

Ethnogenesis and Historiography: Historical Narratives for Central Asia in the 1940s and 1950s¹

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In 1947, at the climax of Stalinist rule, the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR in Tashkent published the second volume of the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan*.² Of this three volumes planned for this work, the second volume was published earliest. The editor of the second volume was the renowned historian Sergei Bakhrushin, then a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union (AN SSSR), head of the Department of Soviet History at the Historical Institute for the Period of Feudalism, and laureate of the Stalin State Prize. The author of the second volume was the corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR Aleksandr Semenov.

Only in 1950 was the first volume of the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* published. Its editor-in-chief, Sergei Tolstov, headed the Institute of Ethnography, while its main author was the corresponding member of the AN SSSR Aleksandr Iakubovskii. This volume was introduced by a short preface from the Institute of History and Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR, explaining that the previously published second volume was “the very first attempt” to produce “a major work” about “the origins (*o dalekom proshlom*) of the peoples of the USSR.” This, however, “could not help but affect the volume’s quality,” and, as could be read there, it actually turned out to be “not without a

¹ I want to express my gratitude to S. Alymov and S. Sokolovskii as well as to R. Cvetkovski and A. Hofmeister for their helpful comments on this essay. I also wish to thank A. Il’khamov, with whom I discussed the subject of this article, and V. Germanov, who directed my attention to a number of useful sources.

² *Istoriia narodov Uzbekistana* [History of the peoples of Uzbekistan], vol. 2 (Tashkent: Izdatel’stvo AN UzSSR, 1947).

number of serious deficiencies.” The text added that “further deepening exploration of Uzbekistan’s historical past, collective work, bold as well as open Bolshevik criticism and self-criticism, high standards, and irreconcilability towards the slightest aberration from the principles of Marxism-Leninism in science will enable the historiographers of the republic to solve the great task imposed on them to build the real Marxist-Leninist history of the peoples of Uzbekistan [...]”³ To me the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* represents a curious example by which to ponder the reciprocity of ethnography and history.

But why ethnography? First, among the main authors and editors of these two volumes were scholars who either wrote ethnographic works themselves as Semenov did, or to whose works ethnographers deemed important to make reference to, as was the case, for example, with Iakubovskii’s writings. Moreover, the editor of the second volume, as already mentioned, had been the director of the Institute of Ethnography of the AN SSSR for two decades. Second, the title of these two volumes was telling about “peoples”—obviously a concept that has always been crucial to, and even formative for, the discipline of ethnography. This concept attracted attention for several reasons. One of these was the measures adopted by the Bolsheviks in the 1920s to carry out the internal administrative-territorial organization of the Soviet state on the basis of national features. In the end, each of the newly constituted republics and regions was assigned a certain “titular” nationality, and accordingly the particular territories and everything they comprised were associated with a specific nation. Thus the thesis of autochthony and of the natural rights to a given territory became central for the demands of the national elites, so that in this specific political framework, historiography could only be national when it was conceived as the history of the “titular” people. As a result, the history of the Soviet Union was understood as the history of the officially recognized people. From the very beginning, academics were involved in the processes of making up directories of titular peoples, drawing boundaries between republics and regions, and of canonizing national cultures and languages.⁴ And their very participation in these official state projects led to new debates about what a “people” actually was, brought about intellectual conflicts, and signaled differences that

³ *Istoriia narodov Uzbekistana* [History of the peoples of Uzbekistan], vol. 1 (Tashkent: Izdatel’stvo AN UzSSR, 1950), 6.

⁴ Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

eventually resulted in attempts to monopolize or divide the discursive fields, either through institutional reforms or through the formation of solidarities between certain disciplines.

At first glance, the release of the volumes of the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* and the discussions emerging from it were a remarkable illustration of the assumption that ethnographic knowledge constitutes a decisive part of authority as well as of the ideological project of constructing “history”—it seeks to act upon the consciousness of the people and to establish legitimacy for the political regime.⁵ In this regard authority was often treated in a narrow sense as a set of administrative units empowered to exercise legitimate violence. However, if one applied this scheme to the aforementioned case, it would become difficult to understand fully the occurrences in Uzbekistan, since it still remains uncertain who was actually representing authority and who fell victim to it. Furthermore, it does not explain how a certain hierarchy between the involved institutes and each of their competences was established. Nor does such a perspective consider the authors’ and editors’ adherence to specific disciplines and their individual approaches to writing history. The abundance of protagonists, titles, institutes, the confusing variety of standards, even the very fact that the second volume was published earlier than the first—all this decisively complicates the situation and makes it quite problematic simply to squeeze it into the relation between power and knowledge or into *a priori* established analytical frames like “Orientalism” and “colonialism.”

In my opinion it is necessary to treat the idea of ethnography’s engagement with authority in the way that has already been put forward by post-colonial criticism, yet from a more sociological point of view.⁶ I suggest looking at ethnography as an “autonomous zone,”⁷ not dissociated from society and authority but open to them and at the same time possessing its own rights, logics, and inner dynamics. Ethnography—that is an institutionalized field, a set of different institutions and hierarchies, of rights and statuses bearing the label “ethnography.” Ethnography—that is the individual identity of scholars adhering to different specializations, and sometimes even of people outside the institutionalized academic sphere. Ethnography—

⁵ See Talal Asad, ed., *Anthropology and Colonial Encounter* (New York: Humanity Press, 1973); Shoshana Keller, “Story, Time, and Dependent Nationhood in the Uzbek History Curriculum,” *Slavic Review* 66, no. 2 (2007): 257–277.

⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus* (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1984).

⁷ A. Blium and M. Mespule, *Biurokraticheskaia anarkhiia: statistika i vlast’ pri Staline* [Bureaucratic anarchy. Statistics and power under Stalin] (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008), 10.

that is a discursive field in which discussion takes place about precisely what it means to label something “ethnography” and what problems, questions, vocabulary, lines of argumentation, and legitimations are necessary to do so. It seems to me that such a perspective would seriously rectify the aforementioned point of view that ethnographic knowledge appears merely as an instrument of authority or even coincides with it. Rather, ethnography represents a field where conflict and competition occur and where attempts of domination and resistance become visible. Both the dispositions within this field and the disciplinary boundaries themselves exercise an influence, reinforcing and strengthening the discipline on the one side, just as they promote criticism and even destruction on the other.

To put it another way, I suggest treating the history of Soviet ethnography as a process of continuous institutional and discursive redefinition of what makes up ethnography. In doing so my analysis will focus on the problem of ethnic history in Central Asia, the discussions of which had an obvious effect on the vocabulary as well as identity of the Soviet ethnographers in the 1940s and 1950s. First I will examine the personal history of three figures—Semenov, Iakubovskii, and Tolstov—who were involved in writing the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan*. I try to trace their academic careers in considering their statuses, their institutional positions, their interests, and their conceptual preferences. Through the prism of their destinies, I attempt to look at the institutional field and the place ethnography occupied in it. Furthermore, I will delve into the ideas underlying the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* and those of its critics. Among other things I will show how these ideas were reflected in the book itself and how they found expression in other publications of the authors. By examining the various perspectives, I will explore the discursive field in which different conceptual approaches competed with each other. Such a correlation of the narrative about personal biographies and institutions with the analysis of the texts proper makes it possible, I hope, to discern more clearly the intersection of different fields and to understand better the mechanisms that determined the historical trajectories of ethnography.

People and Institutions

The eldest of the three figures, Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Semenov, born in 1873, was already an established scholar when the Tsarist Empire collapsed and gave way to the new Soviet state. When the monarchy was overthrown in 1917, he was serving as vice-governor of the Samar-

kand region (*oblast'*) in Turkestan in the position of a general. Though he was a government official, Semenov nonetheless was also recognized as an authority on the local languages, history and culture. As early as during his academic training at the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages in Moscow he attended lectures on ethnography, and afterwards, as he lived in Tashkent, he regularly published in several academic journals and corresponded with renowned scholars such as the Orientalist V.V. Bartol'd. Finally, in the 1920s Semenov taught at the Oriental faculty of the Central Asian University in Tashkent, and in 1925 he published in the anthology *Tajikistan*, among contributions of Bartol'd and other academics, an article about material monuments of Aryan culture. The article claimed that the Tajiks were "the descendants of the oldest indigenous people of the land, the Aryans of Asia." According to him all monuments of the territory up to the sixteenth century, that is, until the accession of the Sheibanid dynasty, had to be ascribed entirely to them.⁸ However, in 1930 and 1931, legal proceedings were taken against the staff of the Oriental faculty because of anti-Soviet agitation. Semenov was sentenced and exiled, but later on he was able to resume teaching at the Central Asian University. During the war years 1941 and 1942, most of Moscow and Leningrad's scholars had to evacuate to Tashkent, enriching the city's active academic life noticeably. Semenov actually enjoyed being part of this community, which swiftly stimulated his scientific career: in 1943 he was appointed a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR and also headed the Institute for the Exploration of Oriental Handwriting.

In 1942 the decision was made to write the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan*. Formally, it was under the auspices of the Institute of History and Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR together with the Institute of History of the AN SSSR. Practically, however, the work was essentially accomplished by Muscovite historians, and Semenov was chosen as one of the main authors for the second volume. The volume was published only five years later but soon met with negative reactions from the Uzbek scholars. In 1949 an extended session of the Department of Humanities of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR took place in which Uzbek representatives also participated. Here they accused Semenov of bourgeois behavior, as well as of advocating a pro-Iranian

⁸ A. Semenov, "Material'nye pamiatniki ariiskoi kul'tury" [Material monuments of Aryan culture], in *Tadzhikistan* [Tajikistan], ed. N. Korzhenevskii (Tashkent: Obshchestvo dlia izucheniia Tadzhikistana i iranskikh narodnostei za ego predelami, 1926), 113–150.

position in which they perceived an apparently overt anti-Uzbek attitude.⁹ Semenov officially had to atone for his “sins” and eventually admitted that his opinion had been harmful.¹⁰ Because of lack of support in Uzbekistan, Semenov left Tashkent in 1951 and, at the invitation of Bobodzhon Gafurov, first secretary of the Communist Party of the Tajik SSR, he moved to neighboring Tajikistan. There he soon became an academic of the Tajik Academy of Sciences and was appointed director of the Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography. During his time in Stalinabad (today’s Dushanbe), Semenov was at the peak of his creative powers. He published a series of historical works, particularly a number of articles about the Sheibanids, a dynasty of Uzbek leaders of Central Asia in the sixteenth century. In 1956 Semenov was elected deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the Tajik SSR, which virtually dispelled the last suspicion of political wrongdoing which had weighed on him all the time. Two years later the former tsarist general died in honor in Stalinabad.

The biography of Aleksandr Iur’evich Iakubovskii was not as impressive. Born in Samarkand in 1886, he graduated from the Oriental Institute in Petrograd in 1924, where the aforementioned V.V. Bartol’d was his teacher. Although the latter could not claim to be a staunch Marxist, he nonetheless was highly esteemed as a scholar possessing unique knowledge. Moreover he critically judged the Indo-European theories, which in turn brought his position more into line with the anti-colonial criticisms that had been developed by his colleague and close relative Nikolai Ia. Marr.¹¹ Marr founded and led the State Academy of the History of Material Culture, where Bartol’d obtained employment as head of the Central Asian Department and also as deputy director of the academy. It was here, too, that Aleksandr Iu. Iakubovskii took up employment.

⁹ *O marksistsko-leninskom osveshchenii istorii i istorii kul'tury narodov Uzbekistana. Stenograficheskii otchet rasshirennogo zasedaniia otdeleniia gumanitarnykh nauk Uzbekskoj SSSR. 21–27 aprelia 1949* [On the Marxist-Leninist illumination of history and of the history of the peoples of Uzbekistan. Stenographic report of the extended meeting of the Department of Humanities of the Uzbek SSR, April 21–24, 1949] (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo AN Uzbekskoi SSR, 1951), 104–105.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹¹ See Yuri Slezkine, “N. Ia. Marr and the National Origins of Soviet Ethnogenetics,” *Slavic Review* 55, no. 4 (1996): 826–862; Victor Shnirelman, “Zlokliucheniia odnoi nauki: etnogeneticheskie issledovaniia i stalinskaia natsional'naia politika” [Misfortunes of a discipline. Ethnogenetic research and Stalinist national politics], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 3 (1993): 52–68; Vera Tolz, *Russia's Own Orient: The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

From the mid-1920s Iakubovskii regularly arranged expeditions to Central Asia and wrote a number of works about the history and archaeology of the region. As opposed to Semenov, who was particularly interested in the period of the House of Sheibanid and the subsequent era (sixteenth to eighteenth century), Iakubovskii explored the Timurid era of Central Asia and that of the Golden Horde (fourteenth and fifteenth centuries), and his research even covered the periods before then. In 1937 he issued the book *The Golden Horde* with Boris D. Grekov, head of the Institute of History of the AN SSSR. This book was very successful and went through two further editions in 1941 and 1950.¹² In 1952 it even won the Stalin Prize, the highest Soviet award at that time. In fact, this work represented an important part of the new governmental and patriotic ideology launched by the Soviet leadership in the late 1930s. In so doing, Iakubovskii, who never had held any important position in the institutional hierarchy, became an influential figure in the scientific community. During World War II he was also evacuated to Tashkent, where he headed a branch of the Institute of the History of Material Culture. In 1941 he published a significant work about the origins of the Uzbek people, after which he was asked to participate in the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* and to write the first volume of the work. Upon his return to Leningrad, he headed the Sogdian-Tajik expedition. He became a member of the Tajik Academy of Sciences in 1951 and died two years later.

Descended from the family of a Cossack officer, Sergei Pavlovich Tolstov was born in St. Petersburg in 1907 but was soon sent to a children's home, since his close relatives had actively opposed the Bolsheviks.¹³ Eventually he managed to graduate from the historical-ethnological faculty of Moscow State University in 1930. But unlike Semenov and Iakubovskii, Tolstov was immediately embroiled in ideological struggles.¹⁴ In accusing numerous scholars of being harmful and of

¹² B. Grekov and A. Iakubovskii, *Zolotaia orda i ee padenie* [The Golden Horde and its demise] (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, 1950).

¹³ For more details, see Sergey Alymov, "Na puti k 'drevnei istorii narodov SSSR': maloizvestnye stranitsy nauchnoi biografii S.P. Tolstova" [On the way to "the ancient history of the peoples of the USSR." Little-known aspects of the academic biography of S.P. Tolstov], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 5 (2007): 125–144.

¹⁴ See Alymov, "Na puti k 'drevnei istorii narodov SSSR.'" See also Iurii Slezkin, "Sovetskaia etnografiia v nokdaune: 1928–1938" [Knockdown of Soviet ethnography: 1928–1938], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 2 (1993): 113–125; Iurii Slezkin, *Arkticheskie*

apparently displaying anti-Marxist positions, Tolstov, in his publications as well as in his multiple public appearances, used language that was in absolute accord with the official rhetoric at that time. It is no surprise, then, that he soon became an advocate of Marr's theory and a harsh critic of "bourgeois science."

In 1934 and 1936, the political leadership called for a new history of the USSR to be written, focusing on the histories of all the peoples within the Soviet Union. To this end an initial meeting convened in 1938 at the Institute of History of the AN SSSR concerned with the question of ethnogenesis,¹⁵ and as a result a special committee was formed at the Department of History and Philosophy of the AN SSSR. It had to deal solely with the problems of ethnogenesis, and its directors made absolutely clear that Marr's ideas had to be taken as a general basis for the committee's work. In 1939 Tolstov joined this committee. At the same time an archaeological expedition under his leadership took up his work and set out for Khorezm, one of the regions in Uzbekistan that Aleksandr A. Semenov once had called "the center [*ochag*] of Aryan culture."¹⁶ Tolstov saw his own research on Central Asia as a part of the larger idea of rehabilitating the history of the former colonies, providing these regions with equal rights by incorporating them into world history, and describing their close interaction with the territory of Russia from the outset in antiquity.¹⁷ In the same year he was also appointed to the recently established chair of ethnography at the faculty of history at Moscow State University. In 1941, however, Tolstov went to the front, where he was soon injured, and ended up in Tashkent, where he vigorously took part in the academic debates about the history of Central Asia. In 1942–1943 he became director of the Institute of Ethnography of the AN SSSR, in 1948 his book *Ancient Khorezm* was awarded the

zerkala. Rossiia i malye narody Severa [Arctic mirrors: Russia and the small peoples of the north] (Moscow: Novoe Literaturnoe Obozrenie, 2008), esp. 279–294.

¹⁵ N. Iusova, "Pervoe soveshchanie po voprosam etnogeneza i sozdanie spetsial'noi komissii po problematike proiskhozhdeniia narodov v kontekste aktualizatsii etnogeneticheskikh issledovaniia v SSSR (konets 1930-kh gg.)" [The first meeting on questions of ethnogenesis and the formation of a specific commission on the problem of the origins of the peoples in the context of the actualization of ethnogenetic research in the USSR (late 1930s)], *Problemy slavianovedeniia. Sbornik nauchnykh statei i materialov* 9 (Briansk, 2007): 95–113.

¹⁶ Semenov, "Material'nye pamiatniki ariiskoi kul'tury," 150.

¹⁷ Alymov, "Na puti k 'drevnei istorii narodov SSSR,'" 139–140. Incidentally, in his works around 1940, long before Edward Said, Tolstov criticized the concept of the "Orient" (*vostok*), which he considered a colonial invention of European scholars.

State Prize,¹⁸ and in 1953 he was appointed a corresponding member of the AN SSSR.

Although Tolstov's actual activities characterized him as an archaeologist chiefly occupied with excavations in Khorezm, he nonetheless officially held the title of the "main ethnographer" in the Soviet Union, heading the "Soviet school of ethnography." This school, as Tolstov explicitly put it, was a "branch of historical science" but had its own "hard-won positions" by "posing the problem of ethnogenesis and historical ethnography."¹⁹ He evidently tried to monopolize the issue of the origins of peoples and similarly attempted to turn the description of the peoples of the Soviet Union into a representative feature of the ethnographic discipline in particular. Curiously enough, Stalin's official criticism in 1950 against Nikolai Ia. Marr and Marrism in general helped consolidate this position significantly, because Stalin had declared the "peoples" (*narody*) the most important subject of history, endowing them with distinctive characteristics that could not be reduced to questions of class or economic development.²⁰ As a successor of Marr, Tolstov certainly experienced this moment with mixed feelings. Eventually, however, the new ideological viewpoint permitted the reinforcement of ethnography's monopoly on writing about peoples. Formally, Tolstov held the office of the director of the Institute of Ethnography until 1966, but because of a severe illness, his scientific activities ended earlier. He died in 1976.

From Imperial to Soviet History

In dealing with the biographies of those who took part in editing and writing the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan*, the previous chapter pointed to the political and institutional field in which the collision of several conceptions took place. Here it becomes possible to discern that the scholars shifted in this field both vertically and horizontally and that their paths crossed and diverged, tracing quite different individual trajectories. Yet what they had in common was the discursive field and in particular those

¹⁸ Sergey Tolstov, *Drevnii Khorezm. Opyt istoriko-arkheologicheskogo issledovaniia* [Ancient Khorezm. Attempt at a historical-archaeological research] (Moscow: Izdanie MGU, 1948).

¹⁹ Sergey Tolstov, "Etnografiia i sovremennost'" [Ethnography and the present], *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, no. 1 (1946): 3–11, here 8–9.

²⁰ Slezkine, "N. Ia. Marr and the National Origins," 858.

questions, problems and themes through which they entered into a dialogue with authority, with society, and eventually with each other. Especially by posing specific questions and their specific treatments, the scholars expounded and simultaneously legitimized their institutional as well as political dispositions and statuses.

Before we analyze the disputes, both overt and covert, the curiosity has to be noted that both volumes were titled the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan*. It is difficult to trace the exact origin of that title, but it was certainly not chosen offhandedly. Yet the title contained an obvious contradiction. It was about a Soviet national republic that had been named for one nation, the Uzbeks, yet the title referred not to one people but to “peoples” in the plural.

In the second volume appear three general lines of inquiry, or rather attempts to combine three kinds of logics to write history. The first is a chronological description of the political events, telling of the change of rulers, the struggle against internal as well as external enemies, and significant measures and reforms in that period. Although the exposition of such facts takes up most of the text, it appears not to be dominant in an ideological sense. It is instead the two other lines that raise this claim—the socioeconomic and the ethnic. Considering their very purpose, these two arguments certainly form the essential logic of the book. Its socioeconomic parts demonstrate the different types of economy and property, just as they show which social groups existed at a given form of government. Semenov describes the stage in which natural economy and feudal circumstances gradually disappeared and were followed by a period based on the exchange of goods and on the monetary system. This, in turn, paved the way for the establishment of specific economic and political relations with Russia and likewise heralded the conquest of the region by Tsarist Russia. In the ethnic paragraphs, however, Semenov explains the complex composition of the urban population, the continuous Turkicization as well as the fusion of the remaining groups and nationalities into the Uzbek tribe. Yet these two approaches obviously compete with each other. One deals with the description of the economic structure, the other focuses on the population, and both logics suggest integrating the region into two basic legitimizing narratives: the first into Marxism, the latter into a “titular” nationalism.

In this respect it is of particular interest how Semenov conceives of an “ethnic history” of Uzbekistan. Here again can be found several different lines and logics: in the paragraph “Uzbek Khanates in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century” within the section “Territory and Population of the

Uzbek Khanates,” the author gives a detailed ethnic description containing numerous different groups and nations (including Sarts, Iranians, Arabs, Gypsies, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, and Jews),²¹ as if this acknowledged that the book really deals with multiple peoples and not only with one single people. In any event, in this brief chapter these peoples interact, fuse, and divide and in so doing produce a stereoscopic image of reality.

This second volume starts with a general explanation of what “Uzbeks” actually are, how this notion cropped up, and whom it actually referred to. However, Semenov’s explanations seem contradictory. He writes that the previous use of that name “must not be confused” with the “contemporary Uzbeks.” Furthermore, he argues that “[c]urrently the label ‘Uzbeks’ is conferred upon that people of the Soviet Union who had historically evolved on the territory of Transoxiana (*Ma Wara’un-Nahr*) which is now a part of the Uzbek SSR.”²² Therefore the “roots of the ethnogenesis” of the current Uzbeks must be traced back “to far more ancient times,” as the first Turkish tribes had appeared in the territory of Uzbekistan. These Turks had continuously mixed among themselves as well as with other groups, which eventually led to the creation of an “Uzbek nationality (*narodnost*).” Unfortunately, Semenov provides no information about exactly when this process occurred.

And finally, in the third concept “ethnic history” looks like a clash or blend of the culturally and numerically predominant sedentary culture with the politically and militarily ruling conqueror-nomads who gradually settled down in the subjected territories, took over the sedentary way of life, and passed their language on to the local population. The nomads in the book were imagined as “Turks” and partly as “Turkicized (*oturechennye*) Mongols,” but actually he meant various tribes from both the former and the latter. Concerning the settled people Semenov describes them less accurately, but a few sentences unmistakably reveal that it is “the ancient population of Uzbekistan of Iranian descent” he was talking of.²³ This last conception was exceptionally popular in the historical-ethnographic narratives in the late tsarist period.²⁴ At that time Russian scholars commonly believed that the principal population of Central Asia was composed of

²¹ *Istoriia narodov Uzbekistana*, vol. 2, 135–139.

²² *Ibid.*, 23.

²³ *Ibid.*, 23, 49.

²⁴ See Sergey Abashin, “Arkheologiiia sredneaziatskikh natsionalizmov: Les mots et les choses” [Archaeology of Central Asian nationalisms. Les mots et les choses], *Ab Imperio*, no. 1 (2003): 497–522.

“Iranians” or “Aryans” who had built up the local civilization, whereas the “Turks” who came later on merely reaped the fruit of it or, as another version goes, simply destroyed this culture without replacing it with something comparable. Undeniably, this concept was influenced by the Indo-European theories that assumed the dissemination of “Aryan” culture all over the world. This idea appeared to be a part, albeit not a decisive one, of the *ancien regime*’s ideology to subjugate the Central Asian peoples, and in so doing it always felt it was acting in the name of Europe.²⁵ Starting his scientific activities with the ethnographic exploration of just the “Iranians” (Tajik highlanders) in the Pamir Mountains and also using the term “Aryan” in his works quite frequently, Semenov was noticeably affected by these theories. Accordingly, he considered himself a representative of an honorable European science.

This last point in particular, although expressed quite obscurely and ambiguously in the second volume of the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan*, encountered a dual criticism. In the discussions of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR, Semenov was accused of alluding to the “Iranian cultural roots” of the Uzbek nationality. This was understood as an assault on the Turkish constituent of the Uzbek people and also as a negation of its achievements as well as its longtime settlement on the territory. In a 1949 meeting the Uzbek scholar and philosopher V. Iu. Zakhidov harshly attacked Semenov’s approach in his paper “Struggle for the Marxist-Leninist Explanation of Questions concerning History and Cultural History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan” because his “illumination of the history as well as cultural history of the peoples in Central Asia proceeds from a notorious pan-Iranianism.” Zakhidov continued, “it is peculiar that A.A. Semenov does not find anything Uzbek in the cultural monuments not only in the region of Bukhara, but also of Samarkand, Tashkent, Fergana, etc.!”²⁶ Marxist arguments were advanced against him, too. His former “Aryan” statements were attacked by Marr’s successors, for whom European colonialism, “Indo-European” theories, and any references to “Aryan” origins represented the major target of their criticism. In the course of the discussions, it was the historian R.N. Nabiev whose

²⁵ M. Lariuel’, “Umозritel’naia Tsentral’naia Aziia: poiski prarodiny ariitsev v Rossii i na Zapade” [Speculative Central Asia. The search of the original homeland of the Aryans in Russia and the West], *Vestnik Evrazii* 23, no. 4 (2003): 155–165; Sergey Abashin, “Les Sartes, une peuple d’avenir.’ L’ethnographie et l’Empire au Turkestan russe,” *Cahiers d’Asie Centrale* 17/18 (2009): 353–379.

²⁶ *O marksistsko-leninskoi osveshchenii istorii*, 20–22.

critique had picked up the Marrist rhetoric in 1949. To Nabiev it was not primarily the language that formed a national common feature: “Principally, the Uzbek people evolved out of the locally rooted nationalities (*narodnostei*) and tribes and also to a greater extent out of the in-migrants [...]. The existence of the Uzbek people (*narod*) dates from time immemorial.” He concludes that “[t]he Uzbeks had existed before the sixteenth century, since it is nearly impossible for a whole people to arise in a short period of time or even within one century.”²⁷

In Search of a Compromise

In his comment Nabiev did not refer directly to Marr but instead to Iakubovskii and Tolstov, whose authority he marshaled against Semenov. The most popular reference to Iakubovskii related to his short pamphlet on the question of the ethnogenesis of the Uzbek people, where he contended that “it is absolutely necessary to differentiate the conditions affecting the formation of a specific people from its name.”²⁸ According to Iakubovskii the nomad Uzbeks immigrating to Central Asia in the sixteenth century were not the last wave of resettlement of Turkish-speaking groups, but they were the “last component [*slagaemym*]” in the ethnogenesis of the Uzbeks who had given their name to the region’s Turkish-speaking population.²⁹ In other words: “The contemporary Uzbeks who are building up a communist society fraternally with the other peoples of the Soviet Union are not a people who does not know its origins [...] This people has a far-reaching and continuous history of its expansion on the territory of Uzbekistan [...]. It received its real name much later than it actually existed, and under no circumstances does this undermine its rights to a historical past preceding the appearance of its very name.”³⁰ This conclusion obviously provided a theoretical foundation for developing a new, nationally oriented historiography, not only for the Uzbeks but also for other “titular” peoples in Central Asia. What the people called themselves was not nearly as important as what name contemporary scholars and politicians decided to give them. One only

²⁷ Ibid., 66–67.

²⁸ A. Iakubovskii, *K voprosu ob etnogeneze uzbekskogo naroda* [On the question of the ethnogenesis of the Uzbek people] (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo UzFAN, 1941), 3.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 18.

had to keep in mind that the classification of the former population had to be in accord with those categories that became the official nomenclature in the 1920s.

The American historian Edward Allworth called Iakubovskii's approach "racialist," i.e., addressing physical features, culture, and language but not one's own consciousness.³¹ He also contended that behind Iakubovskii's conception was hidden the Russian "non-love" towards the nomads and "Turkic-Mongol Golden Horde," that is, in the end a "non-love" towards the "real" Uzbeks who had come from the North to Central Asia.³² However, another American (former Soviet) historian, Yuri Bregel, treated these conclusions skeptically. Bregel pointed out that Iakubovskii played a crucial role in fostering the notion of the Uzbek nation, and he recognized its rights on the territory as well as the richness of its culture. Moreover, Bregel argued that the author was driven not so much by a desire to "help the Uzbek colleagues prove the antiquity of their nation" as by a theoretical commitment to incorporate Central Asia into Marr's conception, which implied that all peoples develop similarly by going through different stages of ethnic and linguistic transformations, regardless of their regional specificity.³³ Bregel adds, however, that Iakubovskii himself was no Marrist but that, in taking up this position, he was trying to demonstrate his political loyalty to the regime.³⁴ To my mind it seems quite difficult to label Iakubovskii a dogmatic successor of Marr, although he started to work in the State Academy of the History of Material Culture under the latter. In Iakubovskii's works there are not many references to Marr or to significant representatives of his doctrines. Furthermore, little of the Marrist terminology itself can be found in his works. Thus it could be useful in this context to turn once again to Iakubovskii's academic teacher Bartol'd and to remember that he was quite critical of the Indo-European theories according to which the nomads had brought

³¹ Edward A. Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present; A Cultural History* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1990), 239–242.

³² This point was made by Alisher Il'khamov, "Arkheologiya uzbekskoi identichnosti" [Archaeology of the Uzbek identity], in *Etnicheskii atlas Uzbekistana* [Ethnic atlas of Uzbekistan], ed. A. Il'khamov (Tashkent: Institut Otkrytoe obshchestvo, 2002), 295–299. See also Alisher Il'khamov, "Iakubovskii and Others: Canonizing National History," in *Exploring the Edge of Empire: Soviet Era Anthropology in the Caucasus and Central Asia*, eds. F. Mühlfried and S. Sokolovskiy (Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2011), 237–257.

³³ Yuri Bregel, "Notes on the Study of Central Asia," *Papers on Inner Asia* 28 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 13.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 13–14.

nothing but regression and destruction into the Aryan world.³⁵ Likewise, he had written disapprovingly about the activities of the “Turkestan Circle of Lovers of Archaeology,” of which he himself, incidentally, was a member: “The exaggerated ideas of the cultural merits of the Aryans and the barbarism of the Turks necessarily found its expression in the understanding of the scientific tasks of Russia in Turkestan. As early as 1895, the year of its foundation, the local archaeological circle was instructed by the highest representative of Russian authority to explore the ancient Aryan culture of the region, which had been destroyed by the Turk-barbarians and which was to be re-established under the rule of other Aryans: the Russians.”³⁶ Bartol’d rejected this interpretation in pointing to the cultural achievements seen in the age of the Timurids.

Iakubovskii followed Bartol’d’s cautious criticism by adjusting it to the new political circumstances. In 1941, discussing the Uzbeks’ ethnogenesis, he highlighted that the Turks appeared on the territory of Uzbekistan in ancient times, and that in doing so they did not work to destroy the local culture. He also pointed out that the Sogdians as well as the Khorezmians—two ancient Iranian-speaking peoples about which Iakubovskii fails to give more detailed information—had been Turkicized and had become a part of the Uzbeks. But this point, too, remains a mere assertion. Iakubovskii’s only answer concerned the historicity of the “Uzbek people” reaching back to ancient times, by which he gave the scholars and ideologues the right to name as “Uzbek” any group living in that region up to the sixteenth century. Yet after the critical attacks on Semenov and the condemnation of “pan-Iranianism,” the question still remained of how to divide the ethnogenesis of the Uzbeks from that of the Iranian-speaking Tajiks and how to split history between the two national republics. Iakubovskii addressed exactly this problem in the first volume of the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* issued in 1950. With regard to the inner structure, this first volume, however, differs somewhat from the second, which had been published three years before. Generally, this text’s narratives about the ethnic composition of the population do not appear in a single chapter; instead the information is spread all over the lengthy

³⁵ V.V. Bartol’d, “Sostoianie i zadachi izucheniiia istorii Turkestana (1913–1914)” [State and tasks of the exploration of the history of Turkestan (1913–1914)], in V.V. Bartol’d, *Sochineniia* [Works], vol. 9 (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1964), 509, 517.

³⁶ V.V. Bartol’d, “Zadachi russkogo vostokovedeniia v Turkestane (1914)” [Tasks of Russian Oriental studies in Turkestan (1914)], in Bartol’d. *Sochineniia*, vol. 9, 529.

explanations of political events. This lacuna, however, was compensated by Iakubovskii's foreword, which was entirely dedicated to the complex of ethnogenesis and obviously referred to the discussion that had arisen about the second volume.³⁷

He begins his explanations with the assertion that if hitherto the scholars had been writing a history of Central Asia as a whole, now they had to write histories of "its individual peoples."³⁸ Indeed in some cases, Iakubovskii concedes, writing such a history could be easy. In others, however, where histories are entangled, it becomes difficult, particularly in the Uzbek and Tajik case. The history of these peoples, as he puts it, is much older than the history of their names: "The composition of the Uzbek and Tajik peoples embraces a history of dozens of centuries, including within its process numerous tribes and nationalities that were a part in the formation of the people as true historical constituents [*slagaemykh*] and that represent what in historical scholarship is called ethnogenesis [...]."³⁹ Furthermore, Iakubovskii suggests two lines of argumentation. The first claims that the resettlement of the Turks in this region, albeit in-migrants to Central Asia, started long before the advent of the Arabs, and that accordingly, all Turkic-speaking tribes and nationalities that turned into non-nomadic residents have to be included in the ethnogenesis of the Uzbeks. The second argumentation, however, contends that the history of the Uzbeks has to consider not only the Turkic-speaking but also Iranian-speaking groups who had gradually become Turkicized and therefore appear as predecessors of the modern Uzbeks, too. Accordingly, in the formation process of the present Tajiks, both Iranian-speaking and Turkic-speaking tribes had participated, but in different proportions.⁴⁰

In his foreword Iakubovskii was obviously concerned about preserving the Uzbeks' symbolic rights to territory and culture. At the same time, he attempted to tread a kind of middle ground between the national histories of two adjacent republics, for which he invoked a whole series of possible arguments. But apparently he did not notice that these two types of reasoning referred to two different conceptual approaches that would conflict if taken to their logical conclusion. In the first case he spoke of a people with one language and one culture that resided in one territory, who had changed in name only. In the second case, however, he referred to a con-

³⁷ *Istoriia narodov Uzbekistana*, vol. 1, 7–14.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 7.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 10–11.

tinuous mixing and transformation of peoples consisting of different languages and cultures. It was precisely this latter concept that was championed by Marr and his advocates, who stated that “ethnic cultures with regard to their genesis do not exist as such.” Marr emphasized that “in this sense there are no tribal cultures separated by their origins, but there is the culture of mankind going through certain stages of development. These were preserved partly or arbitrarily in tribes, often in an entire group or even several groups of backward tribes and nations. But the culture itself is unitary from its very origin, and all its differentiations were the result of the only creative process on the different levels of its development.”⁴¹

Marrism and National Histories

In his foreword Iakubovskii referred to Tolstov as a “contemporary historian” making a “major contribution” to the solution of the “complicated problem of the ethnogenesis of Central Asia in ancient times.”⁴² The Uzbek scholar A.A. Il’khamov assumes that Tolstov has to be considered a disciple of Iakubovskii.⁴³ Yet their points of view, though similar, were not identical. Among the authors treated here, Tolstov was the one whose position was probably closest to Marr’s approach. In the popular 1943 pamphlet *Ancient Culture of Uzbekistan*, Tolstov expounded his view in the section “Library of Combatants”: “The Uzbek people (*narod*) was composed of different tribes and nationalities that were known under changing names in ancient times and the Middle Ages [...]. The history of the name of a people is not always equivalent to the history of the people itself.” He emphasized this already well-known position: “Among the peoples who finally coalesced into one integral whole and who ultimately participated in the history of the Uzbek people for centuries can be found representatives of entirely different groups concerning race, language, and culture [...].”⁴⁴ He added that only Soviet rule was able to lay “the foundations for the final completion of the national consolidation of the Uzbek people.”⁴⁵ In a session of the committee of ethnogenesis taking place in

⁴¹ Nikolai Marr, *Izbrannye raboty* [Selected works], vol. 1 (Leningrad: Izdatel’stvo GAIMK, 1933), 236.

⁴² *Istoriia narodov Uzbekistana*, vol. 1, 9.

⁴³ Il’khamov, “Arkheologiiia uzbekskoi identichnosti,” 299.

⁴⁴ Sergey Tolstov, *Drevniaia kul’tura Uzbekistana* [Ancient culture of Uzbekistan] (Tashkent: Izdatel’stvo UzFAN, 1943), 5–6.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

Tashkent in 1942, Tolstov read the paper “Crucial Problems of the Ethnogenesis of the Peoples in Central Asia,”⁴⁶ in which he expounded his ideas in fully Marxist language.

Here he stated that ethnogenesis constitutes a complex problem that has to be explored in a collective effort by historians, archaeologists, ethnographers, linguists, and anthropologists. For that reason this question should not be solved for each people separately but against the backdrop of a “global process of linguistic and ethnic developments [*mirovogo glotto- i etnogenicheskogo protsessa*].” Tolstov severely criticized attempts to perceive history as a unilinear process, “to find for each people one basic ethnic root” and “to trace this back [historically] as far as possible.” In refusing to examine one single group, he instead proposed to acknowledge “from the very outset a complexity of the ethnic origins of each people” and suggested delving into all “processes of ethnic interactions within the limits of particular, naturally as well as historically demarcated territories or within the framework of socio-political communities displaying a territorial stability and a certain ability to reproduce themselves in the course of the historical process.”⁴⁷ Tolstov assumed that at the end of the first millennium B.C.E., Central Asia had been part of a region in which “proto-Uralic-Altai” and “proto-Indo-European” languages already existed and from which the Uzbek and Tajik language, respectively, later developed. “The decisive historical moment” occurred when the “glottogonic” (concerning the formation of language) and “ethnogenic” (concerning the formation of the “ethnic core”) processes were “nearly complete.” With regard to the Uzbeks, Tolstov presumed this completion took place under the Karakhanids in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and for Tajiks he believed it occurred under the Samanids in the ninth and tenth centuries. Thus the Uzbeks and the Tajiks gradually became similar to each other, developed their own historical symbols and, furthermore, assimilated to the Russian and European nations, which were also mainly formed at that time. Thereafter these peoples continued developing, went through processes of differentiation, amalgamation, and acculturation, and were also complemented by “new ingredients.” It was only in the nineteenth and twentieth century that the present Central Asian nations were finally formed. “None of these peoples,” Tolstov concluded, “directly originated in any ancient ethnic group whatsoever.” Instead,

⁴⁶ “Sessiiia po etnogenezu Srednei Azii” [Session on the ethnogenesis of Central Asia], *Sovetskaia etnografiia* 6–7 (1947): 303–305.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 303.

conversely, the local and in-migrant peoples in various proportions made up the present peoples.⁴⁸

This last sentence obviously contradicted those authors who conceived of a region's history as the history of a single contemporary nation. One of those authors, to a certain extent, was the secretary for propaganda of the TsK of the Communist Party in Tajikistan, Bobodzhon Gafurov, who had published a book in Stalinabad called *The Tajik People in the Struggle for Freedom and Independence of Its Home Country*.⁴⁹ Immediately after its publication in 1944, Tolstov first criticized it in a session of the TsK VKP(b) and then again in a paper read at the Office of Propaganda and Agitation of the TsK. He stated that "some Tajik historians strive to attribute all ancient Central Asian civilization only to the predecessors of the Tajiks, on the simple ground that the ancient population of Central Asia spoke in languages belonging to the Iranian linguistic group [...]. However, the traditions of ancient Central Asian civilizations live in the culture of all other Central Asian nations, and to a certain extent the Uzbeks, too, notwithstanding their Turkic tongue, certainly came from the same line as the Sogdians and Khorezmians, just as the Tajiks descend from the Sogdians and Bactrians [...]. The authors of a Tajik history [consciously] drive a wedge between them [...]." ⁵⁰ As Tolstov then suggested rewriting national histories under the strict supervision of the central authorities, it was obvious that he himself wished to be such a supervisor.⁵¹ Likewise, Tolstov leveled harsh criticism against Semenov's works on the material monuments of Iranian (Aryan) culture.⁵² Although the first

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 304.

⁴⁹ B. Gafurov and N. Prokhorov, *Tadzhikskii narod v bor'be za svobodu i nezavisimost' svoei rodiny. Ocherki iz istorii tadzhikov i Tadzhikistana* [The Tajik people in the struggle for freedom and the independence of its home country. Sketches from the history of the Tajiks and Tajikistan] (Stalinabad: Institut istorii, literatury i iazyka Tadzhikskogo filiala AN SSSR, 1944).

⁵⁰ Sergey Tolstov, "Dokladnaia zapiska" [Report], *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, no. 5 (2007): 163–166, here 164–165.

⁵¹ The criticism never had any effect on Gafurov's career, so in 1952 his book was released in Russian: *Istoriia tadzhikskogo naroda* [History of the Tajik people] (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1952). Four years later he was appointed head of the Oriental Institute (*institut vostokovedeniia*) AN SSSR and later became a member of the AN SSSR itself.

⁵² According to the memoirs, Semenov replied to this criticism among his colleagues: "Well, what's so curious about my being a bad Marxist? It would have been much more curious if the opposite had come true and the former governor of Turkestan proved to be a good Marxist." See: L. Rempel', *Dalekoe i blizkoe. Bukharskie zapisi* [Near and far.

volume of the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* reflected this Marxist criticism, it nevertheless bore imprints of a compromise between the different conceptions that Iakubovskii had previously tried to formulate, as we have already expounded above.

In 1955 and 1956, the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* (whose planned third volume, covering the Soviet period, never came out) was published in a revised version now titled *History of the Uzbek SSR*. The editor, as well as author of a series of chapters, was Tolstov. In the foreword he explained the revision: “In recent years new research and investigations have produced a significant amount of materials, and the questions concerning the historical periodization as well as the ethnogenesis of the Uzbek and other peoples in Central Asia have been more thoroughly elaborated [...]. All this has required a radical reconsideration of the materials in both volumes, which eventually necessitated a second revised edition [...].”⁵³ Aside from the new title, which eliminated the former ambiguity, the structure of the volumes also changed: the first covered the history up to the October Revolution in 1917, while the second was dedicated to the Soviet period. But given the length of the period covered by the first volume, the pre-revolutionary period “necessarily” had to be divided into two parts—that is, into two books. This was particularly justified by the “increase” and “strengthening” of the relations with the “Russian state”: one covered everything prior to the mid-eighteenth century, and the other spanned the period from then until the collapse of the *ancien regime*. In his foreword Tolstov elaborated on that point: “In both the first and the second part, significantly more attention has been directed to the processes of ethnogenesis, to the emergence and expansion of Turkic-speaking elements, as well as to the increase of interior interactions of tribes and peoples in Central Asia [...].”⁵⁴ Moreover, the focus shifted to the era before the twelfth century, which evidently coincided with Tolstov’s own research interests.

The text of the first part of the first volume of the *History of the Uzbek SSR* was based on the first and the second volumes of the former *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan*. Its structure, however, was more aligned with the Soviet-Marxist conception of history by dividing it into prehis-

Notes from Bukhara] (Tashkent: Izdatel’stvo literatury iskusstva imeni Gafura Guliyama, 1981), 15–16.

⁵³ *Istoriia Uzbekskoi SSR* [History of the Uzbek SSR], vol. 1 (Tashkent: Izdatel’stvo AN UzSSR, 1955–1956), v–vi.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

toric, slave-owning, and feudal periods. The part dealing with slave-owning societies incorporated new chapters of Tolstov's work, whereas the section addressing feudalism integrated shorter texts of Iakubovskii and Semenov. The latter in particular was significantly abridged: parts of the chapters mentioning the ethnic composition of the population, as well as all of the author's assessments concerning the history of the peoples in the region, were removed. But Iakubovskii's contributions, too, were modified: some were entirely eliminated, while others were added. For example, there were two new chapters on the ethnogenesis. One within the section on the Karakhanids in the eleventh and twelfth centuries was titled "Formation of the Uzbek and Tajik Nationalities." Another within the section on the Timurids addressed the "Steppe Region in Central Asia in the Fifteenth Century." The foreword implies that these two chapters were written not by Iakubovskii himself but by the Uzbek historian R.N. Nabiev, who was, as we have seen, one of the leading critics of Semenov in the session in 1949. These added chapters were based on a scheme of ethnogenesis that had been advocated by Tolstov, so Nabiev likewise held that at the end of a "century-long process," the Uzbek nationality was formed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Furthermore—slightly deviating from the official line—he stated that "[a]lready under the reign of the Samanids, the foundations of the two peoples clearly loomed: the Tajiks as well as a Turkic-speaking people, later labeled Uzbeks, who likewise played an important role in the socioeconomic and cultural life of the country." He also emphasized that "the Turkic-speaking population [...] was the pivotal population on the territory of present Uzbekistan," whereas the "Tajik people developed on the territory that it has been occupying for one thousand years."⁵⁵ Additionally, even Semenov's statement that "the name 'Uzbek' was given to the people" had been modified to say "the people bears the name 'Uzbek.'"

Notwithstanding the meanwhile overt prosecution of Marr and Marxism, the new *History of the Uzbek SSR* nevertheless formulated the ethnogenesis of the Uzbeks in a consistent Marxist logic: "The present Uzbek socialist nation, like any other nation, is not a tribal nor a racial category. According to Marxist-Leninist theory, the constituents of the Uzbek nation developed over a long period on the territory of Central Asia. The foundation of the Uzbek nationality is constituted not by the immigrating Desht-i Kipchak nomads, who came comparatively late, in the fifteenth century, but by the ancient people of Sogdia, Fergana, and Khorezm, who

⁵⁵ Ibid., 269–270.

led a settled life from time immemorial (*s otdalenneishikh vremen*) and were farming the land just as those Scythic and old Iranian nomadic tribes of the Saka and the Massageteans did [...]. Because they were on common territory and had continuous economic and cultural relations, in time all of these tribes blended into one ethnic entity, into which were added new groups settling on this very territory: Hunnish, Hephthalite, Turkic, Mongol, and other tribes. All of them gradually intermingled and assimilated to the population that lived here previously, and as a result a new Turkic-speaking nationality was formed—the basis for the creation of the Uzbek nationality. The other part of the previous population, which was less affected by assimilation to the Turkic tribes, retained its language—out of this developed the Tajik nationality.”⁵⁶

Tolstov’s idea of writing the history of ethnogenesis of the peoples in Central Asia also manifested as part of the book series *Narody mira* (Peoples of the World), which was published around 1960 by the Institute of Ethnography; both an abridged and a complete edition of the series have been issued.⁵⁷ Here Tolstov and his co-author Tat’iana Zhdanko depicted the emergence of the peoples in the region as a continuous process of ethnic intermingling of different ancient and medieval tribes and groups among themselves. About the Uzbeks one can read that their “most ancient predecessors” were the “local peoples (*narody*) and tribes,” that is, the Khorezmians, Sogdians, Saka, and Massageteans. “The local Iranian-speaking population,” they went on, “mixed with the Turkic tribes” and passed on to them their economic and cultural traditions and, conversely, adopted the latter’s language.⁵⁸ Both authors further made clear that “the research of the intricate history regarding the emergence of nationalities in Central Asia shows that none of them directly descends from any ancient

⁵⁶ Ibid., 373. In 1967 the *History of the Uzbek SSR* was republished, but in this edition, in addition to the Marxist concept of a blend of peoples in Central Asia, the idea resurfaced of the search for the ancient Turks as predecessors of the Uzbeks (see *Istoriia Uzbekskoi SSR v 4-kh tomakh* [History of the Uzbek SSR in four volumes] (Tashkent: Izdatel’stvo FAN Uzbekskoi SSR, 1967). By that time Tolstov had lost his editorial influence.

⁵⁷ T. Zhdanko (with the collaboration of S. Tolstov), “Narody Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana” [Peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan], in *Ocherki obshchei etnografii. Aziatskaia chast’ SSSR* [Outline of general ethnography. The Asian part of the USSR], eds. S. Tolstov et al. (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo AN SSSR, 1960), 157–274; S. Tolstov and T. Zhdanko, “Osnovnye etapy etnicheskoi istorii narodov Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana” [Basic stages of the ethnic history of the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan], in *Narody Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana* [Peoples of Central Asia], vol. 1, eds. S. Tolstov et al. (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo AN SSSR, 1960), 38–114.

⁵⁸ Zhdanko, “Narody Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana,” 176.

ethnic group whatsoever [...]. The peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan were tied to each other by the shackles of ethnic kinship [...].” In this way they reiterated their criticism of the representatives of “pan-Iranism” and “pan-Turkism.”⁵⁹ Thus, without explicitly referring to Marr himself, the Marrist version of the ethnogenesis of the Central Asian population still remained a significant feature of ethnographic publications on that topic, as it was already elaborated in the *History of Peoples of Uzbekistan* at the outset in 1947.

Conclusion

After being accused of pan-Iranism and after moving from Uzbekistan to Tajikistan, Semenov, an ethnographer by his initial interests, devoted the last years of his life to the exploration and rehabilitation of the Uzbek-Sheibanids. The Leningrad archaeologist Iakubovskii, who had provided the historians and ethnographers with a popular formula of the Uzbek ethnogenesis, eventually concentrated all his energies on the excavations of ancient cities in Tajikistan. Finally, the Muscovite Tolstov, an ethnographer by education who was concerned all his life with archaeology in Uzbekistan, had assumed the leadership of Soviet ethnography and came off as a strongly charismatic figure. But his works, which were Marrist in spirit and often extravagant in content, have virtually fallen into oblivion nowadays. All three characters, though belonging to different generations, regions, disciplines and institutions, ended their active academic career at about the same time in the 1950s.

The discussion of these three authors with regard to the *History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan* around 1950 represents merely a small episode in which different interests clashed. Nevertheless, through these events it becomes possible to track very different subjects, such as the struggle between the center and the Central Asian elites; the struggle between the elites of several Central Asian republics; the struggle within the center itself, that is, between Moscow’s and Leningrad’s academic elites; the struggle between the representatives of different academic generations; the struggle between different institutions over status and funding; the struggle between the disciplines each exclusively claiming the object of study for themselves; and also the struggle between the different conceptual approaches. Using the example of the *History of the Peoples of*

⁵⁹ Ibid., 178–179.

Uzbekistan, it becomes apparent how the debate on cultural and historical interplay between the Uzbeks and Tajiks, two Central Asian titular nations, first emphasized the notion of people (*narod*), and that in the struggle for its definition, the Marxist conception of ethnogenesis promoted by the Soviet Union's chief ethnographer, Sergei Tolstov, won out. This victory was a result of Tolstov's success in the institutional field, where he held many key positions. He succeeded in convincing the Uzbek elite, who had just started writing the history of their nation, that claiming an autochthonous yet compound origin of the Uzbeks best corresponded to their political interests.

Ethnography did not impinge on these discussions as a fully developed discipline at all.⁶⁰ On the contrary, it was specifically in these debates that the formation of ethnography actually took place.⁶¹ Tolstov's influence on the writing of the Uzbeks' ethnogenesis was closely linked to the efforts he and like-minded figures made to establish a Soviet ethnography that would form the chief expert community for questions concerning nations and ethnogenesis. It was precisely during such struggles for one's "object" that the nascent discipline accumulated experience, authority, and ambitions to propound a new, i.e., ethnic, history, not only of the Soviet Union but of the whole world. Yet the formation of a new institutional field did not automatically mean that the discursive field was entirely seized by adherents of the dominant conceptual approach. Differing points of view developed by Semenov, Iakubovskii, and other scholars did not lose their legitimacy—their supporters survived, and research, investigations, and debates continued just as further attempts were still made to revise theories. The struggle for influence and for the right to speak the truth continued and caused decisive turns in the history of Russian and Soviet ethnography.

(Translated from the Russian by *Roland Cvetkovski*)

⁶⁰ Francine Hirsch, for example, spoke of "ethnographic knowledge" as an already full-blown phenomenon, and in doing so she classed among the ethnographers the geographers, archaeologists, physical anthropologists, linguists and also the *kraevedy*, i.e., the local historians; see Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, 10.

⁶¹ F. Bertran, "Nauka bez ob'ekta? Sovetskaia etnografiia 1920–30-kh gg. i voprosy etnicheskoï kategorizatsii" [Science without object? *Sovetskaia etnografiia* in the 1920s and 1930s and questions of ethnic categorization], *Zhurnal sotsiologii i sotsial'noi antropologii* 6, no. 2 (2003): 165–179; Frédéric Bertrand, *L'anthropologie soviétique des années 20–30. Configuration d'une rupture* (Bordeaux: Presses universitaires de Bordeaux, 2002).