nationality as far back in time as possible. In addition, with the worsening of interethnic relations both within the Union-republics and among them, official national histories often became tools in the hands of nationalizing titular elites to support their claims about titular nations’ rightful and exclusive hereditary ownership rights over their respective national republics’ territories.⁴⁰ Attempts to use history for non-Soviet national agenda in the Union-republics met with strong criticism from the all-Union Soviet Academy of Sciences, the central scientific institution in the USSR. But its ‘academic authority’ on higher education and research institutions in non-Russian Union-republics had already been on the wane, and the production of the revised ethnocentric histories of the titular Central Asian peoples geared towards nationalist ends, Bregel writes, carried on with the same zeal.⁴¹

Notes

1 Bregel, *Notes on the Study of Central Asia*, 12.

2 For example, see Tolstov *et al.*, *Narody Srednei Azii*, vol. 1, 85.

3 For example, see M. M. Ermatov, *Etnogenez i formirovanie predkov Uzbekskogo naroda* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1968); S. P. Tolstov, *Drevniaia kul'tura Uzbekistana* (Tashkent: UzFAN, 1943), 6.

- 4 For example, see A. Iu. Iakubovskii, *K voprosu ob etnogeneze Uzbekskogo naroda* (Tashkent: UzFAN, 1941), 3, 12–13; B. A. Akhmedov, *Gosudarstvo kochevykh Uzbekov* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), 17, 149.
- 5 Bregel, *Notes on the Study of Central Asia*, 13.
- 6 See A. Magavin, ‘Velikii sootchestvennik Abu-Nasyr Al-Farabi’, *Izvestia: Seria obshchestvennaia*, vol. 4 (Alma-Ata: Nauka, 1969), 77–78; A. K. Kubesov and B. A. Rozeifeld, ‘Mezhdunarodnaia nauchnaia konferentsiia posviashchennaia 1100-letiiu Abu Nasra al-Farabi’, *VIET* 1, no. 54 (1976): 86. According to some sources, al-Farabi was not of Turkic but of Iranian origin, and was born not on the territory of modern Kazakhstan but in Faryab province of historical Khorasan, which is now part of present-day Afghanistan. See F. Abiola Irele and Biodun Jeyifo, eds., *The Oxford Encyclopedia of African Thought*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 379.
- 7 See T. Rainov, *Velikie uchenye Uzbekistana (ix–xi vv.)* (Tashkent: UzFAN, 1943); V. Iu. Zakhidov, A. A. Semenov and Ia. G. Guliamov, eds., *Biruni: Velikii Uzbekskii uchenyi srednevekov’ia* (Tashkent: AN UzSSR, 1950); M. A. Sale, *Mukhammed al’ Khorezmi, velikii Uzbekskii uchenyi* (Tashkent: AN UzSSR, 1954).
- 8 Shoshana Keller, ‘Story, Time, and Dependent Nationhood in the Uzbek History Curriculum’, *Slavic Review* 66, no. 2 (2007): 269–270.
- 9 Alexandre Bennigsen, ‘Soviet Minority Nationalism in Historical Perspective’, in *The Last Empire: Nationality and the Soviet Future*, ed. Robert Conquest (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1986), 143.
- 10 For example, see B. D. Grekov and V. T. Pashuto, eds., *Ocherki istorii SSSR: Period feodalizma, ix–xv vv.*, vol. 2 (Moscow: AN SSSR, 1953), 661, 666. In his 1968 book on Amir Timur, a well-known Soviet Uzbek historian, Ibrahim Muminov, made an unsuccessful attempt to rehabilitate the founder of the Timurid Empire as a progressive leader. I. M. Muminov, *Rol’ i mesto Amira Timura v istorii Srednei Azii v svete dannykh pis’mennykh istochnikov* (Tashkent: Fan, 1968). His book was met with harsh criticism from both Soviet officials and academics in Moscow, who denounced Muminov for presenting a positive image of Timur. For example, see A. P. Novoseltsev, ‘Ob istoricheskoi otsenke Timura’, *Voprosy Istorii*, no. 2 (1973): 3–20. Amir Timur was fully rehabilitated as the chief Uzbek national hero in independent Uzbekistan in the early 1990s.
- 11 For instance, see Musaev, *Uzbevskaia SSR*, 27; Tolstov *et al.*, *Narody Srednei Azii*, vol. 1, 88.
- 12 Keller, ‘Story, Time, and Dependent Nationhood’, 268, note 36. For examples of such works, see Musaev, *Uzbevskaia SSR*, 27–28; Khidoiatov, *Moia rodnaia istoriia*, 187–189.
- 13 See T. Zh. Shoinbaev, *Progressivnoe znachenie prisoedineniia Kazakhstana k Rossii* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhstan, 1973).
- 14 See M. N. Pokrovsky, *Diplomatia i voiny tsarskoi Rossii v xix stoletii: Sbornik statei* (Moscow: Krasnaia Nov’, 1923); *Russkaia istoriia v samom szhatom ocherke* (Moscow: Partizdat, 1933).
- 15 P. G. Galuzo, *Turkestan-koloniia: Ocherk istorii Turkestana ot zavoevaniia Russkimi do revoliutsii 1917 goda* (Moscow: KUTV, 1929); V. N. Lavrentev, *Kapitalizm v Turkestane: Burzhuaznaia kolonizatsiia Srednei Azii* (Moscow: Kommunisticheskaia akademiia, 1930); B. Rodnevich, *O kolonial’nogo vyrozhdeniia k sotsialisticheskomu rastsvetu: O Kazakstane* (Moscow: Vlast’ Sovetov, 1931); T. Togzhanov, *Kazakhskii kolonial’nyi aul* (Moscow: NIANKP, 1934).
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14 The evolution of the Soviet nationality doctrine and policies, 1917–91

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan

By demonizing nationalism as a bourgeois phenomenon incompatible with the goals of proletarian internationalism, Marx and Engels left to their followers, particularly to those directly involved in politics, a heavy ideological burden. In the age of national awakening (the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries), no pragmatic Marxist politician could afford to remove ‘nationalism’ entirely from his/her political toolbox simply because of theoretical objections. They, to paraphrase Gellner, might have wished that ‘it had been *classes* rather than *nations*, to which the spirit of history or human consciousness sent the awakening message’,¹ but the realities of the European political scene at the onset of the twentieth century were very different. Growing nationalist movements across Europe and beyond required an immediate and rational evaluation of political developments. Consequently, many leading Marxists of the period began to think of theoretical frameworks reconciling conflicting aspects of socialism and nationalism in a way that would allow them both to enhance their influence among the masses and to save the face before their ideological mentors, Marx and Engels.

For instance, the Russian Bolshevik Party, aiming to win the support of national minorities in Tsarist Russia, adopted the principle of the self-determination of nations, by which they formally undertook to protect the cultural and linguistic rights of non-Russian peoples in post-revolutionary Russia. The Bolshevik leader, Lenin, went further by interpreting the right of national self-determination to include a right to political secession. Moreover, after coming to power, a long champion of centralized unitary system, Lenin—along with Stalin—became an architect of the Soviet ethnofederal system, in which a great number of state-recognized indigenous nationalities of the forming Soviet state were organized into the hierarchy of national republics and regions named after them. Lenin believed that granting some form of self-rule to non-Russian peoples was essential for the survival of the Bolshevik regime, whose level of popularity for a long time was tied to the strength of the Red Army.

On the other hand, in order to keep in line with the classical Marxist concepts of ‘proletarian internationalism’ and ‘withering away of nations/states’, Lenin developed the three-stage scheme (elaborated later by every succeeding Soviet leader)—*rastsvet-sblizhenie-sliianie* (blooming-rapprochement-fusion)—of the

evolutionary development of the Soviet peoples. According to this scheme, as discussed in Chapter 8, it was presumed that the state-sponsored development of national cultures (socialist in content as specified by Stalin) of the Soviet peoples would naturally lead to their gradual *sblizhenie* as they were simultaneously to develop more and more similarities. This was to culminate in the gradual disappearance of national differences and their ultimate *sliianie* into a single people. As the fusion of the Soviet peoples was to happen naturally and only in the advanced stage of socialism, or in the uncertain (utopian) future, national minority elites had no reason to worry about the possible danger of resumption of the Tsarist-era Russification policies, especially considering the fact that combating the overt manifestations of ‘Great Russian chauvinism’ was part of the then official Soviet ideology.

While Lenin’s three-stage evolutionary scheme was easy to model upon ‘advanced’ Soviet peoples—such as Ukrainians, Georgians and Armenians who had more or less developed national consciousness and experiences of national statehood—in the case of Central Asian communities, there was a need for an additional, preparatory stage. In particular, at the time of the establishment of Soviet rule in the region there was no single territorially or ethnically defined indigenous community conceiving itself as a nation. Furthermore, a considerable majority of the region’s local population—fragmented along clan, tribal, genealogical, regional, linguistic, cultural, socio-economic and sectarian lines—was still in nomadic, feudal or semi-feudal stages of development. For that reason, Soviet officials first had to arbitrarily determine how many and what nations to carve out from the plethora of diverse local population groups before setting them off—along with other ‘advanced’ Soviet nationalities—towards a long journey to communism through *rastsvet*, *sblizhenie* and *sliianie*. In other words, in theory Central Asian nations were to be created only to be eventually merged with other Soviet peoples. What then was the political reasoning behind undertaking the costly and difficult projects of nation-making in Central Asia if their final products were destined to wither away? According to Edgar, this was conditioned by the fact that for Lenin and Stalin:

Nations were a natural and essential stage of historical development, closely linked to capitalism, modernization and the emergence of a modern class structure. Put simply, a people had to become a nation before it could move on to the more advanced socialist and internationalist stages of human existence.²

In addition to this, strategic security considerations in the region dictated the need for the reorganization and gerrymandering of local indigenous communities along Soviet-delineated ethnoterritorial lines in order to prevent the emergence of any pan-Turkic or pan-Islamic movement. Combinations of these factors led to the political ‘imagination’ of the Kazakh and Uzbek (as well as other Central Asian) nations, followed by the delimitation of their national territories as Soviet Kazakh and Uzbek republics respectively.

In order to reify these state-imagined national communities, the Soviet regime embarked on the campaign of *korenizatsiia* (this can be regarded as the start of the *rastsvet* stage) during which, for example: Kazakh and Uzbek (official) traditional cultures were invented and number of Western/Russian forms of ‘high-cultures’ were successfully introduced, nativized and promoted; their languages/dialects were standardized and institutionalized; and for both peoples the institutional structures of native-language education systems were established with the goal of eradicating illiteracy and preparing qualified national cadres and intelligentsias. Furthermore, to make the state-introduced Kazakh and Uzbek ethno-national categories meaningful for the targeted populations, Soviet nation-makers institutionalized them as lifelong mandatory identity markers, registered in all personal identification documents. The bearers of these official nationalities were given preferential treatment in employment/promotion and higher education within their ‘own’ national republics. In addition, official historical narratives/myths were constructed that were specifically geared towards generating among each of these titular groups a sense of a shared primordial past, belonging and emotional attachment to their respective (Soviet-delineated) national territories, which were claimed to have been inhabited by the ancestors of Kazakhs and Uzbeks since time immemorial. In parallel, the Soviets launched an all-out assault on those traditional social institutions, customs and practices that hindered the transformation of Kazakh and Uzbek peoples into modern, secular national communities, such as conservative ulama and the system of secluding Muslim women. Overall, the policy measures and programmes implemented during the *korenizatsiia* period established solid foundations for progressive reification of the Soviet created Kazakh and Uzbek national identities, cultures and boundaries.

From the mid-1930s, *korenizatsiia*, though never formally renounced, was gradually dropped as an official Soviet policy, which has often been interpreted by various Western scholars as a shift towards Russification. The key arguments put forward in support of this claim are: from this period onwards references to ‘Great Russian chauvinism’ not only disappeared from the official Soviet rhetoric, but Russian history, culture and state-selected pre-revolutionary figures became widely glorified and promoted throughout the Soviet Union; in 1938, the Russian language was made a compulsory subject in all non-Russian schools, while the Latin alphabets of many Soviet peoples—including of the Kazakhs and Uzbeks—were Cyrillicized; and with the start of World War II Russian people were enshrined in the ruling Soviet ideology as ‘elder brothers’ of the Soviet nationalities, leading them towards communism.³

There is no question that there was a change in Stalin’s nationality policy in the mid-1930s, yet to present it as a drastic shift from the efforts of nation-building in the Soviet non-Russian republics to the deliberate policy of Russification, in the words of Suny and Martin, ‘is a considerable exaggeration’.⁴ For example, the aim of the 1938 decree, which introduced Russian as an obligatory second language in all non-Russian schools, ‘was neither linguistic nor cultural Russification but rather a strengthening of Russian’s role as the *lingua franca* of

the multinational Soviet state'.⁵ In other words, it was aimed at Soviet state-building (that is, the USSR) rather than at undermining minority nation-building projects. The world's largest country by territory, with over 100 officially recognized ethnolinguistic communities, would not function effectively without a practical *lingua franca* for all citizens, enabling informal and formal communication in fields like science, defence and economy. And it should come as no surprise that it was Russian—the language of the most numerous nationality in the Union—that acquired the role of a medium of interethnic communication; though it was not given the formal status of the state language of the USSR until 1990.⁶ But what is most important is that the 1938 decree did not deny titular nationalities the right to receive education in their mother tongue within their national republics. Until its demise, the Soviet state continued to sustain a vast network of native-language educational institutions ranging from kindergartens to universities in all Union-republics, including Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan.

The state-organized large-scale resettlement of Russians and other European/Slav peoples in Kazakhstan during the 1930s and 1960s that resulted in the Russian demographic dominance in the republic—which in turn was largely responsible for the linguistic Russification of many Kazakh city-dwellers—can be viewed as an indirect Soviet policy of Russification. However, at the same time, it must be noted that without transferring the European population to Soviet Kazakhstan, it would have been practically impossible to turn the steppe lands of the republic into a modern industrial socialist republic, which in many ways conditioned the successful transformation of nomadic Kazakh society into a modern nation. And if some groups, particularly many Kazakh urbanites, later adopted Russian as their first or only language, it was not a result of forced Russification; those Kazakhs willingly shifted to Russian in order to better accommodate themselves in the Russian-dominated urban milieu of their republic and thus to enhance their chances for upward social mobility. Lastly, it should be stressed that whatever were the reasons for these people to adopt Russian as their first language, no one had compelled them to forget their native Kazakh.

As regards the removal of the problem of 'Great Russian chauvinism' from the CP's rhetorical agenda, this issue could not have hung as the Sword of Damocles over the Soviet central government eternally. After nearly two decades of Bolshevik rule, the continuing emphasis on the endemic Russian xenophobia toward minority peoples would have meant the total failure of the Soviet nationalities policy. Moreover, it was to exacerbate the problem rather than solve it. It was clear that at a certain point Russians were to be 'rehabilitated', and the best timing for this was the period of the adoption of the 1936 Constitution, when the Soviet regime announced its successful resolution of the Tsarist-inherited nationality question within the Soviet Union as well as completion of the consolidation of certain communities, such as Kazakhs and Uzbeks, into socialist nations.⁷

The ideological elevation of Russian people to the status of the 'elder Soviet brother' was, no doubt, a Russocentric decision. It is also a fact that after this decision, Soviet nation-makers somewhat modified their nation-building projects in Central Asia and elsewhere. For example, the Soviet Kazakh and Uzbek

nation-building projects, along with praising Kazakh and Uzbek national heroes, languages, and cultures, now also had to underline the special and solely positive role of Russian ‘elder brother’ in the respective histories of these peoples. Furthermore, Russian classic writers—such as Pushkin, Tolstoy, Chekhov and Dostoevsky—were also to be promoted throughout the Soviet Union within the framework of an all-Union culture, and treated as the cultural treasures not only of Russian people but also of other Soviet nationalities, including Kazakhs and Uzbeks. All these were intended to develop a common Soviet identity binding all citizens of the USSR. However, none of this was aimed at obstructing the further development and consolidation of the Soviet-nurtured Kazakh and Uzbek nations.

Regardless of its arrogant content, the concept of ‘Russian elder brother’ in itself implied the recognition of the ‘younger brothers/sisters’. Put differently, this concept would have been meaningless if it had not been coupled with other official slogans such as ‘the brotherhood/family of the Soviet peoples/nations’. As for the Soviet state’s promotion of the Russian-dominated all-Union culture, this project should in no way be seen to rival the Soviet nation-building projects in Union-republics, competing with each of them for the identity construction for the respective Soviet nationalities. First, it has often been forgotten that the Soviet Union was not some sort of a multicultural association but a sovereign state. No matter how genuine Soviet leaders were in their formal declarations supporting cultural diversity of the Soviet peoples, the USSR, like any other polity, required some degree of cultural unity among its constituent nationalities in order to exist as a modern state. Therefore, the creation and promotion of a common all-Union culture should be viewed not as a mechanism for Russification and assimilation, but as a medium enabling various Soviet peoples of different civilizations to have a cultural understanding and interchange, without necessarily losing their national particularities—in theory, at least, until the final (utopian) stage of communism. Moreover, it can be argued with certainty that the all-Union culture (though probably with different content) would have in any case evolved in the Soviet Union even without the central government’s intervention. Because in the era of technological and information revolutions, decades of coexistence in the same state—no matter how centralized or decentralized it was—would have led to an increasing cultural interaction among its constituent peoples, and consequently to the appearance of certain common cultural experiences and commonalities.

Second, regardless of the special position of the Russian culture in it, the all-Union culture was a collection of individual national cultures of all Soviet peoples. For example, the Soviet regime regularly celebrated the cultural days of the titular nationalities of the Union-republics, and paid homage to their national cultural figures.⁸ In 1941, for instance, the whole Soviet Union, including the Nazi-blockaded Leningrad, celebrated the five-hundredth anniversary of Alisher Navoi,⁹ an ‘Uzbekized’ Timurid poet posthumously privileged to represent Soviet Uzbekistan in the all-Union cultural pantheon.

Third, Stalin’s nationality policy, both during and after the *korenizatsiia* campaign, envisaged the endorsement of two levels of formal identity for every

Soviet citizen: (i) a supra all-Union Soviet identity, and (ii) a national identity. The Soviet identity, constructed and reinforced through the promotion of all-Union culture, was never ethnicized by the regime as it would have meant a total deviation from classical Marxism. On the other hand, the national identities of Soviet citizens were not only ethnicized, but also institutionalized as their major legal identity categories. Moreover, as discussed throughout this book, individual nation-building projects were devised for each titular nationality—which were institutionalized as national-territorial polities within the Soviet federal system—to develop their respective national cultures, identities and institutions. In addition, while the Soviet identity was made a ‘common good’, given to all citizens of the USSR irrespective of their ethnic ancestry, every individual in the state was formally associated with a particular hereditary national identity that could not be avoided or changed. In many cases, it was this (passport-ascribed) national identity, which, depending on the respective individual’s place of residence, determined one’s life and career prospects in the Soviet Union. In other words, in the Soviet context, ethnonational belonging had a far more practical dimension (especially for non-Russians) than an overarching Soviet identity. Furthermore, the Soviet multicultural policy, ethnofederal system, and institutionalized-nations and national identities were all set in a way to encourage people to define and differentiate themselves along ethnonational lines. This became particularly evident after Stalin’s public proclamation in 1936 that there were no more antagonistic classes in the USSR,¹⁰ thus leaving ethnonational categories as the primary identity markers in operation.

What is most interesting is that despite the move towards a more Russocentric nationality policy in the mid-1930s, Stalin never eliminated or downgraded in importance those institutions that had been put in place earlier by the regime specifically for the development of state-recognized titular nationalities, such as Kazakhs and Uzbeks. Quite the opposite, Stalin’s 1936 Constitution further reinforced the position of these titular nationalities, elevating, for example, the Kazakh ASSR to a Union-republic status; the practice of highlighting ethnonationality in internal Soviet passports was not repudiated, thus hindering assimilation; Kazakh and Uzbek national cultures were still supported and promoted at all levels; and in the 1940s, the Kazakh and Uzbek Academies of Sciences were established. Overall, as Slezkine puts it, ‘the “Great Retreat” of the mid-1930s reduced the field of “blossoming nationalities” but called for an ever more intensive cultivation of those that bore fruit [such as Kazakhs and Uzbeks]’.¹¹

This duality in Soviet nationality policy that characterized Stalin’s period would remain until the demise of the USSR. For example, Stalin’s successor, Nikita Khrushchev, who began his rule in the Kremlin (in 1953) by somewhat decentralizing the Soviet planned economy and delegating more decision-making prerogatives to the Union-republican governments, gradually shifted back to the centralized system of administration in the 1960s.¹² Moreover, while at the Twentieth CPSU Congress in 1956, Khrushchev was stressing that ‘Socialism, far from destroying national differences and peculiarities, on the contrary, assures the all-round development of and flourishing of the economy and culture

of all nations and peoples'.¹³ In the 1961 Party programme presented at the Twenty-Second CPSU Congress, Khrushchev's main emphasis was on the accelerated *sblizhenie* among the peoples of the USSR. Khrushchev stated that as Soviet peoples were becoming more homogenous the existing Union-republican boundaries were losing their relevance.¹⁴ Khrushchev also informed the Congress delegates about the formation of a new historical community in the USSR, a Soviet people (*Sovetskii narod*), possessing many characteristics of a nation.¹⁵ At the same time Khrushchev specified that the final *sliianie* of Soviet nationalities was not to take place until the late stage of communism.¹⁶ Despite this clarification, Luckyj notes, 'the tenor of his pronouncement was surely in favour of such a merger'.¹⁷ However, as Slezkine remarks, 'The only practical step [taken by Khrushchev] in this direction was the 1959 school reform that allowed parents the freedom to choose between Russian and non-Russian schools'.¹⁸ Indeed, Khrushchev, like Stalin, never removed or weakened those institutions that not only hindered *sliianie* of the Soviet nationalities but also created conditions for their further *rastsvet*.

Two main factors can be adduced as explanations for Khrushchev's, as well as the following Soviet leaders, deterrence to pursue more active 'fusion' policies in the Soviet non-Russian borderland republics. First was the appearance and consolidation of modern, national elites/intelligentsias in these republics. For example, while during the *korenizatsiia* period, most of the nation-making policies in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were implemented with the help of invited experts (mainly Russian) in various fields such as culture, science and education, by the 1950s and 1960s each of these republics had a well-established native professional intelligentsia, acting (under Moscow's supervision) as prime agents of the Kazakh and Uzbek nation-maintaining projects. In addition, by this period, Kazakhs and Uzbeks were no longer fragmented tribal and/or nomadic societies without national affiliations, but cohesive communities with strong senses of national consciousness and identity. Moreover, for the last 30 years or so, the Soviet regime itself was indoctrinating these peoples with the ideas/myths about their ancient national roots, possessing great histories and unique national cultures. Hence, a drastic shift towards blatant *sliianie* (or 'Russification') policies would have certainly met considerable resistance from the Kazakh and Uzbek societies, both at local and elite levels. Therefore, it was more advisable to follow Lenin's political strategy of gradual and prolonged *sliianie* of the Soviet peoples. As for Khrushchev's noisy statements (for which he was quite famous) about the growing *sblizhenie* of the Soviet peoples, this should be viewed as part of his political rhetoric.

A second factor was associated with the Soviet foreign policy objectives. Specifically, throughout the Cold War period, the Soviet Union was competing with both the West and China for influence in the Third World, trying to woo developing countries on its side with its model of socio-economic development and handling of nationality affairs. For example, as mentioned earlier in the book, the Kremlin actively sought to sell its Central Asian 'success story' in many parts of the Muslim world. These foreign policy considerations compelled

the post-Stalin Soviet leaders not force *sliianie* as it would have damaged the Soviet regime's propaganda image among its existing or prospective Third World allies.¹⁹

Under Leonid Brezhnev (1964–82), the Soviet nationality doctrine continued to emphasize the ever-growing rapprochement among Soviet peoples and their consolidation into a new historical community.²⁰ Nevertheless, Brezhnev's general approach to the issue was slightly different from that of his predecessor, Khrushchev. In particular, while for Khrushchev *sblizhenie* implied the gradual disappearance of national differences or their assimilation, for Brezhnev the ongoing process of rapprochement was not necessarily taking place at the expense of loss of national distinctions. For example, in his 1973 speech in Alma-Ata, Brezhnev stressed that:

When speaking about the new historical community of people, we absolutely do not have in mind that national differences are disappearing, and even less, that the fusion of nations has already occurred. All nations and peoples that live in the Soviet Union preserve their peculiarities, traits of national character, language and their best traditions. They have at their disposal all possibilities to achieve even greater flourishing of their national cultures.²¹

This, however, did not imply that Brezhnev dropped the whole idea of *sliianie*. It was still the CPSU's (distant) objective. Moreover, towards this end, Brezhnev's government took certain measures, such as issuing a special decree in October 1978 'On Measures for Further Improving the Study and Teaching of the Russian Language in the Union Republics'.²² Nonetheless, unlike Khrushchev, Brezhnev, in his formal statements, preferred to focus more on the all-around integrity and unity (*edinstvo*) of multinational and multicultural Soviet society, rather than on withering away of Soviet nationalities in the course of *sblizhenie* and *sliianie*.

The Brezhnev years also saw a fundamental change in the centre-periphery relations in the Soviet Union. While Brezhnev, on the one hand, largely restored the Stalinist system of centralized economic planning and management, on the other hand, he gave substantial autonomies to Union-republican governments, headed by his loyalists such as Dinmukhamed Kunaev (1964–86) in Kazakhstan and Sharof Rashidov (1959–83) in Uzbekistan. As long as these native Union-republican First Secretaries followed the Party's central line, suppressed dissidents, and fulfilled economic plans set for them (at least on the paper as it appeared later), they enjoyed considerable autonomy in managing their republics' internal affairs. Such an arrangement, for example, enabled both Kunaev and Rashidov to build up their own patronage networks within Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, which dominated respective republican *nomenklaturas* and were chiefly drawn from the titular nationals.²³ This process of indigenization of administrative-bureaucratic and Party structures in both republics, which was most apparent since the abandonment of *korenizatsiia*, went hand-in-hand with

the prevalence of endemic nepotism, cronyism, favouritism and corruption. Sizable shadow economies of Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan were largely controlled by various local informal criminal networks, under protection and/or direct involvement of corrupted native officials. In short, under Kunaev and Rashidov, it were Kazakhs and Uzbeks who became the 'true masters' of their native republics, while non-titular residents of these republics, including Russians, in Soucek's words, 'were, in a sense, left out in the cold'.²⁴ However, as Chinn and Kaiser correctly point out, the indigenization of cadres in the Brezhnev-era Central Asia should not be viewed as a sign of 'decolonization nationalism', as local elites promoted their fellow ethnionationals not because of national solidarity but because of parochial territorial, clan and kinship affinities.²⁵

Despite its shortfalls, the Brezhnev period may be regarded as some sort of Golden Age for Soviet Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan as well as for the rest of the USSR. In particular, the absence of Stalinist purges, the end of Khrushchev's chaotic reformism, and a relative economic prosperity under Brezhnev provided the Soviet population with a greater assurance of stability.²⁶ This period was also quite favourable for further *rastsvet* of Kazakh and Uzbek (Soviet) national cultures and identities. Notwithstanding the continuing censorship, native intelligentsias of both republics were given more creative freedom in their national cultural productions and expressions than ever before. For instance, official national histories of Central Asian peoples were no longer written in Moscow, but rather in Central Asian research institutions. Furthermore, in the late Soviet era, in contradiction to Stalin's famous slogan, national cultures of Central Asian republics, as Khalid notes, were becoming more 'socialist in form and national in content'.²⁷

Brezhnev's domestic policies, including those related to nationality issues, were put under scrutiny with the advent of the new Soviet leader, Yuri Andropov (November 1982–February 1984). On 21 December 1982, in one of his first speeches as the CPSU CC General Secretary delivered on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the USSR, Andropov outlined that the Party's ultimate goal was 'not only the *sblizhenie* of nations, but also their *sliianie*'.²⁸ In the same speech Andropov also emphasized the need for more 'internationalization' of the cadres at all levels of state and CP administration.²⁹ This was a clear signal that the new Soviet leadership was not happy with the Brezhnev-era 'over-indigenization' of the cadres in national republics, or as Olcott puts it, it was no longer acceptable 'the way party and republic business had been done for nearly two decades'.³⁰ The Soviet economy, after years of mismanagement, rampant corruption and waste, was showing increasing signs of stagnation, requiring immediate and radical action from the central government. Andropov's answer to the aggravating economic difficulties was to decentralize managerial decision-making in certain segments of the Soviet economy and to introduce material incentives with the aim of increasing labour productivity.³¹ The core of his policy programme was an attempt to improve work ethics in the country by imposing strict discipline on the CP and bureaucratic-managerial apparatus, and

cracking down on corruption, which was undermining the entire Soviet economy.

Shortly after assuming the position of General Secretary, Andropov launched a massive Union-wide anti-corruption campaign, the consequences of which were most felt in Central Asia and especially in Uzbekistan. Andropov's drive against corruption in the Uzbek SSR, which began with the investigation of cases of massive embezzlement and fraud in the republic's cotton industry, was later—after the death of Rashidov in 1983—extended to include practically all sectors of Uzbekistan's economy. As a result, during the following years hundreds of Uzbek government officials and economic managerial personnel were arrested and thousands more were replaced or demoted, allegedly for being involved in illegal economic activities and corruption.³² Andropov's rule, however, was too short to achieve the tangible economic effects he envisioned or to bring about any significant changes in the nationality affairs; and even shorter was the period of his successor, Konstantin Chernenko (February 1984–March 1985), to trigger meaningful changes in the dynamics of Soviet domestic policy.

The last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, took Andropov's reforms to the next level by introducing some elements of a free market economy under the framework of his policy of *perestroika* (restructuring), enforcing greater discipline, and intensifying an anti-corruption campaign in Central Asia and elsewhere. He also initiated a policy called *glasnost* (openness), which meant to make government policies more transparent and open to public debate and criticism. For instance it was under *glasnost* that the shocking results of the Moscow-led anti-corruption investigation in Uzbekistan were revealed to the public, and the Soviet press was allowed to expose and uncover mischief in Uzbekistan's cotton industry in depth,³³ some of them going as far as labelling the case as an 'Uzbek Affair'.³⁴ Moreover, in 1986, Rashidov, who was buried with honours in 1983 in Tashkent's Lenin's square, was publicly accused by Gorbachev's government of having being the main culprit behind Uzbekistan's problems.³⁵ In addition, Gorbachev, unlike his three predecessors, showed no hesitancy in drastically reshuffling Party-state bureaucracy in Central Asia, often filling vacated key positions in the region with Slavic cadres from Moscow.³⁶ During 1985 and 1988, for example, all Central Asian First Secretaries were removed from their positions. For instance, in Kazakhstan, on 16 December 1986, the Kazakh First Secretary Kunaev was replaced by Gennadii Kolbin, an ethnic Russian from Russia proper. In Uzbekistan, on 18 October 1988, Rashidov's successor Imanjon Usmankhojaev was replaced by Rafik Nishanov, an ethnic Uzbek though largely an outsider to the local *nomenklatura* as he had been in the Soviet diplomatic service since 1970.³⁷

Gorbachev's centralist policies in Central Asia soon backfired. By attempting to break down the Brezhnev-era centre-periphery arrangement, Gorbachev antagonized many of the established local native *nomenklaturas* who felt that they were losing their privileges and influences. As for native intelligentsias and ordinary titular populations of the region, the influx of Russian cadres in their

respective republics was equated with Russification and the end of informal *korenizatsiia*, inflaming their discontents. For instance, in December 1986, the replacement of Kunaev with Russian Kolbin sparked a spontaneous demonstration of Kazakhs at the main square of Alma-Ata. The demonstrators, mainly students, protested the fact that their home republic was the only Union-republic in the USSR with a non-titular First Secretary at the head. Allegedly some demonstrators were even shouting such slogans as 'Kazakhstan is only for the Kazakhs' and 'Russians, Go Home'.³⁸ Modern Kazakh historiography, however, harshly rejects all claims about the xenophobic character of the 1986 Alma-Ata demonstration, rather asserting that the demonstrators were in fact of different nationalities, including Kazakhs, Russians, Ukrainians and Germans.³⁹ On 18 December 1986, the demonstration was dispersed by army and police, resulting in the death of several protestors. Over the next few months, around 8,500 people were detained in connection with the Alma-Ata protests, and 99 of them were sentenced to various lengths of imprisonment.⁴⁰ These events in turn further galvanized the ethnonational sentiments of the Kazakhs. Similar dissatisfaction with Gorbachev's handling of nationality issues was felt in Uzbekistan. The Uzbek society was expressing its outrage over being singled out by the central government as the most corrupted republic/nation throughout the Union. Ethnicization of the corruption case in Soviet central media was perceived by many locals as a deliberate assault on the Uzbek people as a whole, producing, in the words of Carlisle, 'a reactive nationalism'.⁴¹

In addition to mishandling the nationality question, Gorbachev failed on the economic front. Deepening economic stagnation in the Soviet Union was eroding popular support for him and his *perestroika*. Gorbachev's 'democratic' rhetoric and unmatched concessions to the West were also increasingly alienating him from the Kremlin's conservatives. In the meantime, nationalist movements demanding secession from the USSR were on the rise in the Baltic republics and Georgia; ethnic tensions were escalating between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh AO; and in nearly all Union-republics, including Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, there were strong popular demands for strengthening the role and status of the titular languages. Consequently, by the late 1980s Gorbachev, who started as a strongman trying to establish an order in the non-Russian peripheries with iron fist policies, was compelled to step back and seek consensus with 'old' republican elites. For instance, in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in June 1989, Gorbachev replaced First Secretaries Kolbin and Nishanov with more acceptable candidates to the local native *nomenklaturas*, Nursultan Nazarbayev and Islam Karimov respectively. Gorbachev also delegated more powers to the republican governments, particularly in fields such as culture and education; further relaxed censorship; and gave the green light to the republican Supreme Soviets to institute titular languages of their republics as state languages.⁴² It should also be noted that the traditional references to *sblizhenie-sliianie* of Soviet nationalities were practically absent from official Soviet discourse during the late Gorbachev years. Rather, the Party rhetoric in this period was mainly focused on the economic and ideological unity of Soviet peoples.

All these concessions to the Union-republics, which were made with the aim of diffusing nationalism in the borderlands, however had an opposite effect. The empowered Union-republics were demanding more autonomy from the centre. Furthermore, between 1989 and 1990, all Union-republics declared their national sovereignties, 'a claim short of independence, but demanding that [their] own laws should take precedence over those from the centre'.⁴³ In the hope of reversing the separatist tide in the country, Gorbachev came up with the initiative of reforming the entire federal system of the USSR. According to his plan, all Union-republics had to enter into the new Union Treaty, which envisaged the transformation of the USSR into the union of sovereign republics, each of them with substantially increased jurisdictions. To gain the popular support for his initiative, Gorbachev took the question to the Union-wide referendum in March 1991. Although the majority (76.4 per cent) of those who participated in the referendum voted in favour of the Union Treaty, the referendum was boycotted in the Baltic republics, Georgia, Armenia and Moldova.⁴⁴ Despite this Gorbachev sought to proceed with his plan. For Kremlin hardliners, however, the devolution of the Soviet central government's power along Gorbachev's plan and further liberalization of the Soviet Union's political system was entirely unacceptable. Consequently, on 19 August 1991, the day before the Union Treaty was scheduled for signing, a group of conservatively minded senior officials from the CPSU, KGB and military attempted to mount a coup against Gorbachev. The coup failed within three days largely due to the popular resistance led by Boris Yeltsin, then the elected President of the RSFSR and the main political rival of Gorbachev from the 'reformist-democratic' camp.⁴⁵

Although unsuccessful, the August coup obliterated Gorbachev's already vanishing authority both among the masses and within the Soviet *nomenklatura*. The major challenge to Gorbachev in the aftermath of the coup, however, came from his rescuer, Yeltsin, whose political actions were clearly geared towards undermining the CPSU and its leadership. In such circumstances, Suny notes, 'political realism dictated abandoning the evidently sinking Soviet ship and rowing off in one's own republican rowboat'.⁴⁶ Indeed, over the next four months, following the suit of the Baltic, Transcaucasian and Slavic Union-republics, all Central Asian SSRs one by one adopted the declaration of independence: Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan on 31 August, Tajikistan on 9 September, Turkmenistan on 22 October, and Kazakhstan on 16 December. On 25 December 1991, Soviet leader Gorbachev resigned, and the USSR formally ceased to exist on 31 December 1991.

Thus, on 1 January 1992, Kazakh and Uzbek nations—that were forged by the Soviet nation-builders of the 1920s and 1930s with the intention that they would eventually merge with other nationalities of the USSR—by the accident of history were set free to decide their own and their national republics' destinies.

Notes

- 1 Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, 129.
- 2 Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 44.
- 3 See Zaslavsky, *Neo-Stalinist State*, 99; Grenoble, *Language Policy*, 54, 194; Jeff Chinn and Robert John Kaiser, *Russians as the New Minority: Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Soviet Successor States* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 216; Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society*, trans. Forster Karen and Oswald Forster (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 84–88.
- 4 Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, 'Introduction', in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 12. For a similar position, for example, see Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 97–98; Slezkine, 'USSR as a Communal Apartment', 414; Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 37.
- 5 Suny and Martin, 'Introduction', 12, emphasis added.
- 6 See 'O iazykakh narodov SSSR', in *Novye zakony SSSR* (Moscow: Iurlit, 1990), 149–159.
- 7 See J. V. Stalin, 'The National Question and Leninism', in *Works*, vol. 11 (Moscow: FLPH, 1954), 348–371; 'On the Draft Constitution of the USSR', 540–568.
- 8 Slezkine, 'USSR as a Communal Apartment', 447–448.
- 9 L. V. Maksakova, *Kul'tura Sovetskoi Rossii v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny* (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), 273.
- 10 See Stalin, 'On the Draft Constitution of the USSR', 540–568.
- 11 Slezkine, 'USSR as a Communal Apartment', 414.
- 12 See Simon, *Nationalism*, 233–258.
- 13 N. S. Khrushchev, 'Otchetnyi doklad tsentral'nogo komiteta kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuzu xx s'ezdu partii', in *XX s'ezd kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuzu: 14–25 fevralia 1956 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1956), 90.
- 14 N. S. Khrushchev, 'O programme kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuzu', in *XXII s'ezd kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuzu: 17–31 oktiabria 1961 goda: Stenograficheskii otchet*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1962), 215–217.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 153.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 217.
- 17 George S. N. Luckyj, *Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine, 1917–1934* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 245.
- 18 Slezkine, 'USSR as a Communal Apartment', 449. Prior to the school reform of 1959, non-Russian parents in non-Russian republics were encouraged by the state to send their children to their native-language schools. Those who wanted their children to be educated in Russian schools often had to overcome certain bureaucratic obstacles. See: Dave, *Kazakhstan*, 63. By removal of those obstacles, the authors of the 1959 school reform hoped that an increasing number of non-Russian parents would choose to enrol their children in Russian-language schools.
- 19 On the second factor, see Richard Sakwa, *Soviet Politics in Perspective*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1998), 252; Rakowska-Harmstone, 'Islam and Nationalism', 67–68.
- 20 For example, see L. I. Brezhnev, 'O piatidesiatiletii soiuzu Sovetskikh sotsialisticheskikh respublik', in *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1981), 190–196.
- 21 L. I. Brezhnev, 'V splochnom stroiu Sovetskikh respublik', in *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, vol. 2 (Moscow: Politizdat, 1981), 259.
- 22 For the full text of the decree, see *Biulleten' ministerstva vysshego i srednego spetsial'nogo obrazovaniia SSSR* (1979), 20–22.

- 23 Olcott, *Kazakhs*, 243–245; Donald S. Carlisle, ‘Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks’, *Problems of Communism* 40, no. 5 (1991): 29–30.
- 24 Soucek, *History of Inner Asia*, 256.
- 25 Chinn and Kaiser, *Russians*, 221.
- 26 Khalid, ‘Islam in Contemporary Central Asia’, 141.
- 27 Khalid, *Islam after Communism*, 95–96.
- 28 Iu. V. Andropov, *Shest’desiat let SSSR* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1982), 10.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 15, 17.
- 30 Olcott, *Kazakhs*, 249.
- 31 Sakwa, *Soviet Politics*, 74.
- 32 James Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan: A Soviet Republic’s Road to Sovereignty* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), 42–44; Carlisle, ‘Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks’, 33–35.
- 33 For example, see T. Gdlian and N. Ivanov, ‘Protivostoianie’, *Ogonek*, no. 26 (1988): 26–29.
- 34 Carlisle, ‘Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks’, 35.
- 35 V. I. Vorotnikov, *A bylo eto tak: Iz dnevnika chlena Politbiuro TSK KPSS* (Moscow: Sovet veteranov knigoizdaniia, 1995), 120.
- 36 Sakwa, *Soviet Politics*, 153.
- 37 Dominic C. B. Lieven, *Gorbachev and the Nationalities* (London: Centre for Security and Conflict Studies, 1988), 14.
- 38 Taras Kuzio, ‘Nationalist Riots in Kazakhstan’, *Central Asian Survey* 7, no. 4 (1988): 82; Mikhail Alexandrov, *Uneasy Alliance: Relations Between Russia and Kazakhstan in the Post-Soviet Era, 1992–1997* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1999), 18.
- 39 Karazhan *et al.*, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 365–366.
- 40 Kan, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 206.
- 41 Carlisle, ‘Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks’, 33–34.
- 42 Rywkin, *Moscow’s Lost Empire*, 187.
- 43 Mike Bowker, *Russia, America and the Islamic World* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 136. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan declared their sovereignties on 20 June and 25 October in 1990 respectively. Edward W. Walker, *Dissolution: Sovereignty and the Breakup of the Soviet Union* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 64, Table 3.1.
- 44 In each of the five Central Asian republics, over 93 per cent of the participants in the referendum voted in favour of retention of the Soviet Union. See Tishkov, *Ethnicity*, 51, Table 3.1.
- 45 Rywkin, *Moscow’s Lost Empire*, 188; Robert W. Strayer, *Why Did the Soviet Union Collapse?: Understanding Historical Change* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 187–193.
- 46 Suny, *Revenge of the Past*, 160.

Glossary

Alash Orda this was the name of the Kazakh-Kyrgyz political party and of the government (Provisional People's Council) of the Alash Autonomy (1917–20)

Basmachism anti-Soviet Muslim insurgency in Central Asia; insurgents were known as Basmachis

Chachvon a face veil

Cyrillicization a policy of changing some non-Cyrillic alphabets of the non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union to Cyrillic

Ignorirovanie non-interference, disregard; a policy of tolerating but not promoting Muslim institutions in Tsarist Turkestan

Inorodtsy a derogatory term for non-Russian/Slavic population in Tsarist Russia; it was generally applied to Jews, nomads and Central Asian Muslims

Jadids Muslim reformists in Tsarist Russia, including Central Asia

Kadimists a conservative Muslim clergy

Kalym a bride's dowry

Kolkhoz a collective farm in the Soviet Union

Krai region; a territorial unit in the Tsarist Russia

Kulak a wealthy peasant

Kurbashis leaders of local militias during the Basmachi movement in Central Asia

Kurultai congress/assembly in Turkic

Madrasa a Muslim secondary and higher religious school

Maktab a Muslim religious elementary school

Mufti a head of Muftiat

Muftiat a Muslim Spiritual Board

Mukhtoriyati autonomy in Turkic

Mullah a Muslim cleric

Narod Russian word for people

Narodnost' (pl. *narodnosti*) Russian word for people or nation

Natsiia Russian word for nation

Natsional'nost' (pl. *natsinal'nosti*) Russian word for nationality

Nomenklatura a list of important positions in the Soviet bureaucracy

Oblast province, region

Paranja women's veiling robe/cloak, extending from head to ankles

- Poddanstvo*** suzerainty
Raion a county
Rastsvet blooming
Sblizhenie rapprochement, drawing together
Shari'ah Islamic code of law
Shura-yi Islamiya the Muslim Council
Sliianie fusion, merger
Soslovie social entity, class, category in pre-Soviet Russia
Uezd an administrative district
Ulama a body of Muslim legal scholars
Ulama Jamiyati the Society of Clerics
Ulus a nomadic tribal confederation
Ummah worldwide Muslim community
Volost a small rural district, part of *uezd*
Waqf Islamic Endowment

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