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The Ferghana Valley Under Stalin, 1929–1953

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The so-called Stalin years were a pivotal period in the development of Soviet Central Asia in general and the Ferghana Valley in particular. This was a time when the USSR gained international recognition and when, by the second half of the 1920s, the internal struggle against the *basmachi* in Central Asia concluded. A small number of nationalist émigrés from Turkestan settled in Turkey in the mid-1920s, just at the time when that country was strengthening its relations with the USSR. Apart from running a rudimentary underground network of supporters in the Soviet Union, these Pan-Turkists did not further influence developments in Central Asia. The national delineation of internal borders in Central Asia and the opportunity to carry out creative work in the resulting national entities drew many former Jadids to the side of the Soviet government. On the whole, the government and its major opponents in Central Asia, including bellicose religious radicals and supporters of the *basmachi*, as well as restive idealistic reformers like the Jadids, achieved a *modus vivendi*.

Soviet Policy Shifts from Tolerance and Growth to Coercion and Exploitation

The process of national development under Soviet rule was uneven. From the establishment of the Soviet government in 1918 until the end of the 1920s the Bolsheviks were in no position to carry out the transformation of Central Asian society, which continued to view itself as Muslim. Throughout those years the government confined itself to neutralizing and eliminating whomever it considered to be the worst “exploiters.” It accomplished this by enlisting the support of pro-Soviet Jadids and those Muslim clerics disposed to collaborate with any government, who thereby became the first representatives of the USSR’s “official Islam.” This allowed Central Asian society in the first decade of Soviet rule to adjust to the new political conditions while not betraying its own fundamental Muslim principles. The tradition of

acquiescence with Russian rule reached back to tsarist times, when the majority of mullahs had considered Turkestan to be a kind of Muslim order or “Dar al-Islam.”¹ After all, religion was not oppressed, people freely attended mosques, and *qadi* courts continued to implement an order based on sharia law.²

Such upper class and privileged groups as the *hodjas*, *turas*, *ishans*, *saiids*, and *mirzas* adjusted to the new realities quicker than others, thanks to the skills they had acquired and maintained through many centuries. Many learned Russian and worked as Soviet teachers, administrators, and accountants. Some of them even managed to keep their pieces of land. Tenant farmers or *choriakkoron* who worked for them gave a fourth (*choriak*) of their crops to their landlords down to the collectivization of land at the end of the 1920s. Members of the Muslim clergy (*ulama*)³ continued to be the main advisers to local communities, and they served as intermediaries between Muslims and the new authorities. They issued resolutions on what was considered *halal* (allowed) or *haram* (forbidden), including on such matters as the wearing of modern clothing, the use of modern medicines and medical procedures, and the consumption of new products and of alcoholic beverages like vodka and wine. Such ancestral and urban neighborhood groupings as the *avlots*⁴ and *mahallas*⁵ remained autonomous and detached from politics. Their leaders replaced traditional robes and turbans with suits and skullcaps, and successfully adjusted to the new conditions. In so doing, they assured cultural continuity and stability. Having abandoned their official powers, they managed nonetheless to retain their traditional status and authority in society.

In spite of all the Bolshevik slogans and exhortations, Central Asian settlements did not divide along class lines. Former feudals, officials of the khan, and tsarist administrators sent their young people to study at universities in Tashkent, Moscow, Leningrad, and Baku. Communities continued to support their traditional leaders and take pride in them. They tried to gain their patronage and protection in the event of conflicts or complicated political conditions. Indeed, these traditional leaders came to form the backbone of the new cultural, economic, and bureaucratic elite of the Soviet period.

Thus, Kamil Iarmatov, a Tajik from Kanibadam, became a student at the State Cinematography Training School in Moscow in 1928. Kamil was the son of Iarmuhammad-Mingbashi, a county chief of Kanibadam city, and grandchild of Muhammad Karim-Kurbashi, commandant of Makhram, a fort between Khujand and Kanibadam. Kamil’s grandfather, Karim-Kurbashi, had served the Kokand Khan Khudayar and fought against tsarist troops in Makhram in August 1875. His son, Iarmuhammad, worked for the Russian Tsar Nicholas II. At the beginning of 1918, after the defeat of the “Kokand autonomy,” Iarmuhammad handed over the administration of the county, which included the best Tajik areas of the Ferghana Valley (Kanibadam, Isfara, Chorkukh, Qarachiqum, Besharyq, and Makhram), to the local soviet. Conjointly, Iarmuhammad also gave his own downtown urban homestead to the Soviet government.⁶ In so doing, he saved his own life and the lives of his extended family. The Soviet government did not persecute Iarmuhammad

(who died in 1925), even though he was a former tsarist official. Before becoming a famous Soviet film producer and prior to the revolution, his son, Kamil Iarmatov, studied at a local Russian language school for members of the indigenous population. He spent the years between 1919 and 1924 chasing down gangsters, initially as a member of the Muslim cavalry led by Hamdam-kurbashi Qalandarov and then as a district chief of police.⁷

This gradual and evolutionary development of the Soviet government and its adaptation to local conditions changed radically at the end of the 1920s, when Bolshevik doctrine abandoned the goal of spreading the “world revolution” and embraced instead the idea of “socialism in one country.” Henceforth, a total political and economic centralization reigned in Central Asia. What was called a system of “command and administrative control” prevailed everywhere, and especially in the cotton production in the Ferghana Valley. The goal was to free the USSR of all dependence on cotton from abroad, especially from the United States. The chosen means to achieve this was to collectivize the ownership of land and to introduce extreme centralization in its management. To fight the inevitable inefficiency and abuses to which this system gave rise, the government resorted increasingly to terror and coercion.

Even during tsarist times the Ferghana Valley had been turned into Russia’s largest cotton field. By 1913 it supplied 62 percent of Central Asian cotton and met 37 percent of the needs of Russia’s textile industry.⁸ Following the civil war of 1918–20, central Russia’s textile mills ceased functioning for want of raw materials. No longer able to afford to buy foreign cotton, the Bolsheviks imposed on the toilers of the Ferghana Valley the task of “conquering the heights of cotton independence.” Farmers of the region achieved this by devoting all newly irrigated land to cotton and by reducing the area for all other crops. By 1932 investments in irrigation infrastructure constituted a quarter of all new investment in Uzbekistan, while agriculture accounted for 50 percent of the total.⁹ In addition to this, the national (“Union”) budget devoted still more expenditures to the construction of cross-border irrigation infrastructure, including collectors that discharged water into the Syr Darya River.

The collectivization of land ownership was to be hastened after 1930 by an “offensive against the kulaks.” By mid-1931 this had descended into a policy of “liquidating the kulaks as a class.” For the crime of using hired labor “kulaks,” who were defined in such a way as to include all of the more or less well-off households were charged with “violating Soviet laws.” Kulak households were expropriated and expelled from Central Asia and forcefully.¹⁰ Tens of thousands of peasant households were liquidated and incorporated into collective farms that operated on the principle of a “planned socialist economy.” On the new collective and cooperative farms, virtually everything became communal property, including land, cattle used for work and offered for sale, the main agricultural machinery, tools and buildings. This said, the collective farms were not equipped with the modern agricultural machinery essential for large-scale agriculture to function even minimally. The Communist Party solved this by creating machine-tractor stations (MTS) under its strict control.

Managing each collective farm, or kolkhoz, was a board headed by a chairman elected by a general meeting of members. Kolkhoz Party committees and the MTS exercised rigorous control over the kolkhoz chairmen. These in turn were controlled by the Party's district committees (raikoms) that reported to the regional committees (obkoms) which, finally, were accountable to the central committee in the union republics that reported to the Central Committee headed by Stalin himself. The web of central committees at the republic, obkom, and raikom levels were responsible for carrying out every task assigned by the Center. The Party also managed the entire system of soviets or councils, beginning in Moscow with the Supreme Soviet, then extending downward through a supreme soviet in each republic to district and village soviets.

In the Ferghana Valley, the aim of this entire system of soviets instituted by the Communist Party was the complete destruction of the class of independent farmers and of private agriculture, to be replaced by gigantic collective farms that would produce cotton. More than half of all cropland was devoted to this one industrial crop. Foodstuffs, including bread, were mainly imported from Siberia along the new Turkestan-Siberia railroad.¹¹ Forests that long had been home to rare and unique species of animals and birds were hacked down to make cotton fields.

Collectivization in the Ferghana Valley continued from 1927 until 1933. By the end of 1932, some 81 percent of farming households in the valley had been collectivized, and they accounted for 79 percent of all production.¹² Amazingly, collectivization did not disrupt the traditional structure of the typical Ferghana Valley village. Those who traditionally had worked as tenant farmers on feudal lands had, by the early 1930s, become collective farmers who continued to work without rights, but for the state. This was the grand result of all the attention that higher Party authorities lavished on the Ferghana Valley in those years.

757b74754f3d3a3fdf5281c952620a01 ebrary **Communications**

The epochal drawing of internal Soviet borders after 1924 left the Ferghana Valley divided among three republics, each with its own chief executive (chairman of the republic's supreme soviet), council of ministers, flag, anthem, constitution, national language, national Communist Party, academy of sciences, opera and ballet theater, state university, film studio, and radio station—in short, nearly all the domestic features of a modern nation-state. Yet none of the largest Ferghana Valley cities became a republic capital. Prior to the delineation of borders, the Ferghana Valley had been a self-sufficient economic region at the important junction of the Zarafshan Valley, the Tashkent oasis, the Karategin, Alai, and Pamir mountains, and Chinese Kashgaria. The new borders transformed it into a geographically peripheral and economically marginal zone, whose infrastructure, though not lacking development, was relatively backward compared with the republic of which each sector was a part.

The new borders all but guaranteed that the Soviet government would ignore

the transport and communications needs of the Ferghana Valley. To cover the 650 kilometers from Osh in the Ferghana to Frunze (now Bishkek), the capital of Kyrgyzia, one had to cross two passes at more than 3,000 meters that were closed during winter. Residents of the Kyrgyz south instead reached their capital via the Uzbek city of Khanabad. A train from Osh to Frunze had to cross the borders of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan several times.

The situation in Tajikistan was no less absurd. To get from the highly developed Ferghana region of Tajikistan to the capital in the south meant a 350-kilometer trip that included crossing passes in the Turkestan and Hisar mountains that were closed half the year. The alternative, 200 kilometers longer, was to go via the Uzbek city of Samarkand. Similarly, the trip from Khujand to Tajikistan's Badakhshan Autonomous Region on the Afghan border took at least two days of driving on a road that ran through Uzbek-owned parts of the Ferghana Valley, then via the now-Kyrgyz city of Osh. As a result, northern and southern Tajiks had only the faintest idea of their newly defined "compatriots" in the other region. Even today there are people in Tajikistan's sector of the Ferghana Valley who have never been to the country's capital of Dushanbe, to the more southern areas of the country, or to Badakhshan.

A similar, albeit less absurd, mismatch of political, cultural, economic, and geographical boundaries can be observed in Uzbekistan. The shortest and most convenient way of reaching Tashkent by car from Andijan and Kokand was, and still is, through the city of Khujand in the Tajik sector of the Ferghana Valley. An alternative road running through the narrow Altyinkan corridor and involving the 2,267-meter Kamchik Pass was very inconvenient and closed for winter as well. Similarly, the railway from the Uzbek part of the Ferghana Valley to Tashkent runs for 100 kilometers through the territory of Tajikistan.

The territorial delineation left most of the plains areas of the valley under the control of Uzbekistan. This provided justifications for Uzbekistan to consider the Ferghana Valley as a core Uzbek territory. The foothills, rich in water and opening the way to the Alai and Pamir mountains, fell to Kyrgyzia. Tajikistan got a relatively small but important western part of the valley, through which passed the principal arteries connecting Tashkent with the Uzbek central and eastern parts of the valley. Thus, Uzbekistan controlled the bulk of the valley's territory and population, while Kyrgyzstan controlled the rivers flowing to the valley from the Alai, Tian Shan, and Turkestan peaks, as well as the territory that goods from Badakhshan must cross to reach the nearest railhead, in Uzbek Andijan. As for Tajikistan, it received strategically important sections of the trans-Uzbek railway and motorway. Moreover, with the completion of the Kairakkum reservoir and hydroelectric station in the 1950s,¹³ Tajikistan gained a measure of control over the waters of the Syr Darya River. At the time, however, there were no conflicts over water, and all of the three republics had direct access to the upper streams of the Syr Darya.

During the Stalin era Central Asia failed to become a unified economic region. Moscow viewed it as a source of raw materials for the more developed European

areas of the USSR. Railways were designed not to promote regional development, but to deliver raw materials in the most direct manner from Central Asia to industrial centers in the Russian Federation. There was minimal investment in the internal development of specific republics or in trade between neighboring republics. Indeed, there was no inherent reason for Soviet policy to look favorably on the development of such inter-republican trade and communications in Central Asia or the Ferghana Valley.

The priority Moscow assigned to the core Russian areas of the USSR assured that the periphery would remain backward and with a weak sense of unity. The Stalin era left Central Asia as a poorly developed, agrarian, and subsidized region dependent on Russia for whatever economic well-being it enjoyed. This is all the more true of the Ferghana Valley, as a periphery of a periphery.

Education and Culture

It is difficult to separate “good” Soviet policies from “bad” during the Stalin years. The Bolsheviks inherited from European Social Democrats certain critically important progressive ideas. Thus, they recognized that mass education was necessary for the industrialization and modernization of society. As such, their policies in this area differed markedly from those of the former tsarist government. By 1938 a network of elementary schools extended throughout all of the USSR. Cities and large villages saw the construction of seven-year schools. Overall, the schools paid special attention to mathematics and the exact sciences, as well as to languages, literature, and history. All this represented stupendous progress when compared with the tsarist and Muslim schools that had taught only basic reading and arithmetic. As early as 1939 three-quarters of Soviet citizens were literate, and by the death of Stalin nearly all were.

Russian colonization brought ideas of modernization to the Ferghana Valley by the end of the nineteenth century. In spite of war, revolution, and civil war, these ideas spread to all social classes and to even the most remote corners of the Ferghana Valley over the following decades. Even though the overall quality of life in the Ferghana Valley in 1953 did not exceed that of 1928, many positive changes occurred nonetheless. Fresh water from the Great Ferghana Canal, dug in six weeks in 1939, replaced water from stagnant domestic wells (*khauzes*). The introduction of potatoes and tomatoes improved diets. Clinics and medical centers opened in all cities and big villages. Preventive medicine made such terrible diseases as malaria, typhus, Aleppo boil, diphtheria, cholera, and trachoma things of the past. By 1953 houses across the valley were lit by electricity; films, including locally made ones, were being shown at public recreation centers; and the radio aired hit songs by such popular local singers as Halima Nasyrova¹⁴ and Tamara Khanum.¹⁵ Men were glad to wear European suits, women boldly unveiled their faces, children went to school, and Soviet police maintained order in the growing cities.

The new borders between Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan seemed

of little consequence. People lived in one country, the USSR, and could move from village to village or republic to republic without being stopped by a border guard or facing an armed gangster. Uzbeks in Kokand could easily marry off their daughters in Osh. Mobile and entrepreneurial Tajiks from Karategin felt comfortable living in the Uzbek quarters of Ferghana Valley cities, or even in Tashkent, as this did not damage their ethno-confessional or cultural identity. Symbols of national identity specific to Kyrgyz, Tajiks, and Uzbeks appeared comfortably on the street, alongside Soviet symbols. Indeed, it was precisely in this period that Ferghana Valley residents, who formerly identified themselves mainly in terms of their place of residence or profession, began realizing that they were also Kyrgyz, Tajiks, and Uzbeks.

Marxists recognized national units and acknowledged nationalism as inevitable, yet considered it an intermediate phase to be overcome as quickly as possible in order to reach a classless and nation-free communist future. For this reason, Bolsheviks took the seemingly paradoxical step of laying the foundation of national states in Central Asia, while at the same time making sure that both the new states and the nationalities on which they were based remained strictly subordinate to the political agenda of Bolshevism.

Islam and Gender

The Soviet government attempted to control all aspects of Muslims' social and political life. Communist ideology declared religion to be the opium of the people and subjected it to large-scale attacks. The atheistic Soviet system's first target was the more intellectual form of Islam, with its powerful financial base and array of educational institutions. The Soviets also sought to undermine the influence of "popular" Islam, which had always existed on the communal level and linked the culture and folklore of people in the Ferghana Valley with their religious identity. The organs of state security were particularly active in the struggle against religion, destroying all influential clerics and getting the survivors under their control. Mosques and madrassas were turned into warehouses and commercial buildings. Sharia courts were abolished in 1927.

Meanwhile, the Soviet government used the loyal and certified mullahs of "official Islam" to create acceptable substitutes for both the intellectual and the popular forms of the faith. The Bolsheviks' use of co-opted "red mullahs" dated back to their struggle against the *basmachi* in the 1920s. Official Islam, which emerged during the height of World War II in 1942, was under firm communist control. Its main body was the Central Asian Clerical Administration of Muslims (SADUM) headed by a mufti. SADUM was based in Tashkent and led by an influential Uzbek clan up until the collapse of the USSR in 1991. Vigilantly controlled by the state, the mufti busied himself with registering an insignificant number of mosques, appointing their imams, and even determining the content for the latter's sermons. However, such religious figures and their institutions did not play a significant

role in the lives of the Hanafi Sunni Muslims of the Ferghana Valley. Among those who cared, the majority of Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Kyrgyz preferred official Islam to popular Islam supported by unofficial mullahs and *ishans* at the community level. This “unofficial” or “popular” Islam lacked intellectual depth and operated under the sights of the state security services, which feared the damage it potentially could do to the Soviet government.

In its effort to enlist the sympathies of the “oppressed females of the Orient,” the Bolsheviks promised women complete emancipation. With this goal in mind, in 1927 the Bolsheviks organized a *hujum* (offensive, attack) on patriarchal customs, which they claimed led to the oppression of women. The focal points of this *hujum* were the Uzbek and Tajik communities of the Ferghana Valley. They attacked under-age marriage, the paying of a bride price (*kalym*), and especially the wearing of the *farandji* or *chador*, a symbol of female oppression. Ferghana Valley residents, however, considered the wearing of *farandji* to be a necessity in their densely populated and urbanized environment. Most people in the valley, especially males, perceived the *hujum* as an insult to their national and religious identities. True, some women abandoned *farandji* and aspired to take advantage of their newly won opportunity to get an education and master trades. Public acceptance of the anti-religion campaign diminished at the end of the 1920s when the Soviet government began again to resort to violence in its struggle against Islam. The renewed vigor of Soviet policy intensified civil strife. In the Ferghana Valley a number of reactionary clergymen fought back by killing female activists.

Notwithstanding the compulsory nature of the reforms, an increasing number of women found their way into governmental and educational institutions. By 1940 women made up almost half of all students in urban schools. By the mid-1950s almost all Tajik, Uzbek, and Kyrgyz females in the Ferghana Valley stopped wearing veils. However, both females and males in all three republics tried to preserve the old patriarchic traditions at home. Despite all repressions and prohibitions, Islamic customs and traditional habits concerning prayers, weddings, circumcisions, funerals, eating, and hygiene remained omnipresent in the private lives of people across Central Asia. The resulting double standard enabled people in public to put on a show of living according to Soviet practices, but at home to continue adhering to traditional ways of life. These accommodations left women subject to double exploitation: after working all day they were expected to perform all the traditional household chores in the evening. And despite increases in literacy levels among Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Uzbek females, families with five or more children continued to predominate.

Dilemmas of the “Indigenization” Policy and Problems of Leadership

The Soviet government tried to demonstrate that its policies had nothing in common with the tsarist policies that had oppressed the non-Russian peoples. With this

goal in mind, Soviet officials pursued a policy of *korenizatsiia* or indigenization. This was an early Soviet notion that supported members of the titular nationalities of recently formed republics and “national minorities.” Its objective was to enlist the support of non-Russian peoples and thereby internationalize the communist movement. Minority peoples were called upon to study Russian along with their native languages. Literary works and public documents were being issued in both local languages and in Russian. Clerical correspondence in all three of the Ferghana republics was conducted in at least two languages. Depending on the ethnic composition of a particular area, newspapers in cities across the valley were issued in Russian, Uzbek, Tajik, and Kyrgyz.

A goal of the indigenization policy was to develop competent “national cadres” loyal to the Soviet government. It is during these years that the first Soviet doctors, teachers, writers, actors, and artists emerged from among the Kyrgyz, Tajiks, and Uzbeks. All owed their professional advancement solely to the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet state. Conflict between competence and political loyalty was the major impediment to indigenization. The Soviet government eagerly promoted people from the poorest classes whose educational qualifications were far below those of both Russians and other non-Russians from privileged families. The Bolsheviks treated the latter as unreliable allies and class enemies, in spite of their higher levels of professional training.

The weakness of the indigenization policy began to show immediately. An outstanding figure from among the first Uzbek graduating classes in Uzbekistan that were loyal to the Soviet government was Yuldash Akhunbabaev, a native of Djoibazar village in the Margilan district in the Ferghana province.¹⁶ Loyal and also prominent throughout the Soviet Union were such kolkhoz chairmen as Khamrakul Tursunkulov (1892–1965), from Vuadil village in the Ferghana and thrice a Hero of Socialist Labor, and Saidhodja Urunhodjaev (1901–1967) from the Shaihburchon village in the Khujand district and twice a Hero of Socialist Labor. All three came from poor Ferghana farm families and were only barely literate.¹⁷

Such leaders were distinguished mainly for their peasant origins, performance of duties, and allegiance to the regime; they were trained collective farmers in the spirit of unconditional subordination to the government. Collective farmers knew that their *rais* (chairman) had influential connections in the state and Party hierarchies, and that the well-being of every kolkhoz member was in his hands. In the case of Tursunkulov and Urunhodjaev, these connections extended to Politburo of the Central Committee. Feared and respected, the *rais* wielded absolute power over kolkhozniki. The entire agricultural system of the Ferghana Valley and of Central Asia rested on these authoritarian and at times charismatic leaders, who suppressed all independent initiative and demanded that tasks assigned from above with no local participation be carried unquestioningly. The figure of the *rais*, loyal to his superiors and unrelenting toward his villagers, came to be the ideal archetype for all Party and soviet-level leaders in the Ferghana Valley and Central Asia.

Their lack of education prevented *rais* from rising in the industrial world. This

created a fissure in the economy of the Ferghana Valley, with agriculture and industry developing along parallel but non-intersecting lines. Agrarian Tajik, Uzbek, and Kyrgyz communities, organized into *kolkhozes* traditionally led by *rais*-leaders, dominated in the agricultural sector. Locally born and speaking local dialects, *rais* were not familiar with Marxism-Leninism and had only the vaguest notions on how best to promote communism, but did not interfere with internal community affairs. Industry, by contrast, was firmly in the hands of urbanized Russians and not indigenous people. The government dreamed of a merging of city and countryside and of Russian and Kyrgyz, Tajik, or Uzbek; however, no such merging occurred. As in tsarist times, villages and “old towns” populated by indigenous people lived their own lives and showed no interest in the “new towns” growing up alongside them. Conversely, Russians living in the valley’s cities and villages continued to identify themselves as Russians, remained oblivious to what was happening in the ethnic communities, and refused to learn local languages or embrace local culture. This ruled out any “merging of peoples” into a single, Soviet community. The little “unity” among the people that existed came from the dictatorship of the Communist Party, and was maintained by the manner in which goods and services were distributed.

The Soviet government worked hard to train young professionals from the local nationalities. By 1930 almost half of the 5,000 workers at cotton mills in the Uzbek sector of the valley were local ethnics.¹⁸ But considering the overwhelming predominance of local peoples in the population of the province, this did not suffice. Moreover, most key leadership positions in industry were filled by Russians and other Slavs, with local workers concentrated in the most low-paying jobs.

Soon the Bolsheviks began damping down the indigenization policy out of fear that the multi-national Soviet empire might collapse if it did not have enough people sharing a single language and culture. Ukrainians and Belorussians, for example, could fall under Polish influence, while Central Asians could link up with Muslims in India, Iran, and Turkey. Indigenization began in the mid-1920s but had faded away by the 1930s, replaced by the time-tested tsarist policy of Russification. True, indigenization did not completely die, but it limped along thereafter in a kind of half-life.

Russification and the Manipulation of Language Policy

Russification, the policy of imposing Russian culture on non-Russian peoples, provoked protests from most of the non-Russian peoples of the USSR. Russians were appointed to key administrative and political positions, and the Russian language became essential for business, Communist Party affairs, industry, science, and engineering. Soon bilingualism prevailed in Central Asia; not the former Turko-Tajik bilingualism of the Ferghana Valley, but Russian-Kyrgyz, Russian-Tajik, and Russian-Uzbek bilingualism. However this pertained only to non-Russians, for while Kyrgyz, Tajiks, and Uzbeks spoke a minimum of two languages, very few

Russians mastered any Turkic or Persian language. Russian soon replaced Turkic and Tajik as the common medium of communication throughout the valley. To be sure, most people became familiar with Russian culture without being forced to do so. But within some strata of society Russification engendered Russophobia, taking the form of passive protests and a quiet withdrawal into “parallel” Islam.

The government’s 1927-1940 policy of manipulating language had the further objective of breaking down Muslim unity and isolating Central Asia from the larger Islamic world. Starting from the ninth century, the Tajiks and then other regional peoples had adapted the Arabic alphabet to their languages. The resulting Islamic-Persian-Turkic synthesis formed the basis of the regional culture. Nevertheless, in 1927 the Soviet government abolished what it considered the archaic and inadequate Arabic-based scripts and decreed that the Latin alphabet be adopted instead. By this step the government separated the region from the Muslim world and bound it instead within its own orbit. Latinization broke Islam’s monopoly over the publishing industry and pedagogy and compromised the status of both the Arabic and Persian languages, setting against them the younger and predominantly Turkic “popular” languages. It also anticipated the further transition to the Cyrillic alphabet, which helped put an end to the region’s Turko-Tajik cultural unity and cleared way for a monolithic Russian-speaking “Soviet culture” and “new Soviet man.”

At the end of the 1920s, the Soviet government undertook a large-scale campaign to promote the Cyrillic alphabet and Russian language. It presented this to the outside world as a campaign to “abolish illiteracy,” in other words, to introduce culture into a world of absolute illiteracy and a culturally virgin land. Russians presented themselves as the benefactors and bearers of an advanced culture, as opposed to the “backward peoples of Central Asia, who did not even have their own system of writing.” This was accompanied by the comprehensive destruction of books in Persian, Arabic, and Turkic languages available in almost every home in the Ferghana Valley. People had to conceal, bury, and often burn their favorite books.

Simultaneously, the Soviets destroyed madrassas across the Ferghana Valley and also many mosques, some dating to the Middle Ages. Thus, the little town of Kanibadam and nearby villages boasted eight madrassas in 1914, most of them built in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Among their founders were great rulers and their families, including women, who left endowments (*waqfs*) for the preparation of teachers at schools in Bukhara and India and for student scholarships. Under the madrassas were some 105 schools for boys and girls in the district, with a total of about 2,500 students.¹⁹ The curriculum, not based solely on theology, included the sciences on the grounds that this would help Muslims in their search for the “right path.” These schools taught logic, *adab* (a code of conduct and the appreciation of beauty), the fundamentals of natural science, calligraphy, and Arabic. Alumni of Kanibadam madrassas were considered to be the best calligraphers in the Kokand Khanate, and in the nineteenth century were named to various missions to Kashgar in China.

By the end of the culture war launched in 1927, four of the eight madrassas had

disappeared entirely, and three others (namely Mirradjab Dodho, Hodja Rushnoi, and Oim) were being used as a school for tractor drivers, a vocational-technical school, and a prison. Only one of them, the oldest—Mirradjab Dodho—survived in its more or less original form.²⁰

The campaign to “abolish illiteracy” was a typical Bolshevik project of social engineering. The price paid for modernization and the introduction of Soviet mass education was the irretrievable loss of culture, subsequent cultural deprivation, and the plunging of whole populations into backwardness. Epistemologically and psychologically this policy was rooted in Islamophobia and a Russian form of “Orientalism,” that is in the imperial belief that the Russian people were somehow “chosen” to civilize the more “backward” peoples.

Henceforth, it was all but fatal to admit to having had a “Muslim education.” Instead, people in the Ferghana Valley preferred to present themselves in job interviews as the illiterate children of poor peasants. This was quite logical, since the Soviet government considered an illiterate and poor villager dressed in tatters to be more reliable than a neatly dressed and educated mullah. The government projected this rural poverty and illiteracy onto entire peoples, declaring them backward and qualified for generous “domestication” at the price of unconditional political allegiance. To justify this policy the government resolved first to get rid of the educated class, which it did by denouncing it as the bearer of a reactionary religious ideology. The Soviet vernacular considered mullahs strictly in religious terms, whereas Central Asians equated the term with “educated,” which, of course, meant well grounded in religion and hence able to read the Arabic-Persian script. Muslims considered such knowledge to be sacred, but the Soviet government considered it a crime and repressed all literate mullahs as supporters of the *basmachi*.²¹ Anyone aspiring to advance one’s career had to master Russian and, preferably, marry a Russian woman as well.

Turkey followed the USSR in outlawing the Arabic script in November 1928, and then introducing the Latin alphabet. The leader of the Bashkir emigration, Zeki Validi Togan, correctly said that the Latin script “causes deep disgust in Afghanistan, Persia and Turkestan.”²² But when the Soviets then abandoned the Latin script in favor of Cyrillic at the end of the 1930s, it prevented Turkic people in the USSR and Turkey from finding a common language. From this time on Soviet rulers did everything possible to individualize Central Asian languages and deprive them of their common features. As a result, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in the Ferghana Valley could no longer understand each other’s written language, while Tajiks could no longer understand Persian and Afghan texts. Some regional elites, while remaining Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Uzbek in culture, came to prefer the Russian language. This conformed to the policy of replacing Arabic, Persian, and Turkic as the languages of science, culture, and education with Russian. Within a decade Russian had been established as a symbol of dominance, while all indigenous languages were downgraded and Islam stripped of its scientific, literary, and educational bases. But it was not destroyed, as the Bolsheviks wished. Instead it went underground and

continued as “popular” Islam sustained by uneducated mullahs and charismatic community leaders. Within families, the women instilled their children with respect for the faith.

The Formation of Identity

When evaluating Soviet policies in the Ferghana Valley, it is worth inquiring into the price the population paid for so sweeping a transformation. The greatest loss was in social capital. For centuries valley residents had maintained a complex irrigation system, collected funds for *waqfs* (religious foundations), built madrassas, maintained schools, and built roads and infrastructure. They prayed in the same way, gave their children similar names, worshiped at common shrines, had a common system of sharia law and, until the mid-1920s, were ruled by the same government. Ferghana Valley residents were also bound together by historical memories of resistance to external enemies. Thus, people remembered the united Kyrgyz-Tajik-Uzbek armed units that charismatic military commanders and supranational religious leaders had led against tsarist forces in the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

Did residents of the Ferghana Valley have their own particular mind-set and common political culture, and do they still? The question does not allow certainty, but is worth asking nonetheless. A good place to begin is their attitude toward the government, on which Ferghana residents of all ethnicities differed markedly from their nearest neighbors, the nomadic Turkic peoples and the mountain Tajiks. Ferghana folk recognized government as such to be legitimate and capable of playing a positive role in their lives. None of the valley residents conceived the possibility of a free existence absent governmental control. Unlike their nomadic or mountain-bound neighbors, Ferghana Valley communities were used to a settled existence and expected to obey laws, pay taxes, and otherwise reckon with the authorities. Their citizens equated authority with justice, and considered a government that defended them from external threats, helped the community to function, and supported religion to be just. Beyond this, as highly urbanized dwellers of irrigated oases they were used to a hierarchical rather than an egalitarian political culture. They were also much more literate and learned than either their mountain or nomadic neighbors. Indeed, the nomads of Central Asia looked on Tajiks and Uzbeks from the oasis cities as their *pirs* or mentors.

Many observers distinguished the diverse inhabitants of the Ferghana Valley's cities and agrarian oases, whom Russian colonial officials called Sarts, from other Central Asians. The Sarts were noted for their peacefulness, solidarity, tolerance, and ability to strike a compromise. Rarely did they raise violent campaigns against the government. Theirs was a highly structured society enriched by professional groups of craftsmen, traders, teachers, mullahs, writers, scientists, bakers, musicians, and others. The urban quarters in which they lived had retained the same appearance over many centuries. Everyone knew each other, had a stable place in society, and practiced professional skills handed down through the generations.

People knew, for example, that anyone named Bakhadurkhan-tura came from the *tura* class, the highest level of officials of the Khan, and that he was to be greeted first among any group. Conversely, someone named Irgash-kuknori was assumed to be a reveler and *kuknori* (opium-smoker). The social hierarchy was considered normal. Poor men, called *omi* (from the word *omma*, or masses), knew their birth excluded them from politics and made no effort to change this condition. In fact, most Ferghana residents accepted the established order and made no effort to change it or to assert their rights. In this respect they differed markedly from the more egalitarian herding communities, whose members practiced a kind of “nomadic democracy” and strongly preferred their semi-independence to any state control.

The population density of cities in the Ferghana Valley was the highest in Central Asia. Cities were surrounded by villages or *kishlaks* and served as points of exchange for goods, services, information, and cultural values. Ferghana cities dominated the agrarian periphery, but without causing antagonism. This may be because the layout of houses and the ways of life of city and village dwellers did not differ sharply. Most organized neighborhoods (*mahallas*) were based on territory rather than kinship or ethno-confessional heritage, and life within them was relatively free of state interference.

With little arable land and few jobs, it was imperative for Ferghana Valley residents to acquire knowledge and skills. Neither the nomadic populations nor the mountaineers lived under this compulsion to diligence. In so densely-populated and ethnically diverse a region as the Ferghana Valley, people also understood that the key to survival was *maslihat* (consensus). Most conflicts were resolved through traditional techniques. Of course, there were conflicts between and within communities, but ethnic hostility was not among their causes. A poor Kyrgyz could work in the home of a rich Uzbek but would still be included within the family circle; the head of the Uzbek family would have felt obligated to take care of the youth as their own son, provide for his education, train him for a profession, and marry him off.

These and other circumstances led to the creation of a distinct Ferghana identity that coexisted with an underlying Muslim selfhood and a weak sense of nationality. A pronounced conservatism lay at the heart of this Ferghana identity. Beginning in the late 1920s, residents of the Ferghana Valley, or *fargonachi*, no longer felt themselves to be a single socio-economic and cultural-religious whole. In fact, the term *fargonachi* fell out of use.²³ The delineation of borders from 1924 to 1936 encouraged the residents to view one another through the prism of nationalism. Hastily drawn borders turned peaceful neighbors into competitors ready to fight over their “national interests.” At the same time, Ferghana Valley dwellers were reduced to the status of sub-national groups within the three new Central Asian republics among which their region had been divided. Uzbeks from Namangan, Andijan, and Ferghana City now competed with Uzbeks from Tashkent, Samarkand-Dzhizak, and Khorezm. Tajiks from the Khujand oasis strove to assert their dominance in the fight against southern elites in the capital city of Stalinabad (Dushanbe).

Kyrgyz of the Ferghana Valley, meanwhile, now found themselves in competition with Kyrgyz in the north. All three sectors of the valley had been subordinated to distant republic capitals.

People of the Ferghana Valley embraced the Soviet identity and separate nationalities that had been imposed on them, but these did not replace their older loyalties to family, class, and territory. Their Ferghana Valley identity preserved its major features but shrank to a very local community-based on family clans and a jointly-preserved history. When Ferghana Valley residents moved to the capitals, their devotion to family and clan, and their territorial community, actually intensified. Even in Tashkent, Frunze, or Stalinabad, Ferghana natives retained their traditional mentalities and did not rush to become integrated into their nationalities. Soviet urban culture proved impotent against the more enduring, natural, and emotionally rich indigenous attachments.

Meanwhile, Tashkent continued as the cosmopolitan capital of the entire region, but with a separate “old town” populated by Tashkent Uzbeks. The Tajik capital of Stalinabad from 1929 to 1953 was a large construction site populated by Russians and Tajiks from various regions. Frunze, situated in Kyrgyzia’s north, was a Russian-Soviet city *par excellence*, markedly different from the ancient city of Osh, the southern capital. Migration to these capitals did not turn them into melting pots; instead they became the scene of struggles for dominance among the sub-national groups who had moved there.

Overall, Soviet-style modernization did not attain its goal. Soviet rules did not supersede existing norms. Economic development did not lead to the emergence of national economies. At best, as with the emancipation of women, there was a synthesis of the local and the superimposed. In the Ferghana Valley, traditions of harmonious coexistence among ethnic group faded, while Soviet “nation building” disrupted historical memory and social continuities. Yet indigenous identity, grounded on a common culture, mentality, and emotional ties, somehow survived across the valley.

Repression

After adopting the so-called Stalin constitution in 1936, the Soviet government redrafted the republic constitutions to accord with it. The extensive nominal rights specified in this constitution are well known. It also elevated the Kyrgyz Autonomous Region of the Russian Republic (RSFSR) to the status of a full republic. At the republic level, the constitution provided for elections to soviets or councils at every level down to the village, and these in turn elected their own executive committees (ispolkoms). Such was the formal structure of government in the three republics of the Ferghana Valley on the eve of the World War II.

The 1936 constitution was more a sham political act than a legal document. It declared the “victory of socialism” in the USSR and led the next year to millions of “builders of socialism” being sent to prison camps for betraying the Stalinist

policy line. No measure since 1917 did more than “Stalin’s constitution” to cause citizens to distrust the government and disregard its laws.

The period between 1929 and 1953 marks a tragedy in the history of Central Asia. Under the totalitarian system that crystallized at that time, all power rested with the Communist Party and all non-governmental entities and informal assemblies, including mosques, *madrassas*, *maktabs*, and *gaps* (male interest forums) were violently suppressed. *Chaikhanas* (teahouses) were turned into communist propaganda centers. Religion was criminalized and believers persecuted. During these years all parts of the Ferghana Valley experienced state terror and the merciless destruction of whole classes of people. The Party, fearing external enemies, violently suppressed the slightest manifestation of dissent within the country. Such fears were of course exaggerated, but they produced a climate in which only a suicidal person would dare say anything critical of the government.

Bolsheviks had instituted their “Red Terror” immediately after they seized power in 1917, with the first concentration camps being instituted by Lenin in order to “reeducate” dissenters. With the onset of collectivization, terror became an essential tool of economic transformation. By 1936 until 1938, when the system of total terror reached its zenith, everyone from Politburo heads down was liable to be sent to the prison camps set up by the Main Administration of Collective Labor Camps (GULAG).²⁴

In the Ferghana Valley, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union, many tolerated and even supported these acts of repression. Local leaders tried to save themselves by showing vigilance in hounding down “enemies of the people.” Citizens informed on neighbors or colleagues in order to save their own families. Nonetheless, all sections of the population were subject to repression. Party and Soviet leaders and anyone else suspected of ties with such obvious “public enemies” as *bais*, *khans*, *emirs*, *basmachi*, bourgeois nationalists, and pan-Turkists suffered particularly. The central government determined the numbers to be arrested down to the district level and later empowered local officials to draw up their own lists, beyond the quotas. The eagerness they demonstrated at this task did not necessarily save themselves, however.

In the fall of 1937, the secretary of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (Boshevik [b]), Andrei Andreev, personally “purged” Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Even though most Uzbek and Tajik Party leaders already had been jailed, the government now organized local “troikas” consisting of a prosecutor, the head of the secret police, and the local chief of police, to consider tens, if not hundreds of, cases a day. From 1937 to 1939 such troikas in Uzbekistan tried 37,000 people and sentenced 6,920 of them to death.²⁵

The fall of the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, Akmal Ikramov, and other senior Uzbek officials was marked by public trials and massive propaganda campaigns against them. In Kyrgyzia a group of the most senior officials,²⁶ including Torekul Aitmatov, father of the famous writer Chingiz Aitmatov, were executed in November 1938. On October 31, 1937

the former chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Tajik Republic, Nusratulla Maksum, received a death sentence, with a similar fate suffered a year later by the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Tajikistan. Urunboi Ashurov.²⁷ A large number of other high officials in Tajikistan also became victims of Stalin's 1937–38 purges.

As a result of these purges, residents of the Ferghana Valley naturally became highly fearful and distrustful of the state and government. Many perceived that Stalinist society rested on lies and intimidation. But in assessing the Stalin period, it is important not to whitewash the situation. Stalin's paranoia was not solely responsible for totalitarianism. National and Party leaders were also involved, as was the public at large. Without all their support the Stalinist regime could never have taken root, let alone survived as long as it did.

World War II: On Whose Side?

On June 22, 1941, Nazi Germany attacked an unprepared USSR. Within four months Hitler's forces had seized 40 percent of the Soviet population and 70 percent of its economy. The remaining 1,500 industrial enterprises were evacuated to the east, including 100 to Uzbekistan, 30 to Kyrgyzia, and 20 to Tajikistan. A million refugees from the war zone were relocated to Kyrgyzia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. This evacuation strengthened the command economy, with people working thirteen-hour days, six days a week.

How did the people of the Ferghana Valley respond to the war? To this day Central Asians hold two contrary views on this period. The first is strictly positive, and dwells on the great construction projects and other achievements that transformed the USSR into a world power. Those who share this view believe that Stalin and the USSR deserve the commendation of all progressive people for winning the "Great Patriotic War," and that the victory proved the superiority of socialism and of Stalin's personal leadership. Many people in the region, including non-communists and the young, still hold this view, one that meshes well with the popularity of authoritarian forms of rule in today's Central Asia.

There are, however, supporters of a contrary approach, who claim that Stalin was a criminal and his policies a chain of monstrous crimes against the people. They believe that the achievements of socialism are a myth, that Soviet policies destroyed the peasantry, ruined manufacturing, engendered servility and a belief in the omnipotence of the state, and inflicted irreversible cultural losses. Indeed, the sufferings of World War II would not have been so huge had Stalin not been in power. Central Asian émigrés cultivated these views in the West during the "Cold War," and they appeared in the USSR particularly during Gorbachev's perestroika.

Today, many equate the "two totalitarian ideologies," Nazism and communism, and increasingly use the term "genocide" with respect to Soviet policy in Central Asia. There is underway an explicit rehabilitation of the *basmachi* of the Ferghana Valley,²⁸ as well as of anti-Soviet émigré leaders who collaborated with

Nazis during the war, specifically the figures of a Kazakh, Mustafa Chokaev, and an Uzbek, Baimirza Hait. The argument goes that those who fought in the Wehrmacht Turkestan Legion “did not wage war against their native land, but against the Soviet system.”²⁹

During the first months of the war, expatriate pro-*basmachi* political circles in Afghanistan received funds from Germany to prepare an attack against Soviet Tajikistan. The very distance from the German front and the presence of Allied troops in Iran dimmed prospects for this plan.³⁰ Its more limited goal was probably to destabilize what had become an important Soviet rear supply base in Central Asia. In October 1941, the USSR and Britain demanded that the Afghans deport all German and Japanese citizens from their soil; the Afghans, fearing a possible attack by those countries from Iran, complied and then declared their neutrality.

Even before its defeat at Stalingrad, fascist Germany had shelved its Asian projects. By 1943 the USSR and Britain forced Afghanistan to make mass arrests of Central Asian immigrants who were working for the Germans, including the notorious Ferghana-based *kurbashi*, Kurshermat, or Sher Muhammad. Meanwhile, back in the Ferghana Valley hundreds of thousands of citizens were conscripted, beginning in September 1939. Some 120,000 soldiers from Uzbekistan, more than 42,000 from Kyrgyzstan, and about 50,000 from Tajikistan would receive medals for bravery. Some 209 ethnic Central Asians became Heroes of the Soviet Union,³¹ with more than 100 of them natives of the Ferghana Valley.³² Many industries and peoples were evacuated to the valley during the war, and after the USSR victory thousands of Tatars, Chechens, Greeks, Bulgarians, Armenians, and other peoples of the Caucasus and Crimea whom the Soviet government suspected of collaborating with the German occupiers of their lands were resettled there.

The Turkestan Legion in the German army had been formed in December 1941, from natives of the Crimea, the Caucasus, Volga river basin, and Central Asia who had been captured or voluntarily had crossed the lines. By early 1942 they had established a training camp in Legionowo, Poland, with other bases elsewhere. When Hitler's forces occupied parts of the North Caucasus and Crimea in the fall of 1942, they had numerous fighters of the Caucasus-Muslim legion in their ranks. The Wehrmacht issued various periodicals for the Central Asian volunteers serving in its ranks, whose numbers are estimated from 70,000³³ to 265,000.³⁴ Veli Kaiumkhan from Tashkent, Baimirza Hait from Namangan, and others worked on these projects. The Third Reich also relied on such people to serve as colonial administrators in their Central Asian territories.

Clearly, the decision by many from the region to fight against the USSR was a response to the terror, brutality, and injustice of the Stalinist regime. In addition, the defeats the Red Army suffered during the first year of war left their mark on the consciousness of many Soviet servicemen. But whereas the emigrants from the USSR adopted new homelands, the prisoners of war resolved to take up arms against their homeland and fellow soldiers, to whom they had sworn allegiance. Such actions arouse heated debate to this day, and doubtless will continue to do so in the future.³⁵

Post-War Developments

Victory in World War II came at a high cost, for the USSR had exhausted nearly all its material and human resources. No less serious, the government attributed its victory to Stalinism, which it argued had proven to be the only correct system and as such certainly needed no reforms. Hence, the economy continued to drag and Central Asia remained mainly a source of raw materials for industries located in Russia. Leaders of the republics had no influence on decision-making, especially in the cotton sector, and depended completely on Moscow. Peasants made a bare thousand a year, with 80 percent of their income being paid in kind.

As if this were not bad enough, 1948 witnessed the start of a fresh purge in Central Asia. In January of that year, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR decreed that any “saboteur” deliberately shirking work on irrigation systems, planting or harvesting was to be sent to Siberia. Soon hundreds of thousands of Central Asians and residents of the Ferghana Valley found themselves in correctional labor camps, prisons, and penal colonies. Such heavy-handed measures gradually restored production and allowed the government to abolish rationing, but agriculture had been plundered and living standards in the Ferghana Valley remained low.

Between 1929 and 1953, residents of the Ferghana Valley endured three periods of starvation: in 1932–33 caused by collectivization; the wartime famine of 1941–45; and the post-war famine of 1946–47. Not only did the horrors of collectivization and Stalin’s Great Terror claim tens of thousands of lives, but the repressions continued unabated until the mid-1950s.

Notes

1. Here: “Muslim state.”

2. See Hisao Komatsu, “Dar al-Islam Under Russian Rule as Understood by Turkestani Muslim Intellectuals,” in *Empire, Islam and Politics in Central Eurasia. Slavic Eurasian Studies*, ed. Uyama Tomohiko, Sapporo, Japan, 2007, p. 5.

3. *Ulama* (s. *alim*), religious experts on Islamic laws who worked as *qadis* (judges), teachers, etc.

4. *Avlod* (plural form of Arabic *valid*): a large family of blood relatives made up of several smaller families. *Avlods* could live together in the same house, or separately, but they necessarily acknowledged the supremacy of the common grandfather.

5. *Mahalla* (from the Arabic “place of living”): a stable community of neighbors in a city or large settlement. Usually, *mahallas* comprised people sharing a common profession (e.g., blacksmiths) or origins (for, e.g., Kazakhs).

6. Now Kamil Iarmatov city film theater by is located there.

7. Kamil Iarmatov (1903–1978), one of the founding fathers of cinema in Central Asia. His daughter, Gulnora Kamilovna Pulatova, was a minister of health of the Tajik SSR at the end of the 1980s.

8. Michael Thurman, “The ‘Command-Administrative System’ in Cotton Framing in Uzbekistan, 1920s to Present,” in *Papers on Inner Asia*, Bloomington, Indiana, 1999, p. 3.

9. *Ocherki istorii Ferganskoi oblasti v Sovetskii period*, Tashkent, 1980, p. 34.

10. H.N. Driker, *Formirovanie klassov sotsialisticheskogo obschestva v Tadzhikistane*, Dushanbe, 1983, p. 105.

11. The Turkestan-Siberian railway was built between 1926 and 1931.

12. *Ocherki istorii Ferganskoi oblasti v Sovetskii period*, p. 40.

13. The Kairakkum (Qairoqum) reservoir was created between 1956 and 1958 on the Syr Darya River in the western (Tajik) part of the Ferghana Valley to regulate water flows and provide for stable irrigation of lands covering the area of more than 300,000 hectares. The area of the reservoir is 513 square kilometers.

14. Halima Nasyrova (1913), an Uzbek singer hailing from Taglyk—a village near Kokand. She started her creative activities as a drama actress in 1927 and was a popular artist of the USSR from 1937 on. From 1930 to 1985, she performed at the Uzbek opera and ballet theater and was awarded the USSR State Prize in 1942 and 1951.

15. Tamara Khanum, whose real name was Tamara Artemovna Petrosian (1906–1991), was born in Ferghana and was Armenian by nationality. She was a dancer, singer, and ballet master and participated in the establishment of the Uzbek ballet theater. She reformed the performance style of Uzbek female dances, and was a collector of song and dance folklore of various nations throughout the world. She received the USSR State Prize in 1941.

16. Akhunbabaev (1885–1943), studied in elementary school (*maktab*) and until 1919 he was a day laborer and *arbakesh* (coachman). A communist since 1921 and a chairman of Margilan Koshchi Union (1921–25), from 1925 to 1938 he served as the chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviets of Uzbekistan. From 1938 to 1943 he was the chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Uzbekistan.

17. Tursunkulov participated in the establishment of Soviet rule in the Ferghana Valley in 1918–21 and took pride in being friends with Marshall Semen Budennyi. In 1935 he became chairman of a cotton-growing kolkhoz. Tursunkulov joined the Party only in 1945. Despite his lack of education, he was elected an honorary member of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences of Uzbekistan. Saidhoja Urunkhodjaev, a Tajik from Khujand district, joined the Communist Party in 1929. From 1936 until the end of his life in 1967 he was chairman of a number of kolkhozes in Leninabad district of Leninabad (now Sughd) province. Like Tursunkulov, Urunkhodjaev had friendly connections with the highest ranking officials of the USSR (marshals Budennyi and Voroshilov).

18. M. Rahimov, *Istoriia Fergany*, Tashkent, 1984, p. 42.

19. In the first half of nineteenth century there were 300 *maktabs* and 5,500 students in Kokand.

20. See Abdudjabbor Kahhori, *Adjab Dunee*, Dushanbe, 2003, pp. 31–34, 61. We should add to this that today's Tajiks and Uzbeks have little or no knowledge of calligraphy (*hattoti*).

21. See *Repressiia, 1937–1938 gody. Dokumenty i materialy*, issue 1, Tashkent, 2005.

22. S.M. Ishakov. *Iz istorii Rossiiskoi emigratsii. Pisma A. Z. Validova i M. Chokaeva (1924–1932 gg.)*, Moscow, 1999, p. 48.

23. To be more precise, the term continued to be used only by the Uzbek- and Tajik-speaking emigrants (*muhajirs*), who escaped from the Ferghana Valley to Afghanistan in the 1920s and 1930s. They called themselves *fargonachi* until the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. The *fargonachi* preferred to marry among themselves rather than their kin Uzbeks and Tajiks from Afghanistan. See Audrey Shalinsky, *Long Years of Exile: Central Asian Refugees in Afghanistan and Pakistan*, Lanham, MD, 1994.

24. From 1917 to 1922 the national security service agency was called the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage (Cheka). In 1922 the Cheka was abolished and its functions transferred to the newly created State Political Directorate (GPU). In 1923 the GPU was reformed into the Joint State Political Directorate (OGPU) under SNK (Council of People's Commissars) of the USSR. In 1934 the OGPU was incorporated into the newly formed NKVD and became the Main Directorate of State Security of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (GUGB of NKVD). In 1941 the NKVD of the USSR was divided into two independent bodies: the NKVD of the USSR and People's Commissariat for State National Security of the USSR.

25. *Repressia, 1937–1938 gody*, p. 8.

26. Chairman of Kyrgyzstan government Iusup Abdrakhmanov was arrested in the fall of 1937, allegedly as a participant of the bourgeoisie-nationalist Alash-Ordyn organization. Supreme court charged him with being a member of the anti-Soviet Social-Turan party that planned to overthrow the Soviet government and to secede Kyrgyzia from the USSR. Apart from that, Abdrakhmanov was considered one of the leaders of the fictional Pan-Turkic center and a spy of the “English imperialists.”

27. Urunboi Ashurov (1903–1938), a Tajik and native of Skobelev city (Ferghana). He worked in various Soviet and party capacities in Skobelev and Margilan. From 1925 on he worked as a secretary of the Ferghana city committee of the Communist Party (b) of Uzbekistan, and as a secretary of the Andijan Party’s district committee in 1927. From 1927 to 1936 he studied and continued holding party positions in Moscow. He became an executive instructor of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party (b) in 1936. From January 1937 he served as the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party (b) of Tajikistan.

28. See *Turkestan v nachale XX veka: k istorii istokov natsionalnoi nezavisimosti*, Tashkent, 2000.

29. See Bahyt Sydykova, “Istoriia Turkestanskogo legiona v dokumentakh,” www.continent.kz/library/turkestan_legions/Glava_4.htm.

30. The USSR and England invaded into Iran on August 25, 1941. The USSR justified its actions based on the terms of the Soviet-Persian Treaty of 1921. According to the treaty, Iran committed itself to prevent the use of its territory as a base for military offensives against Soviet Russia, granting the Soviet government the right to invade Iran should this provision be violated. See Jamil Hasanli, *At the Dawn of the Cold War: The Soviet American Crisis Over Iranian Azerbaijan, 1941–1946*, Harvard Cold War Studies Book Series, Landham, MD, 2006.

31. See K.K. Karakeev, *Vklad trudiashchikhsia Srednei Azii v pobedu. Sovetskii tyl v Velikoi Otechestvennoi voine*, bk. 2, Moscow, 1974, pp. 300–301.

32. N.G. Berezniak, *Geroi Sovetskogo Soiuz—uzbekistantsy*, Tashkent, 1984.

33. Waffen-SS im Einsatz Hitler’s Soviet Muslim Legions, <http://stosstruppen39-45.tripod.com/id10.html>.

34. G. Mendikulova, *Kazakhskaia diaspora: istoriia i sovremennost*, Almaty, 2006, p. 147.

35. The aged leader of the so-called Turkestan National Society, one of the organizers of the Turkestan Legion” a former Grupsturmfuhrer Waffen-SS Baimirza Hait visited Tashkent and his native town Djarkurgan (Namangan) in 1992. He was given the cold shoulder and immediately left Uzbekistan. Hait died in Munich on October 31, 2006 at the age of eighty-eight. Hait’s radical views, particularly on the *basmach* movement and repressive features of the Soviet government, became widespread in Uzbek historiography in the 1990s. See, for instance, G.A. Khidoiatov. “Sto let borby narodov Tsentralnoi Azii za svobodu i nezavisimost,” in *Nezavisimost i istoriia: novye podkhody k izucheniiu istorii Uzbekistana*, Tashkent, 1997.