The Peoples of Soviet Central Asia

A BACKGROUND BOOK

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NOTE ON SOURCES

APART FROM Chapters 2 and 3, the present study has been compiled almost exclusively from Soviet source material with only occasional references to other sources.

I have drawn to some extent on my earlier books *Racial Problems in Soviet Muslim Asia* (Oxford University Press 1962) and *The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1964, but much new material has been added.

I am indebted to R. Vaidyanath of the Indian School of International Studies for much of the information on the delimitation of 1924.

Few states are subject to such drastic and frequent changes as the USSR and some such changes may well occur after the book has gone to press.

G. E. W.

INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK is concerned with the Muslim peoples inhabiting the region lying to the north of Persia and Afghanistan and bordered on the west by the Caspian Sea and on the east by China. It consists of the five Soviet Socialist Republics of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kirgizstan (or Kirgizia), Tadzhikistan and Turkmenistan. Properly speaking, the term 'Soviet Central Asia' only refers to the last four of these republics, Kazakhstan being regarded by the Soviet geographers as a separate area. The peoples of this region, now numbering about 14,000,000, came under Russian domination in the 18th and 19th centuries. They are sometimes referred to as minorities, but this is incorrect since they are living in territory which has been their homeland since time immemorial.

Before the Russian Revolution of 1917 the greater part of the region was administered by the Tsarist government as two Governorates-General—the Steppe Region and Turkestan. In addition, there were the two semi-independent vassal states, known as khanates, of Bukhara and Khiva. Before the coming of the Russians the region had been subjected to many invasions and conquests, the principal being those of the Arabs in the 7th and 8th centuries and of the Mongols in the 13th century. But none of the earlier conquerors had colonized the region to any considerable extent, and none except the Muslim Arabs and Persians had exercised any profound cultural influence. The Russians, however, colonized the land on a vast scale: at the outbreak of the Revolution there were about 2,000,000 Russian and Ukrainian settlers in the Steppe Region and Turkestan, and this number has been more than trebled since. According to the Soviet census of 1959 more than one-third of the total population consists of

Russians and other non-Asians, the total of Russians being larger than that of any of the Muslim nationalities.

In coming under the domination of a people of alien race and culture during the 18th and 19th centuries the peoples of Soviet Central Asia underwent the same experience as many other peoples of Asia and Africa. But the fact that their country has remained an integral part of a state territorially identical with the former Russian Empire after the regime of that empire had been overthrown and replaced by one advocating entirely different principles of government and world outlook presents a unique phenomenon. Since the primary object of the present study is to examine the nature and significance of this phenomenon, the greater part of the book is concerned with the Soviet period; but two chapters are devoted to the history of the region before the coming of the Russians and with its administration as part of the Tsarist Russian Empire.

I

Natural Environment and Ethnic Characteristics

GEOGRAPHERS divide Central Asia and Kazakhstan into four regions: the *steppe*, consisting of Northern Kazakhstan or what is now known as the Tselinnyy Kray or Virgin Lands Region; the semi-desert consisting roughly of the rest of Kazakhstan; the *desert* region lying to the south of the semi-desert and reaching the Persian frontier in the west and the Chinese frontier in the east; and the *mountain* region of which the main features are the Pamirs and the Tien-shan.

These regions provide a great variety of climate, vegetation and occupation. In proportion to the vast areas of clay, stone, sandy desert and mountains the area of cultivated and populated land is very small. Vegetation is sparse, being confined to a belt of wooded steppe in the north-east, the grasslands of Kazakhstan, hardy perennials such as saxaul in the deserts and a variety of trees and plants along the river valleys and in the piedmont zones.

The climate can broadly be described as continental, with hot summers and cold winters. In the north of the Steppe Region January temperatures may fall to as low as minus 60° F., while in the extreme south the climate is sub-tropical with average shade temperatures reaching 104° F. Termez, reckoned to be the hottest place in the Soviet Union, has recorded July temperatures of 122° F. Precipitation is low throughout the whole region. In the semi-desert most of the rain falls in summer, while in the south of the desert region most rain falls in March. In some years no rain has fallen in

Tashkent from the beginning of July until the end of September. Heavy falls of snow are uncommon except in the mountainous districts. The north of the Aral Sea freezes for four or five months in the winter as do the lower reaches of the Syr-dar'ya river.

Cultivation on a large scale is impossible without artificial irrigation based on the rivers, and this was practised on simple but highly ingenious lines for at least 2,000 years before the coming of the Russians. Since then, and particularly during the Soviet regime, it has been greatly extended by modern methods and the resulting increase in vegetation is likely to have a considerable effect on the climate.

The great difference in natural conditions between the northern and southern parts of the region resulted in a corresponding difference in the way of life of their inhabitants. But since the coming of the Russians, and particularly during the past forty years, this difference has become much less marked owing to the stabilization of the nomad Kazakhs and the consequent increase in agriculture and urban development.

The natural resources of the whole region have turned out to be far greater than the Russians suspected when they originally decided to conquer and colonize it. Writing some eight years after the creation of the Governorate-General of Turkestan in 1867, Eugene Schuyler, then American Consul in St Petersburg, pronounced these resources to be negligible, presumably on the basis of a Russian assessment. The importance of cotton cultivation, today the region's most valuable asset, was to some extent realized before the end of the Tsarist regime; but neither cotton nor the region's other considerable resources of oil, iron, copper and lead, to mention but a few, were fully exploited until the Soviet regime.

The original population of Turkestan, and most probably of the Steppe Region as well, was of the same Iranian stock as

the Persians, and the attachment of Transoxania to the Persian Samanid Empire until the end of the 10th century resulted in the introduction of Iranian cultural influence which is still apparent today in the larger towns. But from the 6th century A.D. onwards successive Turkic invasions from the east ended in the complete turkification of the nomad elements. This situation hardly changed during the Mongol invasions, since these were not carried out by hordes of slit-eyed Mongol pagans, as has been popularly supposed, but mainly by Kypchak and other Turkic tribes recruited by Mongolian officers.

The ravaging of the cities of Turkestan in the 13th century was thus mainly carried out by Turkic peoples from the Kazakh Steppe, which resulted in the further encroachment of Turkic influence in the settled areas. In modern times, the Tadzhiks are the only Central Asian nationality described as being of Iranian stock. This is mainly on account of their language, which closely resembles the Persian of Persia and Afghanistan; racially they are barely distinguishable from the Uzbeks.

Before the Russian impact, and indeed before the beginning of the Soviet regime, the distinction of the peoples of Central Asia was not as between nationalities, or even as between Turkic and Iranian elements, but as between nomad and sedentary peoples. The nomads were exclusively Turkic, but the sedentary peoples included both Iranian (Tadzhiks) and Turkic (Uzbeks, Karakalpaks, etc.) elements. Tsarist ethnographers described the sedentary population as 'Sart', a word of obscure origin to which they wrongly attached a racial and even linguistic significance. They spoke of the Sarts as representing a cross between the aboriginal Tadzhik (Iranian) inhabitants and their Uzbek (Turkic) conquerors.

Barthold, the great Russian oriental historian, however, held that the name Sart was given at first only to the Iranians, then to the Iranians and Turks, and finally only to the Turks.

He added that the Sarts did not regard themselves as belonging to any particular race but as 'Muslims', and thus distinct from the nomads, whom they regarded as being beyond the pale of Islam. It has already been said that the peoples of the khanates did not think themselves as belonging to nations or even to nationalities. In so far as they considered the matters of race and origin at all, they thought of themselves as members of tribes or clans.

Tsarist scholars were, of course, aware of the broad ethnic grouping of the peoples of Central Asia, and many Tsarist administrators acquired an intimate knowledge of tribal structure. In general, however, the Tsarist government did not concern itself with national questions: it preferred to think of the people in such general terms as the Sarts, Kirgiz (by which they meant the Kazakhs), the Kara-Kirgiz (meaning the real Kirgiz whom they regarded as an offshoot of the Kazakhs) and the Turkmens. The precise labelling of the peoples and their classification as nations, *narodnost'*, and nationalities was carried out during the Soviet regime, and although both processes were to a large extent arbitrary and artificial, the results have after forty years acquired a certain reality. The adoption or resuscitation of precise ethnic labels as a result or as a part of nationalist movements, whether spontaneous or artificial, has been a common enough phenomenon during the past half-century.

For example, the peoples of Turkey did not officially describe themselves as Turks or their country as Turkey (Türkiye) until 1923. The word Turk as used in imperial society before the culmination of the Turkish nationalist movement was a derogatory term reserved for nomads or ignorant peasants. Whether or not the emergence of the Uzbek and other Central Asian 'nations' can fairly be regarded as the work of the peoples themselves, it will be convenient to review the origin of the various peoples as they are officially described and as they apparently think of themselves today. In the present chapter

consideration will only be given to the history of the various peoples and to their material condition and culture before they came under Russian domination. Reference will, however, be made to recent population trends and figures.

From an anthropological point of view the peoples of Central Asia may be grouped as follows. The Uzbeks and Tadzhiks belong to the Caucasoid group; they are round-headed, of medium height and have dark hair and eyes. Mongoloid features can be seen among the Tadzhiks of the plains, among some of the mountain peoples, and also among the Uzbeks of Northern Khorezm and of Fergana. The Kazakhs and Kirgiz belong to the South Siberian type formed as a result of the mingling of the Central Asian Mongoloids with the ancient Caucasoid population of Kazakhstan. The Karakalpaks have features common both to the Uzbeks and to the Kazakhs, being somewhat closer to the latter, The Turkmens are in some respects in a class by themselves: they have predominantly Caucasoid physical features, but they are long-headed and considerably taller than the Uzbeks and Tadzhiks. Both as regards race and language, they are usually thought of as belonging to the south-western groups of Turkic peoples, while the remaining Central Asian Turkic peoples belong to the eastern group.

The *Uzbeks* are the largest Turkic group in the Soviet Union and the largest in the world after the Turks of Turkey. With a total of over 6,000,000 they are the fourth most numerous nationality in the Soviet Union. Their name was probably derived from Uzbek, one of the khans of the Golden Horde. During the 15th century, the Uzbeks occupied the country between the Lower Volga and the Aral Sea. Coming south at the beginning of the 16th century, they conquered the settled regions of Bukhara and Samarkand, and later of Urgench and Tashkent, and soon became mixed with the earlier settlers in these regions, including the ancient Iranian population of Khorezm and Sogd. They constituted more than half the

population of the khanate of Khiva, and a third of that of Bukhara.

Originally nomadic, the Uzbeks have been sedentary for the past three centuries; but traces of their old division into ninety-seven tribes still remain and in the Fergana Valley there are some elements which preserve their own way of life, including a tendency towards nomadism. At present over 80 per cent of the Uzbeks live in the Uzbek SSR, with the remaining 934,000 being more or less equally divided among the other four republics. Outside the Soviet Union there are about 1,000,000 Uzbeks in Afghanistan and about 8,000 in the Sinkiang-Uygur Autonomous Region of China.

The *Kazakhs* are the sixth most numerous nationality in the Soviet Union, with a total of over 3,500,000 of whom about 80 per cent live in Kazakhstan and the remainder in the other four Central Asian Republics and in that part of the RSFSR bordering on Kazakhstan. The origin of the Kazakhs is obscure. In Turkic language records the word Kazakh does not appear until the 11th century, and then only as a general term meaning 'riders of the steppe'. Barthold described them as 'Uzbeks who in the 15th century had detached themselves from the bulk of their nation and consequently had not taken part in the conquest of the Timurid Kingdom'. The three Hordes into which the Kazakhs formed themselves after the break-up of the Golden Horde in the 15th century were distributed as follows: the Greater Horde around Lake Balkhash; the Middle Horde in the northern and central part of what is now Kazakhstan; and the Lesser Horde in the western part near the Caspian Sea and the Ural river.

During the past fifty years the strength of the Kazakh population has undergone considerable fluctuation. At the 1926 census it was approximately 4,000,000, but by the 1939 census it had dropped to just over 3,000,000, a decrease for which no official explanation has ever been forthcoming.

There are about 500,000 Kazakhs in the Ili district of the Sinkiang-Uygur Autonomous Region adjoining the Kazakh SSR.

In the 1959 census, the total number of *Kirgiz* in the Soviet Union was given as 974,000, of whom 837,000 lived in the Kirgiz SSR. Of the remainder, 92,000 were given as living in the Uzbek SSR and 26,000 in the Tadzhik SSR. Outside the USSR, there are some 70,000 Kirgiz living in the Sinkiang-Uygur Autonomous Region to the north and west of Kashgar. The origin and identity of the present-day Kirgiz has not yet been fully established. Kirgiz are known to have inhabited the upper reaches of the Yenisey river between the 6th and 9th centuries, and it is these Kirgiz who are mentioned in the Orkhon inscriptions which date from the 8th century. The language of these inscriptions bears a striking resemblance to modern Kirgiz, but it is not known how or when the Kirgiz reached their present habitat. Tsarist ethnographers regarded them as closely allied to the Kazakhs in race and language, but whether or not they had a common origin the two peoples are now considered as separate nations. It is perhaps significant that although the 1959 census shows 20,000 Kazakhs as livng in the Kirgiz SSR, no Kirgiz are shown as living in the Kazakh SSR.

Of the total of 1,400,000 *Turkmens* in the USSR, 924,000 live in the Turkmen SSR and the remainder in the Uzbek SSR. There are about 200,000 in Persia and some thousands in Afghanistan. The Turkmens are the most distinctive Turkic people in Central Asia and they kept aloof from the khanates of Khiva and Bukhara which adjoined their territory, except in so far as they raided them. Their origin is obscure: one Turkmen tradition traces them to the legendary Oguz Khan, possibly a personification of the Oguz, a tribal union mentioned in the Orkhon inscriptions; but the Soviet ethnographer Tokarev considers that their long-shaped heads suggest intermingling with some ancient non-Turkic stock. Their

language, which belongs to the south-western group, is of a western rather than an eastern origin.

The *Karakalpaks* numbered 173,000 in 1959 and are almost entirely concentrated in the Karakalpak ASSR (part of the Uzbek SSR). The first historical mention of the Karakalpaks as such dates from the end of the 16th century when they were living on the lower reaches of the Syr-dar'ya, both groups being under the influence of the Kazakh hordes. During the 18th century, and possibly earlier, the southern group settled on the Zeravshan river and in Fergana, while the northern group moved to the delta of the Amu-dar'ya.

Of the total of 1,397,000 *Tadzhiks* living in the USSR in 1959, 1,051,000 were living in the Tadzhik SSR, the latter figure including some smaller Iranian communities such as the Yagnobis and Shugnanis in the Pamirs. There are 312,000 Tadzhiks in the Uzbek SSR and 15,000 in the Kirgiz SSR. The total number of Tadzhiks living in Soviet Central Asia is far smaller than of those living outside it. There are about 2,100,000 in Afghanistan, mainly in the province of Badakhshan, the valley of the Hari Rud and the southern slopes of the Hindu Kush.

There is also a Tadzhik community living between Nishapur and Sabzavar in North Persia, and there are about 17,000 in Sinkiang. The Tadzhiks are without doubt the oldest ethnic element in Central Asia, being the descendants of the ancient Sogdian and Bactrian population; but traces of ancient Iranian civilization are no more marked among them than among the Uzbeks, except perhaps among the so-called mountain Tadzhiks of the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast.

These six peoples have constituted the bulk of the population of Soviet Central Asia, most probably in the same relative proportions, for several centuries, although they have not always been so clearly distinguished from each other as they are today. The great majority of each of the nationalities live in the republics bearing their names: but the relative proportions

of titular nationalities in the total population of the republics have fluctuated considerably in the Soviet period. Thus, in 1926, Kazakhs constituted 57 per cent of the population of Kazakhstan, Uzbeks 74 per cent in Uzbekistan, Kirgiz 66 per cent in Kirgizia, Tadzhiks 75 per cent in Tadzhikistan and Turkmens 74 per cent in Turkmenistan. But in 1959 these proportions had fallen to 29·6 per cent of Kazakhs, 62 per cent of Uzbeks, 40·5 per cent of Kirgiz, 53 per cent of Tadzhiks, and 61 per cent of Turkmens.

The ratio of all titular nationalities to total republic population showed a steady downward trend in this period of thirty-three years, except in the case of the Turkmens, which decreased to 59 per cent in 1939 but rose to 61 per cent in 1959. This change in ratio has been due not to inter-republican migration but to the steady influx of non-Asian settlers.

In addition to the main Asian nationalities listed above there are a number of minor ones. Before the coming of the Russians these were confined to small communities of Tatars, Arabs, Jews and Indians. During the 19th century, communities of Uygurs (Turkic Muslims from Sinkiang) and Dungans (Chinese Muslims) migrated to Russian territory from Western China and in 1959 numbered 95,000 and 21,000 respectively. During the Soviet period some 213,000 Koreans and a few thousand Baluchis have settled in the region, and by the 1959 census the Jewish and Tatar communities had risen to 147,495 and 780,000 respectively. The number of Tatars steadily increased throughout the 19th and 20th centuries and was further swollen in 1944 by the deportation from the Crimea of over 200,000 Tatars.

Mention must also be made of the large number of Germans in the region. These consist partly of the exiled population of the German Volga Republic and partly of unrepatriated prisoners of war. The 1959 census shows a total of 91,000 Germans in the Uzbek, Tadzhik and Kirgiz SSR. Other Soviet sources show a total of 330,000 Germans in the

northern part of Kazakhstan alone. The grand total in the five republics must therefore exceed 500,000.

In any consideration of the social and cultural characteristics of the peoples of Central Asia before the Russian impact some distinction must be made between the nomadic and sedentary elements. Certain features were common to both of them. The first of these was the principle of kinship and consanguinity which permeated the whole of Central Asian society. But while among the nomads kinship was the overriding factor, among the settled peoples the appearance of the city and the growth of urban life became to a considerable extent incompatible with tribal and clan loyalties. The joint family was everywhere the social unit; among the nomads the large joint family amounting to a clan had ceased to be the economic unit some time in the 6th century A.D., although they retained most of their customs and traditions, as well as their moral codes. Among the sedentary peoples, in the middle of the 19th century, the joint family usually consisted of only two generations. Among both nomad and sedentary elements the authority of the head of the family was paramount, and regulated such matters as marriage and the allotment of property and family duties.

Before the coming of the Russians the Kazakhs were a purely nomadic people, except in the extreme south, where the steppe began to encroach on the semi-desert region during the 16th century. Here there was some urban and agricultural development; but elsewhere the economy was entirely pastoral and there were no towns or roads of any description. The whole of Kazakh life was conditioned by the search for summer grazing grounds with adequate water, and for winter pastures sheltered from the wind and cold. Most of the perpetual tribal warfare was due to quarrels over these pastures, and the general insecurity made life for the Kazakhs hard and precarious. But their economy was exceedingly vigorous, and once the threat of Oyrat aggression had been eliminated by the Chinese devasta-

tion of Jungaria in the 18th century they might have continued their nomadic existence for an indefinite period, had they been left to themselves.

The effect of Islamic culture upon the Kazakhs was limited by the conditions of nomadic life, but it was none the less considerable. Islam brought the art of writing, and such education as there was was based on the Arabic script and on Arabic and Persian literature. A considerable Arabic and Persian loan vocabulary found its way into the written language; but the spoken language and the large oral literature consisting of epic poems, tales, legends and ritual songs remained to a large extent free from foreign accretions. Society was to some extent regulated by Islamic customary and canon law, but women went unveiled and their position was much less abject than is often made out.

Islam sat even more lightly on the Kirgiz than on the Kazakhs, and Barthold notes that they were still looked upon as heathen in the 16th century. Nomadism was by no means universal among the Kirgiz, but the settled districts were small and isolated; none of the cities and townships of present-day Kirgizia came into existence until the second half of the 19th century.

Although the culture of the nomadic peoples was in some respects primitive, it is noteworthy that it was among the Kazakhs that political comprehension first began to dawn rather than among the more sophisticated and urbanized Uzbeks. Schools were unknown and literacy consequently confined to a few mullas and merchants, but through their epic poems the Kazakhs had a considerable knowledge of their history and of their existence as an individual people quite distinct from the Chinese, the Oyrats and the settled peoples of the oases. The same could be said of the Turkmens and Kirgiz, although the latter certainly regarded themselves as more closely associated with the Kazakhs than with any other people.

The spoken language of the nomad peoples was highly developed. Kazakh and Kirgiz are nowadays regarded as separate languages, particularly in their written form; but before the coming of the Russians, the difference was considered as purely dialectal, and writing, when it was done at all, was in Arabic, Persian or perhaps Chagatay, of which mention will be made later. Among the Turkmens, writing was practised much earlier and the poet Makhtum Quli, who flourished between 1730 and 1780, was already writing in a language perfectly comprehensible to the ordinary people. It is noteworthy that he is mentioned in the modern Turkish *Encyclopaedia of Islam* as a Turkish poet whose works are part of the literary heritage of the Turkic peoples.

Cultural development in the settled districts of the southern part of the region was on different and much more sophisticated lines owing to the greater influence of Islam and of Iranian civilization. Long before the Russian people had accepted Christianity, that is, before the end of the 9th century, Islamic culture had reached a high degree of development, and Iranian influence, which had begun during the Sasanian period, continued with hardly a break up to the end of the Samanid dynasty in 999. The overthrow of this dynasty by the Karakhanids began what is sometimes called the Turkish period, although Barthold considered that the culture of the Karakhanids as of other Turkic peoples coming from the east was largely derived from their contact with the Chinese.

The Mongols themselves contributed nothing whatever to the culture of Turkestan, but the *pax Mongolica*, which ended with the Timurid dynasty, gave an important fillip to urban culture and the arts. During the 10th century Bukhara became an important centre of Islamic learning, and it was there that the *medreseh*, or Muslim Higher Educational Establishment, had its origin. Under the rule of Timur's grandson, Ulugh Beg, the arts and sciences flourished exceedingly in Samarkand. Much of the literature of the period was in Arabic or Persian,

but at the beginning of the 14th century, the Chagatay language came into vogue and was used to some extent by the Great Uzbek poet Mir Ali Shir, who appended to his poetry in that language the *takhallus* or *nom de guerre* of 'Navai' (the melodious), while for his Arabic and Persian writings he used 'Fani' (the transitory). Chagatay, named after one of Chingiz Khan's sons, was a kind of Turkic literary *lingua franca* much used for intercommunication during the 14th and 15th centuries, and it was in Chagatay that the Emperor Babur wrote his famous memoirs.

Education, which was virtually non-existent in the Steppe Region, was a distinct feature of urban society in Turkestan. It was on strictly Muslim lines and consisted mainly in the learning of passages from the Koran by rote. During the turmoil of the 18th century the *medresehs* suffered a decline, but in the first half of the 19th century, owing to the improved economic condition of the khanates, many new *medresehs* were built and education was undoubtedly on the upgrade. Ten years before the khanate of Kokand was overrun by the Russians, Khoroshkin, a Russian officer who carried out a reconnaissance in 1867, reported the city of Kokand as having a population of 80,000 with 600 mosques and 15 *medresehs*, where about 15,000 students were taught.

With a few exceptions such as the one just quoted, the general picture painted by western and particularly Russian travellers in the region before the Russian conquest was one in which misgovernment, cruelty, poverty, dirt and disease featured largely. Conditions were undoubtedly low by contemporary Western European and in some instances Russian standards; but disparagement of existing conditions is a well-known prelude to and concomitant of imperialist aggression, and the general picture is in many ways misleading. There were many aspects of nomad and rural life in Central Asia which were deserving of admiration and even of envy; and the rulers were not all monsters of cruelty. It is also by

no means certain that the standards of ruling and living in Central Asia during the first half of the 19th century were much lower than those of mediaeval Europe, where wholesale invasion and devastation came to an end some centuries earlier than in Central Asia.

2

Historical Background

THE PEOPLES of Soviet Central Asia can hardly be said to have 'entered history' before the Arab conquests of the 7th and 8th centuries. Historical records before the appearance in the region of Islamic civilization and culture are extremely scanty, being confined to Greek and Chinese chronicles, many of which were based on legend and hearsay.

The only part of the region about which any coherent information is available was Sogd, which lay between the Amu-dar'ya (Oxus) and Syr-dar'ya (Jaxartes) rivers and corresponded roughly to what later became known to Western historians as Transoxania. The people of Sogd were of Iranian origin, but they formed only a small part of a vast nomad Turkic empire one-half of which stretched from the Urals to Mongolia, while the other was centred on Semirech'ye, or what is now Kirgizia. The valleys and oases seem to have been fairly thickly populated and were ruled over by princelings known as *dihqans* living in castles from which they dominated the countryside. The prevailing religions were Zoroastrianism and Manichaeanism. Some early traces of Buddhism and Christianity have been found, but these had mainly died out before the beginning of the 7th century.

During the 7th century the Persian Sasanian Empire had been conquered by the Omayyad caliphate centred on Damascus, and at the beginning of the 8th century Arab forces under Qutayba ibn Muslim, operating from Khorasan, the northernmost province of the Sasanian Empire, overran Transoxania and most of what is now the republic of Turkmenistan. Resistance by the Turkic nomads and the settled Iranian

population was soon overcome, but of potentially greater importance was the proximity of the Chinese, to whom the local population appealed for assistance. The Arabs themselves regarded Turkestan, as the region was then known to the Persians, as a province wrested from the Chinese, to whose influence they finally put an end by defeating them at the battle of the Talas river in 751.

In 750 the Omayyad caliphate was replaced by the Abbasids and this really marked the end of direct Arab rule in Turkestan. Until the end of the 10th century, Transoxania, and in particular the cities of Samarkand and Bukhara, became part of the Persian Samanid Empire. Although Arab Muslim influence in such administrative matters as law, taxation and land tenure was great and lasting, it was Persian culture which had a greater effect on the settled areas, where its influence is still considerable today. In general, Islamic culture and influence were confined to the cultivated regions and did not spread into the northern Steppe Region until much later, probably during the 15th century.

In the year 999 Samanid rule in Turkestan was overthrown by the Karakhanids, a Turkic people coming from the east who quickly embraced Islam. Thenceforward, with two brief intervals following the invasion of the Karakitays (1125–1210) and the Mongols, Turkestan remained until the coming of the Russians under various Turkic rulers and dynasties among whom the principal were the Seljuks, who ruled over the whole of Muslim Asia until the middle of the 12th century, and the Khorezm Shahs, who reached the zenith of their power at the beginning of the 13th century when they were overthrown by the Mongols.

The Mongol invasion and subsequent domination included the whole of Turkestan and part of the Steppe Region; but since the greater part of the Mongol forces consisted of locally recruited Turks, the number of Mongols who settled in the region was negligible and the cultural effect of the conquest

was therefore very small. By the middle of the 14th century all the Mongol rulers had become Turkicized and had embraced Islam. The effects of Mongol administrative methods are more easily traceable in Western Russia than they are in Central Asia, and the last Mongol dynasty, that of Timur, or Tamerlane as he is more generally known, is celebrated for the impetus which it gave to the development of Islamic art and culture.

Timur and his successors ruled over Turkestan until the beginning of the 16th century, when a part of the nomad Kazakhs, who had by this time embraced Islam and come to be known as Uzbeks, came south under their ruler Shaibani Khan and overthrew the Timurid dynasty.

Since the Arab invasion did not penetrate into the Kazakh Steppe, the early history of the Kazakhs was hardly treated at all by contemporary Arab chroniclers. In such confused records as exist of the first half of the 17th century the Kazakhs are referred to as Uzbeks, but in the second half of the century a so-called Kazakh Union or Confederation was formed with which the Russians, who had by this time conquered the khanate of Astrakhan', established some kind of contact. At the end of the 16th century the Kazakhs were divided into three hordes, mentioned in Chapter 1, but it is not known when these hordes came into existence. During the 17th and the early part of the 18th centuries the Kazakhs were more or less united against the Kalmyk or Oyrat invasions directed from what is now Sinkiang; and it was partly in order to gain help against these invasions that some of the Kazakhs submitted to Russian rule in 1730. The Oyrat invasions were the last nomad invasions of Central Asia, and Nadir Shah's incursion in 1740 was to be the last attack on Central Asia by an Asian ruler.

The Shaibanid dynasty which had succeeded the Timurids came to an end in the middle of the 17th century, and what Barthold describes as 'a period of political, economic and

cultural decadence' ensued.* At the end of the 18th century, three so-called khanates came into being in Bukhara, Khorezm (later known as Khiva) and Kokand. These three khanates together occupied most of the territory which now constitutes the four southern Central Asian Republics; but they had no clearly defined frontiers and were constantly at war with each other.

The Russians believed for a time that the khanates were properly constituted nation-states with which it would be possible to establish some kind of regular relations. During the first half of the 19th century, however, they realized that this was very far from being the case and that if they were to achieve their aim of advancing until they reached the frontiers of organized states, they would have to neutralize the khanates by force of arms.

Although originally part of the Arab Empire, the Central Asian khanates had become cut off from the rest of the Muslim world, or rather from that part of it nowadays known as the Middle East. This was due partly to the rise of Shiism in Persia during the Safavid dynasty (1502–1722) and partly because the caravan routes which had connected Central Asia with the Middle and Far East since the 2nd century B.C. had during the 13th century begun to give way to sea routes between the southern Chinese ports and the Persian Gulf. There was, however, a brisk trade with Afghanistan and to some extent with Northern India. The result of this comparative isolation was that on the eve of the Russian conquest the Central Asian khanates, and still more the Steppe Region, were the most backward part of the whole Muslim world and nation-forming processes which were already at work elsewhere could hardly be said to exist there.

In the first quarter of the 18th century the situation prevailing in what is now Soviet Central Asia and Kazakhstan and in the adjoining countries was roughly as follows: the

* V. V. Barthold. *Four Studies on the History of Central Asia*, vol. 1. Leiden 1956.

Steppe Region, corresponding approximately to present-day Kazakhstan, was occupied by the nomad Kazakhs, ruled over by various 'sultans' and 'khans'. The division of the Kazakhs into 'hordes' was not a political one but related to the groups of tribes and clans who roamed over certain wide areas in search of pastureland and water for the flocks and herds which formed their only means of livelihood. Security was low by reason of constant tribal warfare and frequent incursions from Sinkiang by the Oyrats.

The Russians were already in possession of Western Siberia and were about to found the city of Orenburg; and in the west, Cossack settlements were established along the line of the Ural river. South of the Steppe Region lay the deserts and oases. Here the Khans of Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand held uncertain sway over peoples who were partly nomad and partly settled in the oases where, in contrast with the Steppe Region, considerable towns had grown up. The khanates had no fixed frontiers but laid claim to spheres of influence and allegiance which resulted in almost perpetual warfare among themselves and also with local governors in China and Persia and with local rulers in Northern Afghanistan. In the west of the region, the Turkmens mostly remained outside the influence of the khanates and roamed and raided at will in the latter's territory and also far into Persia.

In Persia, Nadir Shah had usurped the throne of the Safavids in 1736; but after his meteoric campaigns in Afghanistan, Northern India and Central Asia, he had been murdered in 1747 leaving Persia in a state of chaos and Northern Afghanistan in the strong hands of Ahmad Shah Durrani. The Mogul Empire was in the process of disintegration, but British power in India had not yet advanced beyond the stage of isolated trading stations in Bombay, Bengal and Madras. In Western China the Central Chinese Government was beginning to establish its authority, but only to the extent that it liquidated the khanate of Jungaria, thus bringing to an end

the Oyrat threat to the Kazakh Steppe. Sinkiang was not formally established as a province of the Chinese Empire until late in the 19th century.

The Russian expansion southwards into the Kazakh Steppe and later into Turkestan began at a time when the other powers adjoining the region had either abandoned their designs on it or were too weak to pursue them. Ahmad Shah Durrani, the only strong ruler to emerge during the rest of the 18th century, directed his attention towards Northern India rather than across the Amu-dar'ya (Oxus) river, which marked the northern limit of his territory.

During the period of over 200 years which followed Nadir Shah's invasion of Central Asia the destinies of the peoples of what is now Soviet Central Asia have remained almost entirely unaffected by developments in the adjoining states of China, Afghanistan and Persia and have lain exclusively in the hands of Russia. It was this fact which retarded, if it did not indefinitely postpone, the natural process of nation-forming among these peoples. The khanates, whose ruling dynasties had not been founded until after the Russians had begun their encroachment of the Kazakh Steppe, were in no sense nation-states: their people did not regard themselves as belonging to any nation nor did they have any sense of patriotism, or even allegiance, except for those in the immediate entourage of the khan.

But in this respect they differed little from the principalities of mediaeval Europe; and there were no large closely knit communities like the Sikhs and Marathas in India. Nevertheless, if the khanates had been left to themselves or had received material assistance from another power or powers interested in arresting the southward advance of Russia, it is reasonable to suppose that in the course of time they would have formed nation-states, or would have perhaps merged into one. There were strong interresemblances of race and culture both within the khanates and among all three of them.

On the eve of the Russian conquest, there was nothing in the Steppe Region which could fairly be described as jurisdiction or administration. There were no cities, no settled areas and consequently no land ownership or taxation. property consisted entirely of live-stock. The armed force at the disposal of the various tribal leaders was not organized in any sense known in the West, although it possessed considerable skill in guerrilla warfare.

In the khanates things were different: in Bukhara and Kokand there were several large cities and cultivated areas and there were in consequence systems of administration, land-tenure and taxation which were to some extent a legacy of the Perso-Arab administration of Transoxania under the Abbasid Caliphate and of the Timurids. The rule of the khans of Bukhara and Kokand was normally despotic and cruel, but buttressed as it was by the influence of the Muslim clergy, it probably did not appear so to the people. The khans engaged in some state-building activity and carried through some irrigation schemes and even a measure of administrative reform. There was a flourishing, if feudal, economy and a brisk trade was carried on with Russia and other countries long before the conquest. Between 1827 and 1837, for example, the value of exports to Russia exceeded that of imports by 2,000,000 rubles. The exports consisted principally of raw cotton, cotton textiles, silk, dyes and fruit, while from Russia were imported pottery, hardware, sugar, paper, tin, fur, mercury, candles and, later, paraffin and manufactured goods and textiles.

The situation in Khiva was different from that in Bukhara and Kokand. In one sense it was more compact since it did not consist of principalities with strong local traditions and a tendency towards separatism as did the other khanates. On the other hand, some of the towns developed a kind of local patriotism which amounted at times to autonomy. Khiva was more exposed than the other khanates to the marauding

activities of Kazakh and Turkmen nomads who roamed the desert areas lying to the north and south-west. Artificial irrigation was extensive and there were six main canals from 45 to 60 miles in length. Internal trade was fairly well developed although it was less than that of Bukhara and Kokand. All three khanates maintained small armed forces with some semblance of organization but with only a mixed collection of obsolete firearms, some of them of home manufacture.

During the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th a considerable number of Russian envoys, merchants and army officers visited the Steppe Region and the khanates. During the latter period, Britain was extending her rule in India and consequently became interested in the possibilities of trade with the Central Asian khanates and also in Russia's intentions there. This naturally resulted in a certain amount of intelligence activity designed to examine the logistics of a possible Russian advance, and also to establish some kind of relations with the local rulers.

Both Russian and British Intelligence must have discovered that the military potential of the khanates was negligible; but although Soviet writers claim that the British intelligence officers came to Central Asia with the sole object of preparing the way for British conquest, colonization, enslavement and the like, they have not adduced any evidence to show that the British Government ever formulated any plan of imperial aggrandizement in Central Asia on the lines of that carried out by the Tsarist Government and so far successfully perpetuated by its Soviet successors.

3

The Coming of the Russians

IN CHAPTER 2 some account was given of the situation prevailing in Central Asia on the eve of the Russian conquest. Tsarist and Soviet descriptions of this situation and of the circumstances which preceded and attended the conquest show a good deal of variation. Tsarist historiography was relatively factual and consistent, since it was not concerned to the same extent with whitewashing Russian actions in the eyes of the world. Legitimate Russian trading operations were being interfered with first by the Kazakhs and later by the Uzbek khanates. Accordingly, pacification of the Steppe and circumscription of the power of the khanates were understandable operations for an expanding power impelled by what in North America has been described as 'manifest destiny'.

The only great power from which the Russian advance was likely to evoke protest or resistance was Britain, and that solely because of the threat which the latter stages of the advance constituted to the British position in India. Soviet historians, on the other hand, have been confronted by a far more difficult task: they have had to explain why vast and valuable territories which Imperial Russia acquired by force of arms have been retained by a regime which professes to eschew the whole idea of empire and colonialism. This has severely taxed their ingenuity, and their approach to the subject has displayed a good deal of tergiversation. Pokrovskiy, the first Marxist historian, roundly condemned the Russian conquest as having no redeeming feature whatever. After his death in 1932,

this theory was declared to have been mistaken: in its place, the theory of the 'lesser evil' was adopted, that is to say, it was explained that bad though the conquest was, it was not so bad as would have been a conquest by Britain or Germany.

'Soviet historians', wrote N. A. Khalfin in 1960, 'are of the definite opinion that for Central Asia to have become part of the British dominions would have been the greatest possible disaster for its peoples.'* He does not, of course, mention the fact that if the peoples of Central Asia had been embodied in the British dominions, they would by now, for better or for worse, have gained their independence.

During the Soviet period a vast mass of literature has already been and still is being written on the subject of Central Asia. It deals in the greatest possible detail with every aspect of the history and culture of the various peoples, and seeks to prove how all through the ages they have been exploited and repressed by successive rulers until the Soviet regime ushered in by the Revolution of 1917. The change in policy outlined above has resulted in much less emphasis being given to the actual conquest of the region, which, as already noted, is now no longer thought of as a conquest at all; but the Tsarist administration is described as uniformly bad, its only redeeming feature being that it was instrumental in introducing to the Central Asian peoples a large number of Russian peasants and workers.

Even leaving out of account the considerable quantity of earlier Soviet writing which has been withdrawn from publication owing to changes of policy, the volume of extant literature far exceeds that produced during the Tsarist period. Until quite recently practically none of the latter had been reprinted or was indeed available to any but a few selected Soviet students, but in 1963 it was decided to produce for the first

* N. A. Khalfin. *Russia's Policy in Central Asia, 1857–1868.* A condensed version of the original Russian. Central Asian Research Centre, London 1964.

time a definitive edition of the works of the great oriental historian V. V. Barthold, who died in 1930, but whose pre-revolutionary writings constituting the bulk of his work had never been reprinted.

The literary rehabilitation of Barthold, coupled with the fact that much Soviet writing, and particularly that published during the past ten years on early history, ethnography and philology is informed by considerable scholarship, has endowed Soviet historiography with respectability and authority in respect of the fields just mentioned, but this can hardly be said of the Soviet version of the history of the past 150 years.

The actual conquest of the region by the Russians need be described only very briefly here. It consisted of three phases. From 1730 until about the middle of the 19th century Russia was engaged in the annexation and pacification of the Steppe Region, which consisted mainly of what is now the Kazakh SSR. During this phase the only foreign power with which the Russians came into contact was China. Soviet maps published in the 1950s show the Chinese Empire as still extending as far west as the eastern shores of Lake Baikal at the end of the 18th century, but by 1860 the effective frontier between Russia and China was approximately where it lies today. The second phase began in 1855, by which time Russian forces were occupying the so-called Syr-Dar'ya line running from the north of the Aral Sea to Lake Issyk Kul'. From this line the Russians advanced to the capture of Tashkent in 1865, and in 1867 established there the so-called Governorate-General of Turkestan. The third phase was the subjugation of the khanates, resulting in the complete annexation of Kokand and the reduction of Bukhara and Khiva to a state of vassalage; and finally in the defeat of the Turkmens, the most warlike and redoubtable element in the Central Asian population, at the battle of Gök Tepe in 1881 and the overrunning of Transcaspia and the Merv oasis by 1884.

From a military point of view, the operations were unremarkable. The Russian troops certainly performed some notable feats of physical endurance and were often outnumbered; but the only real resistance which they encountered apart from the guerrilla tactics of the Kazakhs and Turkmens was from the so-called armies of the khanates, which were undisciplined and unco-ordinated and possessed only a few antiquated firearms. Some idea of the extent of local resistance can be gained from the Russian casualties. Between 1847 and 1873 these amounted to only 400 killed and about 1,600 wounded. In the campaign against the Turkmens they were relatively much higher, amounting to 290 killed and 833 wounded during 1880–81.

No precise figures of the casualties suffered by the Muslim population are available, but they must certainly have run into many tens of thousands. After the battle of Gök Tepe alone the Russian commander, General Skobelev, whose total force amounted to about 7,000 men, admitted to a British journalist, Charles Marvin, that he had had the corpses of the defeated Turkmens counted and that the total was 8,000 of both sexes.

In considering the Russian position in and administration of Central Asia it is important to note that there are two circumstances which sharply distinguish this region from other Asian colonial territories. The first is that although originally inhabited by peoples socially and culturally quite distinct from the Russians, Central Asia is geographically contiguous to European Russia and is not separated from it by any abrupt physical or climatic barriers. Secondly, in the Russian Empire, as in the USSR, the Russians have always enormously outnumbered the Asians: taken together, that is Great Russians, White Russians and Little Russians or Ukrainians, they make up nearly 80 per cent of the total population.

In certain other respects unconnected with these circumstances the Tsarist administration of Central Asia and the

Russian attitude towards its peoples differed from those which prevailed in other colonial empires, for example, those of Britain in India and France in North Africa. In the first place, the administration was essentially a military one: the Governor-General of Turkestan, as of the Steppe Region, was always a serving general officer and all the oblast (provincial) governors and so-called 'uyezd (county) commandants' were serving army officers. To the Russians this seemed a perfectly natural arrangement. In 1912, Krivosheyn, then head of the Agricultural Administration, wrote that Turkestan was 'still a Russian military camp, a temporary halting place during the victorious march of Russia into Central Asia. The Russian military might speaks to the subject mass of the natives a more comprehensible and impressive language than could a civil administration.'

The official Russian attitude towards Islam and the Muslim population was undoubtedly conditioned by the fact that from the 13th to the 15th century the Russians had themselves been dominated by the Islamized Mongols and they regarded their conquest of Central Asia partly as an act of retribution of which the capture of Samarkand in 1868 was the culminating point. 'Samarkand,' says an official handbook, "the focus of the world" and the capital of Tamerlane, who had once been so terrible to Russia, surrendered. Almost 500 years after Tamerlane's fearful attack on Russia (1395) our troops captured the town where lay his tomb.'*

Thenceforward, the Russian attitude towards Islam alternated between distrust and contempt. During the Tsarist regime this had the effect of the Russians setting their faces against the delegation of any important responsibility to Muslims, and also against the formation of territorially recruited armed forces. It also induced in Russian administrators the belief that the best way to treat Islam was with indifference; it would then gradually die of inanition. This

* *Aziatskaya Rossiya*, vol. 1. St Petersburg 1914.

belief, however, was abandoned after the revolt in Andizhan in 1898.

In their understandable desire to emphasize the achievements of the Revolution and the benefits which the Soviet regime has conferred on the peoples of Central Asia, Soviet historians have concentrated on presenting the history of the Tsarist colonial administration in the worst possible light and the motives and methods of Tsarist administrators as uniformly bad by contrast with the enlightened principles of their Soviet successors. Impartial historians of the future are unlikely to take quite the same view of the matter: in so far as Central Asia is concerned they will be inclined to see the two regimes merely as two phases of the same process —that of the superimposition for material ends of one culture and way of life upon another. They will regard the second phase simply as one which arose out of and was made possible by the first.

In retrospect it is easy to find fault with Tsarist administration in Central Asia and to point to many instances of inefficiency, muddle, corruption and lack of sympathy. When, however, all the facts are considered the Tsarist record of achievement can be seen as by no means negligible. During the 19th century the Russians had gained control over a vast region with a sparse but resentful population, where there were no communications, where building, agriculture and irrigation were carried on with techniques over 1,000 years old, and where industry was virtually confined to domestic handicrafts. The Steppe Region was not finally pacified until 1850; armed resistance continued in Fergana until 1876 and in Transcaspia until 1881.

Only twenty-four years were to elapse before Russia was involved in the disastrous Russo-Japanese War and the Revolution of 1905. During this relatively short and chequered period, however, the Russians achieved much. In the first place, they had battered the local population into a state of

almost complete submission broken only by the revolt of 1916 which a greatly depleted garrison was able to suppress without much difficulty. They established a good road and railway system and adequate port facilities on the Caspian and Aral seas. They founded a number of large and flourishing towns in the Steppe Region where none had been before, and they developed and modernized those of the province of Turkestan. They secured the Chinese, Afghan and Persian frontiers; they considerably developed trading facilities and the supply of raw materials; finally, they introduced into the region a total of some 2,000,000 Russian settlers. All these were essential preliminaries to the more complete exploitation and modernization of the region which was engaged in by the Soviet regime; but in this respect incomparably the most important was colonization, for without the presence of 1,500,000 Russians in the Steppe Region and nearly 500,000 in Turkestan the Revolution could never have been extended to Central Asia, which would thus have been lost for ever to the new regime unless it had been disposed to embark on its reconquest.

As regards the welfare of the local population the Tsarist achievement was less substantial. The Russian administration lightened and equalized the burden of taxation; it improved the state of personal security throughout the region and thus gave a fillip to private trading; and it provided a great deal of regular employment. In education, public health and the administration of justice not much improvement was effected.

On balance, and taking into consideration the differences in prevailing conditions, the Russian achievement in Central Asia was little different from that of the British in India and elsewhere, and the same factors hampered any radical progress: unwillingness of imperial governments to provide the necessary funds, opposition by retrograde and obscurantist elements in the local population and the reluctance of the ruling power to remove such opposition by force. During the last years of its

existence the Tsarist government became aware of the need for drastic reforms, and the Senate Commission under Count Pahlen which toured Turkestan in 1908–1909 made a large number of recommendations. None of these, however, had been put into effect before the outbreak of war in 1914.

As soon as the peoples of Central Asia realized that further armed resistance to the Russians was hopeless, they accepted their presence with characteristic Muslim resignation. That they welcomed their latest conquerors with open arms is merely a fiction concocted by Soviet propagandists; the Tsarist administrators never indulged in any such illusions. Tsarist innovations and interference with the traditional way of life were minimal compared with what was to come later under the Soviet regime; but Russian as well as Western observers were sceptical about the people's appreciation of Russian tolerance. N. Petrovskiy wrote of Russian institutions in the *Messager de l'Europe* of October 1875 that they 'appeared to the natives to be far more arbitrary and far more tyrannical than those under which they formerly lived under Mussulman rulers, not because they are really arbitrary and tyrannical, but because, seeing their frequent change, the native is not able to understand and explain to himself either the meaning of frequent changes, or the existence of these institutions'.

Eugene Schuyler, author of the best description of the early Tsarist administration of Central Asia ever written,* gave it as his opinion that 'a native can hardly help regarding the whole system as an irresponsible tyranny of the worse sort. Under Mussulman rule his khans and his beks were tyrannical, but they were still Mussulmans, men of his own race and of his own village, with similar character and holding to the same customs and traditions. Cruel and tyrannical as they were in many respects, there were certain bounds which custom forbade them to overstep, and were these bounds too greatly or fre-

* Eugene Schuyler. *Turkistan*, 2 vols. London 1876.

quently passed the popular discontent was such as to drive them from power. But for the Russians there seem to be no limits.'

However much they disliked them, the people were prepared to suffer the introduction of Russian institutions and methods in silence until after the Tsarist policy of colonization had reached its peak between 1906–11 and resulted in the people being deprived of much of their best land and of their water rights. This was the main cause of the great revolt of 1916 to which reference has already been made.

Neither this revolt nor anything else which happened during the Tsarist regime can be called a national movement aiming at independence; but there was a perceptible growth of what, for want of a more precise term, can be called national consciousness, in spite of the fact that the people did not regard themselves as belonging to nations or nationalities and were not grouped as such by the Russians. Something in the way of a natural nation-forming process had begun in the 19th century when the three literary languages of Arabic, Persian and Chagatay began to be replaced by literary Kazakh, Uzbek and Turkmen.

It is probable that three national groups were beginning to emerge from the welter of Central Asian peoples, namely, the Uzbek-Tadzhik, Kazakh-Kirgiz-Karakalpak, and Turkmen groups. Indications of national consciousness were most apparent in the first two of these groups. Among the Uzbeks and Tadzhiks of the Turkestan province the principal factor was the so-called Jadid movement. This took its name from the formula *usul-i-jadid* or 'new method' and had its origin among the Tatars of the Crimea. It was primarily a Muslim reformist movement with pan-Turkic overtones, which aimed at modernizing the Muslim system of education and also at introducing a uniform Turkic language for use by all the Turkic peoples in Russia. In the second of these aims it achieved no success, but in the educational field its progress

was remarkable and a large number of so-called *Jadid* schools were set up in the larger towns of the Turkestan province, where they competed successfully with the 'Russo-native' schools set up by the Russian government with the aim of providing modern education through the medium of vernacular languages.

The Jadid movement also affected Uzbek, or as it was then called, Sart literature. The new Jadid literature was mainly concerned with attacking clericalism and obscurantism, particularly in the still semi-independent khanates; but as it also resisted Russian literary influence, it had the effect of seeming to reinforce local culture against Russian infiltration of all kinds.

The Jadid movement had comparatively little effect in the Steppe Region, where, however, national consciousness began to flower independently. Although culturally more backward than the Uzbeks and Tadzhiks, the Kazakhs, being more homogeneous, were more susceptible to the idea of the nation. Something approaching a nationalist press began to appear in 1907 with the newspaper *Qazaq* published in Troitsk. This paper attacked the government for its policy of Russification and colonization, but it also attacked reactionary pan-Islamism and nomadism. It never advocated separation from Russia and even urged the extension of compulsory service in the Russian armed forces to Kazakhs.

It may be useful to conclude this chapter with an attempt at a rather more objective assessment of the historical significance of the Russian conquest and subsequent administration of Central Asia than can be gained from a study of Soviet historiography.

Once Russia had established herself in the vast expanse of virtually uninhabited territory between the Urals and the Pacific, it was inevitable that she should expand southward to the frontiers of properly constituted states. When the Russians appeared on the scene, the peoples of Central Asia were just

beginning to recover from long centuries of foreign invasion, massacre and enslavement. Russia was the only power on the Asiatic mainland with the necessary military strength, dynamism and economic urge to take over responsibility for the Central Asian Steppes, deserts and mountainous regions. There is no doubt that by doing so she enormously improved her strategic, political and economic position. Nor is there any doubt that from a material point of view, that is, according to Western standards, the lot and prospects of the local population also improved. As in the history of other imperial conquests there were isolated instances of voluntary submission to and even of collaboration with the invaders; but there is no evidence whatever that the population as a whole welcomed either the Russian invading forces or the hundreds of thousands of Russian settlers who followed them.

Up to the end of the Tsarist regime in 1917 the idea of 'indigenization' of colonial territories with a view to the eventual grant to them of independence had scarcely impinged upon Western imperialist thinking, and it is not surprising that the Russians never held out any prospect of independence or self-government to the peoples of Central Asia. Had the Tsarist regime continued, however, it would inevitably have moved with the times and would have had to defer not only to nationalist but to world opinion.

4

The Revolution and the Civil War

FROM THE point of view of the leaders of the Revolution the great revolt of 1916 and the violent retribution which followed it were favourable circumstances, since they seemed to underline and further exacerbate the hostility of the Central Asian peoples towards the Tsarist regime. As indicated in the previous chapter, the underlying cause of the revolt was the rapid increase in the number of Russian settlers and the preference accorded to them in the allotment of land and irrigation water.

The revolt was actually sparked off by an imperial decree calling up some 500,000 men for labour duties in rear of the Russian forces engaged in the First World War. Hitherto the people of Central Asia had never been liable for military service, and the fact that they were now required not to fight but only to dig added insult to an already deep sense of injury. Soviet historians have tried to prove that the venom of the Muslims was directed solely against Russian officialdom and not against the hundreds of thousands of Russian peasants and workers living in their midst. But contemporary Tsarist official reports show clearly that it was the presence of the Russians in general to which the Muslims objected. This is supported by the fact that whereas Russian civilian casualties in the Turkestan Governorate-General alone were 2,325 killed and 1,384 missing, only 24 Russian and 55 native officials were killed. There is no record of Muslim casualties during the revolt, but they must have been extremely heavy. In addition, a Soviet

source has estimated that some 300,000 people fled into Chinese territory to escape the punitive operations which followed the revolt.

In 1917 about 97 per cent of the Muslim population of the Steppe Region and Turkestan were still illiterate, and it was only the very small intelligentsia which was capable of grasping the significance of the Revolution. These greeted the prospect of the breakdown of Russian rule with mixed feelings: the Jadids and landowners thought that the Revolution would put an end to Russian encroachment on their culture and on their lands and water rights; the traditionalists and the trading element, on the other hand, feared that it would put an end to their privileges and security.

After the 'February Revolution' the Muslims of Russia began for the first time to develop something in the way of organization. Muslim congresses were set up which received the blessing of the Provisional Government and at first even of the Bolshevik Government which succeeded it in November. In theory the Communist Party was committed to the grant of self-determination to all the subject nationalities, and there may at first have been some genuine intention of creating a kind of loose federation of the Muslim peoples of Russia which would be firmly attached to the ideals of the Revolution and eventually spread them to neighbouring Muslim countries. But circumstances soon arose which showed such a plan to be impracticable.

In the first place, any goodwill which the Muslims of Central Asia may have harboured towards the Revolution in the beginning was quickly dissipated by the action first of the Tashkent Committee which had taken over the functions of the Governor-General after the 'February Revolution', and later by the Tashkent Soviet which overturned the Committee in October 1917. Both the Committee and the Soviet entirely ignored the Muslim population and at the Third Congress of Soviets convened in November with the object of laying the foundation

of Soviet power in Turkestan, a special resolution was adopted which excluded Muslims from all government posts. This immediately aroused the hostility of the Muslims, who perceived that their hope that the Revolution would involve the disappearance of Russian rule was completely unfounded.

In December the Fourth Extraordinary Regional Muslim Congress met in the town of Kokand and passed a resolution which expressed 'the will of the peoples of Turkestan to self-determination in accordance with the principles proclaimed by the Great Russian Revolution and declares Turkestan territorially autonomous in union with the Federal Democratic Republic of Russia. The elaboration of the form of autonomy is entrusted to the constituent assembly of Turkestan, which must be convened as soon as possible.'

The so-called Kokand government formed after this Congress rightly considered that the Tashkent Soviet was acting without the authority of the revolutionary leaders in Petrograd and called upon the latter to intervene. It is probable that Lenin, if he was fully informed of the situation in Turkestan, disapproved of the Tashkent Soviet's attitude; but he was powerless to intervene and the Kokand government was therefore informed by Stalin that if the Tashkent Soviet was, in the opinion of the Muslims, 'leaning upon non-Muslim army elements, they should themselves dissolve it by force, if such force is available to the native proletarians and peasants'. In fact the only force possessed by the Muslims was a hastily recruited, undisciplined and poorly armed militia which the troops at the disposal of the Tashkent Soviet had no difficulty in defeating. In the middle of February 1918, Red Army forces surrounded the old city of Kokand and easily captured it. The sack of the city was followed by a massacre in which at least 5,000 people were killed, local estimates being more than double this figure.

The destruction of the Kokand government by the Tashkent Soviet, which contained no element of Muslim rep-

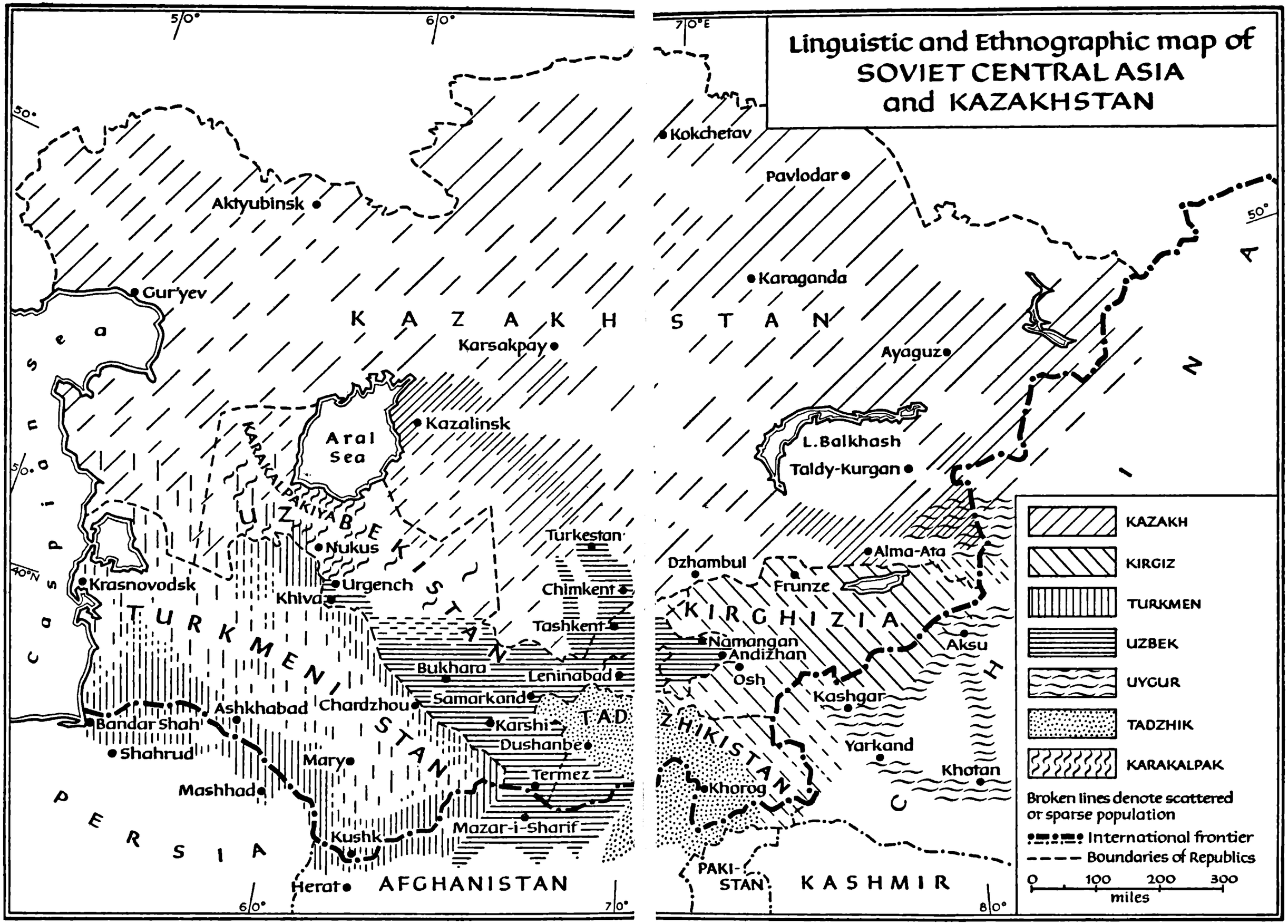
resentation, was in direct contradiction of all declared Communist principles. This was admitted by Safarov, a close associate of Lenin and a member of the Turkestan Commission appointed in 1919 with the object of curbing the power of the Tashkent government and arranging for Muslim participation in republican and local government. In a book published in 1921* he wrote:

> At the time when the power of the Turkestan Soviet was opposing the Muslims as an alien and hostile force, it discovered the most improbable allies among the European nationalities in the person of representatives of the Armenian bourgeoisie, the Dashnakists, the rich Russian peasants of Semirech'ye, Tsarist officials and even of those organizers of pogroms, the Russian priests! All these off-shoots of an exploiting society rallied quite naturally under the Red Flag of Communism inasmuch as in Turkestan, in the conditions of a former Tsarist colony, 'leftist Communism' amounted in fact to a *predatory feudal* exploitation of the broad masses of the native population by the Russian Red Guards, settlers and officials.

But although the Soviet government may have been disturbed by the high-handed attitude of the Tashkent Soviet, they probably feared that any attempt to compromise with the Muslim population would result in the loss of Central Asia to the Russian or Soviet empire. If the Muslims had been allowed in the beginning to participate in the Tashkent Soviet, or to set up a parallel government in Kokand or elsewhere, they might have consolidated their position and acquired a prescriptive right to the government of their own country of which it would have been difficult to deprive them. The 'liquidation' of the Kokand government is seen in retrospect by Soviet historians as a necessary operation which forestalled a counter-revolutionary movement designed to *wrest Turkestan from Soviet Russia.* These are the actual words used in the current edition of the *Soviet Encyclopaedia.*

* G. Safarov, *Kolonial'naya Revolyutsiya* (Opyt Turkestana). Moscow 1921.

Linguistic and Ethnographic map of SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA and KAZAKHSTAN



Based on a map by Stefan Wurm in Soviet Empire *by Olaf Caroe.*

The years 1918 and 1919 were years of great hardship for the Muslim peoples of Central Asia. Government, in so far as it existed at all, was in the hands of people entirely unsympathetic to Muslim spiritual and material requirements. Many of them were unprincipled adventurers or opportunists belonging to minorities mistrusted by both Russians and Muslims alike. Most of these disappeared after the arrival in 1919 of the Turkestan Commission; but the part which they played in what is now known as the 'triumph of the Revolution' in Central Asia was important in that it intimidated the population to such an extent that they eventually tolerated the relatively orderly and moderate regime which succeeded the earlier reign of terror.

Soviet historians write of the Revolution and Civil War in Central Asia as if the local Muslim population played an active part in both. Nothing could be further from the truth. The bane of the Central Asian Muslims' existence was not inequality or the oppression of landlords but the all-pervading presence of the Russians. Moreover, in many parts of the country, and particularly in what is now Turkmenistan, the land was already communally owned by tribes and family unions, and the idea of confiscating it and distributing it to individuals was unintelligible. The peasant war which broke out in European Russia did not extend to Central Asia until it was artificially induced by a widespread propaganda campaign designed to create among the 'have-nots' a feeling of hatred for the 'haves'. Nor was the Muslim population involved except marginally in the Civil War, which was waged between contending Russian factions with the active participation of some 50,000 German, Austrian and Hungarian prisoners of war whom the Revolution had set at liberty.

But although the Muslim population had had nothing to do with starting either the Revolution or the Civil War, both of these had a disastrous effect on the ordinary people. The collapse of the Tsarist colonial administration soon resulted in

the complete breakdown of security and social services. Famine stalked the land and the situation was made worse by the thousands of disbanded or mutinous Russian soldiers, as well as the newly formed Red Army units, who ranged the countryside and plundered the native population indiscriminately. All this is described in detail by such contemporary writers as Safarov, although later historians have tried to attribute the worst excesses to Armenian militia units. Only in the larger cities was some semblance of law and order maintained, and this was mainly due to the presence there of large numbers of peaceable Russian citizens who were not politically inclined and wished to take no part in the Revolution.

The foregoing refers to the situation in the Turkestan Governorate-General. The situation in the Steppe Region and the khanates of Bukhara and Khiva was somewhat different. In the Steppe Region, in spite of the presence of 1,500,000 Russian settlers, the Kazakhs were at first able to display some initiative in the management of their own affairs. A Congress convened in Orenburg in December 1917 proclaimed an autonomous Kazakh region under a moderate national party called Alash Orda or Alash Host, Alash being the name of the mythical founder of the Kazakh people. The declared purpose of this autonomy was not apparently to create a Kazakh state, but merely to prevent the spread of Communism into the Kazakh Steppe.

The first Bolshevik occupation of Kazakhstan was only temporary: between January and March 1918 they occupied some of the northern cities as well as Alma-Ata (then still known as Vernyy), but before the end of the year the whole of the Kazakh Steppe had been cleared of Bolshevik forces, not, however, by the Kazakhs themselves but by the Ural and Orenburg Cossacks operating with Dutov's forces in Siberia. The power of the Alash Orda government was less than nominal and its fate was sealed when the anti-Bolshevik government in Omsk declared in November 1918 that it would

no longer support Kazakh autonomy. Discouraged by this the Kazakh leaders began to join forces with the Bolsheviks, and by March 1920 resistance to the latter forces had faded away. In August 1920 the creation of the Kirgiz (Kazakh) Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic was announced.

Until 1920 the khanates of Bukhara and Khiva managed to preserve the same degree of nominal independence as they had enjoyed during the Tsarist regime. In these khanates there was little or no hostility either towards the Tsarist regime or to the presence of the Russians, since the latter was confined to railway workers, technical advisers and traders. In Bukhara the rule of the Emir was tyrannical and even barbarous, but there is no evidence that the people as a whole resented it.

Barthold, a stickler for the truth, points out that there were cases of migration from Russian-administered and Afghan territory into Bukhara, and he concluded from this 'that the Kirgiz (Kazakhs?) at least did not always prefer Russian to Bukharan rule'. Even writing ten years after the Revolution* he seems to have remained convinced that in spite of widespread corruption and oppression, the essentially Asian system of government in the khanates was in many ways more suited to local conditions and better understood by the people than the materially more efficient and 'enlightened' methods introduced into Russian-administered territory.

The Jadids, it is true, had penetrated into Bukhara even before the Revolution and formed a party in opposition to the Emir known as the Young Bukharans. In March 1918 this party invited a force of Red Guards to enter the khanate with a view to overthrowing the Emir; it was repulsed by a fanatical mob stirred up no doubt by the mullas, but also influenced by the events in Kokand in the previous January. The Emir thereupon instituted a reign of terror and was not finally overthrown until September 1920, after which the People's Republic

* Barthold, *History of the Cultural Life of Turkestan*, p. 250. Leningrad 1927.

of Bukhara was set up. Events in Khiva followed much the same course: the Tashkent government made common cause with a Young Khivan party composed of Uzbeks in opposition to Junayd Khan the Turkmen leader who had earlier usurped the power of the Emir. In January 1920 a Red Army force entered Khiva, drove Junayd Khan into the desert and in June created the Khorezmian (Khivan) People's Soviet Republic.

Another area where the establishment of Soviet authority encountered more or less organized resistance was Transcaspia or what is now Turkmenistan. In the spring of 1918 the Tashkent Soviet had gained control of Ashkhabad, but in July Bolshevik rule had been overthrown by a so-called Russian Social Revolutionary government. This government, which was scarcely any stronger or better than the previous one, appealed for assistance to the British Military Mission which had been established in north-east Persia with orders to take all possible action to ward off an expected German advance through the Caucasus into the Middle East. A small British force of about 1,000 men entered Transcaspia and did what it could to stiffen the Ashkhabad government's resistance to Bolshevik attacks. But in June 1919, the British force was withdrawn to Persia and without its support the Transcaspian forces were easily defeated. By February 1920 the whole of Transcaspia was in Bolshevik hands.

In addition to coping with the resistance offered in the khanates and in Transcaspia, the Tashkent government had to contend with a widespread guerrilla movement known as the Basmachi Revolt.* The immediate causes of the revolt were the sacking of Kokand in January 1918 and the reign of terror introduced by the non-Muslim Tashkent Soviet. It hardly merits the description of a great pan-Turk nationalist movement given to it by some Western writers. From the beginning the ranks of the rebels were rent with dissension and rivalry,

* *Basmachi* was a word in general use throughout Turkestan with the meaning of raider or marauder.

and its most redoubtable leaders were as much opposed to the Jadidist reformers as they were to the Russians.

Nevertheless, the revolt was a clear indication of the disillusionment of the Muslims with the new regime and of the desperation resulting from the famine and misery caused by maladministration. Soviet historians prefer to represent the revolt as the work of a few reactionaries who, with British encouragement and material support, terrorized the poor people of Central Asia and impeded the path of progress. Contemporary accounts, however, show that the country people as a whole supported the Basmachis, and that although frequent application was made for British aid, none was in fact provided.*

The Basmachi revolt lasted over five years. It began in the Fergana Valley, where it was at first joined by the so-called Russian 'peasant army' made up of Russian settlers from around Dzhalal-Abad and was able to establish contact with Admiral Kolchak's Siberian forces. In September 1919, the Red Army defeated the Cossack Ataman Dutov, whose forces had for two years prevented contact between European Russia and Turkestan; and Red reinforcements temporarily regained control of Fergana. There was a brief lull in 1920 after the arrival in the autumn of 1919 of the Turkestan Commission, which tried to stop the Muslim population from supporting the Basmachi by stepping up military operations and also by distributing food and seed. These measures brought about the defection of the Russian 'peasant army', but by 1920 the revolt in Fergana had broken out again and in 1921 was extended to Bukhara. Here, in spite of the overthrow of the Emir's government, the Tashkent government was by no means in full control and the revolt gained some impetus from the arrival in Bukhara in 1921 of Zeki Validi Togan, a Russian-educated Bashkir intellectual who set about organizing the Turkestan National Union

* See, for example, Kozlovskiy. *Krasnaya Armiya v Sredney Azii.* Tashkent, 1928.

aiming at a genuinely national government for Turkestan free from Russian domination.

Meanwhile fighting continued in Fergana, where the rebels were under the redoubtable leadership of Kurshirmat (Kurbashi Shir Muhammad), until the arrival in September of two new Red Army divisions which soon regained control. The final phase of the revolt began with the arrival in Bukhara in October 1921 of Enver Pasha, who had been Minister of War in Turkey until her defeat in the First World War in October 1918. Under his able leadership the revolt gained new vitality: contact was re-established with the Basmachis in Fergana and also with the Turkmen leader, Junayd Khan, who was still offering strong resistance to the Bolsheviks in the Karakum Desert. But Enver's efforts were frustrated by dissension and treachery on the part of the other Basmachi leaders. By the summer of 1922 he was on the defensive and in August he was killed in an ambush. Deprived of Enver's leadership the Basmachi resistance movement was doomed. By the end of 1923 the backbone of the movement was broken, although sporadic activity continued until the late 1920s.

By the end of 1920 the Civil War throughout Russia was over and communication was re-established with all parts of the Russian Asian Empire. With the virtual collapse of the Basmachi movement in 1923, the Soviet government was able to proceed to the consolidation of its power in Central Asia. By now the Bolshevik leaders had repudiated their early promise of self-determination for the non-Russian nationalities. Already in January 1918, Stalin had written that 'it is necessary to limit the principle of free self-determination of nations by granting it to the toilers and refusing it to the bourgeoisie'. Since in Central Asia the only element capable of formulating national aspirations was the bourgeois intelligentsia, this meant that nation-forming would henceforward become a purely artificial process imposed from above. Self-determination in its hitherto accepted sense was now to be

replaced by a new concept known as 'the liquidation of existing inequality', which would in effect involve not separation of the non-Russian nationalities from Russia but an organized union of synthetically created nation-states administered according to uniform Socialist and later Communist principles.

History provides no parallel to the situation in Central Asia in the early 1920s. Orderly government as exercised by the colonial Tsarist regime and the despotic rulers of the khanates had completely broken down in a vast area with a population of some 12,000,000, of whom about one-third was nomadic, while the remainder, including 2,000,000 white settlers, was concentrated in a few widely separated towns and settlements. The largely illiterate Muslim element had no recognized leaders, no military forces and no experience in the art of government, its earlier tribal and guild organization having been fatally weakened by the Russian conquest and annexation. What they would have done if they had been left to their own devices can only be conjectured. The deciding factor was the presence of 2,000,000 white settlers. Although only a small proportion of these was in sympathy with the Revolution they were generally, if not unanimously, opposed to the idea of the Muslim element taking over or even playing any part in the government of the country. The presence of the settlers and the initiative of a few bold spirits among them ensured the perpetuation of Russian domination until such time as regular contact could be re-established with the centre, where the idea of handing back Muslim Central Asia to its rightful owners had early been abandoned.

It could be argued that for the new regime to have abdicated authority in the former Russian colonial territories before they had been prepared for self-government would have been unethical and even materially disastrous for the peoples concerned. This, however, is not the line taken today by Soviet apologists. They start from the premise that the original Tsarist conquest saved Central Asia from the designs

of the western imperialists. After the Revolution, they say, it was the will of the Muslim peoples themselves that their country should continue to be an integral part of the Russian empire under its new name of the Soviet Union and that their material, political and cultural destinies should remain in the hands of the Russians and be controlled from Moscow.

Both these arguments have been advanced in the past by other imperial governments as justification for the temporary or permanent direct control over colonial territories; but they have both been demolished by circumstances which have not so far arisen in the Russian and Soviet empires. These circumstances were the growth in the metropolitan country of liberal opinion which condoned and even encouraged nationalist movements; and the material support given to such movements by hostile or rival foreign powers.

Once the Muslim peoples of Central Asia had realized that their hope that the Revolution would bring self-determination was illusory and that there was no prospect of material assistance from outside, they accepted their fate with resignation. It was this resignation which made possible the rapid consolidation in Central Asia of the new Soviet regime.

5

The Formation of the National Republics

CONSIDERATION of the national problems of Central Asia, and of the solution which the Soviet regime claims to have found for them, requires some preliminary understanding of how the terms nation, national consciousness and nationalism are used in Soviet parlance.

The Soviet definition of a nation as a people distinguished by community of territory, economy and culture does not fit all the nations recognized as such in the western world; but it may apply to peoples outside the Soviet Union who are not regarded and do not regard themselves as nations. Again, while in Soviet eyes a non-Soviet people answering to the Soviet definition of a nation should be politically and economically independent, Soviet 'nations', although officially described as 'fully sovereign', are not independent in any sense understood in the west. Communism concedes some merit to nationalism outside the Soviet Union in the sense that it can and should resist and exclude the influence of 'imperialist' powers other than the Soviet Union itself. Inside the Soviet Union, however, all nationalism is roundly condemned. National consciousness is a term not much used by Soviet writers but it is permissible provided it exists in a cultural sense without any political overtones.

In the West, national consciousness is often confused with nationalism. National consciousness may exist without ever developing into nationalism; and nationalism or a nationalist movement may be initiated by an individual or group for

personal or patriotic ends even where national consciousness does not exist; although if a movement is to succeed it must eventually inculcate such consciousness.

In Chapter 3 it was explained that something in the way of nation-forming processes and of national consciousness was already at work in Central Asia in Tsarist times. The Tsarist administration, however, did not concern itself with such matters or at any rate never attached sufficient importance to them to consider the eventual grant of some degree of self-determination to the subject peoples of Central Asia. Had the Tsarist regime continued it is probable that national consciousness would eventually have developed into nationalism and nationalist movements aiming at separation. Such movements already existed in Poland and in the Baltic countries and it was no doubt their secession from the Russian Empire after the Revolution which impelled the Soviet regime to take steps to prevent the Muslim nationalities from following their example.

By the end of 1920 the greater part of the former Tsarist Governorates-General of the Steppe Region and Turkestan had passed under direct Soviet control, although the Basmachi revolt continued in Fergana, Eastern Bukhara and in parts of what is now Kazakhstan. The area under direct Soviet administration, such as it was, consisted of the Kirgiz (Kazakh) Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, and the Turkestan Soviet Republic; while the two so-called People's Republics of Khiva and Bukhara, although still nominally independent, were subject to close Soviet supervision. Except in the somewhat doubtful case of the Kirgiz (Kazakh) ASSR, the principle of national republics had not yet been introduced. The Turkestan republic comprised exactly the same territory as the former Governorate-General, while the khanates of Khiva and Bukhara, now transformed into People's Republics, were sandwiched between Transcaspia and the remaining four *oblasts* of Turkestan, namely, Syr-dar'ya, Semirech'ye, Fergana, and Samarkand.

Although the treaties which now allied Khiva and Bukhara to Moscow described them as politically independent, they were in fact no more free from Russian control than they had been during the Tsarist regime. In both republics a situation began to develop which resembled that prevailing in the mandated territories of the Middle East at the same period. By the introduction of specially selected instructors and advisers and by the conclusion of economic and military agreements, Soviet control was extended to cover practically the whole life of the republics; but the illusion that some degree of freedom had been granted was achieved by the annulment of all previous agreements between Russian governments and the khanates and all concessions formerly held by Russian individuals and firms.

Much the same kind of control was exercised by the mandatory powers in the Middle East: they maintained their own armed forces, superintended the training of the local armed forces and police, and virtually took charge of the administration by means of a cadre of advisers who set up political, judicial and economic institutions on western democratic lines. There was, however, one important difference. The mandatory system was designed as, and in fact proved to be, a step on the road to complete independence. In the Central Asian khanates, on the other hand, it was merely a prelude to complete control by Moscow and to the establishment of systems of government uniform with that which was being devised for the whole of the Soviet Union.

The history of the consolidation of Soviet power in Central Asia and of the complete subjection of its peoples to the will of Moscow really begins with the arrival in Tashkent in September 1919 of the Turkestan Commission. The Commission was entrusted with the task of rallying to the Soviet regime the Muslim masses of Central Asia whose sympathies had been alienated by the arbitrary and chauvinist attitude of the Tashkent government; but it was given no clear directive on

how this was to be achieved. The Commission was headed by Eliava, a Georgian who, like the remaining four members of the Commission who arrived with him, had no first hand knowledge of Central Asia or indeed of any Muslim peoples. Frunze,* the sixth member of the Commission, undoubtedly had such knowledge, but he did not arrive in Tashkent until February 1920.

In the meanwhile, the Commission immediately ran into difficulties. During 1919, as a result of steps taken on instructions from Moscow, Muslim representation in the Turkestan government and in the Turkestan Communist Party had been considerably increased and the Third Regional Conference of Muslim Bureaux convened before the crucial Fifth Conference of the Turkestan Communist Party on January 20 was bold enough to pass a resolution that Turkestan should be renamed the Soviet Republic of Turkic Peoples, that the Turkestan Communist Party should become the Turkic Communist Party, and that a Turkic Red Army should be created as an autonomous part of the Red Army. This ran directly counter to the decision taken by the Turkestan Commission on January 15 that in principle Turkestan should ultimately be divided into separate Uzbek, Turkmen and Kirgiz republics.

When the Turkestan Communist Party Conference opened it was found that the Muslims had a majority. Three out of the five Commission members sided with this majority on the issue of a Turkic Republic, but opposed the demands for a Turkic Communist Party and a Turkic Red Army. But the Muslims won the day on all three issues and the Conference passed various economic measures designed to favour the native population: the controversial grain monopoly was to be applied only to European settlers, the natives were to be taxed progressively according to the Shariat, and the land usurped by the settlers was to be returned to the native population. On his

* Mikhail Vasil'yevich Frunze, a prominent Revolutionary military leader, was the son of a Moldavian settler in Semirech'ye.

arrival in February, however, Frunze, who seems to have taken charge of the Commission at this point, caused all these resolutions to be summarily revoked and virtually assumed control of the Tashkent Government. Thus, what seemed to be a clear expression of the wishes of the Muslim people of Central Asia with regard to their future was arbitrarily and finally brushed aside.

It does not necessarily follow that Frunze's decision to ignore the wishes of the Muslims was a wrong one or that to defer to them at this stage would ultimately have proved to be in the Muslim interest. He believed the so-called Turkic nationalists in Tashkent to be politically unreliable and unrepresentative of the Muslim masses. They were, as he reported to Lenin, no more than 'a handful of Muslim petty bourgeois intellectuals who proclaim themselves to be the spokesmen for the multi-national mass of Turkestan Muslims. . . . From my observations, their political influence is very small. . . . In spite of all their nationalistic aggressiveness . . . they are in fact a very weak group which is conscious of its weakness.'

It is no injustice to the Muslim point of view to say that this appreciation was probably correct. To have acceded to the demands put forward by the self-styled Muslim spokesmen in Tashkent would almost certainly have exacerbated the existing chaos. The Muslims were quite unprepared for independence, and even if the Soviet government had been disposed to grant it to them, it would have been faced with the bitter opposition of the 2,000,000 Russian settlers in the region.

The Soviet nationalities policy of which the foundations were laid by the Turkestan Commission has been roundly condemned both by Muslim refugees and by the majority of western historians. When, however, the facts are examined in their proper perspective it may be seen that it is not so much the policy itself as the ends which it was designed

to achieve and the methods by which it was applied that are deserving of criticism.

During the 19th century, the Muslims of Central Asia had come under the domination of a state whose own political and social foundations were unstable: democratic institutions had only been introduced into metropolitan Russia during the second half of the century and at the outbreak of the Revolution they were still insecurely based. It is hardly surprising that a state which had not itself adopted the principle of representative government should have failed not only to impart such a principle to the peoples of its colonial territories, but to display any interest in what the will of those peoples might be. The Tsarist government had, on the other hand, a genuine sense of patriarchal mission: they sincerely believed that they were conferring a lasting benefit on the peoples of Central Asia, who, in spite of some tendency to cling to their outworn traditions and culture, could and did wish for nothing better than to be ruled for ever by Russians.

Similar illusions were cherished for a time by the rulers of other colonial empires, but were gradually abandoned as it became clear that those who had been most eager to assimilate western notions of government and culture were in the forefront of nationalist movements demanding independence. The Tsarist regime came to an abrupt stop when this stage was only just beginning in Central Asia and before the authorities had taken any real cognizance of it or the small Muslim intelligentsia had had time to develop any kind of organization.

The Soviet regime inherited to a large extent the messianic convictions of its predecessor, but two circumstances which had been almost entirely absent during the period of Tsarist rule caused it to adopt an entirely different attitude towards the people of Central Asia.

The first of these was a sense of urgency induced by the chaotic situation which followed the collapse of Tsarist rule

and which was described in the last chapter. Soviet fears of British and even of Japanese intervention in Central Asia, however groundless, were probably genuine. Such intervention would only be hastened by abdicating responsible government to the Muslims and would inevitably result in the loss of the indispensable cotton resources of Uzbekistan. To Frunze the danger seemed to lie less in the Basmachi revolt, which had temporarily died down in 1920, than in the activities of political extremists like Turar Ryskulov and Nizametdin Khodzhayev, which had begun to have considerable effect in Tashkent during the autumn of 1919.

The second circumstance was the entirely different Weltanschauung or world outlook which developed as a result of the Communist Revolution. The attitude of the Tsarist administration towards Islam and the traditional way of life was contemptuous; but it was also tolerant. The Soviet regime, on the other hand, considered Islam, even more than other religions, to be the root cause of economic backwardness and, in spite of Lenin's frequent counsels of moderation, it proposed to wage relentless war against it.

Frunze's immediate task was to restore order in Turkestan, to put an end to the more obvious injustices perpetrated against the local population by the Turkestan government, and to re-organize the region's economy. He evidently considered that the creation neither of a Turkic republic nor of national republics based on the different Turkic 'nations' would help in the performance of his task. The idea of a Turkic nation he regarded as 'a fiction', and it is of some interest to consider how this idea arose and whether it could ever have been translated into fact.

The name of Turkestan as the country of the Turks was first used in a somewhat derogatory sense by the Persians during the Sasanian dynasty (A.D. 226–637). It was not used by the Arab geographers but occurs fairly frequently in the works of Western and Russian geographers. It never seems to have

been used by the actual inhabitants of Central Asia until it was revived by the Russians as a convenient name for the Governorate-General which they created in 1867. The pan-Turanian and pan-Turk movements which began at the turn of the 19th century used the terms Turan and Türk Yurdu to describe the 'Turkish homelands'. They did not use Turkestan. It was quite natural that the name Turkestan should have been applied to the first Turkestan republic which occupied the same territory as the original Governorate-General, although it contained at least 1,000,000 people who were not of Turkic race or language. It has never been clear whether the so-called Turkic nationalists proposed to include the Iranian Tadzhiks in their Turkic nation; but they certainly intended to include the Kazakhs, Tatars and Bashkirs who lived outside the confines of the Turkestan Republic.

Among all the Turkic peoples there were bonds of union in Islam and the inter-resemblance of their languages; but they were no stronger, and in many instances weaker, than similar bonds of religion and culture which had failed to unite the Teutonic, Slavic and Arab peoples in what were in some ways much more favourable circumstances. A longer period of orderly Russian rule might conceivably have welded all the Turkic peoples into one nation provided the Russians had so wished. But that such a nation could create itself without the guiding hand of a strong and established paramount power was from the point of view of the Soviet regime, beset as it was with innumerable domestic and external problems, quite unthinkable: the ensuing chaos would have done irreparable damage to the Russian economy and to strategic security; it would also have inflicted even greater misery on the Muslim peoples for whose welfare Lenin at any rate felt a certain responsibility.

Frunze only remained in Turkestan until September 1920, when he was appointed commander of the southern front. During his brief stay he appears to have concentrated on

purging the existing Turkestan government of its more troublesome non-Muslim members in order to grapple with the growing hostility of the local population. The Turkestan Commission virtually took charge of the government. Certain palliative measures which were taken in respect of the restoration of Muslim institutions and the distribution of food and seed had a good, if temporary effect.

In June, Frunze telegraphed to Lenin that division into national republics was not feasible because of the shortage of reliable native leaders and was politically inexpedient since it would play into the hands of the nationalists. Lenin himself seems at this moment to have been undecided: Eliava, who was in Moscow, telegraphed to Frunze that he (Lenin) had come out against division into national republics; but there is on record a telegram from Lenin dated July 13 instructing the Turkestan Commission not only to take all possible measures to counter manifestation of pan-Islam and 'bourgeois nationalism' but also to prepare a report showing the ethnic divisions of Turkestan and explaining how the various elements would be fused or divided. This was the first step towards the national delimitation of 1924.

The well-intentioned palliative measures just referred to were to have disastrous results during 1921. The redistribution of land occupied by Russian peasants or native land-owners not only created renewed hostility between settlers and natives but also awakened class hostility among the Muslim population which had never existed before. The restoration of Muslim institutions was only temporary and gave place to an organized campaign designed to undermine the whole Islamic way of life. During the next two years the Basmachi movement, which had temporarily died down, flared up again and, as was seen in the last chapter, gained additional impetus from the arrival of Enver Pasha from Turkey.

There is a large amount of Soviet literature purporting to describe the need for, and the events leading up to, the

national delimitation of 1924, as well as the way in which it was actually carried out. While this material contains much valuable information about the ethnic distribution of the area, it does not present a clear picture of how the various decisions were arrived at. Soviet writers try to give the impression that the whole operation was carried out in accordance with the will of the various peoples concerned and with true Bolshevik principles of give and take. In fact there was no means of discovering what the will of the various peoples was, and when Frunze wrote in 1920 that the Muslim intellectuals gathered in Tashkent did not represent the Muslim masses he might well have added that representation of the Muslim masses was for the present impossible.

The actual work of delimitation with all its ethnic, geographical and economic implications was done by the Central Asian Bureau created in 1922, the Central Asian Economic Council created in 1923 and the Central Asian Territorial Commission established in 1924, all of which were under Russian control and were directly responsible to the Central Executive Committee of the Russian Communist Party. The task before these three bodies was a formidable one. They had in effect to preside over the liquidation of the existing three republics of Turkestan, Khorezm and Bukhara* and to set up in their place Uzbek and Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republics, a Tadzhik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and Kirgiz and Kara-Kalpak Autonomous Oblasts demarcated on the basis partly of linguistic and partly of economic considerations. They had at the same time to go through the motions of listening to the claims of the various National Bureaux, the already constituted Kirgiz (Kazakh) ASSR, as well as of the 'Turkic nationalists' who were still clamouring if not for a Turkic state, then for some kind of Central Asian federation.

There is an atmosphere of unreality and of *suppressio veri*

* In 1923 and 1924 Khorezm and Bukhara had respectively been proclaimed 'Soviet Socialist Republics'.

about the official accounts. The impression is gained that there was fairly free expression of claims and counter-claims on the part of the nationalities, but that objectors to the delimitation plan were quickly slapped down, told that they must agree and eventually did agree. For example, in July 1924 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Khorezm openly rebuked some members who tried to rally support for the delimitation plan and threatened to expel them from the Party. Immediately, Karklin, the vice-chairman of the Central Asian Bureau, went to Khorezm and a resolution was shortly issued by the Communist Party 'welcoming the decision of the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party on national delimitation'.

A similar fate attended the proposal to form a Central Asian Federation. In August 1924, Abdurakhmanov, the secretary of the Turkestan Central Executive Committee, had declared that

> 'the formation of independent republics and autonomous oblasts is a step towards the establishment of a single state of toilers of Central Asia. Through national delimitation to international unification of the toiling masses of Central Asia, to the creation of a Central Asian Federation—this is the slogan of our party.'

But in September 1924, Vareikis, the non-Muslim secretary of the Central Committee of the Turkestan Communist Party announced that

> 'the idea of forming a federation, although it has a large number of adherents among the party members, has been considered as premature by the higher organs of the party'.

No other reason for not forming a federation has ever been advanced; but it is obvious that such a plan savoured too much of 'ganging up' to suit the Soviet authorities.

The actual task of aligning the frontiers of the new national units naturally fell upon the Territorial Commission, and it is significant that no report of this Commission's work was ever published either in the contemporary press or in literature

published subsequently. It completed its work in less than a year and submitted its recommendations in September 1924. These were formally approved by the Central Executive Committee of the All-Union Communist Party in October and the formation of the new republics and oblasts officially proclaimed.

The national delimitation plan was adopted not so much in defiance of the wishes of the Muslim peoples of Central Asia as over their heads. Even supposing it had been possible to obtain some coherent expression of the wishes of the various nationalities, it would have been impossible to defer to all or even to the majority of them. The plan itself had much to recommend it, and if the Tsarist regime had continued in existence, it would almost certainly have introduced something of the same kind as an intermediate stage on the road to complete independence.

The idea itself was not a new one: as far back as 1913 the Central Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party had included in its programme provision for 'a wide measure of regional autonomy and full democratic local self-government; the demarcation of the boundaries of the regional autonomies and self-governing units by the local populations themselves in conformity with their economic, ethnic distinctions and national composition, etc.'. But such a plan was not immediately workable in Central Asia, where in 1924 over 70 per cent of government posts of all kinds were still held by non-natives. It was only a semblance of the plan which was put into operation and has remained in operation ever since.

6

Central Asia under Soviet Rule

THE NATIONAL delimitation of 1924 was the first stage in the consolidation of Soviet power in Central Asia. It was not only an important administrative expedient for the restoration of law and order but it served as a spectacular renunciation of the imperial principle, and by creating a whole set of new administrative terms strove to give the impression that colonialism had disappeared.

In Chapter 4 it was explained that there was no question of the Revolution breaking out among or spreading to the Muslim peoples of Central Asia. At the very beginning, some proportion of the intelligentsia believed that independence lay within their grasp. But they soon realized that even if self-determination was one of the declared aims of the Revolution, the new government formed by the Russian settlers, whom they regarded as their natural enemies, had no intention of granting it and was less efficient and much more oppressive than the Tsarist administration; they therefore resorted to such resistance as lay within their power.

Even before this resistance was finally overcome, the better organized government inaugurated by the Turkestan Commission and now firmly under Moscow's control proceeded to extend the Revolution to Central Asia by artificial means. The whole traditional system of agricultural and agrarian relationship had to be undermined. Unlike European Russia there were here no class distinctions and few if any cultural barriers; the patriarchal system was so firmly established that

the idea of seizing a landlord's property simply did not occur to the peasants. The first task of the Soviet authorities, therefore, was to create among the 'have-nots' a hitherto non-existent hatred for the 'haves'. Before this could be done, however, steps had to be taken to remove the only existing genuine hatred, that of the Muslim population for the Russians who had seized their lands and gone on seizing them during the first two years of so-called revolutionary government. By May 1921 nearly 700,000 acres of land were said to have been confiscated from Russian settlers and redistributed to 13,000 native households, mainly in Semirech'ye.

Although the redistribution of land and subsequent agrarian reforms probably succeeded in giving the impression that the new regime was intent on the abolition of inequality, this was not their primary purpose. 'In turning the peasant against the landlord', writes Alexander Park,* 'the Bolsheviks were not aiming merely to put an end to historically derived inequalities in the countryside; they sought rather to destroy the landlord as a political, economic and social force in the village. . . . The land reform was to be an instrument for cutting the peasant loose from every tie with the past. By destroying every competing authority it sought to make the Soviet system the only source of guidance in the village.'

Land distribution, which was later extended to the uncolonized areas, was merely a prelude to collectivization, which amounted to the arbitrary herding of the new individual peasant proprietors into collective farms. Had the peasants realized this, their resistance would have been even stronger than it was.

The effective period of collectivization lasted from 1928 until 1933. Soviet historians view it as a revolutionary measure imposed from above but supported from below by the vast majority of peasants, who were not yet politically mature enough to take the initiative themselves. Full details of the

* *Bolshevism in Turkestan, 1917–27*. New York. 1957.

methods by which it was applied will probably never be forthcoming, but the posthumous indictment of Stalin has included a description of the mistakes attributed to him over the collectivization campaign. These 'mistakes' involved almost universal hardship, but the main victims were the so-called kulaks or rich peasants most of whom were summarily shot or deported. It was officially stated that in Uzbekistan alone between 1930 and 1934 more than 40,000 kulak holdings were liquidated. By 1932 74·9 per cent of the peasant households in Uzbekistan had been collectivized and similar figures were announced for the remaining three southern republics.

The effects of collectivization in Kazakhstan were even more drastic and were disastrous from an economic point of view. It early became clear to Moscow that the Soviet social and administrative system could not be imposed upon the nomad population of Kazakhstan without stabilization. The settlement of nomads and the combination of animal husbandry with land cultivation had been encouraged by the Tsarist government, but any well-meant efforts on the part of local administrators had been stultified by the centrally controlled settlement policy which resulted in most of the best lands being given to Russian and Ukrainian settlers.

Forcible stabilization was not resorted to until the beginning of the first Five Year Plan in 1928, and during the next four years it was combined with collectivization. The herds and land belonging to kulaks were expropriated and distributed among the poorer peasants, who were organized into collective and state farms. Resistance was almost universal: the Kazakhs resorted to the wholesale slaughter of cattle; and the whole Kazakh economy, based as it was on animal husbandry, was struck a crippling blow from which it took many years to recover.

There was also a heavy loss of human life: the 1939 census showed a drop of nearly a million in the total number of Kazakhs since 1926, and for this no official explanation has

ever been forthcoming. An unspecified number are said to have migrated to China and the fate of the rest is unknown. Responsibility for the failure of these early attempts at sovietization was fastened on to the Kazakh nationalists, and in March 1935 a number of them, including Kulumbetov, the republican Vice-Premier, were executed.

It is now generally admitted by Soviet writers that the methods employed in achieving collectivization were unnecessarily ruthless and brutal, and for this they blame Stalin. Many western agricultural experts have questioned the long-term effectiveness of collectivization as an economic expedient; but although similar doubts may have assailed the Soviet authorities they have never expressed them. They were certainly right in their belief that drastic agrarian reforms were an essential preliminary to the introduction of the Revolution into Central Asia. By destroying the traditional system of land tenure and water rights the Soviet regime struck at the very roots of Muslim society and prepared the ground for the supplementary campaigns aiming at political indoctrination and cultural regimentation.

Some western writers have chosen to represent the first twenty years of Soviet rule in Central Asia as a period of unrelieved terror and misery for the local population. This was broadly true of the first four or five years after the Revolution and of the years of the Great Purge of 1935–37; but apart from these periods much was achieved in the fields of economic recovery, education and public health, all of which contributed to the material welfare of the people and induced a sense of resignation, if not of contentment. Until the 1950s, western propagandists steadily played down Soviet achievement in all these respects and ignored the undoubted fact that the economy and standard of living in Central Asia were rapidly overtaking those of the adjoining non-Soviet countries. In thus distorting or suppressing facts which were soon to become known to the peoples of those countries, they distracted

attention from the much more questionable political and cultural aspects of Soviet rule.

Like other imperialist regimes the Soviet administration had to rely for the implementation of its policies on the recruitment of pliant collaborators from among the local population. The psychology of collaboration has not perhaps received the attention it deserves. The collaborator may be and often is simply a cynical person with an eye to the main chance. But he may also be a split personality who readily accepts the material benefits proffered by the conquerors and applauds and even adopts their way of life while remaining a reactionary and a nationalist in his heart. Finally, he may be an internationally minded person for whom the tenets of a supposedly international ideology such as Communism have a genuine attraction.

From these categories the Soviet authorities were able to draw enough 'activists' to set their propaganda machine in motion. Few of them stayed the course for very long; in the prevailing atmosphere of suspicion many of them were justly or unjustly accused of such crimes as deviation, cosmopolitanism, formalism and bourgeois nationalism, while some of the crypto-nationalists became disillusioned to the point of declaring their inner convictions, which usually ended in their execution or disappearance. But there were plenty of others to take the place of those who for one reason or another failed to satisfy the authorities, and the process of indoctrination, or at least of ensuring that all strata of the population knew what was expected of them and what would be the consequences of non-compliance, went ahead at a fairly regular pace.

Space does not permit a detailed description of the various organizations and institutions which the new regime formed and used for the transformation of Muslim society and the achievement of centralized control; but some mention of them must be made.

One of the earliest and most effective institutions was the Koshchi,* which has been described by Park as 'a mixture of rural trade union and co-operative with a predominantly political character'. It was given official status in March 1922 and a charter specified its various tasks, which included political indoctrination of the rural population and encouragement of friendly relations between the Muslim and European workers. The idea of the Koshchi quickly caught the popular imagination and people flocked to become members. It served at first as a useful Party propaganda medium, but later it fell into official disrepute and was finally abolished in 1931.

Another important instrument of indoctrination and propaganda was the trade unions; and there were various planning, construction and youth organizations which were conceived on all-union basis and whose membership cut across national boundaries. Muslims, most of whom had previously been exempt from conscription, were now drafted into the preponderantly Russian Red Army where they received regular political instruction.

Finally, there was the greatest instrument of centralization of all—the Party, with its probationary adjunct, the Komsomol or Young Communist League. At first, few restrictions were placed upon membership of the Turkestan Communist Party which in 1921 consisted largely of Russian colonists and Muslim illiterates who joined as a matter of expediency. A purge brought the total membership down by three-quarters in 1923 and thereafter membership was made much more difficult, particularly after the creation of a separate Communist Party for each of the new republics.

All these organizations and institutions were used not only for the political indoctrination of the people but also for furthering the process of social and cultural regimentation which will be described in the final chapter. But in spite of the agrarian reforms, the rapid spread of secular education and

* The word simply means 'ploughman' or 'hired labourer'.

the various campaigns against the whole fabric of Muslim life and society, no very deep inroads into the habits and mentality of the people were made until the Great Purge of 1935–37. Dr Baymirza Hayit, the Uzbek author of *Turkestan in the 20th Century*, who grew up in Soviet Uzbekistan and defected to the West during the Second World War, describes in great detail the strong spiritual resistance by Muslim intellectuals to the Soviet assault on their cherished traditions and way of life. He writes, nevertheless, that 'it was not until 1937 that the social life of Turkestan was determined by Communism. Up to then, the Turkestan Communist leaders had tried to let the people live in their own way, and at the same time to fulfil Soviet state plans. Therefore the people were able to live either secretly, or frequently quite openly, according to their own customs.'

The Purge convulsed the whole of the USSR, but its effects were particularly striking in Central Asia where there had been many rumblings of discontent and where the authorities suspected the existence of nationalist aspirations among the Muslim Communist *élite*. The Purge offered an opportunity not only of harrying out real or suspected opponents of the regime wherever they might be lurking, but of striking terror into the hearts of the whole population with a view to ensuring their complete and final submission.

Subsequently, in 1956, the Purge was included among the excesses and crimes against humanity attributed to Stalin, and a certain number of innocent victims were posthumously rehabilitated; but no detailed account of the executions and arrests has ever been published and it is difficult to avoid the impression that, Stalin or no Stalin, some kind of drastic catharsis would have been found necessary by the authorities before the desired process of the building of Communism could begin.

Of the few extant accounts of what actually happened during the Purge perhaps the most impressive, because the least

exaggerated, is that by Azamat Altay, a Kirgiz who was fifteen when the Purge began.* This account shows clearly the dismay and disillusionment which assailed the younger generation of Kirgiz when the new national intelligentsia in whom they took enormous pride, were condemned almost to a man as 'enemies of the people'. It is noteworthy that the first *History of Kirgiziya*, published in Frunze in 1956, makes not a single reference of any kind to the great Purge in its 400 pages. The revised and expanded edition of this volume, which appeared in 1963, devotes only two of its 796 pages to 'the Negative Influence of the Cult of Stalin's Personality in Kirgiziya' and does not give the name of a single victim.

The effects of the Purge were probably greatest in Uzbekistan, where the authorities claimed to have uncovered a nationalist plot aiming at the complete independence of the republic. The Prime Minister, Fayzulla Khodzhayev, and the first secretary of the Communist Party, Ikramov, were accused of organizing this plot in collusion with the British and were both executed. Although both men admitted to having 'worked for national independence' it was never made clear what this meant, and it seems probable that they had never visualized the separation of any part of Central Asia from the Soviet Union. The matter is not referred to at all in the *1957 History of the Uzbek SSR* or in a work called *Materials for the History of Soviet Uzbekistan* (published in Tashkent in 1957); nor did it in 1960 figure in the list of outstanding events in Uzbekistan since the Revolution which adorns the walls of the Historical Museum in Bukhara.

Throughout Central Asia there was hardly a family which was not affected in one way or another by the Purge. The people as a whole were stunned, and offered no active resistance. Although national consciousness and antipathy to the Russian presence still remained, the horrors and deprivations of the

* See 'Kirgiziya during the Great Purge', *Central Asian Review*, 1964. Vol. XII, p. 97.

first years of the Revolution and the failure of the Basmachi revolt were still fresh in their memories, and the authorities could congratulate themselves that not only the ability but even the will to resist had largely disappeared.

After the Soviet Union's entry into the war in 1941 press censorship became stricter than ever and very few books were published. In consequence, little is known of developments in Soviet Central Asia during the war years. In spite of some unconfirmed German reports there does not seem to have been any disturbance in the region, although Dr Hayit mentions one or two isolated attacks on police stations. One of the results of the Great Purge was that by 1938 all national military formations had been disbanded and absorbed into the Red Army.

Dr Hayit asserts that 1,500,000 Central Asian Muslims were called up for service in the war and that of these 800,000 deserted to the Germans. The latter figure may be an overestimate, but there is no doubt that many hundreds of thousands either deserted or were taken prisoner and of these a considerable proportion were organized by the Germans to fight, and did actually fight, against the Soviet Army. Their ultimate fate is unknown: many of them were no doubt killed or recaptured and the great majority of the remainder were handed back to the Soviet Union by the Germans after the Potsdam Agreement of 1945. Only a few thousand managed to evade repatriation and these are now scattered throughout Europe and Asia.

The war affected Central Asia in certain other respects. The grave danger in which the Soviet Union found itself caused the government to seek the spiritual support of religious bodies. There was consequently a temporary cessation of anti-religious propaganda and of the closing of mosques, where the faithful were now adjured to pray for the success of Soviet arms. It was in 1941 that the four Muslim Spiritual Directorates were created, no doubt with the object of raising Muslim morale.

Another effect was that a large number of factories with their technical personnel were transferred to Central Asia from the western part of the Union, and this naturally contributed towards the rapid industrialization of the region. Finally, in 1944 nearly 1,000,000 Muslims in the Crimea and the North Caucasus, who were alleged to have collaborated with the German invaders, were uprooted from their homes and deported *en masse* to various parts of Central Asia. The rehabilitation of these people did not begin until 1956 and is still far from complete.

During and immediately after the war, material conditions in Central Asia were probably better than in most of the rest of the Union. There was no destruction and communications, such as they were, were not disrupted. There was, of course, a great shortage of many commodities and the concentration of agriculture on cotton had led to some shortage of cereals; but agriculture as a whole had begun to recover and there was no return of the famine conditions of the early years of the Revolution. The loss of native manpower was to some extent balanced by the influx of Russians and Ukrainians from the west. On the other hand, there was a marked increase in Great Russian chauvinism to which the defection of large numbers of Muslims to the Germans had undoubtedly contributed.

During the war there had been a tendency to revert to the use of the words Russia and Russian in referring to the Soviet Union as a whole, and in the early 1950s strong criticism began to be levelled at most of the histories of the Central Asian peoples which had been written under official auspices and which praised the resistance offered to the original Tsarist invaders. As explained in Chapter 3, Pokrovskiy, the first Marxist historian, had been criticized for describing the Tsarist conquest of Central Asia as 'a positive evil'. It had been pointed out that since this conquest had forestalled annexation by some even more predatory power such as Britain or Germany, it should be described not as a positive but only as 'a lesser' evil.

After the war this change was carried a step further: in 1951 the argument was put forward that owing to the great advantages which the Central Asian peoples had derived from their close association with the Russian people, their incorporation in the Russian Empire should be regarded not as a lesser evil but as 'a positive good'. This new development resulted in a considerable re-writing of history: the word 'conquest' (zavoyevaniye) was expunged and the expression 'voluntary incorporation' (dobrovol'noye prisoyedeniye) substituted; and leaders of the resistance to Russian encroachment, who had previously been described as 'heroes of the people', were now presented in an entirely different light.

The most notable example of this political *volte face* is to be found in the difference between the two official histories of the Kazakh people published respectively in 1943 and 1957. In the 1943 history the revolts which took place against Russian rule in the first half of the 19th century are described under the heading 'The struggle of the Kazakh Hordes to preserve their independence'. 'All the risings of the Kazakh Peoples in the 1820s and 1830s showed how great was their indignation and how courageously they fought for the independence of their country.' In the 1957 history there is no mention whatever of a desire for independence or of a struggle for freedom on the part of the people. The revolt led by Kenesary Kasim is no longer found to be, as in the 1943 history, 'the culminating point and synthesis of all the succeeding movements' revealing 'the freedom-loving and fighting spirit of the Kazakh people, who were not easily to be parted from their national independence'. Instead, the rising is characterized as 'a reactionary feudal-monarchical movement which dragged the Kazakh people back to the consolidation of patriarchal and feudal conditions, to the restoration of the mediaeval rule of the Khan, and to the isolation of Kazakhstan from Russia and the Russian people'. Kasim, who in the 1943 history is described as 'a hero of the Kazakh people' and as a talented general and

statesman, is depicted in the later work as rapacious and cruel, imposing burdens of taxes on the people and caring little for their well being.

The attempt to revive the mystique of the Russian people as the saviours and uplifters of the benighted peoples with whom they came in contact, and who have thankfully accepted their domination, has, with minor modifications, been persisted in ever since, although the cruder forms of Great Russian chauvinism were less apparent after the death of Stalin in 1953. The continued harping on the theme of the great love which the Central Asian peoples have borne the Russians ever since they were conquered by them seems to indicate that Soviet propaganda has not yet achieved its aims in this respect.

Any attempt to describe the life and opinions of the Muslim people of Central Asia during the past twenty years must inevitably produce one-sided and to a large extent misleading results. On the one hand, it is perfectly possible to construct a detailed and largely accurate picture of developments in agriculture, industry, irrigation, public health and education; and in spite of the efforts of detractors of the Soviet regime to play down achievements in these fields, they must be seen as remarkable by any standards, except, perhaps, in agricultural productivity. It is obvious that this material progress was the result of determined and relentless planning from the centre rather than of national development brought about by the will of the various peoples concerned; but this is not to minimize the part actually played by the Muslim peoples in providing the necessary labour and in acquiring new skills which could be used in developing the economy.

On the other hand, about the spiritual life of the people, the progress of ideas and the existence, if any, of national aspirations the impartial social historian can discover very little. The vast mass of literature, press material, broadcasting and public speaking which purports to treat of these matters is produced under the closest Party supervision and clearly

bears little relation to reality. Far less is known about the progress of ideas among the Central Asian intelligentsia than among their counterpart in Western Russia, where evidence of an intellectual and artistic revolt against some of the rigid precepts of the Party can be found not only in writing smuggled out of the country and published abroad but even in literature published inside the Soviet Union. Quite apart from being less addicted to metaphysical discussion and writing than the Russians, the Central Asian Muslims, whose past history is a long tale of foreign conquest and foreign dominion, have acquired a built-in characteristic of philosophical resignation. 'These peoples say nothing but forget nothing. They are very polite.' This was how an intelligent young Russian girl summed up her impressions of the Uzbeks to a recent Western visitor to Tashkent. That the authorities are aware of a deep undercurrent of passive resentment is evident from the frequent Party animadversions on 'nationalist survivals', local patriotism and the like, although instances of such malpractices are always described as 'isolated'. It is these official reproofs as well as the shrill Soviet rejection of Western criticism of the Soviet policy of cultural regimentation which reveal the falsity of the picture of the thought and outlook of the Central Asian peoples which the Soviet authorities seek to present to the outside world—a picture of spiritual as well as material contentment, of peoples glorying in alien rule and in the systematic destruction of their traditional culture.

The modern history of the Soviet Central Asian Republics published in the Soviet Union under Party auspices consists almost entirely of a catalogue of achievements in the fields of industry, agriculture, irrigation, communications and culture, all of which are attributed to the 'triumph of the Revolution' and few, if any, of which bear the stamp of native genius. Such history, if indeed it can be called history, is in marked contrast to the available accounts of developments in the independent Muslim countries of the Middle East and South

Asia. Here the story is of frequent changes of governments and even of regimes, of conflict now with neighbours, now with the West, of tribal revolt and internal disturbance, of the rise and fall of public figures. By no means all these happenings have benefited the people as a whole; but generally speaking the story is one of natural if uneven growth and progress, and of increased national stature in the world. Governments may be arbitrary, but they are not alien; they may advocate and may even insist on modernization, but not at the price of allowing their countries to be overrun by foreign settlers.

One of the proudest boasts of the Soviet regime is that it has solved the national and racial problems to the entire satisfaction of the formerly subject peoples of Russia and to the envy of colonial and 'semi-colonial' peoples in the rest of the world. The suggestion frequently made in the West that the Soviet regime is still practising 'colonialism' is bitterly resented on the ground that the Soviet Union has never practised it in the sense that this word is defined in Soviet political handbooks, that is, as 'the seizure of a country or region by imperialists accompanied by the subjection, brutal exploitation, and sometimes by the annihilation of the local population'. This definition, like some others, is worded so as to exculpate Soviet imperialists, who thus

> *'Compound for sins they are inclin'd to*
> *By damning those they have no mind to.'*

The Soviet regime did not 'seize' Central Asia; it merely retained and continued to administer, admittedly more efficiently, territory which had been seized by the Tsarist regime. The Soviet government is not now 'brutally exploiting' the former Tsarist colonial territories and it has not 'annihilated their population', although the deportation of 1,000,000 Muslims from the North Caucasus and the Crimea was an act of brutality barely paralleled in the whole history of imperialism.

Great though the material benefits may be which the perpetuation of an enlightened form of alien government on the Soviet model has conferred on the Asian peoples of the USSR, most of the formerly colonial peoples of Asia and Africa have clamoured for and, for better or for worse, have obtained certain 'rights' which have so far been withheld from the peoples of Soviet Central Asia. These include the right to choose their own form of government, to control their own economy, to conduct their own foreign policy, to exclude foreign troops and settlers from their territory, and to retain and develop on their own lines their traditional culture. In all these matters the Muslim peoples of Central Asia are entirely dependent upon the will of Moscow.

The system of government established in all the Central Asian Republics after the National Delimitation of 1924 was uniform in every respect with that of the other republics of the Soviet Union irrespective of national differences and traditions. Concessions to such traditions which had been included in the constitution of the People's Republic of Bukhara such as declarations safeguarding the possession and disposal of private property and the inviolability of 'the foundations of Islam' were quickly eliminated, and new constitutions for each republic were eventually drawn up which conformed in every essential respect with the Soviet constitution of 1936.

The administrative division of the republics into oblasts (provinces), rayons (counties), and towns and villages, each with its separate soviet or council is standard throughout the Union, and all administration, and indeed every human activity, is under the overriding control of the Republican Communist Party. The Republican Parties in their turn are under the rigid control of the Central Communist Party. This, of course, is not to say that ways are not continually found, as they will always be found under colonial administration, of eluding or circumventing official supervision. Such evasions

are constantly reported in the daily press, not only as indictable offences but as reactionary nationalist survivals.

Any detailed description of the economy of the Central Asian Republics is outside the scope of the present study. The initiative in the remarkable economic transformation of the region did not come from the Central Asian peoples who, left to themselves, would probably have developed their economy on quite different lines. But since this transformation has profoundly affected their material condition and their whole way of life and work, a brief account of it must be given here.

Economic development in Soviet Central Asia naturally fell into two periods separated by the Second World War. The widespread breakdown of security and the policy of nationalization followed by the first Turkestan Republic brought the process of integrating the Central Asian economy with that of Russia as a whole, which had already begun, to an abrupt halt and had almost the same effect on the whole economy. The Soviet government, therefore, had first to concentrate on what it conceived to be the primary task of bringing back Central Asia to its pre-war function as a source of technical crops and raw materials for the industry of Great Russia. As a result of the New Economic Policy introduced in 1921, the Turkestan government denationalized half the enterprises which it had seized during the Civil War.

But even during the NEP period, the Moscow government did not lose sight of its socialist ideals: while it was intent on restoring as rapidly as possible the pre-revolutionary level of economy, and to this end allowed a certain amount of freedom to private enterprise, it did all it could to develop the state sector of economy and proposed to control private enterprise and cottage industries by a system of producer co-operatives. It also tried to create a native industrial proletariat by constantly enjoining local Party authorities to recruit more Asian workers into industry. Considerable progress was made in

recruiting Muslims, including those previously employed in cottage industries, into the lower grades of employments in state industrial concerns. But in 1934, all the workers in the huge Tashkent Textile Combine were still Russians. At the beginning of the first period of Five Year Plans (1928–37) the output of Central Asian industry as a whole was still about half the 1913 level; but it was said to have increased more than twelve-fold between 1926 and 1940.

It was in the post-war period after 1950 that the main expansion of the Central Asian economy took place. A considerable proportion of the natural increase of the labour force in the rural areas now began to take up employment in the towns. The proportion of nationalities employed in the various industrial enterprises has always been difficult to determine, but by the mid-1950s over 33 per cent of the total population of the five republics was made up of immigrant non-Asians, and their proportion in industry remained very high. For example, in 1957, only 11 per cent of the workers in the Tashkent Textile Combine mentioned earlier were Uzbeks. Current statistics for the proportions of nationalities employed are not available. The technical training of the Muslim population has proceeded apace; but so has the increase in non-Asian immigration. Recently the problem of unemployment has raised its head, and in skilled employment this is more likely to affect Muslims than non-Asians.

Although prominence in Soviet reporting is always given to industry, and although progress in both heavy and light industry has been remarkable, the fact remains that the most important economic asset of the whole region is cotton, which has both agricultural and industrial characteristics. According to the report issued by the Research and Planning Division of the Economic Commission for Europe published at the end of 1957:

> 'Central Asia can be characterized as a region equipped with a fairly broad range of consumer goods industries, producing

for the local market but dependent on imports for nearly all capital goods, and with scarcely any export industries save crude processing such as cotton ginning, oil pressing and silk spinning. Apart from some exports of ores and mineral oil, the region is therefore completely dependent on its agriculture, and above all on its cotton, to pay for necessary imports of cereals, timber and industrial goods.'

Broadly speaking, this description holds good today, and it is therefore important to note that the most important criticism levelled at Soviet economy by Western experts is in respect of agriculture, and in particular of collectivization. There is indeed a strong presumption that the whole collectivization campaign was an economic as well as a social blunder. In their subsequent examination of the campaign Soviet specialists have produced a long list of 'mistakes', most of which have been attributed to Stalin. In some of their writings there is even an underlying suggestion that the whole campaign was wrongly conceived and that it was not, as has been so stoutly maintained, favoured by the majority of peasants. Another vast agricultural venture—the Virgin Lands Campaign in Kazakhstan—undertaken in spite of faint but unmistakable local opposition—has produced disappointing and perhaps even disastrous economic results and has had the unwelcome effect of further increasing the non-Asian population of the Kazakh SSR by nearly 10 per cent.

A feature of colonialism to which Soviet propagandists and supporters seldom, if ever, refer is the presence of foreign troops and settlers. Demands for the early removal of such troops and settlers have formed a prominent part of those put forward by the leaders of most of the nationalist movements in Asia and Africa, including the short-lived movements in Central Asia after the Revolution; and independence has generally been followed by their complete withdrawal except where their partial retention was specifically requested by the new national governments.

In Soviet Central Asia, however the situation is entirely different: there are no locally recruited military formations and the considerable armed forces maintained in the region for internal security or external defence purposes are predominantly Russian; and the number of non-Asian settlers, mainly Russians and Ukrainians, has increased from 2,000,000 in 1917 to 7,500,000 in 1959, thus constituting more than one-third of the whole population. According to figures published in 1964, the population of the five Central Asian republics increased by over 20 per cent between January 1959 and January 1964.

In this period the population of the whole USSR increased by 8 per cent. Since the average increase of the RSFSR Ukraine and Belorussia was only 6 per cent, it is evident that the greater part of the increase in the Central Asian Republics must be due to non-Asian immigration. It is certainly true that this addition to the sparse local population of the region has contributed greatly to its economic prosperity, but Soviet protestations that the ever-increasing settlement of Russians in their midst is welcomed and valued by the Muslim population are transparently spurious.

One of the essential features of a Soviet Union republic is that it must border on a foreign state, and since each Union republic is officially described as 'fully sovereign' its government naturally includes a Ministry of Foreign Affairs, if only for form's sake. In fact, however, all relations with adjoining states have always been the exclusive concern of the Central Government in Moscow, and none of the fifteen republics has ever maintained any representation abroad, with the sole exception of the Ukrainian and Belorussian delegates to the United Nations. During the decade following the Revolution several attempts were made to persuade the Turkmen, Uzbek, Tadzhik and Kazakh elements in Persia, Afghanistan and China to regard themselves as belonging to the newly formed national republics which adjoined their territories. These

attempts were unco-ordinated and they conflicted with the Soviet government's other aim of competing with the West for the favour of the Persian, Afghan and Chinese governments.

In the first few years of the Revolution it was by no means certain what form the governments of these countries would eventually take, but when it became clear that they would be strongly nationalist and that any attempt to create trouble among their populations or to bring about secession of part of their territories would be strongly resented, the earlier policy was abandoned, except for one disastrous attempt to revert to it in Persia in 1945–46.

The character of relations between Soviet Central Asia and China, or, more specifically, with what is now known as the Sinkiang-Uygur Autonomous Region, was different. Russian influence in Sinkiang was first established in the 1870s when Russian troops occupied for ten years part of the Ili Valley round Kuldja.

After the Revolution, Russian influence increased rather than slackened, and continued up to and beyond the Chinese Communist Revolution of 1949. The frontiers of the Kazakh, Kirgiz and Tadzhik SSR march with those of Sinkiang for nearly 1,500 miles, and although the Kazakhs, Kirgiz and Tadzhiks played no part in initiating or maintaining Russian or Soviet influence in Sinkiang, which was largely commercial and technical, there have been important movements of population back and forth across the frontier. During the second half of the 19th century about 100,000 Uygurs and Dungans (Chinese Muslims) moved into Russian territory, where they are still settled, and after the 1916 Revolt in Turkestan and the Steppe Region, some hundreds of thousands of Kazakhs and Kirgiz migrated to Sinkiang. Some further migration of Kazakhs into Chinese territory took place in the early years of the Revolution, but many of the emigrants are said to have returned since to Soviet territory, others having made their

way into Gilgit and thence to Turkey, where they are now settled. More recently, in 1962, some 6,000 Kazakh families from the Ili Valley took refuge in Soviet territory.

The long frontier with Sinkiang constitutes one of the Soviet Union's most delicate border problems, particularly since the Chinese Communist Revolution of 1949. Until that year, the situation of the 4,000,000 Muslims in Sinkiang in respect of foreign interference with their settled way of life was much better than that of the Muslims of the Soviet Union, and the number of Chinese colonists and officials in the area had not exceeded 300,000.

Before the coming of the Russians the Muslims of both eastern and western Turkestan probably accorded greater respect to China than they did to the rulers of Persia or Afghanistan. It may be true that later, according to Owen Lattimore, 'the Central Asia peoples have always tended to accord prestige and admiration more readily to Russia than to China', but the Russians themselves have not always been certain of this. After 1949, and particularly after the constitution of the Sinkiang-Uygur Autonomous Region in 1955, they seemed to have been nervous lest the resurgence of China as a great power intent upon re-establishing her old imperial frontiers might prove an attraction for the Asian peoples of the Soviet Union. From this time onwards there was a marked absence of any detailed reference to China in the press of the Soviet Republics adjoining Chinese territory and particularly of any mention of the considerable economic development of Sinkiang.

Since 1963, when the Sino-Soviet conflict first came into the open, China has accused the Soviet Union of organizing subversion in Sinkiang. Soviet counter-accusations have been moderate by comparison and have been confined to charges of 'frontier violation'. Chinese and Soviet fears of attempts to subvert each other's Muslim population are probably mutual, but there has so far been no conclusive evidence that such

attempts have taken place or are imminent; but neither possibility can be altogether excluded.

It is hardly possible to form any notion of how the attitude of the peoples of Central Asia towards their neighbours would have developed if the natural nation-forming tendencies had been allowed to proceed. They might, and most probably would, have wished to join forces with their co-nationals in the adjoining countries, and the resistance which they would inevitably have encountered from the governments of those countries would probably have resulted in hostilities. Up to 1965 there was no indication that the Soviet government would permit any direct diplomatic or trade relations between the Asian republics and their non-Soviet neighbours.

There can be no doubt that the combined effect of what must in spite of mistakes in planning and execution be regarded as great economic progress, of colonization and even segregation, has been to raise the standard of living in the Central Asian republics far above that of adjoining countries. Whether this can be regarded as fair compensation for the loss of what outside the Communist world is regarded as liberty is another question.

Up to 1960 it looked as if the so-called federal system inaugurated in 1922, of which Soviet Central Asia has formed part since 1924, had come to stay and that the Soviet government was satisfied that 'nationalist survivals' would automatically die out. In 1960, however, it became clear that the Party had decided to revert to Lenin's original plan of a unitary multinational state, that is to say, a state in which there would be no separate 'nations'. Nationalities would only exist in a broad cultural sense: the cultural entity of 'great historical ethnographic regions' such as Central Asia might be recognized, but such obstacles to state unity as frontiers and national languages would disappear. The implications of this aim and the processes of *sblizheniye* (drawing closer), and *sliyaniye* (fusion) by which it would be achieved were made clear in

the Party Programme adopted at the 22nd Party Congress in 1961.

No reasons for the decision were given but it must have been induced, at least in part, by a conviction that the synthetically created 'nation-states' were gradually acquiring a kind of political reality. This was particularly undesirable in Central Asia where three of the republics bordered directly on China, of whose new strength and potentiality as a rival for the favours of the Central Asian Muslims the Soviet Union had by 1960 become uncomfortably aware.

Certain measures, such as the creation of centrally controlled Central Asian agencies, taken since 1961 with the evident object of reinforcing Moscow's authority, were dropped after Khrushchev's fall from power in October 1964. The impression may thus have been created that it was he who was responsible for the new policy, whose unpopularity in the republics had by this time become obvious. The measures mentioned may have been taken on his personal initiative, but since his downfall care has been taken to emphasize that the decisions of the 22nd Party Congress were taken collectively. It is possible, therefore, that Khrushchev's downfall was considered a suitable occasion for the cancellation of measures which had in fact been taken 'collectively' but which had later appeared too precipitate. It is unlikely that the principles of *sblizheniye* and *sliyaniye* have been abandoned, but up to the end of 1965 there was a marked decrease in the amount of writing advocating the 'internationalization' of culture and the abolition of national distinctions.

7

The Sovietization of Central Asian Culture

BEFORE THE coming of the Russians the culture of the peoples of Central Asia did not differ greatly from that of settled and nomadic people in other parts of the Muslim world. In the settled regions, for example in Samarkand during the Timurid dynasty, it had reached a level comparable with that then obtaining in western Europe, and considerably above that of Russia. The nomadic peoples were less affected by Islamic civilization, and their culture had remained primitive by western standards, although none the less distinctive.

At the beginning of the Russian impact during the first half of the 18th century, the westernizing reforms of Peter the Great were only just beginning to take effect on Russian society, and Russian literature, music and art were still untouched by western influences. During the first 100 years of the Russian connection with Central Asia, therefore, there was scarcely any question of projecting Russian culture towards the Muslim peoples of the region. During the annexation and pacification of the Steppe Region which was not complete until 1850, any cultural development of the Kazakhs was carried out not by the Russians but by Kazan' Tatars, who had figured prominently in the early penetration of the Steppe. Tatar mullas had been encouraged by the Russian government to propagate Islam among the Kazakhs, whose practice of religion had hitherto been casual. The result of this was that the first Kazakh schools established at the end of the 18th century in Orenburg and Omsk were run on purely Muslim lines. It was not until the

rise of Great Russian nationalism in the 1850s that the Russian government became interested in Russianization as a means of consolidating the empire.

Considering that throughout the Tsarist regime the government of Central Asia was entirely in the hands of the military, progress was greater than might have been expected. It was, however, confined to the towns of the oasis region and the areas of the Steppe Region which were colonized by Russians, and it was achieved more by what is sometimes called 'culture contact' than by the development of education on Russian lines. By the end of the Tsarist period, literacy had not been increased by more than 1 or 2 per cent; but a large proportion of the settled population had become familar with Russian ways even if they did not adopt them, and among the Muslim townsfolk a smattering of spoken Russian was quite common. Vernacular, and particularly Uzbek literature published in the last three decades before the Revolution made use of a considerable Russian loan vocabulary.

In one sense the effect of Russian political and cultural influence in Muslim Central Asia was as great as, if not greater than, British influence in India. Things were done more and more in the Russian way because there were more and more Russians present. In 1914, there were 2,000,000 Russian settlers in the whole region and at least 40,000 Russian troops in the Turkestan Governorate-General alone, while in the whole of India at the same time there were less than 100,000 British including the British armed forces. Whereas in India the entire clerical establishment of the central and provincial Indian governments was Indian by the turn of the 19th century, in Turkestan and the Steppe Region taken together, over 70 per cent of clerical posts were held by Russians until many years after the Revolution.

The attitudes of imperial administrations towards the culture of their colonial dependencies vary in a way which cannot easily be explained. The British, whose cultural

heritage at the beginning of the 19th century was far greater than that of the Russians, have been accused with some justice of 'withholding their culture' from the Indians and other colonial peoples. On the other hand, they respected indigenous cultures and did much to systematize local languages, to preserve ancient monuments and to encourage native art. They promoted higher education on English lines, but they virtually ignored primary education and discouraged (almost to the point of prohibiting it) the use of the English language among the working classes and in the army.

The Russians, whose own cultural heritage was not only relatively small but, by western standards, of very recent origin, affected to despise the native cultures which they encountered and assumed that they would wither away after being in contact with the superior Russian culture. They virtually ignored the vernacular languages and conducted all official business in Russian, through interpreters where necessary. But whatever plans the Tsarist regime may have had for the eventual russianization of Central Asian society, they had not made much progress before the Revolution. The Soviet regime which has constantly accused its predecessors of pursuing a policy of russianization, has in fact gone much further in this respect itself, and it is with its attempts to regiment the culture of the peoples of Central Asia on Russian as well as on Soviet lines that the present chapter is concerned.

It had early become clear to the Revolutionary leaders that if the Russian empire was to remain territorially intact, a uniform system of government and society would have to be established; in other words, the Revolution would have to be artificially spread to areas where it had no spontaneous attraction. Priority was given to the fundamental matters of land ownership, and as was explained in the last chapter, by the early 1930s the existing system had been entirely destroyed and collectivization established in its place. Assaults were begun almost simultaneously on the prevailing system of social

grouping, on religion, language and literature, education and the practice of the arts; and the effects of Soviet reforming zeal in each of these fields will now be examined.

Social Grouping

Briefly, the Soviet plan was to abolish all existing loyalties of tribe, clan and joint family. These were to be replaced by synthetically formed 'nations', membership of which, however, was not to involve citizenship or patriotism: everyone would be a Soviet citizen and his patriotism would be due to the Soviet Union as a whole.

The abandonment of tribal society was a phenomenon which was taking place all over the non-Soviet Muslim east with encouragement, but not with coercion, on the part of national governments where they existed. In Central Asia, where there was both encouragement and coercion, the disappearance of tribe, clan and joint family as political economic and even as social units was much more rapid than elsewhere, and within certain limits the adoption of the westernized way of family life advocated by the Soviet authorities proceeded without any widespread opposition. But the hope that this would lead to the realization of the 'Great Russian dream'—the ethnic fusion of the Russians with the other races of the Union—has proved illusory.

The Muslims, on whom the ideas of nationality and the nation have been impressed for forty years, have now become accustomed to them as the only form of grouping which they are allowed; the synthetically formed republics, therefore, now seem to them to have acquired a self-contained individuality which has nothing to gain by fusion with the Russians. Inter-marriage between Muslims and Russians, without which fusion would be impossible, is still extremely rare.

Religion

Islam as a religion came under the general fire directed against all supernatural beliefs, but since it had its own

distinctive social, educational and judicial systems, all of which were regarded as militating against material progress, it was regarded as infinitely more pernicious and objectionable than any branch of Christianity. The existence of the pan-Islamic movement, whose influence the Soviet authorities greatly over-estimated, was also regarded as potentially dangerous. As recounted in Chapter 4, the Muslim organizations created immediately after the Revolution were soon liquidated, and it was not until 1942 that the four Muslim Spiritual Directorates were brought into being under the close supervision of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults attached to the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

Although the Soviet authorities have never concealed their hostility towards Islam both as a religion and as a way of life, their attacks on it have varied considerably since the Revolution. Foreign reports of the actual persecution and suppression of Islam have been exaggerated; its practice in accordance with Koranic precepts has never been formally forbidden, and in its campaign against what it regards as harmful customs the Soviet government has never gone to such lengths as the nationalist governments of some non-Soviet Muslim countries. But the number of clergy and of functioning mosques has been drastically restricted and a more or less steady stream of propaganda has been directed against the less fundamental aspects of Islam such as the veiling of women, pilgrimages to local shrines and tombs, festivals which interrupt work and such practices as child-marriage and circumcision.

There is no doubt that many of these practices had been carried to objectionable lengths and the reform and modernization of Islamic practice as a whole had been the aim of the Jadid movement mentioned in Chapter 3. This movement was at first inclined to make common cause with the Revolution; but it soon fell foul of the Soviet authorities, who insisted that the widespread social and cultural reforms which they had in mind should be associated exclusively with the 'triumph of the

Revolution'; to them the idea of reform from within Islam was indistinguishable from that of nationalism. The Jadids, therefore, found themselves at loggerheads not only with the reactionary Muslim clergy and with some of the leaders of the Basmachi revolt but also with the Soviet regime. An additional complication arose from the fact that the Soviet authorities condemned, and still condemn, as nationalists both the Jadids and those who continue the practices which the Jadids themselves condemned.

This has resulted in some confusion in the minds of casual students of Central Asian affairs, who imagine that survivals of such practices as child marriage and the seclusion of women are indications of nationalism. They overlook the fact that many nationalist governments in non-Soviet Muslim countries have been just as active in suppressing these practices as the Soviet government.

The social and cultural power of Islam has been undermined in varying degrees in different parts of the Muslim world, and probably nowhere more so than in Soviet Central Asia. But although the outward observance of Islam is probably less there than elsewhere, its underlying influence is still very much alive. In spite of the closing of mosques, the secularization of education and atheist propaganda, the vast majority of Central Asians still readily admit to being Muslims. The Russians are aware of this and are incensed at it. They think that the survival of Islam is not only objectionable in itself but is symptomatic of a deep-seated preference for Islamic to Soviet-Russian culture. They still adhere doggedly to the belief that this preference can eventually be eliminated by 'scientific' propaganda campaigns and by the provision of 'socialist' in place of religious and national traditions.

It is possible and even probable that the Soviet government will succeed in reducing still further the outward observance of Islam; but it is unlikely that the demise of Islam as a cultural force is yet in sight It is not that Soviet Muslim

intellectuals hanker after Islamic culture as practised in the non-Soviet east in the same way as western Russian intellectuals yearn for the forbidden fruit of western culture. Indeed, given the choice, they would probably veer towards western culture themselves, as do so many of their co-religionists in independent Muslim countries; but they evidently still feel that Islam has some indefinable quality which distinguishes it from western ideologies whether they be Capitalist or Communist.

Education

Like other Imperial governments with large backward colonial territories to administer, the Tsarist government was confronted with a serious dilemma; would education make the people of Central Asia more or less difficult to handle; and if education were to be the order of the day should it be on Russian or on Muslim lines? The existing system of Islamic education consisted of the *mektebs* or primary schools attached to the mosques, and the *medresehs*, or seminaries for the training of clergy and religious teachers. The Russian government never interfered in any way with the *mektebs* and only began to take an interest in the *medresehs* in the beginning of the 20th century. It did, however, establish three other types of schools: those for the training of interpreters; schools for the education of Russian settlers and families of officials at which a limited number of places were reserved for native children; and the so-called Russo-native schools, whose object was to acquaint Muslim children with Russian culture through the medium of their own language, and also with the elements of the Russian language.

These half-hearted measures resulted in the introduction of new thought in a small section of native society and in the creation of a native intelligentsia; but the resulting increase in literacy was only minimal. The Russo-native schools were not a success; but they stimulated the creation of the so-called New Method schools by the Jadids, which were much more popular

and had in turn the effect of stimulating the government to adopt a more active educational policy. The *medresehs*, whose number had greatly increased during the period of Russian rule, were placed under official administrative and financial control and a system of inspection was inaugurated. In 1907, a plan was put before the Duma for the introduction of compulsory primary education throughout the empire, but for political and financial reasons it was never put into effect.

In his book published in Tashkent in 1927 Barthold described what he called 'the alliance between Russian conservatism and old-style Islam', which, he said,

> 'completely changed the [Russian] attitude towards the old Muslim school. In 1876 it had seemed that Russian influence in the east was confronted with an important and lofty task—that of breaking the intellectual shackles of Mohammedanism and of bringing the natives into the orbit of a humane existence; in 1907, the Muslim school was compared with the ancient Russian Christian school; the *medreseh* curriculum was recognized as 'a very serious one' compatible with the real requirements of the people's life and as susceptible only of gradual and cautious extension in the sense of the introduction into it of 'elements of modern knowledge', and not of radical dismemberment. With the victory of the Revolution, conservative aims in the sphere of the school, as in all other spheres, were placed by other aims, which have not yet produced definite results.'

Barthold was not able to disclose his own views on the matter, but it seems likely that he himself thought that there was a case for the development of both primary and secondary education on Muslim lines. The Soviet government thought otherwise and concentrated on the development of general and technical education on purely secular lines. A decree of January 23, 1918, laid down that 'the teaching of religious doctrines is not permitted in any state, public or private educational institution where general educational subjects are taught'. Owing to shortage of teachers and funds this law could

not be enforced immediately, and although over 1,000 Soviet Schools had been opened in the Turkestan Republic by the end of 1921, many Muslim schools continued to exist until the early 1930s when compulsory primary education was introduced.

Thenceforward progress in education of all kinds was steady, and it must be seen as one of the most remarkable achievements of the Soviet, or indeed of any other imperial regime. Even allowing for the fact that it is not always possible to extract the Muslim element from the statistics showing school, university and technical training college attendance—it must be remembered that over one-third of the total population of the five republics is non-Muslim—there can be no doubt that the standard of literacy and of higher and technical education in Central Asia is far higher than that of any Muslim country in the world and indeed higher than of any Asian or African country with the exception of Japan and Israel.

In some instances, it is possible to establish the fact that a somewhat higher proportion of non-Muslims attend higher education establishments than their percentage of the population in various republics would seem to warrant. Thus, in Uzbekistan where non-Muslims only constituted about 20 per cent of the population in 1959, they accounted for over 30 per cent of the students in higher educational establishments, and they still did so in 1963–64. In 1960, there were 112,000 Muslim degree-holding specialists employed in the economy of the five republics, and this represented only about one-third of the total number of graduates at work.

There is also room for improvement in the higher education of women: in the scholastic years 1963–64 the proportion of women undergraduates in the Central Asian Republics was 29 per cent as against 43 per cent in the USSR as a whole. When, however, this situation is compared with that prevailing in the region thirty-five years ago, when there were no higher educational establishments which Muslims could attend and

when female literacy was much less than 1 per cent, the progress made must be seen as astonishing.

Detractors of the Soviet regime criticize on various grounds the Soviet educational policy as it has been applied to the Muslims of Central Asia: that its aims were political and economic rather than cultural, that it ignored national characteristics and rode roughshod over religious and traditional susceptibilities. However true this may be, it can hardly be denied that the development of public instruction in the widest sense of the term has contributed greatly to the general welfare of the people. Although the ultimate object of uniformity may be to create a standard *homo sovieticus*, it is probable that one of the main attractions of education for the Muslims lies in this very fact of uniformity, since it makes for an equality of professional opportunity which has not so far existed in any other colonial administration.

Whether more lasting and in the long run more beneficial effects could be achieved by a more deliberate process and a more liberal curriculum, and whether education may not promote rather than obscure the idea of opposition to colonialism, are matters still in the realm of conjecture.

Language

Before the Revolution the peoples of Central Asia had never been subjected to anything approaching a linguistic policy, that is to say, an attempt by the government to change and regulate by legislation established languages or methods of writing them. The Tsarist government's attitude towards the local languages was one of indifference closely bordering upon contempt: all official business was conducted in Russian and Russian officials were not required to, and seldom did, study the vernaculars, in which there were no school text-books and very little press or other literature.

Linguistic policies are generally of two kinds. There is the policy initiated by a national government with the object of

modernizing an existing language or of resuscitating an old language which has fallen into disuse. Languages like Arabic, Persian and Turkish, which had fallen into disuse as vehicles of modern knowledge, have been fairly successfully modernized to suit national requirements. Under the impetus of powerful nationalist movements classical Greek and Hebrew have been brought back into use in a modernized form; but an attempt to do the same with Irish has been a complete failure. There is also the policy whereby an imperial government seeks to compel subject alien peoples either to abandon their own languages—this was the policy followed by the Japanese in Korea—or to change them in certain specified ways to suit its own purpose. The policy followed by the Soviet government in Central Asia is to some extent a combination of these two policies: it affects to modernize, and in some instances to create or resuscitate, national languages to suit the individual requirements of the various nationalities; at the same time, by insisting that all these national languages should remain subordinate to Russian, it has ensured that they can never compete with Russian as vehicles of modern knowledge.

According to Soviet philologists, there are six main languages in Central Asia—five Turkic and one Iranian. Tsarist philologists considered that there were only three Central Asian Turkic languages—Turkmen, Uzbek and Kazakh, Kirgiz and Karakalpak being merely dialects of Kazakh. All the Turkic languages and dialects have a strong inter-resemblance which was further enhanced by the fact that up to the Revolution all writing in them was done in the Arabic character. The Jadids had proposed to create a single Turkic literary language written in a modified Arabic script for the use of all the Turkic peoples of Russia; but without the co-operation of the paramount Russian power their plan was doomed to failure.

The Soviet nationalities policy, as originally conceived, aimed at emphasizing the differences rather than the similarities among the nationalities; consequently, they concentrated on

the creation of distinct languages and literatures for the various nationalities with the evident object of reducing the possibility of their ganging up against the new regime. The first step taken was the introduction of the so-called unified Latin Alphabet in substitution of the Arabic for the writing of all Central Asian languages. In 1940 this in turn was replaced by a series of modified Cyrillic alphabets which emphasized the phonetic and grammatical differences among the languages by allotting certain special letters to each of them.

The use of Cyrillic rather than Latin characters also served the double purpose of facilitating the learning of Russian and of differentiating the Turkic languages of Central Asia from that of Turkey which had adopted the Latin character in 1928. Many school text-books, grammars, dictionaries and other literature had been published in the Latin alphabet before the adoption of the Cyrillic alphabets in 1940 and the enormous task of replacing them was considerably hampered by the war. But after 1945 the work of systematizing national languages and of publishing in the new characters was redoubled. The efforts and scholarship deployed in this campaign have been extraordinary and far too little attention has been paid to them by western scholars.

Apart from the initial but unexpressed aim of emphasizing national differences, the Soviet linguistic policy has throughout had two declared aims: first, 'the transformation of tribal and community languages into developed national languages with a rich terminology and vocabulary'; and secondly, the establishment of Russian as 'a second native language'. Great progress has certainly been made in achieving both these aims, but it seems likely that in the long run they will prove to be mutually contradictory. The authorities have always made it clear that Russian should be regarded as a superior language, and however much importance is attached to the development of national languages there has never been any question of any of them being considered on a par with Russian as a medium of

higher education. In 1958 it was announced that it was now for parents to decide whether their children should attend schools where Russian or the national language was a medium of instruction, and, if they chose the latter, whether they should take Russian as a subject.

At the same time, it is common knowledge that a command of Russian is essential for any kind of national advancement. It is also obvious that as long as Russian intellectual and philological mentorship persists, Central Asian languages can never become fully adequate as educational media.

The effect of imperialism on the language of a subject people varies with circumstances, but it is always great and may prove lasting. Where nationalism has full rein the imperial language may disappear altogether, as Turkish has disappeared from among the Arab subjects of the former Ottoman empire, Japanese from Korea and Arabic from Southern Spain. It is still too early to predict the ultimate fate of French and Italian in North Africa; but it may well prove to be the same. In India, English has gained a new lease of life as being preferable to Hindi, which to the majority of the Indian states seems to have less practical and cultural value than their own state languages. They think, probably with good reason, that the growth of these languages would be still further stunted by the introduction of a third language.

The Soviet aim of making all the non-Russian nationalities bi-lingual in their national language and in Russian is probably unattainable, and of recent years the government has shown signs of replacing it with the aim of making Russian the *first* rather than the second native language. This could of course happen without any official coercion just as it is happening, if it has not already happened, in Wales.

Literature

Because of the low standard of literacy, the demand for literature of any kind in Central Asia before the Revolution was

very small. Surveys made by Russian orientalists and officials between 1908 and 1912 on the reading matter available in the Turkestan Governorate-General showed that publications in local languages issuing from lithographic presses consisted partly of translations from Arabic religious literature, and partly of secular literature made up of translations from the Persian and original works, either in local languages or in other Turkic languages such as Tatar.

Much of the original writing was still poetical, but since the beginning of the 20th century writers like Firqat (1858–1909) and Hakim-zadeh (1889–1929) had been much influenced by Russian literature, and wrote in prose as well as in verse. Under the influence of the Jadid movement a number of pamphlets and short-lived newspapers, many of them satirical, appeared and had a certain vogue among the intellectuals. There was also the *Tuzemnaya Gazeta* or Native Newspaper produced under Russian control and edited for a time by the Russian orientalist Ostroumov assisted by the Uzbek poets Firqat and Muqimi. Like most other literature at this period this newspaper was not written in a popular language, but in 1906 it had a circulation of 3,600.

Partly because the Kazakhs had had no classical literary tradition, and partly because they were the first to feel the effects of Russian influence, writing on modern lines developed earlier in the Steppe Region than in the southern part of Central Asia. In the second half of the 19th century a group of writers appeared which aimed at breaking down the old tribal traditions and at making Kazakhstan into a modern nation. The three principal members of this group—Chokan Valikhan, Ibrahim Altynsaryn and Abay Kunanbay, all had an excellent knowledge of Russian and of Russian literature, and the last two had had a traditional education and were well versed in Arabic and Persian literature. Abay, as he is generally known, was primarily a poet, but all three wrote in prose as well as in verse. Valikhan concerned himself principally with

interpreting Kazakh culture to the Russians, while Altynsaryn was primarily an educational reformer.

In the 20th century, and particularly after the 1905 Revolution and the partial relaxation of the restrictions on political writing, two somewhat different groups emerged, the one advocating western reforms on Russian lines, the other being more nationalist and anti-Russian in its outlook. The Kazakhs also led the way in journalism, and *Qazaq*, published in Orenburg, had at one time a circulation of 8,000 .Other papers were published outside Kazakh territory, in St Petersburg, Troitsk and Tashkent.

Before the Revolution, the practice of original writing was not widespread and was associated almost entirely with religion, legend and, for a brief period, with national consciousness, all of which subjects were anathema to the Soviet regime. Such literature as did exist displayed a certain natural vigour which was soon to disappear when after 1924 writing and publishing of every kind came under strict official control.

What the Soviet government set out to do was to create 'national literatures' written in the national languages which had been officially apportioned and systematized. These literatures were to be 'national in form and socialist in content', which meant in effect that apart from the languages in which they were written, they would conform to certain literary criteria laid down by the Communist Party for the whole of the Soviet Union; and they were to be a vehicle for official propaganda on carefully restricted subjects ranging from the positive merits of socialism and Communism to the iniquities of imperialism, capitalism, religion and nationalist survivals.

The quantity of literature of all kinds produced under these auspices was soon to become enormous, and at present far exceeds that produced in any of the other Muslim countries outside the USSR. With one or two exceptions the standard of printing and production is high; in respect of literary style and construction, too, Central Asian writing may be ahead of

much of that which appears in Middle Eastern and South Asian countries. But as a genuine reflection of modern living conditions, and still more of modern thought and world outlook, contemporary Central Asian literature does not bear comparison with that of Persia and the independent Arab countries. During the 1930s there were some literary rebels, such as Cholpan and Qadiri, who refused to conform to the new standards; but most of these were executed or disappeared after arrest, and since 1937 there has been a general tendency to conform to official requirements.

Looked at from the western angle the task of the professional Central Asian writer seems to be an impossible one; for the Party requires writers to produce works of a characteristic national flavour about nations which are supposed to be rapidly losing their distinguishing national characteristics. When, however, they not unnaturally look for such characteristics in the past, they are liable to be accused of reactionary tendencies.

It is hardly practicable to speculate on the future of Central Asian literature. The 'thaw' which set in intermittently after Stalin's death has had far less effect on Central Asian than on Russian writing, where the old tendency towards imaginative and radical thinking is to some extent reasserting itself. There are several reasons for this: in the first place Central Asian writers have good reason to be more chary of offending Party critics; secondly, they have not yet become accustomed to the new literary genres which have been imposed upon them. In addition, the dual emphasis on Russian and on national languages sometimes results in writers not being fully at home in either, or perhaps in their being more at home in Russian. Indeed, it sometimes happens that works hailed as masterpieces of national literature are written first in Russian and translated later.

It is possible that Central Asian literature might eventually assume a more natural and vigorous character if it were

written and published in Russian rather than in languages whose growth has been artificially stimulated. Many examples of such a phenomenon can be found in the history of other empires.

The Arts

The fine arts barely existed in Central Asia before the Soviet period. Since Islam forbade the representation of the human form, painting was at a very low ebb and sculpture non-existent. Music was held in high esteem but its development was hampered by the absence of notation. The creative arts found expression in architecture, carpet weaving, ceramics and embroidery, but except in the first two, achievement was not outstanding either in workmanship or in inspiration. The drama as it had developed in China, India and the West was unknown in Central Asia until 1913, and did not really develop until after the Revolution.

Soviet artistic regimentation, therefore, has consisted mainly in the introduction and development of new arts regulated by the principles of 'socialist realism'. In the existing arts mentioned above, little progress has been made, except perhaps in music which has profited by the introduction of notation. If the present condemnation of the cult of personality is maintained, there may be some hope of rescuing the carpet-weaving industry from the curse of political portraiture from which it has so far suffered.

As might have been expected, progress in the new arts has been minimal. Artists were suddenly required to produce painting and sculpture, which were not only entirely new to them as forms of expression but were to act as vehicles for entirely new ideas. It is therefore not surprising that their productions, although considerable in quantity, lack spontaneity and genuine character. Tendencies to 'hark back to the past' are frowned upon by the authorities, who maintain the Marxist-Leninist aesthetic principle that the main purpose of

art is the propagation 'of the great ideals of Communism and the immortalization of the memory of those who devoted their lives to the struggle for the people's happiness'.

The development of the drama, however, has met with an enthusiastic popular response. Here it was only a question of organization, for there was plenty of existing talent which had hitherto been exercised by the bards, jesters and strolling players, who sometimes performed in market squares or on platforms by the roadside whole scenes portraying unjust judges, dishonest merchants, mullas and the like. The newly built theatres and opera houses draw large audiences to see not only propaganda plays translated from the Russian, but also productions of familiar legends such as *Leyla and Majnun* and *Farhad and Shirin* as well as selected scenes and episodes from the well-known and loved oral epics such as Manas, Alpamysh and Korkut Ata. Dancing, too, has also been greatly developed and ballet performed by both sexes has now taken the place of the old unedifying dancing done by boys.

Great strides have been made in the cinema, radio and television, all of which are greatly prized by the authorities as propaganda media. There are said to be over 7,000 stationary and mobile cinemas in operation throughout the five republics. By 1960 there were radio and television transmitters in all the republics except Turkmenistan, which was partly served by Baku. 'The main task of Soviet sound and television broadcasting is to mobilize the workers of our country in order to translate successfully into reality the Seven-Year Plan and the whole programme of the large-scale construction of Communism in the USSR.' This statement, appearing in the newspaper *Turkmenskaya Iskra* on May 7, 1961, does not suggest that radio and television programmes have a very high entertainment value and this is confirmed by the published programmes. Nevertheless, the amount of listening and viewing seems to be large and on the increase.

In the absence of facilities for pursuing impartial investiga-

tion it is impossible to assess the overall effects of the forty-year-old campaign to substitute Soviet-cum-Russian for traditional culture. The Russians do not generally distinguish between culture and civilization, and Soviet sociologists would not accept Professor MacIver's statement that 'our culture is what we are, our civilization is what we use'. But on the basis of such a distinction it can be said that whereas the use of Soviet *civilization* is now widespread in Muslim Central Asia and may even be firmly established there, the adoption of Soviet *culture* is still limited and superficial.

The casual European or Asian visitor to the Central Asian republics cannot expect to engage in any frank conversation on this subject with Muslim townsfolk—he is never allowed to penetrate into the countryside—but he can learn something from a summer evening or two spent in one of the city Parks of Rest and Culture. Here he will note a very marked difference in the deportment (to use an old-fashioned but expressive word) of the Muslims, and particularly of the women, and he will seldom if ever see Muslims and Russians walking or talking together; and this in spite of the fact that they work together and are to a large extent educated together. The authorities are evidently aware that in spite of all their efforts and claims, symbiosis is still very far from being achieved; and this is confirmed by the renewed emphasis on *sblizheniye* (drawing closer) at the 22nd Party Congress and the implied threat of liquidation of the republics referred to in the last chapter.

CONCLUSION*

IN THIS brief study an attempt has been made to show that although the material condition of the peoples of Soviet Central Asia has greatly improved during the Soviet regime, their political and cultural development on national and traditional lines has been—and is still being—inhibited.

In the absence of facilities for pursuing first-hand enquiries into the state of opinion among the Central Asian peoples or into Soviet intentions in regard to them, it is difficult to form any idea of what their future will be. It is, for example, impossible to estimate with any degree of precision whether those same nationalist trends which appeared in the British, French and Turkish empires at various times during the first half of this century, and which gained independence for so many of the peoples concerned, are also at work among the peoples of Soviet Central Asia. It may, however, be useful to consider certain aspects of the matter and in particular how far circumstances in Central Asia resemble or differ from those prevailing in the regions where national consciousness has burgeoned and finally blossomed into nationalist movements leading to political independence, if not always to economic viability.

Before attempting to compare conditions in Russian-dominated Central Asia with those in other colonial empires, it is important to draw a distinction between national consciousness and nationalism. National consciousness is a kind of group solidarity not unlike other bonds of union such as religion, tribe or caste. Nationalism, on the other hand, has the

* Most of this Conclusion has been taken from the Editorial written by the author, which appeared in *Central Asian Review*, No. 2 of 1965.

positive aim of creating a nation state enjoying a government exclusively its own. National consciousness may exist in composite nations and also in colonial territories without ever developing into nationalism if there are no facilities for its development. Nationalism or a nationalist movement may be set in motion for patriotic or personal ends by an individual or by a small group even where, usually owing to lack of education, only rudimentary national consciousness exists; but if a movement is to succeed, it must eventually inculcate such consciousness.

National consciousness exists strongly among the Scots and Welsh in Britain and among the French, Italian and German communities in Switzerland without developing into nationalism aiming at separation. In colonial territories, national consciousness will inevitably develop with education; but it will remain dormant and negative in the absence of leaders and of certain other factors.

In three fundamental respects the case of the peoples of Soviet Central Asia resembles that of most of the other peoples of Asia and Africa who came under European domination during the 19th century or earlier: their country was acquired by military conquest or annexation; they are culturally and ethnically distinct from the people of the metropolitan country; and their lands are important sources of raw materials which for various reasons they have not been able to exploit fully themselves.

In spite of these basic resemblances, however, the evolution of the peoples of Central Asia under the Soviet regime has been entirely different from that of any of the other peoples of Asia or Africa. Among the latter, nationalism has resulted in independence owing to the presence of at least some of the following circumstances: easily identifiable national leaders with some freedom of speech and action; religious and cultural freedom for all; aid and encouragement from abroad; native armed forces trained in the use of modern weapons; and finally,

support from liberal opinion in the metropolitan country, or relaxation of metropolitan control as a result of political or military weakness. None of these circumstances has been present in Soviet Central Asia during the past forty years, a fact which in itself would seem to explain the absence there of any of the characteristic signs of nationalism.

There are certain other factors which distinguish the situation of the peoples of Central Asia from that of all other colonial peoples, with the exception of the non-Han peoples of China, although these factors do not themselves necessarily militate against nationalism. The first of them is that Central Asia is part of a landlocked empire undivided by any important geographical barriers. Secondly, the Soviet government applied to the incipient disease of nationalism, of which some symptoms appeared immediately after the Revolution, a kind of homeopathic treatment which artificially induced notions of nationhood designed to replace the old tribal and clannish loyalties; and these notions were carefully emptied of all political significance. Thirdly, material conditions and facilities for general and technical education have improved far beyond the standards reached in all but a very few African and other Asian colonial territories. Finally, the ratio of European colonization has exceeded that existing anywhere else, not excepting North Africa.

As long as a combination of all these circumstances and factors continues to prevail, any development of the undoubtedly existing national consciousness into active nationalism on lines familiar elsewhere can hardly be expected, particularly since the Soviet regime actively campaigns even against manifestations of national consciousness. Nevertheless, the obstacles to assimilation and symbiosis remain as fundamental in Central Asia as elsewhere, and Soviet belief in the possibility or even in the expediency of their final removal is not unshakeable.

The homeopathic treatment just referred to consisted in

constituting as Union Republics five of the 'nations' created in 1924, and as an Autonomous Republic the Kara-Kalpak 'nation', all with the trappings but with none of the reality of sovereign nation-states. In all these republics except Kazakhstan the titular nationality is in the majority; but each of them contains many hundreds of thousands of other Central Asian nationalities, and over all of them is spread a non-Asian—mainly Russian and Ukrainian—settler population of over 7½ million, in proportions ranging from 13 to 50 per cent of the total population of each republic.

In attempting to assess the present state of national consciousness in Soviet Central Asia in the belief that it might develop into some form of nationalism, it is reasonable to assume that there is an under-current of resentment against continued alien rule and regimentation; but also that the people would not be able, and would be most unlikely to attempt, to break free from the political, economic and cultural straightjacket in which they are at present confined unless there were some prospect of its deliberate or involuntary loosening by Moscow as a result of internal or external pressure.

There has always been ample evidence of the existence of national consciousness; but the form which an actual nationalist movement or movements could take, and the nation or nations which such a movement would aim at forming, can only be conjectured. Would it revert to the pre-revolutionary natural or artificial groupings, or would it develop on the basis of the artificially formed but by now largely crystallized 'national republics'? Would it aim at a Turkic nation embracing only the Turkic peoples, or at a Turkestani nation including also the Iranian Tadzhiks? Could it perhaps be extended to the considerable Turkic and Tadzhik elements living just over the Chinese, Afghan and Persian borders? Finally, to what extent could such a movement or movements be expected to receive aid or moral support from abroad?

In the conditions prevailing in Soviet Central Asia during the past forty years, national consciousness has had no opportunity of developing into nationalism and thence into independence; but this does not mean that such an opportunity will never occur. The many changes which have taken place in the internal and external policies of the Soviet empire have not yet materially affected the political, economic and cultural status of the Central Asian peoples as it was conceived by the new regime in 1924; but it is easy to envisage circumstances in which the Soviet government might consider it either imperative or expedient to adopt a different attitude. Practical if not ethical considerations might well impel the Soviet government to permit, if not nationalism of the kind familiar elsewhere in Africa and Asia, then some form of regionalism based on the republics, which would not only benefit the peoples concerned but could contribute to the prosperity and security of the Soviet Union as a whole.

Appendix

Principal Nationalities of Soviet Central Asia and Kazakhstan

Nationality	Number (1959 census*)	Political Status	Main Location
I TURKIC PEOPLES			
Uzbeks	6,004,000	Nation	Uzbek SSR
Tatars	780,000	Nation	All republics. Majority in Uzbek SSR
Kazakhs	3,581,000	Nation	Kazakh SSR
Turkmens	1,004,000	Nation	Turkmen SSR
Kirgiz	974,000	Nation	Kirgiz SSR
Kara-Kalpaks	173,000	Nation	Kara-Kalpak ASSR
Uygurs	95,000	Narodnost'	Kazakh and Kirgiz SSRs
II IRANIAN PEOPLES			
Tadzhiks	1,397,000	Nation	Tadzhik SSR
Iranians	21,000	National Minority	Turkmen and Uzbek SSRs
Baluchis	7,800	National Minority	Turkmen SSR

* No complete breakdown by nationalities has been published since the 1959 census. Total population figures for the five republics as at January 1, 1965, have been officially estimated as follows:

Uzbek SSR	10,130,000
Kirgiz SSR	2,569,000
Tadzhik SSR	2,432,000
Turkmen SSR	1,862,000
Kazakh SSR	11,853,000
	28,846,000

Nationality	Number (1959 census)	Political Status	Main Location
III OTHER ASIAN PEOPLES			
Dungans	21,000	Narodnost'	Kazakh and Kirgiz SSRs
Arabs	8,000	National Minority	Uzbek SSR
Jews	147,000	—	All republics. Majority in Uzbek SSR
Koreans	213,000	—	Uzbek and Kazakh SSRs
IV EUROPEAN PEOPLES			
Russians	6,265,000		
Ukrainians	1,035,000		All republics. Majorities in Kazakh SSR
Belorussians	108,000		
Germans	500,000 (approx.)		

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