

NEW LIGHT ON
CENTRAL
ASIA

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PREFACE

It is on the persuasion of Mr. Mustansar Hussain Tarrar that I agreed to publish a compilation of my recent articles, already printed in the magazines and newspapers of Pakistan. As the articles present the past, present and future of Central Asia from an entirely new angle, I have entitled the book as "New Light On Central Asia" The articles actually fall in three groups. The first deal with cultural relations between Pakistan and Central Asian States; the second traces the history of the modern independent states in Central Asia and tries to understand it from the wider perspective of Asian history; and the third puts on record my old impressions of Bokhara and Dushanbe.

I am thankful to the management of Sang-e-Meel Publications for bringing out this book. I hope the readers would like to look at them once again for a better appreciation of the changes that are now taking place in Central Asia. I am also thankful to many of my foreign friends who have

shown interest in these contributions. However, I am particularly obliged to my friend Mr. Mustansar Hussain Tarrar who has seen the book through the printing.

Islamabad

A. H. DANI

1 January 1993.

Central Asia And Pakistan Through The Ages

Central Asia, or “Shredne Asia” in Russian language, is widely known as “Middle Asia” to the Russians. Recent western historical literature has talked of it as the home of brutal invading hordes, such as the Mongols, the Huns and several others, who have been painted as a menace to the peaceful life of the civilised world, over which the Europeans have ruled and exploited to build their own nations and become ruling elites and industrialised states in the modern world. The picture has been so grimly presented that the neighbouring peoples living so close for centuries became estranged. The Central Asian “bug bear” remained caged in the harrowing tales of the west. Consequently the people of Pakistan hardly remember their closest neighbours, with whom they had historical relations for centuries, over millennia, nay across millions of years. All this happened within less than seventy years, and in spite of many Bokharis, Samarqandis, Tirmizis, Kashgaris, Uzbekis and Moghals, who now live in Pakistan, their blood relations across the border have freezed in the cold and closed pages of history. How this happened will be told some other day but today’s topic is to recapitulate the threads of old linkage—the traditional routes that provided the bonds—the fundamental base of human relations that still lie dormant under the shadow of imperial exploitation that opened

oceanic pathways between east and west and dried up all direct land-routes that connected neighbouring and distant humans in a world of perpetual contact, mutual relations and close friendliness.

It was only in 1924 when the state of Bokhara was finally merged into the Soviet Union that the trade of Peshawar and Lahore across the land to Central Asia was permanently frozen. The Kashmiri Shawl merchants stopped moving into the old familiar caravan serais of that land. The Sethi house of Peshawar packed up their notes and bundled their *bahi-khatas* (account books) only to decorate their mirror halls that still reflect the glory of old Bokharan palace. The *mandi* of Shikarpur and the caravan *maidan* of Multan slipped into the limbo of oblivion. Although the Kashmiris still roll up the *namdas*, the rugs, and prepare paper-machine works, all for local markets, they hardly remember that this was a common profession practised by them as well as by the Tajiks in Tajikistan. While the *Zardoozis* work in the concealed lanes and by-lanes (Sooa Bazar) of old Lahore and gold and silver smiths beat for gold and silver leaves to the demand of local luxurious dishes, they have no memory that their own brothers and sisters across the border have been busy in the same trade for centuries. The traditional crafts have continued below the fashion of European and Japanese taste so much so that the other day when I went to purchase some local gifts, I was shown a set of cutlery and assured that it was made in Pakistan but labelled as “made in Japan”. How many old families of the Frontier, Kashmir and Panjab still possess the orange coloured China ware, generally known as “Guerdenor” ware, so much prized in the last and beginning of this century? What happened to that “Guerdenor” workshop in Tzarist Russia?

The early British travellers in the last century wrote a lot about opening old trade routes from Central Asia down

the Indus river. Among such travellers Moorcraft has been very famous. The British sent a number of missions to Bokhara, Andijan, Khojen and other places in Central Asia. But all these overtures were lost in the game of diplomacy which resulted in a compromise formula that left the peoples north of the Hindukush under the fold of Tsarist Russia and those south of the Hindukush under the benign exploitation of the British colonial masters. That was the beginning of the estrangement between the brotherly peoples of Central Asia and Pakistan. Afghanistan was suffered to stay on outside the control of these imperial hands in the medieval glory of stagnation. And yet this little hill kingdom kept up the traditional handicrafts in the form of carpets, leather work, products of lapislazuli and other precious stones, lot of fruits, furs and woollen clothes that were in great demand all over the world. Different tribes in Afghanistan have lived in freedom to the adjustment of Afghan monarchy which was left free to manage with the imperial powers. When Afghanistan woke up to modernisation, mainly after the second World War, its international relation had to be redefined vis-a-vis the emerging new powers. In this game of new diplomacy, backed up by royal family feuds, the balance in Afghanistan was broken and the tilt veered in favour of the immediate neighbouring power. The tribes were reawakened to their sense of freedom and rights. They were pitted one against the other to kill their kith and kin and rediscover their relation with the state power. In this process of transition Afghanistan bled severely and drained away the wealth of the country alongwith that of its protege to the satisfaction of others and less to fulfil its own process of modernisation. Are the tribes prepared to accept this change? Probably they are but in their own terms. The Afghan tribal social relations must find its readjustment and get merged in the new life of the Afghan people. This new historical event has shaken up the peoples in the immediate neighbourhood and they have begun to think whether they could come together, open the doors of historical relations

and sit together in the traditional *kahve-khana* or in a caravan-serai and exchange ideas and goods and renew old friendship, relearn about eternal bonds of kinship and help one another in reasserting their human rights and compose their differences to march forward to a new world of cooperation. This free spirit of cooperation has affected the entire region including the new freedom fighters in Kashmir.

The period of the Mongols in the 13th century A.D, was a dividing line in the mediaeval history of Asia when a new order was established all over the land. The barriers between China, Central Asia, the Arab world and the Bulgar and other Slavic states on the Volga were broken. The Yuan empire in China, the Chaghatais in Central Asia, the Oghtais in Tigris-Euphrates valley and the Golden Horde in the north opened a new era of contacts and conflicts, when a new civilisational level was created, scientific and technological developments were freely exchanged, the might of the horse power was firmly established, spiritual mysticism gained ground, education received a new impetus and art and architecture got integrated into a new shape. The highwater mark of this creative spirit reached its climax in the time of the Timurids when the whole of Central Asia united under a new spirit of lyrical medium, poetic creation, artistic excellence and spiritual yearning under the inspiration of Islamic learning. Pakistan was a part of this historical process. Whether it is the Gakhars in Panjab or the Sammas in Sindh, they established friendly relations with the states in Central Asia. The caravans moved freely between Samarkand, Multan and Lahore. It is not just the trade goods that flowed but also men of learning and those inspired by spiritual missions that crossed the boundaries and mixed with the people to teach them new lessons of love, brotherliness and fellow-feeling. The successor states of Shaibanids in Bokhara, the Safavids in Iran, the Mughals in India and the Mings in China were the end products of this systematic process, when a new international relation among

them was established. Commercial enterprise took new shape. Silk, carpets, rugs, brocades, jade and other precious stones, books, manuscripts, painted designs, scrolls, silver and copper wares, gold, porcelain and leather goods and several other items of trade passed from Central Asia to Pakistan. New roads were built and series of caravan serais were erected alongwith stepped wells, mosques, kos minars (mile stones) and shaded trees. For the first time Khaibar pass was opened and a road built across it in the time of the Mughals. Thatta, Multan, Lahore and Peshawar became the industrial and commercial centres in Pakistan. Peshawar played a leading role in the economic activity for the transition of goods, men and missionaries that flowed in either direction between Central Asia and Pakistan. Many serais were built in the city of Peshawar. Among them Gor-Katri (probably Kor-Khattri, meaning probably a house of business community) has remained a relic of old that has changed hands from one conqueror to another but retained its main purpose of housing the visiting merchants, missionaries and scholars. In fact the city of Peshawar became a great emporium of Central Asian trade and its Hindko language became the lingua franca for this international commerce. All the urban centres in the Frontier from Peshawar to D.I. Khan adopted this language for trade and these cities welcomed new business entrepreneurs. As a result Turanian cultural influence reached Pakistan and many standing buildings of the time today present common features in taste and technology. Many kinds of agricultural products passed between the two regions. Lift irrigation system became popular. Water was carried through copper conduits in nobles' houses. Turkish system of baths were introduced. Terraced gardening attracted the mind of the people. Above all calligraphers, painters, builders, and men of learning freely passed in these countries. These contacts and exchanges knit together all these regions into one civilizational unit, where not only

common market provided business facilities but also common cultural goal.

The migration of the Huns into Central Asia in the 5th century A.D. introduced the mediaeval epoch. In western China the Huns were opposed to the Hans and they also pressed against the Hassanians in Iran and the Roman empire in Europe. Later while the Hun empire was broken up into numerous Turkish tribal States, in the territory of Pakistan including Kashmir the Huns continued to rule and build a new agricultural order until they were themselves succeeded by several Turkish states, the most famous of them are the Turki Shahis, who ruled from Udbhandapur (modern Hund on the Indus) and from Kabul. The Turks, who were originally Buddhists, were the rightful successors of their cousins, the Huns. Neither the Huns were united into one nationhood nor were the Turks. Both of them held together the different tribes and subtribes, into one politico-economic system, in which both Central Asia and Pakistan were knit together into one cultural zone. Later the spread of Islam added a new ideological force to their religious life and the tribes having different affiliations fought among themselves for supremacy, as we find in the case of the Ghaznavid Sultans and the Turki Shahis of the Indus region. However, the politico-economic system, which they had earlier evolved, little changed. When the Turks became supreme power wielder under the Abbasid Khalifahs, the Arab world soon became a part and parcel of this great economic zone. At the same time Central Asia, alongwith the Arab world, became a great centre of scientific and educational development and where trade and commerce flowed along ancient trade routes. It is at this time that many of the Chinese technologies were transferred to the west. Great advances were made in mathematical and astronomical sciences. The old scientific knowledge of Western Asia and Greece found its fertile home in Central Asia. The contemporary T'ang emperors of China kept

regular contact with Central Asia. Several princes, men of wisdom, missionaries and business men crossed the Hindukush and left behind their records on the rocks along the upper reaches of the Indus. Samarkand, Panchkent and Tashkent were directly linked with Chitral and Gilgit. Tirmiz on the Oxus became a great emporium.

The Samanids, the Seljuqs, the Karakhittais and the Karakhanids held supreme power in Central Asia, one after the other, and they sent their sub-branches into Pakistan. The Ghaznavids were an off-shoot of this Turkish movement. The Trakhans in Gilgit carried the Turkish blood and banner into that region. Later the Arghuns and Tarkhans spread their influence in Baluchistan and Sindh. But the most powerful force that became supreme in the southern part of Pakistan was that of the Baloch tribe, which probably represents an old tribe called Balus in the Babylonian texts, and which is today scattered in Turkmenistan (USSR), Iran, Afghanistan and all the provinces of present Pakistan. Their mud fortifications and decorated graves are found all over the place and they encouraged trade and cultural contacts by this southern route with Central Asia. It is this southern sindeflection of trade that forced the Baloch tribe to occupy the areas of present D.I. Khan and D.G. Khan right upto Bahawalpur so that they are in control over the Gomal pass caravan trade. It is at this time that Ghazni became a great emporium and maintained direct connection on the one hand with Multan and on the other with Bokhara Via Khorasan route. The result was a migration of several Central Asian saints including Gardezis and Bokharis into Multan. This city became a centre for the production of glazed tiles, textile, camel leather works and decorative furniture. The route went further upto Chinot which specialised in the art of wood carving. This industry of fine wood craftsmanship is widely spread from Peshawar to D.I.Khan and eastward to Multan, Chinot and Lahore. The art did not stop here. It

spread into Kashmir and into the hill regions of the north. Today in Swat, Dir, Kohistan, Gilgit and Baltistan the wooden style presents varieties of examples. It is these wooden decorations that re-echo the stone and tile ornamentation seen in the monuments of Central Asia. Whether it is the Ghazni towers in Afghanistan, or the Kalian minaret in Bokhara, or the wooden *mazinas* in Swat and Kohistan, each one of them presents patterns of decoration that are intimately related. Two new developments are very remarkable. One refers to the astronomical discoveries that led to the creation of starry skies in the dome ceilings. The other is the work of carpet making, the designs of which find reflected in the decoration of the tympanums, soffits and underside of the arches. The presence of this common media speaks of the itinerary of the artists from one country to another. Above all it is this Central Turkish mannerism that obtained currency in all these areas. The cookery, the food habits, the food-spread, commonly known as *dastarkhwans*, inclusive of the delicate spouted vases, washing bowl-plates, all became common patrimony of the people that lived all over this vast belt. Whether one is in the old part of the city of Bokhara or Samarkand, or even in the old homes of Peshawar and Lahore, one may witness similar custom, food, dress and drink among the old families that feel shy of modernism but have faint memory of their age-old tradition. This was the civilization of the past, on which is rooted the common heritage of Central Asia and Pakistan and which still survives below the veneer of westernization.

Going far back in ancient history, even much before the beginning of the Christian era, about 2nd or 3rd century B.C. the Scythic nomadic tribes roamed about the Steppe land of Eurasia right upto the western borderland of China. These pointed-capped nomadic horsemen settled in the oasis-land of Central Asia, pushed down into what is now known as Seistan after their name, even right upto modern Sindh,

which was then called Scythia after them, and who have been now traced in the rock carvings of Gilgit region along the Indus river. Their great king Maues held his court in Taxila and whose successors conquered right upto Mathura on the Jamuna. Their another branch forced into Indian Gujerat to open up trade route across the Arabian sea and ultimately leaving their blood among the mercantile community of Gujerat. It is their descendants who are widely scattered in the Indus-land and still stick to the profession of trade and commerce. Their names still survive in the *kand*-ending names of the cities, such as Samarkand, Panchkent, Tashkent, Yarkand etc. They speak of wide ranging historical links in this vast area and many of their words are today recognised in the Pashto vocabulary. The Scythians are again a heterogenous mixture of several peoples. Their graves have been discovered in Central Asia, Afghanistan and Pakistan, which are rich in gold and silver objects. Their close cousins were the Kushanas, whom the Chinese record as Yuechhis. They advanced into Central Asia and founded the largest empire of the ancient world, stretching from the Caspian sea to the Bay of Bengal and from the Aral sea to the Arabian sea with their summer capital at Kapisa (Bagram near modern Charikar in Afghanistan) and winter capital at the city of Peshawar, which was then known as Purushapura. But later the Kushana empire shrank and it remained confined to the Land of the Seven Rivers until they were finally overthrown by the Huns.

The Great Kushanas, as they are usually remembered, have been described as uncouth and barbarous people in modern historical literature. Unfortunately there is no contemporary historical literature that can enlighten us on their achievement. However, sufficient archaeological data, including coins and inscriptions, have been discovered, which speak of harmony and toleration throughout the empire. On the one hand the Kushana emperors are known to have built fire temple in places like Surkh-Kotal in Afghanistan and on

the other they erected largest number of Buddhist stupas and monasteries. In their coins they portray the figures of as many as thirty-five deities from different religions of the time. This height of spiritual compromise was the result of intermixture of varieties of human groups that moved freely within the Kushana empire. It was an age when the real Silk Road took its concrete shape that joined east and west by land routes. Credit must go to the Kushanas that this international trade route was also deflected south of the Hindukush and it was linked with the Arabian sea route going towards the west. The Kushana emperors had diplomatic relations on the one hand with China and on the other with the Roman emperors. It is along this Silk Road that international trade flowed for full five centuries. To meet the demand of this trade the Kushana emperors issued gold coins which are discovered in large numbers in Pakistan and Central Asia. The gold was obtained by international commerce as well as from Syberia and gold anti-hill deposits in Ladakh, where Kushana inscription has been found at Khalatse. The trade was built on the base of industrial development seen in large number of cities that were established at this time. The Kushanas encouraged large-scale urbanisation of the entire area from Pakistan to Central Asia. The industry was founded on the popularisation of iron technology. In the Indus-land the iron deposits in the Kalachitta Range and Kalabagh were exploited. All along this Range large tunnels are now seen, where from iron was extracted and in its neighbourhood old industrial settlements have been discovered. They are today recognised by the ruins of furnaces and iron slags that are scattered in Attock district. It is this exploitation of iron that helped build the mighty Kushana army that conquered right upto Karakorum Range along modern Karakorum Highway. Kushana inscriptions have been found in Chilas, Gilgit and Hunza.

Side by side with this heavy industry developed varieties of crafts in gold, silver, copper, ivory, bone, shell, jade and precious stones, including carnelian, agate, jasper, emerald and glassware. The ivory workmanship, discovered at Bagram in Afghanistan, is superb in its art of figural engraving. Several examples of seals, sealings and medallions, discovered in different cities of the time, speak of the movement of artisans and of their wonderful skill in minor art. Luxury items, such as mirrors, combs, scent bottles, collyrium sticks and various kinds of ornaments that adorned both men and women, have been unearthed in the different urban centres. Above all footwear, various kinds of head-gear, arms and armoury, furniture and house-hold furnishings add to the wealth of the time. The most remarkable heritage of the time for all the peoples of Pakistan and Central Asia is the style of dress that distinguishes them even today from the rest of humanity. Long baggy trousers with tight-fitting tunics and heavy boots, that suited horse riding, became so fashionable that it is seen all over the place worn alike by kings, soldiers and common men. It is this dress alongwith long heavy *Choghas* that have continued to our own time. Later this gave rise to sharp, well-cut *sherwanis*—an apparel which has become national dress of Pakistan. This kind of dress was also worn by the *Janisaris* of the Turkish army and even now it is the customary dress of Central Asian women.

All these human cultural elements are missed when we limit ourselves to the wonderful product of Gandharan sculptures in stone, metal, terracotta or stucco and in cave paintings or in book illustrations. The Gandharan art is no doubt the finest gift of the Kushanas to world civilization and it is this art that spread from Gandhara to the whole of Central Asia and its influence is noted in China, Korea and Japan. The art not only mirrors the life of the people in Pakistan but it also reflects a new development of Buddhism, that is usually remembered as Mahayana form. This type of

Buddhism had a great appeal to the masses as it was populist and wherever trade routes led the merchants, there followed the artists, the scholars, the missionaries, the monks and masons, who carried the new faith and techniques of transforming it into a medium that was attractive and appealing to the people. It is the expression of this spirit that is now traced in the Gandhara type of Buddhist sculptures at Merv and even in the very name of Bokhara, that is most probably derived from the Buddhist word *Vihara*. In the paintings at Afrasiab (the old name of Samarkand), at Panchkent and at Ajina Tepe the artists' hands speak of the common theme and common medium of expression. Above all it is at Termez that large number of inscriptions in the Buddhist establishments speak of historical links with the then people of Pakistan. All along the Silk Road from China across Central Asia to Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey the merchandise of different industrial centres was transported; missionaries, marchants and men of crafts and medicine moved from place to place. It is their earning and saving that supported the monasteries and fed the artists of the time. Gandhara art is the product of this economic boom as it thrived on the mercantile economy founded on the prosperity of the Silk Road.

The Kushana emperors, who bore for themselves the proud title of *Shao-nano-Shao* (or later *Shahinshah*) left behind a long legacy of Shahs to the people of both Pakistan and Central Asia. In this country we still preserve their names in those of the hill ranges, such as Hindu Raj and Shahi, and the very name Shah, applied to the saints and kings alike speak of the great respect that these rulers commanded from their people. Every nook and corner of Pakistan from the Hindukush to the Arabian sea the heritage of the Kushanas has survived not only in the scattered stupas and monasteries but also in that traditional homes and their furnishings. The rural life of Pakistan is deeply impressed by the cultural legacy that has been left by

the Kushanas. Many tribes from Central Asia that trailed behind the marches of the Kushanas finally settled in the Indus-land and it is they who integrated the earlier traditions and helped de in the maturing of the cultural phase that can legitimately be called the classic period in the history of Pakistan. It is the efflorescence of this classical life that bears the name of Gandhara civilisation—an amalgam of a new spiritual realisation that harmonised the current ideas ultimately leading to an inspiration of artistic excellence deriving from internationalisation of cultural life by human commingling and cooperation. It is this Gandharan legacy that distinguishes the Indus spirit from rigid classicism of the Gangetic pattern and it is the same Indus spirit that binds the people of Pakistan with their kith in Central Asia. That spirit is well-praised by Alberuni and the end of the Shahs is rightly lamented by him. But that was not the final death of spirit of the Shahs. It has continued unconsciously down to our own time by being further reimbursed in the subsequent historical relations. There is an unbroken transformation of this life by a process of historical change but that still remains to be understood in the lost pages of history. The Kushanas are no more but their imprint in history still refreshes the tears that rolled down the cheeks of scholars, savants and men of the countryside alike. It is a tribute to them that some of the Gujjars today in Pakistan call themselves Gujjar-Kushanas.

In total contrast of this golden age of Central Asian history comes the imperial age of ancient past, when in the 6th century B.C. the Achaemenian Iranians, who inherited the West Asian legacy, made a bid to unite together the bands of the Aryan tribes who were then littered in the whole of Central Asia. Riding on the horse-driven chariots, the Achaemenians followed the Assyrian policy of conquest and pushed forward to hold their tight hands over the Scythic tribes in Central Asia and many free Aryan tribes then living in the Indus-land. The rule of the Achaemenians

gave a strong administration and welded together all of them into a united force that dashed against the Aryan tribes who were settled in Grecian islands. For two centuries the war continued until the Macedonian prince Philip established his authority over Greece. His son Alexander now vowed to take revenge on the Achemenians. It is this move of Alexander that has been painted as a venture for world conquest. It is the same campaign that is interpreted as Hellenising mission of Alexander on the peoples of Central Asia although Sir William Tarn himself admits how soon Alexander himself gave up the garb of his Grecian look when he penetrated deep into Central Asia and Pakistan. The history speaks of the defeat of the Achaemenians and end of their system of rule but at what cost. Alexander was lured into the heart of Central Asia and was made to traverse the entire Indus-land and finally return across the desertic plateau of Balochistan, being bitten by mosquitoes only to die a premature death at Babylon at a young age. The heroic resistance of the tribes of Pakistan is narrated by the Greek historians themselves. How different is the present narration by modern historians who bring out Alexander as a world conqueror and treat his retracing of steps as the fault of his followers rather than blemish the character of Alexander. Whatever may be the truth, his new conquests in the Indus-land were rolled up even before he left this soil by a revolution brought about by Chandrgupta Maurya, who was then a student in Taxila. The Greeks, who were left behind in Central Asia, had to rebuild a new state in Bactria and then occupy the Indus-land from the unmanageable Mauryan empire that was built on the policy of a political scientist, viz. Kautilya, then teaching in Taxila, and whose model, according to Dr. Buddha Prakash, was derived from the imperial Achaemenian system. This imperial legacy brought about some rapprochement of the contemporary scientific knowledge and artistic and architectural tendencies that are reflected in the Mauryan art of the time. However, much more solid was the survival

of the Greeks in Central Asia and later in Pakistan, who re-established many urban centres, such as Pushkalavati (modern Charsadda) and new city in Taxila in Pakistan and Ai-Khanum in Afghanistan. It is these Asianised Greeks who continued to hold political power from roughly 250 B.C. to 50 B.C. But in this short period there were thirty-nine kings, including three queens, who fought among themselves on the support of local tribes. A congeries of Greek kingdoms betray a continuation of local tribal warfare that could cease only after the establishment of the Scythic and later Kushana power in Central Asia and Pakistan. There is hardly any trace of the Greeks now in this part. Certainly they did not go back to their original homeland. They integrated into the local population. They have been rediscovered with the help of their coins and inscriptions, and some monuments which they have left behind and a taste of Grecian art that later mellowed and matured in Gandhara school. How much contact did they keep up with the west is difficult to say but they were themselves deeply involved in their own preservation within the gathering political forces that were then assuming new shape in Central Asia. The Greeks are no more but recent interest in the past Greek glory has led believers in Hunza and Kalash to find blood connection with them. This is a revival of tendencies to seek kinship with the modern superior racial concepts of the west. However, in this long perspective of history Alexander or the Greeks were a passing phenomenon in the vast scene of the historic drama of Central Asia and Pakistan.

This interpenetration of cultural elements from west to east in the last period was preceded by a long process of urbanisation in the Bronze Age both in the Indus valley as well as in the southern regions of Central Asia from the Caspian Sea along the Syr Darya right upto the Ghisar Ranges in Tajikistan. The new discoveries have shown how the Bronze Age cultures gradually evolved in the Indus

region from the earlier farming communities in the 7th millennium B.C. Similarly excavations in Turkmenistan evidence the gradual formation of cultures from the early farming community through chalcolithic period to the early Bronze Age in the 3rd millennium B.C. It is in this period of early Bronze Age settlements that the first contacts are noted between Central Asia and Pakistan. Long distance trade is attested between the proto-urban settlements in the Gomal valley, Punjab and Sindh and those of the oasis occupation sites in Turkmenistan. Overland routes across Balochistan and Afghanistan have been noted. These contacts were made long before the fully developed urban settlements of Mohenjodaro and Harappa. The Indus Civilization is a different pattern by itself which had its orientation towards the sea and it thrived on the profits of wide littoral region extending from Indian Gujerat to Makran coast on the west. All this fell within its control. This enabled the Indus people to have direct sea connection with the then civilisation in western Asia. But this development does not mean that this new phase of intense urbanisation had no heritage of the past. In fact the earlier Bronze Age cultures of the Indus-land contributed richly to the maturing of the Bronze Age life pattern that we call today as Indus Civilization. How this happened still remains unknown but what happened is clearly evidenced by the rapid extension of the various elements of this civilization eastward towards India, northward to the northern part of Afghanistan and westward to the very borders of Iran. This wide territorial extent has been termed by Dr. M. Rafique Mughal as Greater Indus Valley, where we find further intensification of agriculture based on the use of Indus flood water, over-industrialisation of the urban areas founded on the import of raw materials from distant places, over which the Indus people had control and more particularly in their capacity to indulge in trade and commerce with distant places either directly or through intermediaries. It is quite likely that raw material from Central Asia, such as lapislazuli, also found

opening through the markets of the Indus-land. We have evidence of trade by the Mohenjodarians in lapislazuli, carnelian, and other precious stones, ivory and timber, conch shell, peacock and spices. The system of disciplined administration that the Indus people developed gave them an edge over the profits of international trade that extended from Central Asia to Western Asia.

Unfortunately this very profit of the Indus people and of many other settled civilisations of the Bronze Age became an anathema to the less privileged Steppe-nomad communities that roamed over the Eurasian Steppes at this time. Such pastoral nomads, who barely touched the settled lands of the civilized people, most probably traded with them and exchanged some of the products of their pastoral economy. But soon these heterogeneous communities pushed southward from the Steppe-land of the north and penetrated into the southern regions of the civilised people. They forcibly possessed the sources of the mineral wealth and probably also forest wealth, on which mainly the industries of the civilised people depended. Thus many precious resources of the Hindukush was lost to the Indus people, resulting in their industrial dislocation and finally leading to economic strain and consequent decline of the civilisation. Among such Steppe-nomad pastoralists were bands of people who are today recognised as Aryans, whose graves have been found in Central Asia as well as in Pakistan. They are the squatters on the land of the older civilisations. They were subdivided into numerous tribes but united in their nomadic behaviour life pattern. Strengthened by the horse-power, they are seen to pounce down on the civilised lands, break assunder the ties of commercial relations and spell disaster for the flourishing civilisations of the Bronze Age. It took time for them to get mastery over the Indus-land, not before the middle of the 2nd millennium B.S., by which time the Indus Civilisation had disintegrated. By this time the Aryans were divided and distributed into several

communities and spread out in different parts of the Eurasian continents. It is their descendants who formed two distinct cultural zones in Asia—the Iranian in Iran and Central Asia and the Sanskritised Aryans who chose Aryavarta as their final home in India. The Indus-land remained in between them and we have seen earlier how the Achaemenian Iranians brought this region under their control and in subsequent periods of history how the Indus people became inseparably linked with the peoples of Central Asia culturally as well as ethnically.

This long perspective of history has left deep historical linkage between the peoples of Central Asia and Pakistan but the most recent history has spread a veneer over this long historical connections so much so that the immediate neighbours have forgotten their age-old relations. The departure of the British from the subcontinent loosened one end of the knot but the other end remained tied to its own system. As Pakistan seeks to discover its historical roots, there is no clear perception of its historic identity as cultural links are shadowed behind the dark curtains of recent developments. Today Central Asia is a part of another world, which some of the western writers have wrongly described as Soviet Empire and thus kept its real perception hidden from the view of general intelligentsia. The phrase is hardly justified as the USSR is hardly an empire of either British pattern or of any other West European colonial system. It is no doubt a successor state of the old Tsarist empire but there is a great gap of historical events between the two, marked by the Marxist Revolution, that defined new relations among the Republics who together constitute Soviet Union. It led to the establishment of a new politico-economic order although dictated from the top. Its strength lies in the power of the Union. Central Asia has been a part of this system. Despite large-scale socio-economic changes, the Union is now faced by a great economic crisis, not by an inherent defect in the socialist programme, but in the

manner in which this programme was executed by a dictation from the top. This over-centralisation resulted in the compromise of the freedom of the Republics and as a result local initiative suffered and local developments sacrificed in the interest of overall goal. This pattern of political arrangement need new adjustment so as to give more freedom to the Republics for initiative and for having greater say in their own affairs of local developments and Republican policies. This transformation is now viewed in terms of the western democratic ideas and the economic crisis is understood to be solved on the competitive spirit of market economy. But in the closed economy of Soviet Union market arrangement could be only internal but that will not solve the problem of commodity shortage unless sufficient resources are diverted from defence to the production of materials needed for the consumption of the people. The other alternative is to leave the Republics to generate their own resources by giving them freedom to have friendly relations, political as well as economic, with their neighbours. In what form this new reconstruction takes place and how soon it is going to happen are questions that are inseparably related to the future of the peoples living in the region. The old historical links will no doubt have deep influence on the direction that Central Asian Republics will choose given the new freedom.

However, the future adjustment depends upon the shape of things that Soviet Union is going to evolve. Can the Soviet Union survive the test of the present crisis in its present form? The answer appears to be in the negative as it denies the reality of Perestroika. However, as the Union was not empire, there is no question of its breaking as it was in the case of British Empire. Its future structure must evolve from within its system. As Soviet Union is a conglomeration of several ethnic groups, each ethnic group has a right to attain its nationhood. As the national consciousness in the Soviet Union is based on ethnicity, there has been little

integration of several ethnic groups living in the same Republics for the last seventy years. This ethnic rivalry has been the main cause of recent troubles in some of the Republics of Central Asia. There is no end to it if ethnic ideas are carried to the extreme. But economic demands and their solution may force the peoples living in the same area to broaden their outlook and develop a sense of territorial nationalism. If this does not happen, there should be found some ideological motivation to unite the peoples on one political goal. Whatever happens in the future, Central Asia is going to have a new face in the changing pattern of Soviet Union. Under this new impact the neighbouring countries have much to add to the common prosperity of peoples living so close to one another. In this process of historical change Pakistan cannot but find a scope to extend its economic activity to a region and its peoples who are no strangers to its people in the true historical sense.

15 May 1990

Cultural Links Between Central Asia And Pakistan

Central Asia today is little known and understood in Pakistan because for nearly seventy years that extensive region, wherefrom came our mediaeval rulers and which bestowed a cultural character to the people of Pakistan, was a closed book to us. There has been, however, a faint, memory in the mind of the people who are stirred by Allama Iqbal's nostalgic poetic verse about Samarkand and Bokhara. Apart from this poetic vision, trade and commerce continued for centuries between the trading houses in Peshawar, Lahore, Multan, Thatta and Shikarpur on the one hand and those of the famous cities in that part. In Bokhara one can still see *Sharafa* Bazar, caravanserais named after our cities and even old Panjabis surviving from the old business families. In the same way one can get hundreds and thousands of old Russian notes in the Sethi house at Peshawar—the old forgotten currencies that ran out their value after the communist take-over in Central Asia in 1920s. In fact Central Asia was a life-line for our land-route commerce to Russia and Europe at a time when the region was open to world market upto the beginning of 20th century. It is this commercial activity that brought the people and rulers of Central Asia to our land and this close contact roped in the people of the two areas into common political and cultural activity. In fact what distinguishes the cultural

character of the people of Pakistan from that of the Indians is the great heritage that we have received from Central Asia and what makes this culture individualistic is the over-colour of Indian Chilli and *masala* (spices).

From the Steppes of Kazakhstan to the Arabian Sea and from the Caspian to the mouth of the Indus, this vast stretch of Asian heartland is one cultural zone where people have common religion and ethnic history. For many centuries it is this Central Asian land which served as the great Silk Road, over which passed traders and businessmen, scholars and missionaries, artists and artisans and invaders and conquerors between east and west. The entire area from the Aral to the Arabian sea has actually been one great economic zone which was characterised by free trade and free movement of people. All over this region from Lahore to Kazan on the Volga and from Baku to Multan one can witness the presence of Caravanserais that lined the old trade routes and facilitated large-scale business. The main trade was carried on not only on the basis of common currency, such as the gold and copper coins of the great Kushan emperors between 1st and 4th century A.D. but also on Hundis issued from Peshawar, Lahore and Multan for business houses in Bokhara and even carried by English travellers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The inflow of merchants, artisans and craftsman to the city of Lahore in the mediaeval period changed the whole complexion of urban life here. Paper manufacture, the wood-carving, the types of copper vessels made today in Pakistan, many kinds of gold and jewellery designs, the tailor's profession and many other customs observed in the Pakistani society have a deep imprint of the cultural life of the Central Asian people. The traditional *dastarkhwan* of Central Asia and Pakistan have a common *adab* and common dish that can match with any other social behaviour and this can transcend from food habits to common dress, music and musical instruments. The closing of the trading

houses snapped the contact but the old survivals at the two ends recall the historical links, urge us to revive the age-old relations and get together both socially and economically and once again pave the way for closer bond.

The heartland of Central Asia is Mawar-an-nahar (literally, "that which is beyond the river", viz. Amu Darya) i.e., Trans-Oxiana—really the valley of Zarafshan, the Golden River,—the river of Rodaki, the Persian poet of 10th century A.D., which has nourished the cities of Bokhara and Samarkand of mediaeval fame and which was the home of the ancient Civilization of Sogdiana, based on the capitals of Afrasiab and Panchikant. It is the Samanid rulers of Bokhara, who sent down their Amirs to Ghazni, one of whom, Sultan Mahmud of Gazni, intergrated the present Pakistan into his empire and thus paved the way for Persian and the culture based on that language in our country. Lahore, City-on-the-Ravi, came into prominence for the first time and Persian lyric was here sung henceforward. The entire enthno-cultural life of the then Pakistan was remoulded in the pattern of Central Asia. What was there earlier has been well described by Abu Raihan Alberuni, the encyclopaedic scholar who came here from Khwarizm and what transformation took place can be read in the traditions preserved by the Gakkhars and the many anecdotes in the life history of the Muslim saints whose *dargahs* are spread over the length and breadth of Pakistan. The Sufi tradition of Pakistan bears a great imprint from that which is seen in Central Asia. As Bokhara is famous for Chashma Ayub—the Prophet who preached the Word of God there, so Samarkand is well-known for the *dargah* of Shah-i-Zinda, the saint Hussain ibn Abbas who introduced there Islam. In the same way Lahore is Data-nagari and Multan the city of Suhrawardia saint, Bahauddin Zakariya and his descendants. From Peshawar to Karachi many of the transport trucks bear the black ribbon associated with the name of Buner Baba, the Tirmizi saint, who reminds us of the famous city of

Tirmiz on the Oxus,—the gateway to Central Asia—where the saint Abu Abdullah bin Hussain al-Hakim of 9th - 10th Century A.D., is buried.

This side of the Oxus river, *i.e.*, west of the river, spreads out the territory of old Khorasan, now divided between Turkmenistan, Iran and Afghanistan. While the famous city of Merv is in the first state, the holy city of Meshhed is in the second, and the city of Herat, associated with the name of Shah Rukh and Behzad is in Afghanistan. Turkmenistan is the land of Turkmens—the Oguz Turks—who roam about from the piedmont region of Kopet Dag to Karakum desert and Ust-Urt plateau. It is these Turkmens who gave to us the Turkmen soldier—stateman Bairam Khan, who helped the Mughul emperor Akbar consolidate the Mughal authority and lay the foundation of Mughal culture. Back in the prehistoric time there was brisk trade between the Indus region and the Bronze Age cities of Namazgah-tepe and Altyn-tepe in Turkmenistan. Two Mohenjodaro seals have been found in Altyn-tepe. In terracotta art and other designs of daily use there was intimate connection between the two regions. Later in history Turkmenistan developed Parthian state with its metropolis at Nisa, about twenty miles away from Ashkhabad, the present capital. It is one of the collatorals of the Parthian rulers who came to Pakistan in the first century B.C. and laid the foundation of Parthian Kingdom with its Capital at Taxila. What we now see at the Sirkap site of Taxila is actually the Parthian city. The temple at Jandial may be favourably compared with the temple complex at Nisa and many such temples are found in other parts of Central Asia. In the mediaeval period the Centre of activity was Merv, which became the capital of the Seljuq Sultans. In the old city of Merv, we have two Buddhist stupa ruins, from one of which was recovered a large stucco head of Buddha as is known from Gandhara. From another stupa was found a seated figure of Buddha in steatite, obviously an import

from Peshawar valley. There are several fortification walls of different periods at Merv. However, the most important building is the mausoleum of Sultan Sanjar (1118-1157 A.D.), in whose time Merv reached the peak of its glory. The mausoleum is a square edifice with its three-tier dome making a third of its height. The lower tier of the building is tallest and its face is bare except for its upper part. The wall shows slight batter. The second tier shows beautiful semi-circular corner towers flanked on either side by terracotta vertical panel decoration ornamented with geometric designs. In some places the walls are blue-glazed and even decorated with carved and gilded ornaments. From architectural point of view the mausoleum is very important as it had direct influence on the monuments seen at Multan. The three-tier mausoleum of Shah Rukn-i-Alam bears a close relationship with that of Sultan Sanjar. Similarly many Seljuq designs are seen in the monuments of Mahra Sharif in Dera Ismail Khan district. It seems that the artisans and architects from the Seljuq empire travelled to our country and helped in building local monuments.

Of all the regions that had deeper impact on our country in ancient time is Bactriana that partly lies north of the river Oxus in modern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and partly south of that river in Afghanistan. It is from Bactria that post-Alexandrian Greek rulers came here in the 2nd century B.C. and left here Greek style of art and architecture that are seen in several excavated cities in Pakistan. It is the influence of these Bactrian Greek artists that led to the creation of the famous sculptures in Gandhara art. The influence also affected city planning architectural style, astronomy, theatre and drama of the time. There was also a reverse influence from Gandhara on Central Asia. Near Tirmiz at Kara-tepe Gandhara style of Buddhist monasteries and stupas decorated with Gandhara type sculptures have been found. Similar Gandhara Buddhas are seen in Kyrgyzstan and at Ajinatepe in Tajikistan.

Comparable gold jewellery can be seen from the finds at Dalverjin-tepe and at Taxila. In the first century B.C. the Scythians entered Pakistan from the side of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan across the Pamir towards Gilgit and Taxila. Their Kurgans are wide-spread in Centra Asia from Kazakhstan to Turkmenistan. Although their graves have not been excavated so far in Pakistan, yet some of the material found here must have come from their burials. One of the latest find is a gold waist belt from Pattan in Kohistan, now preserved in Peshawar Museum. The animal designs seen on this belt are of the same type as found in the burial of the gold man at Isik in Kazakhstan. These Scythians introduced here a particular hair style as noted in the sculptures of this period from Taxila. They also introduced here a type of horse, known as heavenly horse in Kyrgyzstan, and can be seen today in the rock carvings at Chilas. In fact many other rock carvings that we find in the Northern Areas of Pakistan have close similarity seen in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. Among them the Scythian style of ibex is known in several places in the upper Indus valley. These Scythians introduced a type of nomadic cattle culture in our country and they were wide-spread from Gilgit to Sindh. In fact in the 1st century A.D. Sindh was known as Scythia after them, as we learn from the *Periplus of the Erythraen Sea*. It is after the name of the same people that the geographic term Seistan in modern Afghanistan and Iran is derived. These Scythians also gave to us *Kand* ending names of places, such as Samarkand, Tashkent, Yarkand, Malakand etc. The Scythian rulers also gave to us new system of eras, one of which is known after them Saka era starting from 78 A.D. This era is no longer in use in Pakistan but it was carried by the Saka (Scythian) rulers to Indian Gujrat, where it is even now used. The Scythians, who are known in Central Asia from 6th century B.C., later became a harbinger of new cultural force that widely spread in Pakistan.

The historical period of the Great Kushanas is the Golden Age in the ancient history of Pakistan and Central Asia when Afrasiab (modern Samarkand under the Sogdian rulers and Peshawar under the Kushan rulers had mutual exchanges of trade and culture. Both at Varaksha-tepe, a little distance south of Bokhara and at Afrasiab we have wall paintings showing deep imprint of Buddhist scenes as known in this part. In Pakistan the Kushanas patronized not only Buddhism but also world-famous Gandhara art. Earlier Kushana art is seen at Khalachayana in Uzbekistan and it is from these humble beginnings that Gandhara art under the influence of Grecian classical art took its new form and became a medium of expressing the socio-religious life of the time. It became a vehicle of carrying Buddhism wherever the Kushanas extended their influence, trade and commerce. It is the rich prosperity of the time that led to unparalleled development in the sculptural art between 1st and 4th centuries A.D. The Kushanas introduced their rule as *Shao-nano-Shao* (the *Shahinshah* of modern time) and their civilization spread from Sinkiang, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and southern part of Uzbekistan to the whole of Pakistan. It is they who introduced the new social decorum in our country. Their official dress, Shalwar, Kamiz and Sherwani, has become the national dress of Pakistan. The style of turban that was then in vogue is still in use in Pakistan. The various types of ornaments, different kinds of furniture, *Chapals* and shoes are still worn in Pakistan. The great Shahs, whose traditions were alive for nearly one thousand years, are remembered with great respect by Abu Raihan Alberuni. The urban pattern, the irrigation system, the large number of copper currency and many arts and crafts left a deep imprint in Pakistan. They founded a number of Buddhist monasteries and stupas which still survive in the nook and corner of the different hills and ranges here. It is these Kushanas who for the first time laid a solid foundation for close cultural link between Central Asia and Pakistan.

In the 5th century A.D., the Kushanas were followed by a confederacy of the Huns, known as Epthalites in western literature. These Huns built up a mighty empire in Central Asia from Kazakhstan to Iran and even spread out to Europe. One of their branches built a strong Kingdom in the Indus region and introduced a new system of land tenure in the country. This system gave feudal rights to the confederate tribes who later assumed the little of Rajput, and thus this Rajput system became a permanent feature in the country. The Rajput system made a deep dent on the caste system of the Hindus and they found an honourable place in the local society. It is alongwith the Huns that many other tribes, such as the Jats and Gujjars, entered Pakistan. Some of the ruling clans of the Gujjars call themselves as Gujjar-Kushans. The Hunish system of tribal ownership was also followed by the Pashtun tribes in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Their name-ending "Gul" is even now in wider use among the Pashtuns of the Frontier province. They popularised a new kind of lady's dress in Pakistan, known today as *Gharara* with flowing tail ends, also seen in mediavel Europe, and it is their practice of polo game and horse racing that are still seen in our country. The high boots that we find today in Central Asia and Pakistan and the tall caps worn by the ladies of Northern Areas of Pakistan and also in the regions of Tajikistan and Kyrgizstan are the survivals from their time. In the rock carvings of this wide region several engravings of horse riders bear witness to the common cultural links of the whole region. The Huns, whose names are generally associated with destruction, gave to Pakistan a new socio-economic pattern that has survived until today. The personalities and families have changed but the Rajas and Rajputs still hold to their titles. It is at this time that most of the ethnic complexities of Pakistan took their shape and it is alongwith them that many folk epics travelled from Central Asia to Pakistan which later found expression in the Sasi-Pannu of Sindh, Hir-Ranjha of Punjab

etc. The Gujar cultural tradition seen today in Pakistan is the result of this period of contact between the two regions.

Next came the migration of Turkish tribes in our country in the 7th and 8th centuries A.D. In the Northern Areas of Pakistan the Trakhan dynasty of Gilgit came from across Pamir and established the Turkish rule in Gilgit, Hunza and Nagir and at about the same time came here the Turkish ruling families of Khapalu and Shigar. In the Frontier Province and Punjab came the Turki Shahi dynasty, whose representatives today are the Janjuas who were defeated by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni. It is these Turki Shahi rulers who have left a large number of hill forts in our country and they contributed a new ethnic element in our society. In the wake of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni came the Gakkhars whose population spread out from the Indus to the Jhelum. It is, however, the Muslim Turks who, issuing from Bokhara, defeated their own cousins, the pre-Muslim Turks and introduced here a new Turko-Islamic cultural pattern from Central Asia. A new urban setting of Muslim towns was started and new routes opened for trade and Commerce with Central Asia, as is noted by Alberuni in his account of the local geography. This was the time when the Ghaznavid empire incorporated the whole of Pakistan with parts of Central Asia, right up to Merv. The Persian epic, *The Shah nama*, became the foundation stone of a new literary tradition. The mosque architecture of the Central Asian type, the victory towers, such as those now standing at Ghazni, (the Lahore tower is now gone for ever) and the tomb style based on the mausoleum of Ismail, the Samanid ruler of Bokhara, came into vogue. It is on this very design that the tombs of Marha Sharif in Dera Ismal Khan district are modelled. The Turkis Shahi cities of Peshawar, Ohind (modern Hund) and Nandna in Jhelam district were turned into Islamic centres and the new cities of Lahore, Pak Pattan and Multan became the focal points of Islamic culture. Through this new Turkish population Central Asia exported

new variety of its culture that was now suffused with Islamic elements. The Ghaznavid period of the history of Pakistan switched on to a new direction of Islamic trends that bonded the people of Pakistan with those of Central Asia.

This Turkish trend was further spurred by the conquests of the Ghorid Sultans who blended together the Tajik and Turkish elements and paved the way for Turko-Persian culture in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Alongwith them migrated into our country the new ethnic blend of Turko-Tajik population and also came in their train the Khaljis, the Karlugs, Kara Khittais and Kara-Khanids who have all now integrated into the local population of Pakistan. The Khattais, who came from the region of Kashgar have still preserved their identity in Kashmir. When Central Asia was overpowered by the Mongols in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries A.D., there was great influx of Turko-Tajik population in the wake of Jalaluddin Khwarizm Shah and many of them continued to come even later and settled down in Punjab. As the journey at this time was through Gomal and Tochi passes, the cities of Multan and Uchchh became famous cultural seats of learning. The Mongols continued to push in year after year and they settled down in Punjab as neo-Muslims. These Mongols introduced here the titles of Khan and Kagan (or Khaqan) and their new system of horse training, horse striping and alongwith them their military system found favour in our country. The conquest of Khwarizm and Mawaran-nahr by the Mongols sent in many Sufi saints and scholars from those regions into Pakistan. The science and philosophy, mathematics and astronomy and the methods of historical science and new ideas of geography alongwith the measurements of longitude and latitude came from Central Asia to our country. For the first time the local literatures were suffused with Sufistic ideas and Turko-Persian words became integrated in the local languages. As a result a new language, called Urdu, derived from *Urta*, i.e., Camp, (the same as the English word.

'horde'), came to be used by the camp soldiery with the local population.

Then came the conquests of Amir Timur in the 14th Century A.D., who after overturning the little Khanates that had parcelled out the territory of Changiz Khan in Central Asia, made a bid for a new world order in Central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran and right up to the Mediterranean coast in the west and to this was added the whole of Pakistan and the Delhi Sultanate. The Amir, who hailed from the Barlas Turks and born in the city of Shahr-i-Sabz in modern Uzbekistan, has been misrepresented in historical literature as a great destroyer. He certainly built up a mighty empire by integrating the small states. The only country, which he could not conquer was China as he died of severe illness at Otrar on his way to Chinese campaign. What is necessary is to understand the significance of this vast empire, which was regarded by Timur as heritage from the time of Changiz Khan and hence he called himself Gorgan, i.e., son-in-law and took the title of only Amir. Five fields of cultural activity are very prominent in his life-time. The first is the great respect with which he held the Muslim saints. He was a great devotee of Hazrat Bahauddin Nakshibandi, in whose *dargah* he built a mosque. In the city of Turkestan he reconstructed the mosque, madrassah and mausoleum of Hazrat Ahmed Yasavi, who is regarded as the great saint of the Turks. In the city of Shahr-i-Sabz he built the blue-domed mosque and mausoleum of Shamsuddin Kulya, who was one of the guides of Amir Timur. In several other places he repaired the *dargahs* of Muslim saints. At Samarkand he built the largest stone *rahal*, on which the Holy Qur'an was to be placed. And at the end, according to his wish, he is lying buried at Samarkand at the feet of his own teacher, Mir Sayyid Barkat. Such a great religious man has been misrepresented as a tyrant. On the other hand we find him laying the foundation of hundreds of madrassahs and mosques in Bokhara, Samarkand, Shahr-i-Sabz, Tirmiz, Kunya Urgench

(old Khiva) and several other places, which can even now be seen. It is from these madrassahs, mosques and dargahs that Central Asian alumni came to our country and from his time onward the Nakhsibandi order of saints began to visit and influence our land. What was Amir Timur's relation with Sayyid Ali Hamadani, the great saint who spread Islam in Kashmir and Baltistan is difficult to say. Actually Amir Timur over powered both the rulers of Hamadan and Khuttlan, with which the great Sayyid was associated. But the very fact that the great saint could move in his empire and freely preach his teachings and leave behind for us *Zakhiratul Muluk*—a great book on political craft—shows that the religious preachings were the order of the day. The second field of activity lay in Timur's patronage of architecture. Starting from Shahr-i-Sabz, where he built the palace of Akserai, whose monumental portal still stands as a majestic glory of his time, in imitation of which was later built Buland Darwaza at Fatehpur Sikri by the Mughal emperor Akbar, we find a whole series of buildings at Samarkand and Bokhara that show a new majesty of high domes, glittering tiles, intricate geometric patterns, starry sky at the ceiling and noble specimens of calligraphy. His son Shah Rukh carried this architectural style to Herat where a number of buildings adorn this city. The Arghun and Tarkan rulers brought this style to Thatta in Sindh, where the tomb types of Sultan Ibrahim, Mirza Jani Beg and Dewan Shurfa Khan make a new departure from the local Sindhi style of the period of the Samma rulers. The Third field that was given a new impetus is the art of miniature painting and what has been called "the Arts of the Book". Contemporary writers, both Muslim and European, tell us quite emphatically that painting was much patronised in Samarkand at Timur's court: he decorated the walls of the palaces and pavilions with painting; he had picture galleries. Yet nothing, so far known, has survived. But of his successors, Shah Rukh in Herat, his sons Baysunghur and Ulugh Beg and the next generation of Husain Baqara we

have a galaxy of material. In the words of Ernst Gurbe: "In the early decades of the 15th century the artistic workshops of the emperor and one of his sons, Baysunghur Mirza, produced a series of manuscripts in which was embodied a style, a distinctive canon for the illustration of books that became the standard for generations of painters in the eastern Muslim world. The painters who worked for Timur's heirs in Herat in the second half of the century continued to paint in essentially the same manner as that practised under Shah Rukh and Baysunghur, as did the artists who worked for the Turkmen princes of the same period in western Iran. Herat painting served as a model of the artists of the Bukhara ateliers of the 16th century, for the artists of Safavid Tabriz in the first third of the century, for the court artists of the Mughal emperors of India in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, and it may even have inspired the Safavid Shah Abbas I to initiate a revival of the "classical" style of painting in Isfahan in the second decade of the 17th century. Much can be written about Baysunghur Mirza, son the Shah Rukh, son of Amir Timur. He was not only a patron of art but himself a great calligraphist. He copied a giant size of Quran with leaves nearly six feet high, to be placed on the famous *rahal* of Samarkand mosque. The next field of study that engaged the Timurids was science, particularly astronomy and mathematics, Ulugh Beg, son of Shah Rukh a governor at Samarkand, has been called the Muslim world's first scholarly monarch and his tastes were not only literary but scientific, with a special enthusiasm for the exact sciences. A number of well-known scholars worked at his court, who wrote mathematical and astronomical treatises dedicated to Ulugh Beg. The monarch himself compiled astronomical tables, a task which was to occupy him until their compilation in the year of his death in 1449 A.D., His observatory at Samarkand is still a piece of great attraction, in imitation of which later observatory at Jaipur in India was built.

Such a period of unparalleled cultural and scientific activity in the time of Timurid Amirs, which was to influence the cultural activities for generations in the whole of Central Asia and neighbouring region of Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, can no longer be missed from the pages of history. In fact Timurid period was not only a Golden Age in the history of Central Asia but a harbinger of a new age of science and culture of the whole of the heart-land of Asia.

The end of the Timurid period was marked by the rise of new political forces in the heartland of Asia. The last of the great Timurid Sultan in Herat was Sultan Husain Bayqara (1470-1506), a great grandson of Umar Shaikh, under whom flourished the great Persian poet Jami and who saw the development of Turkish poetry with the great poet Mir Ali Sher Nawai. In the words of Babur "his was a wonderful age; in it Khurasan and Herat above all was full of learned and matchless men". His closing years led to the rise of the Uzbeks in Mawaran-nahr, the Safavids in Iran and the Mughals in Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. Muhammad Shaibani Khan laid the foundation of the Shaibanid rule in Central Asia. His descendant Abdullah Khan made Bokhara his Capital. Shaibani's son, Timur Sultan defeated Babur and snatched Samarkand from him but Shaibani himself was killed in 1510 by Shah Ismail who took away Merv from him. Babur, fleeing from Farghana and Samarkand, first held his court in Kabul and then laid the foundation of the Mughal empire in Delhi and Agra. Thus politically three kingdoms rose over the ashes of the Timurid empire: the Shaibanid in Central Asia, which incorporated Bokhara, Samarkand, Balkh, Qunduz, Tashkent and Farghana; the Safavids in Iran and Khurasan, the Amu Darya being the border between these two states; and south of the Hindukush and east of Herat spread the Mughal empire incorporating Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. With the Mughals came here the Persian speaking Tajiks and also the Uzbeks. These new ethnic

elements spread over the whole of Pakistan and northern India. Even in Sindh, apart from the large number of tombs of the Arghuns and Tarkhans who immigrated here at the end of the Timurid period, we have the famous tomb enclosure of Baqi Beg Uzbek at Thatta. However, this Turkish and Tajik population in our country did not preserve their ethnic identity of Uzbek or Tajik, except that some of them still preserve their surnames as Mughals, Mirzas and Beks. They intergrated into the earlier Muslim population. And yet in the closing years of the Mughal rule in the subcontinent there were strong political groups identified as those of Iran and Turan. All those who came from Central Asia belong to the latter group and others who came from Iran, particularly of the Shiite sect, belonged to the first group. Although the Mughals were in war against both the Safavid and the Shaibandis, yet in the time of Babur and Humayun the Safavid rulers gave much help to them. Even later we find Iranian families, such as that of Mirza Ghiyas Beg, the father of Nur Jahan, migrated to this part of the world. Humayun did bring with him many famous painters from Iran when he returned after his exile. It is these painters who laid the foundation of Mughal school of painting. Similarly from Central Asia came many scholars, poets, painters, artists and architects alongwith many soldiers and statesmen to the Mughal court. As a result the Mughal mansabdari system and the military organization derived much from the pattern of government that was bequeathed right from the time of Changiz Khan in Central Asia. In fact there was a continuous brain drain from Central Asia and Iran to the Mughal court. Such a migration of the learned men did not stop even when the Shaibanids were succeeded by the Astrakhanid dynasty and later by the Mangits in Bokhara. However, in Khiva the Qungrats continued the Uzbek rule and maintained trade and cultural relations with the neighbouring states. The same was true in the case of the new state of Kokand that came to power in the 17th century A.D. and incorporated most of Farghana.

This cultural exchange was largely promoted because of Persian being the common cultural language. This was the vehicle through which Central Asian and Iranian Culture passed on to the people of this part as here also Persian was the main language of the elite. It is the Persian language and literature that maintained the continuity from the earlier period of Muslim history and close connection with the people of Central Asia. It is in the time of the Mughals that the influence of Timurid architecture led to the creation of great forts, palaces, mausolea and madrassahs. The cities of Lahore, Peshawar, Multan and Thatta not only became great seats of learning but also developed many arts and crafts that can find their parallels in Central Asia, particularly the copper vessels, silver plates and vases, the use of China ware, zinc-coated copper ware all became popular in our country. Our dress, turban and ornaments received a new fashion and style. Our cockery and food habits became sharply distinguished from those of the Hindus and our *dastarkhwan* brought the people of Central Asia and Pakistan together on one social gathering. Our marriage customs and ceremonies, including rituals of birth and death and respect for Pirs and their tombs brought them in closer bond of relationship. All over this entire belt of Asian heartland one common cultural standard was maintained. This was possible because of free movement of the people and brisk trade that continued among these states in spite of wars and conflicts. Then came the advance of the Western powers. Tsarist Russia closed in around the Khanates of Khiva, Bokhara and Kokand. The state of Kokand was finished for ever and the new province of Turkestan was established by the Russians with Tashkent as their headquarter. Trade concessions were forced upon the Khans of Khiva and Bokhara and economically they became subservient to the growing power of Russia. Similarly on the Sea side the western powers snatched the monopoly of ocean trade. Thus the three great empires of Iran, the Mughal and Central Asia became land-locked and cut off

from the new developments that were then taking place in the rest of the world. The advance of the western imperial hands subdivided Asia into their own colonies or spheres of influence. While South Asia fell to the lot of the British, Central Asia was grabbed by Tsarist Russia. New geographic boundaries were defined. For us Khyber became the border. For the Afghans the Oxus river delimited their territory and hence large number of Uzbeks and Tajiks became isolated. For the Iranian Kopet Dagh became the northern border and old Khurasan became divided between Russia, Iran and Afghanistan. Still later the British abolished Persian as the court language and gave a death blow to the historical culture of the Muslims in South Asia. At the same time we became cut off linguistically from Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia. Even then some trade flowed on. When the Communists took over Khiva and Bokhara finally, whatever link had so far continued was snapped for good. With the introduction of Russian language and Cyrillic script the Central Asian people began to look to Moscow and we, under the pressure of the British trade and English language, found our new Mecca in London. Our age-old relationship with our closest kith and kin in Central Asia was finally broken and we began to look in two different directions. This is the greatest historic tragedy that we have met in modern age. And it is only now that with the downfall of the western empires that the dividing curtain is lifted and let us hope that we regain historic sense to relive our natural life in close bond of blood relationship and common cultural heritage.

23 March 1992.

Emergence Of Independent States In Central Asia

In the changing political scene of the former USSR it is difficult to assess the pattern of events that are taking shape in that part of the Eurasian world. One thing is certain that in this vast arena of Eurasian peoples the political balance is no longer going to be monolithic as it was during the Soviet dominance. This change has come rather too late after the consequences of the economic strain of Eastern European burden ultimately overtook the former Soviet Union. The West European imperial powers understood the impact of the colonial burden on them soon after the Second World War and they got rid of the political and military responsibilities that were costing more and more in the post-war period and concentrated more on new economic relations that would help them in reconstructing their war-torn economies. The former USSR on the other hand, overjoyed in its new territorial influences, increased its military budget to unprecedented extent to the total neglect of the improvement of the lot of the people. Hence scarcity of consumer goods, food shortages and imbalance of growth pattern told heavily on the development of technology, stagnation of the old productive machinery and consequent indolence of the non-competitive populace. The blame certainly did not lie on the principles of Communism but on the particular mode in which state craft was followed on a

dictatorial style of administration in which initiative was usurped by the top hierarchy. When in the time of Breznev Helsinki accord was signed on European Security, it became abundantly clear that Western Europe had far surpassed the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the march of human progress. Breznev tried to introduce the spirit of competition among the people on the basis of the old system but that did not work well. This failure led Gorbachev to make a case for Perestrivka—whole-sale reconstruction of the entire system. His policy was to reduce the defence expenditure and give up the burden of Eastern Europe and Third World Countries. This also led to withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan. The stage was now set for restructuring the politico-economic system of the former USSR. The first step was to devolve control of planning and production from the Centre to the Republics. This price of change was not easy as it led to mismanagement of the productive system and concentration of wealth in the hands of the managers. Even when this step was not straightened, the system of market economy was introduced in the hope that goods would flow into the open market and there would be plenty to buy in the shops by the people. The goods did flow into the open bazars but not into the Government shops for the simple reason that prices in the bazars were competitive while those in the Govt. shops were fixed because of the survival of the old system. This led to further concentration of money in the hands of the few and consequent corruption of the higher echelon of the society. When market economy was opened to western luxury items, the need for foreign currency jumped up to the sky, leading to increasing devaluation of the rouble and consequent economic crisis and total maladministration of the existing system. However, credit must be given to the seventy years of strict disciplinary training of the people that they bore all the burden and did not rise in revolt.

In this deepening economic crisis Gorbachev's scheme of democratising the institutions further led to new administrative imbalance in a political structure where the people had been used to only one party system and that was the communist party. Gorbachev aimed at reforming this party and introduce democratic process into traditional system. This was differently understood by different groups of peoples in the different regions. The common man was badly hit by economic crisis and hence Gorbachev was losing his popularity. The Communist Party and the bureaucracy desired to pull the country out of the political and economic chaos. But the average intelligentsia of Moscow and Leningrad (St. Petersburg) had already been aroused and they were not to toe the line of the monolithic Communist party. Their Russian nationalism had also been moving them to a direction which favoured to support the programme of Boris Yeltsin which at least opened bright prospect for the Russian Federation. This was the situation before August 1991 Coup.

The Coup was brought about by the old guards, to retrieve whatever was left of the old system and to save the old pattern of the Soviet Union in opposition to the new Union that Gorbachev was trying to bring about by giving sovereign status to the different Republics. The Coup failed, not because of the revolt by the Sovereign Republics, but because of the stout resistance by the awakened intelligentsia led by Boris Yeltsin who could now wreak his personal vengeance against Gorbachev who had failed to control his Communist party coterie of friends. This led to the total collapse of the Communist party, and end to the Communist system and the popularity of the open economics of the Capitalist system. However, the Union continued and Gorbachev survived for the time but no Union agreement had been signed so far and status quo was maintained as it was in the past. Several attempts were made to redraft the Union agreement for giving some powers to

the Centre and devolving some others to the Republics, which were declaring their independence and sovereignty one by one.

In this game of Union arrangement Nur Sultan Nazarbaev, the President of Kazakhstan Republic, who was re-elected as President by over 99% votes was playing a leading role along with Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin. He has special qualities of statesmanship and a special role to play in his own Republic where Russians are in absolute majority in six provinces of northern Kazakhstan and 50% in the three other provinces of the Republic. The Kazakh population in the whole Republic, according to the President, is only 51%. The ethnic history of the Republic has been very painful but whatever has been the past history, it requires great wisdom on the part of the president to maintain a political balance among the existing population, particularly in view of two facts: (1) the greater and wider political and administrative experience of the Russian ethnic group and (2) the presence of nuclear establishment with in the territory of Kazakhstan. The pull of Russian population may be towards Russian Federation but it is not easy because that Federation itself is not a unitary ethnic group. Although we do hear of some young Russians leaving Kazakhstan for jobs in Russian Federation, yet by and large the Russian people are well entrenched in this Republic and they are in no way inclined to play lesser role in this Republic. It is therefore no surprise to find that the present Prime Minister in Kazakhstan is Russian by ethnic origin although the State language is Kazak.

As long as the idea of Union was toyed, Gorbachev had a role to play and Nur Sultan Nazarbaev brought all the support from Central Asian Republics for him. The situation completely changed when Ukrain decided to declare complete independence breaking away from the Union and its president assuming the role of the Head of the army to be

built in Ukrain. This declaration was the greatest blow struck at Gorbachev. It spurred Boris Yeltsin on to make a quick decision, leave Gorbachev at the dead end of the old Union, and move fast to win back Ukrain to some form of cooperation and this he could achieve only by pushing forward the idea of a new Commonwealth of at least Slav peoples and by giving them a new personality of European character. Although the Slavic and Christian character was later denied but the European trend is the common bond that unites the three Republics of Ukrain, Byelo-Russia and Russia. However, Boris Yeltsin is in no mood to break up the old Soviet territory and hence he has appealed to all the Republics to join the Commonwealth. Under this new name of Commonwealth the old territorial union is apparently to survive with power balance to be distributed in the light of future agreements. This, of course, is again a transitory stage. How the defence, strategic control and one citizenship are to be coordinated, is difficult to perceive in view of the fact that Russia is claiming to be a successor of all that belonged to former Soviet Union. At least that is what Boris Yeltsin has been proclaiming so far by usurping all the rights and property of the former Soviet Union. It seems as if the old Tsarist Russia is being resurrected in the new structure that Boris Yeltsin is trying to reshape his Russian Federation. It is also possible that in this game he has the support of Ukrain and Byelo-Russia. What about the other Republics? Are they in a position to assert their rights of independence and sovereignty and claim equality with the European Republics of the former Soviet Union?.

Armenia, because of its Christian character, has a special affinity with the European Republics and it has greater interest to join the Commonwealth if its nature could be so defined as to accommodate the demand of the Armenian population in Nogorni (or as the Azerbaijanis say, "Daghliq") Karabakh, which is an autonomous region within the Republic of Azerbaijan. The latter Republic, although

claiming independence for long and sovereignty over Karabakh, has also shown interest to join the Commonwealth for security and economic reason.

The problems in Central Asian Republics differ one from the other as far as internal issues are concerned. Several attempts were made in the recent years to form a Common Union, or at least a common approach, to the general issue of the succession to the old Soviet Union. Several politicians in the West as well as in Russia have talked of the Islamic or Muslim character of these Republics. We also note growth of Muslim or Islamic parties, either openly or secretly, in these Republics but their role has been more sentimental than as political parties simply because the people have been used so far to one party system and that was communist party earlier and now renamed as democratic party, or democratic socialist party or people's party. Whatever may be the name, the pattern of political system has not changed. It is the single—chosen candidate who is elected by over ninety percent votes and usually he is the same person who has been in power for some years in his own Republic. The only change we find is in the case of Tajikistan, whose President Nabiev Abdur Rahman was elected recently only by 52% votes while the opposition is led by five Muslim Jamats but is more under the influence of Himmatzade. The case of Tajikistan is peculiar as the majority people here are Tajiks and their Republic is hemmed in by Turkish speaking population around. The Tajiks also have greater claim as their ethnic population is seen in southern Uzbekistan, particularly in the cities of Samarkand and Bokhara and they are also spread down in Afghanistan. Hence they desire to play a special role in the solution of the problem of Afghanistan as they have been closely associated with the Kabul regime in the past. Although the Muslim opposition is strong, yet the intelligentsia is not for Islamic fundamentalism. And therefore to say that the Islamic movement in these

Republics is going to outweigh all other factors will be a misreading of the developments that have taken place here within the last seventy years. Attempts have also been made to arouse Pan—Turkic sentiments. Meetings and Conferences were held in Tashkent to stress on this point. Close relationship with modern Turkey has also been established on cultural and economic fields and Turkey has been first country to recognise these Republics. In addition to these feelings, there is a general tendency in Central Asia that their attitude to Islam is closer to that which obtains in modern Turkey because the entire population here, whether Turkic or Tajik, lay stress on the revival of their national culture. Even then it will be wrong to say that there would be a greater Turkestan Union, spreading from the Chinese border to the Mediterranean Sea. This is as wild a dream as the idea of a political union under the concept of Islamic Umma. The burden of recent history and regional politics weigh heavily on the current political trends in Central Asia.

The most important concept, around which these Republics have aligned themselves in the recent years is around ethnic intergration in which different historical tribes have integrated themselves and hence within the last seventy years Central Asian Republics, have come into being with individual linguistic-cultural unification. Such ethnic unity, identified with different Republics, is certainly a myth but so far that has worked very well and it is around this concept that all political awareness has grown in recent years.

One example of Kyrgyzstan is given here, based on the article of Asal Azamove, appearing in Moscow News of 8-15 December 1991. Here the total population is 4.367 million, in which the ethnic distribution is Kyrgyz 52.4%, Russian 21.5%, Uzbek 12.9%, Ukrainian 2.5%, German 2.4%, and Tatars 2%. Here the Communist party is suspended as it supported the August Coup but the people do not fight against the symbols of Communism, such as the statue of

Lenin. However, the president elect Akayev secured 95.3% votes in last October. According to him "land belongs to the Khyrgyz and citizens of other ethnic origin". "A state is strong when its ethnic minorities feel themselves strong". There are over 40 ethnic cultural centres in the Republic and Akayev discusses every important step he intends to make with the representatives of minorities as well. There is a draft law on the rights of ethnic minorities which even includes the right to form an ethnic autonomous entity within the Republic. Apparently this draft law is not approved by the internal opposition to the President who believes that the restoration of rights of the indigenous population must be regarded as a task of over-all priority. Hence the State Council turned down to pass the ethnic minorities act in October. This shows the mood of the Conservative Parliament. However, the President is for Republic's independence and for democratisation. His main task is to build a national state and to integrate Kyrgyzstan into International Community.

The creation of such a national state is the aim of all the Republics in Central Asia and they desire to integrate the existing ethnic groups into common citizenship of their individual states. They have no desire to reverse the historical process but to reap full benefit from the progress they have made during the Soviet regime. It is this aim which makes them opt for the Union of States.

However, the situation has considerably changed with the new moves of Boris Yeltsin who has tried to form a Commonwealth, first of the European Slav Republics and later of all the Republics of former USSR. His attempt to be a sole successor of the former Soviet Union is apparently not willingly received by other Republics. It was under this situation that all the Central Asian Republics met at Ashkhabad in Turkmenistan to show their common approach to the issue of the Commonwealth. There is no

doubt that these Republics desire to maintain some sort of a Union, whatever may be the name and its nature, but they are in no mood to sacrifice their independence and accept any position lower than that of the European Republics. Hence their first demand was to be founder members of the Commonwealth, meaning thereby that they would accept to be members as equal partners in the Commonwealth and not simply as adjuncts or secondary members of the Commonwealth. Could there be any compromise on this issue? At least Ukraine is not prepared to change its original status as implied in the first founding members of the Commonwealth. While Russian State is going forward in its national aims and to assume the leadership as it had before the agreement of 1992, it seems that some compromise formula is being evolved under the new nomenclature of Commonwealth of European and Asian States. What does it actually imply is difficult to say.

The latest agreement signed on Saturday, 21st December 1991 in Alma-Ata by eleven Republican Presidents, the only exception being Georgia, makes all of them founding members of the Commonwealth of independent states with no Central power structure but only with a Council of Presidents and another Council of Prime Ministers. This agreement duly recognises the territorial integrity of each Republic and has thus guaranteed peaceful transfer of power from the old, now dead, Soviet Union to the Republics. This agreement leaves much for speculation as no final decision of the Central structure nor even of the defence arrangement has been taken. Both the issues are left open for decision in the next meeting to be held at Minsk on December 30, 1991. The issue is complicated as both Ukraine and Azerbaijan have opted to be the head of their own republican army. On the other hand Russia is pushing forward to replace the old Soviet Union in the Security Council.

The death of the Soviet Union has not only annulled the 1922 agreement by which the Union was originally created, but has also released those forces that staged the political drama in this vast Eurasian Steppe land in the nineteenth century. Will the newly-created Commonwealth knit them together in a peaceful Union? It all depends upon the role the Russian Federal Republic is going to play in the days or months to come. Can the Central Asian Republics play a different role in this new set-up. As Republican units, they will certainly have a great weight, but on purely economic, cultural and academic grounds, they will heavily depend upon Russia unless some other better and more profitable opening is seen by them. It is in this last alternative that the old nineteenth century Central Asian diplomatic game can be reopened by outside interested parties. The immediate neighbours appear to have less chance of gain by interfering into this political balance. It is only the internal conflict within the new Commonwealth of independent states that may lead some of the Republics to look outside to support their independent and sovereign status. The ideological pull towards Islam is a far cry for two reasons: firstly, it has so far not given any political shape to the existing Muslim countries; and secondly, the Central Asian Republics have been too much open to Russian type of western influence, that they would not like to retrace their steps backward in history, particularly when it is realised that for them Islam is identical with their national culture. Thus today the land of the Central Asian Republics is a virgin field for exploitation both by the Russians as well as by any powerful alliance of the advanced countries of the world. It all now depends on the genius of the Russians themselves how by giving concessions to their old friends in Central Asia they forge ahead to maintain the territorial unity of the old Soviet Union. In the maintenance of such unity we can visualise the dawn of the new peace and harmony in Asia. Time alone can say which direction wind will start blowing in the twenty-first century.

22 December 1991.

Central Asia: Emergence Of Modern States

Central Asia, as understood in restricted sense, rightly should be understood as *Asia-i-Miana*, i.e., “Middle Asia”. It is the land that lies between China and South Asia on the east and the Ural mountain and the Caspian Sea on the west; and between the Siberian forest on the north and Irano-Afghan plateau on the south, i.e., the southern Oxus river line and the Kopet Dagh range on the south. It is a land of contrast and its rivers flow into land-locked seas — Lake Balkash on the east, Aral Sea in the middle and Caspian Sea on the west. Its eastern part is hilly, marked by Tien-Shan and Alatau ranges. It is from these ranges that two mightiest rivers of Central Asia — the Oxus (Amu Darya) and Jaxartes (Syr Darya) — originate and they between them create *Mulk-i-Bala*—the historic *Mawar-an-nahr*, Trans-Oxiana — the mid-land, that is the heart of Central Asia. North of Syr Darya is the extensive grassy Steppe land, where roamed about the nomads alongwith their horses. These nomads impinged on the Ural and even spilled over to the Volga basin, the western — most line of the Asian nomad’s advance. West of the Oxus river lies the Karakum desert that borders on the north piedmont region of Kopet Dagh. The fertile river valleys of this region formed a part of mediaeval Khorasan with Merv as its centre but into the vast dry desert roamed about the

Turkmen horse-riders — descendants of the Oguz or Guz Turks, the forefathers of the Seljuqs. *Mawar-an-nahr* is not like the Doaba in other parts of the world. It encloses the richest land within—the valley of Zarafshan, “The Golden Land”, which was the home of Sogdian Civilization and where flourished the cities of Bokhara and Samarkand. At the mouth of the Oxus is the fabled Khwarizm with its fairy-tale city of Khiva. The mouth of Zarafshan is now dry, forming the Kyzylkum desert. The source of Syr Darya lies in the beautifully landscaped region of Farghana. The hilly part between the Pamir and Hissar ranges forms the ancient Tokharistan and Bactriana, the latter even extending over to the Sherabad region, where stands the famous city of Tirmiz—“Three Mazd”—the gateway to Central Asia from south. It is the Turkmen land on the west that constitutes Turkmenistan with its new capital at Ashkhabad. From Khwarizm to Farghana and to Tirmiz on the south is the land of Uzbeks—modern Uzbekistan with its Capital at Tashkent standing on a canal branch of Syr Darya. The grassy steppe land beyond Syr Darya is Kazakhstan with its Capital at Alma-Ata—(the city of) Father Apple—on the Alatau range. The eastern hilly land is shared by Tajikistan on the south with its Capital at Dushanbe and Khirgizstan on the north-east with its Capital at Biskek. It encloses another big lake Isik-Kul, where Saka and later Turkish nomads hovered around. Historically these nomads came from north, western Mongolian heights down to the northern Jungar part of modern Xinjiang (“The Western Region”) and Kashgaria and even around the Taklamakan desert—the whole now a part of China. The Khirgiz are the descendants of Turgesh and Qarlugh Turks while the Tajiks belong to the East Iranian ethnic group, assimilating within them old Sakas, the Tocharians and probably also Sogdians, the Badakhshanis and Wakhis. Thus Central Asia is a land of contrast, geographically, ethnically and linguistically.

Central Asia is a land of perpetual struggle between the nomad and the settled, the two together having contributed to the formation of Central Asian Civilization. The nomads, having started from the cold north-eastern high lands have not only roamed over the extensive steppe-land of the north but also hovered round the Central Trans-Oxiana and spilled over to Turkmenistan in the south-west and Taklamakan in south-east. They always tried to penetrate into the heartland of Trans-Oxiana—Mawar-an-nahr—the main home of civilization—the Sogdian, the Irani-Tajiki and finally Islamic-Turkish. The Sogdian shows the first integration of the Saka nomads with the settled population, inclining towards solar cults and worship of the fire, enshrined in luxuriously painted temples, with the bones of the dead thrown into huge *drachmas*, fortified palatial buildings of their kings, centring round the metropolitan cities, such as Afrasiab (modern Samarkand), Merv, Tirmiz and several others. It also absorbed elements from Iranian Zoroastrianism, Nestorian Christianity, Post-Alexandrian Hellenism, Gandharan Buddhism, and Chinese cultural trends that flowed along the Silk Road. The Irani-Tajiki was a development of the post-Arab conquest of this region, when a new Tajiki Persian literature flourished alongwith those artistic and scientific ideas that survived the Arab conquest of Iran, Khorasan and Central Asia. It absorbed the Arab-Islamic elements but gave a new identity to the Irani-Tajiki, integrated the Turko-Tajiki population, and gave birth to a new Sufistic Islamic order that probably combined many ideas of popular religion of the past, and above all it led to the creation of new artistic and architectural tradition and finally to the production of scientific knowledge based on freedom of thought and expression. It was a great age of creative activity in the history of Central Asia that preceded the conquest of Changiz Khan. The Islamic-Turkic era dawns with the post-Mongol period and it was inaugurated by Amir Timur when the Turco-Mongol population integrated, the Mongol

minority ruling class having fused into the major Turkish military oligarchy, the Mongol nomads in Central Asia having accepted the Turko-Tajik brand of Islam in this region and finally a development of the new ethnic groups, such as the Uzbeks, the Kazakhs, the Khirgiz, the Turkmen and the old Tajiks that survive right down till today.

As Islam gave a new socio-religious system to Central Asia after the conquest of the Arabs, the Turks, among all the nomads, provided the main base of socio-ethnic population in the region, and the Mongol conquest under Changiz Khan introduced a new politico-economic order that sustained the political system here after and led to the emergence of modern states in Central Asia. The Mongol ruling class had to depend heavily on the Turkish population that had earlier spread out throughout Central Asia and who provided the mass of the military strength of the Mongols. The Tatars who originally lived in the western part of Mongolia, found themselves in the extreme western part of the region in the basin of the Volga and in and around the Urals. Changiz Khan was a lord of the nomad Mongols. He built a nomadic empire on the strength of the fast-galloping war machine and was thus able to impose his authority over the settled Turko-Tajik population in Central Asia. He was fortunate in having four stalwart sons—Jochi, Ogthai, Chaghtai and Toili—who could continue his political authority after his death over the entire conquered territory in Asia. While the political order of *Yasa* was imposed throughout the conquered domain by the Mongols, Changiz Khan managed to transfer power to his sons, who shared territories among themselves. It was the eldest Jochi who controlled the western region from Irtysh to the Volga and from Siberia to Khwarizm. The second, Chaghtai, held the important land of Mawar-an-nahr, the Alatau Tienshan hilly region, southern Jungar and Kashgaria. It is the latter parts which came to be known as Mughus4

listan. It is here that the literary Turkish was later developed and hence it was called Chaghtai Turkish. It is from Farghana—a part of Mughulistan—that Babur came and hence his family became popular as Mughuls although he hailed from the Barlas Turki family of Amir Timur. The third, Oghtai, remained in charge of the home territory of Mongolia and the neighbouring conquered areas in northern China and the western grassy steppes. The fourth son, Toili, was in charge of the main Changizid *Ulus*. It is the two sons of the last—one of them, Kublai Khan, who conquered China and laid the foundation of the Yuan dynasty, and another, Hulegu, who over-turned the Abbasid Khilafat and founded the Il-Khanid dynasty in Iran and Western Asia. Jochi's son, Batu, extended his authority over Dasht-i-Kipchaq, north of the Caspian Sea, and further imposed his sovereignty right upto Crimea on the Black Sea and across Don river over the rulers of Moscow. His brother, Sabagan (Arabicised as Shayban), established his control over Sibir, which later gave rise to the name of Siberia. It is the *Ulus* of Batu that was known as Golden Horde probably because of the golden hue of their flag. Uzbek was eighth in descent from Batu and it is he who is said to have Islamised the Turko-Mongol people of his territory. The Muslim population was henceforth known as Tatars. The Moroccan traveller Ibn Battutah has given a vivid description of the time of Uzbek. It was he who conferred the title of Grand Duke on Ivan I of Moscow and thus gave to his descendants a pre-eminent position among the Christian Slav Chieftains of the region. At the time of Timur Alatau steppes were occupied by some Shaybanid tribes of diverse origin, Turkish and Mongol, all Turkish speaking and it is they who became known as Uzbeks. They occupied the Steppe-lands of modern Kazakhstan. In 1428 Abul Khayr Khan, Shayban's descendant, became the chief of Shaybanid *Ulus*, also known as Uzbek Khanate, united all the nomadic tribes and tried to extend southward to Mawar-an-nahr but his design was thwarted by Oirots, who had succeeded Oghtai in Mongolia.

They defeated Abul Khayr and killed him alongwith his son. Uzbeks had to wait for another fifty years until Abul Khayr's grandson, Muhammad Shaybani Khan, could rise and seize territories from the feeble hands of Timur's successors.

Two princes, descended from Jochi, viz. Karay and Janibek, broke away from Abul Khayr and were followed by a considerable number of clans, who sought refuge with the chief of the Chaghtai clan of Mughulistan. These dissident clans received the name of Kazakhs. After the departure of the Oirots and the death of Abul Khayr and his son, the Kazakhs spread out on the Steppes of Syr Darya. Under the son of Janibek, by name Kasim Khan they remained unified and tried to extend southward. However, after Kasim Khan they broke into three Khanates: Great Horde in Semiricheye, the Middle Horde in the centre and Little Horde in the most western, east of hte Ural river. They again got united and fought against the Shaybanids, occupied Tashkent twice and tried to penetrate into Mawar-an-nahr. But they were again threatened by Oirots in 17th century. The Oirot threat continued until they were destroyed by Manchus in 1757. The Kazakhs, who became united under the chieftainship of Abul Khayr of the Middle Horde, were now finally free from Oirot danger. Yet this danger stood in the way of their emergence as a nation. Then came the Russian advance from the north. In 1731 the Little Horde, in 1740 the Middle Horde and in 1742 part of the Great Horde had to accept Russian protectorate.

The Khirgiz appear in the old Turkish inscriptions of the Orkhon in Mongolia as "Qirgiz". Later they are found in two territories: Yenisi basin and Tien-Shan mountain. The first they occupied in 1st Century AD and the second in 8th-10th Century AD. They are of Saka, Usun and Hunistic groups. In the second period they began to integrate under Turgesh and Qarluk states. With the final migration of Yenisi Khirgiz, they got united. Between the 15th and 17th

centuries they struggled for independence against the power of the Mongols and Kalmuks and the Chaghtai Khanate of Mughulistan. Between 1683 and 1685 the Oirots ravaged Tien-Shan and finished with the Chaghtai Khanate. When Manchus destroyed the Oirots in 1757, the Khirgiz nominally accepted Chinese vassalage. Southern part of Khirgizia, *i.e.*, Farghana, was conquered by the Khan of Kokand. In 1862 Russia took possession of the fortress of Biskek and occupied northern Khirgizia. Following the liquidation of Kokand in 1876, the Russian conquest of the region was completed.

As Changiz Khan left a permanent legacy of his nomad empire in Central Asia, Amir Timur was another great figure in Central Asian history who infused a new spirit of political domination among the settled Turkish population and opened for them a new Chapter of Irano-Islamic Civilization that has survived till today. His empire is mistakenly compared with that of Changiz Khan. He had no ambition to build a nomad empire. He was working from the heart of Mawar-an-nahr and hence he aimed at expanding the strength and prestige of this *Mulk-i-Bala* over both the nomadic land as well as the settled regions of Asia. He was building the might of the settled over the nomad. His was, above all, the empire of *Asia Miana* and by building this empire he reversed the process of Changiz Khan. Like Changiz he was not lucky enough to have his four sons survive him and thus bequeath to them the reigns of the empire that he had built but he did succeed in restrengthening the source of the Irano—Islamic Civilization. It is during his time and the time of his successors that Mawar-an-nahr was intimately linked with Khorasan and the two areas together made a contribution to human civilization that has seen no parallel in the world any time in history. He was not just an empire builder but he was certainly a builder of Civilization—a civilization that matured from about the middle of 14th century till the last

day of the rule of his great grandson, Sultan Husayn Bayqara, in 1506 A.D. It is no wonder that Babur recorded with feeling: "The whole habitable world has not seen such a town as Herat had become under Sultan Husayn Mirza. Looking back to those times with nostalgia he wrote: 'His was a wonderful Age; in it Khurasan, and Herat above all, was full of learned and matchless men. Whatever the work a man took up, he aimed and aspired at bringing that work to perfection'".

Even then the historians have misjudged Amir Timur and his time. They have bewailed over his power of destruction and lamented on not leaving a permanent consolidated empire of his conquered territories. In this he met the fate of Alexander the Great, whose conquests were apportioned among his generals. But Alexander did release to the then world the spring-water of Hellenic Civilization that fertilized the intellectual heritage for generations. Similarly Timur's conquests had to be shared between the settled and the nomads, the latter having been tamed and cultured to carry on the legacy of Irano-Islamic Civilization for generations. Although being connected by marriage with the Chaghtais of Mughulistan, yet Timur had to contend on the one hand with the remnants of the Il-Khanids in Iran and Trans-Caucasia and on the other with the nomads of Golden Horde that roamed from the Urals across the grassy Steppe-land of the north. He destroyed both but while he seized upon the heart of the Iranian civilization that was further developed in the time of his successors, he weakened the strength of the Golden Horde, that in course of time disintegrated and opened the way for the rise of the Slavs and advance towards the Asian east. As a result of his conquests the original *Ulus* of Batu had completely disappeared. In its place arose the independent Khanate of Kazan and Astrakhan on the Volga; independent Khanat of Crimea; White Horde in what is now Kazakhstan; Nogay Horde, north of the Caspian Sea and Khanate of Sibir

centered on the Irtysh-Tobol basin. However, it is from the ashes of the Timurid empire that the Safavids rose up in Iran to continue the Timurid legacy within their dominion and it is from the same fire that the Shaybanids caught up to spread out of the original stock of the Golden Horde and further split up into Uzbeks and Kazakhs. It is Muhammad Shaybani Khan who ultimately extended the Uzbek Khanate into Mawar-an-nahr to carry further the Timurid legacy. In Khurasan the two new powers, those of the Safavids and Shaybanids, contested between themselves, ultimately the Oxus river defining their line of control. The Timurids themselves were squeezed out of their homeland and Babur was lucky enough to build a new empire south of the Hindukush right across the northern part of South Asia. While Timurid empire came to an end in political sense, the cultural legacy of the Timurids encompassed, for generations, the whole area that had been earlier conquered by Amir Timur. While Changiz is remembered for his empire building, Timur should be credited to have built a civilization that has characterised the personality of Central Asia till today. It is therefore welcome to quote an observation that Timur himself “came to exemplify the impact of Irano-Islamic civilization upon the Turco-Mongol peoples so that if he seemed a barbarous ‘Tatar’ to his victims in Heart, Shiraz or Baghdad, he was nevertheless also a strict Sunni Muslim, a generous supporter of *Shaykhs* and dervishes, and a patron of Iranian art and letters, who could fully appreciate the pleasure of Iranian city life. His court at Samarqand (as described by Clavijo) was very different from the encampments of the war lords of Jungaria and Semirechie, and was a measure of the rapidity with which Iran was able to tame this most savage of his conquerors”.

From Timurids to Shaybanids the pendulum of history swung to the other side. Muhammad Saybani Khan led the nomadic Uzbeks into Mawar-an-nahr and there began a new

integration of population between the older local Turkic population and the new-comers. Although Muhammad Shaybani Khan was killed in 1510 at the hands of the Safavid ruler Shah Ismail in the battle of Merv, yet his successors succeeded in wielding power north of the Oxus and in course of time they controlled Mawar-an-nahr, Khwarizm, Farghana, Balkh and Badakhshan for about a century. Certainly Khorasan was taken away by the Safavids and south of the Hindukush the Timurid-Mughals established their rule and thus the Shaybanids were locked north of the Oxus but this position could hardly isolate them because they did not block their passage across the Caspian to the Ottoman world nor were they debarred across the Aral sea to the traditional route over to the Volga nor even towards China along the old Silk Road. But isolation, if at all it was there, was due to the drying up of the Silk Road as a result of the precedence of the new Ocean-going traffic from the 16th Century A.D. onward. On the other hand the Shaybanid domain continued to add to the intellectual and cultural activity of the time so much so that the artists, literateurs and men of scholarship and religion overflowed into the Mughal territory and enriched this land intellectually. In literature both Persian and Turkish developed. There flourished a new Bokhara school of art. By opening new madrassahs education was given a further push. In the religious field not only the orthodox Sunni order was patronized and *Shariat* was enforced but for the common man the *Darvesh* order gave a new impetus to raise the cultural level of the common man. Such a sufistic movement was common in all the domains of the time—Shaybanid, Mughal, Safavid and even Ottoman but its influence was no bar to the intellectual progress of the time, as is generally believed and advocated. Darvesh did not stop freedom of thought or expression. It only helped in levelling cultural disparity among the people. This was necessary for the nomadic Uzbeks who were then settling down in the fertile land of Mawar-an-nahr and transforming themselves from

the life of nomadism to that of a settled agriculturist, with the result that today the Uzbek has become the best of farmer in Central Asia. It is this farmig activity that has urged them move into all the fertile lands whether in Khwarizm, Farghana, Balkh and even north of the Syr Darya. In the Shaybanid history of Central Asia it is this transformation of the Uzbek life and saturation with the Irano-Islamic Civilization that should be clearly understood. Among the rulers who built the Shaybanid state the name of Ubaidullah shines out prominently. But of even greater fame was Abdullah Khan-II, whose reign (1583-98) was long remembered as Golden Age when commerce and agriculture began to thrive. His name assumed a legendary proportion comparable with that of his near contemporary Shah Abbas-I in Iran, so that "down to very recent times it was usual to attribute the construction of any otherwise anonymous caravanserai, bridge, madrassah, garden or other amenity in and around Bokhara to the munificence of this man". In the time of the Shaybanids the fame of Bokhara rose to its greatest height. And yet the period hardly made any progress in the field of science and technology as it was so in the case of the Mughals and the Safavids. Being far away from the ocean traffic they were removed from the European advance in this field and this lack was the main cause of the subsequent decline of the region. Constant wars between the Shaybanids and the Safavids and strained relation with the Mughals weakened the strength of the Shaybanids, and after the death of Abdullah Khan-II in 1598, Mawar-an-nahr passed into the hands of Janid ruler, Jani Khan who was sister's husband of Abdullah Khan-II, whose ancestors had fled from Astrakhan when it was occupied by the Russians in 1554. With him started the Janid or Astrakhanid rule in Bokhara in about 1600 A.D.

The Janids continued to rule throughout 17th century and greater part of 18th century while the Shaybanids still held their authority in Khwarizm with Khiva as Capital.

Among the the twelve rulers, who governed from Bokhara as a seat and Balkh as a residence of the heir-apparent until the time of Nadir Shah's invasion in 1740, Imam Quli Khan (1680-40) was the greatest. Bokhara enjoyed peace and prosperity. He built the Sherdar madrassah in Samarkand. His nephew Abdul Aziz constructed the Tilakari madrassah in Samarkand, but the name of Subhan Quli (1680-1702) as a scholarly figure outshone all others. However, the Russian advance towards the Aral Sea instigated Nadir Shah to push forward towards Bokhara and Khwarizm. After this invasion the real control of administration passed into the hands of Muhammad Rahim Bey, a Chieftain of the Mangit tribe.

The Mangits traced their descent from Changiz Khan. Muhammad Rahim Bey attained the highest office of *Hakim Ataliq* in Bokhara in the time of Abdul Aziz (1705-1747), the son of Subhan Quli. He was able to arrest the horrors of Nadir Shah's invasion and even fought against Riza Quli Khan, Nadir's son. Although the Janids survived Nadir Shah for another forty five years, yet the Mangits were the real rulers. The first full sovereign of the Mangit dynasty was Amir Masum Shah Murad (1785-1800) when Bokhara enjoyed peace and prosperity. Shah Murad was not only a military leader who fought against Khwarizm, the Qazars in Iran, and Kokand, which had established independent power in about 1700 A.D., but was also a pious man and a theologian. He also enforced the *Shariat* law in his domain. Among his successors the name of Nasrullah (1827-1860) is the most prominent who led expedition against Kokand Khanate. He is regarded as the most able and successful post-Shaybanid ruler of Bokhara. His successor Muzaffaruddin had to sign a humiliating treaty in 1868 with the advancing power of Russia. The Amirate of Bokhara became a Russian protectorate.

With Bokhara and Khawarizm as separate Khanates, it was natural that Farghana valley should find an independent

course of life. It was Shah Rukh Beg, a descendant of Changiz Khan, who established the Kokand Khanate in about 1700 A.D. It comprised Farghana valley, Kokand, Khojend to the west, and Tashkent and Chimkent on the north bank of Syr Darya. Conflict with Bokhara State was inevitable. In the first decade of 19th century Alim Khan embarked upon centralisation and built a strong military force. His son and successor Muhammad Umar Shaikh, a devout Muslim and generous patron of arts, built the fortress of Ak-Mechet to stop the advance of the Russians. Under his son Muhammad Ali Kokand reached the zenith of its splendour but he was defeated and killed by the Bokhara Amir Nasrullah. As a result, the military power of Kokand weakened. The Russians could overpower Kokand in 1876 and banish its last ruler Khodayar Khan.

These three states of Bokhara, Khiva and Kokand divided among themselves the resources of the heartland of Central Asia. Though they were strong individually, their strength weakened as a result of mutual conflict. Though they maintained the traditional splendour of their respective domains, they failed to unite together to meet the Russian advance. All these states stagnated in the glory of the past and in maintaining the traditional art and culture. Being isolated from the new advance in science and technology, they fell an easy prey to the growing military power of Russia.

The rise of Russia is linked with the unification of the Russian State and the development of the absolute monarchy with the centralised power located at Moscow. Taking advantage of the new European trends, resulting from the geographical discoveries and Reformation movement, Moscow transformed its government institutions and at the same time turned agricultural economy to a commodity economy resulting in the need of markets. The beginning of this new change can be traced to the time when

Uzbek conferred the title of Grand Duke in 1328 on the Moscow Prince Ivan I. Thus he not only became the chief collector of tribute but he laid the foundation of a centralised state. In contrast to the growing power of Moscow the strength of the Golden Horde weakened as a result of its defeat in 1395 A.D. at the hands of Timur and, as we have seen before, it led to the division of its territory. This weakness encouraged the Grand Duke Ivan III to stop paying tribute in 1476 A.D. to the Golden Horde. The comparative strength of the Moscowite and the Golden Horde was clear when Ahmad Khan, four years later, tried to advance towards Moscow territory but he had to withdraw. Ivan III now reorganised state machinery and built a large army. It was this growing power that instigated Ivan IV the Terrible to assume for the first time the title of Tsar in 1547. To him goes the credit of launching an eastward drive for a further push towards the home territory of the now divided Tatar states on the Volga. Sixteenth century was the age of Russian expansion into the Volga right upto the Urals, down to the land of the Nogai Horde upto the Caspian Sea and over to the Caucasus. This was the first period of Russian advance to the east when on October 2, 1552, the Khanate of Kazan, the heir of the former realm of Golden Horde, was occupied and in 1554 the Khanate of Astrakhan was taken over and its ruler fled to Bokhara. In 1558 Ivan the Terrible granted to Gregory Strogonov land on the bank of the Kama river traversing the Urals. He crossed the range and stood on the Asian soil. In 1579 he recruited Don Cossacks and crossed the Urals. Kutchum Khan, with his capital at Sibir on the Irtysh river, was defeated and Sibir was occupied in 1583. The fur trade of Siberia fell into his hands. These Russian advances went hand in hand with the consolidation of the power in Moscow and further crystallization of the Orthodox church. Now full measures were taken to Russify the conquered territories and assimilate the population into Russian state but the resistance of the Tatar Muslims stood on their side and

helped in maintaining their cultural identity. The Tatars were suppressed and oppressed and the migration of fresh Russian population to uphold the Russian authority and dominance only disaffected the Tatars who continued to maintain their national tradition against Russian atrocities. The same attitude is seen towards the Khanate of Crimea, which at first came under the protection of the Ottomans but in 1771 finally fell into Russian hands. As far as the vast open space of Siberia was concerned, which was scarcely populated in the 17th century, the whole population then being calculated to be 236,000 only on an area of 13 million sq. km., the Russian advance proceeded gradually by founding a number of cities, such as Tobolok (1587), Tomsk (1604) Yakutsk (1632) and Otchotsk (1638). In this first stage of Russian expansion the underlying concept was to build up the greater Russian State by assimilating the population as far as possible or by the migration of Russian population over the occupied territories and making their position dominant in the region. Two different tendencies are seen that were followed in two different directions: the first was to assert the Russian dominance over the remnants of the Golden Horde in the western Steppe-land, *viz.* the Tatars by suppressing their political, military, economic and cultural cohesion in the Volga region down to the Caspian Sea, by encouraging the Russian Cossacks to play their new role of aggrandizement; and the second was to colonise the sparsely populated area of Siberia and exploit the fur and forest wealth of the region and integrate the local population into the migrant Russian community. This direction led the Russians reach as far as the Pacific.

So far the policy of the Russians was practically the same as was followed by the earlier Mongol Tatar conquerors. With the beginning of the seventeenth century Russia rose to be a new monarchy of Ramonov dynasty which continued to rule until 1917. Towards the close of the century with Peter the Great the State was led on to a New

Russia and by the time Catherine II ruled over Russia, the country had attained an altogether new political personality by absorbing the new developments in Western Europe. Russia towards the end of the eighteenth century had surpassed the Central Asian States which were still continuing their mediaeval life. It was now that the Central Asian States were totally isolated from the modern world and from the new tendencies that had changed the whole system of life in this modern age. Peter the Great could now think of Russian expansion into the vast open world of Central Asia for exploiting its resources to the benefit of his newly emerging state. Rightly he said at Astrakhan in 1722: "Although these Kirgizes are roaming and fickle people, their Steppe is the key and gates to all the countries of Central Asia" Kirgiz was the term used for the people who were settled in Orenburg region—a vast country stretching to the Volga on the west, Caspian and Aral Seas on the south and on the east Syr—Darya and Ala-tau mountains. The Russian advance was to follow in two directions—the Steppe-land north of Syr Darya and south of their Siberian penetration in what is now Kazakhstan, and second direction over the Karakalpak and Turkmen dry and desert land in between the Aral and the Caspian Seas. It is beyond these Steppe and desert lands that the new states of Khiva, Bokhara and Kokand had risen to absorb the nomads and make them settle in the irrigated areas only to continue the Irano-Islamic civilization inherited from the time of the Timurids. These states had rich potential for trade and this advantage was adequately used by Catherine II, who had changed the Russian policy towards the Tatars to whom she gave new concessions and used them as intermediaries for trade with Central Asian States. The Russian advance into the eastern Steppe-land was made easy by constant fight between the Kazakhs and the Lamaic Buddhist Oirots who had founded the Kalmuk State in Mongolia. Weakened by this struggle the Kazakhs sought protection, which began in 1732 when the Khan of Little Horde sought allegiance of

Empress Anne. A hundred years hence Russia established herself from the Aral Sea and along the lower branches of Syr Darya. The final defeat of the Oirots in 1757 at the hands of the Manchu rulers of China and their migration to the West brought Russia face to face with China. The only state that intervened in between was that of Kokand which stood as an irritant between both as it interfered on the one hand in the total Kazakh subjugation by the Russians on the other it meddled into the affairs of Kashgaria. The mutual fights between Bokhara and Kokand further weakened the latter state and in 1876 it was finally absorbed by Russia, making it a part of the newly formed province of Turkestan under the name of Farghana oblast. The addition of Farghana was a great boost to the agricultural wealth of the conquered dominion. However, this led Russia on to the international diplomatic dealing with China, final demarcation of the boundary by dividing the Chu and Ili valleys and allocating the Kazakh and Khirgiz population to one or the other side. Now Turkestan with its capital at Tashkent became the spearhead towards the States of Bokhara and Khiva. The other direction across the Trans-Caspian was not so easy as the fierce Turkmens were still strong in their nomad desert land. With the establishment of a fort at Krasnovodsk on the east Caspian shore the position of the Russians was strengthened but their advance towards Merv and Khiva faced another challenge from the British who had special interest in Afghanistan and Iran, the borders of which needed to be defined in relation to these areas. While they took time to conquer nomad Turkmen in their homes, it was not difficult for the Russians to constitute a province of Trans-Caspian and extend their direct rule over the Turkmens. But Bokhara and Khiva states were not finished. After extracting trade and other concessions and controlling their external relations, the states were for the first time isolated from the rest of the world and left to stagnate in their outmoded mediaeval systems.

This was a new imperial policy which Tsarist Russia adopted towards the two surviving states of Bokhara and Khiva.

Thus Central Asia now became a Tsarist Russian colony, and it was used as an open market for the industrial goods of Russia and its agricultural produce was developed to such an extent that it could feed with raw material the factories established in the main Russian territory. The developments of this colonial Central Asia within Tsarist Russian empire can be understood under different fields. The first was the political isolation of the region from the rest of the world as it came directly under the provincial government of Tashkent with restrictions for free movements across the border. The second was the control over the educational institutions and an attempt to transform the old educational system and bring it under the tutelage of the Russian. Although the Russian language was learnt by some locals for the sake of convenience, yet the attempt to foist Russian and Russian culture did not result in the modernisation of the people as a whole. It was only towards the end of the Tsarist rule in the twentieth century that we find *Jadidiya* movement rising in Khiva and Bokhara mainly to thwart the power of the Khans and Amirs and bring these states in line with the revolutionary movements that were then taking place within the tottering empire. In the field of communication rail and road links were built in the region, firstly for military purposes and secondly for the transport of raw material to the factories. In the economic field cash crops like cotton was given a great impetus and in due course of time the entire trade came into the hands of the Russian merchants. This colonial exploitation of the region was of a different pattern from those of the British or French maritime powers. As Central Asia was directly linked by land to Russia, direct rail and road connections were enough for exploitation. We find sufficient Russian interest in geographical discoveries and geological explorations but all for the purpose of easy access to the interior and for

exploiting the mineral wealth of the region. With so close contacts the whole of Central Asia could hardly awaken to the modern world. It remained isolated, deeply immersed in its age-old tradition and culture. It is only the Russian population who were settled here that showed interest in the new revolutionary developments that overpowered the Tsarist empire in 1917.

At the time of 1917 Revolution Central Asia consisted of three political divisions—Russian Turkistan, the Khanate of Khiva and the Amirate of Bokhara. While the province of Turkistan was created for administrative convenience, the two native states preserved the local cultural tradition. On the whole even as a Tsarist imperial colony Central Asia could not be Russified. It kept its mediaeval Islamic Cultural character all along and the people were still linked by a wider Muslim bond of relationship. This position needed a transformation in the eyes of the Marxist revolutionaries who desired to create a national cohesion within Russian state by abolishing all mediaeval linkages. Hence they took advantage of the internal divisions; in the case of Central Asia breaking down such cultural unity that had existed through history, by creating ethno-national states among peoples to whom the concept of nationality was hardly known and understood. Hence the partition of Central Asia was carried out and completed by the end of 1924. It is this partition of the whole of Central Asia that achieved by one stroke what the Tsarist Russia could not achieve in her almost hundred years of rule—the political and economic amalgamation of Central Asia into the monolithic giant structure of Soviet Union. It was hoped that the new Soviet cultural uniformity would destroy the age-old Islamic bond and Central Asia would be reborn into a new world of modern relationship as visualised by the communists. Accordingly Central Asia was divided into five national areas: the more advanced and the more populous peoples—the Uzbeks and Turkmens—were formed into

Soviet Socialist Republics, the smaller and less advanced into Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics (the Tajiks) or Autonomous oblasts (the Khirgiz and Karakalpaks). Subsequently the Tajiks were promoted in 1929 as SSR, the Karakalpaks within Uzbekistan as ASSR in 1932 and Khirgiz as ASSR in 1926 and SSR in 1936. It is this partition which underlies the evolution of modern states in Central Asia under the names of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Khirgizstan and Turkmenistan. This partition closed the chapter of inter-tribal and inter-regional warfare and gave statehood to newly created ethno-cultural units. For the first time people such as Khirgiz obtained their state-hood. Similarly the Tajiks could have their own national state. But at what cost? This was done by eroding all the historico-cultural links restarting from clan and tribe to form the newly evolved ethno-cultural nations. The new states have been on a new concept of nationality while together they joined into a monolithic politico-economic structure deriving all the dictats from Moscow. It was a forced integration into a new Soviet State that could be understood in western terminology. There was thus an apparent end to all Tsarist colonial exploitation and equalisation of states towards a common goal of communist achievement. But as communist Union was originally brought about primarily by Russian and Ukrainian people, their predominance was natural and as they were the most advanced in the modern European sense, their way of life came to be ideally represented every where. As a result the older cultural institutions of Central Asia had given place to new instruments of life processes that would change all the systems considered to be outmoded in the new soviet pattern. The first task was in the field of education under which all the traditional schools were closed, religious education in schools was forbidden, and vigorous attempt was made to inculcate new education from child to the adult with the primary purpose of infusing the new lesson of communism. While education certainly became wide-spread, and in order to bring about uniformity

Russian language was made compulsory, and even where local languages were patronised, the cyrillic script finally replaced the older Arabic script. Thus the whole education system was streamlined and it was freed from the hold of clergy. While old madrassahs were replaced by new schools, the old mediaeval ideas had to give place to new thinking. With the erosion of the old institutions this change became very easy. As old centres of learning in places, like Bokhara, Khiva, Merv, Turkestan, Khojend and Kokand, were closed, new universities were opened in new metropolitan centres of Tashkent, Alma-Ata, Biskek, Dushanbe and Ashkhabad. After 1941 only one Madrassah at Bokhara was opened for the training of clergy and later a higher Islamic Institution was opened at Tashkent but both under the control of the Government. Add to these the establishment of Academies of Sciences for higher research with the aim of social and economic development of the country. All these were revolutionary steps to modernise the education of the entire people. The result was a total transformation of the people's mind—freedom from the clutches of the clergy to a new age of free thinking and free expression subject only to the communist philosophy. The intelligentsia was freed from the shiboleths of mediaeval religious notions and they could rise to a new world of modern living and thinking. Religion freed from Mullah's control no longer remained a bar to the adoption of modern institutions and new ways of thinking. As a result even the personal names were Russified but not the people. This was a great period of transformation of Central Asia comparable to the Age of Enlightenment in Europe—a transformation that has left a permanent legacy on the mentality of the Central Asian man today. Central Asia is reborn into a new world of scientific thought in which religion does not put a limit to any length of human imagination but it only serves to ameliorate the moral and spiritual life of man. It is this latter aspect which has preserved the cultural identity of Central Asia and in boosting the national culture the Central Asian man has

rediscovered his own past and well understood that it is the amalgam of his own living cultures with the new trends of the modern world that could save the people and lead them on to better future. For common cultural development the Soviets introduced new standards of living, table manners, new food habits, new theatres, films, operas, music and dance but they have not been able to efface the local traditional practices and manners. They have only added to the traditional heritage. Wherever we go, in every Muslim family, *mohalla* and locality, the social etiquette of old, the social habits, love for traditional culture, values, arts and crafts, the traditional *dastarkhwan*, the dress, food, music and dance still continue and inspire the people. This survival of the national culture is seen as a continuation of the Islamic way of life that has received a new boost in the eighties and nineties after the relaxation of the stricter measures in the time of Gorbachev. This has led to the revival of some Islamic institutions but not at the cost of the erosion of the new learning and education that have gripped the whole people of Central Asia. The old institutions in the hands of modern intellectuals are seen as a boost to national life and there is hardly any sign of reversion to the mediaeval mentality of the past. Islam appears to Central Asian man as a force for moral regeneration in the modern world rather than a backward step to play down into the hands of the Mullahs. Central Asia today has marched ahead into the new world of science and technology.

In the economic field there has been a tremendous shake-up of Central Asian society. Old cities no longer survive as mere administrative centres in the midst of multitudes of villages given to rural economy of production of food, arts and crafts. The new urban and rural planning, as dictated by the standards of communism, have given a new pattern of living. The cities are planned and governed with all the paraphernalia of modern age and the villages have been mostly fitted into the system of cooperative

farming so much so that the entire agriculture is now mechanised and geared on to the needs of the new industrial growth, which, in the common system of the former USSR, is linked to the monolithic structure. The *Komososls* in the far-flung areas no longer appear to house poor peasants with no amenities of life. The farming in the large scale had gathered the producers to different centres and given them incentives for production to an extent that the Soviet economy could absorb them. However, even when the productive economy in Central Asia did receive new impetus by increased methods of irrigation and the introduction of machinery, the region as a whole remained agricultural with only those industries developing here that were needed for agriculture and for improving the standards of living. With the levelling up of the social structure as demanded by the Communist Principles, the minimum living wage and amenities of life and a satisfaction for cultivating and promoting the national culture the Central Asian man was happy in his routine life. But all this development was within the Soviet system managed by the Communist party and removed far away from the new changes in the western world. Central Asia had reached a stage of communal life that was well saturated with Soviet system and had seen the world today only through Soviet eyes. It was a vast world isolated from the rest of the world community.

The perestroika, as started by Gorbachev, was little understood in this part of the world. Even with some decentralisation of the process of control over political institutions and industrial and agricultural products, the polity and economy were still tagged on to the former monolithic structure. The democratic institutions hardly formed favour here except that the traditional institutions got freedom to be reopened. In these traditional institutions one may see the revival of Islam as more mosques and madrassahs are being built today but all these developments are within the Soviet system. When the economic crisis over

took the Soviet Union. that little affected this region. When communists managed to oust Gorbachev in 1991 forcefully and staged a coup in Moscow, that had little repercussion in Central Asia. Their final ouster by the people in Moscow and Leningrad and the banning of the Communist party were certainly stunning news but created little repercussion in this region. With the declaration of independence by some Western Republics, the Central Asian States also became automatically independent, which was later ratified by referendum. But in Central Asia there was no struggle for independence. When the Commonwealth of Independent States was formed, the only demand was for equal partnership. That having been granted, other changes were very slow because Central Asian states have yet to look to Moscow for their defence, for their rouble economic structure, and for higher educational facilities. There is a long way to go here for implementing those essential paraphernalia of state system that would give them all the conditions of independence. However, these states have now rights to enter into external relations with any other foreign country, political as well as economic. The communist party is also banned here giving place to new names such as democratic or socialist parties but under the new names the older personalities still continue to hold power. Depending upon the local political developments popular parties have also been born under different names. The aim of these parties is to further the cause of national regeneration and development including their language policy and other local needs apart from older Russian leanings. In some states religious parties have also arisen under different names and their aim is to reassert moral regeneration of the people and reintroduce moral and spiritual values as prescribed by Islam but even these leaders do not like to give up the benefits and amenities accrued from the socio-economic system as bequeathed by the old communists. The Islamic revival, which these leaders visualise, is at most to have good friendly relations with Muslim countries and particularly

with the neighbours, the contact with whom may open new doors to outside world. But it would be wrong to take them as representatives of new fundamentalism in Central Asia. That stage is now far left behind. The people of Central Asia are now awake to a new age of science, in which Islam has a different meaning and is fully understood as a prop to national growth. Some would like to call it secularization of religion but this would be too much to read in the new trends. Today Central Asia has a new message to give to the Muslim world in properly understanding Islam and how to profit from it for regenerating modern man to a new world of science. It is this understanding which will keep them nearer to the thought process of the Russians and even of the western countries. As long as the present political situation prevails in the Commonwealth of the Independent States, the Central Asian people could hardly break away from this new Union. Their future depends upon the growth of new international order in which they have an opportunity to play their own political and economic role away from Moscow. For the time the situation is open because the transformation to another system of economic growth would take a long way to go. As long as these states are tagged on to the present system, they have no choice but find peace in the continuation of the older structural relations. They are certainly looking to the neighbouring countries for an outlet and also looking to the developed countries of the world for economic cooperation so as to find a release from the old stagnant communist institutions. However, it all depends upon the freedom of opportunities that they get from outside for bettering their standards of living. The politicians in these states are well aware of the needs of their countries and they are ready to cooperate for mutual benefit but not at the cost of losing their gains which they earned in recent years. Cooperation with the neighbours is natural because this may give alternative openings to the free world of economy but there is always a danger for slipping into the position of Third World Countries where glory of the past

still aspires the man of today. This dream is a thing of the past as far as Central Asia is concerned. They have got a better and brighter message for the future for the realisation of which they would certainly like to cooperate and have friendly relations with the neighbours. The sooner the free movement of people is made available the better will it be for the development of a new order in the entire region.

9 July 1992.

Resurgence Of Central Asia

Is Central Asia going back to mediaeval Islam as it characterised the land before the coming of the Westernised Russians? Is she trying to Islamise the processes of life as she experienced under Russian rule and Soviet dominance? Or is she trying to modernise the Islamic way of life as she has inherited through history? Is there any new spirit of revival or renaissance in Central Asia? What is the meaning of resurgence as far as Central Asia is concerned? The Russians tried to russify the land and the Soviets attempted to create a Soviet man. But both failed to transform the historic personality of Central Asia. The land remains Central Asian and the people have continued to be Asian. But one thing is clear that they have buried the ghost of mediaevalism and marched into the modern world. The nomadism of the pastoral world is a thing of the past. Central Asia is now well-settled in its agro-industrial life. Islam as a part of national culture, or *vice versa*, is a great inspirer to build the national life in future. It is the spirit of nationalism, born out of modernism, that reverberates in the life of all Central Asian people. For this modernism they are grealy indebted to Russia because it is through Russian eyes that they have seen the modern world. They have inter mingled with them and yet they have ressurected their personality through different stages, as told below, in order to find a sure place in the modern world.

THE FIRST STAGE

There are four stages in the resurgence of the Central Asian people after the conquest of the Russians. The first stage is mainly confined to the European part of the Tatar Muslims who had to bear intolerable sufferings at the hands of the Russians after Kazan and Astrakhan states were taken over by the latter in mid-Sixteenth century A.D. The Russians, who belonged to the Orthodox Christian Church, had the aim of completely assimilating the Tatars into their own social system. But the Tatars, who are staunch Muslims, resisted. Not only have they resisted pressure over four centuries aimed at their assimilation, but they even succeeded in converting to Islam and Tatarising some Eastern Finns and Christian Turks (*Chuvash*). When the Tsarist policy changed during the reign of Catherine II, she cancelled all restrictions on Tatar trade in Bashkiria, Siberia and Kazakh Steppes. The Volga merchants served as middle men between Russia and the still unconquered Central Asians, acted as missionaries, building mosques and schools and thereby bringing their version of Islam to this part. It was during the late eighteenth century that the Volga Tatars became the undisputed leaders of Russian Islam.

The response of the Tatar intellectual elite to the final effort of Tsarist Russia during the reign of Alexander III to convert them to Christianity was the modernist *Jadid* movement (See below). This was the most interesting attempt made to sponsor both religion and technical progress and to secure for Islam a place in the modern world. Before 1917 Revolution the Volga Tatars were among the most advanced Muslims in the field of education and Islamic theology. During the first fifteen years of the Soviet regime, pan-Turkic or pan-Islamic identity gained the upper hand and was accepted as the basis of Tatar nationalism by the Tatar national communists, such as Sultan Galiev and his

comrades (See below). During this period Tatars appeared as the leaders of Soviet Islam, and the Volga Tatar language was its *lingua franca*. Up till 1930 newspapers in Tatar appeared all over the Soviet Union. However, Tatar National Communism was physically liquidated during the bloody purges of 1930's.

A typical representatives of that time is Abunnasir Kursavi (1776-1812). In his writings he protested against some formerly established dogmas of religion which were considered immovable and therefore beyond all dispute. He writes; The era of *ijtihad* is not over, if need be, let every one make a creative effort, because *taqlid* is heresy. And further, the time for *ijtihad* does not pass. Man must work to the full extent of his capacity. Work is the sign of times. The epoch of activity is endless. Another representative is Abdurrashid Ibragim (1857-1944), who became a *mudarris* and later elected as a *qadi* of the Shariat law. His objectives in his own words: "We Muslims need friendship among ourselves, we need assistance, modern knowledge, specialisation, progress, literature, our own press, our own theatre, social associations, modern scholars; we need clerics who know the Russian language. Our children must study in Russian schools. We still have numerous defects which we must eradicate. We must fight fanaticism and ignorance; we need modern schools, including schools for girls; we need entirely modern system of education".

THE SECOND STAGE

The second stage of resurgence rightly started after the failure of the Andijan rising of 18 May, 1898, headed by an *ishan* of a Sufi order, Muhammad Ali Khalifa. It was also joined by the semi-nomadic Kipchaks and Khirgiz, who were greatly disturbed by the stepping up of cotton production in Farghana. The rising clearly revealed the weakness of local

leadership and it was crushed by the Russian military might. The failure gave a death-blow to the religious leadership and at the same time led to the rise of new men influenced by Western ideas. The national consciousness, although influenced by religion, became more political in so far as it gave to the locals a sense of separateness from their foreign Russian rulers. Now a nationalism based on essentially democratic values gradually replaced the older loyalties to religion. It acknowledged the need to liberalise and modernise the Muslim way of life, while demanding more autonomy for Muslims in political, economic and cultural affairs.

The most outstanding figure among these Muslim nationalists is the Crimean Tatar Ismail Bey Gasprinskiy (1851-1914). He became the back-bone of the *Jadidist* movement. *Jadidism* was initially well-disposed to Russian rule since in opposing the die-hard Muslim religionists or *Kadimists*, it looked for Russian assistance. Again the permeation of Western ideas produced a mere radical nationalism demanding more than educational reform, cultural autonomy and representative government. Hence there arose a left-wing *Jadidism*, which opposed the feudal and clerical system, advocated modern science and culture, and defended the interests of popular masses. Its later development will be seen in the third stage.

The beginning of the *Jadid* movement can be traced to the realization of the decadence of the madrassah educational system. From the end of the 19th century the Tatars, who were the most dynamic among those affected by a new awakening, had given priority to the educational problem starting with a drastic reform of the *maktebs*. Gasprinskiy had come to Central Asia and opened a reformed *makteb* at Samarkand under the patronage and with the financial support of a Tatar merchant named Husaynov. This reform in the *makteb* occurred just when the

Russo-Vernacular schools were being developed, and although upto 1905 the new *maktebs* were few in number but as they became more in number, their popularity increased. They made an endeavour to open itself to the modern world. Even the traditional schools were obliged to compete with them. At this time 1908 revolution in Turkey made itself felt on national and reformist ideas in Central Asia. The *Jadid* movement spread and various of its thinkers on being persecuted by the Amir of Bokhara and compelled to flee from there, turned up in Samarkand and Tashkent with a Turkestan version of the reforming spirit. For the first time in centuries Turkestan witnessed a movement of thought of its own linked to its past and to its destiny. The rapid growth of the reformed *makteb* network is the measure of this trend and even the old-fashioned clergy cast around to the new style solution to the problems of its own schools.

A French writer concludes: "The Russian presence in Turkestan. . . was unquestionably a potent ingredient in the intellectual awakening of Turkestan. That presence meant contact with a civilization of progress, the penetration of capitalism; it meant the influx of new ideas. It was because of the Russian presence that Turkestan woke up. . . and in this way little by little opened its doors to the modern world".

THE THIRD STAGE

As the rise of the *Jadid* movement is connected with the Russian Revolution in 1905 with its intellectual milieu supplied by the reformed *maktebs*, so the next stage of resurgence is connected with the Marxist Revolution of 1917 with its linkage to the Kokand Revolt of 1916, Alash movement in Kazakhstan and the Muslim Socialist programme in the Volga-Ural regions, as outlined by Sultan Galiev. First of all the *Jadid* movement affected the Khanate

of Khiva and Amirate of Bokhara, where traditional Islam had fortified itself and continued to exercise its influence among the ruling junta. However, the society had received a jolt by the *Jadids*, whose activities led to the rise of *Young Khivans* and *Young Bokharans*, who desired to bring to an end the outmoded governments, finish with their atrocities and fully participate with the Revolutionary movements. It is their cooperation with the Marxists that resulted in the final defeat of the rulers, and thus Khiva and Bokhara becoming part of Soviet State. However, the spark was given by the First World War, not by the participation of the Turks on the enemy side, but by the shortage of food and disease, which increased discontent, and much more than this by the imperial decree of 25 June, 1916 conscripting the natives (so far exempt) for non-combatant duties in war at a time when cotton crop was ready for harvesting. This led to Kokand Revolt causing racial conflict between the natives and the Russians and Ukrainian Settlers. The Khirgiz tribe put up a united uprising which lasted from about June to September, 1916. About 2000 settlers were killed. The Khirgiz were defeated by the Russian military superiority. As a result about one third Khirgiz fled to China. This Kokand uprising was a prelude to a series of eventful occurrences in Farghana which led to several Muslim conferences and the final establishment of Kokand Provisional Government in December, 1917, of which the President was Mustafa Chokayev. Their objective was autonomy for Turkestan. On the other hand in Tashkent there was the urban Russian population who had come here alongwith the establishment of the Russian Government after 1867 and whose number had increased by the importation of technical and industrial labour. They formed the real urban proletariat in Turkestan and being fully aware of the Marxist movement had formed Tashkent Soviet by themselves. Opposed to them was a strong nationalist or "autonomist" group among the Muslim intellectuals, who aimed not at separation from Russia but at political and especially legal or cultural autonomy within the

Russian federation. Mustafa Chokaev of Kokand was one of them and another was Ali Khan Bokayhanuli among the Kazakhs. The result was a conflict between the two groups, leading to the overthrow of the Kokand Provincial Government in February 1918. It is this fall of the Kokand Government that led to the uprising of the general masses under the name of Basmachi uprising. It was a political movement against the Tashkent Soviets but not against the Russians as a whole. And hence some of the intellectuals made an appeal to Moscow Soviets for help because they were convinced that the Revolution was to better their life by putting to an end the Tsarist atrocities.

Connected with these developments in Turkestan was another nationalist movement in Kazakhstan, called "Alash movement" organised by the Alash Party as early as 1905 but it became more important after the establishment of *Alash Orda* (National Independent Government) in 1917. In the first Kazakh Congress, held in July 1917 the prominent issues included "The future composition of the Russian State Government as a whole", "The question of Kazakh autonomy", "The problem of Russian immigrants to Kazakhstan, which meant the land problem". The Alash Orda Government was proclaimed on 13 December, 1917. The President elect was Ali Khan Bokeyhanuli. Its capital was located at Semey (modern Semipalatinsk). The Government had to face the advancing communists and also the remnants of the Tsarist army. After a struggle of three years, the Alash Government was destroyed in 1920.

Another great figure, who worked for the founding of the Tatar-Bashkir Republic, was Mirsaid Sultan Galiev, born on 13 July, 1892 in the Ufa *gubernia*. He was a member of several revolutionary circles and took part in the revolutionary events near Kazan and became one of the active participants in the Muslim Socialist Committees. In July 1917 he joined the Bolsheviks and remained in the party

until 4 May, 1923, when he was expelled—probably a victim of Stalinist provocation. He belonged to the pleiade of Bolsheviks who were working for the national movement, who were searching for the most effective way to combine national and class interests in the revolutionary struggle of the country. Probably it is this posture that threw him out of the party.

The historic transformation of Central Asia during October Revolution of 1917 swept away the Turkestani nationalism, if there was any, and simultaneously it led to the end of Khiva and Bokhara Governments, which had to a great extent maintained the old Islamic institutions and their Ulama agents. The intellectuals and the educated, who were interested in taking advantage of modern science, technology and industry introduced by the Russians alongwith the new ideas, could not build any new institutions but hoped for the better in the new Revolutionary movements. Hence they acquiesced in destroying the decadent Khiva and Bokhara Governments. When the war created new difficulties, new misery, they sought to get over them by establishing the Kokand Provisional Government and Alash Orda but though these could face the immediate problems, they had no solution for the ultimate issue of nationalism. Could there be a Turkestani nationalism? According to Mohammad Chokaev there was a “relative growth of national consciousness since the period of independent Khanates”. Although in the eyes of some, on the eve of October Revolution, Turkestani nationalism was a dominant and even explosive force, yet actually Turkestani nationalism consisted of a liberally-minded bourgeois leadership including some communist sympathisers—both looking to Moscow for support, and resentful native population who were politically naive but by experience bitterly anti-Russian. Not only the promises of self-determination held up by the Bolsheviks but also fears of reactionary elements in their own midst, persuaded the

nationalist liberals of Turkestan to throw in their lot with Moscow after the Bolsheviks had come to power, and separation from Russia, in the politically backward state of the country, might have meant the restoration of the Khanates and of intolerant reactionary regimes. However, in the eyes of the communists there was no native proletariat in Turkestan. In fact both Turkestan and Steppe Governments were artificial creations, to which were added the mediaeval state territories of Khiva and Bokhara. Hence what was thought of "Turkestan nationalism" was a vague dream of undefined territory, ill-integrated tribes and clans, Russian capitalist economy and poor industrial growth. The only binding force for the entire region was Islam that was more religious than political as there was no unified state under this name. Hence it was easy for the Bolsheviks to partition Central Asia on ethnic and linguistic ground and create new national states. Even this creation took a long time to complete and in this creation all the old opposition and governments were ruthlessly levelled. The old leadership was either removed or made to conform to the new national concepts of Lenin and Stalin.

THE FOURTH STAGE

The fourth stage began with the creation of the new ethno-linguistic national states when the Soviets not only built the new urban and rural life in Central Asia but also resurrected some old and new literary figures and heroic personalities, such as Ali Sher Novoi in Uzbekistan, Chokhan Valikhanov and Sirim Batir Datov in Kazakhstan, Sadruddin Aini and Rodaki in Tajikistan and others. They built new museums, theatres and public parks for enjoyment and for the performance of local music, dance and plays. But the greatest opening for the local talents came with the radio and television which gave a new turn to local performances and created a great love for local language, literature and

native ways of living, poetry recital, drama, dance and song. The one man from Central Asia, who outshone others in bringing about new cultural revival was Babajan Gafurov, a Tajik scholar, who became the Director of the Oriental Institute, Academy of Science in Moscow. The clue was probably taken from the visit of President Soekarno in mid-fifties, who desired to go to the tomb of Imam Bokhari near Samarkand. By this time the place had been ruined. Soon the whole complex was renovated and the President was taken there. The Soviets realized the importance of such places at least from political angle, and later for the purpose of tourism many monuments in Samarkand, Bokhara and Khiva were restored. But Babajan Ghafurov had a different objective. Himself an author of the History of Tajikistan, his aim was to reconstruct the civilization of Central Asia and hence he worked for establishing a worldwide Institution for the study of Central Asia at the level of UNESCO. Several international conferences were held in different cities of Central Asia in which, art, architecture, literature, philosophy, science, social and economic developments of the region were thoroughly examined. Hereafter the whole face of the cultural scene in Central Asia was transformed. This was a great cultural build-up, in which both Russians and Central Asians cooperated but it created different impressions. For the Russians it was more academic, historical and archaeological but for the Central Asians it was a revival of national culture. In the context of the new political states that provided a new base for the growth of respective nationalism. I could hardly realise this new development until I attended in 1988 a television function at Dushanbe where the main motto was *Ba Tajikistan ma Zindaem* (with Tajikistan we are alive). The whole procedure was in Tajiki (Persian) language and all the items represented Tajiki culture. Not a word of Russian was spoken. Another function at Alma-Ata in early 1991 was still more revealing, where a local poet Sabet Kazi Agataev

recited an intensely emotional Kazakh national poem before an international gathering.

These new developments followed the creation of ethno-linguistic national states by the Soviets whose primary aim was to destroy the old religio-cultural links and pave the way for the promotion of Soviet man. Unfortunately such a man was never born, not even in the Russian federation, but it did lead to the rise of local patriotism, local national spirit, a determination to fight for local rights and to build the national state on the basis of their own cultural experience.

It is in this background that we can understand the rise of Kazakh nationalism which has deep roots in history from the end of the 19th century. The poem, "Wake up Kazakhs" by the great reformist Kazakh writer Mir Yakub Dulatov, published in 1906, best illustrates the sentiment:

"Every year our land and water grow smaller. They are taken by the Russian peasants. The tombs of our glorious ancestors are now in the middle of their village streets. Russian peasants destroy them, taking the stones and the wood for their houses. When I think about this, my heart is consumed by sorrow, like a fire".

For the Kazakhs the most important was their pastoral land that suited their nomadic life but the Soviet policy of forced sedentarisation in 1920s led to the slaughtering of thousands of heads of livestock. One and half million people died of starvation between 1926 and 1939. In 1953 Krushchev's decision to create a new bread basket out of the under-utilized lands of southern Siberia and Kazakhstan produced the Virgin Lands Scheme. Large state farms (*Sabkhoz*) were built and staffed largely by Europeans. This led to unproportionate changes in the ethnic composition of Kazakhstan. Several party changes were made until Dinmukhamed Akhmedovich Kunaev, who was Chairman of

the Council of ministers, was made in 1964 first Secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party and continued to hold that office until December, 1986. The powerful leadership of Kunaev had a great impact on the Kazakh's position. Under him Kazakhs participated increasingly in the leadership of both Party and State whereas much of the old Russian dominance over native cadre broke down particularly after 1971 when Kunaev became the full member of the Politburo. By 1981 the Kazakhs held 60 per cent of the posts and the Kazakh shares of ministerial and state chair positions increased from 39 to 61 per cent. With all these achievements Kunaev's fortune waned after Breznev's death. First his half brother Askar Kunaev was dismissed from the Presidentship of Kazakh Academy of Sciences and on 17 December, 1986 Kunaev was retired by Gorbachev from chairmanship of the party and replaced by a Russian, Gennadi Kolbin. His removal was immediately followed by Alma-Ata riots on 17 and 18 December, 1986. The demonstrators, armed with sticks and iron rods, shouted nationalistic slogans: "Kazakhstan is only for Kazakhs". In the opinion of Roy Medvedev, the Russian dissident, "the violence in Alma Ata was almost certainly nationalistic rather than religious. It is possible that the protesters feared that use of Kazakh language in official circles, a practice that had become prevalent under Kunaev would now give way to Russian". And further he adds: "It is harder in 1980s to send a Russian to run a republic than it was under Stalin or Krushchev".

This was followed by disturbances in Khirgizstan, which is divided into northern and southern regions with capital at Frunze (now Biskek) but the main southern city of Osh, originally a part of Farghana, has played an important role in the Islamic religious activity in the past. However, this time the origin of the conflict in autumn 1987 was more economic and ethnic. The Soviets described it as "a political manifestation and the incorrect attitude of local Khirgiz

young people against 'foreign students' (i.e., Russians or other Europeans)". In Osh the dispute arose over the allocation of irrigated land. In Biskek the demonstrators demanded resignation of the Government. It is said that 139 people died and 486 were injured. The party noticed the formation of "Democratic Movement", called "Khyrgyzstan", led by Kazat Akmatov (Secretary of the Writer's Union) and Toichubek Turgunaliyev (Party Secretary of the Frunze Pedagogical Institute). The real cause of the conflict was the imbalanced admission policy in the higher education, engendering national egoism and self-concept in a certain part of students. However, the authorities blamed Professor Attokurov of the Department of Archaeology and Ethnography of the University, who is said "to engender by word and action distrust between our fraternal peoples". The other consequence was the removal of Comrade Tadzhibaev, former Chairman of Osh oblast Executive Committee for his negligence over the growth of religious practices in the region. Here again nationalistic feelings began to affect the moods of the people.

In Dushanbe again disturbances in 1987 started on economic ground over irrigated land but later in February 1990 the protest meetings were organised against the influx of Armenian refugees. Apart from these riots Tajikistan has been affected by religious sentiments as a result of the influx of people from the country side to the capital at Dushanbe, where power struggle has been going on between the old guards and the opposition. In the beginning there was the formation of a provisional national committee headed by Buran Karimov, Deputy Chairman of the Republican Council of Ministers in 1990. This led to the foundation of *Rastokhez* party which has its main support among the religious revivalists. Although the Western press would lay emphasis on the strength of religion, the support mainly coming from Kulab region, but in Kulab itself the tendency is more nationalistic than religious. In Dushanbe the conflict

is more political and economic than ethnic. The Party affiliations are divided between north and south but both are combined to preserve the identity of Tajikistan as opposed to other ethnic groups.

And finally coming to Uzbekistan we cannot but note the rise of Birlik, Erk's fore-runner, founded in November 1988 by intellectuals (writers). Its full name "Birlik (Unity) Movement for the Preservation of Uzbekistan's Natural, Material and Spiritual Riches" sums up the aim which is embodied in the Birlik movement. Its founders were Ahmad Azam, Zahir Alam, and Muhammad Salih. Towards the end of May 1989 Abdur Rahim Polatov (a Physicist) was elected Chairman of Birlik's governing Council at Birlik's first Congress. It is from the moderate groups of Birlik that the new organisation, called Erk took shape in February 1990 and this latter was recognised as a political party on 11 March, 1990. Birlik's charter was published in September 1989.

Birlik is a People's Movement for "the renewal of all spheres of life of its society", for the development of national cultural and language. Its policies and programmes are:

- (i) Thorough study of the culture heritage of the Uzbeks and other peoples of the Republic.
- (ii) Replacement of recent place names with historical equivalents.
- (iii) Publicity of the activity and programmes of several organizations banned in 1930s.
- (iv) Introduction of Arabic Script in Uzbek's schools and curriculum.

The movement emphasized on Uzbek as the official republican language and proposed many programmes for the

social and economic development of the society without division into nationalities and without borders.

The survey of the different developments in the Central Asian States speak of resurgence on nationalistic lines with an eye to a march towards modern world rather than a reversion to religious emotionalism. Religion as a part of national culture may add new strength but can hardly replace the new tendencies of resurgence.

4 August 1992.

Communications Between Pakistan And Central Asian Republics - A Historical Perspective

Communications that are to be developed between Pakistan and Central Asian Republics have to take into consideration the old trade routes. I therefore present here the main historical routes used for the purpose of trade and contact.

Central Asia has been in the heart of East-West trade in the past between China and India on the one hand and western world on the other. The old Silk Road, which was the main land route connection, ran from Xien (ancient Chang'an), the old capital of China, through the core of this vast Central Asian land to Venice in Italy. As long as the Silk Road remained open, Central Asia flourished and prospered. With the shifting of the trade route to open Seas across the Pacific, Indian Ocean and the Atlantic, the commerce through the land route dwindled and Central Asia became more and more isolated and began to look inward. Even then commerce and contact continued between the trading houses in Lahore, Multan, Shikarpur and Peshawar on the one hand and Samarkand, Bokhara and Baku on the other, and also between Kashmir and Swat on the one hand and Yarkand, Khotan and Kashgar on the other. With the Russo-British diplomatic war in the nineteenth century, even

these proximate land routes stood closed and Central Asia began to look to Moscow and the Land of Pakistan became confined to South Asia. The long historical and cultural links between Pakistan and Central Asia were finally cut off and the peoples of the two regions became estranged within the last seventy years.

Trade and cultural routes, discussed here, are confined to those highways that have facilitated movements of peoples from Central Asia now included in the Commonwealth of Independent States (former Soviet Union), and Xinjiang (now in People's Republic of China) and the Indus region, now included in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. For this purpose the whole of Kashmir has been taken into consideration as that is a part of the Indus region. The routes lie in the north-south direction. They connect peoples of three main regions: (1) The countries in and around Mawara-un-nahr, comprising Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, (2) in and around the old Kashgaria and Jungaria, comprising the whole of Xingiang, west of the Hexi Corridor and Jiauqian pass, i.e., countries around Taklamakan desert, and (3) The Indus valley country spreading from the Hindukush—Karakorum mountains to the Arabian Sea. For this purpose we also include Azerbaijan, which lies in the Caucasus region, west of the Caspian Sea. The independent State of Azerbaijan has one of its province, Nakhichevan, cut off from its main land by the penetration of Armenian territory in between. Nakhichevan has an over-land border of 12 (twelve) kilometer with the eastern part of Turkey. There is a rail connection between Baku and Nakhichevan through Armenia. Recently an agreement has been signed with Iran to have a road link between Baku and Nakichevan through Iranian territory *via* Astar station.

There is a great barrier of mountains between the north and south. The Hindukush and its branches in the

Central massif of Afghanistan separate Mawara-un-nahar from the southern regions. The Ghissar ranges in Tajikistan, which branch out from the Pamir separate the southern part of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan from Wakhan strip of Afghanistan, Chitral, Yasin, Gilgit and Hunza that lie in Northern Areas of Pakistan. The Karakorum and Kunlun ranges separate Northern Areas of Pakistan and Kashmir from the old Kashgaria. The Tienshan mountain that stretches from Kyrgyzstan into Xinjian divides northern and southern Kyrgyzstan and the old Kashgaria from Jungaria. Similarly Alatau mountain cuts right into Alma Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan and Turkestan hill lies in between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

The old Silk Route ran east to west from ancient Changan, modern Xien, the Capital of Shansi province of China, along the Hexi Corridor right upto Jiauqian Gate, the southern end of the Great Wall, and then bifurcated into two directions—the northern route passed north of the Taklamakan desert and south of Gobi desert and Tien Shan mountain, across Hami, Turfan, Aksu, Kucha to Kashgar, and the southern route passed south of the Taklamakan desert and north of Kunlun mountain across Niya, Khotan and Yarkand and finally joined Kashgar. From Yarkand the old route followed the Yarkand river and went down to Karakorum pass and through Ladakh, east of Siachen to Zojila pass and Kashmir. From Yarkand one route also followed Shimsal pass and came to Hunza and Gilgit and down to Taxila. From Kashgar three routes emerged: one went down to Tashkurgan, followed the Mastuj valley and then across Shandur pass went to Chitral south of the Hindukush. From here the route went down to Kunar valley and *via* Nawa Pass to Bajaur, Swat and Peshawar valley. This very route from Mastuj went down to Darkot pass and on to Yasin and Gilgit. However to the north of Darkot pass lies the famous Darwaza of old, called Borogil pass that opens

into Wakhan, and following the Wakhjir river it goes westward to Qala-i-Panja on the Oxus river. There are several crossings of the Oxus river between Wakhan and Badakhshan. These crossings lead directly into south-eastern part of Tajikistan on the Pamir. By following westward route one can go to Kurgantepe valley, on to Kulab (ancient Khuttlan) and finally to Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan. Northern pass through the Ghissar mountain leads to Samarkand. From Kunar one could also go to Kunduz and then to the ancient city of Ai-Khanoum, south of the Oxus river, and to Takht-i-Sangin, north of the Oxus river and then join the earlier route to Kurgantepe and Kulab.

From Kashgar one could also go to Osh across the mountains in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan or one could directly go to Biskek in the northern part of Kyrgyzstan. There are following three routes between Osh and Kashgar:

1. Osh—Sufi Kurgan—mountain pass—Trek Dawan— Valley of river Kaksu—Pass Karavankul—Irkistan (border of China)—motorable road to Kulja or Kashgar.
2. Osh—Uzgend—(two passes): Kara shoro or Chitti—Valley of river Arpa—lake Chitirkul—mountain pass Turgat (border of China)—to Kashgar or Kulja.
3. The ancient Silk Road: Osh—Kazirman—Narin—Turgat Pass (border of China)—Kashgar or Kulja.

From Kashgar one could go directly to Biskek, south of Isik-Kul lake *via* Narin. Or one could go across Tien-Shan to Ili valley and then cross the border at Khorgos, onward to Panfilao and then one could go directly to Biskek or to Alma Ata, the Capital of Kazakhstan. From this northern route one could go to the mediaeval cities of Otrar and Turkestan.

the latter is famous for the Dargah of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawai. From Turkestan one could come down to Chimkent and finally go to Tashkent south of the river Syr Darya. There is also a good motorable road from Alma Ata to Biskek, from Biskek to Osh, from Osh to Dushanbe, and from Dushanbe to Tirmiz on the Oxus.

Right from the ancient time Tirmiz has been a gateway to Central Asia. Today it is very well connected by motorable road, by train and by air with all the important cities in Central Asia. It joins northern and southern Bactria and across the hill beyond Sherabad one could descent into Kashka Darya and go to Karshi or to Shahr-i-Sabz, the birth place of Amir Timur. From either place one could directly go to Samarkand or to Bokhara, both of which lie in Zarafshan valley. To the west of Bokhara lies the Kyzylkum desert, bordered on the west by the Oxus river. Further west lies the Karakum desert, which separates the southern part of Turkmenistan, lying north of Kopet Dagh slope, and northern part of Turkmenistan, hugging the old bed of the Oxus river. Here in the north lie the important cities of Kirki, Amul (Charzou), Urgench and Konya Urgench. Khiva, the old Capital of Khwarizm lies 25 Km. south west of Urgench while Beruni, the home town of Abu Raihan Alberuni stands on the other side of the Oxus river, the modern city of Urgench being on the southern side. Two rivers, Murghab and Tezen flow from Afghanistan into Turkmenistan. The Murghab river joins Mazar-i-Sharif area with the old city of Merv. Tezen river joins Herat region with Sarakhs and onward to Abiverd and then to the modern city of Ashkhabad and old city of Nisa. From Tirmiz one could also come down to Mazar-i-Sharif and follow the Maimana route to Herat and onward *via* Farah to Kandahar. From Mazar-i-Sharif one could go down to Bamiyan and then across Shibir pass onward to Bagram

(modern Charikar—old Alexandria under Hindukush) and then to Kabul. Modern road from Mazar-i-Sharif to Charikar passes through Salang pass.

At present the easiest motorable road from Peshawar is to go to Kabul and then short of Mazar-i-Sharif to Tirmiz or *via* Kunduz to Badakhshan and across the Oxus river into Tajikistan. As has been stated before one could also follow the Kunar route and go to Badakhshan and straight to Kulab (old Khuttlan). It was this route that was followed by Sayyid Ali Hamdani. Babar followed the Shibir pass route to Kabul while Amir Timur followed the Maimana route to Herat and Kandahar. Alexander the Great came across the Shibir pass to Bagram, descended into Kunar valley and across Nawa pass to Bajaur and onward to Swat.

The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang followed the northern route and came to Samarkand, Bokhara and down to Tirmiz, then to Bagram and eastward to Peshawar. Another Chinese pilgrim Song Yun passed through Borogil pass and directly into Darel valley and then westward to Swat and finally to Peshawar and Taxila.

Today Pakistan can follow one of the four routes, two of them go through Afghanistan. The easiest and quickest land route is from Peshawar to Kabul, onward to Mazar-i-Sharif *via* Salang pass and across the modern bridge over the Oxus to Tirmiz and beyond to any of the Central Asian cities. The second route is from Quetta to Kandahar, onward to Herat and then *via* Maimana to Mazar-i-Sharif and then join the earlier road to Tirmiz. From Herat one can also go to Meshhed, from Meshhed to Sarakhs and then to other cities in Central Asia.

If we like to avoid Afghanistan, one could go from Quetta to Zahidan, from Zahidan to Mashhed and onward

to Sarakhs. Another choice is to follow the Khunjerab pass, go to Kashgar and then onward to Osh, Biskek or Alma Ata.

20 February 1992.

Independence Day Of The Central Asian States*

As I was listening to the English programme of Radio Tashkent, the first three words that caught me were “Freedom, Independence and Motherland”. It was an emotional comment in words and in poems on what is the significance of these terms in the life of a nation. The two deputies of Uzbekistan Supreme Soviet, who were interviewed, said that we were like a bird in a cage for seventy years and now we became free to breathe the free air. Another comment was a quotation from Zahiruddin Muhammad Babar, saying, “it is painful to leave one’s motherland and rule over another land”—the most apt lesson to the imperialists. It was also categorically asserted that “freedom was not awarded to us”. This is very significant in the history of Soviet Union. As there was no award, there was also no struggle for freedom. The independence came by peoples’ choice. On 31st August, 1991 the Deputies of Uzbekistan Supreme Soviet unanimously voted for the declaration of independence, for the territorial sovereignty of the country, for the protection of the rights and privileges of all the citizens of Uzbekistan irrespective of religion, ethnic affiliation and political groupings. In accordance with this resolution Islam Karimov, the President of the Republic, declared 1st of September as

* Celebration in Islamabad, 31st September, 1992.

a public holiday for the celebration of independence. The name of the state was changed to “Republic of Uzbekistan”. It was declared that “Uzbekistan will be absolutely free in defining its social and economic policy and conducting foreign political and economic activity. All industrial enterprises owned by the USSR will be transferred to the jurisdiction of the Republic”.

Today marks the first anniversary of that great day when Uzbekistan—the land of Mawar-an-nahr—the seat of the ancient Sogdian civilisation, the home of the great civilisation associated with the cities of Samarkand, Bokhara and Khiva, and the attractive fairyland of Farghana that once supported the Kokand State—all became free to reassert their traditional life and make a new resolve for reconstruction of their socio-economic life in the coming years.

On this occasion it is but natural that Radio Tashkent remembered the heroes of 1917 Kokand Provisional Government, of which the President was Mustafa Chokayev who had aimed at freedom from the Tsarist imperialism. The then Turkestan had produced a strong nationalist movement, the leaders of which also included Alihan Bokeyhanuli, who became the President of the Alash Orda Government in Kazakhstan, Osman Khodzha in Bokhara, Obedulla Khodzha in Tashkent and Zeki Velidi Togan in Bahshkiriya. The *Alash* movement in Kazakhstan was a nationalist movement to reunite all the Kazakh people. The word *Alash* is used by the Kazakhs as the rallying cry and a password. It has also the meaning of “people”. “Alti Alash” means six peoples, the Kazakh being one of them. Others are Khirgiz, Uzbek, Turkmen, Karakalpak and Bashkir. The destruction of the Kokand Government in February 1918 and that of the Alash Orda Government in 1920 led to the new partition of Central Asia by the Communists. It is but natural that nationalist parties have now been revived in

these states: the Alash Party in Kazakhstan, the “Khirgizstan” in the Republic of Khirgizstan and Birlik movement in Uzbekistan.

On Saturday, August 31, the Parliament of Khirgizstan declared the Republic an independent democratic state. President Askar Akayev declared: “The dictatorship of the Proletariat was nothing but a veil masking the dictatorship of one party or one man. What we must do now is to lay the foundations of a rule-of-law state and a free economy”.

On 30th August a session of the Azerbaijan Supreme Soviet adopted a declaration on independence which restored the independence of the sovereign republic. Under the decree of the then President, Ayaz Mutalibov, “the management of internal affairs bodies, state security, the prosecutor’s office and justice is from now on under the exclusive authority of this transcaucasian republic”.

On 22nd August there was a joint session of the Presidential Council of the Turkmen SSR and the Presidium of the Republic’s Supreme Soviet, the President of the Turkmen SSR, Saparmurad Atayevich Niyazov, congratulated the participants on signing the declaration of sovereignty and independence. The President said: “I want to congratulate once more all our inhabitants on today’s holiday, the entire Turkmen people and the nations and the ethnic groups living in our republic, on the first anniversary of the adoption of the declaration of independence and sovereignty of our republic. And I wish that this nation-wide holiday of ours will bring in practical freedom in our life, independence, equality to all citizens living in our republic”.

On Monday, 9th September, 1991, at its emergency session Tajikistan’s parliament proclaimed independence for the republic. It adopted a declaration which says that Tajikistan is a sovereign and democratic state ruled by law.

September 9 is announced as Independence Day and a public holiday. In connection with the changed status of the Republic its parliament made amendments and addenda to the declaration of sovereignty adopted earlier. Accordingly state property, such as state-owned facilities, offices and organizations, including those run by the Centre are Tajikistan's property.

And then came Kazakhstan. In a vote by the Kazakh Parliament the Republic declared its independence on 16th December, 1992. By a decree of the Kazakh President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic State Committee for Defence has been set up with a view to safeguarding the Republic's independence, territorial integrity, defence and other vitally important interests.

Pak-Central Asia Friendship Association and the people of Pakistan congratulate our brothers and sisters in Central Asia on this first anniversary of Independence Day. May this Day bring bright future, more strength and prosperity to the people and establish closer bonds between our peoples.

President
Pak-Central Asia Friendship Association

1 September 1992.

UZBEKISTAN DAY

My Land!

I wish to extol this day,

Although I lack the words to express my feelings;

There are poets who made their land famous:

All expressed in poetry

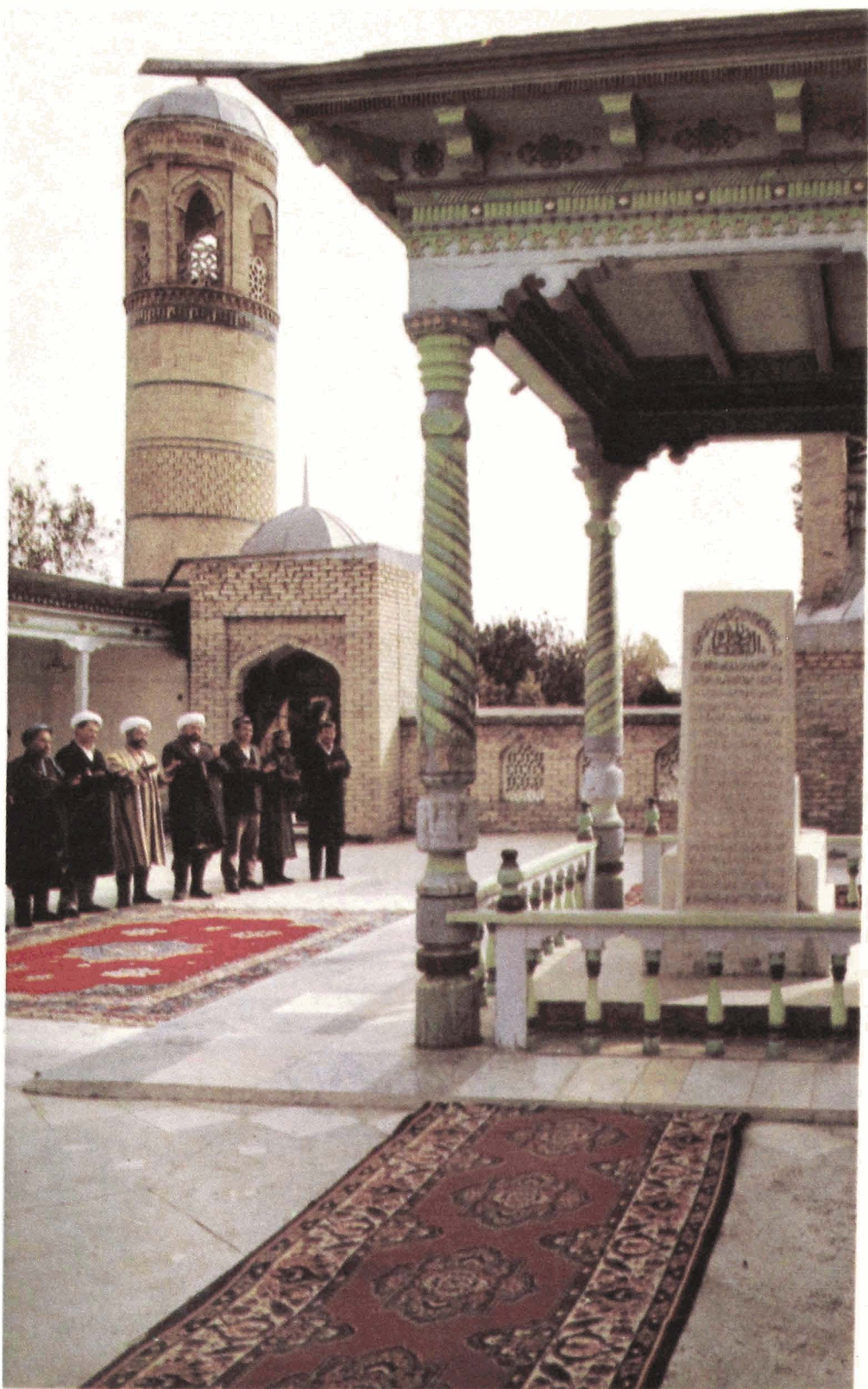
Which will tie the silver land;

Still there is a land in the world

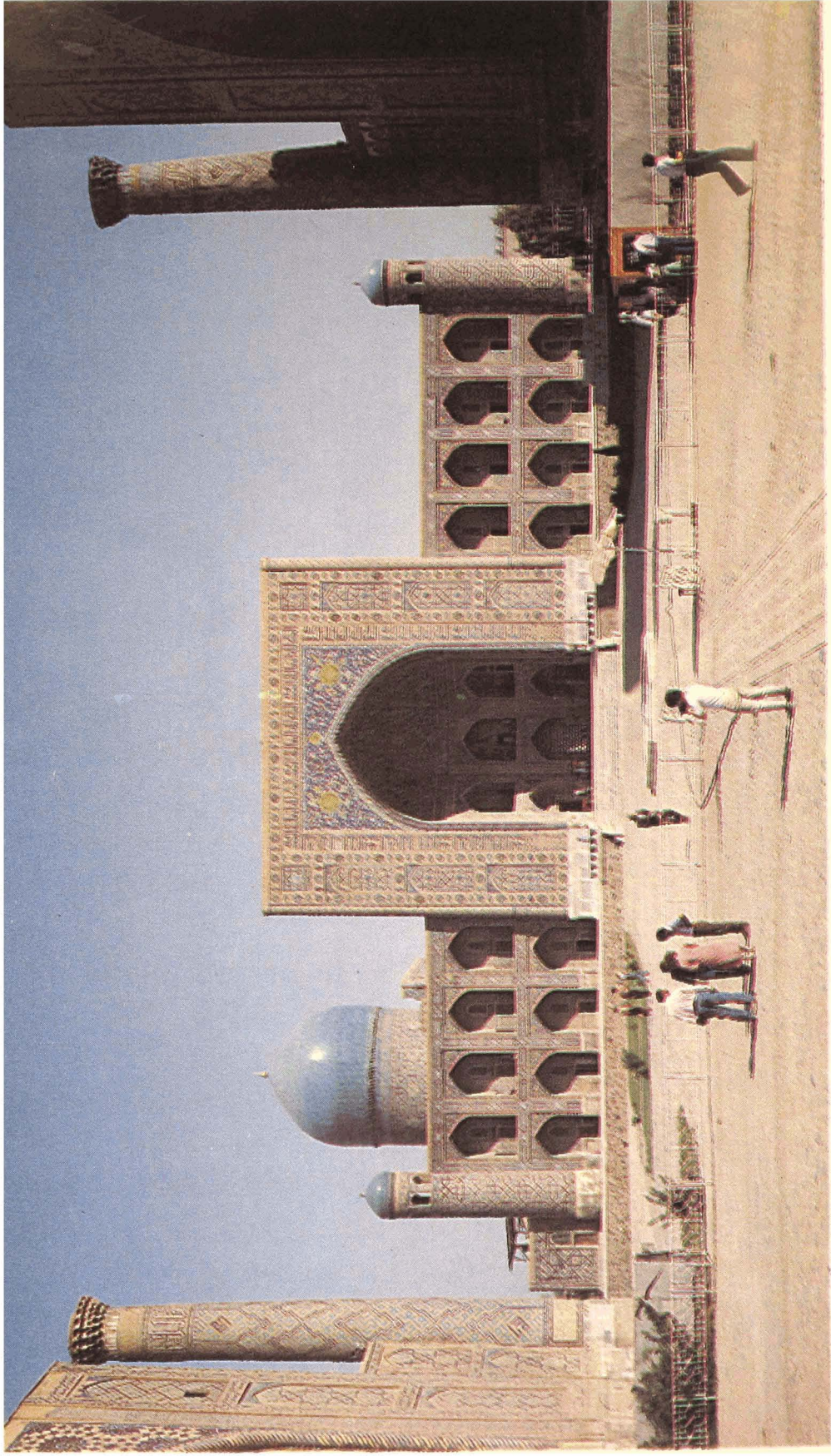
Which itself is a real poem,

And it is Uzbekistan, my mother-land.

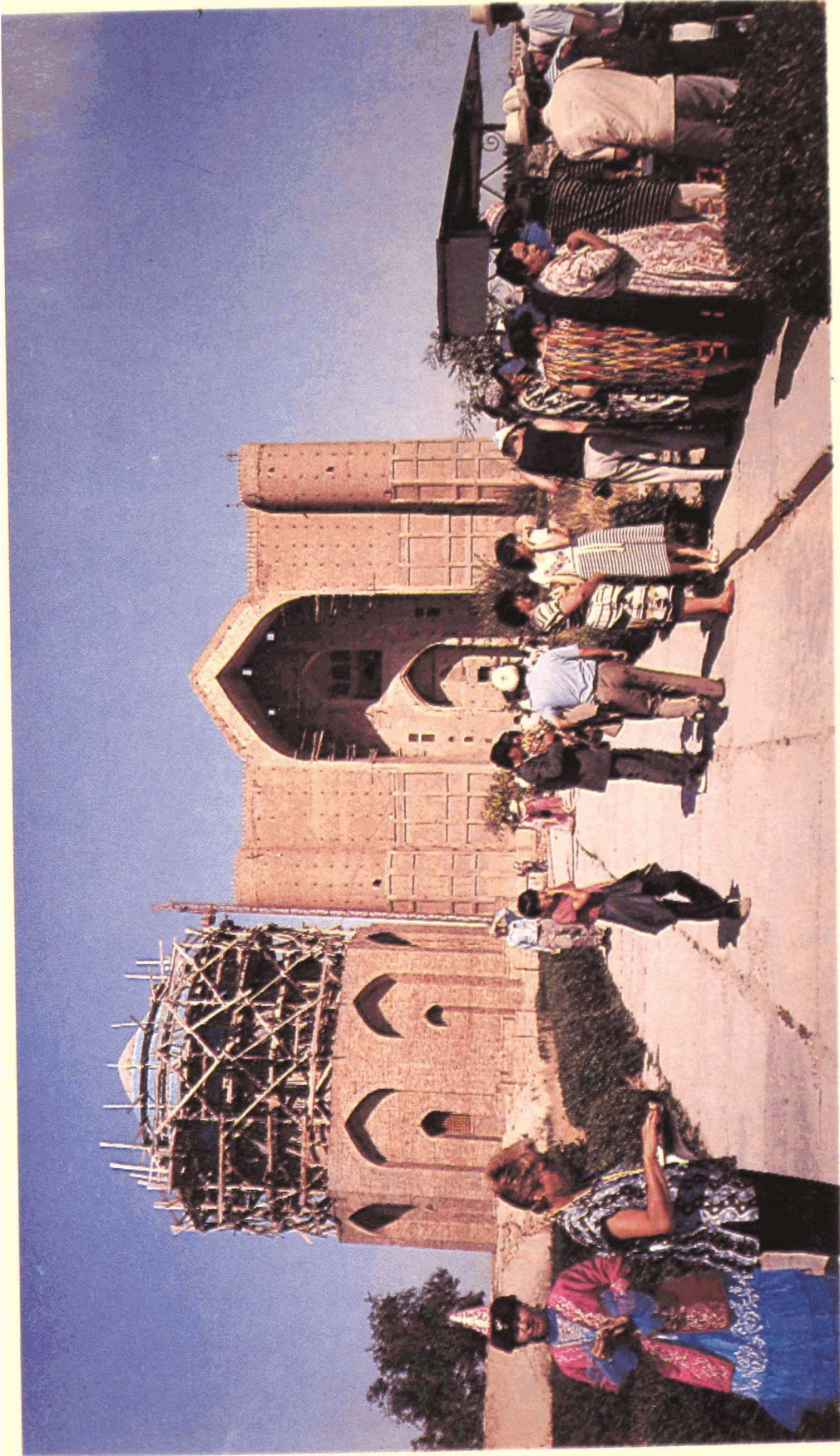
— *Radio Tashkent*



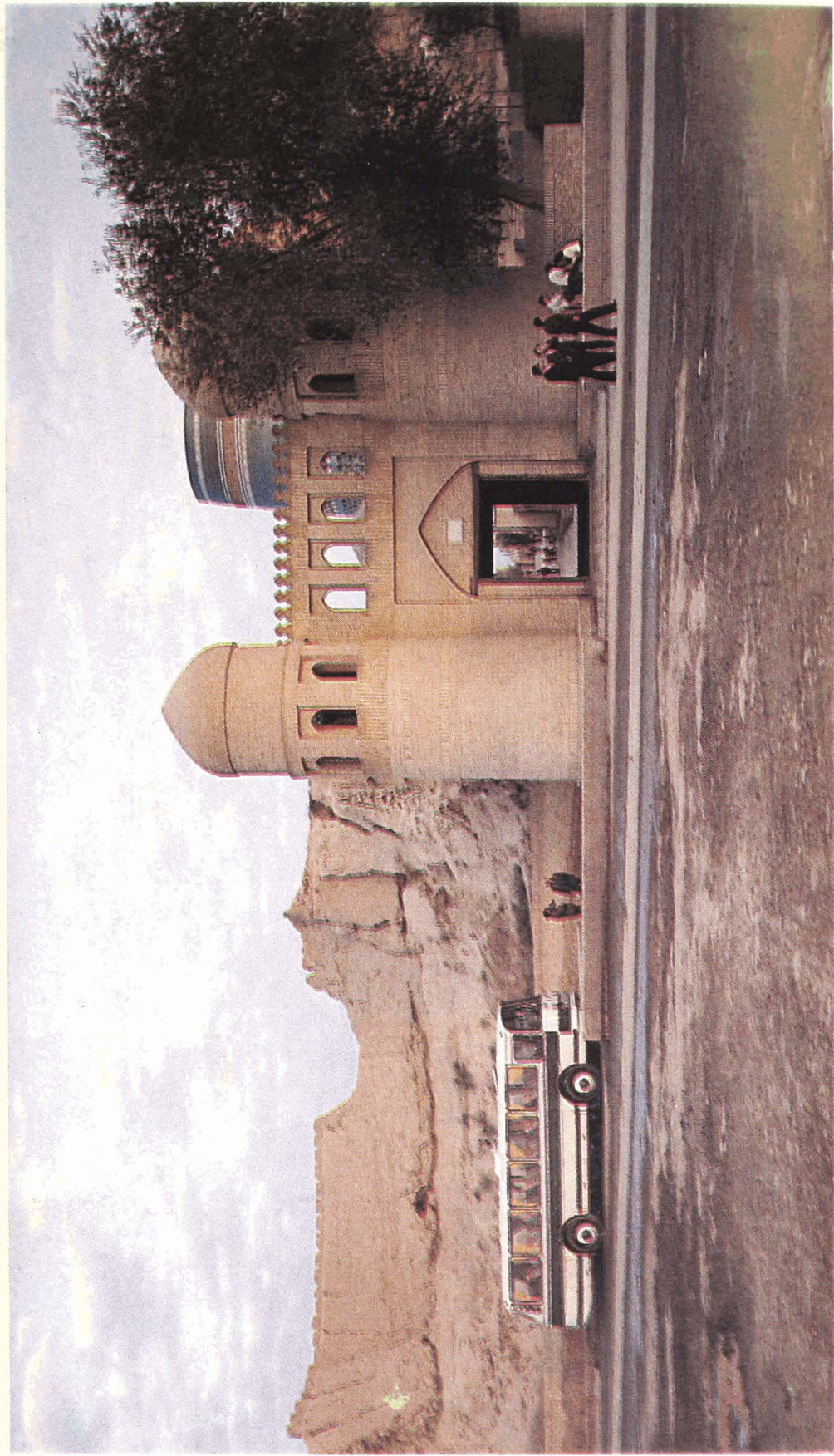
Samarkand. Imam Bukhari Mausoleum. 9th c.



Registan Madrasah at Samarkand

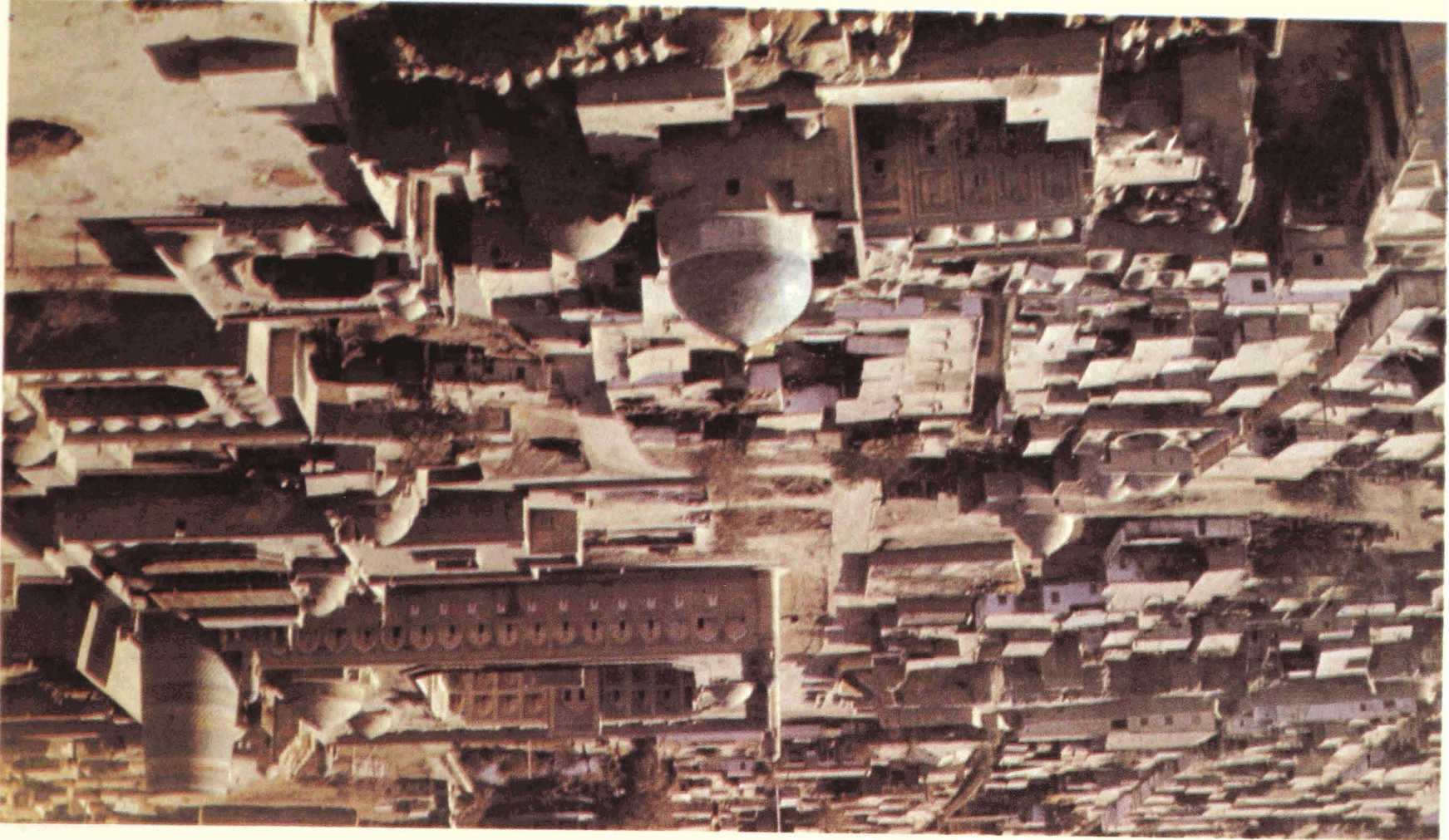


Tomb of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi at Turkestan in Kazakhstan



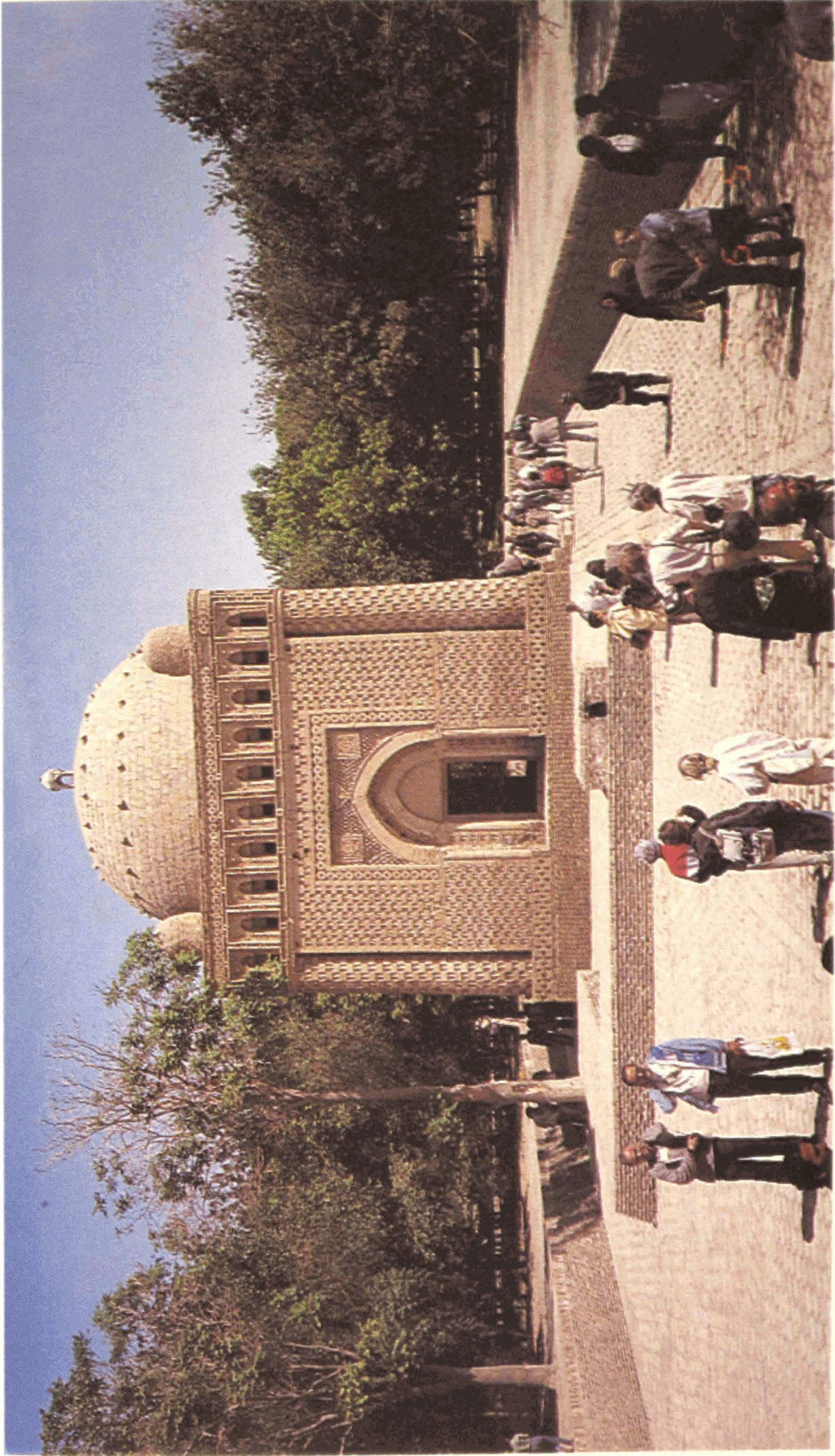
The main entrance of the Fort at Khiva, Capital of Khwarizm

Khiva. View of the city





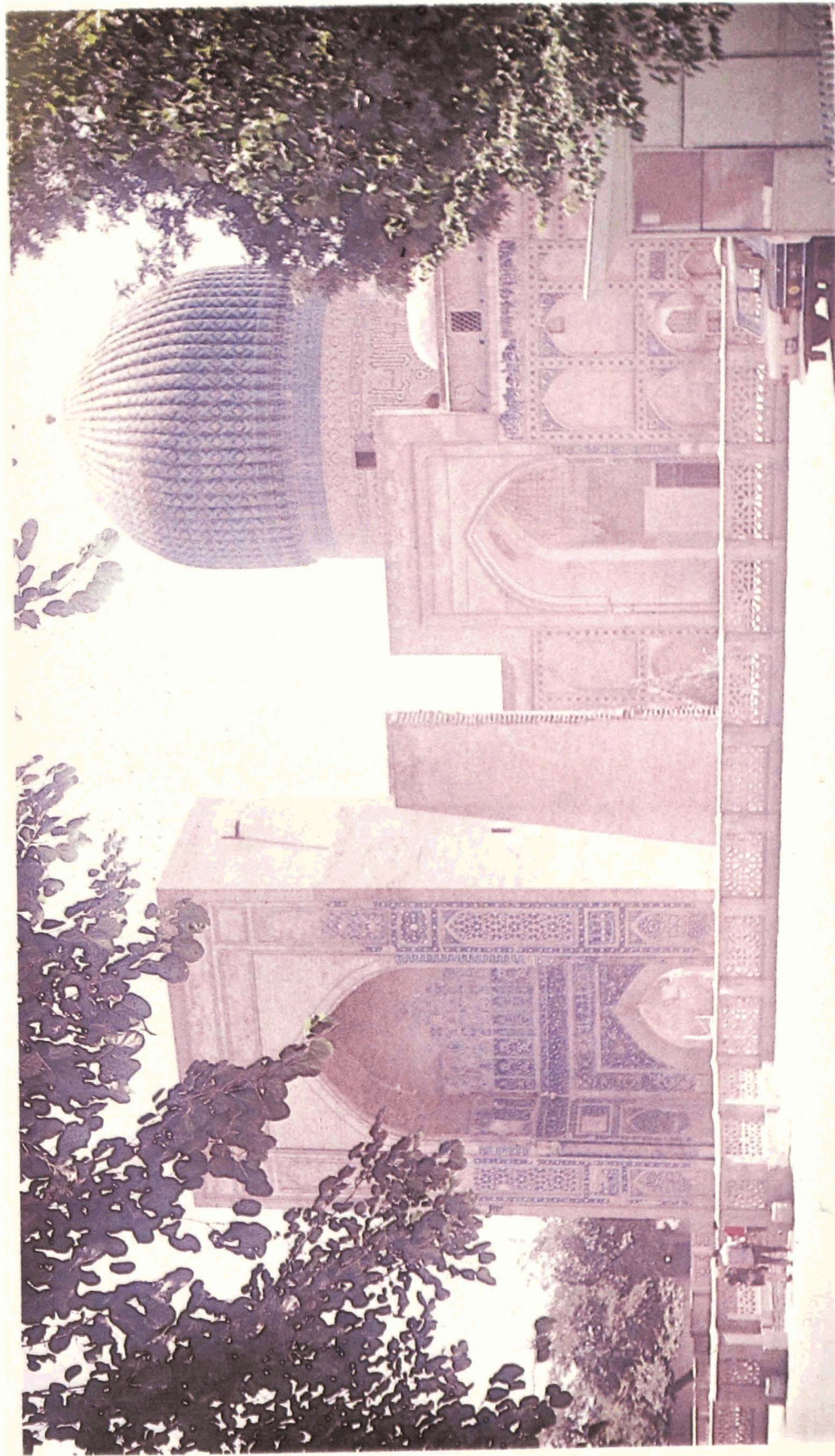
Dr. Yar Muhammad, Prof. Ahmad Hassan Dani with the Mufti Tashkend



Tomb of Sultan Ismail, Samanid Sultan at Bokhara



Tajik ladies playing on musical instrument



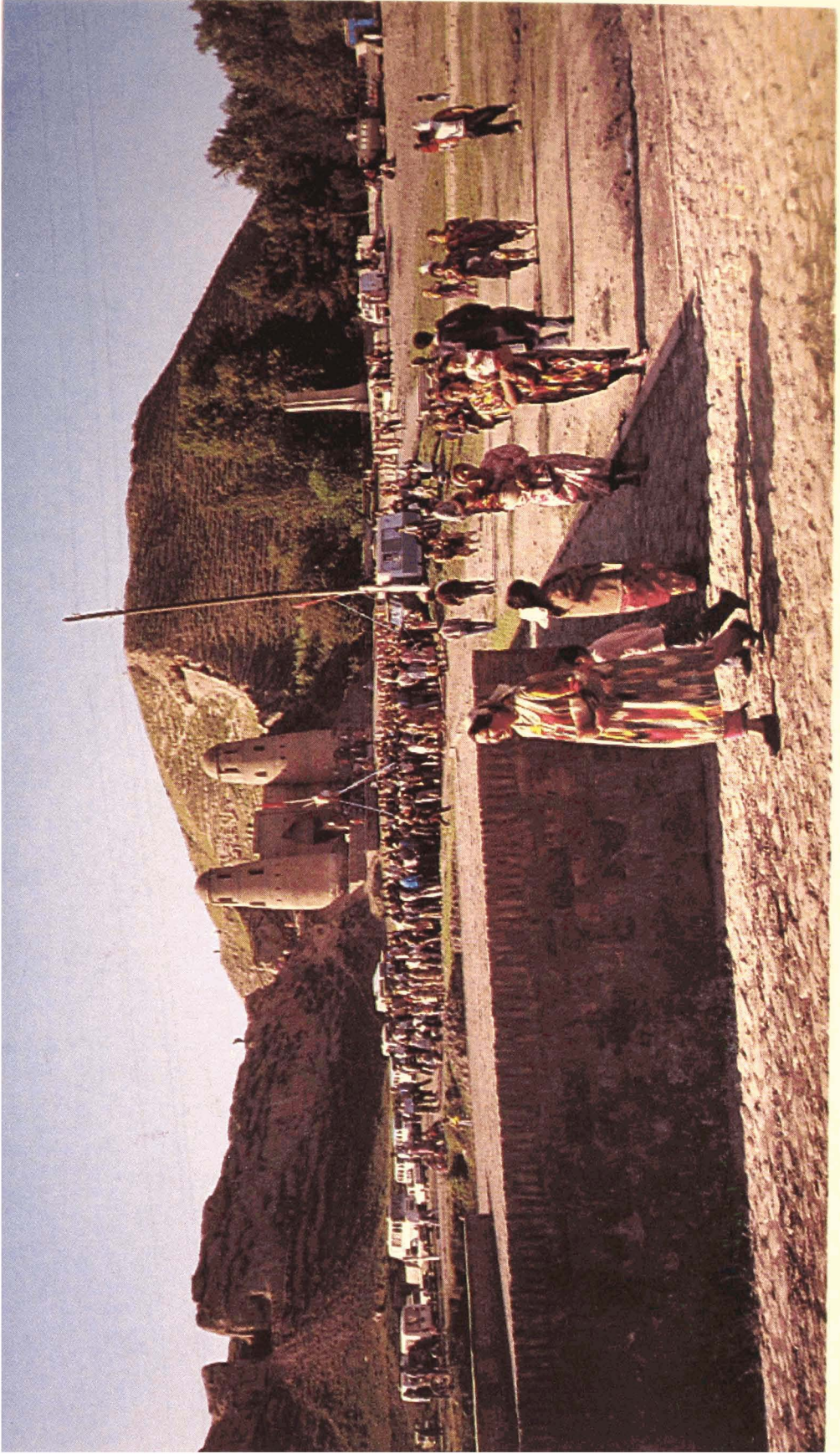
Gor-i-Mir - Mausoleum of Amir Timur at Samarkan
(Not numbered)



Taq-i-Sarrafan, a business Centre of old in Bokhara.



A Traditional Costume of a Dervish



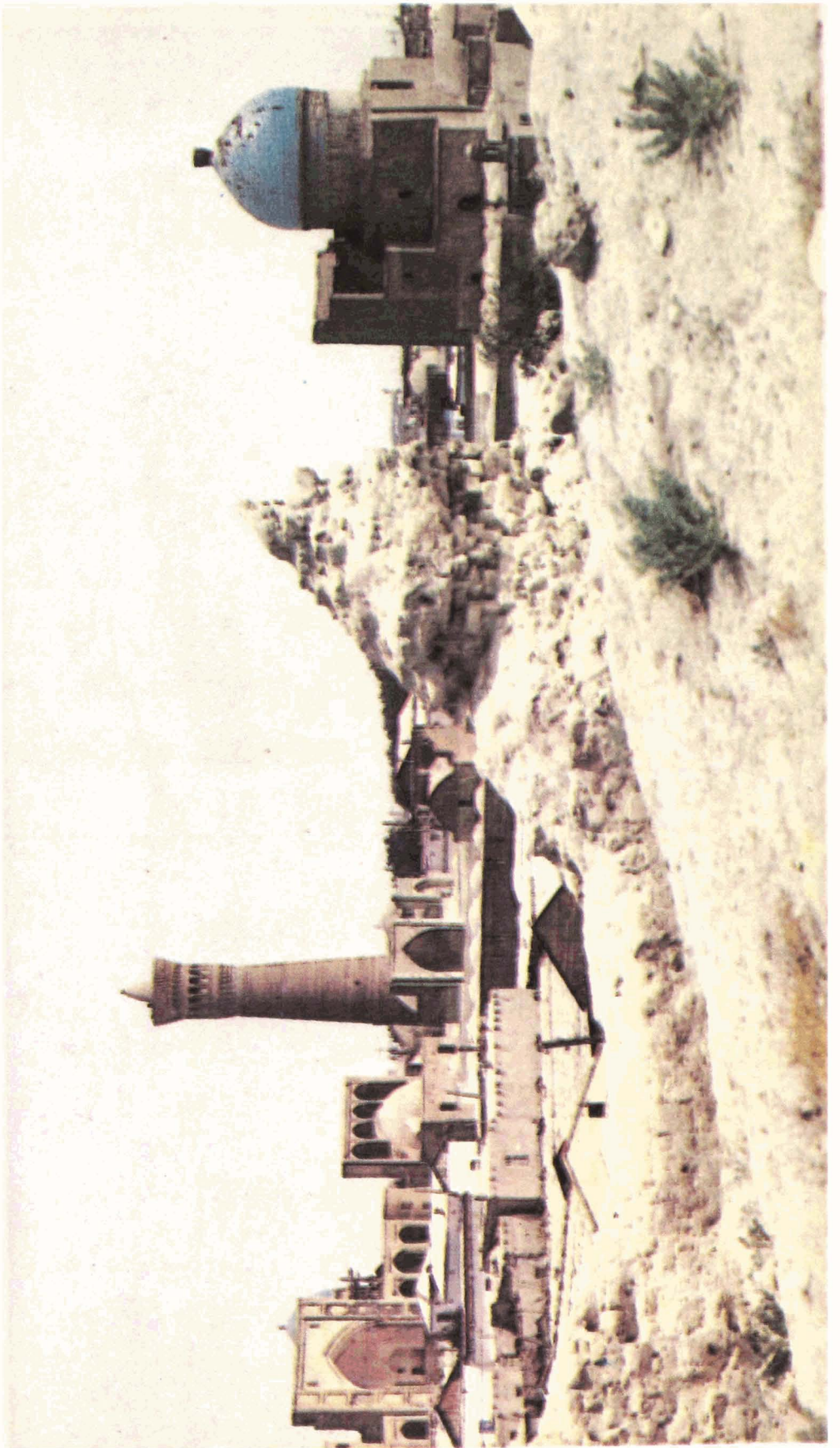
Hissar Fort at Dushanbe Tajikistan



Bukhara : Monument of Abu Ali ibn Sina (Avicenna).
Sculptor F. Abdurakhmanov, architect G. Mukhtarov



Bukhara : Monument to Nasr-ad-Din
Sculptor Ya. Shapiro, architect K. Kryukov



Samarkand : Ulugbek Observatory. XV century



From Lahore To Tajikistan:* A Region Of Cultural Integration

Lahore is correctly *Lauh* or *Rau* or *Ravi* and *Ur* or *Pur*, i.e., literally “City on the Ravi” (river). It came into limelight only in the 10th century A.D. during the time of the Ghaznavid Sultans, a line of rulers deriving their political authority from the Tajiki-Samanid dynasty of Bokhara. It is natural therefore that Lahore of the time should assume the appearance of a Central Asian city. But unfortunately that city has not been traced so far. Probably its remains were washed away by the destructive currents of the Ravi. However, what has survived is the language—the language of the Tajiki (Persian) speaking people who followed in the train of the Ghaznavid Sultans, settled in this city and gave to it not only the language for the first time but also a new colour and a new taste of life. Above all it is this time which gave to Lahore its great mystic saint, Sayyid Ali Hujwari, popularly known as Data Saheb, who wrote here the most remarkable book, *Kashful Mahjub*, in Tajiki-Persian language. He was responsible for the spread of Islam in this region. His *dargah*, which must have been situated outside the city of that time, is still well preserved.

There were other Tajiki (Persian) poets and scholars who came here and made Lahore their home. Among them

* Independence Day Celebration, Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 9th September, 1992.

Mas'ud bin Sa'ad bin Salman, who died in 515 A.H./ 1121 A.D., has left behind a memorable *Diwan*, in which he praises Lahore in several verses and when he was far away in Ghazni, confined in the prison, fervently showers his pangs of love on this city. A few examples are given below:

اے لاہور ویک بے من چگونہ ای بے آفتاب تاباں روشن چگونہ ای
 ناگہ عزیز فرزند از تو جدا شدہ است بادرو او ہنوحہ و شبیون چگونہ ای
 تو مرغزار بودی دمن شیر مرغزار با من چگونہ بودی دبی من چگونہ ای

From the prison his soul-stirring verse is most appealing:

کار اطلاق من چو بستہ بماند کہ ہی ایزدش نہ بچشاید
 مر مرا حاجتی ہی باشد وز دلم خارششی ہی زاید
 مخملی باید از حسدا وندم کہ ازو بوی لودہور آید
 کہ ہسی ز آرزوی لوہاور جان ددل در تنم ہسی ناید

And lastly from his *Diwan* his longing for Lahore can be well appreciated:

دانی تو کہ با بند گرانم یارب دانی کہ ضعیف و ناتوانم یارب
 شد در غم لوہور روانم یارب یارب کہ در آرزوی آنم یارب

From this time onward the city of Lahore has been a great centre of Tajiki (Persian) language and culture. Its influence on the language and literature of Panjabi is immense. This tradition has continued right down to our own time, except that the British replaced the Persian by English as official language after their occupation. As a result the vernacular became popular and Persian, the language of culture, became classical language for us. It was continued to be taught in this manner all along the British

domination.

Even then Tajiki-Persian was adopted by our poets whenever a soul-stirring message has to be given, as we find in the following verse of Allama Muhammad Iqbal in his *Zabur-i-Ajam*:

خاور ہمد ماہندِ عبا رہا ہے است یک نالہ سخاموش واثر باختر ہے است
 ہر ذرہ این خاک گرہ خوردہ نگاہ ہے است از ہند و سمرقند و عراق و ہمدان خیز
 از خوابِ گراں، خوابِ گراں، خوابِ گراں خیز
 از خوابِ گراں خیز

In another *ghazal* Allama Iqbal prays:

اے ظہورِ تو شبابِ زندگی جلوہ ات تعبیرِ خوابِ زندگی
 اے زمین از بارگاہت ارجمند آسمان از بوسہ بامت بلند
 شش جہت روشن ز تابِ بُوے تو ترک و تاجیک و عرب ہندو سے تو
 از تو بالا پایہ این کائنات فقر تو سرمایہ این کائنات
 در جہاں شمعِ حیات اندروختی بندگان را خوابگی آموختی

Allama Iqbal rises far above his place of origin, which in his life-time was called India but now it is in Pakistan. For the first time he speaks of the cultural unity of the entire Tajiki-Iranian world in the following verse:

اگرچہ زادہ ہندم فروغِ چشم من است
 ز خاکِ پاکِ بخارا و کابل و تبریز

It is this particular emotion of Allama Iqbal which made him inspire the whole people of the region with a new spirit, as we find in his following Urdu poem:

میں بندۂ ناداں ہوں مگر شکر ہے تیرا رکھتا ہوں نہاں خانہ لاہوت سے پیوند
اک دلولہ تازہ دیامیں نے دلوں کو لاہور سے تا خاکِ بخارا و سمرقند

However, he mixes up Urdu and Persian when he speaks of the spark of common love which arises from the heart of Asia:

پھر اٹھی ایشیا کے دل سے چنگاریِ محبت کی زمیں جو لانگہِ اطلس قبایانِ ستاری ہے
بیابانِ خریدارِ راست جانِ ناتوانے را پس از عمرے گذر افتاد بر ما کاروانے را
بیاسانی تو اے مرغِ زار از شاخسار آمد کشید ابر بہاری خیمہ اندر وادیِ صحرا
صدائے آساراں از منہ ز کوہسار آمد

It is this Kohisar, the land characterised by the Hissar ranges—the land of Tajikistan—which has once again arisen to bring together the Tajiki world and give to the people a new sense of awakening. May the Tajik people live long to continue their life and culture!

Tajikistan Today

Tajikistan today is seriously engaged in search of its modern democratic base but there are several instable factors of political economy that stand in the way of peaceful progress. Unfortunately Tajikistan has not been able to find strong leadership that could command legitimacy among the people, now totally confused after the overthrow of its old President, Kahar Mokhamov (1985-1991), who sided with the leaders of August 1991 coup of Moscow. The hope pinged on new elections of 1991 has not been fulfilled because under the given circumstance of the strength of (old communist) party organisation, the result could not have been other than what we find today. Even after several cabinet reshuffles the weak-minded new President, Rahman Nabiev, who was forced to submit his resignation on 7 September, 1992, could not satisfy the people as his government did not reflect the wish of the masses. There is today a constitutional crisis in the state: Nabiev still remains the legal President and the Parliament (*i.e.*, the Supreme Soviet) has little chance of holding its full session as its members have loyalties more to regional interests than to the whole state. The State National Guards cling to the President who comes from the northern region of Khojend (old Leninabad) and has also support from Kulab. As opposed to him stand the armed forces of *Hizb-i-Nuzhat-i-Islami*, led by Muhammad Sharif Himmatzode, whose party is very strong in Kurgan-tepe, Qarategin and partly in Kulab

and Dushanbe. The source of his weaponry comes from across the border in Afghanistan and the Party is determined to mobilise the emotion of the youth and even use force, now led by Isan-i-Qayamuddin as commander, to snatch power. The recent skirmishes are mainly between the national guards and this opposition armed force.

Regional issues in Tajikistan are very important although leaders, such as Tahir Abdul Jabbar, founder-President of Rastokhez, do not accept this view because he believes in peoples' movement for independence and freedom of thought and expression, belief and practices and therefore he would like to mobilise the entire people, including the old Russians who are settled in Tajikistan, and work for complete independence from Moscow. His is not a nationalist party against the Russians nor a regional party favouring one or the other area. The Party's aim is "to reach a democratic government, destroy the remnants of the totalitarian regime and ensure the economic and cultural progress of society and the freedom of every individual". The Party does not believe in the use of force but desires "to realise the goals by legal and political ways".

The extreme case of regionalism is seen in the example of Badakhshan, whose 80% of population out of nearly 200,000 are Ismailis—a region close to Pakistan, the nearest point being Is-Kasim, hardly 25 km. away—which has declared itself as an autonomous republic, a status higher than that of autonomous region. The latter position was enjoyed here by the people. This change is not simple independence, as has been commonly interpreted in the foreign media, but it is the same status as is enjoyed by the Autonomous Republic of Karakalpak within Uzbekistan. On my asking, the *Rais* of the Republic, Dr. Gharibsha Shabozov, spoke of the under-developed condition of the area and hence the need for greater advantage by his Republic to arrange direct economic cooperation with

foreign countries. However, the Autonomous Republic will remain within Tajikistan and for the time even this Republican status has not been approved by the Tajik Parliament. As informed by the *Rais*, Badakhshan has the following parties in order of popularity, Hizb-i-Communist; Hizb-i-Democratic; Hizb-i-Nasir-i-Khusrau; Hizb-i-Nuzhat-i-Islami and Sazman-i-Adalat.

Hizb-i-Democratic was founded on August 10, 1990, by the philosopher academic Shodmon Yusuf and drew members from all nationals, Tajiks, Jews, Uzbeks and Russians. Of late its membership among the Russians is reduced because the President of the Party criticised the interference of C.I.S. troops and feared that this would threaten the Russians living in Tajikistan. However, it is a well-organised secular Party with branches all over the Republic. The Party aims at protecting the freedom of the people disregarding their culture, language and religion, *i.e.*, complete economic, political and cultural autonomy. To solve the present political crisis, Mr. Yusuf talks of immediate surrender of all powers to a Council of State by the President. According to him, "an election for a national Majlis with representatives from all provinces and all parties and assemblies should be set up as soon as the Council of State has prepared the population". As Mr. Yusuf does not believe in the representative character of the present Parliament, he proposes that "all powers of the President should be taken away, and the executive branch of the government, meaning the Council of Ministers, should be consolidated. The Parliament as it exists today has no more right to convene and decide on new laws and agreements. Ultimately the Council of State will transfer to a parliamentary democracy with a national assembly". The secular character of the Party does not rule out the role of Islam in the society but the Party supports the freedom of religion of every member, and whether they pray or not, is their choice".

In contrast we have Hizb-i-Nuzhat-i-Islami, which was a secret organisation for fifteen years until it was officially recognised on 26th October, 1991. The Party is independent of the Qaziat of Tajikistan. The Idara-i-Qaziat of Tajikistan is headed by Qazi Haji Turajanzade. The Qaziat was established in 1990. His Islamic Centre in Dushanbe is run from the charity received from the public and also money received from Saudi Arabia, Rabita-i-Islami and even from Kuwaiti people. The Qazi has opened several madrassahs and hopes to impart education on Islam so as to create suitable conditions for Islamic government in future but for the time he advocates secular state. According to him *ijtihad* is still alive and will remain so until *Qiyamat*. Hence *Shariat* needs to be redefined in the light of the present circumstance.

Hizb-i-Nuzhat-i-Islami has strong following in Kurgan-tepe, close to Afghan border, and in Qarategin, close to the Osh region of southern Khirgizstan—formerly a part of Farghana, which largely now forms a part of Uzbekistan. In these neighbouring areas of Central Asian Republics Islamic forces are very dominant. In the recent skirmishes at Dushanbe, when the people surrounded the President, Rahman Nabiev, at the airport and forced him to resign, it was rumoured that large contingents from Qarategin had come to the capital city. The local leader of the Party in Qarategin is Mehreddin Abedinzadeh.

This is the most organised opposition party in Tajikistan with one of its representative Daulat Osman as *Mu'wan* to the President opts for the time for compromise on many government issues in order to solve them on the basis of secular democracy, yet the Party itself is committed to advocate the following goals:

- “A spiritual revival of the citizens of the Republic;
- An independent economic and political system;

A complete political and legal awakening with the aim of applying to everyday life of the Muslims of the Republic the principles of Islam;
“The spread and advertising of Islamic thought among different nationalities of the Republic.

The Party is extremely vocal in criticising the communists and its members are strong die-hards. As regards regionalism they say: “We think the one sure way to solve the problems of regionalism is to resolve to Islam. No other regime can unite people. From the Qur’an’s humanistic point of view we are all brothers, so there is no need for regional hostility. Our Muslim grand-parents lived in harmony for so many years, but the Communist regime advertised separate nationalities of Tajiks, Uzbeks, Tatars. They separated villages from each other. We have to return to the Qur’an and to Islam”.

The old Communist Party has been registered again last January and its first Secretary Shadi Shabdollov claims to have a large membership all over the State although it is now much reduced in number. However, in Khojend and Badakhshan and partly also in Kulab the Party still continues weight. It is said that 1/4th of the members of the Party in Tajikistan are Uzbeks. Many of them live in Kurgan-tepe—a region which has been a scene of great trouble in recent days. The strife in Kurgan-tepe and other parts of Tajikistan has been a matter of great concern even to the President of Uzbekistan. Islam Karimov, who looks at the events as violation of human rights. The position of the Russian population in Kurgan-tepe has been very perilous and it is understood that almost all of them have migrated from this region and nearly half of the Russian population from the city of Dushanbe have also left. They have gone not just because of the local disturbance but for other economic reasons because the riots are more political than ethnic. As I understood from Mr. Alexander Polykostin, a lecturer in

English at Khojend University and resident of Chekalovsk, a Russian colony near Khojend, many of the Russians leave for better jobs outside. According to him he fills nearly 200 applications every day in English language of the Russians who desire to migrate to USA, Canada, Australia and even to South Africa.

Any yet the international border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan has to be protected and it is here that the Russian army is posted. It is this army personnel and those of the C.I.S. defence force that were called to quell the riots in Kurgan-tepe as well as to protect the Norek dam and the Russian technicians in Norek colony. The opposition force belongs to the Nuzhat-i-Islamic Party, which is said to have acquired nearly 25000 klashanikovs from across the border in Afghanistan. They are also making a bid to snatch arms from the local Russian army.

As far as information is available, the Russian army is neutral in the local political squabbles but the Tajiks are very elergic even to the C.I.S. forces and they blame the Russians for sowing the seeds of regional conflicts. Add to these political upheavals, the recent Internation Forum of World Tajiks, held in Dushanbe between 9th and 16th September, 1992, the main aim of which was to infuse a spirit of cultural cohesion among the Tajiks of the world. However, it created a new stir among the Tajiks living in Uzbekistan. One Tajik lady from Samarkand, Mrs. Aziza Yusufi, was very vocal in her speech at the Forum to criticise the cultural and educational policy of Uzbekistan. It is these portents and future repercussion of the International Forum that probably worried Islam Karimov and as a result he temporarily suspended air service between Tashkent and Dushanbe. However, the greater source of trouble to Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and other Central Asian States is from the smuggling of arms and drugs from Afghanistan. This was one of the subjects discussed in a recent meeting of

the heads of C.I.S. at Biskek. The issue has become much involved as it concerns with the protection of the international border and also of the important installations, such as the Norek dam. It is to meet the emergency of saving the Norek dam that the present acting President of Tajikistan, Akbar Shah Iskandarov, who himself hails from Badakhshan and is a Sunni Muslim, requisitioned C.I.S. defence forces and posted them on the site. The action flared up emotions and its repercussions are now seen in Kurgan-tepe.

Some persons believe that some day the conflict between the northern region of Khojend and the southern region of Dushanbe and Kurgan-tepe may assume worse turn. In history the northern region has been a part of Sogdiana and it came under Russian influence soon after the Kokand State was amalgamated into Turkestan province in 1876. It is more industrialised. The largest Uranium factory is situated near Khojend and it has the richest silver mine in the nearby hills. The highly educated Khojendis, including President Rahman Nabiev, have been ruling over Dushanbe for several decades. Khojend is the hot-bed of the Communist Party and it has a large Russian colony at Chekalovsk. On the other hand the southern part has been a part of Bactriana in history and in the recent past it was known as Eastern Bokhara as it was under the Amirate of Bokhara. Only in 1920 after the fall of the Amirate, it became a part of the Soviet State. The Bokharan scholar Sadruddin Aini came here to establish the Tajik Academy of science. Yet the local socio-political condition in Dushanbe is far different from what prevails in Khojend. Dushanbe is a new city, centred round the Dushanbe bazar held in the vicinity of the *dargah* of Hazrat Yaqub Charkhi, a Nakshibandi saint of 14th century A.D., who originally came from Ghazni. The people in the countryside are very religious. In the vicinity of Dushanbe there are large tracts of agricultural farm and so is the region of Kurgan-tepe,

where the waters of Kafirnigan and Vaksh rivers irrigate the land. In Kulab new cotton fields have been developed. Outside these irrigated lands the southern and eastern parts are all hilly, the largest ranges emerge from the Pamir, a part of Badakhshan. Hence this southern region is comparatively less developed.

Is there any chance of division between the north and the south? Only future can give full answer. If this happens, it will have a great repercussion on the ethnic divide of Afghanistan, the northern part of which is dominantly Tajik in character. The possibility of such partition and regrouping is very remote as C.I.S. heads are taking sufficient steps to improve coordination among themselves and create better means of communication and self-defence against any possible international intervention. However, today Tajikistan is aflame and it will require greatest acumen on the part of the local politicians to compose their differences and work for peaceful progress of the democratic state of Tajikistan—a state that has been created only in the present century by the Soviets after the Tajiks lost their statehood soon after the overthrow of the Samanid dynasty in Bokhara in 10th century A.D. The land of Tajikistan is minerally very rich, the power supply is more than sufficient, the fruits and other food products have tremendously increased because of new irrigational channels, and the people are highly educated and civilised. What the State needs is peaceful political stabilisation, concerted economic planning and development, opening to the outside world by free movement of people, and much more than this economic cooperation for free market economy. It is hoped that the wisdom of the Tajik people will chalk out a better plan for their own future.

30 September 1992.

Future of Democracy in Central Asia

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union and creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States new pattern of inter-relationship among these states has been gradually developing to replace the old system of monolithic structure that obtained in this part of the world throughout the period of Communist domination. It was the dominance of one Communist Party system that held together the former Soviet Union but beneath it that system was backed by KGB, which worked to destroy any kind of organised opposition that could arise within the State. Both these structural machines are now destroyed as a consequence of August 1991 Coup of Moscow. However, such an eradication of these two mechanisms was inevitable in the process of changes that followed Prestroika introduced by Gorbachev, harbinger of new reforms in the former USSR. Long before the August Coup the heads of the different Republics had been thinking in terms of new treaty of Union relations among the composing Republican Units of the former Soviet Union. Some were talking in terms of Confederation, others of Commonwealth, and still others of a loose Federation. When the date was fixed for the final signing of the Union treaty, just before that date only to destroy the new Union arrangement that the die-hard Communists planned the Coup and worked for continuing the old system probably for

the purpose of saving the country from economic crisis and for keeping intact the benefits of Communist distributory system. However, new forces of political awareness that were released by Gorbachev and the lure of democracy had so much affected the mentality of the intelligentsia that to return to the dictatorial monolithic system of the past was impossible. While such dramatic events were taking place in Moscow and Leningrad and other European parts of the former Soviet Union, what was happening in the Asian Republics? Although we hear of Nur Sultan Nazarbaev, President of Kazakhstan, playing a leading role in working for the Union Treaty, yet we do not learn of any public enthusiasm in this part for new political structural changes. In fact some of the Republical Presidents, such as those of Tajikistan and Azerbaijan, gave support to the leaders of the August Coup. When the Communist Part received all the blame for the Coup, such leaders had to go. But the repercussion on the two parts of the Union, European and Asian, was entirely different.

It is this difference in the peoples' attitude to political changes that underscores the pattern of political developments, and that difference is sure to characterise the future nature of state system in the two parts. This paper concerns only with the nature of changes in the Republics of Central Asia, including Kazakhstan, and on their basis attempt will be made to focus on the possible developments in the coming years.

When Gorbachev took over as the head of the Soviet State, changes were made in the set-up of the personalities of different Republics of Central Asia. Such personality changes were not unusual in the former Soviet Union with the change of the top leadership but what is very important to note is that at this time the personality changes led to ethnic riots in Kazakhstan, Khirgizstan and also in Tajikistan. The feelings in Uzbekistan were not much

different. Even in Turkmenistan the University young scholars were thinking of rewriting their history from Turkmen angle. In all these Republics anti-Russian feelings began to emerge and there was greater demand not only for better jobs for the locals but also for giving more importance to the local languages of the Republics. Towards the close of the Gorbachev era nationalist parties or movements had begun to grow and exert their influence on the people; e.g., Alash Orda and Azad parties in Kazakhstan; Rastokhez in Tajikistan; "Khirgizstan" party in the Republic of Khirgizstan; Birlik movement and Erk party in Uzbekistan. The rise of these parties or movement were not just for the assertion of political right but also for cultural freedom and economic independence. We also find the development of two new tendencies in this region: the first is the foundation of Democratic Parties, such as the one in Tajikistan, and the second is the revival of Islamic religious fervour in all the Republics, and in some of them leading to the public organisation of Islamic Revivalist Parties, such as Hizb-i-Nuzhat-i-Islami in Tajikistan. Even in Farghana some people talked of the presence of so-called "Wahabis" but political formation on religious lines has not been very open in Uzbekistan. What is important is to note that for the first time in these Republics multi-party system has been allowed by the State governments and permission has been given to chalk out their programmes, propagate their viewpoints and nominate their candidates for election. With the dissolution of the Communist Party, the role of these new parties has gained in importance. But the persons, who earlier belonged to the Communist Party, have not lost their influence. They have been wise enough to move with the time and lay the foundation of new Socialist or Peoples' Parties and kept their hold tight on the reins of their respective governments. However, one great change that we note is in the method of elections when the candidates put up for this purpose could stand simultaneously and propagate their party viewpoints. It is another matter that because of the strong organisation

of the old Communist Party, or its successor parties, there was hardly any change in the leadership, as we note in the case of Kazakhstan, Khirgizstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

There is some difference in the case of Tajikistan and also in the case of the Caucasus Republic of Azerbaijan, where the old Communist Presidents have been thrown away by popular mass movement of the people. The issue in Azerbaijan has become more complicated because of the centrally-located Armenian-dominated zone of Nogorno-Karabakh within the Republic of Azerbaijan, which has led to ethnic conflict between the Armenians, who are all Christians, and the Azeris, who are by and large Shia Muslims. However, partly because of the Azeri problem in northern Iran and partly because of the international complications, the neighbouring Iran has not been able to render that assistance to Azerbaijan which the Republic expected in its struggle against the Armenians. On the other hand Turkish nationalist tendencies have had great emotional appeal to the Azeris and in this feeling they have received due response from modern Turkey. Azerbaijan has held free Presidential elections on multi-party basis. Two political issues have played dominant role in influencing the results of the elections: the first and most important is the Nogorno-Karabakh issue, and the second is the economic issue—the profits gained out of the sale of the huge deposit of oil in this Republic by claiming international market price. Although religious feelings are quite strong, which has led the Republic to opt for the membership of ECO (Economic Cooperation Organisation of originally Iran, Turkey and Pakistan), yet they have not particularly affected the results of the elections.

The case of Tajikistan is still different, where the local language is Tajiki (Persian), which brings the people of the Republic close to Iran and the Dari-speaking people of

Afghanistan. In fact northern part of Afghanistan is largely peopled by Tajiks. This close proximity of the Tajiks in the next door country of Afghanistan where recent war has created an entirely different atmosphere, has not been without great influence in Tajikistan. It is because of this influence that most of the political parties are diametrically opposed to the Communists and are committed to establish complete independence and freedom of action in Tajikistan, even breaking the relation with the Commonwealth, if it is necessary or possible. Although multi-party system has been accepted here, yet the political process has not been able to find a constitutional base. Hence mass uprising in some cities, and even riots in distant regions have led to great disturbance, resulting in the exodus of the Russian population. Tendencies for obtaining greater autonomy in favour of far-flung hilly regions of Tajikistan have recently emerged, as is clearly noted in the example of Badakhshan. However, it is because of the great influence from the Mujahid struggle in Afghanistan that Islamic revivalist trends have gained wider popularity in Tajikistan and these trends bear the same fighting features as are noted in the attitude of the Mujahids. These trends are but off-set by a strong ethnic feeling that the Tajiks, not only of Tajikistan but also in the other Republics of Central Asia, have nurtured.

This ethno-national tendency is not only strong in Central Asia but also in the Russian Federation, in the three Baltic Republics, in Ukrain and Bylo-Russia and also in Georgia and Moldova. In the last two Republics it has assumed the character of ethnic riots. On the other hand the three dominant Slav Republics of Russia, Ukrain and Bylo-Russian, where the population belongs to Greek Orthodox Church, have shown a tendency that makes them gain upper-hand in the Commonwealth. It is against this tendency that the Central Asian Republics evinced a common stand in their approach to the formation of the Commonwealth and

won for themselves the status of equal partnership. But how far such a partnership will be workable in actual practice remains to be seen in the coming years. It appears that there is bound to be a distinction between the highly industrialised European Republics and those of Central Asia. There is a general feeling in Central Asia that their fertile land and mineral resources have so far been developed to supply the raw materials to the growing industries of the West. They have not been paid fair price for the agricultural goods and mineral wealth. On the other hand they have been paying high prices for the industrial commodities. This imbalance in economic relations is surely going to be affected in the years to come.

What form this new perception will assume is a matter that depends upon the new national economy that each of the Central Asian Republics is going to reconstruct and the way that each one of them will formulate the shape of its government. As far as the European parts of the former USSR are concerned, their equation with West European countries is surely going to Europeanise on capitalist lines the instruments of power seen there. This process may take some years but it is almost certain that those Republics would acquire West European models more quickly than the Central Asian States where industrial base and consequent democratic government formations appear to be slow. It is this discrepancy in the past two centuries that gave upper hand to Russia and the entire land of Central Asia served as colonies to the Tsarist empire. Could there be a repetition of that historic phenomenon? The possibility of such a repetition is very remote as the means of communication and the political environment of the international world has considerably changed and hence these Central Asian Republics can no longer remain isolated and they have to move forward to catch up with the progress of the modern world.

At present the old order of economic relations among the Republics is breaking very slowly simply because the leadership has not changed in person and this leadership sees more advantage in maintaining the status quo simply because they have been used to that system. But the changes are slowly coming and they are bound to come more rapidly when the national economy is built on self unit basis. Already these Republics have started making bilateral agreements not only among themselves but also with foreign countries for joint ventures and for the development of their resources. We find today great variation in the price structure in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Similarly Turkmenistan has started charging higher prices for its oil and gas. How far Kazakhstan can continue to supply its great wealth of products on equal basis to other Republics is a question that is not difficult to understand. These internal differences are bound to affect the growth of forms of government in the different Republics. The most difficult will be the solution of ethnic representation in the future government of Kazakhstan. Being an extensive region, it has the possibility of absorbing more Kazakhs from outside, and when the percentage of the Kazakhs increases, their influence in the Government is bound to affect the service structure and also the proportion of representation. The sand-wiched Russians within the six northerly districts of Kazakhstan, where they are today in absolute majority, are certainly going to feel the pinge.

The immediate reaction that we get today is with regard to two tendencies in Central Asia. While Kazakhstan has so far not shown any great enthusiasm for the membership of ECO, the other Republics have already applied for membership and very soon they would be full members. This discrepancy may be due to the fact that Kazakhstan has large Russian population and its boundaries are close to the Russian Federation. On the other hand Uzbekistan, which incorporates Mawar-an-nahr—the heart

of Central Asia—still believes in playing a dominant role in uniting politically the peoples of Central Asia. It has toyed with the idea of Turkic nationalism and the Uzbeks would like to follow the pattern of secular government of the type now seen in modern Turkey. The Uzbeks present in the other Republics of Central Asia have an important role to play in the local economy. On the other hand Pan-Turkic tendency, and even a move to a political union with the Kazakhs have so far not borne fruit. In contrast to this Turkic sense of unity, the Tajiks who have large population in Uzbekistan and Khirgizstan, and whose Tajiki-Persian language and culture dominated Central Asia for centuries, have a dual personality, one of a minority within the surrounding Turkic-speaking population, and second of a buoyant feeling of resurgence of their cultural status in cooperation with the Tajik (Persian or Dari) speaking population in the other countries, particularly in Afghanistan and Iran. This close brotherly feeling among the Tajiks appears to grow rapidly in so far as there is close cooperation of television and radio programmes between Iran and Tajikistan. How far this language and cultural affinity will be off-set by the fact that the Iranians are mainly Shias while the Tajiks are Sunni Muslims, remains to be seen in future. There is no doubt that the intermediate link of Afghanistan may have greater role to play in determining future relations between Iran and Tajikistan. Can we revive the old idea of Khorasan? That is less likely because Old Khorasan today is shared by Iran, Afghanistan and Turkmenistan and then the State of Uzbekistan in this set-up cannot be overlooked. On the other hand the historic rivalry between Iran and Turan cannot be entirely brushed aside.

With this historical background we can now ask the question: can these states transform their governments in the pattern of West European democracy? That transformation, if at all it happens, will be a new

fundamental change in the socio-political tradition of the region, where patriarchal system still holds strong. The role of the elder man and the respect for the aged continue with strong attachment to joint family system. These features will play dominant part in the build-up of the future governments. If we add to these the total historical experience of the local people, we have to admit that their democratic base will have to be entirely different from what is now seen in the West. On the other hand they have a good base of literacy and a sense of discipline well disposed to the observance of State laws. The distributory system of wealth is fairly well balanced. However, the main hurdle is the monolithic system of government that has been in vogue so long and the old communistic pattern of economy that held the society together so far. In what way and how soon such an existing order gives place to a democratic process of free exercise of political rights and open market economy remains to be seen in the coming years.

The role of Islam in the vast region of Central Asia can not be minimised on any account. This attachment, if it grows in intensity, may overtake even the present Russian Federation and the Tatar Muslims in the Volga region may seek to establish their own independent republic and exert their influence on the Republics of Central Asia, as they are not only modernised in the European sense but they have also intense feeling for religion. In any case Islam in Central Asia will continue to exert greater and greater influence on the life of the Central Asian Muslims as it has been doing in the past. The Communist regime forbade many rituals to be followed openly by the Muslims, replaced the Shariat laws by their own legal system and tried to secularise education and life style of at least the urban population in Central Asia. While the Communists succeeded in diverting the highly placed Central Asian Muslims from the influence of religion, the people of the rural areas remained attached to all the rituals and practices of Islam. Even in the cities the social

and cultural attitude of the Muslims did not completely change. At home and within the social gathering of the Muslims all Islamic practices were observed. What was more evident was the separation of the Mulla and the mosque from political and governmental functions. The politics was totally cut away from religion. It became thoroughly secularised. The monolithic form of the Communist government here was not difficult to be achieved from the earlier Khanate and Amirate. This system has been normal in this part of the world for centuries. What changed materially was the legal system and also the economic pattern. The economic arrangement, after some resistance in the beginning, proved to be very beneficial for the general masses as it changed the whole mechanism of agriculture and led to better rural planning, better feeding, education and health for all. In this new socio-economic system the agricultural as well as the pastoral society of the region found a better living standard and they have become used to these benefits for the last seventy years. Such benefits would hardly be allowed to lose. Hence in the coming years the good results of the communist development would continue to find favour with the people. However, the people are worried by three factors: the first is the misrepresentation of their history in the works of the Soviet writers; the second is the freedom of religion which was not available to the people during the Soviet regime; and the third relates to the freedom of political expression and cultural and linguistic assertion which was not possible because of great Russian pressure. All these three factors are inter-related and they are the very life-blood of the Central Asia people. All these three elements have found some expression during the last years of Gorbachev. The number of mosques and madrassahs built in the recent years may be many times more than has been seen in the same period in other Muslim countries. The urban areas have been overwhelmingly invaded by religious fervour that can be matched only by an aversion to the communist atheism. Today the urban

population in Central Asia is undergoing a revival of Islamic spirit in their daily life, practices and even thinking and vision as seen in recent art expression. In the Republics, such as Tajikistan and Azerbaijan, there is a growing tendency of fusion of the rural religious survival with the recent urban transformation from the Communist time. This tendency is seen also in Uzbekistan where poets and artists are already focussing on Islamic heritage, Islamic art forms and even Arabic and Qura'nic writings. This tendency of Islamisation appears to grow and influence the life style of Central Asian man in the years to come. The evidence for such a change can be given from the fact that in Central Asia the *adab* of *dastarkhwan* has continued to play dominant role in the social life of the Muslims, and secondly all Islamic rituals have assumed a new meaning in the eyes of the people. And finally, the Central Asian family structure has not been affected at all by West European influences. The Central Asian man will continue to remain Central Asian in future and their life will be influenced more and more by Islamic moral code.

Today there is separation between political culture and religious practices. The social life is a mixture of the two but modern education has overtaken the thought process of the people. The women have been freed from the burden of the hearth and the four walls of seclusion and they share freedom, education and other facilities of employment equally with men. These conditions will continue to remould the life of the people in building democracy. However, so far the government mechanism has seen very little change. Even after the presence of multi-party system the State organ continues the old dictatorial form in many of the Republics. Such an organ is bound to change with the extension of democratic process in the Republics. The new trends are already seen in Tajikistan and Azerbaijan. In these new developments what particular forces would gain upper hand in the coming years is difficult to say. At present Islamic

political forces are seen at a low level and in some of the Republics they are not even allowed to work. This position is certainly going to change but how far they would be able to oust the present secular trends will depend upon the peaceful development of the society. The new transformation will certainly be dictated by the economic compulsions and such economic demands will find broad representation in the representative governments. However, as all the economic programmes so far have been motivated by benefits in this world, the political culture cannot remain immune from that overtone. The structural mechanism of the State appears to retain its secular colour. It is another matter that the intense religious practices of the Central Asian man may lead to new philosophical creations that would affect new thinking of the Muslims throughout this region. For the development of such a philosophy, ground has already been prepared in the current literary trends of Central Asia. Apart from these particular developments, new trends in democracy will certainly open new prospects of cooperation with the neighbouring countries. Even Kazakhstan will not be able to maintain its aloofness from this change. It is also possible that Kazakhstan may also act as a bridge between these States and the West. This role may be taken up by all the States in Central Asia as far as relation between the East and West is concerned. In the long perspective these States have a great role to play in linking the heart of Asia with the future developments in Europe. They have a great stake for their social and economic well-being by maintaining close contact with the progressive forces in Europe just as modern Turkey is doing. Central Asia is bound to forge ahead in the years to come. The more the democratic forces are allowed to play their independent role, the more the people will march forward to a better destiny and a better world.

1 October 1992.

Central Asian States And ECO

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Central Asia has begun to draw attention of the whole world. Will Central Asia return to its great historical role and influence the future march of history in Asia and Europe or will it continue to remain at low key level as it has been in the time of the former Soviet Union? The isolation of Central Asia has been so complete in the modern age and division of its political power has so much reduced its real strength that to predict its immediate future is very difficult. In fact the whole of former Soviet Union had drawn a fence of separation around its entire communist world. Central Asia was a part of that world net and immersed in its peaceful pursuit of raising its socio-economic life to the Soviet standard. Although the Union is disintegrated, the shackles of the old system are still holding tight the economic ropes, and the political transition continues to cast deep shadows on the evolution of the future course of events.

Today Central Asia, or correctly *Asia-i-Miana*, is partitioned into five independent states of Kazakhstan, Khirgizstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. This partition took place only after the Communist take-over of this region after 1920. Before this time these territorial names were not in use at all nor did the earlier states bear these titles. Before 1920 the Amirate of Bokhara and the Khanate of Khiva have been long standing historical states. The southern part of present-day Tajikistan was then included in eastern Bokhara province. It was only in the sixties of the last century that the Russians advanced into

Syr Darya region and after hard fighting they finally finished with the Khanate of Kokand in 1876, brought Bokhara and Khiva states under terms of their protection and established for the first time the province of Turkestan with Tashkent as capital under its first governor Von Kaufman. It is at this very time that the power of the Turkmen hordes was suppressed and they were brought under the control of Trans-Caspian province. Now Russia directly confronted China on the east and the British empire on the south. Boundary adjustment and political balancing in Central Asia led to the maintenance of Afghanistan as a neutral state and consequent advance of the Russians upto Pamir, the Oxus river and the Kopet Dag range on the south. Still earlier and Great, Middle and Little Hordes of present-day Kazakhstan had been overpowered and brought under administrative control of the Russians from Orenburg and Omsk. Advancing from Siberia along the Irtysh river the Russians had not only brought under their political domination the whole of the Kazakhs but also the Khirgiz nomads. As the Kazakh steppes were administered from the Siberian cities, in Russian literature the present-day Kazakhstan is generally excluded from the geographic region of Central or Middle Asia. However, Siberia has never been a part of Russia in past history. The very name Siberia takes its origin from that of the city of Sibir that was the headquarter of a Khanate. It was captured by the Russians only in the eighties of the sixteenth century. It was the fur trade and forest wealth that encouraged the Russians to penetrate into this inhospitable cold region. That was possible only after the Russians had been able to overpower the Volga Tatars in 1552 and occupy their famous city of Kazan. It was this victory of the Russians over the Tatars that also enabled them to push southward, capture Astrakhan in 1554, penetrate across Daghestan over the Caucasus into what is now the Caucasus states of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia. The Caspian sea became Russian lake and they could dictate terms to the then Persia. The rich oil deposit of the Caspian fell into

Russian possession. Azerbaijan was cut out from Iran and Turkey and the Multani caravanserai was finally closed.

The communist revolution in the Tsarist empire was mainly the work of the Russians. The revolutionaries held their hands tight on the former Tsarist imperial territory and so redistributed the lands and the population into new republics that the overall power remained in the tight grip of the communists and the real strength of the people in Central Asia and of the Muslim population in Azerbaijan, Daghestan and the Volga region was so divided that they could hardly regain their united power and stand against the Russians or other ethnic groups in former Soviet Union. The original Azerbaijan territory was dissected by the Armenian territorial penetration and thus Nakhichevan was separated and in addition Armenians were settled in Nogorno-Karabakh. The Tatars were not given their own independent republic but were subdivided and joined in the Russian Federation. The Kazakh pastoral land was interfered and in the name of agricultural reclamation and "Virgin Land" scheme the Slav population was implanted in the northerly provinces of present-day Kazakhstan with the result that according to 1989 census they are nearly 49% of the population. Although during the Communist regime there have been great social and economic changes in Central Asia and education was given the greatest importance mainly for the propagation of communism, yet in the name of skilled jobs and industrial and technological development the Russian population invaded the urban centres of Central Asia and thus the whole urban life in the region was transformed. The compulsory education of the Russian language and the use of Cyrillic script for all the local languages gave a new direction to the outlook of man in Central Asia. It is through this process of Russian education that the Central Asian man has been modernised. Thus Central Asia is reborn into modern age within the confines of the old Soviet Union.

With the break-up of the Soviet Union the five Central Asian Republics and Azerbaijan have emerged as independent states with all the Soviet legacy in political, economic, cultural and educational fields. In order to keep up the continuity of the existing system a Commonwealth of Independent States has been formed that tries to guarantee safety to the old territorial boundaries, maintain peace and civil liberty in the states, help in contracting bilateral agreements for mutual benefits, and make proposals for common economic space under the old rouble economy. The independence has no doubt released the forces of nationalism and at the same time the local cultural elements that continued to survive in the rural areas as well as in the Muslim homes even during the communist repression have found new freedom to reassert their influence. Islamic rituals and practices have found new expressions in the building of mosques and madrassahs, open observation of feasts and festivals and even formation of some political parties under its influence. There is a growing feeling of Muslim brotherhood and opening of the barriers has increased the desire of cultivating peaceful neighbourly relations. The old historical and cultural links are being recapitulated and there is a tendency to give expression to the religious and spiritual aspirations of the Muslims as a whole. At the same time the growth of national states on the basis of ethnic lines during the Soviet regime has left its deep influence on the current political trends in Central Asia. Ethnic awareness and ethnic alignment have led to the assertion of ethnic freedom and ethno-cultural feeling. In Azerbaijan it has led to Azeri-Armenian conflict. In other states the presence of ethnic minorities have aroused some bad feelings but by and large statesmanship on the part of the experienced politicians has succeeded in maintaining ethnic peace. The most volatile case in Kazakhstan where the adoption of Kazakh as the state language created some stir among the Russian population, who in their emotion, particularly the Russian Cossacks, evinced desire of

solidarity with the Slavic population of Russian Federation. However, the wisdom of the Republic's President, Nur Sultan Nazarbaev, has appeased the people on the whole as he has tried to develop good relations with Russian Federation. On the other hand Tajikistan has been a victim of political strife mainly because of regional developmental disparities and secondly because of continuous antagonism between the communist loyalists and other emerging political forces, the most important of which is Hizbe-Nuzhati-Islami. This Islamic Renaissance Party has the support of a well-organised armed band who are again helped and encouraged by the Mujahids in Afghanistan. As these Mujahids are ethnically and culturally related to the Tajiks, their influence is greatest in Tajikistan and is probably the main cause of instability in the Republic. As the political normalisation in Afghanistan is getting more and more complicated because of the fall-out of the old communist supporters and joining hands with the north-based Mujahids, so is the case in Tajikistan, where the old communists have maintained their strength in the northern part and also in some areas of the south. On the other hand while the south desires absolute freedom and complete break with Moscow, the reality of the politico-economic situation is such that some sort of a transitional arrangement with Moscow, or as a matter of fact with other C.I.S. states, is an absolute necessity. The disturbed situation in Tajikistan has been a cause of worry to other Central Asian states resulting in comparative isolation of Tajikistan from them. The very fact that Tajiks are Persian speaking — a language that remained official media of expression right to the end of the Amirate of Bokhara in 1920 — makes them distinct from the Turkic speaking population, such as Uzbek, Khirgiz, Kazakh, Turkmen, Azeri and Tatars. The Tajik-Persian language brings them nearer to Afghans and Iranians and even to Pakistanis who have inherited the tradition of old classical Persian from the Tajik people. From the linguistic cultural point of view there is a common historical tradition between Tajikistan, Iran, Afghanistan

and Pakistan. On the other hand Turkic linguistic tradition binds together modern Turkey with Azerbaijan, Tataristan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Khirgizstan.

If we dig deeper into the historical tradition of the medieval period, we could recall two great periods of Asian unification: one in the time of the Changizid monarchs and second time during the rule of the Timurids. In these two periods a new world order was built up. In fact Amir Timur had been emulating Changiz Khan and was trying to restore the tattered states of his successors into one unified political system. Unfortunately this whole period is so badly painted in historical literature that today it is difficult to understand and appreciate the development of culture and civilisation that marked this epoch. Actually it is the legacy of this epoch that lies at the base of the cultural personality of the people and nations that now live in the entire zone of *Asia-i-Markazi*, a name that can be given to the vast territory extending from Pakistan to Turkey and from the Chinese border to the Volga. This entire belt has inherited the traditions of Islamic religion and culture and the people of this region have made definitive contribution to the enrichment of the civilisation stamped by Turkic, Tajiki-Iranian and Pak-Afghan elements. This is a region where the population is predominantly non-Arab but they have adopted Islam in the same fervent zeal as the Arabs have propagated the faith to the four corners of the world. And yet Islam has not been the only binding force among the people living in this wide belt. Their common history is much older, their ethnic relationship is much deeper and their cultural participation is much closer in locking the people into inseparable bond of affinity. As the Arabs have their past history so the Central Asian people have their own distinctive history of the past. Their particular contribution to ancient world civilisation and to international world trade and cultural exchange along the Silk Road has been well-recognised. It is this character of the people that distinguishes them from others and their cultural attributes

characterise the personality of the human who now live in this extensive heartland of Asia.

Despite this long historical tradition recent history has forced the people to live apart in separate states under different influences from outside. The states are realities today and the outside influence will continue to exert political and economic pressure on them because of a global situation to which they have become component parts. It is the older perspective of Cold War between two Super Powers that led to the founding of Baghdad Pact in the fifties of this century and when one of its member, Iraq, having undergone an internal political revolution was out, the organisation was renamed CENTO, which brought Iran, Pakistan and Turkey under one politico-military forum to serve primarily the purpose of a Super Power and secondarily to get some benefits for national development. As long as the interest of that Super Power sustained, CENTO continued to bring these countries nearer but the past historical tradition or religious bond was hardly invoked to promote people to people contact. When the relation became cooler between this Super Power and the individual states, the bond of CENTO became weaker, it lost its significance and it became a dead record of history. However, it did create a feeling of love among the old partners and when it was backed by the historical ties of old, it did lead to a few alliance, called Regional Cultural Development (RCD), which went a step ahead in cultivating greater cultural relations between these countries. Some educational exchanges, scholarships and visits of scholars and young men and women opened prospects of friendly cooperation between these countries. However, as the exchanges were limited to official arrangement, contact and relation on the people's level were hardly visible. There were certainly a few common institutions that were established, e.g. Pak-Iran Cultural Centre in Islamabad, and study of languages, such as Urdu, Turkish and Persian, but they

speaking more of bilateral relations than developing a common base for regional cooperation. It seems that political and economic compulsions of common relations did not receive as much attention as they deserved. This was because the outside politico-economic pressures were too strong on individual states to give them an opportunity to devise a complementary means of mutual economic development. This is still more clear when we look at the regional conflicts, such as Indo-Pakistan war, or Iraq-Iran conflict, when the other partners comparatively remained lukewarm or at best gave only moral support, although in the case of Cyprus issue Pakistan gave full support to the cause of the Turks. In the case of Afghanistan, it is only Iran and Pakistan that had to bear all the burden of refugees on individual basis while Turkey managed to receive Wakhi and Khirgiz refugees from Wakhan through Pakistan. All these activities took place outside the purview of RCD. It is the Afghan conflict that brought face to face the Central Asian States with Pakistan but the two sides were on the opposite camps. It is the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan that has raised the issue of mutual relations between Central Asian States, Iran and Pakistan and to a certain extent Turkey. Although Tajik, Turkmen and Uzbek population had been living in northern part of Afghanistan, the Central Asian states had only indirect dealings with Afghanistan through the agency of Moscow. The situation completely changed after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the emergence of independent states in Central Asia. A keen interest has been noted in these republics for the peaceful solution of the Afghan issue.

RCD was more a cultural forum rather than political or economic organisation. It was founded primarily to revive the old cultural bond that had existed between the three countries through history. But apart from cultural contacts on official level, very little attempt was made to institutionalise the promotion of cultural legacy of the region. Even the little activity undertaken under its aegis

became inoperative in the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution in Iran. However, another attempt has been made to infuse new life into the surviving activities of RCD by the foundation of ECO (Economic Cooperation Organisation) as far back as 1985. But its real work started only after 1990 when the Organisation was given full legal framework. As the very name of the new organisation suggests, it made a bid for cooperation in the economic field, particularly trade and insurance. With a view to promote activities in these fields seven technical committees have been formed so as to give some initiative to trade and commerce. These committees primarily relate to transport, trade, commerce, education and culture. Above all ECO Chamber of Commerce has also come up on surface.

The importance of ECO as a regional organisation has considerably increased after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The inclusion of Central Asian States and Azerbaijan has increased the number of its membership and it is quite likely that the scope of ECO would be redefined in the light of the new politico-economic changes in the region. So far ECO was trying to re-establish relations and coordinate the activities of the three countries which could be said to be a part of western capitalist system. Although each of the three countries had their own particular relations with outside world, yet their mode of market economy was similar. Attempt has been made to bring into cooperation some of the activities that are common between them. With the accession of the new independent states the situation is completely changed. First of all these inland states need an immediate opening to outside world so that their natural resources and agricultural products could find a market outside. This could be easily provided within the framework of ECO if the transport facilities could be developed further and tariff arrangement is eased for the movement of goods. Still more important for these states is the immediate need for direct postal and telecommunication link with the

outside world so that they are in a position to break the old channel now available through Moscow. Much more than this will be the need for bringing these states within a given economic system that must link all these member states to a condition of mutual trade and commerce. This is very important because such a step has not been taken by ECO so far. The minimum requirement for such a development will be the inter-changeability of the respective currencies that each state now puts up. This will not be an easy task in so far as the new independent states are at present within the zone of rouble economy. On the other hand the distributory system followed in these states so far is completely different from what obtains in the other three states. Although communism is dead, yet the communist system of distribution and benefits still continue. Above all there the market economy has so far not taken roots nor even the privatisation has found its place in the existing economic order. If we look to the political process, the old system of election with a single party domination still plays an important role. The old framework continues to limit the participation of the people in the Government. Behind this survival of the old machinery the ethnic reassertion tries to play greater and greater role in the society. It is these existing conditions that differentiate the role of these states from that of the three founding members of ECO. How far the original members can bring their expertise to pull these new states to their new line of action is difficult to say. Certainly they have better experience in private trade and banking but the new states have more experience in distributing benefits, educational, economic and cultural, to their population. Already Kazakhstan has felt it difficult to toe the line of other states in finding an entrance into ECO. Her ethnic composition and proximity with Russia have forced that state to continue the older relation with Moscow and get greater benefits from the developing technology and experience of Russian Federation. And yet the rouble economy which is bearing all the strain of Moscow economic

crisis has little meaning in the agriculturally based economy of Central Asian States. Sooner such imbalance is removed, the better will it be for these States to find a smooth sailing in ECO. But for the time ECO has to have a broader vision of the politico-economic problems of the Central Asian states and open its doors with understanding and appreciation of the situation in which the entire region is now plunged. Add to this the unsolved political problem of Afghanistan which has to play a key role in establishing close links among all these states. The way can be smoothed only when we go beyond the official circle of legal framework and allow the freedom to common man to join hands in paving the way for closer cooperation in all fields of life.

What do the independent states expect from the founding members of ECO? Certainly not Islamic solidarity, as is propogated in the western press, because that could be better found in OIC. The sudden emergence into independence for them after the demise of the Soviet Union had left no other choice but to seek new relationship with countries of past historical connection. Such old history could be backed by geographic neighbourliness and above all age-old cultural bond. However, the immediate necessity was to carry into practical execution the meaning of independence and this meaning could be relevant only when it is realised in the political and economic fields. As the separation of these states was more due to the machinations of the European imperial powers, their disappearance would certainly result in rebuilding the old linkage. It is this historical link which these states desire to re-establish once again and find a sort of reunification with the separated brethren. This unification will certainly put a strain on the three founding members of ECO but if the resources are pooled together, a new era would dawn for all of them. Turkey would be relinked with her ancestral Turks in Central Asia, Iran would discover its relationship with Khorasan, Samarkand and Bokhara, and Pakistan would understand its roots in Central Asia and find its due place in

this wider homely region. As the disintegration of the Soviet Union was more due to economic crisis than to political events, the greatest need of these states is to find an immediate solution to the economic vacuum caused by Soviet economic withdrawal, particularly almost the total absence of foreign currency reserve. The second immediate need is to meet the demands of commodity and food supplies that had been disrupted owing to sudden collapse. The third is to carry forward many industrial and commercial projects that were in hand but remain to be completed. Then come the long-term plans for making these states stand on their own economic growth by utilising their agricultural products and natural resources. But above all the most important is the creation of the machinery, the training of the manpower and the dissemination of the professional knowledge for converting the communist mode of production to privatisation and market economy. It is in this field of transmission of technical experience that ECO could render help for restructuring the economic system of the new states. This is a gigantic task which will require new strategies and sacrifices to meet new challenges of the time. It is in this way that the isolation of Central Asia will be broken and they will discover their due place in the developing institutions of ECO. It is not only the founding members that will benefit but it will also be in the interest of the new states that will find new way of putting into action their new-won independence. At the same time ECO will have to transform itself from its slow moving pace to a dynamic machinery to meet the new challenges of the new age that has dawned after the demise of the Soviet Union. It is for the people of this entire region to stand together and march forward to lay the foundation of a new system in which the coming generations will find their place in the world of tomorrow.

5 November 1992.

Pilgrimage To Bokhara

بخارا خوشتر آمد از همه تمام شهرها مارا
ز چشم بدنگه دارد خدا شهر بخارا را

“It is time to get up. It’s time to get up. It’s now the time for Prayer”, shouted my wife, Safiya. I burst out at her: “No. Let me sleep. It is still dark. I have not heard the *Azan* (Muslim call to prayer)”. Suddenly I woke up. My wife was not there. I was alone in a twin-bedded room in the Intourist Hotel Bokhara. I stretched my hand, pressed the button overhead for light and picked up the watch from a long wall-table to right. It was 6.00 a.m. but still very dark in Bokhara. Why did I have such a dream here in this city? Was it just a mental haunt of an earlier experience? The previous evening, I had gone, in the company of my friends, Dr. Kamaluddin Aini, son of the famous Tajik literateur, Sadruddin Aini, and Mr. Amin Jan Shakurov, Head of Radio Bokhara, to see the mausoleum of Hazrat Ayub. It lies in a newly-developed Kirov Park of Culture and Recreation within the old part of the city. When approaching the mausoleum, I felt a continuous sound of *Azan* coming into my ears. I asked Amin Jan; “Is this truly *Azan*”? He promptly replied: “No. I was mistaken. It may be an announcement from the radio speaker, fixed in the park for the benefit of the people”. He then explained how there were numerous graves all over this place in the past. They have all been levelled down with the exception of two

monuments. It is on their ruins that this recreation park has been built. I remarked: "how many centuries of human bones may be lying under our feet. Perhaps I am hearing their voice". To console me Kamaluddin repeated a Persian verse:

در سینه بخارا بر سنگ یک مزار است
در پشتِ هر مزارش درد و فغان و زار است

I approached the mausoleum and learnt from Amin Jan the local legend about Hazrat Ayub. How at a remote time, when there was scarcity of water, Hazrat Ayub struck the ground with his staff and discovered water-spring for the benefit of the people. Or as others say he extended his hand and dug out the water. Hence people believe that his palm impression is to be seen here. In a desert region around Bokhara such a story is very relevant. Its historical analogy can be found in the *Shahrud* (royal canal) of the Samanids who brought a water channel from the nearby Zarafshan river into the city. My imagination travelled beyond history and to my mind came the story of Hazrat Ibrahim, who discovered similar water-spring at Makkat-ul-Mukarram. There the Muslims go on a pilgrimage, as I did in 1978, and sip the *Ab-i-Zamzam*. Could this be my second pilgrimage?—Pilgrimage to Bokhara Sharif, as the city is respectfully called by local people. The city, after all, has been the home of Imam Bokhari, Hazrat Barat, the first translator of Holy Qur'an into Persian, Abu Abdullah Rodaki, Firdausi, Abu Bakr Narsakhi, Ibn Sina, Al-Khwarizmi, Sadruddin Aini and a host of other savants, who have continued to illumine the horizon of Islam for generations. I have come to their city for light.

سمرقند سعی قلی روی زمین است
مشهد از گنبدِ سبزش نمایان
بخارا قوتِ اسلام و دین است
نمدخانه روتے زمین است

Kamal consoled me by saying: "My inner emotion deserves me to be called Haji-i-Bokhara Sharif".

I was attracted more and more towards the mausoleum, which is a unique blend of several periods of architectural forms. I could not experience its inner calm, as it remains closed to public. Only through the iron grating of the closed door I could see the round well inside—a symbol of the water-spring. The exterior of the mausoleum presents stark simplicity, free from decoration—an epitome of saintly asceticism and contemplation. Its two parts have a different appeal: the west, is crowned by a tall conical dome on a high drum—a Seljuqian taste of 12th century A.D., and the eastern part, probably a *mazar*, a reconstruction of the Timurid period but without the Timurid glamour, having domed space, the central dome crowned by a tall windowed cupola. What a mystery surrounds this building: Its inner meaning can be experienced and felt rather than described.

Coming away from the peace of this mausoleum, I was at once presented with a glamour—a chaste decor of historic interest in the tomb of the Samanid Sultan Ismail, whose governors at Ghazni had made a bid for an advance into the land of Ind. As the historic personality of the Samanid Sultan is unique, so is unparalleled his tomb, which stands in the same park in low-level ground. In its single-domed square style with corner round turrets, it set a model for future Islamic tombs. I was at once reminded of the tomb of Sultan Iltutmish at Delhi but there is no comparison between the two. While the Delhi tomb is wrought in the decorative stone masonry of Indian tradition, Ismail's tomb illustrates Sogdian taste of brick style. In its external decoration the interplay of vertical and horizontal brick setting, making multiple patterns, creates an effect of light and shade that is inimitable. A row of arched niches beneath the parapet softens the heaviness of the structure. It is a monument of royal dignity that gathers the ripe experience

of previous age and presents it in a form that could find no second example of this kind. The monument to be enjoyed must be seen in different lights. I had the good fortune to be with Kamaluddin, who, being very resourceful, got hold of Aminjan Inayatov, an engineer, who, in his youthful vigour and romantic ways, gave us a new picture of Bokhara in the night. In dimly lit moon-light every line of brick decor in Ismail's tomb stood erect, face to face, to tell a different story of age and experience that needs words of Aminjan alone. Unfortunately he spoke in Russian, that was translated for me into Tajiki (Persian) by Kamal, and in my broken Tajiki, that I had learnt by now, I could creep into the majesty of the monument.

What a contrast between the peace of the *mazar* of Ayub and the royal command of Ismail's tomb! The two illustrate the two ways of mediaeval life and the two together complete the picture of the past.

However, the historic Bokhara has many more things to speak of. Four kilometers away from the main city stands *Sitara-i-Makhi-Khosa* (Palace of the moon-faced), which was erected for quiet luxury and pomp and show by the last Amirs of Bokhara towards the end of the last century and continued to be built right upto the twenties of the present century. It displays a unique pride in the lay-out of its park, inner setting of European taste and detail of local craftsmanship exhibited in the luxurious white hall of reception, the painted halls and carved wooden settings that speak of the height of skill that Bokhara artists achieved. It is a monument of luxurious glamour, erected far away from the madding crowd of the city, to be steeped in lovable pleasure, undisturbed and unmolested—the last cup of elixir to be drunk full before the sensibility goes amock. What a wonderful creation by human imagery by the Amirs at a time when they could hardly understand that their days were numbered. An architectural creation of magnificence, no

doubt, but built over the foundation of misery, poverty, and sickness that had overtaken the humble people of Bokhara.

I was struck by human poverty of feeling and sympathy and wondered at what man builds for his personal pleasure and what destiny has in reserve for such people in time. It was a sickening effect on my heart and how much I desired to enjoy the monument, I was led away to the peace of Hazrat Ayub's mausoleum and to the calm dignity of Ismail's tomb.

The last day of my stay in Bokhara came. A lot remained to be seen. I was putting up in the twelve-storeyed Bokhara hotel in the new part of the city, where the architectural scene is completely different. Multi-storeyed apartments, administrative buildings, educational houses and institutions for higher learning and culture, all aligned in a well-planned, open, wide avenues and parks speak of modernity and chaste economy. But that is Bokhara of the present having no continuity and comparison with the old city. Sitting on the topmost floor of the hotel in the night, we had a marvellous spectacle of the glittering lights all around, ranging in tiers and rows from one end to the other. But the darkness of the night had concealed old Bokhara and what was to be seen was a grand view of modern Bokhara. I longed to see the old city, the old minarets and domes, the mosques and mausolea, madrassah and market places but all were in gloom. How I wished that each of them could be lighted so that I could compare the old with the new. That opportunity came early in the morning when sunshine had broken assunder the darkness and spread its rays over the lovely minarets, green domes, multi-coloured mihrabs, carvan-serais, mosques and madrassah. That was old Bokhara in my front still priding in its splendour and frowning upon the new city that had hardly anything magnificent to compare. Even in ruins old Bokhara is marvellous and charming. What a contrast between old

Bokhara and its present status. The pre-eminence of Bokhara that lasted for nearly one thousand years in the history of Turkestan has now faded away. It now lies as a regional headquarter in one corner of the Republic of Uzbekistan. In 1925 the capital of the Republic was moved to Samarkand and in 1930 it was transferred to the centrally located city of Tashkent. The city, which boasted of high learning in the past throughout Asia and produced scholars in *Hadith*, poets, scientists, philosophers, painters and historians of the highest order, had just started with some modern institutions of education and culture. In the absence of a modern university at Bokhara, which could become the high seat of learning and inspire new meaning to the old tradition of Islamic lore—once a pride of Bokhara—the students who pass out from the surviving madrassah after seven year's of study, go to Tashkent, Damascus or Al-Azhar for higher education. Bokhara certainly deserves to regain its importance and to reassume its pre-eminence in science and higher scholarship in line with the spirit of so many old madrassahs that survive here today for archaeological interest. Bewildered by the contradiction between the old and the new, I decided to explore the past tradition and history of the city and discover the continuity of life in the old city, its ruins, its bazars and a labyrinth of narrow lanes and by-lanes that still preserve the mud houses of old.

For the legendary history of the city we go to History of Bokhara by Abu Bakr Narshakhi, who talks of Siavush, a young warrior and hero of folk epic, being married to the daughter of Afrasiab, the ruler of Turan, and who founded the city fortress, called *Ark*. The story is continued in Firdausi's *Shahnamah*, where we find Siavus as the founder of Bokhar in Turan:

A palace high he built in time
 Midst trees and flowers so sublime
 And on the walls' tween columns tall
 were scenes of hunting—eyes to enthrall.

Archaeologists have discovered the ruined walls of such a palace at Varakhsha 18 miles from Bokhara and a seat of the ruler Bukharkhudat. The paintings from its walls are now preserved in the Archaeological museum at Bokhara. One scene vividly depicts two fire—worshippers, one on either side of the fire altar in great devotion. Archaeology also reveals the earlier history in the materials of the Scythian type three-pronged arrow-heads, microliths and even tools of the Stone Age. But these are meant for specialists. A visitor would like to see the mud fortification wall of the old city, that was 12 k.m. long, as rebuilt in the 16th century, with twelve gates on foundations of pre-Muslim city wall having only seven gates. The city wall, which is fast decaying, has preserved at least one gate, Darwaza-i-Talipoch, which displays its grandeur in its high pointed arched opening between two tall tapering towers. Samarkand gate is preserved only in memory while close to Darwaza-i-Barat survive the traditions of the Persian poet Jami and the tomb of Afrasiab.

In the old city all eyes are focussed on the Ark fortress, which is situated in the northern-western part of the old area. Sitting 20 m. high above the surrounding plain, its magnificent gateway on the west still dominates the architectural scene and the sloping wall on its either side, apparently unscalable, retains its solidity and strength in its thick—set bricks. The gate opens under a pointed arch, protected by huge tall tower on its either side, well-lighted by windows, and having crenellated parapets with arched niches adding to its beauty. The awesomeness persists when we enter inside and begin to climb up the sloping ramp with tall guard niches on our right and left, measuring our every step as we walk through the corridor until we stumble and are face to face with dungeons—prisons of historical fame, where men like Sadruddin Aini were thrown in to rot. At the end of the corridor stood the office of the guard commandant. This was enough to understand the majestic

personality of the Sultan. At last we breathed a peaceful air before the lovely southern facade of the Jami mosque. As the mosque was under repairs, the interior was closed, but the exterior of the main prayer hall, which is covered by a dome, had covered verandahs on three sides. It was the southern verandah that we saw first, which shows handsome carved wooden tapering pillars with stalactites at their upper ends, supporting a highly decorated roof with a raised vaulting in the middle part in a typical Bokhara style. The prayer hall was fronted by an extensive quadrangular courtyard on the east, with an ablution pond, square in plan, nearer to the western verandah. Next to the Jami mosque we are shown a place for the servants to eat, the mint and the palace of the Prime Minister (*Kushbegi*).

As we turn right from the place where we first saw the mosque, we came to the main inner domical entrance, which is open on all four sides. The Jami mosque is on the north. The old city is on the west, which can be enjoyed from the buildings of *Haveli Asp*. On the south is *Salam Khana* and other buildings in two storeys, now converted into historical and archaeological museums. The buildings included *Mirza* or *Munshi-Khana*, *Khana-i-Rahim Khan*, built in the time of Shaibani Khan and *Haveli* for the residence of the Amir's family. On the east is *Haveli-takht* or *Kurenish-Khana*, the view of which is closed by a low wall. This *Haveli* really served the purpose of *Diwan-i-Khas*. It has a wide open courtyard in the middle, surrounded by *ghulam-gardish* on three sides, and a raised platform for the *takht* on the eastern side. Its southern flank has a basement, containing treasury. The western flank, through which we entered, has a tall *pesh-taq*, showing glittering glazed tile in blue and yellow. The grandeur of royal reception was to be imagined as nothing more remains here to be seen. All other residential buildings behind this eastern *Haveli* appear to be gone. We return to the domical entrance and to *Haveli Asp* and have a beautiful view of the city. Right in front on the western side,

behind the trees, stands out prominently the charming Bala Hauz Mosque. Before we go down to see this mosque, on our left just below the fortress wall spread out an open *maidan*, remembered as *Registan*, where in the past bazars were held twice a week and people came here for holidaying. But we paused and we were asked to see a balcony, what we call a *jharokha*, usually meant for the Amir to be seen by the people down below. We were told that this was the place where the amir sat to see the occasional events. And such events were related to the punishment—lashing—of the prisoners and dissidents that defied the cruelties and pain wrought by the amirs on the humble folk. On the *Registan* stood such sufferers and bore the wounds cheerfully with shouts of cry but heaved a sigh of relief in the hope that some day the people around who witnessed the ghastly scene would gather strength and turn the table to their favour. Even the look of *Registan* was awe-inspiring and the scene of lashing and hanging is better left untold. There are far better and soother scenes to be seen in the city.

From that horrible scene it was better to go away and see the modern Sunday Bazar just below the city wall on the other side of the mausoleum of Hazrat Ayub. Sunday was the closed day for the Departmental stores and holiday for the people. But it was the day for the humble folk to come from the countryside and sell their own products in the open market. That is the day when common man—young and old—has a chance to make a bid for things of his choice, jostle about the crowded *rehriwalas* and rig their shoulder through the thick of people who have enough money to buy but little to choose. Here was an exactly reverse experience from what we find in our own Juma bazars at Islamabad. In our own country bazars are held for humble people who cannot afford to go to big shops. They find things of daily use handy and cheaper in the bazars. But here at Bokhara it is reverse. People bring their own arts and crafts, all sorts of caps—embroidered, gold-threaded, multi-coloured—*jammas*,

shirts of *atlas*, *pyjamas*, embroidered clothes, head-covers, bed-sheets, toys and children's games of many sorts; on the other side are aligned cakes, biscuits, sweets, *nans* of all kinds; and then are to be found vegetables, fruits, eggs and meat and certainly grape juice and minerals of all kinds. These goods were not cheap and there was no bargain also. The prices were fixed. The people were charging the cost of their own individual labour. I was fascinated to see a well-designed Tajiki cap—sixty roubles for it, certainly beyond my purse. I bought a simpler cap just for seven roubles. I went in to select an *atlas* long shirt of Tajiki style just to give a surprise to my dearly loved wife in the hope that I would see her in this dress and remember the Tajiki ladies in Pakistan. But the cost again was forbidding—more than sixty roubles. When I counted that each rouble in my country is equivalent to twenty rupees, I hesitated and decided to forego* this luxury for my wife. I wondered how Tajik and Uzbek ladies go about in this dress every day in the streets and also cover their head with fashionable embroidered and well-designed scarf. With an average salary of 150 and 250 roubles per month such an overtaste for pure silk dress only stresses a fascination for traditional costume. That luxury is seen not only in dress but also in food at least all over Central Asia.

A foretaste of this started in our journey from Dushanbe to Bokhara. We first halted at Leninabad, ancient Khojend, situated in a marvellous circle of hills, right on the bank of Syr Darya, with a huge water reservoir on one side. The snow-capped peaks on the south, from which many streams flowed down to the Darya, presented a beautiful silhouette at the horizon and down below the well-planned Leninabad boldly stood out amidst fields of green patches and fruit trees, interspersed with silvery white water channels that fed the fields and orchards and defied the

* Later I purchased at Dushanbe departmental store for forty roubles.

desert that looked wide-spread far away from the height of the plane. While we continued our journey, the hill, called Kohisar-i-Mongol, soon merged into the desert plain and a line of greenery began to emerge between sandy desert, that belonged to the life-giving Zarafshan—the main spring of life—the river of Rodaki—that flowed from Panchkant and Samarkand to Bokhara. And finally we got off from the plane at the newly—emerging town of Novai, named after the great mediaeval statesman and poet Ali Sher Novai. At the airport we were received by the elder sister of Dr. Ashrafi, wife of Kamal—a quiet scholarly lady, expert in miniature painting, just the opposite of Kamal who is talkative, jovial, entertaining and replete with Persian poetry. The two sisters sat in one car and we were in another with the Radio Chief, Amin Jan. The drive from Novai to Bokhara, one hundred kilometre, was the most wonderful experience that I have had in Central Asia, particularly when there is an entertainer like Kamal with encyclopaedia of Persian verses and informer like Amin Jan who had all the knowledge about recent developments in the country around—the refacing of the roads, the emergence of the new town of Novai in the centrally located desert area and the new project of bringing a canal from the river Oxus to irrigate the waste land around. As we approached the small town of Ghizdwan, there spread out the extensive sea of the golden cotton fibre—a true thriving treasure for the people of Central Asia. Our car stopped in this town, which is midway between Novai and Bokhara and we got into the house of Dr. Ashrafi's sister. Her husband, Jorakul Moradev a Veterinary doctor of the region, sons and beautiful young daughter welcomed us. It was Doctor's own private house, built on a land, which as is common in the Soviet Union, belongs to the State. The house, which had mud walls within timber framing, was built on two different dates—the older part lay to the south of the main garrage entrance and the new part was of L-shape, both the parts surrounding a garden and vegetable open square in the middle. In the

garrage entrance lay a Central Asian traditional *khat*—a wooden cot with upright rests on two sides, spread over by a carpet and side quilts. As we had not yet taken breakfast, we were taken straight into the middle room—a dining room of modern type having a dining table with chairs. Close by was a small wash room with a wash basin for washing hands before breakfast. The breakfast was a typical Central Asian luxury—varieties of fruits—grapes, apples and *anjir* (fig)—varieties of milk products—cream, butter, curd, *smitana*,—fried chicken with all varieties of *nan* and tea or coffee without milk. I had my full, more than the appetite, as I thought the long journey and the day sight-seeing would hardly give us time to have more food. In fact I stored food in my belly. And then we came out in the fresh air and sat for gossip and waited and waited to the last minute of my patience. At last came a majestic lady, Rais Salamat Ganiyova—a spectacular *Rais* of the region, the foremost leader of cooperatives, the real Cotton Queen. And inside we were taken again, this time for dinner—that is what they call here lunch—and I was taken aback as to what I should do now. I told Kamal that I had my fill but he joked and said that was just breakfast. Now it was lunch time. We have to honour the lady as she had come all the way to entertain us. I bowed my head and joined the others. The first course again of fruits, salads, *nans*, cold chicken, tomato; the second course of *shorba*,—a kind of soup with all kinds of vegetables and rice, third course of *kababs*, *shashlik*, fourth course of *pulao* and roasted meat, then came melons and water-melons and finally varieties of cake. And out we came for tea, grapes and pomegranate that were served on the *khat*. I do not know how many rules of medical advice I broke that day. Thanks God that I stood the test and the lady was not dissatisfied. Kamal had a big joke that we had to give company to the fair ladies. I was restless to go to toilet, which I did in a small corner room having convenience of Central Asian type—a big hole in the floor for allowing the dirt to go down. At last the time came for the majestic lady

to depart. We all got up and she, with her own soft and caressing tone, robed me with Tajik *jama* and cap and remarked: "Now, you look like a Tajik".

We also begged leave of our host and started our excursion by first going to Aini Museum at the Aini farm, not far from the place. The place has been donated by the family for Sadruddin Aini Museum to commemorate the life and works of Sadruddin Aini, the founder of modern Tajik literature and the first President of the Tajik Academy of Sciences. The museum occupies, an old mosque building—a domed square structure with verandahs resting on tapering wooden pillars on three sides. There stood a ruined *mazina* to the north-east of the building. Inside the museum complete life of Sadruddin and his time has been depicted in pictures and sketches, letters, despatches, books and other materials of daily life. Most pitiful was the scene of beggars and naked poverty that had overtaken Bokhara in the time of the last Amirs. And still more awe-inspiring were the skin—scratchings on the back of Sadruddin by the lashings given by leather whip. It is no wonder that Sadruddin, the poet, rose up to dole out inspiring poems for the masses:

خواہم آن خانہ بیدارم ویران باد خواہم آن محکمہ جورمزارستان باد
خواہم آن تخت کہ شد باعث بدبختی ما ریزہ ریزہ شد با خاک سیمہ یکسان باد

We also went to the village of Afshan and saw Ibn Sina Museum, where the life and works of Ibn Sina have been chastely depicted through pictures, sketches and archaeological material that was found in the region. The life of this great scientist, thinker and philosopher has been very well illustrated to inspire the younger generation.

And finally we came to the city and stood before Bala Hauz Mosque—a rare piece of monument with glittering tiles and coloured mosaics that became fashionable in the

later days of Bokhara School. Originally built in 1712 as a single—domed square mosque facing the Registan, it was later faced by a multi-column *ivan* of the Bokhara type, built between 1914-1917 in the time of the last Amir and hence in this addition repeating much of the luxurious tint and colour in the tender, tapering wooden pillars that have cupola-shaped capitals on a series of tiered stalactites. In 1817 a minaret was added to the mosque and in the nineteenth century *hujras* were also added on the northern and southern sides of the inner courtyard, to which entrance was provided by portals on the eastern side.

However, if one desires to conjure up the traditional social life of Bokhara, it is necessary to go to Liabi-hauz ensemble, the main focus of which is in the central water-reservoir of square shape with bevelled corners, at the head of which today stands a bronze statuette of Khwaja Naseruddin on horse back. Here vendors still shout out for drinks and eatables. This was the place of gathering—for *manajat* and *mushaira*—of the local poets, orators and gossipers who made Bokhara livelier. In the beginning of 17th century, on the order of a dignitary, Nadir Divan Begi, a madrassah-mosque and a caravan serai, named after him were built here. The caravan serai consisted of a square-shape courtyard with bevelled corners, fringed by a row of two-storey hostel cells. A small additional courtyard adjoins the building from the east. Later this serai was adapted for a madrassah and a new shape was given to its main facade, besides the addition of corner towers and a graceful portal entrance. Consequently the facade has acquired a festive appearance. It is this facade which is the bridal attraction of Bokhara today. Here the main portal shows, on the tympanums of its arches, not only conventional vegetable ornaments but also fantastic birds (*Samurghs*) and deer against the background of intertwined vegetable ornaments. It is within this madrassah building that today concert is

given in the night for the entertainment of the people in the traditional festive style (see below).

Beyond the water reservoir, on its western bank, rises the Devanbegi *Khanak* (a cult building associated with Sufism) having a big portal and domed hall. The *Khanak* gives a majestic appearance as we view it from the side of the reservoir: two powerful corner towers (*guldastas*) flank a tall arch in the middle and above it rises an arched gallery forming a monumental portal. The domed rectangular hall has tall niches in the walls and on the western side is the mihrab. Close by flows the Samanid period *Shahrud* (canal). Through the narrow street, lined by modern shops, we pass on to wonderful array of oriental covered bazars, which were not only a place for buying and selling but also a home of all the gossips, folk-tales and storey-telling, as those told by the popular figure, Khwaja Naseruddin, giving a jocular caricature of the amirs and nobles, their luxury and laziness, moeny-grabbing merchants, princes and princesses, who were drunk in the elixir of the traditional citylife. Originally, as built in the sixteenth century, there were five covered bazars, known as *tim*, *chorsu* or *taq*, marked by roofed places. It was usual for the intersections of commercial and craftsman stalls to have a central domed building with outlets into the main streets. These *tims* with their domes served as reference points for the customers. We enter this ensemble through *Taq-i-Sarrafan*, and then comes *Taq-i-tilapak-furoshan*, and we are led to *Taq-i-Zargaran*, finally to the *tim*, of Abdullah Khan, built in 1557.

On this long trip we should not forget to see Central Asia's largest madrassah, Kokaltash, built in 1568-69, which housed 130 *hujras*. Its mosque has stately cupolas and hall has varied features with decorative domes over the passages. The madrassah has arcades running all along the second floor of the flanking facades. In the same commercial area is the famous Magoki-Attari Mosque with the roof resting on

six stone pillars. The beauty of the mosque lies in the southern frontage, probably built in the 12th century, with extremely well-designed terracotta carvings. As is commonly believed, it may incorporate some of the carvings of the pre-Muslim period as it is said to have been originally a Zoroastrian temple.

The story of Bokhara will not be complete without the name of the enlightened Timurid Amir Ulugh Beg, who, in the fifteenth century, erected three big madrassahs. One of them, named after him, is the oldest existing madrassah of Central Asia, as it was built in 1417 in the heart of Bokhara. It is on the entrance of this madrassah that the following famous line was inscribed:

“It is the duty of every Muslim, man and woman, to strive to knowledge”.

Its plan set a standard for all subsequent developments of its type. It consists of a vaulted portal with domed hall on either side, one serving for a mosque and another for congregation. This leads to the main courtyard on the inside, which has portals on the main axis, encompassed by two stories of *hujras*. The main facade has circular towers at the corners; the arches arranged in two stories. The facade is decorated with tiled mosaic and rich colour.

From this madrassah we pass on to Pai-Kalan architectural ensemble, which forms the core of ancient Bokhara. It serves to organize and direct the cobweb of the city's numerous old streets. It is difficult to imagine the sky light of Bokhara without majestic Kalan minaret, the tall blue dome and portals of the Kalan mosque, the domes and portals of the Mir-i-Arab madrassah, which make a magnificent group of architectural works in Bokhara.

The Kalan minaret, which has several legends surrounding its original construction, was built in 1127 by

Arslan Khan. It is really the symbol of the old city as it dominates the entire monumental remains of Bokhara and can be seen from far. It is built of burnt brick and gancha mortar and rises to a height of forty-six meters above the city. The minaret, which is tapering upward, is crowned with a sky light rotunda having sixteen arched windows. The crown gives the appearance of a Central Asian turban with a pommel or pointed cap jutting out in the middle. From top to bottom the minaret is faced with several bands of decorative motifs that produce different effects of light and shade in moonlight. There are steps inside the minarets to lead up to the rotunda, wherefrom the *azan* (call to prayer) was sannounced. However the minaret also served as a watch-tower and light house for trade caravans.

The Kalan mosque, which was completed in 1514, as built on the ruins of a twelfth century mosque, and presents the typical glamour of the Timurid period in its glittering domes and coloured mosaics. It consists of a spacious open courtyard and with *ivans* on all the four sides, entered by seven arched doorways, the eastern one being most prominent. The prayer hall on the west which has a well decorated mihrab is crowned by tall domes on high drums. From the courtyard the ivans present a marvellous view with their arched openings and tall portals.

Opposite Kalan mosque is the Mir-i-Arab madrassah, built in 1530-1536 by Shaikh Abdullah of Yemen, nicknamed as Mir-i-Arab during the rule of Abdullah Khan. The madrassah follows the usual plan of the local educational institution—a square courtyard with bevelled corners, fringed by two stories of living cells. The axis of the courtyard is accentuated by a deep and tall portal gallery. There are traditional turrets (*guldastas*) on the corners. The main entrance facade shows the high portal with the new Persian inscription about the establishment of the present madrassah in 1890-92. The entrance leads into a vaulted

room, which gives access to two domed halls on the north and south. The northern hall, which is usually meant for *daras* (lecture) has been later turned into a mortuary chamber. In its middle is the prominent grave of the ruler Abdullah Khan and to the left is the grave of Mir-i-Arab in the midst of several other graves. As we pass on to the interior square, we see one hundred and eleven *hujras* in two stories around the courtyard. At present there are eighty students in the madrassah who come from all over the country. From the courtyard we can enter the mosque, which actually occupies the northern hall of the main entrance chamber. The mosque is very chastly furnished and the peace inside was so compelling that I borrowed a Tajiki cap from one Azerbaijani student and offered two *raka'ts* of *namaz-i-nafal* in the mosque. This is a mosque meant primarily for the students and teachers of the madrassah. For the general public there are three other mosques—Khwaja Zainuddin, Khwaja Ismat and Khwaja Talbad—where regular prayers are held five times a day.

There still remained much to be seen but there was hardly time for all the gems of Bokhara that demanded closer scrutiny. From a distance I could see the architectural composition, called Khosh-Madrassah, Ensemble of the sixteenth century, which shows a double building opposite to each other—Madarikhan Madrassah and Abdullah Khan Madrassah—an architectural composition that presents a duality of monument in a single complex. The buildings in the extremity of old Bokhara are no less interesting. One such suburban area is known as Shamsabad, which became a festive ground from twelfth century. In 1119 a *namazgah*, what we call *Idgah* in our country, was built here. The old mihrab wall with five terracotta finishing still survives. In the time of Amir Timur glazed decoration was added to the renovated building. Still later in the sixteenth century a three-span vaulted pavilion with a portal was added. At the suburban village of Fathabad there stand the domes,

mausoleum and Khanak of Shaikh Saifuddin Bokharchi, a scholar and theologian who died in 1261, and since then it became a place of pilgrimage. Here stands a monument of the Mongol period—the mausoleum of Buyan Kulikhan (died in A.D. 1358), presenting an unusual colour saturation, brilliance and luxury. Some six kilometers from Bokhara is the village of Sakmatin-Sumitan, where stands the majestic Chor-Bakr ensemble (1559-1563), consisting of a Khanak, a madrassah and a mosque, including several memorial buildings. Mention may also be made of Faizabad mosque-Khanak (1598-99 A.D.), which catches the eyes for its big dome, arched gallery around the central hall and tall portal. However we could hardly miss the four rising minarets of the Char-Minar Madrassah, built in 1807 by Khalif Niiazkul. The four-minaret building is actually an entrance domed gate, leading into the madrassah having a cosy courtyard and a pond and a summer mosque. It is the four tall minarets with their sky-blue cupolas that attract the eye and present a glittering look to the old city.

As the time was passing fast, we returned to our Intourist Hotel late in the afternoon and sat down for our quick lunch at 4.00 p.m. With hardly an hour to settle in my mind the mosaic of the wonderful monuments that I had seen, it was difficult for me to stop myself. I called my friend Kamal and got down from our rooms to have a stroll in the park that faced the Bokhara Hotel. We had earlier rounded the park in a car but never stopped to see inside. This time I was attracted to a tall monument in the midst of the park. That was a war memorial—a monument dedicated to the heroes who had sacrificed their lives for the cause of their motherland in the Second World War. Twenty-thousand souls from Bokhara, whose names are inscribed in alphabetical order on a long horizontal plaque, died in different battle-fronts so that their children, brothers and sisters would live in peace and freedom. Nearby burns the eternal flame of life, where I stood unmoved for long to

record my silent respect for the dead heroes. Still more inspiring was the bold statue of an unnamed soldier, grasping firmly a gun in his hand and exhibiting vigour and strength of his body and noble calm in his face. Over him hang the quarter circle of a spoked wheel, probably representing the entire world, showering a boquette of congratulations on him for his marvellous determination. This symbolic monument was a unique experience that has left an indelible impress on my mind and has told me much more about the War than I have read about it in several volumes. What a horror the war brings to humanity? When will man learn this lesson?

When I was brooding over this thought, my friend Kamal pulled me out and said that it was time to go. Our engineer friend Amin Jan had arrived with his car. In historical mood he rushed us around the old city in the twilight of the evening, telling us many fantastic stories about old Bokhara, the luxury as well as the poverty of the old city life, the changes in the lay-out of the city, the new roads and streets that necessitated the effacement of some of the older ruins; and then he drove into the interior of the narrow lanes and by-lanes. I was afraid whether we could turn back. He consoled us by saying that he knew Bokhara very well. He would like us to see the inner life of the old city, how the ordinary men moved about, talked about, sat in the squares, drank *kahve*, ate *nans*, and opened their hearts to their friends and dear ones. It was a wonderful experience of a historical process that showed humanity surviving through the centuries of oddities and despite revolutionary changes brought about by Soviet Government, life in Bokhara keeps up the man of the past undisturbed, unmolested and unshaken in his traditional behaviour and mannerism that belong to Bokhara. This is the eternal majesty of Bokhara that is unsurpassed in the whole of Central Asia.

We got off the car and walked to Mahalla *Gau-Kushan*, sat on a stony bench in the square and looked at the Madrassah-i-Gau-Kushan and another Madrassah of Ahmad Jan. Nearby was the Taq-i-Sarrafan or Taq-i-Hindiyan and a caravan-serai-i-Hindiyan, where traders came from my part of the world for business and trade. It was a happy recollection of my childhood, when in my Kashmiri family stories of Kashmiri merchants going to Bokhara for the sale of carpets and shawls were told. Perhaps my own ancestors might have come and stayed in this caravan serai. The memory took me to Peshawar, where I had paid visits to the wonderful *Baithak-Khana* in the Sethi hosue and my friend, Mr. Ismail Sethi, had shown to me sacks of Russian notes and *hundis* and several other papers belonging to his family and relating to the trade that was carried on by his family with Bokhara. Those were the days of brisk trade between Lahore and Peshawar on the one hand and Bokhara at the other end. I could also recollect the wonderful wood carving, decorative patterns and mirror halls in the house of the Sethis in Peshawar. It is only now that I could understand their meaning and close relationship with the Bokhara School of art and architecture. This historical link that existed for centuries between these sister cities has been snapped through the vegaries of human history. Geographical proximity is still there. Bokharis are still living in Pakistan. The Caravan still stands in Bokhara. But man has frozen his movement and age-old relationship. Humanity appears to have closed this chapter of history—to be reopened again, God knows, when?

The life in Bokhara, however, still continues the historic tradition and in its melodious and sonorous tone gives a clarion call to men and reminds them that they are human first to live together on this earth which God has bestowed upon them to enjoy together. At last we were next drawn to such a gathering in the courtyard of Dewan Begi madrassah where arrangement had been made for an

evening concert. The whole court was lit in a subdued light and furnished in the traditional fashion with the old type of *Khats* having carpets and quilts on sides and a low table in the middle with coloured teapot and small bowls around. On these *Khats* sat in the traditional Bokhara style American Tourists, Europeans, Japanese, Bokharchis.

We ourselves sat on a specified *Khat*, wondering at this human intermingling, where we certainly forgot our individuality and all were intent on the forthcoming scene at the stage. And on came music, song, a dance by three lovely young girls in typical old Bokhara dress. The music was played by six instrumentalists on local instruments—*Doila*, *Cicha*, *Chhang*, *Rubab-i-Kashgar*, *Gitar* and *Dhab*. The girl in *raks* followed *Surudi-i-Bokhara*. The performance was varied by introducing, by turn, *ghazl*, Uzbeki song, Tajiki song and even *Raks-i-Khatlan Zamin*. Similarly the dance also varied in taste and decor, exhibiting the styles of different regions of Central Asia. A display of each of the musical instruments in their special tone. Then came the *Khwarimian* song, *Surudi-i-Kohistani*, *Rubab-i-Badakhshani* and *Surud-i-Farghana*. And finally came *Jashn-i-Urusi*—typical marriage song with a bride and bridegroom in old Bokhara style, majestically walking under a bejewelled cover. At the end came Bokhara dance, in which all the musicians and dancers joined together in a crowd of the hilarious sight-seers who stood up and mixed together in a joyous craze for human pleasure—and elixir of life on this earth.

That was an unusual experience and we returned to our hotel late at night and back to the twelfth story to have some snacks before sleeping and also to have the last glimpse of the city in the night. I got down into my room at midnight and went to my bed. But sleep was not to come. I sat up on my bed and continued to see the flickering lights through the window. In front lay the open park and at the distance stood the war memorial. As the clock tinkled one, two, three, four

and five, I was counting one by one the spokes of the earth—wheel. It was a terrible recollection of the war history. Why does man wage war? Why does he spend so much and prepare for war? Is it necessary to achieve peace through war? War and peace—is this the history of man? These thoughts were lying heavy on my eyes. I suddenly realised it was six O'clock. I got up, washed myself and offered my morning prayers. As I finished my *du'a*, my head again bent down for the last *Sajida*—last thanksgiving to God for the chance that I got to come to Bokhara. In that pose, I remained, my eyes closed and it seems I fell sleep. The whole night I was awake and this peaceful rest was natural. But it was not a simple sleep. It was a long dream of the history of Bokhara that kept me half awake.

It was the story of young warrior Siavus once again that broke into my dream. Then came the Arabs with their walled city, enclosing stately palaces, orchards, trading shops and dwelling houses. But the Samanid history lingered long in my mind with the imperial splendour that surrounded the court as Bokhara became the capital of a large state in 10th century A.D. Its grand library, called *Savvan-al-Hikmat*, drew Ibn Sina's Comment: "I entered a building with many rooms. I saw there books which many people have never heard of. I have never seen such a collection of books". Then came the Karakhanids in 11th-12th century A.D., when burnt-brick buildings with terracotta decoration accentuated the taste of the people. In 1220 the Mongol hordes flooded the country and almost brought to a halt the cultural activity of the city. In the 14th century the city once again received a new life under Timur. The name of the Timurid prince Ulugh Beg can hardly be forgotten in Bokhara. In 1530 the Shaibanids took over and there was an all round blossoming of the city. Memorable description came to my mind: "A political and cultural centre of a large country, the bulwark of Sunnit learning and the safekeeper of its shrines. Bokhara lived through a period of unexampled prosperity. Its

territory, being enlarged and once again surrounded by seven miles of wall, reached its present-day dimension; Bokhara shaped out, for good and all, as a feudal city with a labyrinth of winding streets that stretched from the old centre of the city to the gates, and magnificent domed buildings that lorded it over the flat-roofed houses nearby". Then came the invasion of Nadir Shah in early 18th century and parcelling into smaller Khanate by the Mangyt rulers. It was an age of catastrophic decline all over the Muslim world when European powers were extending their imperial hands towards the east. Bokhara retained a duality of life—a rich luxurious pleasure, mixed with European taste and decorum, at the upper strata, and an utter poverty, beggary and disease at the lower level, deeply engrossed in the glory of the past tradition. It is this contradiction in the socio-economic life of the people that invited revolts, rebellion and opposition to the cruelties of the time. The poor, unfortunate, innocent people were fed by the jocular taunts and remarks of Khwaja Naseruddin. But there were also men of intellect, like Sadrudin Aini, who deplored the squalor and stood up for the improvement of the conditions of the humble folk. But all such men were meted out capital punishments—lashings in the Registan. Oh. lo. There the whipping on the backs! loud shout to the dismal chagrin of the onlookers. A deep shriek and I suddenly up and out came from my mouth these lines:

بمیانختہ من بیدار شدم ترسم، لرزم من ہستم کجا
چہ خواب چہ دانی کہ کھینم نمی دانم کہ راہ راست کجا

It was difficult for me to understand the meaning of the dream. There was hardly time to ponder. I had to pack up as I was to leave the hotel soon for my return journey to Dushanbe. As I was bundling up my tit-bits in my suitcase, I remembered the perilous situation faced by Abu Abdullah Rodaki (885-940), the famous court-poet of the Samanid

court, who had to abandon Bokhara, unwept and unsung, so much so that even today there is no statute of Rodaki in Bokhara, although his verses are in the mouths of the people. One memorable verse can be aptly quoted:

کنون زمانه دگر گشت، من دگر گشتم
عصا بیار که وقت عصا و انبان شد

30 September 1985.

Bazm-i-Dushanbe (Dushanbe Dialogue)

When I was told late in the afternoon of 20th September, 1985 that I was to go from Alma Ata to Dushanbe, instead of Leningrad, to meet Professor V.M. Masson and sort out with him the editorial issue of the first volume of *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*—a UNESCO assignment, I was rather taken aback, but also amused because Dushanbe has been a familiar city to me. I have always loved to be there and to know more about the people in Tajikistan, which is so close to my country geographically, historically and culturally. Throughout the period of history—whether Aryan or Scythian, Achaemenian or Greek, Kushan or Hun, Turk or Mongol—these two contiguous countries have had a common experience. And yet since the last century, after the imperial powers of Tsarist Russia and British Masters extended their prowling hands into this part of the world, our estrangement began, and today our separation is complete so much so that we hardly remember our past historic connection at all. Whenever I return from Dushanbe, my people ask me questions as if I have come back from a land which is totally different from ours. Fortunately both the metropolitan places—Dushanbe and Islamabad—are growing cities, the first originating from the *Dushanbe* village market and the second from a few suburban villages around the *dargahs* of Barri Imam at Nurpur Shahan and of Golra Sharif. In

Dushanbe also we have the famous *Dargah* of Maulana Yaqub Charkhi, who came here from Ghanzni and died in A.D. 1455. His two famous disciples were Maulana Abdur Rahman Jami and Khwaja Abrar Obaidullah of the Nakshibandi order. The Khwaja dedicated his *Tohfatul Abrar* to Maulana Charkhi. While we are still renovating the Dargah of Barri Imam after a long controversy over the feasibility of its jungle surroundings, the site of Maulana Charkhi has been totally cleared of its jungle within the last five years, a new structure built, and the nearby mosque is the largest and most attractive place in Dushanbe.

The comparison goes still further. While Islamabad is situated on the slope of Margala hill, Dushanbe runs down the Ghissar hill. Here the Soan river preserves pebble tool culture of the Stone Age and there the Kafir Nihan river has produced a similar pebble tool material. The cultural link can be traced throughout the Stone Age and even in the Rock carvings that we see in the Northern Areas of Pakistan and in the trans-Pamir region in Tajikistan. This part of the history is for the specialists and need not be detailed here.

As I flew from Alma Ata late in the evening in the company of Academician Mohammad Saifuddin Asimov, President of Tajik Academy of Sciences and of Dr. Naga Kasi, the UNESCO representative, it took us one and half hour to reach Dushanbe, quite late in the night, when I saw only glittering lights of the new city against the hazy background of hill peaks. From the cold of Alma Ata it was pleasant to be in the cool breeze of Dushanbe, almost the same weather as I experience at this time in Islamabad. In plane we were fortunate to be well-treated because of The Academician Asimov, who also happens to be a member of Parliament in Moscow. I sat in between Dr. Naga Kasi and the Academician, and it was my good or bad fortunate to be a bad translator of scores of Persian verses that the Academician was repeating to impress upon Dr. Kasi how

the Tajiki (Persian) tradition still dominates the life of the people in Central Asia. My friend Dr. Kasi, originally a South Indian gentleman but replete in French culture because of his long sojourn in France, may have felt a little boring because of my poor translation but I am sure he understood the spirit of conversation as I could manage to communicate the thought currents from one to the other particularly because the Academician spoke very little English.

However, my real trial began the following morning when Academician Asimov took us to show something of the city. And this time in the car, where three of us sat, besides the driver, there was a volley of verses from Iqbal on different aspects of life, and I realised how adapt the Academician was in *Iqbaliyat*. Although I could not repeat as many verses from Iqbal, I could understand the particular cultural content in the Academician's approach to Iqbal. While we in Pakistan adore Iqbal and stress on the Islamic content of his poetry, he was trying to raise him high in the ladder of humanity by impressing upon us how intensely human is the spirit behind the great poetry of Iqbal. For him Iqbal is the harbinger of a new human culture for the modern bewildered man. It is in this light that his poetry is to be read and propagated for the benefit of humanity. As he rightly observed, Iqbal and his poetry were widely read and appreciated in Tajikistan because Persian was the common link between Iqbal and the people of Tajikistan. Wherever I went in the city of Dushanbe, I found Iqbal's works in great demand.

Our day's trip began with our visit to the grave of Babajan Gafurov, the first President of the International Association of the Study of Cultures of Central Asia. Over the grave stood a stone bust on a pillar and on the grave stone was an open book, which I took to be Holy Qur'an, but it may represent just a book signifying great scholarship of

the person buried. In the same Aini park, where this grave was located, there was also the grave of Sadruddin Aini, the founder of modern Tajik literature and once President of Tajik Academy of Sciences. From here we went to pay our respects to the great poet of Persian, Abu Abdullah Rodaki (858-941 A.D.), below the statue of whom are inscribed these words:

هر که نامحنت از گذشت روزگار
 هیچ نامزد از هیچ آموزگار

From this place we went to the big Ibn Sina square that faced the grand buildings of the Institute of Medicine named after this great scientist. Bubbling water was gushing forth from one thousand fountains that lay below the beds of blooming flowers. At the head stood the statue of meditating Ibn Sina with the following significant verse inscribed on it:

از قمر گری سیاه تا روج زهبل
 بیرون حتم ز قیدی هر مکر و حیل
 کردم همه مشکلات گیتی را حل
 هر بند کشاد شد مگر بند اجل

From the place of this great scientist of encyclopaedic knowledge we drove a long way to the top of Luchap hill which gave a magnificent view of the city. Here on its top stood the grave of the famous Tajik poet Mirza Tursunzadeh (1911-1977) who loved to be always in the view of his own city. The following apt verse of his own is inscribed on his grave:

اگر چه بارها افتادم از یار دیارم دور
 بسیار مرا کردند گرچه دوستان مشهور
 دسل من در همه در کنج کنار دهر
 همیشه با وطن بودم همیشه با وطن مشهور

It was a feeling of serene calmness and peaceful repose that charged the air around and gave to the poet an atmosphere of a different aspect of Persian poetry that is perfectly in tune with nature. From this top our descent was slow along the winding road until we touched Prospecta Lenina and drove straight northward along Vazrov rivulet until we found the river water kissing the feet of the Kohisar (hill). And here in its lap the Academician brought us for lunch at the Naseem-i-Kohisar Restaurant—a lone picnic resort where man and nature associate together to share the beauty of pleasure. The restaurant has a wide hall for bigger parties and smaller cells open to the river and hill side where the gushing water, with its rhyming melody, welcomes the guests on a single small dining table or to a traditional Tajiki *khat* (wooden cot), perfect for a nuptial honeymoon. But all three of us were males and aged and yet the atmosphere was surcharged with the emotional Persian verses recited by the Academician from Sadi, Hafiz and Umar Khayyam. I was listening to these verses and explaining to Dr. Kasi their inner meaning in between the murmuring of the rippling water and the sip of kahve and grape juice, interposed by a bite of apple or pomegranate or by a variety of dishes—*shorba*, *kababs*, *nans* and pulao and then completed by melons of delicious taste. It was a difficult choice—to feast on the table, to hear the lovable Persian verse, or to enjoy the enchanting ripple of the river water against the harmonious background of the hill slope. Certainly it was the conquest by nature of man to pull him away from human barriers and to remind him of the lofty cultural heritage that is seen in the works of these poets. It is this cultural tradition which is the heritage of the Tajiks—nay of the whole of Central Asia and also of Pakistan.

Late in the afternoon we returned to our Mihman-Khan-e-Tajikistan (Hotel Tajikistan) for rest and repose. It was an intourist hotel of medium standard, where visitors from different countries of the world had come to stay and

go around to see things of their choice. Some walked into restaurant, others into streets or nearby lanes and bylanes to see the ordinary people or to take photographs; still others went shopping in the departmental stores. I discovered an extensive park right in front, where music was played, children moved about, and men and women holidaying on benches and chairs before water fountains. I walked freely to see the many statues of lyric and muse in the garden, and tarried long till late in the evening when more and more people came to enjoy the fun that went round. Later I found that on Sunday it was a humming place for young and old to come and display their mimicry and music in the open stage that permanently stood here. In another place dancing booth was there and still away was the playland for the children. The park was in the heart of the city, where people could go at a little cost, pass their pleasant hours in the crowd, eat, drink and talk to one another. The young and the aged all found company and pleasure. Whenever I was free, I passed many hours in the garden listening to the music or playing with little children. It was a fun to find oneself at home in a strange land but I never felt that it was strange for me.

One night I was invited by my old friend Dr. Abdullah Jan Ghaffarov, head of the oriental languages at the Academy of Science and one who also knows Urdu, to supper in his house, which was not far from Hotel Tajikistan. In his house, were gathered together most of his family members from his home town of Khojend. He had also invited for dinner five Indian Professors—three male and two female, headed by Professor Manzur Alam, Vice-Chancellor of Kashmir University at Srinagar. The dinner was arranged in two small rooms—one on a *dastar khwan* for the ladies and children of the family and another for us on a dining table. But there was a free mixing between the one and the other room, except that we had to take off our shoes when we went into other room. Abdullah Jan had come to Pakistan on the occasion of Iqbal Centenary celebrations

and proudly remembered his hugging shoulders with our President Zia ul Haq. He only wished that there could be more such contacts of academic and scholarly kind between his country and Pakistan. His youngest daughter is studying Hindi-Urdu at the University of Tajikistan and there is need that she gets opportunity to have some experience in Pakistan. The dinner was of an informal nature but Abdullah Jan had taken care that we should not be serious just on eating. He had invited three of his young nephews to entertain us with music. Sabir Sultan began with his melodious song from Iqbal and two young boys played on duff, stringed instrument and flute. The height was reached when he sang his self-composed *Wasf-i-Dushanbe*:

گل را شکوفام از رخ دروانه بدیدم از هیئت گلزننگ جوانانه بدیدم	ما فیض سحر از رخ جانانه بدیدم این باغ و خنیا بال نوآباد دوشنبه
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We were all captivated by the music. There was an interlude in the dinner. And lo! the young girls of the house stepped in to display their art of graceful dancing. The host and the hostess, and the grand old lady of the house, probably in her eighties, stood up to join in dance steps. And we were not spared as well. The bashful Indian Muslim lady in her Sari was bewildered to keep steps in their crowd. The *raks* and *surud* reached their climax and the dancers went round and round the *dastar khwan*. The scene reminded me of Babar's camp-fire: how the mediaeval tradition of entertainment had survived among these people. The dinner was a secondary affair. It was the joyful company, the pleasant jokes, the satire of the hostess and free exchange of talks of our youthful frailties to the young girls and old women that kept the dishes hot on the table. I noted how fare were the Indian professors with the family members although they had met for the first-time. I wished there could be more such contacts between Pakistani

academicians and those from Central Asia. Apart from political relations such academic and cultural contacts form the foundation of basic human relations. Even in the old days of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, the great Central Asian scholar Abu Raihan Alberuni maintained his scholarly contacts with the Indians:

I was fortunate that my academic work with Professor V.M. Masson was not vitiated at all by political relations that exist between our two countries. In fact our ideological differences also did not come in the way of our understanding the historical problem that we faced in editing the History of the Civilizations of Central Asia. That was because neither Professor Masson was trying to enforce the Marxist approach to history nor was I keen on adopting any particular school^s of historical thought. The appreciation of each other's view was on a human level. As our subject was confined to prehistoric period and the data was mostly derived from archaeology, the approach to the reconstruction of history was analytical. Our stress was more on human relations, societal formations, cultural groups and ethnic evolutions rather than on building ideologies or treating the data on straight jacket theories. I do not know how far we have succeeded in our approach but I have the satisfaction to say our understanding was on purely human level and our reconstruction was to present the history of man in Central Asia in so far as the man of this part of the world contributed to the development of human civilization as a whole.

However, the path was not always so smooth. The real difficulty came when I had to deal with another period of history—the period after the Muslim conquest of Central Asia in the eighth century A. D. and when the Muslims dominated all sphere of life in this part. That was the Age of Achievement as far as the development of Islamic Civilization was concerned. But we were not writing the

history of Islam as a whole. Our theme was confined to the contribution of the peoples of Central Asia to the flowering of Islamic Civilization as well as to the state of other cultural trends that continued side by side in this part of the world. This time, I faced Professor Noman Negmatov of the Institute of Historical Studies, at Tajik Academy of Science—a specialist in mediaeval history. His fierce criticism was against any religious approach to the reconstruction of history and he would like non-conformist tendencies to be given equal importance. But there could be no two opinions that this was the Age of Faith. We could differ in our approach to explaining the various elements that went to strengthen the principles of Faith but all that the mediaeval man did was to explore the world around him to discern the expression of Faith in the different phenomena of the world. Fortunately we found a common ground to analyse the phenomenal world as presented by the scientists, philosophers, logicians, jurists, sufis, poets, artists, painters and craftsmen of the time. Again the approach became analytical and the reconstruction was to visualise the world as conceived by mediaeval man rather than enforce the concept of modern time. After all we were writing history not for ourselves, but we were trying to present the main contribution that Central Asian men made to human civilization at this time. We certainly agreed that the contribution was of no mean order. The contribution was both in the field of sciences as well as humanities. Particularly man's culture in Central Asia became much more humanised and refined. It certainly began with the influence of Arabic but gradually it became merged with the growing Persian and Turco-Mongol tendencies. This admixture of various cultural elements in Central Asia created a historical tradition, which apart from political rivalries and bickerings, led to the rise of a living appreciation of human life, surcharged with poetry, music, fellow feeling, respect for the aged and women and love for family and children. It is this human aspect of Central Asian

culture that is the greatest gift of Central Asia to man's civilization. In this final conclusion we both came to an agreement and our attempt was now to discover the path as to how to give expression to these ideas so that the real contribution of Central Asia could be understood by the intelligent man of the world.

This compromise was followed by a request from the members of the Academy of Science that I should give a talk on the educational system in Pakistan and the state of historical and cultural research in my country. To this I readily agreed and spoke how our methods differed and also our institutions were entirely different from the Academy of Science in USSR. In an answer to a question I frankly admitted how professors in our universities fared badly in comparison to the bureaucrats. It was a surprise for them to discover how we retire at the age of sixty when they continue to work as long as their health permits. In terms of salary they compared well with any other profession. In fact their academicians were much better paid. *Sadr* of a *Sho'ba* gets five hundred roubles a month; a Professor, if he is a doctor, gets three hundred and twenty roubles a month; but if he becomes a *sadr*, he gets only three hundred and eighty-four roubles a month. The Academician Asimov drew, as far as my information went, a sum of 1300/- roubles a month which included his emolument of being a corresponding member of Soviet Academy of Science in Moscow and a member of Parliament. This salary should be understood in the perspective of the socio-economic life in Soviet Union. To give a contrast, Professor Abdullah Jan Ghaffarov draws 500/- roubles a month; his wife Nazakat 300/- roubles a month, plus 150/- roubles a month as pension for five children that she gave birth; the youngest daughter, who is still studying gets 70/- roubles a month. The family pays 30/- roubles a month as rent for the apartment, which includes all charges, incorporating also local telephone calls. The driver, Abdus Sattar bin Sayid, who has been working at the

academy of Science for the last sixteen years, draws 140/- roubles a month, and his wife who works in *Vazarat-i-Sauda*, gets 110/- roubles a month; besides this, the driver earns overtime payment. He lives with his three children in an apartment.

My talk in the Academy was followed by question-answer and comments by Dr. Gaffar Ashurov, professor of philosophy, Professor Noman Negmatov and Dr. Munira Shahidi. The comments mostly related to the methodological approach to history that I had earlier described. The professor of philosophy primarily dealt with logical understanding of the problems and Professor Negmatov, who is a non-conformist, advocated a materialist approach to history based on the analysis of the actual historical and archaeological data available for the reconstruction of history. One question from the audience that related to religious tendencies was appreciative of the new feeling of renaissance that is seen in the Muslim world. But the question on no account gave any idea to our belief that there was any Islamic revivalist tendency in Central Asia. In that part religion is personal affair. It is its cultural aspect that attracts the Muslims of Central Asia. As far as ceremonies and rituals are concerned, they are accepted and observed as part of the traditional life of the people. And in this observation I was not able to notice any interference on the part of the state. To bank on the overt propaganda of religious revolution among the present Muslims of Central Asia appears to be mere moonshine.

What is more important is the freedom in social life of the people. This was evident everywhere. One experience in the house of Professor Negmatov may be illustrated. I was invited for dinner at his family residence in an apartment alongwith Dr. Kamaluddin Aini and Dr. Mukhtarov. The family consisted of his wife, an employee at the Academy of Science and two daughters, one of whom is married and

hence lives separately in her own house. However, in this dinner both the son-in-law and the married daughter also joined. We entered the dining room directly after taking off our shoes as it was carpeted and comparatively well decorated, having a dining table and chairs. As we sat down for eating, the males were on one side and the female members were on the other. But all of us freely talked and joked with one another. There was no dance or music. The dinner was a little formal in so far as various toasts were proposed for the health of one another, for the development of friendship between Pakistan and USSR and for the promotion of academic relation between Tajik Academy of Science and the Universities in Pakistan. But more important was the exchange of gifts. I had practically exhausted my store of things which I had taken from Pakistan. The only thing that was left was my own personal *tasbih* (rosary of beads). Among others I presented this *tasbih* to Professor Negmatov, knowing full well that he is a non-conformist but I hope he would appreciate and sympathise with the spiritual content of Islamic prayer. After dinner we passed on to his small study room and I sat in his own chair of study. The room presented a serious atmosphere with books all around. He deplored that he had no books from Pakistan, to which I assured that some arrangement would be made to send to him the books. The discussion started from a lighter vein to serious issues—the manner how the people in Central Asia like to enjoy life as their ancestors did and how they love their national tradition and culture. They described the poverty, squalor and illiteracy that prevailed in the country in the past, and particularly the rivalries and wars among the princes and amirs that caused miseries to the people. All these ideas were not new to me. After all I have been a student of history and I knew full well the state of things that prevailed in Central Asia. And then Dr. Kamaluddin pointed out the new developments, the new trends, the new literary heights and the new socio-economic reconstruction. I agreed with all this except pointing out that

their prosperity and achievement are still far behind the standard seen in Western Europe and America. Dr. Negmatov held his ground and said that it might be true if a higher level of life pattern was taken into consideration. Yet what was essential was to see the general rise of standard of life as a whole. How the people of Central Asia, particularly the Muslims had outgrown the mediaeval poverty and ignorance and came up to a life, which might not be to the western stand, but was certainly modernised and well in advance of other countries in Asia. I agreed with him and congratulated him on this successful transformation of their society but pointedly raised a finger and said : "As we look to western Europe and America for higher knowledge in science and technology, you also look to Moscow and Leningrad for leadership in scientific advancement. That was not so in the mediaeval period. At that time Central Asia gave the lead. It is therefore high time that both you and I should strive hard to pull our people and our country from this state to the standard of a competitive world". There was a silence and all of us realized that whatever opportunities we have in our respective countries should be fully taken advantage of so as to raise the level of education of our people. I was told of the big Norek dam built on the Vaksh river, about 60 km. away from Dushanbe, and how its construction has brought about a revolutionary change in the socio-economic life of all the people in the region. I was able to see the dam on the following day in the company of Professor Abdullah Jan Gaffarov. The dam is 300 m. high and it tames the turbulent river Vaksh, which literally means "wild" or "indomitable". The heidel power capacity of the station is 2,700 thousand KW. a year and it gives water to 1200 thousand hectors of new lands in the basin of the Amu Darya. The Norek water reservoir is 70 km. long and from two to five km. wide. Snow-white motor boats plough the mirror-smooth surface of that man-made sea. I was able to have a wonderful view of the entire Norek valley through the courtesy of Mrs. Sadbarg, an enchanting young lady who told

us all about the new city of Norek and also helped us by lending another car when our own car, by which we came, broke on way. As a result our return journey was late in the night and hence I could not keep many other appointments that evening.

However, on Friday it was possible for me to go to the *Dargah* of Maulana Yaqub Charkhi in the outskirts of Dushanbe. On my earlier visits to Dushanbe I had come here to offer my prayers in the mosque but this time I found the *Dargah* and the mosque in a much better condition. The mosque has been enlarged from a single rectangular hall to L-shape with a forty-foot high minar to be built in future. The grave of the saint is contained in a rectangular walled enclosure, has an inscribed head stone, and is popularly known as *Khanqah-i-Besutun*. It is no doubt a religious Centre of the city. There is a separate sitting room for the Maulanas. On its door is inscribed:

دوستی را جستجو داریم ما
از امانے گفتمگو داریم ما

On Thursday people come here for *ziarat* and on Friday for prayers. About twenty thousand people congregate in the mosque. The Imam of the mosque is Maulana Ahluddin, who studied in Bokhara and Tashkent. The *Khatib* of the mosque is Haji Tura Khan. The mosque does not receive any state grant but is maintained by *zakat* and *khairat* voluntarily given by the people. The mosque was fully carpetted as the carpets were left behind after the *janaza* prayers. I was fortunate to have a long talk on the religious affairs with the Maulana present here, headed by Alhaj Abdullah Mirza Kalan, an official of the Islamic Institute of Central Asia. Quite naturally all his views were official in nature. One thing was clear. Students were selected according to the needs and sent to Bokhara or

Tashkent for religious education so as to man the different mosques. But mosques were not to be used for instructional purposes. I put the question to Mirza as to how the children could learn Muslim tradition and culture. His answer was that such cultural tradition is learnt at home and it was the duty of the parents to make the children familiar with their own culture, custom and rituals. When I said this was hardly possible as both father and mother were busy in their works and the children come home only late in the evening. The answer was that in Central Asia the joint family system still prevailed. The traditional culture is not learnt at school but is practised at home and in society. There are enough old people to impart to the new generation the cultural heritage of our forefathers. As far as national culture is concerned they were free to practise their own ways of living. When I asked about their conditions of living, he presented a rosy picture of the new society that is being reconstructed under the Soviet system and deplored the poverty and misery of the earlier period. I agreed with him on the socio-economic development of the present population and also on the educational and medical facilities that the State gave to them but pointed out the constraints placed on religious education and spiritual consolation and when I sharply remarked: "Every good thing is there in your country but one thing is missing and that is *Iman*", the reply was rather confused and it was mixed with the general well-being of the total population. However, later Dr. Kamaluddin Aini correctly remarked: "We do have it but you have to understand it as

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This answer really resounded in my mind for days and I began to think how sincere we are in our faith. How many of us abide by the faith that we believe in and how many act upto it.

While this thought continued to disturb me all the time that I was at Dushanbe, I looked around and felt the natural common behaviour of the people with whom I conversed, met in the streets and shops, and seen in the lanes and bylanes and through the mud-house and in the sand and dust where children played and soiled their hands. It was not a people suppressed and watched, half-starved or half-naked nor was I overtaken by any distant watchers. My movement was free and my mixing was limited to the point that I did not know the Russian language. However, I could speak in broken Tajiki and feel the inner emotions and humanity of the people.

It was one evening when I was coming back to the *Mihmankhana* after a usual stroll, that I found two small girls of about 8-10 years in age, after having crossed the road, coming straight to me. They talked to me in Russian. I answered "Russian Niet". One girl asked "Intourist". I said, "Yes". She said, "American", I said, "No" I am a Pakistani". Only one girl knew a few words of English. I could learn their names—Sayida Mutabar, a Tajik girl, and Talasavalaura, a Russian girl, whose father was away, serving in Siberia. I passed on my visiting card to them. They could read and learn about me and followed me right upto the Guest House where I was then staying. I had a number of metal ball-points in my pocket. They caught a fancy for them. I presented one each to the girls. They thanked and quietly parted. After an hour I found them back again in my room from their nearby house Nos. 74 and 72, Ulitsa Krasnamenskia, Dushanbe. They had come with some presents for me, consisting of sweet buns and some ball pens. I could not know how to refuse but decided to accept them with thanks. They became happy and began to see my collection of books. They asked me more questions about my country, about the children in my country and about schooling. I doubt whether I was able to explain to them

fully. As it was getting late, they parted with the wish that they would come back again and show me their house the following day. Unfortunately I could not meet them that day as I was late in coming from Norek. They tried again the next evening when I was found in my room. They wanted to take me to their house but I had an engagement for dinner. When I told them I was to leave for my country, the next morning, they were taken aback as they did not know that I was to leave so soon without having paid them a visit. I noted sadness on their face. Hurriedly they went out, asking me to wait, and back they came full of chocolates in a bag, an after-shave lotion, a soap and a scarf. Perhaps they wanted to give these presents to me in their own house and also introduce me to their parents. When I was patting and persuading them to accept some more presents from me, Professor Negmatov arrived to take me to his house for dinner. I asked him to explain to the lovely children the shortage of my time and how I was unable to go to their house. As I was to leave for dinner, they stepped down with me to the ground floor, stood long at the porch and drowned their eyes in wishful tears. I could not but feel inner depth of emotions and realised how warm is human attachment for whatever length of time they are together and in whichever country you may find them. Humanity has a stronger bond of relationship than all the limitation that man imposes upon himself.

The same depth of feeling I could note in the face of the lady housekeeper, Mrs. Zahirova Shirmahi, in the state Guest House, where I was later lodged. She had been separated from her husband but had to maintain three children. And yet she was very obliging and entertaining although I could not communicate with her properly as her Tajiki (Persian) was difficult for me to understand. In the oriental style she had invited me for dinner in her house but I could not keep to my promise because of my late arrival from Norek. Even then she brought the *mastoba* (another

variety of *shorba*), prepared by herself, the next day and served me in my room. Her attachment became so strong that she brought her three children to me when she learnt that I was to leave the next day. I gave some presents to them, placed my caressing hand on their heads and kissed them on their cheek. The eldest, a daughter, was amazed to get this warmth and love from a stranger as she had missed this from her own father. The mother looked wishfully at me and bade me farewell with grateful heart.

It is such a great warmth of feeling and human emotion that I experienced at Dushanbe in whatever walk of life that I went and whomsoever I met in different places. This may be oriental ways of behaviour which is no doubt common between Pakistan and Tajikistan, but more than that it is human relation that draws one man to another in whichever part of the world I have gone. Humanity lives on this as well as on other side. It is for us to discover the man and the ways of his living. The sooner we find this eternal lesson for humanity, the better will it be for mankind.

11 October 1985.

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