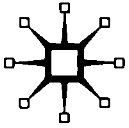
The Establishment of National Republics in Soviet Central Asia

Arne Haugen



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First published 2003 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN
Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10010
Companies and representatives throughout the world

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ISBN 1-4039-1571-7 hardback

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Haugen, Arne, 1967-
The establishment of national republics in Soviet Central Asia / Arne Haugen.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 1-4039-1571-7
1. Asia, Central—Politics and government—20th century.
2. Nationalism—Asia, Central—History—20th century. 3. Asia, Central—Ethnic relations. I. Title.

DK859.H28 2003
958.4'0841–dc21

2003051968

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
12 11 10 09 08 07 06 05 04 03

Printed and bound in Great Britain by
Antony Rowe Ltd, Chippenham and Eastbourne

In memory of Alf Grannes

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Acknowledgments

Central Asian studies in Norway represent a most limited area. It was therefore far from self-evident that my application for scholarship in this field would be granted. I am all the more grateful that the Faculty of Arts at the University of Bergen gave me the chance to pursue the study of Central Asia to doctoral level.

First and foremost, however, this book is the result of the late Professor Alf Grannes' eagerness to promote the study of Central Asia and the Caucasus at the University of Bergen. Being a Slavicist himself, Grannes began a fruitful and productive joint tutorship together with Professor Odd-Bjørn Fure of the Department of History. Their combined expertise and enthusiasm produced a stimulating environment, from which a number of students could profit throughout the 1990s. The result was a number of interesting studies of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Without Professor Grannes' initiative, this book could not have been written. It was therefore a great loss when Grannes was gradually incapacitated from incurable illness and died in April 2000. Without Professor Fure's keen interest in this project and his insistent encouragements in difficult moments, this work might never have been completed. Finally, I am very grateful for the generosity and hospitality of Dr. John Shoeberlein, who introduced me to Central Asian studies at the Harvard University and who was willing to share with me his unique scholarly expertise in this field.

Any shortcomings of the work remain, however, the responsibility of the author alone.

Abbreviations and Glossary

AO	Autonomous *Oblast*
ASSR	Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
BCP	Bukharan Communist Party
CAB	Central Asian Bureau
CC	Central Committee
CEC	Central Executive Committee
CP	Communist Party
CPSU	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CPT	Communist Party of Turkestan
Ispolburo	Executive Committee
KhCP	Khorezm Communist Party
krai	A large territorial and administrative subdivision found only in the Russian Republic
maktab	Traditional primary school run by the clergy, mostly held in mosques
MPF	Moldavian Popular Front
NEP	New Economic Policy
oblast	Province, administrative unit in the Soviet republics
okrug	Region (smaller than *uezd*)
Orgburo	Organizational Bureau of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party
Politburo	Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party
RCP	Russian Communist Party
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
RTsKhIDNI	Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Recent Historical Documents
Sovnarkom	Council of People's Commissars, the highest body in the Soviet government
SSR	Soviet Socialist Republic, the 15 union republics
TASSR	Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
uezd	Region, smallest administrative unit in Tsarist Russia
volost	Local level administrative unit

Introduction

After almost four centuries of expansion, at the beginning of the twentieth century the Russian Empire covered vast territories of the Eurasian continent and encompassed an immensely diverse population. In contrast to the fates of Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire remained largely intact as a territorial and political entity. However, the diversity of the population and the emphasis on national communities and national rights in contemporary world politics made intranational relations an important issue for the new regime that had been established on the ruins of the old empire. How was the new state to deal with the heterogeneity and the complexity of its population? This work is about the strategies adopted by the Soviet regime in what the Bolsheviks often referred to as the "national question". Considering the Bolsheviks' original approach, Soviet policies in this field were quite unexpected. In fact, the role of nationality came to be a distinctive and peculiar feature of the Soviet system.

Initially, the revolutionary socialists had paid little attention to this aspect of social and political life. From their Marxist point of view they envisioned an internationalist community, which left little place for nations, nationalism, or national statehood. However, political realities drove the Bolsheviks into positions rather different from their original one. Paradoxically, the state that the internationally-minded revolutionary socialists established developed into the greatest nation-building polity ever. The Soviet state was organized into a federalist structure with national territories situated on different hierarchical levels, culminating in a quasi-federation of national Soviet republics named after their respective predominant population groups. It is the policy of establishing ethnically- or nationally-based political-administrative entities that is the main concern of this study, and I will use the

organization of national Soviet republics in Central Asia in the 1920s as a case study.

Central Asia was incorporated into the Russian Empire during the second half of the nineteenth century. At this time of Russian expansion into the region, Central Asia was dominated by the khanates of Kokand and Khiva and the Emirate of Bukhara. All three entities featured highly heterogeneous populations. While the Kokand khanate was abolished, Khiva and Bukhara were allowed continued existence in the form of Russian protectorates. Khiva (in 1920 renamed Khorezm) and Bukhara existed as separate entities (People's Republics) until 1924, while the rest of Central Asia was organized into the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) as part of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). In 1924, in what was termed the national delimitation (*natsional'noe razmezhevanie*), Central Asia was completely reorganized politically. Khorezm, Bukhara and the Turkestan ASSR were abolished and replaced with so-called national Soviet republics. In the period 1924–36 the following republics were created: the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR), the Uzbek SSR, the Tajik SSR, the Kyrgyz SSR, the Kazak[1] SSR and the Karakalpak ASSR.[2] It is this political reorganization of Central Asia in the 1920s that is the subject of the present study.

I approach this matter from two perspectives, one central and one local. In the central perspective the focus is on central Soviet authorities and the Soviet nationalities policy. The main question then becomes: why did the originally anti-nationalist Bolsheviks make national identity the main principle of the territorial political organization of the new state? As Ronald Suny has pointed out, the Soviet Union was the first state to systematically base its political units on ethnicity.[3] The national delimitation of Central Asia was an essential part of this strategy, and I fully agree with Francine Hirsch, who maintains that "the national-territorial delimitation remains at the heart of the debate about the nature of Soviet rule".[4] Why did the internationally-minded Bolsheviks replace the existing multiethnic political entities of Central Asia with entities whose borders essentially corresponded with main ethnic divisions? Was it primarily a strategy aimed at securing the political *power and control* by the center over the non-Russian peripheries? Or was it a strategy for the implementation of *national rights*, based on a combination of Bolshevik ideology and pressure from the respective population groups? A third possibility is to see the delimitation primarily as a *practical measure*. From that perspective the reorganization was primarily aimed at facilitating the

administration of the region, but not necessarily connected to notions of power and control. A fourth and final possibility is that the reorganization was one element in a more comprehensive plan for *societal transformation*. Of course, these interpretations are not mutually exclusive, and I will discuss to what extent the various elements can be identified in the delimitation process. The answers to these questions must influence our understanding of the Soviet regime of the 1920s.

In this perspective I focus on the central Soviet authorities, or what is often imprecisely referred to as "Moscow". This means that it includes the Moscow-based central authorities of the Soviet state, such as the Central Committee (CC) of the Russian Communist Party (RCP), the Sovnarkom and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (CEC). Of these institutions the Central Committee is the most interesting one for the purposes of this study, as the national delimitation was accomplished by the Communist Party.[5] Moreover, by the time of the delimitation the political initiative had moved from state to party institutions (the Central Committee, and in particular the Politburo). However, the most important level in my analysis is not the Central Committee itself, but its Central Asian Bureau, located in Tashkent.

It is a long way from Moscow to Central Asia. After the revolution this led to a great deal of discrepancy between priorities of the central Bolshevik authorities and practices in Central Asia. In October 1919 the Turkestan Commission was sent to the region as the representative of the All-Russian CEC and the Sovnarkom in affairs concerning Turkestan. As an extension of the Turkestan Commission, the Turkestan Bureau was established in 1920 as the plenipotentiary of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party in Turkestan. From 1922 the authority of the Bureau was extended to Bukhara and Khorezm as well, as a result of which the Bureau was renamed the Central Asian Bureau of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party. The Central Asian Bureau existed until 1934 as the plenipotentiary of the party's Central Committee in Central Asia. It became an important institution in Central Asia in these years, and one of its most important tasks in this period was the accomplishment of the delimitation. To understand the mode of operation of the Soviet regime in this period it is therefore interesting to discuss the relation between "Moscow" in the narrower sense and its local representatives in Central Asia. Did the Central Asian Bureau simply implement decisions made at the center, or were decisions to a greater extent formed locally? To the extent that Moscow's local representatives behaved as independent political agents, what influenced their decisions?

This leads to what I call the "local perspective", from which I focus on indigenous political actors in Central Asia. From this perspective the main dichotomy is the distinction between "Moscow" and its representatives in Central Asia on the one side, as opposed to indigenous political actors on the other. Was the delimitation in every respect the project of the central Soviet authorities and its local representatives, or was there some room for local political actors to influence the process? This is another question of considerable importance for the understanding of the Soviet regime of the mid-1920s, that is, in the middle of the New Economic Policy (NEP) era. Was the idea of a nationally-divided Central Asia forced upon the Central Asian population against its will, or did the reorganization to any significant degree correspond to political aspirations among Central Asians? This is related to another key question: did the entities established in the 1920s correspond to historical and contemporary patterns of identity in the region, or did they represent a typical example of colonial borders drawn by imperialists ignoring local realities? Finally, we will discuss the major historical implications of this reorganization.

The present study is first and foremost based on material from the archives of the Central Asian Bureau.[6] This material can be divided into four main groups. First are documents produced by the Central Asian Bureau itself and by the many committees established in connection with the delimitation. This includes resolutions and stenographic accounts from the meetings in the Central Asian Bureau, and from the Territorial Committee and its subcommittees as well as various other committees at work during 1924. This is particularly interesting as it includes representatives of the central Soviet authorities as well as the indigenous communists. This allows for a discussion of the position of indigenous political actors, their relations to the central Soviet authorities, and their potential for influencing the delimitation process.

A second type of material stems from the Communist Party organizations in Central Asia, whose activity was coordinated by the Central Asian Bureau: the Communist Parties of Turkestan, Bukhara, and Khorezm. A third source of material is the correspondence between the Central Asian Bureau and various other organs. This correspondence with the Central Committee in Moscow represents a good source of knowledge about the relation between the two levels. Furthermore, like the Central Asian Bureau's correspondence with the plenipotentiaries of the USSR in Bukhara and Khorezm, it throws light on the

Soviet authorities' perception of Central Asian society in the period prior to the delimitation. The same can be said about the reports from military and police authorities in Central Asia to the Central Asian Bureau.

Finally, the archives of the Central Asian Bureau include a collection of documents in various ways related to the delimitation. There are, for example, unsolicited appeals to the Central Asian Bureau from different formal or informal groups, providing a basis for discussion of the ways in which the indigenous population reacted to the delimitation project. It is equally interesting to analyze how Soviet authorities viewed the appeals. Popular opinion had considerable interest for the Soviet authorities, which led to a number of reports on the subject. I have also made some use of the Central Committee archives. However, they have more limited interest here as they include only resolutions and decisions and not the discussions that preceded them. In addition to this material from the party level, I have made use of some material from the state organs, namely from the All-Russian CEC.[7] However, in connection with the delimitation it is the party level that represents the greatest interest.

There are some obvious limitations in the material used for this study, particularly concerning conclusions about the local perspective. The Central Asian political actors appearing here are restricted to the tiny minority who held positions in the Soviet sphere, mostly belonging to the Communist Party. I do not claim that this minority was representative of Central Asia as a whole, and in that respect this is "Central Asian history" in a quite limited sense. Nevertheless, I do believe that this minority, however tiny, at this historical juncture was able to exert influence far beyond its size. Members of this group exerted considerable influence on important decisions of the Soviet authorities. Moreover, the fact that they were inside Soviet circles did not mean that they were entirely cut off from Central Asian society, and I argue that these influential Central Asians reflected important historical and social realities.

I approach these issues by way of a theoretical perspective made up of a variety of insights. These relate in part to the Soviet Union in general, in part to questions concerning colonial relations, and in part to general questions of national and other identities. During the Cold War period, Western studies of the Soviet Union tended to see "Moscow", or the central Soviet authorities, as omnipotent. Whatever the question, the answer was to be found in Moscow among the

central authorities and policy makers. This approach was characteristic of every field. On the one hand the notion of omnipotence implied that developments in all areas of society were more or less exclusively the result of state priorities and machinations. On the other hand it implied that the fate of the Soviet republics was entirely in the hands of an omnipotent "Moscow". In recent scholarly literature a more complex picture has developed. The omnipotence of "Moscow" has been replaced with a stronger focus on local agents and on local preconditions for the implementation of policies formulated in Moscow. This work is a part of that emerging tradition.

In regard to Central Asia, the image of an omnipotent Moscow has been intensified by the presence of a colonial dimension. For the history of Central Asia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is also a history of colonialism and colonization. As Edward Said pointed out in "Orientalism", in Western discourse on colonialism and imperialism there has been a strong tendency to focus almost exclusively on Western (imperialist) agents. As a result, the colonial situation has been seen from the perspective of the imperialists. The same tendency has characterized studies of Central Asia in general and accounts of the national delimitation in particular. This approach predominated until the end of the Soviet Union. Recently, however, a stronger emphasis on local agents has become evident. On the background of these developments I have developed an approach in which both a central and a local perspective are employed in order to allow "a multiplicity of voices to be heard",[8] or, at least, more than that of "Moscow" alone.

"Nation" and "national identity" are central concepts in this study. They are important not only in the sense that they were imposed on Central Asia by an alien power. "Nation" and "nationalism" are in my interpretation important concepts for understanding political developments in Central Asia during the first half of the 1920s from a local perspective. Agreement has long since been reached among scholars that national (or any other) identities are the results of historical processes rather than primordial qualities. There is a long scholarly tradition of discussing the emergence of nations and national identities in a developmental perspective. Although the approaches of influential scholars such as Anthony Smith, Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson have differed on important points, they have all concurred on the significance of long-term processes.[9] While not rejecting these interpretations, Rogers Brubaker has introduced a different perspective, particularly focusing on the eruptive aspects of "nation". He argues that in many cases the nation can be seen as "an event", that is, as a

political phenomenon that emerges under particular political and societal circumstances, rather than as a long (and necessary) development. This perspective has frequently been employed in analyses of post-Soviet societies in discussions of the political situation and relations in and between states. In my opinion, the same interpretive framework can increase our understanding of Soviet Central Asia in the 1920s as well. I argue that there was a development among Central Asian communists in the first half of the 1920s which resulted in the increasing importance of national identities.

This development was the result of changes in the political situation in that period, but it was also in line with a trend that emerged prior to the revolution and that was strengthened in the post-revolutionary situation. In that period, to borrow Alexander Motyl's terminology, nationalism as a "belief system" developed among some Central Asian groups.[10] In addition, the Bolshevik ideology of national equality as well as the Soviet practice of applying national categories in societal organization led to what I refer to as the "nationalization of political discourse" among Central Asian communists.

If the short-term political situation was essential for this development, there was historical continuity as well. For even though "the nation" in this sense is a modern phenomenon, the content that is put into this category is based on traditional and historical realities. As Anthony Smith has argued, even though the nation is in many ways a modern phenomenon, it at the same time bears with it pre-modern roots.[11] It is a main argument in this study that the nationalization of political discourse and ultimately the entities that were established as a result of the delimitation process to a great degree corresponded to historical divisions and formations in Central Asia.

The first chapter of this study presents a historiographical outline. In Chapters 2 and 3 I discuss the question of identities in Central Asia prior to the establishment of national Soviet republics. In Chapter 4 I discuss the central Soviet authorities' views of Central Asia prior to delimitation. I maintain that they perceived a deeply fragmented Central Asia, and I argue that the delimitation should be seen as an attempt to unite rather than to break up the region. The next chapter investigates the reality of the perceived fragmentation, with particular focus on national identities. I make the argument that a nationalization of discourse took place among Central Asian communists in the period preceding the delimitation. In the ensuing chapters I change the focus and discuss why the new map of Central Asia was drawn the

way it was. I argue that on one level there was a great deal of continuity between traditional identities and the new entities that were established. However, the delimitation was also a dynamic process in which local political agents used and manipulated the new divisions for their own purposes. In fact, this influenced the outcome of the delimitation process. Chapter 8 is a discussion of the main principles at work in the border-making process, while the final chapter is an exploration of the historical implications of the political reorganization of Central Asia. Rather than ultimately leading to the breakup of the Soviet Union, the establishment of national republics, not only in Central Asia but throughout the Soviet state, was what made a largely peaceful dissolution of the Soviet Union possible. Was the delimitation a catastrophe for Central Asia? In my opinion, not necessarily. There is, of course, no doubt that Soviet heritage encompasses several tragic dimensions. In the field of intranational relations, however, the situation is more ambiguous, and I believe there are some positive elements that can be of considerable value in post-Soviet Central Asia.

1
Historiography

Interpretation of historical events inevitably leads to dispute. The intensity of the struggle, however, will vary with the participants' sense of how much is at stake. Of course, Soviet history is a matter over which historiographical struggles have been particularly intense, as historical interpretations in this case were enmeshed in the struggle between socialism and capitalism, or liberalism; that is, between East and West in the second half of the twentieth century. Interpretations of Soviet nationalities policy in general and of the national delimitation in particular were no exception to this rule. In this chapter I will first focus on interpretations of the Soviet nationalities policy as a whole, followed by a discussion of the historiography of the national delimitation and its relation to Soviet nationalities policy.

It can seem a paradox that the Russian revolutionary socialists turned into first-rate nation-builders. To begin with, therefore, I will discuss how the Bolsheviks and other socialists and revolutionaries originally perceived of "the national question".

Marxism, socialism and the nation

In the period prior to the Russian Revolution, the concept of "nationhood" held a strong position in Europe. On the one hand was the heritage of romantic nationalism from the nineteenth century, conceptualizing humanity as an essentially finite number of nations, each with its distinctive character. On the other hand was a politically-oriented nationalism embodying the pronounced ideal that national and state boundaries ought to coincide. These ideological developments were intimately connected with the demise of the European empires and the peace settlement following World War I, the latter of

which represented the definitive breakthrough for political nationalism. In contrast, Marxism represented a fundamentally different alternative. On a theoretical level, it rejected the idea of the nation as a more or less natural category, arguing instead that the concept of nation was a historical construct, essentially a product of capitalism. Like religion, the idea of the national community concealed real class differences, and was in that sense another kind of "false consciousness". While in conflict with the predominating mode of thought at the time, the Marxist emphasis on the constructedness of the nation is now accepted throughout the scholarly community. However, Marx's quite narrow focus on capitalism as the key factor has been replaced with a broader focus on modernization, involving many of the elements included in the concept of capitalism, but not necessarily restricted to capitalism. Considering "nation" and "nationality" essentially as by-products of capitalism, Marx found no place for these categories in his plans for the future socialist world order.

The idea of the nation was for Marx essentially something negative, as it concealed true societal structures and real group interests. Divisions of the proletariat along national lines might prevent it from joining forces against the common class enemy, instead focusing attention on the respective national communities. As a corollary, Marx also found that in some cases the struggle for national separation and independence might be a productive force in the greater struggle of the proletariat and in the development of class-consciousness among its members. This was the basis for Marx's support of Irish and Polish independence movements. In accord with his general analysis of the nature of nationalism, Marx found that the English ruling classes nourished anti-Irish sentiments in the general English population. This, in Marx's opinion, drew the attention of the proletariat away from the question of class conflict and channeled antagonism instead into the field of national relations. If the Irish independence movement were crowned with success, such diversion would no longer be possible. In 1869, Marx drew the following conclusion:

> I have become more and more convinced – and the only question is to bring this conviction home to the English working class – that it can never do anything decisive here in England until it separates its policy with regard to Ireland in the most definite way from the policy of the ruling classes, until it not only makes common cause with the Irish, but actually takes the initiative in dissolving the Union established in 1801 and replacing it by a free federal relation-

> ship. And, indeed, this must be done, not as a matter of sympathy with Ireland, but as a demand made in the interests of the English proletariat. If not, the English people will remain tied to the leading-strings of the ruling classes, because it must join with them in a common front against Ireland. Every one of its movements in England itself is crippled by the disunion with the Irish, who form a very important section of the working class in England.[1]

In Marx's perspective, the idea of a national community had no value in itself – class was the only legitimate organizing principle in his vision. However, in particular circumstances support for national movements might be a tactical step in the short term for the realization of that vision. On this basis, one might agree with Alexander Motyl that a tactical exploitation of national movements was one part of Marx's heritage to the Bolsheviks and other socialists of the twentieth century.[2] However, it should be emphasized that this was not a very prominent aspect of Marx's thinking.

In the early twentieth century, differing opinions regarding the national question developed among those who aspired to realize Marx's political vision. On the one hand was the Austro-Marxist position, represented particularly by Karl Renner and Otto Bauer. They were generally sympathetic to national demands, and certainly much more so than Marx had been. In contrast to Marx himself, the Austrian Marxists found intrinsic value in the national principle, and pointed out that it had significance for the organization of the future socialist society in the matter of extra-territorial cultural autonomy. At the opposite end of the spectrum one finds Rosa Luxemburg and "national nihilism",[3] which was much closer to Marx's position than that of the Austrian Marxists. Luxemburg rather categorically rejected the idea of nationality as an organizing principle, and in Eastern Europe socialist circles, "Luxemburgism" was associated with uncompromising hostility towards all national movements.[4]

What was the position of Lenin and the Bolsheviks on this point prior to the establishment of Bolshevik rule? On this matter one finds a considerable degree of consensus among scholars. The Russian Social Democrats' approach to the national question originally largely concurred with that of Marx. At the turn of the century, the national question was no primary concern of the Social Democrats. Indeed, no mention was made of it at the first party congress in 1898. Furthermore, to the extent that the question was discussed, the attitude of the Social Democrats towards nationality as an organizing principle was

hostile. For the Social Democrats, nationality was ultimately connected with capitalism, a middle-class phenomenon opposed to the interests of the proletariat. Of the solutions that were discussed in the first 10–15 years of the twentieth century, the Social Democrats rejected both federalism and extra-territorial cultural autonomy. While most of the minority socialist groups favored the one or the other of these positions, the Social Democrats preferred large states and centralized power; federalism was in opposition to both these goals. Moreover, cultural autonomy would be an obstacle to the unification of the proletariat, diverting attention to nationality instead of class. Yuri Slezkine has argued, however, that even a self-declared internationalist like Lenin, who on a theoretical basis rejected the existence of national culture, in the final analysis conceived of humanity in terms of national communities, each exhibiting a unique character.[5] Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that a world organized politically along national lines had no place in Lenin's visions of a future socialist society.

However, theoretical preferences may be susceptible to changes in the real world. During the first 15 years of the twentieth century the prominence of the national question grew in Russian political life, which led both Mensheviks and Bolsheviks to devote greater attention to the issue, and to some extent to rethink their positions. In 1913, the Bolsheviks' increased attention to this issue materialized in Stalin's famous article on Marxism and the national question. Some aspects of the article were remarkably remote from Lenin's conception of nationality, and in particular Stalin's oft-cited definition of "nation". While admittedly, as Lewis Siegelbaum has pointed out,[6] Stalin thus defined the nation in historically contingent terms, what is striking about the definition is that it includes elements of a more "primordialist" approach to nationality and national communities. This made it significantly different from the original position of the Social Democrats.

In the following years, there was considerable debate among the Bolsheviks concerning the national question, and Lenin's slogan of self-determination of nationalities was at the center of the debate. Lenin's introduction of this slogan was, however, a pragmatic move and did not reflect any change in his main goals concerning the nationality issue. It is well documented that Lenin became increasingly aware of the potential of national liberation movements as valuable temporary allies in the revolutionary struggle.[7] The tactical aspect of the policy of self-determination is evident from all the reservations that were connected to it, and Lenin himself expressly stated that

the ultimate goal remained large states and a rapprochement of nations.[8] In spite of some disagreement in the Bolshevik camp, one may conclude that there was a general consensus that national organization did not belong in a future socialist society. Bolshevik attitudes towards the idea of the nation remained negative until the revolution.

Against this backdrop, it appears highly paradoxical that the state established in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution adopted precisely nationality as a major organizing principle. Indeed, the Soviet state institutionalized nationality in a way unparalleled by any other state. First, the Soviet regime established a link between ethnicity or nationality and territorial organization. The Soviet Union was organized into national territories on different levels in a hierarchical structure with the 15 union republics on top and nominally autonomous regions (republic, *oblast*, *okrug* and *krai*) on lower levels. The union republics were set up as quasi nation-states named after the predominating population group in the given area. The national delimitation of Central Asia in the 1920s was an important element in this strategy. In addition to national territories, the Soviet regime fostered the idea of national cultures, which were promoted among the various national groups. No doubt, this was a national culture that was designed by Soviet authorities so as to be compatible with the overall Soviet communist ideology, but conceptually it was a national culture. In the national cultures language occupied an important position, and development of national literary languages for the various groups was a key element in the institutionalization of nationality. Finally, the Soviet state made nationality a main category in its classification of the population. The famous fifth point in Soviet passports represented (supposedly) genealogical information about the holders. As Terry Martin has argued recently, the Soviet state made nationality a decisive criterion in the distribution of goods and resources such as jobs, education, positions in bureaucracy, and so on.[9]

In the scholarly literature on Soviet nationalities policy, two main interpretive frameworks can be identified. In the first, the Soviet emphasis on nationality is understood as power politics and as a strategy to secure Moscow's and central Russia's dominance over the borderlands. The second framework links Soviet promotion of nationality to the concept of modernization. From this perspective Soviet emphasis on national identity was a strategy for societal transformation rather than for establishing and maintaining political power. In the following I will discuss these two paradigms in greater detail.

Soviet nationalities policy: tactical concessions or instrument of modernization?

There is no doubt that Lenin and other Bolsheviks before 1917 became more aware of the revolutionary potential of the national question. In the "prisonhouse of peoples", dissatisfied and repressed nationalities might represent a useful temporary ally in the revolutionary struggle. In the mainstream of Cold War-period Western scholarship, the Soviet nationalities policy of the 1920s is perceived as a continuation of this power-oriented approach. From this perspective, the Soviet regime's use of nationality as an organizing principle represented tactical concessions aimed at securing the Bolsheviks' political dominance over the borderlands. The national concessions were intended as a "temporary solution only, as a transitional stage to a completely centralized and a supra-national world-wide Soviet state".[10] Moreover, the concessions were formal rather than real, in that real power remained firmly in the hands of the unitary Communist Party. The approach of the Bolsheviks to the national question remained essentially the same after the revolution as it had been before, even though realities made them establish national facades to accommodate national sentiment in the borderlands. That is the essence of the analysis of the formation of the Soviet Union that Richard Pipes made in the 1950s. This understanding of Soviet nationalities policy and of the promotion of nationality came to dominate practically all Western writing, including general works on the Soviet Union as well as more specialized studies of the Soviet nationalities policy. This was the case in Europe as well as in the USA.[11]

In a work about the national delimitation of Central Asia, it might be interesting to note that the same scholars, who support the tactical concession-perspective, identified a different logic in the case of Central Asia. According to scholars such as Pipes, Bennigsen, Conquest, Carrère d'Encausse and others, the organization of national administrative and political entities in Central Asia was not a question of concessions. On the contrary, the rationale was to divide and rule by destroying a genuine nationalism (Turkestanian nationalism) and replacing it with artificial national orientations (Uzbek, Turkmen, and so on). However, the overall interpretation remains the same: the mobilization of national identities was part of a struggle over political power and control. In the following I will return to the historiography of the national delimitation in greater detail.

Within this same interpretive framework, many scholars have drawn attention to the international dimension, arguing that the promotion

of national identity was the result of international concerns, too. Walker Connor has maintained that the Soviet Union's establishment of nationality-based entities was motivated by four main concerns. First, the national entities were meant to satisfy the national aspirations of groups in the borderland of the Soviet state. Second, it was a strategy designed to win support among peoples in the colonial world by demonstrating that people in the former Russian colonies fared much better than people in other colonized areas. Third, it was designed to appeal to the ethnic kinsmen of the borderland peoples outside the Soviet borders. Fourth, the arrangement was meant as international propaganda demonstrating the Soviet regime's respect for national rights of self-determination, a greatly esteemed slogan in world politics at the time.[12]

A few Western scholars proposed an entirely different interpretation. The most prominent example is E. H. Carr, who, in his work on the Bolshevik Revolution, took the pronounced intentions of the Soviet regime much more seriously. Rather than as a means of subjugating the peoples of the borderlands, Carr saw Soviet nationalities policy as a sincere attempt at realizing the egalitarian goals of the Bolsheviks. First, it was aimed at ending nationally-based discrimination, which had characterized the predecessors of the Bolsheviks. More significantly, Soviet nationalities policy represented a strategy for overcoming the factual inequalities that existed in almost every area (economy, culture, and so on) between central Russia and many of the peoples of the borderlands. Having developed a certain level of sympathy with the Bolshevik project, Carr argued that "what could be said in its [the Soviet nationalities policy's] favor was that the bourgeois theory of self-determination had by 1919 reached an impasse from which no escape was possible".[13] To Carr, the Soviet nationalities policy was a strategy for modernization and development (even though he did not necessarily use these terms much himself in this connection) of the borderlands conceived in the spirit of egalitarianism.[14]

Research into these questions has benefited greatly from the new political situation. Access to primary sources has provided a fundamentally new basis for study and analysis. In contrast to Norwegian political scientist Arne Kommisrud, I believe that this fact alone has made it possible to develop qualitatively new insights into the nature of Soviet state and society, and certainly much beyond mere journalistic scoops and sensations.[15] Second, the field has become depoliticized, and is now no more politically charged than scholarship in any other field. Since approximately 1990, a considerable amount of work has

been undertaken in the area of Soviet nationalities policy. Differences in emphasis notwithstanding, these works tend to reject the idea that power is the only relevant dimension for interpreting Soviet policies. In many recent works there is an emphasis on the connection between the nationalities policy and idea(l)s of societal transformation. Indeed, modernization is a key concept in many of these works.

The most insistent call for a reorientation in the study of Soviet nationalities policy was made by Yuri Slezkine in 1994. In his article, Slezkine argued that it was necessary to acknowledge the earnestness in the Soviet regime's promotion of ethnic particularism, while maintaining that scholars, in their eagerness to condemn the Soviet regime, had failed to notice its "chronic ethnophilia".[16] Slezkine identified three main factors that led to the Bolsheviks' adoption of the ethno-territorial principle in their nationalities policy. First, there was their belief that it was necessary to "preach" in the local languages, and that language was a transparent medium, without any connection to a "national form".[17] Second, Slezkine maintained that promotion of national identities in the borderlands was considered necessary in order to overcome national mistrust among the non-Russian groups. He particularly emphasized Lenin's distinction between "good" and "bad" nationalism, between the reprehensible great-power nationalism (or chauvinism), which might lead to a minority nationalism (or defensive nationalism), which Lenin considered legitimate. Third, Slezkine argued, like Carr, that the promotion of nationality was part of a "catching-up" strategy. Backward borderland peoples were to "catch up", economically, socially and culturally, with the population of central Russia. Furthermore, rather than continuity in the Bolshevik approach to the national question, Slezkine finds that important changes took place after the revolution. Initially, promotion of national identity had been accepted as a necessary evil, but by the time the tenth party congress in 1921 legitimized institutionalized ethnicity, the attitude had changed. From then on, promotion of nationality appeared as something "natural" rather than as a necessary evil.

Several recent works have attempted to capture the essence of the Soviet nationalities policy through the use of conceptual innovations. While Slezkine pointed to the regime's ethnophilia, Terry Martin labeled the Soviet Union the "Affirmative Action Empire".[18] Martin's argument is that the Bolsheviks, and particularly Lenin and Stalin, so much feared the development of defensive minority nationalism, that they promoted national identities to the point of affirmative action in favor of the potential minority nationalists. To this Martin adds a dog-

matic dimension of modernization, arguing that for the Bolsheviks the nation appeared to be a historically inevitable stage, related to modernization in a more general sense.

The modernizing dimension enjoys an even more prominent position in Francine Hirsch's analysis, in which the Soviet Union is referred to as an "Empire of Nations".[19] Hirsch maintains that Soviet nationalities policy should ultimately be understood as a strategy for modernization and development. In this perspective, the Soviet regime's modernization program was "state-sponsored evolutionism", a variation of Western colonial policy.[20] Modernization of backward borderland peoples was to be accomplished by organizing them into nations within the context of a "unified state with a colonial type economy". The goal was "double assimilation". National identification was to develop within a more fundamental loyalty to the Soviet state.

In his detailed analysis of the Bolsheviks and the national question, Jeremy Smith shares the view that the Bolsheviks were initially opposed to the concept of nationality. When they nevertheless made nationality a primary organizing principle, it was not simply as a tactic in a power struggle. Rather, the positive attitude towards the (idea of) nationalities was the result of the Bolsheviks' natural egalitarianism and an instinct for supporting the underdog.[21] While Martin pointed to the dogmatism of the Bolsheviks and their belief that the nation was an unavoidable historical stage, Smith emphasizes much more strongly developments in Bolshevik orientation on this matter. Originally perceived as a problem, national identity gradually came to be seen as something positive. It became a part of a solution in the short as well as in the long term. In the short term, the "national engineering" of the Soviet regime would enable the Bolsheviks to consolidate their rule and influence through the medium of national loyalties. Political stability was a scarcity, and "national engineering" was intended to increase the level of stability. In some regions, notably in the Caucasus, the promotion of national identities was to be particularly directed against interethnic violence, a grave threat to stability. In the long-term perspective, the use of the national framework was supposed to accomplish modernization, to improve material and cultural conditions in backward regions, and ultimately to develop the basis necessary for socialism.[22]

With these different positions in mind, we now turn to the historiography of the national delimitation of Central Asia in particular.

Soviet and Western accounts of the delimitation

The main point in all Soviet accounts of the delimitation, scholarly as well as popular, is that the establishment of national republics was the realization of the will of the Central Asian population.[23] Some take this position very far, claiming that the delimitation fulfilled an age-old longing of the Central Asian population.[24]

Many Soviet accounts demonstrate a perspective that seems quite foreign to Marx's and Lenin's positions. Some historical accounts discuss the political reorganization of Central Asia within a national-teleological perspective, in which the unification of the respective Central Asian national groups in separate political units is a major goal in itself. Only then can the national groups consolidate into "socialist nations".[25] Typically, these accounts do not problematize why "consolidated socialist nations" were to be preferred over other configurations.[26]

This perspective is based on an objectivist approach to the question of groups and identities, a quality it shares with most Soviet accounts of the national delimitation. They hardly discuss the relation between the ethnonyms, upon which the delimitation was based, and identities and group consciousness in Central Asian society at the time. A typical example is Vakhabov's *The Formation of the Uzbek Socialist Nation*. The author claims that the nationalities that were organized into separate national republics or *oblasts* during the delimitation existed before the revolution, but not as yet fully consolidated into nations. As the different groups were intimately related economically, culturally, and linguistically, it might be difficult to clearly distinguish them from one another. For instance, while the Uzbeks and Tajiks from Ferghana spoke different languages, they had a common economy, culture and way of life (*byt*). Moreover, there was the designation "Sart", applied to urban Uzbeks and Tajiks alike. It was even more difficult to differentiate between the Kara-kalpaks and Uzbeks of the lower Amu-Darya region, which "although they represented two different nationalities [*narodnosti*], had great resemblance in language, way of life and economy".[27] The groups were there, objectively, but their process of formation and consolidation was not yet completed: "One would come across clans and tribes that had not yet worked out their national consciousness."[28]

Although teleology was a feature of most Soviet accounts, other Soviet scholars offered a more thorough discussion of the background for the delimitation. In arguing for the necessity of the reorganization,

they take into account social, political and economic conditions in contemporary Central Asian society. Here, notions of national antagonism are important. The main argument is that the period before the delimitation was characterized by destructive national antagonism. The establishment of national republics might be the only effective solution. The emphasis is on allegedly objective conditions rather than a teleological nationalism seeing a national republic as a great value and as a goal in itself.

In Soviet accounts there is generally little room for dynamism or change. The purported antagonism was usually not problematized, and rarely related to historical processes. To the extent that history was allowed a role, the focus was primarily on the Tsarist period. Some argue that national antagonism increased during that period as a result of a divide and rule strategy on the part of the Tsarist regime in its attempt to secure its position in the region.[29] From most other accounts, however, one gets the impression that national antagonism represented a relatively stable condition. As a result, it becomes important to account for why the national delimitation was not carried through at an earlier stage. This is another question touched upon in practically all Soviet accounts, and the answer is always the same. Due to the weakness of Soviet power in the first years following the revolution, the struggle against the Basmachi uprising, and the immense economic problems experienced in its initial years, it was not feasible to undertake such an ambitious and extensive reorganization until 1924. One can hardly argue against that.

Nevertheless, the repeated insistence on the obstacles to delimitation appears conspicuous, and rather than as explanations for why something was *not done* prior to 1924, they must be seen as justifications of what *was done* in 1924. However, this is not necessarily an indication of widespread hostility towards the reorganization. It may equally well be seen as a result of the peculiar character of the Soviet system, in which expressions of uncertainty had no place, and in which it was essential to show that every strategic choice was fully in line with the grand plan laid out by the masters Marx and Lenin. In Soviet accounts it was a major concern to prove that the delimitation was not "the invention of some politician".[30] Instead it was set forth as an integral part of the Leninist nationalities policy of the Communist Party, and supported with references to previous similar initiatives. In 1920, the All-Russian CEC directed the Turkestan Commission and the Sovnarkom to express their opinion on the question of whether or not it was advisable to split the Turkestan ASSR. It was concluded that

a division was not advisable at the time.[31] The same year, Lenin ordered the development of an ethnographic map of Turkestan, partitioned into "Uzbekiia, Kirgiziia and Turkmeniia", and called for discussions regarding the fusion or separation of these areas in the future. Although important, national antagonism was not the only element in Soviet accounts of the delimitation. Some weight is also given to the interrelated phenomena of modernization and the strengthening of Soviet power. In part, the national delimitation is presented as a strategy intended to allow the respective nations a possibility to develop culturally, politically and economically.[32] As we will see in the following chapter, the idiom of "backwardness" became important in characterizing the Central Asian population in the Tsarist period. This applied to Tsarist officials and groups of Central Asians alike. Probably, "backwardness" became even more important in the Soviet context. In some Soviet accounts, the delimitation is seen as a strategy for overcoming Central Asia's backwardness, such as clan-based and tribal organization,[33] and what was rather imprecisely referred to as the "village way of life" (*aulnyi uklad*).[34]

Even though Soviet accounts indicate that the delimitation corresponded with the will of the people, there is no attempt to conceal the fact that opposition to the project existed. As always in Soviet communist rhetoric, those who opposed the project were seen to do so on a class basis, representing the interests of the bourgeoisie, and acting against the interests of the people (*narod*). However, opponents were also condemned as representatives of pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic movements or ideologies. As we will shortly see, these pan-concepts are important in much of Western scholarship. While focusing on popular will, the Soviet accounts at the same time present the delimitation as primarily the work of the Communist Party. The reorganization of Central Asia according to nationality was accomplished by the Communist Party, which thus fulfilled the promises of self-determination of peoples, made by Lenin and the Bolsheviks.[35] This largely accords with the prevailing Western interpretation, in that it recognizes the Communist Party and Soviet Power as the most important agents. But Western and Soviet accounts differ completely when it comes to the party's motivation to accomplish the reorganization.

A work that ought to be mentioned is Vaidyanath's monograph from 1967, one of the rare non-Soviet publications to deal with the formation of the Soviet Central Asian republics in a detailed fashion. Published in India, it is neither "Soviet" nor "Western", and as a non-Soviet publication it suffers from lack of access to materials essential to

the questions raised. However, the readiness of the author to accept the versions presented in Soviet scholarly literature on the national delimitation makes it fair to say that the work is located within the Soviet framework of interpretation. His main argument is that Central Asia in the years prior to the national delimitation was marked by "the aspirations of the local national groups like the Turkmens, Uzbeks, and Kazakhs to develop their own national languages, literature, culture, organs of administration etc".[36] According to Vaidyanath's account, it was the meeting between these aspirations and the Soviet nationality policy of self-determination that resulted in the national delimitation in 1924.

Western scholarship on the Soviet Union has suffered from two main shortcomings. On the one hand there was a lack of access to primary sources, which in 1964 made Geoffrey Wheeler conclude: "the factual information on which such a description [of the national delimitation] ought to be based is not, and probably never will be, available".[37] The second shortcoming that characterized Western Soviet scholarship was the strong politicization of the field. The Cold War polarization discussed above is very clearly present in Western scholarship on the delimitation. While Western scholars on their part rightfully accused the Soviet accounts for being based on political rather than scholarly considerations, Western scholarship has also been deeply politicized. Like the Soviet versions, which served to justify the Soviet regime, Western scholarship almost equally systematically argued in ways that undermined Soviet legitimacy. This tendency is clearly evinced in Western accounts of the delimitation, in which the "divide and rule theory" occupies a key position.

Although the Red Army and military power had been crucial in the establishment of Soviet Power in Central Asia, the cooperation of elements in the native population had also been decisive. Significant numbers of Central Asians were incorporated into the Party and into positions of influence. The basis for the divide and rule theory is an assumption that this Central Asian elite later became a threat to Soviet rule in the region, as its members intended to combine their forces against Soviet rule. The central Soviet leadership in Moscow was aware of that, and acted swiftly. To quell the threat, it was decided to pit the potentially unified Central Asians against each other by organizing them into national republics. This would presumably result in the various groups fighting each other rather than joining forces against Moscow. Baymirza Hayit passionately made this argument in the 1950s and 1960s,[38] and it was an important element in the writings of Alexandre Bennigsen from 1960 onwards:

> There is little doubt that the wish to forestall the fashioning of a pan-Turkestan national consciousness ... was central to the 1924 decision. One need only to recall that the Bolshevik leaders had to combat at the same period the ideas of Sultan Galiev and his followers on the union of all Turks of Russia into a single republic, Turan.[39]

It is true, as Adeeb Khalid recently pointed out, that Alexandre Bennigsen's works have been "enormously influential".[40] A more recent account more or less coinciding with Bennigsen's view is Stephen Blank's work on Stalin as Commissar of Nationalities. According to Blank, who substantiates his arguments with references to the works of Alexandre Bennigsen and Sir Olaf Caroe, "the facade of national self-consciousness and autonomy hid the fragmentation of real unity".[41] Blank argues that the national delimitation of Central Asia was a part of a great divide and rule plan, the essence of which was to accomplish the "fragmentation of Muslim unity".[42]

Most probably, this widely-shared opinion developed partly on the basis of émigré accounts, such as those of Mustafa Chokaev, the former president of the short-lived Kokand government. According to Chokaev, the national delimitation was a plan invented solely as a "counterpoise to Pan-Turanian tendencies", and that it was "the direct result of Sultan Galiev's attempted counterrevolution".[43] Edward Allworth also finds the divide and rule theory seminal to the understanding of the national delimitation. According to Allworth, the strategy had a two-fold goal, the primary one being to debilitate a potential enemy, while the secondary goal was to "validate Marxist theory of nationality development", and to demonstrate that history inevitably leads to ethnic segregation.[44] Again, the divide and rule perspective is linked to a perception that the introduced republics corresponded poorly with existing groups and identities, which was particularly the case as regards the identities "Uzbek" and "Tajik": "As late as the start of the 1920s no unified self-content Uzbek aggregate existed."[45]

At the same time, Allworth argues that the delimitation was the cornerstone in a segregation strategy that was essentially anti-Uzbek. Allworth appears to regard "Uzbek" as a sufficiently clearly defined identity, and argues that the Uzbeks posed a particular threat to Moscow. The forces that might lead to the integration of Central Asia were particularly related to the Uzbeks: they were geographically dispersed over great parts of the region, they had considerable political resources, and the Uzbeks exerted a pull of ethnic assimilation. The

assimilation could result in the integration of the region, prompting the central Soviet authorities to carry out the national delimitation in order to separate the influential Uzbeks from other Central Asian groups. In Allworth's understanding, this was in every respect Moscow's project and it met with considerable opposition from the Central Asian population, and in particular from the region inhabited "by those known as Sarts or Uzbeks".[46] While Bennigsen attempted to link the delimitation to specific events, this approach was not meaningful for Allworth. By relating the "ethnic compartmentalization" of Central Asia so specifically to Marxist theory, he suggests that a similar strategy would have been chosen even if there had been no "Uzbek threat".[47]

Even though probably important, the desire to vilify the Soviet government was hardly the sole factor in the development of the divide and rule theory. To a great extent, the argument is based on perceptions of the consequences of the delimitation. Carrère d'Encausse, for example, maintains that the plans for the reorganization of Central Asia led Kazaks, Kyrgyz and Uzbeks to fight for the establishment of a greater Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan respectively.[48] In a similar vein Olivier Roy maintains that:

> Stalin's great victory was that he made the intellectuals in Central Asia defend their own languages and "nations" against their neighbors, and not against Moscow, who instead was called upon for mediation and the settlement of conflicts.[49]

Although the Uzbeks according to Roy were favored in the national delimitation, the town of Osh was given to the Kyrgyz Autonomous *Oblast*. This provided the otherwise favored republic with elements of weakness and friction.[50] Moreover, Roy argues that the divide and rule principle was not restricted to the idea of pitting groups against each other. On the contrary, this was only one element in what he calls a strategy of Machiavellian calculations, the goal of which was to establish republics that might never become viable economical units. Real independence thus became impossible. However, consequences do not necessarily reveal intentions. Moreover, and this is at least as important, struggles such as those referred to by Carrère d'Encausse and Roy existed prior to the delimitation as well.

While Soviet accounts argued that the new political organization corresponded neatly to the predominating identity groups in Central Asia at the time, supporters of the divide and rule theory maintain that the introduced entities were poorly suited to Central Asian reality. This

forms an important part in Allworth's argument, and according to Bennigsen, a political reorganization based on nationality would make more sense if it established the following three entities: a Kazak-Kyrgyz entity, an Uzbek-Tajik entity and finally a Turkmen entity.[51]

In Western accounts of the national delimitation, the idea of the divide and rule principle became so widely accepted that it is fair to say that it developed into conventional wisdom. It was more or less routinely alluded to in works concerning Central Asia in particular, as well as in more general surveys of the history of the Soviet Union. However, as pointed out by John Schoeberlein, little evidence has been produced to substantiate this view. In the Cold War climate, Western scholarship on Central Asia was typically based on an aggressor–victim dichotomy. What was often mistakenly labeled "the Soviets" (in most cases probably signifying "Russians") comprised the aggressor, while the native population represented the victim. With the end of the Cold War, new approaches appeared that challenged this paradigm. The mentioned dichotomy has been problematized and a greater willingness developed to focus on factors internal to Central Asian society.

In an article in 1989, Bert G. Fragner criticized the tendency in Western Central Asian studies to focus on the "Soviet Muslims" exclusively within an anti-Soviet perspective, and as being totally dependent on "Moskauer Zentrale":[52]

> Hegemonic dependency is until this day characteristic for the majority of mankind, and the nations of Middle-Europe represent no exception. However, it would be completely wrong to see their history and culture in this perspective alone, ignoring all other aspects of human existence.[53]

Based on this assertion he calls for an approach that to a greater extent includes social, economic and cultural aspects of Central Asian society. Such an approach, Fragner argues, will reveal ignored elements of continuity in the national delimitation. The established republics were not arbitrary, but coincided significantly with historical, social and economic realities. The organization introduced in 1924 accommodated these realities much more effectively than would a Greater Turkestan including both Turkmen and Kazaks.[54]

A breakthrough in developing an approach to Central Asian studies, both more balanced and founded on an impressively solid empirical basis, is Adeeb Khalid's study of Jadidism in Central Asia.[55] Although primarily focusing on the Tsarist period, the work calls for a reconsid-

eration of the traditional understanding of the national delimitation, and dismisses the tendency to see "the emergence of distinct nations in the 1920s as the result of imperial fiat, a classic case of divide and rule, imposed by an omnipotent regime on a helpless victimized population".[56] Khalid challenges the understanding that "Central Asian identities were focused elsewhere and that Central Asians were only passive participants in larger dramas played out elsewhere".[57] The Tsarist period was a time of great social, economic and cultural change in Central Asian society. The period saw fundamental changes in group perceptions and group formation, and there is a line of continuity between redefinition of group and identity in this period and the emergence of distinct nations in the 1920s: "The roots of modern Uzbek predate the Soviet regime."[58] In Chapter 3 I will return to this argument in more detail.

Employing what he calls a politically-oriented approach, and drawing attention to intra-elite politics, Donald Carlisle focused on local participation in a somewhat different way:

> While recognizing the importance of figures in Moscow (Stalin in particular), emphasis is on the play of local politics and the place of native politicians whose cooperation with the Center was essential for the success of the project.[59]

In Carlisle's perspective, the national delimitation is the outcome of a political game involving internally competing Central Asian elites on the one side and the Central Soviet leadership in Moscow on the other. The divisions between the Central Asians "were by no means primarily ethnic in nature; the identities in conflict were essentially political and they produced patriotisms that were also regional or geopolitical, not merely 'national'".[60] According to Carlisle, one of the main keys to the delimitation is to be found among the Jadids of Bukhara, and in particular among Fayzullah Khojaev and his followers, who were "the principal instigators and main local beneficiaries of the national delimitation".[61] This is in opposition to Allworth's interpretation, in which Moscow deliberately operated through Bukhara to make the delimitation appear as the result of local initiatives.[62] On the other hand, in Carlisle's view the Uzbek SSR was a Greater Bukhara, demonstrating political continuity as well as reflecting the influence of the Bukharan elites.

In an article from 1995, Steven Sabol argued that there was an important ideological dimension involved in the decision to reorganize

Central Asia: the strategy was a response to local demands for autonomy. However, he does not reject the divide and rule perspective altogether, and furthermore argues that similar considerations were important on different levels as well, and that one concrete goal was to separate the main tribal units of Ferghana Valley.[63] Evidence, however, is scarce, and in the end Sabol puts greater weight on practical and strategic concerns. From this perspective, the delimitation was aimed at improving administration and planning in the region.

The national delimitation and the New Economic Policy

A fundamental point of controversy between Soviet and Western interpretations of the delimitation concerns the role of central political agents as opposed to local ones. This question, however, ought not to be restricted to the establishment of national republics in Central Asia. Indeed, an understanding of the relation between central and local political agencies in the delimitation is integral to the understanding of the New Economic Policy (NEP) period in a more general sense.

In important respects the years from 1921 to 1928 stand out from the preceding and the following periods. Lewis Siegelbaum has referred to this period as one "between revolutions", while Robert Tucker has called the NEP "an interval between two phases of the Russian revolutionary process".[64] In important respects the NEP era differed from the "War Communism" of 1918–21, and "Stalinism", which began in the late 1920s. How was the NEP era different from War Communism and Stalinism? The various opinions on this issue can be placed in a matrix made up of sets of opposing pairs. The most important oppositions are "state" as opposed to "society", "liberalization" as opposed to "state control", "pluralism and tolerance" as opposed to "uniformity and non-tolerance", "cooperation and consensus" as opposed to "violence and force", and "lower level and local influence" as opposed to "central dictate". During War Communism and the Stalin era, Soviet strategy was entirely dominated by the latter elements in these oppositions. In the years of the NEP, however, some argue that at least in comparison with the period before and after, there was some room for liberalization, pluralism and tolerance, cooperation, consensus, and compromise, as well as local influence.

For some scholars, the NEP is exclusively linked to the economic reforms, which indeed gave the period its name. Richard Pipes, for example, entirely rejects the idea that the NEP was a part of any general liberalization of Bolshevik attitudes. It was exclusively the result of

the economic, social and political disaster generated by War Communism, which, according to Pipes, was the most self-defeating policy conceivable. As a result of a growing peasant rebellion, the strategy that was later labeled War Communism had to be abandoned for both political and economic reasons.[65] In Pipes' view, therefore, the essence of NEP was "to purchase political survival with economic handouts that could be taken back once the population had been pacified".[66] Liberalization was only temporary, a necessary step, and restricted to the economy.[67]

Concerning the temporal perspective of the NEP, Pipes bases his argument on contemporary Bolshevik discourse, in which the NEP is routinely referred to in terms of "retreat" and a "regrouping of forces". Giving priority to these kinds of expressions, Pipes opposes the view held by others that a gradualist approach to social transformation developed. In this view, typically held by "revisionist" scholars attacking the "totalitarian" school's identification of Leninism with Stalinism, the NEP was not simply about "buying off" potential opponents. Rather, Soviet leaders came to see it as a relatively long-term strategy for gradual social transformation based on a collaborative economic policy.[68] This position rejects the claim of the "totalitarian school" that the cooperative socialism of the NEP was fundamentally in opposition to the ideological basis of the Soviet communists. According to one main exponent of this view, Stephen Cohen, who emphasized the "Bukharin alternative" to Stalin's program for collectivization and crash industrialization, "by the mid-twenties, NEP had achieved a general (if sometimes grudging) consensus among Bolshevik leaders as the proper transition to socialism".[69]

Scholarly disagreements over the NEP have not been restricted to the question of how Soviet leaders perceived it as a political strategy. Was the economic liberalization only one dimension of a more general liberal trend involving the above-mentioned qualities such as pluralism and tolerance, cooperation and consensus orientation, and lower-level and local influence? Richard Pipes rejects this quite categorically. In his opinion, "the relaxation of the state's grip on the economy under the New Economic Policy of 1921 [coincided with] a corresponding tightening of controls on all other aspects of national life".[70] In a recent contribution Nicholas Werth has supported this view. In his analysis, the Soviet regime of the NEP period was completely hostile to any kind of compromise.[71] As regards the cultural realm in Russia, Pipes maintains that "[s]uperficially, Russian cultural life under NEP continued to display the comparative diversity of the regime's early

years".[72] However, he does not really explain why this diversity was superficial.

According to Cohen, on the other hand, "[perhaps] the truest reflection of the pluralism of NEP society was to be found in cultural and intellectual life, always a barometer of genuine diversity and state tolerance. For here the twenties were a decade of memorable variety and achievement."[73] Indeed, Cohen finds the diversity to be genuine and the achievement to be substantial: "NEP culture ... was a major chapter in the cultural history of the twentieth century."[74] As a result of the relative tolerance in the cultural sphere, in the words of Lewis Siegelbaum, NEP made "fellow traveling" possible and even attractive. It was primarily the technical intelligentsia that were provided with "first-class accommodation", but the cultural intelligentsia also had a much easier time in this period.[75] Cultural tolerance was not only a question of the state's attitude towards writers, artists, and the intelligentsia. Robert Tucker has argued that the declared Soviet ambitions of cultural revolution during NEP were replaced with a more gradualist approach. Instead of trying immediately to break the old structure to its foundations, the idea of a transition period gained currency.[76] The result was a certain level of cultural tolerance.

The combination of economic reforms and relative tolerance in the cultural realm led to a period of remarkable social calm in the 1920s. The peasantry was largely left to itself between 1921 and 1929, and constraints on the intelligentsia – in the wide Soviet sense of the term – were not too severe. To some of them, the NEP represented a considerable improvement. Lewis Siegelbaum quotes a "non-party specialist" saying that "[i]t was at that point we came out of that airless crypt and began to breathe. ... Many of us felt that, thanks to the NEP, we had finally returned from the moon to the earth."[77] The "nepmen" too, even though despised by communists and often subject to popular antipathy, had a space in which they could maneuver quite freely in this period.[78] However, the social calm did not manifest itself everywhere or in the same way. According to Carrère d'Encausse, it was largely restricted to the Slavic regions: "Whereas the social revolution of wartime communism stopped in the Slavic countries in 1921, it continued elsewhere until 1929."[79] The notion of social revolution in Central Asia in the 1920s is particularly linked with the policy of Khujum, a militant campaign organized in the newly formed Central Asian republics by the Central Asian Bureau and the Zhenotdel, the Women's section of the RCP against the seclusion of women. The campaign was ultimately an attack on perceived manifestations of a kind of culture

and social structure for which there was no place in Soviet society. It was directed against various practices considered to have great influence on the role of women in society, such as veiling, the *kalym* (bride price – payment by the groom's parents to the bride's parents) and polygamy. However, the idea of the 1920s as a period of continuous social revolution in Central Asia is not unproblematic. The Khujum campaign was not begun until late 1926, and in the preceding years Soviet authorities had made a number of concessions in the cultural field, resulting in a period which had much more in common with the general picture of social calm than with the militant strategy of the Khujum.[80]

How does the national delimitation of Central Asia relate to the various interpretations of the NEP period? Was the creation of national Soviet republics in Central Asia a sign of liberalization or of state control, of pluralism and tolerance or of non-tolerance and insistence on uniformity? Does the delimitation suggest that the Soviet regime of the 1920s was intent on cooperation and compromise or was it accomplished by a regime hostile to any kind of compromise? Was there any room for local political forces and aspirations in connection with the national delimitation? My analysis suggests that it is insufficient to see the delimitation only as a part of a greater power game, and also that the divide and rule theory is untenable. I do not dispute that the delimitation was essentially the act of the Communist Party. In my opinion, however, local forces were able to influence the project to a much greater degree than has usually been acknowledged. Moreover, the records of the delimitation show that, at least to a limited extent, there was some room for cooperation and consensus in the Soviet Union of the 1920s.

Concerning the question of correspondence between the new republics and existing patterns of identity, I will argue that there was a considerable degree of continuity. However, and this is a very important point, the discussions in connection with the delimitation also reflected that identities were changing. This was partly the result of the policies and events of the Soviet period, but important changes took place in the decades prior to the Soviet Revolution as well. In the next two chapters, we turn to the question of Central Asian identities. First, I discuss the most important identities in Central Asia prior to the incorporation of the region into the Russian Empire. Second, I examine the Tsarist era and the question of how identities changed during that period.

2
Traditional Identities

As Central Asia was integrated into the Russian Empire during the latter part of the nineteenth century, military forces were followed by a host of Russian ethnographers and orientalists. There is general agreement that Tsarist Russia, in stark contrast to the succeeding Soviet regime, had no ambitions to change or reform Central Asian society in any fundamental way. Rather, its main aim was a maximum of control at a minimum of cost, and it was believed that knowledge of the region would facilitate political control. For the Russian scholars and orientalists who went to Central Asia, a major task was to identify the population of the region. Who were the peoples of Central Asia?

Uzbeks, Tajiks or Sarts?

In the world-view predominating in the Tsarist administration at the time, attaining as much knowledge as possible on the newly incorporated subjects would enhance possibilities for control. According to the maxim of "know your subjects", orientalists and ethnographers departed to Central Asia, their principal mission being to map the population of Central Asia.[1]

The work of the Russian scholars was characterized by the romantic nationalist assumption that humanity is ultimately divided into a finite number of "peoples" or "nationalities". As no consensus existed as to what constituted a people or a nationality, Russian scholars based their efforts on the use of ethnonyms, notions of race, linguistic practice, territorial affiliation, socioeconomic differences, and a number of other distinctions. However, they soon recognized that mapping the Central Asian population in this way was no easy venture. Not only did they

encounter practical problems, the entire conceptual basis seemed inadequate.

In their investigations, the Russian scholars met with a variety of group designations, many of which refused to comply with the scholars' conceptual framework. This was particularly the case with the designations "Sart", "Tajik" and "Uzbek". The designations crossed expected boundaries, particularly linguistic ones. Moreover, they involved boundaries that, according to the orientalists, were not relevant or decisive for what was to be considered a "nation" or a "people". In particular, this involved socioeconomic realities. As a result, Central Asian group designations represented a conundrum for the scholars. The scholars of the empire were more concerned with etymology than social practice,[2] but their studies also provide us with valuable information concerning contemporary usage of the various names.

Although there had been some disagreement as to the usage of the term "Sart", Samoilovich concluded in 1910 that the majority of Russian orientalists agreed that:

> Following the Arab conquest, the original Iranian population of Central Asia was given the name "Tajiks" by the nomadic Turks in the North, a name that they adopted. In the course of time, and no later than the time of the Mongol conquest, the Turks again gave this population a new name, "Sarts", although this did not replace the first one. Prior to this, the term "Sart" had not had any ethnic meaning. Consequently, the ancestors of today's Sarts were by blood and language Iranians.[3]

In this sense, "Sart" is virtually synonymous with "Tajik", and Samoilovich himself referred to Sarts and Tajiks without indicating any difference between the two designations.[4]

Gradually, however, according to orientalists such as Radlov, Bartol'd and others, the Iranian dimension of "Sart" faded out of use as the Sarts mixed with Turkic-speakers of the region. Consequently, beginning in the seventeenth century, "Tajik" and "Sart" ceased to be synonymous. The first referred to the non-Turkified Iranian population, and the latter to the Turkified population of Iranian origin. Bartol'd links the separation of "Sart" from "Tajik" to the sixteenth-century conquest of the Uzbek tribes. For the conquerors, the Turk–Tajik distinction had no relevance; to them the entire sedentary population was "Sart". Under the influence of the conquerors, the entire urban population began to call themselves "Sarts", but "due to the great tribal differences between the

Turks and the Tajiks, the two peoples could not be called by the same name". As a result, the urban Turks began to be called "Sarts", distinguishing them not only from the nomads, but from the Tajiks as well, "Tajik" now referring exclusively to the Iranian-speaking population. Once synonymous, "Sart" and "Tajik" now had different references.[5] However, this was probably a simplification. Due to local variations in the use of the terms in question, Bartol'd's description cannot be applied universally.[6]

While the Russian orientalists spent much time trying to come to terms with the roots of "Sart", "Uzbek" represented no problem in this respect. The designation "Uzbek" entered Central Asia with the Shaybanid conquest in the sixteenth century. The dynasties that ruled the khanates from this time on descended from the Shaybanid conquerors, and were thus considered "Uzbek dynasties". Although "Uzbek" was primarily associated with the ruling elites, the general population began to use this as a self-designation as well, in their capacity of subjects of Uzbek dynasties.[7] But if the origin of the word was known, it was far more difficult to give any precise analytical definition of its referent.

Attempts to differentiate between "Uzbek", "Sart" and "Tajik" from each other involved linguistic practice and socioeconomic categories as well as social organization. Khoroshin makes use of two categories simultaneously:

> The population of the Turkestan krai consists of two peoples [*narodnosti*]: the settled Tajiks and the half nomad Uzbeks, who in their turn have had great influence on the Tajiks, turning parts of them into Sarts, a settled people of Tajik origin speaking the Uzbek language.[8]

Khoroshin's text effectively demonstrates the problems involved in distinguishing between various "peoples". On the one hand, Khoroshin claims that linguistic criteria are decisive for membership in the various groups, saying that Tajiks are Iranian-speaking, Sarts are linguistically Turkicized Tajiks, and that Uzbeks are uniformly Turkic-speaking. At the same time the text includes references to "Sart-speaking Tajiks", which does not accord with the categories applied. Furthermore, the Uzbeks, who were first referred to as a half-nomad people, are later said to be "partly settled, partly half-nomad and partly nomad".[9]

The main distinction in Khoroshin's work between "Sart" and "Uzbek" was that the first were of Iranian origin, while the latter were

originally Turks. Other scholars employed different categories in their attempts to establish a systematic Uzbek–Sart distinction. Some found that the distinction between nomads and settled was the most important one, with nomadic Uzbeks as opposed to settled Sarts, both groups being Turkic-speakers. According to the orientalist Radlov, however, the main distinction was not between settled and nomadic but between urban and rural. In his view "Sart" implied urban, and "Uzbek" rural.[10] Others again, such as Samoilovich, found the key to the Uzbek–Sart distinction in differences in social organization. Whether settled or not, Uzbeks were Turks with their traditional clan-tribal consciousness intact, while Sarts were Turkic speakers without this quality.[11] Several scholars shared his opinion on this point.[12]

John Schoeberlein maintains that those who identified as Uzbeks did so as subjects of the ruling Uzbek dynasties, and not on the basis of linguistic affiliation or type of social organization. Consequently, the Uzbek identity included Turkic and non-Turkic speakers as well as people with or without tribal identities.[13] The strong tradition of bilingualism in the region would render any division strictly according to linguistic criteria problematic. However, based on the assessments of the Russian scholars, it seems reasonable to conclude that there was a Turkic element to "Uzbek", suggesting a distinction along the Turkic–Iranian boundary.

The Russian scholars' conceptualization of Central Asian society was dominated by three supposedly interrelated dichotomies: Turkic as opposed to Iranian, nomadic as opposed to settled, and finally, existence as opposed to absence of tribal lineages. The elements of these dichotomies represent what John Schoeberlein has called the "pure" forms of Turkic and Iranian culture.[14] They represent the extremes of a civilizational continuum, characterized by age-long interaction and mixing. The Russian scholars attempted to group the population of Central Asia in a way that would cause the various groups and peoples to fall into neatly distinct compartments in this great space.

When this enterprise largely failed, it was ultimately because reality was too complex. The existing patterns of group identity did not conform to the categories employed. Furthermore, when different scholars came up with different conclusions and categorizations, it was a reflection of the fact that the group designations in question had no precise or unambiguous reference, but were attributed different meanings by different people at different places and times. For instance, as Bartol'd noted, when Kazaks used the designation "Sart", socioeconomic

aspects were predominant. They primarily referred to the settled population of Central Asia, whether Turkic- or Iranian-speaking.[15] In the official terminology of the Russian administration, however, "Sart" was applied to Turkic speakers alone. Having traveled in Central Asia, Samoilovich concluded that while "Sart" had little, if any, ethnic meaning in Tashkent, Samarkand, and Bukhara, in Khiva the term was still used to designate ethnicity.[16]

In their largely objectivist approach, the imperial scholars more or less refused to take social practice into account. In their opinion, use and misuse of labels might obscure the matter, which the following passage illustrates: "Not all Central Asians who call themselves Sart, or who are called Sarts by others, are actually Sarts in the ethnic sense."[17] The fact that the various designations were used in different ways in different contexts made the task of the Russian scholars virtually impossible. Consequently, the relation between the discussed concepts and those promoted in the delimitation is a problematic one. Even though the group labels "Uzbek" and "Tajik" were given priority in the 1920s and made the basis for the reorganization of Central Asia, they did not refer to groups that could easily be traced back in time, not even for a rather limited number of years.

The Uzbek–Sart complex was a particular problem. In Tsarist colonial discourse "Sart" came to be applied to the Turkic-speaking elements of the sedentary population of Central Asia, as opposed to "Tajik", exclusively referring to Iranian speakers. As a result of this practice, in the census of 1897, the number of "Sarts" (951,337) exceeded that of "Uzbeks" (725,602) in the three main *oblasts* of Turkestan: Ferghana, Syr-Darya and Samarkand. The eagerness to understand "Sart" as a people or a nationality, also led the Russian orientalist Ostroumov to establish a Sart literary language, which was supposed to be distinct from Uzbek and other Turkic languages and dialects.[18]

Less than 30 years later, the censuses looked very different. The number of "Uzbeks" had increased enormously while the "Sarts" had largely disappeared altogether. I will return to this issue in later chapters. At this point I will only conclude that the Russian scholars found it difficult to identify the "true nationality" of the Central Asians, and "Sart", "Tajik" and "Uzbek" were at the core of their problems. Boundaries overlapped in unexpected ways. In the case of "Sart", "Tajik" and "Uzbek" the degree of overlap was considerable, and much of what they had in common was affiliation with the historically significant socioeconomic formation one might call "the sedentary population of Transoxania".[19]

Islamic and local identities

As the main subject of this study is the national delimitation, I have focused on the identity designations on which the delimitation was based. However, this does not imply that these were the most important identities to most Central Asians at the time. In daily life, Central Asians tended to identify with smaller and more limited entities, which was one reason for the Russian scholars' puzzlement. This was clearly expressed by Bartol'd in his classic formulation:

> The settled population of Central Asia think of themselves primarily as Muslims, and think of themselves only secondarily as living in a particular town or district; to them the idea of belonging to a particular people [*narod*] is of no significance.[20]

If we put the religious aspects aside, what Bartol'd pointed out was the insignificance of designations such as "Uzbek" and "Tajik", which, in the terminology of Bartol'd and the other Russian orientalists of the time, would be considered "peoples". The most important aspects of "people", as used here by Bartol'd, seem to be the problematic categories of "stock", "race" or "origin", as well as linguistic practice. Bartol'd noted that for the settled population of the oases of Central Asia, affiliation with this particular locality was crucial for their self-identification, while belonging to more widely defined groups, except for membership in a religious community, was hardly important at all. These communities of towns or districts were truly multiethnic, and they cut across the linguistic boundaries of the Turkic–Iranian dichotomy. In addition, the concepts of Turkic or Iranian descent did not have any significant place in the self-conceptualization of these local communities.

If "Uzbek" and "Tajik" were relatively insignificant concepts in the Tsarist period, this was about to change. In 1928, the journal *Za partiiu* included an article with the following title: "The people of Bukhara and its surroundings: are they Uzbeks or Tajiks?"[21] While indicative of a political struggle that was taking place in Central Asia in the second half of the 1920s, this question would have had little relevance at the time when Bartol'd made his observations. In the following chapters I intend to explain the change that took place between Bartol'd's observation and the publication of the above-mentioned article. At this point, suffice it to emphasize that at the time of the Russian conquest in the nineteenth century, Uzbek and Tajik were not particularly important identities.

In addition to the secular identities connected to particular localities, a major source of identity in nineteenth-century Central Asia was Islam, which had entered the region during the Arab conquest. Following the Arab invasion, towns like Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand became important intellectual centers of the Muslim world. Bartol'd perceived Islam as the ultimate source of identity for the settled population. He envisioned a hierarchy of identities in which Islam predominated over all other forms of identity. Bartol'd was consistent with modern understandings of identity in recognizing the existence of various simultaneous identities, but the notion of a fixed interrelationship between them cannot be considered adequate. It is not theoretically possible to point out any particular identity that would outweigh all other identities *in all situations*.[22] Furthermore, Islamic identity in Central Asia was not and is *not one phenomenon*. Rather, Islam represented and still represents a variety of identities on different levels and displaying different content and meaning.

In nineteenth-century Central Asia, Islam was the ultimate source of social authority. This authority could be derived in two different ways. First, there were the *Ulama*, people of religious learning, possessing the quality of "*ilm*" (learning) in its widest sense. Another group derived their Islam-based authority from claims to "holy descent" or "sacred lineages", that is, claims to be the descendants of persons considered holy within the given Islamic tradition. In the above quote, Bartol'd reserves the predominant Islamic identity for the settled population of Central Asia. Even though this must not be understood as implying that Islam was not important among the nomadic, or half-nomadic population, the nomadic–settled dichotomy has relevance for the understanding of Islam in Central Asia.

In the areas of predominantly sedentary population, an institutionalized form of Islam developed, often referred to as "orthodox". In this social configuration, the *Ulama* came to hold an important position of authority. Nomadic way of life, on the other hand, to quote Shirin Akiner, "was not conducive to a spread of the orthodox, mosque-centered faith of the sedentary population".[23] Among the nomads, religion was less institutionalized, and there were no *Ulama* of the same influence and authority as among the sedentary population. Instead, notions of holy descent (which, as mentioned, were important among the settled population too) were more prominent as a basis for authority, as was the case among the Turkmen, and the *övlat*, or "holy tribes". In his study on the Turkmen *övlat*, Sergei Demidov acknowledges that the five Turkmen *övlat* groups (Khoja, Shikh, Seiit, Magtym

and Ata) enjoyed considerable social authority based on the notion that they had descended from the first four Caliphs.[24]

Their authority found expression in a variety of ways. Irrespective of age, which is otherwise traditionally a source of authority in Central Asian society, *övlat* members would be addressed by non-*övlats* in a way that reflected the authority invested in the *övlats*. During various celebrations at which many people assembled, *övlat* members would often be given some kind of award, not of any economic significance, but as recognition and manifestation of their authority in society. Furthermore, non-*övlats* expressed their acceptance of *övlat* authority in providing their children, most notably their sons, with *övlat* names.[25] The position of authority held by the *övlat* groups was summed up in the following proverb: "He who honors the *övlat*, will be rewarded in this and in the next world."[26]

Religiously-based authority among the Turkmen was not restricted to the alleged descendants of the Caliphs. The authority of the Mullahs was based on Islamic learning, and their primary task was the education of children. Also, the Mullahs played a significant role in important events such as weddings and funerals, as well as in the organization of the Friday prayers.[27] Perhaps the most important example of the social authority of the Mullahs was their role as mediators in economic or other conflicts. Observing the Turkmen during the Tsarist period, the Russian G. Kostin wrote that "all disagreements over property are settled exclusively by the Mullahs on the basis of the Sharia, and in the opinion of the pastoralists, only the Mullahs had the authority to do that".[28]

These examples of *övlats* and Mullahs show that Islamic identity was not restricted to the sedentary population of traditional Islamic strongholds such as Bukhara, Khiva and Samarkand, even though identities and forms of authority were not necessarily identical. And although Soviet scholars such as Demidov took pains to prove the falsity of the alleged Arabic descent of the *övlat* groups, conceptually, for *övlats* as well as non-*övlats*, their position was entirely based on notions of Islam, as was the authority of both the Mullah and the learned of the *Ulama*. It should also be stressed that notions of sacred lineage are not exclusive to the nomadic population. Indeed, they are found throughout Central Asia, cross-cutting boundaries of language, socioeconomic structure and social organization.[29]

The concept of sacred lineages couples Islam with another of the most important forms of traditional Central Asian identity, the notion of *descent groups*. Central Asian society is commonly referred to in

terms of "tribes" and "clans"; that is, groups formed on the basis of an idea of common descent. While there is much debate as to the significance and importance of this kind of identity in contemporary Central Asia, it is generally accepted that descent groups and lineages traditionally were among the predominant foci of identity for Central Asians. As was briefly commented on above, the existence and importance of lineages is supposed to correspond to the Turkic–Iranian dichotomy. Typically, Turks have lineages, Iranians do not. Furthermore, also corresponding to the "ideal types" of Turkic and Iranian civilizations, the existence and strength of lineages to some extent reflected the settled–nomadic dichotomy. This was noted by the orientalists of the Tsarist period: "In any places in Central Asia (although, for instance, not in Khiva), the tribal consciousness has been significantly weakened."[30] Even though absolute terms should be avoided, it seems justifiable to say that notions of lineage and descent group were most prominent among the non-sedentary population, while generally weaker and less significant among the settled. Among the latter, on the other hand, affiliation to a particular locality was more pronounced. Later in this chapter I will return to the question of descent groups and lineages in more detail.

In the realm of social authority, Islam structured the relations between members of society. Of course, Islam was also a confessional identity, providing the individual with a sense of a place in the world as a whole, an identity that was both confirmed and created in the performance of various practices conceived of as "Muslim". It has been a widely shared opinion that Islam both as a belief and as a confessional identity was (and still is) stronger in the areas of a traditionally settled population than among the (former) nomads, yet it is difficult to substantiate such arguments. In Soviet scholarship, based on an objectivist concept of identity, much energy was spent arguing for the non-Islamic character of religious beliefs and practices in Central Asia, particularly in relation to the traditionally nomadic groups. The argument was that much of the religious belief and practice of Central Asians could hardly be called Islamic.[31] Islam was regarded as a finite, objective entity, while little attention was paid to the way in which people themselves conceived of their various practices, traditions, and so on. In the experience of the population, none the less, much of what was dismissed as "pre-Islamic survivals" by Soviet scholarship was truly Islamic. Moreover, considering that social authority among the nomadic groups was also to a great extent rooted in Islam, the settled–nomadic distinction regarding Islam becomes a

problematic one, or at least not one of Islamic versus non-Islamic cultures.

Islamic identity was not only a question of religious belief or of social authority. On another level, "Muslim" was a very wide and inclusive identity, encompassing the native population of Central Asia as a whole. "Muslim" in this sense grouped together individuals representing various cultural backgrounds all identified as "Muslim". However, this did not mean that there existed an idea of Central Asian unity, and there was no territorial aspect to this identity. Instead, this aspect of "Muslim" identity became very useful and relevant in Central Asia's encounter with Russia and Russians in the nineteenth century, and "Muslim" gained currency as a way of distinguishing between Russians and other Europeans on the one side, and Central Asians on the other. In this sense, "Muslim" referred to all native Central Asians alike, irrespective of socioeconomic, linguistic or other differences. Moreover, it was largely void of religious meaning, in the sense that no assumption was made about the religious conviction of those to whom it referred.

This concept of "Muslim" comes out very clearly in the notion of "Muslim language", a term that was the result of the Tsarist administrators' failure to distinguish between the different languages spoken in Central Asia.[32] The term "Muslim language" was applied as an unspecified reference to any of the Central Asian languages, and Russians used it as a synonym for "native" (*korennyi*). This did not mean that the Russians in question were unaware of the existence of different languages, or that they believed that there really was one "Muslim language" as such. The same term was used in the 1920s as well, mostly in informal contexts, and it distinguished between "local language" on the one side and Russian on the other. In situations that required a greater level of precision, more specific references would usually be applied.[33] The "Muslims" themselves adopted this particular use of "Muslim". At the sessions of the Central Asian party organs in the first years of the Soviet period, Central Asians routinely used the term "Muslim language", and it was almost exclusively used in situations involving a Russian–native dichotomy. The following words from one Central Asian party member are illustrative: "If the majority of the members of the presidium of Turkestan CEC are Muslims, then one should speak [the] Muslim language."[34] Typically, a few passages below, "Muslim language" is exchanged with "local (*mestnyi*) language", used with the same meaning. Outside the sphere of the Russian–native dichotomy, "Muslim language" would be replaced with references such as Uzbek, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, and so on.

The development of a "Muslim" identity in this broad sense has had profound significance for the way in which Central Asians conceived of themselves during and after the Soviet period. John Schoeberlein has noted that the sense of "Muslim language" meaning "a[ny] Central Asian language" is still alive in the region, suggesting that Islam is still an important dimension in the self-identification of Central Asians.[35] However, this does not necessarily imply that continuity is absolute, as, for example, David Nissman has argued regarding Turkmenistan. He maintains that anti-Islamic propaganda of the Soviet period had been largely ineffective, leaving the Islamic dimension of society more or less intact.[36] This is a hasty conclusion, as nominal continuity is not necessarily the same as continuity of meaning. When present-day Central Asians identify themselves as "Muslim" and may even refer to a "Muslim language", this does not in itself indicate that they identify in the same way as did "Muslims" of Central Asia a century earlier, or that atheist propaganda had been a failure altogether. It primarily means that Central Asians, irrespective of personal belief, feel that they belong to culture that is "Muslim" in a very wide sense. The same phenomenon is reflected in Chantal Lemercier-Quelquejay's observation that identifying as, for instance, a "Kyrgyz" but not a "Muslim" is close to a contradiction.[37]

Even though Bartol'd was conceptually mistaken in presenting one particular identity as superior to all other identities, it remains true that being "Muslim" was important to the bulk of the population in Tsarist and pre-revolutionary Central Asia. People considered their way of life, practices, and traditions to be "Muslim", and social authority was to a great extent based upon Islam. In the increasing contact with Russians in late nineteenth and early twentieth century, "Muslim" also took on a broader meaning, defining the boundaries between the populations native to Central Asia and the European newcomers.

Except from the "Muslim" identity, broadly defined identities had no prominent position in Central Asia. For the sedentary population more limited local identities had much greater importance, as had notions of descent groups and tribal lineages. Being an inhabitant of, for instance, Bukhara, or belonging to a particular lineage or descent group, was much more significant than being "Uzbek", "Tajik" or "Sart". As a result, when discussing nineteenth-century Central Asia, referring to an "Uzbek" or a "Tajik" nation or nationality is problematic, although Soviet historiography found few conceptual difficulties in tracing the respective nations even as far back as antiquity. One

must agree with Edward Allworth, arguing that this perception was based on a backward projection of realities.[38]

Tribal conglomerates and descent groups

Because of the ambiguity of these designations, I have deliberately avoided referring to "the Uzbeks" and "the Tajiks". On the other hand, such as in the discussion of the *övlat* groups, I referred to "the Turkmen" without further problematization. This was not the result of logical inconsistency, but because this particular designation was less problematic than the two others. In the preceding paragraphs, genealogically-based identities were viewed in opposition to broader ones, such as Turkic and Iranian and Uzbek, Sart, or Tajik. However, identities defined by genealogy were not necessarily limited to small descent groups, notions of common descent also constituted, at least conceptually, groups counting hundreds of thousands or even millions of individuals. This was the case with the Turkmen, the Kazaks and the Kyrgyz, tribal conglomerates that, in the words of Khalid: "retained their distinctive identities, rooted in myths of origin that defined them against other groups in Transoxania".[39]

Let us begin with a closer look at the Turkmen. To what extent did there exist a well defined group of "Turkmen" in nineteenth-century Central Asia, and what kind of community was this? In accordance with the claim that the national delimitation corresponded to objective ethnic realities, Soviet scholarship consequently used the term "the Turkmen people" in accounts of the nineteenth century (as well as those addressing earlier times, for that matter), and the same terminology is applied in much of Western scholarship.[40] Even though "Turkmen" had a less problematic reference in the nineteenth century than "Uzbek" or "Tajik", using a concept like "people" is still questionable. It includes a number of non-specified references, and seems to imply a cohesion that might not have been there.

Whether or not there was a "Turkmen people" is therefore a complex question. What did exist, however, was a number of lineages and descent groups that were accepted by their members as "Turkmen". An all-Turkmen ideology existed, and, at least conceptually, it united the different tribes in a wider Turkmen community.[41] A number of descent-based groups linked themselves to this genealogy, the most numerous ones being Teke, Yomut, Ersari, Chovdur, Salor and Saryk. Members of these groups considered themselves part of a Turkmen genealogy, and they were identified by others as Turkmen. It is

characteristic that the Turkmen identity caused the Russian ethnographers much less pains than, for instance, "Uzbek", "Tajik" or "Sart". As far as the Russian scholars were concerned, the "Turkmen people" was not a particularly problematic entity.[42]

However, boundaries were not always clear-cut. Particularly in the areas of Khiva or Bukhara, where groups identifying and identified as "Turkmen" lived alongside a non-Turkmen population, identities could be much more ambiguous. This point is neatly illustrated in the following somewhat frustrated conclusion from October 1923, of a commission set up to determine the "true identity" of various groups populating the Charjou district of Bukhara:

> Considering that the tribes of Salur and Baiad on the one hand consider themselves Turkmen, on the other hand Uzbeks and on the third refuse to call themselves by nationality altogether, the commission concludes that it did not succeed in establishing the nationality of the mentioned tribes. Concerning the tribe Khidir-Illi, in spite of the fact that certain individuals of this tribe called themselves Turkmen, the answers must be considered erroneous, and we choose to consider the tribe of Khidir-Illi Uzbeks.[43]

This document is an interesting source of Soviet conceptions of identities in general, and we will return to the issues it raises in later chapters. The point made here is that although the idea of a Turkmen identity was less problematic than, for instance, an Uzbek one, boundaries could not always be easily drawn.

Perhaps even more important than the question of boundaries is the question of significance. What did it mean to people that they considered themselves members of an all-Turkmen genealogy? To what extent did this influence peoples' actions and lives, and what were the political implications? In a sense, one might say that the Turkmen tribes have been characterized by a marginal existence. To a considerable degree, they have been living on the fringes of more or less powerful states that with varying success claimed authority over the various tribes. From the sixteenth century on, the most important states were the khanates of Bukhara and Khiva, both loosely defined territorially. They maintained a core territory, while control of the peripheries varied greatly according to their political strength at the given time. In the first half of the nineteenth century, claims to supremacy over what is today Turkmenistan and its population were made by Khiva and Persia, as well as Bukhara. In sum, the Turkmen tribes lived in a field

of tension between the rule of the tribe and the power of the surrounding states.

What were the reactions, attitudes and strategies of the Turkmen tribes in this situation? One answer is given by Mehmet Saray in his dissertation *The Turkmens in the Age of Imperialism*. Saray here terms the period 1800–60, when the Turkmen tribes were exposed to this three-way pressure, "the struggle for independence", a characterization indicative of the general perspective of this work.[44] By referring to all instances of clashes between the various Turkmen tribes and the above-mentioned powers as "*the* struggle", Saray implicitly suggests that this was *one* phenomenon, one great all-Turkmen struggle, rather than a series of separate incidents. In Saray's view, those who acted and participated in the struggles did so as Turkmen and not as members of tribal or other groups. This applied to the Yomut–Khivan strife at the beginning of the century, the struggles between Persia and the Southern Yomuts in the 1830s, as well as the clashes between Persia and the Goklen tribe in the same decade. In these and other cases, the members of the Yomut, Goklen, and other tribes are systematically referred to as "the Turkmens", suggesting that "Turkmen" was their primary identity in the discussed events.[45]

However, there seems to be little evidence that identification with other Turkmen was particularly important in these struggles. It is rather the case that the author in retrospect rhetorically applies a Turkmen dimension, thus lending it much greater weight than it had at the time for those involved. Instead, the tribal level was paramount, a fact borne out by the interaction between the tribes and the various external forces. As Russia increasingly became a key actor in the region throughout the nineteenth century, it interacted with individual tribes, and not any collective Turkmen entity.[46] An early example is the Yomut petition for Russian protection against Khiva and Persia in the mid-1830s. From Saray's perspective this becomes a "Turkmen request", while there is no argument that the request was to represent all Turkmen.[47]

Although the tribe was the main level of action among the Turkmen, examples of a more concerted Turkmen effort were also found throughout the nineteenth century. In the 1850s, the khan of the Teke, Nurberdy Khan,[48] succeeded in uniting the Teke, the Saryk and the Salor in a common struggle against Persia. However, there is little to suggest that there was any essential difference between this unified effort and previous temporary alliances between the various Turkmen tribes and other powers, whether Turkmen or not. For example, earlier in that century, both the Teke and the Yomut entered into alliances

with Khiva, or had at least intended to do so.[49] Moreover, Nurberdy Khan's union did not include the Yomut, one of the most important and numerous groups. And in their relations to Russia in the second half of the century, the Turkmen tribes continued to relate to Russia on an individual basis.[50]

As an indication of the insignificance or at least weakness of a Turkmen identity in political life, one may also mention the unrest of 1916 and the way in which this was evinced among these groups. According to Carrère d'Encausse, citing Kuropatkin, "the Turkmens had accepted mobilization peacefully enough ... The Yomud Turkmens alone refused to submit to their new obligations."[51] This is probably an exaggeration as a Soviet account from 1951, while evidently attempting to minimize the scope of the events, included some other groups as well.[52] Nevertheless, it seems well documented that the 1916 revolt among the Turkmen population followed a tribal rather than an all-Turkmen pattern. In early September 1916, local military authorities reported the occurrence of agitation among the population of Krasnovodsk district, "urging the Yomuts to unite with the Persian Yomuts in the uprising against Russia. Therefore, all those Yomuts who possibly can, must immediately leave for Astrabad to unite with the rioting Yomuts, where they will shortly be joined by Junaid-Khan, coming from Afghanistan."[53] In the next chapter I will return to the events of 1916 in some more detail. At this point I conclude that as far as the Turkmen population was concerned, patterns of mobilization largely corresponded to tribal boundaries.

To some extent, these tribal conglomerates represented what Anthony Smith refers to as "ethnic communities". According to Smith, an ideal type of an ethnic community is marked by the following characteristics: a collective proper name, a myth of common ancestry, shared historical memories, one or more differentiating elements of common culture, an association with a specific "homeland" and a sense of solidarity for significant sectors of the population.[54] The Turkmen tribes identified with a collective proper name, although the importance of this designation might be discussed. The common names of the tribal conglomerates were derived from their respective genealogies, which also provided the groups with a myth of common ancestry. This gave the tribal conglomerates a character of "superfamilies of fictive descent", which, according to Donald Horowitz, is the essence of a national community.[55]

As far as the question of a common culture is concerned, it was certainly not possible to distinguish neatly between a Turkmen, a

Kazak or a Kyrgyz culture. However, differentiating elements of common culture existed, such as linguistic ones. That, as John Schoeberlein has pointed out, Central Asian cultural diversity was and is "defined by gradients of difference", making it difficult to draw definite boundaries, does not necessarily mean that notions of boundaries did not exist.[56] In today's system of classification of the Turkic languages, Turkmen is the only Central Asian language related to the so-called southwest or Oghuz group of the Turkic languages. This reflects the fact that most members of the various Turkmen tribes spoke in a way that was generally perceived as a common tongue, and that their speech might be a distinguishing cultural feature.[57] Similarly, linguistic differences could serve to distinguish between Kazaks and Kyrgyz. As we will see later, these linguistic differences came to take on political importance during the national delimitation.

Moreover, the development of literary languages must not be forgotten, even though only a tiny percentage of the largely nomadic population of the tribal conglomerates was literate. In the eighteenth century, Magtymkuli, now celebrated as the Turkmen national poet, wrote his poetry in a Turkic that differed from the east Turkic languages or dialects of Transoxania.[58] He initiated a tradition of poetry that won considerable popularity among the Turkmen tribes. Among the Kazaks, the poet and literati Ibrahim Kunanbayev made an essential contribution to the establishment of a written Kazak language in the nineteenth century. This also differed from the east Turkic forms of Transoxania.

An important dimension of an ethnic community is the notion of a common history. Typically, dramatic events such as wars hold an important place in this kind of collective memory. As far as the Turkmen tribes are concerned, there was at that time little in their historical experience that might serve as sources for such notions of common history. Although on some occasions the major Turkmen tribes had formed temporary unions against common outside enemies,[59] they were fighting each other as much as non-Turkmen groups.[60] Sources of common history or shared historical memories were therefore largely limited to the narrative of the genealogy. Among the population of the Kazak steppe, the situation was different because of their longer and varied record of contact with Russia. Russian influence here had become significant already in the eighteenth century, when the Kazak *zhuzes* (tribal confederations) accepted Russian protection. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the *zhuzes* were abolished and the Kazak steppes were integrated into the Russian Empire. This integration was followed by considerable colonization and settlement by

Russian and other European peasants.[61] For Russia, the population of the steppes represented a unit, and the Kazaks were dealt with accordingly. Irrespective of tribal or *zhuz* affiliation, the Kazak population experienced an increasing land problem. This made a collective Kazak identity more relevant to the interpretation of reality than it had been before, and this marked a difference from the other population groups in Central Asia.

The two final elements of the concept of ethnic community are the idea of attachment to a wider territory and a sense of solidarity with the given population. Neither of these aspects was particularly prominent among the population of the tribal conglomerates. Territorial affiliation tended to correspond to tribal division, making conceptions of Yomut, Teke or Small Zhuz territory more important than perceptions of a Turkmen, Kazak or Kyrgyz territory.[62] Correspondingly, there is scant evidence of all-Turkmen solidarity, and the mentioned revolt of 1916 is a case in point.

On balance, the tribal conglomerates at least partially corresponded to Smith's ideal type of an ethnic community. However, salient aspects were more or less absent. This was even more the case with the sedentary population of Transoxania. Group designations such as "Uzbek" and "Tajik" could hardly be said to represent ethnic communities in the sense the term is used here. Socioeconomic criteria were at least as pronounced as notions of descent, and the significance of language for identification was debatable. Moreover, the territorial dimensions of these identities were weak or altogether absent, as in the case of "Sart". While the quality of being settled was important in the identification of the sedentary agriculturalists of Transoxania, the people of the tribal conglomerates to a great extent identified themselves in opposition to the former. This dichotomy took on great significance in the delimitation.

At the time of the Russian conquest, there was little to indicate that a fundamental political reorganization of the region such as the national delimitation was going to take place in Central Asia. But this does not imply that the reorganization was in every sense "artificial". Already in the Tsarist period, a process had begun which foreshadowed the reorganization of the 1920s. By the turn of the century, broader and more territorially-based identities were gaining currency. Certainly, Central Asia had not turned into a "hotbed of nationalism". But during the Tsarist period there came into existence a group of reformers that represented modes of thought intimately related to what Anthony Smith has called "the culture of nationalism".[63] This process is the subject of the following chapter.

3
Changing Identities

The Tsarist conquest initiated a period of massive change in Central Asia. Most of it took place in the Soviet period, but the Tsarist period brought important changes as well (albeit not necessarily those intended). In this chapter, I will discuss the extent to which the Tsarist period involved changes that foreshadowed the establishment in the 1920s of nationality-based territorial political entities in Central Asia. On the basis of recent re-evaluation of Central Asian social and cultural life in this period, I will argue that the national delimitation represents a certain degree of continuity, and certainly more than that allowed for in the traditional divide and rule perspective.

This continuity was first and foremost represented by the group of reformers that appeared in Central Asia around the turn of the century, the Jadids. Consequently, this chapter is primarily concerned with the Jadids, their ideas and their reform efforts. First, I will discuss the context in which the movement arose. Significantly affected by Russia's advance into Central Asia, it also involved the general orientation towards reform that characterized large parts of the Muslim world in the nineteenth century. In both ways it was primarily a consequence of the encounter of the Muslim world with the West. The reformers represented a new understanding of community, which was not incompatible with the kind of political organization that the delimitation implied. Even though Jadid visions of national communities did not necessarily correspond conceptually to those favored by the Soviet government, Jadid thinking nevertheless came to represent a position closely related to the idea of a nationally-divided Central Asia.

In the eyes of contemporary external observers, reform was desperately needed in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Central Asia. With European expansion in the nineteenth century, a number

of Western travelers visited Central Asia, in many cases leaving detailed memoirs to witness their impressions. The travelers' accounts concurred in that their visit to Central Asia was an encounter with "backwardness". As Carrère d'Encausse has put it: "the prevalent impression was one of an extraordinary lag behind the rest of the world of the nineteenth century, indeed of total immobility".[1] Visiting Bukhara as late as 1911, the Danish traveler Olufsen was thrilled to discover that "it [Bukhara] and its population are still the same as in Tamerlane's day".[2] This perception of Central Asian backwardness was shared by Russian authorities as well as by the scholars who followed in the wake of the Russian conquest. As we shall see in this chapter, this image of backwardness was also what the Jadid reformers projected to the Central Asian population in their efforts to demonstrate the need for reform. Later, the idiom of backwardness lent itself well to the world-view promoted by the Soviet regime, in which Soviet strategy in Central Asia was presented as a struggle against the historical backwardness of the region.

Although "backwardness" did not mean the same to all who applied the term, it nevertheless corresponded to the interrelated social, political, cultural and economic realities of Central Asian society:

> On the eve of the Russian conquest, both Bukhara and Khiva were classic examples of premodern societies: the khanate's economic, social, and political systems, their technology and the intellectual attitudes of their rulers showed no qualitative change since the tenth century. Even the printing press was unknown.[3]

Whether or not any qualitative change had taken place over the last 1,000 years can be discussed. However, this is not the point. What is more salient is the idea of a backward society losing touch with the rest of the world. This was the perspective of contemporary European visitors, and the notion of backwardness spread among parts of the native population of the area as well, stimulating calls for reform.

Central Asia under Tsarism

When Russia made its way into Central Asia, it encountered a population that, in relation to the Russians, was first and foremost "Muslim".[4] This was nothing new for the Russians, who had a centuries-long history of interaction with Muslim groups. As Andreas Kappeler has pointed out, Russian policy in Central Asia in the nineteenth

century differed in important ways from traditional strategies towards non-Russians in general and Muslims in particular. Kappeler argues that, until the nineteenth century, the overall tendency in Russia's relation to Islam as a religion and to Muslim groups was one of relative tolerance and "pragmatic flexibility". For the Russian state, political matters held priority over religious concerns. The ideology of Tsarism, dynasty and the notion of empire (*Reichsbewusstsein*) were more suited to preserving the Russian multiethnic empire (*Vielvölkerreich*) than Orthodoxy.[5] The ultimate goal was to exploit both human and economic resources as efficiently as possible, and policy makers thought this could best be achieved through cooperation. Certainly, Russia wanted to accomplish the integration of non-Russians into the empire, but a pragmatic strategy of flexibility, relative tolerance and co-optation was chosen over one involving aggressive conversion and severe repression. To a large extent, Muslims and other non-Russians were accepted as equals, and non-Russian elites co-opted by what Kappeler calls "flexible integration".[6]

The strategy chosen for Central Asia, however, differed markedly from this general scheme. Here, integration had given way to segregation. The main concern was to secure the status quo in the region. Russian authorities cooperated with local elites, not least in the cases of Bukhara and Khiva, which were kept nominally intact as Russian protectorates. However, no efforts were made to integrate elites on a broader scale. A notable exception in this respect was the Bukharan Emir, Abd al-Ahad (1885–1910), who came to play an important role in Russian society.[7] Emir Abd al-Ahad was integrated into Russian society much in the same way as other Muslim and non-Russian elites had been. In late nineteenth-century Central Asia, however, the Bukharan Emir was an exception, and very different from the case of Khiva. Moreover, the population of Central Asia was given the status of *inorodtsy* (of foreign origin), and for this reason not subject to the same rights and duties as the remaining population of the empire. The Tsarist strategy in Central Asia was one of *non-interference*. According to Kappeler, the continuing existence of Bukhara and Khiva was the result of this non-intervention ideology.[8] Adeeb Khalid has focused on economy, and has argued that the authorities in St. Petersburg, and in particular the Ministry of Finance, showed reluctance to take on the expenditure of administering new regions.[9]

In the historiography of the Russian advance into Central Asia, economic aspects have been attributed a prominent position in Soviet as well as Western scholarship.[10] Rather than new markets, however,

what incipient Russian capitalism could gain by controlling Central Asia in the latter part of the nineteenth century was a supply of cotton for its textile industry. Cotton supplies had become scarce as a result of the American Civil War. The American crisis led Russian merchants to urge the Minister of Finance to "seek in Central Asia, especially Bukhara, the raw materials which the American crisis was denying them".[11] Others have focused on the "Great Game" perspective, seeing Russia's advance into Central Asia as primarily a product of great power competition between Russia and England. Yet others question the existence of a grand design behind the occupation of Central Asia altogether, emphasizing instead the role played by generals of great ambition and initiative.[12] It is noteworthy that none of these perspectives are mutually exclusive. Whatever the motivations may have been, there is no doubt that economic considerations came to occupy a central place once Russian control in Central Asia was a reality. Russia sought to achieve a maximum of control at a minimum of cost, and the imperial authorities believed that this could most effectively be accomplished through segregation and non-interference.

Andreas Kappeler has listed a number of factors to explain the different strategy adopted for Central Asia. From an ideological perspective, the Russian perception of Muslims underwent great changes in the nineteenth century. In this period of imperialism and colonialism, the Russian attitude of tolerance towards Islam, and the tendency to treat Muslims more or less as equals, was replaced with an image of "barbaric Mohamedans".[13] Indeed, in the minds of Tsarist administrators and policy makers, the Muslims of Central Asia were barbarians and savages. Islam was considered an anti-social force and a reservoir of potential fanaticism. The impact of nationalism probably also played a role in Russia's adoption of a non-intervention strategy. The nineteenth century was the era of Romantic nationalism, and the general idea was that the world consisted of clearly separate "peoples", each having their own fixed character. This ideology served to emphasize differences rather than to encourage integration. Although contentions of this kind may be hard to document, Russia's strategy towards the native population of Central Asia accorded fully with this mode of thought.

The Russians increasingly saw themselves as representing civilization as opposed to barbarism, yet the Russian regime took on a civilizing mission in Central Asia only to a limited extent. A number of Russian schools were opened, and, importantly, the printing press was introduced and newspapers established in the name of enlightenment.

However, this was a cautious approach, as – in the eyes of the Russians – challenging Islam could mobilize the feared fanaticism. Instead, Islam was exposed to the policy of *ignorirovanie*, the hope being that Islam would gradually lose its significance. Islam was to be ignored and isolated, and any offensive was to be directed against its organizational structures rather than against the religion as such. No religious dignitaries were to be given positions of authority, pilgrimage to the holy places of Islam was made difficult by practical measures, and Turkestan was kept out of the jurisdiction of the Muslim Spiritual Administration based in Orenburg.[14] Perhaps the most striking expression of the non-interference strategy was the ban on all missionary activity of the Orthodox Church in Central Asia until 1917.

The non-intervention strategy was not restricted to the cultural sphere and Islam; the same tendency put its mark on judicial and political organization. In both fields, traditional organizations were admitted significant positions, and local and Russian hierarchies coexisted. In legal affairs, judgments were rendered according to traditional standards unless the case involved Russian interests or subjects, or was considered particularly grave by the Russian administration.[15] Virginia Martin has referred to this as "legal syncretism", in which "customary, Russian, and Islamic laws intertwined and operated side by side".[16] This characterization of Tsarist policy applies primarily to southern Central Asia. In the Kazak steppe, the situation was strikingly different. Here, there was a more strongly felt Russian drive for change than in the south. For example, a program of secular education was promoted much more extensively in the Kazak steppe than in Turkestan. This had consequences for intellectual development among the Kazak intelligentsia.[17] Moreover, the regime took an interest in the settlement of Kazak nomads.[18]

On the basis of pragmatic concerns and economic constraints, Tsarist Russia organized Central Asia in the following fashion. In the south, Bukhara and Khiva were allowed continued existence as protectorates, while the Kokand khanate was annexed in 1876. Tashkent was made the administrative center of the new Governorate-General of Turkestan, which had been established in 1867 and was made up of five administrative units, or *oblasts*:[19] in the west was the Transcaspian *oblast*; in the southeast the Ferghana *oblast*; centered in Samarkand was the Samarkand *oblast*; and in the north and northeast the Syr-Darya and Semirechie *oblasts*, respectively. Thus, the Turkestan Governorate-General comprised the previous khanate of Kokand, land taken from Bukhara and Khiva, and nomadic regions where state control had

previously been limited or absent. In the Kazak steppe in the north the Governorate-General of the Steppe was established. Having initially comprised Semirechie, Uralsk, Turgay, Akmolinsk and Semipalatinsk, in 1898 it was reduced to the two latter regions.[20]

Tsarist Russia's non-intervention strategy was in stark contrast to later Soviet policy in the region. However, that the Tsarist regime did not intend to change Central Asian society in any fundamental way does not mean that change did not occur. Important changes took place in the Tsarist period. The most interesting ones in this connection are related to identity and group formation, and in this process the Jadid reformers played a pivotal role. The following discussion of the Jadid reformers is based on the existing literature on the movement, and does not include any primary sources. Until the last decade, little research had been carried out on the Jadid movement, and what was done was characterized by the Cold War climate. Recent contributions to the study of Central Asia in this period have provided valuable new insight. This is particularly the case with Adeeb Khalid's work on Jadidism in Central Asia,[21] and a prime objective of this chapter is to argue that his reinterpretation of pre-revolutionary Central Asian society is most fruitful for our understanding of the events of the 1920s.

Muslim reform and the Jadids

Stirrings of reform appeared in Central Asia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. There is universal agreement that reform movements among other Muslims of the Russian Empire, notably Tatar reformers, played a crucial role in the development of the Central Asian reform movement and ideology. The most prominent individual in Tatar reform was Ismail Gasprinsky (1851–1914). Being a journalist with professional experience from both Paris and Istanbul, Gasprinsky established the journal *Terjüman*, which became a decisive instrument in the realization of the reform program. A key element in this program was education, and the goal was to replace traditional religious education with modern, secular education. Indeed, the reform movement took its name from the sphere of education. *Usul-i jadid* ("the new method" [in the teaching of Arabic language]) signified a break with tradition. Gasprinsky established the first new-method schools in the Crimea in the 1880s, and this modern education won considerable popularity among the Tatars.

Tatar reform was a part of a wider trend in the Muslim world in the nineteenth century. Primarily as a consequence of the expanding West,

various kinds of reform programs were initiated in Muslim societies. Among the various intellectual responses to the changing conditions in the Muslim world at the time, three main positions may be singled out. One argued for the primacy of political concerns, recognizing as legitimate any adaptation that facilitated the achievement of political goals.[22] This was opposed by a second position, which was based on Islam and argued that politics was irrelevant if it did not allow for the preservation of Islam. A middle way was represented by *Islamic modernism*, the intellectual current to which the Muslim reformers of the Russian Empire were most closely affiliated. Islamic modernism prescribed adaptation, but not at any cost. Reforms were both desirable and fully compatible with Islamic traditions, and they should be based on arguments congenial to Muslims.[23] This was the general solution presented by the main architects of Islamic modernism, such as Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani (1838–1897) and Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905).

John O. Voll has identified three primary responses to Western expansion in the Muslim world. The first he calls "adaptationist Westernizers", the second is a militant reaction, whereas the third response involves a revivalist activism but no Westernizing reform programs or Islamic modernism.[24] While militant resistance was found in the Caucasus, the Tatars' strategy was adaptationist. Indeed, the Tatars had long since been integrated into the Russian Empire, and Tatar reformers were largely recruited among the aristocratic elites that had been co-opted into the Russian social hierarchy.[25] In addition to being adaptationist, the Tatar reform project clearly belonged to the tradition of Islamic modernism. Reforms in education went much further than the teaching of a particular alphabet. Indeed, Gasprinsky introduced and propagated a new kind of education based on modern, secular knowledge, largely similar to the kind of education offered in the Ottoman Empire during the pragmatic reforms of the nineteenth century. As it had been the case throughout the Muslim world in this period of reform, these changes challenged the traditional authority of the *Ulama*, creating tension between *Ulama* traditionalists and the modernizers. Furthermore, the reform project of the Tatars involved the establishment of civic institutions as well as the improvement of the situation of women.[26]

Among the Tatar reformers, new visions of identity appeared, notably the concept of pan-Turkism. The appearance of pan-Turkism must be seen in the light of pan-Slavism, but it was also a part of an intellectual trend in the wider Muslim world. In the Ottoman Empire, these currents were initially most prominent among various non-Turk

millets.[27] As a part of the reforms in Ottoman administration in the 1860s, the administration of the *millets*, which until that time had been dominated by the higher clergy in the respective religious communities, was secularized. Contrary to hopes that this would pave the way for a uniform government for the entire Ottoman Empire, the secularization of the *millets* instead served to foster nationalist and separatist tendencies among many of the religious communities.[28] In Egypt, by then only nominally a part of the Ottoman Empire, a new kind of Egyptian identity, distinct from Islam, appeared in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The affiliation between people and territory was an important element in this identity, as was the notion of the antiquity of the community. Based on European discoveries, continuity between the contemporary Egyptian population and the pre-Islamic period was emphasized.[29]

The Tatars of the Russian Empire focused neither on historic continuity nor on territorial aspects. Instead, their pan-Turkic project stressed the community of all Turks, a giant fictive "super-family".[30] In addition to Gasprinsky, another leading pan-Turkist was Yusuf Akçura, born in the Russian Empire. Although he lived for a period in Istanbul, he returned to Russia to work as a teacher in Kazan. In 1904, Akçura presented his pan-Turkic manifest *Three Kinds of Policy*, in which he argued that the strategies of Ottomanism and pan-Islamism[31] would be met with definite hostility by the world powers, in relation to which the Ottoman Empire at this point was clearly inferior. Pan-Turkism, on the other hand, would be acceptable to all the powers with the exception of Russia. This pan-Turkic program, however, was hardly very successful. Among the Turks of the Ottoman Empire, there was little support for these ideas, and even the Young Turks largely stuck to its predecessors: Ottomanism, centralization and modernization.[32]

However, the significance of this Turkist or pan-Turkist rhetoric and ideology may have been greater on another level. According to Adeeb Khalid, "the more basic idea of the affinity of various Turkic groups, and the knowledge of their Turkness, rapidly suffused all notions of identity in the Turkic world".[33] This was the case with the Jadids of Central Asia as well, and their understandings and visions of community.

There is no doubt that the Tatar Jadids played an important role in the development of a Central Asian reform project. First, the Tatar newspapers published in Russia were widely read. This was particularly the case with Gasprinsky's own *Terjüman*, but other Tatar papers as

well won considerable popularity in Central Asia. The Tatar press introduced ideas of reform and served as a model for the Central Asian press that developed after 1905.[34] Of the 1,000 individuals who subscribed to *Terjüman*, approximately 200 were located in Central Asia.[35] Second, Tatar Jadidism contributed to the Central Asian reform project in that the reformed schools in Central Asia made use of Tatar textbooks, and many reformed schools in Central Asia had Tatar teachers.[36] Indeed, one of the first new-method schools in Central Asia was opened by Gasprinsky himself in Samarkand in 1893. Elsewhere in the region, new-method schools also opened with Tatar instructors for both Tatar and Turkestani boys.[37]

The role of the Tatars, therefore, was substantial, although Khalid is correct in stating that Central Asian reformism should not be considered "a pale reflection of a better organized movement in European Russia".[38] Certainly, there were important similarities between Tatar society and Central Asia. In both cases the population was predominantly "Turkic" from a linguistic point of view, and the great majority of the population identified themselves as "Muslim". At the same time there existed great economic, social and cultural differences. Even if there had existed ambitions to simply transfer the Tatar project to Central Asia, the differences between the two contexts would inevitably take on significance, making this second project a different one from the first.[39]

Education was a cornerstone in the reform project in Central Asia, and the first reformed schools were opened in Turkestan during the 1890s. The new-method schools were to represent an alternative to the traditional system of education, as it existed in the *maktabs* (clergy-run primary schools, mostly held in mosques). While the reformed education among the Tatars became, within a short time, the predominant form of education, the reformed schools did not achieve any hegemonic position in Central Asia. They remained grossly outnumbered by more traditional schools.[40] A reform project came into existence in Bukhara as well. The first efforts here were made by the Tatars around the turn of the century. A number of attempts to open reformed schools in Bukhara in the first decade of the twentieth century were unsuccessful, but in 1908 the Emir authorized the establishment of a reformed school for the children of his subjects.[41] As we shall see, the Bukharan Jadids' battle was a tough one, and their main adversary was the Emir. The most prominent names among the Bukharan Jadids are Fitrat and Fayzullah Khojaev. The first was particularly influential in the period prior to Bolshevik rule, while Khojaev became the most

influential Central Asian in the first years of Communist rule in Central Asia.[42]

As already noted, the printing press was virtually unknown in the region prior to the Russian conquest.[43] In the Tsarist period, Jadid reformers strove to establish a press that would serve as a forum for the distribution of reform ideas. For a number of reasons, however, these efforts were only partly successful. Nevertheless, the press represented something new, and it was a critical element in the development of the project of the Central Asian Jadids. Other vehicles notable for the distribution of Jadid ideas were poetry, literature and drama. It is indicative of Jadidism's intellectual break with tradition that they introduced new forms of expression to Central Asia, such as prose, fiction and drama.

In Soviet scholarship, the Jadid reform movement in Central Asia was presented as an entirely class-based phenomenon. As a consequence of the integration of Central Asia into the Russian Empire and thus global capitalism, a bourgeoisie, primarily consisting of wealthy merchants, began to form in the region. According to Soviet historiography, the Jadid movement was neither more nor less than a phenomenon expressing and representing the interests of this developing class.[44] Relating the Jadid movement to class was not incorrect. The Jadids represented no popular movement. Members were invariably urban, and the movement recruited among what might be called the bourgeoisie.[45] As far as membership is concerned, therefore, the movement did exhibit a distinctive class character. Moreover, the Jadids of Central Asia enjoyed the financial support of wealthy merchants, although not to the same extent as the Tatar reformers. Among the Tatars, capitalism and class differentiation was much more developed.[46]

Differences in interpretations of the Jadid movement between Soviet and Western scholars are typical of the polarization of the Cold War period. While Soviet scholars focused on new social and economic structures, many Western scholars have focused on the alleged anti-Russian character of Jadidism, seeing it first and foremost as a response to colonization and foreign dominance. In this perspective, reform was not an end itself, but a means by which the main goal could be accomplished: liberation from Russia. Jadidism was in this view primarily a political phenomenon with cultural reform as a major weapon. Carrère d'Encausse maintains that "the final goal was to liberate Dar-ul-Islam from the Infidels' domination". Similarly, Abduvakhitov maintains that "national liberation" was among the Jadids' main goals.[47] The

Jadid movement was a nationalist response to colonization, nationalism here manifesting as hostility to foreign rule.[48]

This is, however, a problematic view, which can be demonstrated by the attitudes of the Jadid leaders during the revolt of 1916. According to Carrère d'Encausse: "[t]he leaders of the Turkestani reformist movement came out resolutely against the decision" to mobilize Central Asians in working brigades. In her presentation, the Jadids are anti-Russian separatists, sympathetic to the revolt.[49] However, not much evidence is provided. In the discussion of the 1916 revolt in Soviet journals in the mid-1920s, it was convincingly claimed that, on the contrary, the Jadids had been opposed to the revolt, and that separatism had not been on their agenda. This seems to have been accepted by all participants in the discussion at the time, irrespective of attitudes towards the events of 1916.[50] Recent research has supported this view.

The Jadid movement was exclusively urban. It had little contact with the rural population and even less with the nomads, who played the leading role in the revolt of 1916. The revolt therefore took place in surroundings with which the Jadids were quite unfamiliar. Given this fact, it seems quite unlikely that the Jadids should have played any important part in the events. On the contrary, they opposed the entire revolt. Adeeb Khalid has documented that leading Jadids not only opposed it, they were in fact enthusiastic about the recruitment of Central Asians that led to the outbreak of the revolt.[51] This does not fit very well with the idea of Jadidism as a primarily anti-Russian phenomenon. Khalid has introduced a more fruitful perspective of cultural reform, in which Jadidism is seen more as a result of factors internal to Central Asia than as a response to colonization or foreign rule.

Education was at the heart of Jadid activities. A more secularized type of education was introduced in much of the Muslim world in the nineteenth century, but it was pragmatism that triggered the reforms. A new kind of education was necessary in order to increase efficiency. For the Jadids of Central Asia reforming the educational system was not simply about efficiency and pragmatic considerations. The plans for reform reflected the Jadids' world-view, which – in Khalid's words – was dominated by a perception of "knowledge as salvation".[52] Rather than a dichotomy of native as opposed to Russian, what predominated in Jadid thought was the opposition between "progress" and "backwardness" or "decay". In the eyes of the Jadids, Central Asian society was in a state of decay. Moral decay had led to prostitution, alcohol and drug usage, and to other un-Islamic practices. The essence of the

political decay was the subordination of the region to Russia. For the Jadids, moral decay and Russia's political dominance were really two sides of the same problem, and it is important to note that Russian dominance was a symptom rather than the problem itself.[53] It was the most prominent symptom of the disease of backwardness which troubled Central Asian society, and from which it had to be saved. If this did not happen, prospects were dismal. Munawwar Qari put it in this way in 1906:

> If we continue in this way for another five or ten years, we are in danger of being dispersed and effaced under the oppression of developed nations ... O coreligionists, o compatriots! Let's be just and compare our situation with that of other, advanced nations ... let's secure the future of our coming generations ... and save them from becoming slaves and servants of others.[54]

What was at stake, therefore, was much more than political sovereignty. It was the continued existence of Central Asian culture, or more precisely Central Asian culture as perceived by the Jadids.

The reason for the decay was ignorance. All the ills that plagued Central Asia could be traced back to the lack of knowledge, which was the result not of Russia's recent conquest of the region but of long-term tendencies. In the Jadid perception, the disastrous ignorance was largely the result of moral corruption within the religious and societal elite. Occupied exclusively with their own position and material well being, the *Ulama* had neglected the interests of Central Asian society, which, in the eyes of the Jadids, deprived the *Ulama* of their legitimate authority.[55] This clearly demonstrates the differences between Jadid thought and the notions upon which *Ulama* authority was based. The latter was based entirely on religion, that is, on the acceptance by others of their specialized religious knowledge and competence. Accommodating the interests of society, however defined, was not a part of the *Ulama*'s claim to authority. For the Jadids, however, the interests of society were at the center of attention.

In Khalid's perspective on Jadidism, the main adversary of the movement was the traditional elite of Central Asia, and not Russians or the Russian regime. The failure of the traditional elite was the main reason for Central Asia's troubles; the Jadid reform project was formulated on this background. Attitudes towards Russia, on the other hand, were far from unequivocally antagonistic. In his detailed analysis of Jadid texts, Khalid finds an image of Russia that is generally positive. The reason

was that from the point of view of the Jadids, Russia could be a useful temporary ally that could make it easier to facilitate the accomplishment of the program of modernization and reform. Russia produced the conditions that made reform possible.

On the matter of Jadid attitudes towards Russia, one may therefore distinguish between a short-term and a long-term perspective. Certainly, in the long term, the goal of the Jadids was for Central Asia to become independent of Russia. But in the short term they believed that the same Russia might help to reach this goal. Consequently, the Jadids did not represent "nationalism" in the sense of embodying a reaction to foreign dominance. Nevertheless, it might be argued that Jadid thinking introduced the idea of the nation and the national community to Central Asia and that Jadidism, in this sense, represented a presage to the territorial political reorganization of the 1920s.

The Jadids, nation and politics

If nationalism is exclusively understood as a political phenomenon aimed primarily at achieving the political sovereignty of a particular group of people defined as a nation, the Jadids' cooperation policy towards Russia would make any link between Jadidism and nationalism impossible. Yet, as discussed in the preceding chapter, nationalism is as much a cultural as a political movement.[56] Nationalism, as a culture, implies a particular way of thinking about groups and community based on the main criteria listed in the definition of an ideal type of ethnic community.[57] Notions of common ancestry and shared historical memories are central, as is the association with a particular home territory and a sense of solidarity among significant sectors of the population. As outlined in the previous chapter, this kind of group conceptualization was hardly found in nineteenth-century Central Asia. The Jadids, however, represented a considerable approximation to this ideal.

In the literature on nationalism, several scholars make a distinction between an ethnic and a civic national community.[58] I will not elaborate further on that distinction other than to say that there was a significant "civic element" present in Jadid thinking. This was expressed through the Jadids' emphasis on the "interests of society", or by extension, its members or citizens. Focusing on the interests of society, the Jadids challenged the legitimacy and claims to authority of the traditional elites, and in particular the *Ulama*. This represented a break with Central Asian traditions. In the three dynastic states of Bukhara,

Khiva and Kokand, the source of legitimacy was of a religious or theological character, while the interests of the population were not an issue.

Like the traditional elites of the *Ulama*, in the final analysis the Jadids based their arguments on Islam. This was typical of Islamic modernism, with its ambition to reconcile Islam and Western-style modernity. In the reformed schools of the Jadids, Islam and religious subjects also held a central place. Using as an example Munawwar Qari's school, Carrère d'Encausse argues that, "despite the anxieties expressed by the *qadimis* [the traditional elites], religion lost none of its rights there [in the reformed schools of Central Asia]".[59] She goes on to emphasize the fact that 44 per cent of the total timetable of the school was devoted to purely religious subjects, and concludes that secular education (arithmetic, geography and the exact sciences) was in reality very limited, amounting to only 20 per cent of the timetable.[60] What this strictly statistically based argument misses, however, is *meaning*. It says nothing about the ways in which the "purely religious subjects" were taught. It can therefore witness continuity primarily on a *nominal* level.

From this perspective, Adeeb Khalid has found important differences between the "Islam" of the *Ulama* and that of the Jadids. The Islam taught by the Jadids was less absolute than the Islam on which *Ulama* authority was based. The distinction introduced between Islam and other kinds of knowledge implied that Islam was no longer all-embracing, but occupied its own separate space, however sizable. Islam was contextualized and historicized, and the teaching of Islamic history made Islam subject to knowledge that was essentially worldly in character.[61] To a great extent, this represents a transformation of Islam from the realm of religious dogma to that of secular culture, and this Islamic culture became crucial in Jadid thinking about groups and identities. The Jadids sought to make their reform program compatible with the basic elements of this secularized Islam, but arguments for reform were always based on what was good for the members of society. Any phenomenon was evaluated on the background of its supposed effects on society, as the essential aim of Jadid reform was to improve conditions in all spheres: health-care, culture, morality, economy, and so on.[62]

This side of Jadid thought represented a new way of thinking about groups and society in Central Asia, one that has much in common with an important aspect of the culture of nationalism. The exchange of divine legitimacy for a largely secular approach based on the welfare

of the population is closely related to the concept of the civic nation. Indeed, it was the nation (*millat*) that became the focus of the Jadid reforms. Although the Jadids emphasized that their reforms were in accordance with Islamic principles, their ultimate legitimization was to be found in their effects on worldly society, on the *millat*.[63] The Jadids called for a new kind of solidarity with the community. Accused by the traditional elites of disregarding Islam, Jadids such as Fitrat responded that the reformed schools not only strove to make their students good Muslims, but to make them patriots to their *millat* as well, arguing that there was no contradiction between the two.[64] Both the focus on what is good for society and the idea of solidarity with "significant sectors of the population", as Smith puts it, represent important elements in the culture of national identity.

Another central aspect of that culture is the idea of a connection between people and territory. As discussed in the previous chapter, territorial aspects were not very prominent in traditional Central Asian identities in the nineteenth century. What was the territorial dimension in the Jadids' thoughts about community? Some scholars have stressed that the Jadids continued a tradition where the territorial aspect had little importance, and the arguments have been based on the existence of different pan-movements or ideologies. First, there is the notion of pan-Islamism. According to Alexandre Bennigsen, the Jadid movement in Central Asia soon took on the character of a pan-Islamic movement.[65] Understood in political terms, the ultimate goal for a pan-Islamic movement would be the political unification of all Muslims. This was, however, not the goal of the Jadid movement of Central Asia, nor of any group. Instead, various notions of pan-Islamism existed, but none of them really focused on the political unification of all Muslims. Within Tsar-Russia's Central Asian administration, fear of pan-Islamism was strong. In the Ottoman Empire, rulers had used the idea of pan-Islamism to increase or maintain influence in regions with Muslim population, but political unification had not really been the goal.[66] Different identities do not exclude each other, and identifying with a comprehensive unit such as the "world of Muslims" is not the same as maintaining that all Muslims ought to unite in a political sense. While the Jadids recognized themselves as a part of a comprehensive Muslim community, Turkestan remained the frame of their political activities.

Second, the Jadids have been associated with the ideology of pan-Turkism with its ultimate goal of the unity of the Turkic peoples of the world. Indeed, pan-Turkism had played a role among the Tatars, who

strove to strengthen the connection between themselves and the Turkic speaking populations of Central Asia as well as the Ottoman Empire. Among the Jadids of Central Asia, however, Turkic unity was not an issue, which is witnessed by the fact that the Jadids supported not only the conscription of Central Asians in 1916, but also indeed the entire war against the Ottoman Turks.[67]

Furthermore, while the territorial aspect of both pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism was rather vague, the Central Asian Jadids had a clear territorial frame for their aspirations. The "nation" to which they referred in their writings, whose backwardness they sought to overcome, and whose glory and greatness they hoped to restore, was that of Turkestan. The "nation" of the Jadids was therefore a territorial entity and much more so than a pan-Islamic or pan-Turkic approach would have implied. Also, the Jadids in this way envisioned a community based on a sense of territorial identity very different from the more limited territorial identities that then predominated.[68] In a very different way, this notion of a Turkestan identity projected a community in which the members certainly had no direct experience of each other, or for that matter, knowledge of each other's existence. It was indeed an "imagined community", and the conceptual and emotional link between the people and the land, so typical of the culture of national identity, appeared in the texts of the Jadids and resulted in formulations such as "We Turkestanis love our homeland more than our lives."[69]

It is quite possible that the development of a stronger territorial orientation had to do with political changes following the Russian conquest. Until then, the three states of Central Asia had not been territorially fixed. With the Russian conquest, this situation changed completely, and for the first time Bukhara and Khiva became strictly defined territorial entities. In agreements drawn up between Russia and the two states, they became protectorates of the imperial power.[70]

Besides that of territory, another important element in the concept of national identity is the experience of what A. D. Smith has called "differentiating elements of common culture". In some of the previously discussed traditional identities, differentiating cultural elements were not too important, while other distinctions, such as socioeconomic ones, were more significant. This was particularly characteristic of the sedentary population of Transoxania, where, for example, bilingualism was widespread. As we saw in the previous chapter, this represented a puzzle to the scholars of the Russian Empire. Identity based on differentiating cultural aspects was more prominent among the tribal conglomerates, largely situated outside Transoxania. However,

the Turkestan envisioned by the Jadids was not only a territorially-based community, but a cultural one as well. Yet in the complexity of Turkestan, culture was defined in a very broad way, and the link between population, territory and culture was expressed in the community designation "the Muslims of Turkestan".[71] The mentioned secularization of Islam had opened for a cultural understanding of the religion, and in this fashion Islam came to be the cultural basis in the Jadids' concept of the Muslims of Turkestan.

For the maintenance of a sense of national community, a notion of common history is essential as it provides the given group with a sense of antiquity. Prior to the period in question, historiography in Central Asia had largely been occupied with dynasties, rulers and Khans, paying scant attention to the subjects or to the idea of community at large. Also in this vein Jadid reformers represented a fundamental break with tradition. Their approach to history and thus historiography was completely different, and their focus moved from rulers to community: "Leading Jadids, such as Hajji Muin ibn Shukrullah of Samarkand, understood ... that a community without a sense of history has no basis for vitality."[72] In their ambitious program to educate the people, it became a task of greatest importance to "show readers and listeners how to identify themselves".[73] Accordingly, it was the people of Turkestan that were at the heart of Jadid attention. In the period 1908–15, a history of Turkestan was published serially in the *Turkistan wilayatining gazeti*. Later, this was published in a separate work as a history of Turkestan, including Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand. In this and the other Jadid works, the perspective was consistently that of Turkestan, and the texts typically included references such as "We Turkestanians", suggesting both the unity and the antiquity of this group.[74]

Altogether, the Jadids of Central Asia represented a break with tradition in several respects, and to some extent it could be said that Jadid thought introduced the idea of the national community to Central Asia. In relation to the Jadids, the term "nationalism" has often been understood as an expression of anti-Russian attitudes and as a reaction and opposition to foreign rule. In that sense, the Jadids were hardly nationalists. Nevertheless, the Jadids did represent a way of thinking which shared much with the culture of nationality. The Jadids began to focus on the civic aspects of community, envisioning a community united by a common culture and affiliated with a clearly delimited territory. They perceived of and presented their community as a historical one, and the community to which they referred was that of the

"Muslims of Turkestan". Later, however, when the conceptual framework of the national community had first been established, its content could easily be subject to modification through reconsideration of the various elements of the national identity. In fact, this was what happened to the nation of the Jadids, much as a result of the political upheavals of 1917.

The idea that the Jadids represented an approximation to the modern idea of the nation is not new. This was a main point in Roger Kangas' comprehensive political biography of Fayzullah Khojaev from 1992. From a point of view that is in many respects similar to that of Khalid, Kangas argued that the Jadids combined Islam with the modern concept of the nation state. The project of the Jadids and the Young Bukharans, or at least of the majority of them, was to create a modern nation state. However, the intelligentsia was too small, illiteracy too widespread, and real independence too far away because of Bolshevik dominance after 1917 for this project to succeed. In this perspective Jadidism is primarily perceived in political terms. It was a call for educational reform that developed into a program for political reform.[75] Kangas focuses primarily on the political differences between the Jadid reformers and the traditional elites. This is very useful for understanding the kind of political organization that the Jadids hoped to introduce, while it does not in the same way as Khalid's cultural perspective emphasize the novelty in Jadid group conceptualizations.

As we have seen, language was not among the most important identity markers in the traditional identities of Central Asia. In accordance with the Central Asian traditions of Turkic–Persian bilingualism, linguistic aspects were not present in the category of "the Muslims of Turkestan". However, the attitude of the Jadids changed on this point, and was gradually replaced with an increasing focus on "Turkness". The movement's emphasis shifted from the idea of "Muslims of Turkestan" to that of Turkestan as the homeland of the Turkic peoples, and new linguistic practices were expressive of this shift. A leading Jadid such as Fitrat, who had been writing almost exclusively in Persian until then, in 1917 abandoned Persian in favor of a purist Turkic.[76] Jadid attempts to present "their nation" as an ancient community had been evident before, but with the new emphasis on Turk aspects, they now sought historic origins that were exclusively Turk. Names of historical character such as Chingis, Timur and Ulugh-Bek came to occur frequently in Jadid national rhetoric. Furthermore, the shift implied that, more than before, the community envisioned by the Jadids was a com-

munity of common descent, an aspect that until this time had been largely absent.

Adeeb Khalid has linked this change directly to the upheavals of 1917. According to Carrère d'Encausse, however, at least as far as the Bukharan Jadids were concerned, 1917 saw no significant change in the approach of the Jadids, who "were pursuing, untroubled, their dream of national and Islamic re-conquest".[77] However, as a result of the failure to problematize or analyze the concept of nation, understanding it largely as "Central Asian" as opposed to "Russian", Carrère d'Encausse fails to see how the nation itself was subject to change in the minds of its supporters. Edward Allworth has found that the question of group identity became more compellingly interesting to the intellectual leaders of southern Central Asia after the collapse of the Tsarist regime in 1917, "not merely for immediate political reasons but for basic cultural and intellectual ones".[78] Khalid, on the other hand, sees the shift primarily as a result of the new political conditions.[79] Prior to 1917, Russia's political dominance had been an undeniable reality. As a result, the struggle between the Jadids and the traditional elites of the *Ulama* had primarily taken place in the realm of culture, as a struggle for cultural leadership in native Central Asian society. As the empire fell apart in 1917, this competition suddenly moved into the battlefield of politics. As the *Ulama* had appropriated Islam, the reformers were forced to move in another direction. They opted for an "ethnically charged nationalism", greatly inspired by the ideology and rhetoric of Turkism, and which had been present in Jadid discourse prior to 1917 as well.[80] As a result, the Turkic aspects became more prominent in the Turkestan community that the Jadids promoted. This was, however, a change in emphasis rather than in kind, as the framework within which the Jadids conceptualized their nation basically remained the same.

Just as the concept of "the Muslims of Turkestan" would appear to contradict the subdivision of Turkestan into separate national entities, the same might be said about the idea of a Turkestan identity with its emphasis on Turkness. But this may be an apparent rather than a real contradiction, as the "Turkestan" of the Jadids was not necessarily as comprehensive as the term would suggest. Similar to the Bolsheviks, who, irrespective of their claims, did not at any point represent all proletarian elements in Russia, the Jadids hardly represented all Muslims of Turkestan. Rather, they primarily represented certain segments of the sedentary and urban population in Transoxania. With the increased emphasis on Turkness, the Jadids' focus changed to what

Adeeb Khalid has called the "unmarked" Turkic population of Turkestan, meaning the Turkic-speaking population not identified as Turkmen, Kazak or Kyrgyz. This was the population to whom the term "Sart", in the Turkic sense, had been applied by Russian ethnographers, and it was to a great extent located in Transoxania. "Sart" in this sense was translated into "Uzbek", and to the Jadids, Uzbekness became a defining feature for the Turkic-speaking population of Central Asia. Moreover, Uzbek became a linguistic category, as the Jadids saw their Turkic speech as being "Uzbek".[81]

How should this development of an Uzbek focus be understood? Khalid finds the answer in "new ways of imagining the world and Central Asia's place within it".[82] However important, that is only part of the answer. One must also inquire as to why communities are "imagined" in that particular way, and why boundaries are such as they are. Even new ways of imagining may reflect continuities, and this was the case with the Jadids' conceptualization of the Uzbek community, however novel this was in other respects. There is consensus that "as late as the start of the 1920s no unified, self confident Uzbek aggregate existed",[83] and that individuals who a few years later were recorded as "Uzbeks" in Soviet censuses did not necessarily identify as "Uzbeks" prior to the Soviet period. Yet this is not the point. Even though it did not reflect a coherent Uzbek entity, the Jadid notion of Uzbekness involved continuity. What it did reflect were historical differences between the largely settled and to a great extent urban population of Transoxania, and the nomadic or semi-nomadic Turkmen, Kazak and Kyrgyz tribal conglomerates. It was these historic differences of linguistic, cultural and socioeconomic character that led the Jadids to translate Turk into Uzbek, and to make Uzbek appear as synonymous with "nation".[84]

In sum, the Jadid visions of an Uzbek nation were genuinely new while at the same time representing historical continuities. The framework within which this nation was conceptualized represented a new and modern way of thinking, but the fact that the nation was "imagined" in that particular way was a result of historical, social, economic and cultural realities.

What the Jadids thought about groups and communities is one thing. A very different question is the implications of these thoughts for Central Asian society in general. Theoretically, the Jadids might have remained a marginal group without any significant influence whatsoever. Indeed, this is what they at first were. After the revolution, however, their status changed.

When the Jadid movement developed in Central Asia in the first decade of the twentieth century, it consisted largely of young men who managed to occupy a new social space created by the establishment of Russian dominance in the region. Towards 1917, the movement grew, but its influence remained limited, much as the result of Tsar-Russia's attitude towards it. Until the revolution, Central Asian society was characterized by a triangular relationship in which the groups and actors included Tsarist Russia, the traditional elites and, finally, the Central Asian reformers. In this relationship Russia held the ultimate power, a fact not contested by the two other groups. Rather, these groups sought to maneuver in the remaining space, competing for authority within Central Asian society. Representing the ultimate power, Russia was in the position to influence greatly, if not completely determine, the outcome of the struggle. While the Jadids favored a short-term alliance with Russia for long-term benefits, they did not meet the desired response on the part of Russian authorities, who instead chose to support the traditional elite. This choice is generally understood as a consequence of the Tsarist non-intervention strategy with its aim of preserving the status quo in the region. Also, there was a fear that the young reformers represented a potential for mobilization that was, or at least could become, a threat to Russian interests.[85] By 1917, the movement had developed from its modest beginnings around the turn of the century, but its relations to the traditional elite and to the Tsarist authorities remained the same.

It was only the political upheavals of 1917 that dramatically altered this situation. As the dominant part in the triangular relationship crumbled, the competition between the two remaining groups changed. Now, political power, which had until then been the exclusive domain of the Russian regime, could be acquired. For the Jadids, however, the dramatic year of 1917 had the effect of demonstrating that their project held limited appeal for the Central Asian population. As the situation developed throughout the year, the Jadids and the *Ulama* came to be concentrated in their respective organizations. The reform-minded Turkestanians had gathered in the Shura-yi Islamiya (Council of Islam).[86] The Shura had originally joined with the conservatives of the traditional elites, forming together the Central Council of Muslims (also called "the National Council"). However, these groups split, and the conservatives formed their own organization, called the Ulama Jamiyati. In the summer of 1917, the two groups contended in the elections to the Tashkent City Duma. This resulted in an overwhelming victory for the conservatives of the Ulama

Jamiyati, which demonstrated the *Ulama*'s hold on Central Asian society and simultaneously revealed the limited appeal of reformism.[87] Indeed, concerning the situation in Bukhara in the final days of the Tsarist Empire, Miller, a Russian political agent, maintained that: "The adversaries of reform are ... all classes of the Bukharan population; its only supporters are the Young Bukharans, of whom there are about 200."[88]

The social forces at work in Central Asia were therefore hardly in favor of the Jadids and their project. Quite soon, however, Central Asia was once again to be dominated by forces based outside the region as the Bolsheviks and their Red Army won control of Central Asia in the civil war. Thus, the internal struggles of Central Asia were again to be regulated by a power that possessed the military force required to maintain political control. But this time the outcome of the competition was different. In alliance with the Bolsheviks, the Jadids of Central Asia now won positions and a level of influence that until then had been unthinkable.

In the rhetoric of the Social Democratic Party prior to the revolution, the rights of non-Russian peoples of the east were given great emphasis. However, the practice adopted in the aftermath of the revolution did not correspond to the promises that had been made. After the revolution, the matter of cooperation between the native population and the entirely Russian Soviets was raised. Shir Ali Lapin, the leader of the Ulama Jamiyati, suggested that a coalition government be formed. The Russian Congress of Soviets rejected this proposal categorically:

> It is impossible to let the Muslims into the revolutionary government at this time, because the attitude of the local population to the Soviets is doubtful, and because the indigenous population has no proletarian organizations.[89]

This practice was far from the one envisioned in both Lenin's and Stalin's rhetoric before the revolution. The rejection naturally complicated relations between Russians and the Central Asian population, but whether or not it is the key to understanding the formation of the Kokand Autonomous government is a matter of debate. It is certain that the central Soviet government increasingly saw this attitude on the part of those who represented Bolshevik power in Central Asia as a problem. As a result, initiatives were made to improve the situation on this point. Early in 1918, a commission was sent to Central Asia to

accustom the local population to the Bolshevik institutions. A watershed in the development of Muslim participation was a directive from Moscow, dated July 10, 1919, which ordered proportional representation in party and state organs.[90] Muslims now entered the party *en masse*, and the newspaper *Ulug Turkistan* reported that "following the victory of the Bolsheviks over their enemies the support for the Bolsheviks among Muslims has been greatly increased".[91] The number of Muslims who now entered party organs greatly exceeded those who had been active in the Jadid movement. Nevertheless, according to Khalid, even if the Jadids themselves did not represent a majority group among the Muslim communists, these Central Asian communists "represented in many ways a direct connection with the main thrust of Jadidism".[92]

This is not too surprising, as there were striking parallels between the Bolshevik project and that of the Jadids. Both aimed at modernization, and, while their ultimate goals diverged enormously, both projects strove for a reformation of society based on secular knowledge, education, and enlightenment.[93] These similarities represented an important common ground for the Jadids and the Bolsheviks, and it is characteristic that the Jadids came to occupy a particularly important position in the field of education during the initial years of Soviet power in Central Asia. For the Jadids, who had until recently been a rather marginal group, this must have been an unexpected success. Commenting on the decision of the Turkestan Commission to remove some Russians from high positions and to replace them with members of the indigenous population, Donald Carlisle has maintained that:

> Ryskulov, Tursun Khojaev and their Jadid associates must have been dizzy with success as they watched the Russian lords shipped out of Turkestan and some of Tashkent's railroad organizations – the first strongholds of Bolshevism of Central Asia – disbanded and sent packing.[94]

The Jadids and their thoughts were to significantly influence Central Asian society in the first decade after the revolution, and this influence was not restricted to Turkestan. Indeed, it was outside Turkestan, in Khiva and Bukhara, that the Jadids enjoyed their greatest success, and, as before, Russia's strength was the determining factor. If the khanates, and in particular Bukhara, had enjoyed a certain autonomy in the Tsarist period, this became a much greater degree of independence after the revolution. In November 1917, the Tashkent Soviet implicitly

recognized the independence of Bukhara, which was now entirely in the hands of conservatives.[95] In both Bukhara and Khorezm, the traditional elites used this independence to hunt down the reformers who were challenging their authority. The latter were therefore completely dependent on outside assistance. Reformers in both Khiva and Bukhara sought refuge in Turkestan, and allied themselves with the Bolsheviks. The Young Bukharans persuaded the Bolsheviks to overthrow the Emir as early as March 1918, but at this point the Red forces were not yet sufficiently strong. In 1920, however, they were ready. The Khivan khanate was abolished in January that year, and the Emirate of Bukhara was abolished six months later, having existed for almost half a millennium.

The ancient khanates were transformed into "People's Soviet republics", and in both entities governments set up under the strong influence of the reformers. In Khiva, or, as it was now called, the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic, 10 of the 15 *nazirats* (ministries) were headed by Young Khivans, while the government of Bukhara was dominated by leading Jadids such as Fayzullah Khojaev (the minister of foreign affairs), Usman Khojaev (the minister of finance) and Abdurrauf Fitrat (the minister of public education).[96] Thus the reformers, who a few years earlier had been fighting against the dual oppression stemming from local elites and the Russian administration, suddenly found themselves in charge of governments and enjoying a level of influence of which they had previously only dreamed.

Nationalism and the tribal conglomerates

I have so far focused on the development of a particular elite which primarily represented the sedentary and urban population of Transoxania. This chapter ends with a discussion of the population groups that I have referred to as the "tribal conglomerates". In the Kazak steppe, the situation diverged in important ways from that found in southern Central Asia. First, the experience of interaction with Russia and Russians had a longer record here than in the more recently conquered south. Second, the Russian presence was much more strongly felt due to the considerable influx of Russian and other Europeans. Moreover, non-intervention was not as characteristic of Tsarist policies in the steppes as in the south. Much as a result of this, but also reflecting the lower level of islamicization in the steppe regions, a secular elite had begun to develop during the nineteenth century. Chokan Valikhanov, Ibraim Altinsarin and Abai Kunanbaev represented what Martha Olcott

has called "the first generation of Kazak intellectuals".[97] This first generation was overwhelmingly pro-Russian, and national identities or the culture of nationalism did not occupy any important position in their visions of enlightenment and modernization (for example, the settlement of the steppe population). In the years prior to the revolution, a second generation of Kazak intellectuals came into being.

This second generation was much more critical of the Russian regime, and for this group "Kazak" and "Kazakness" became central concepts. They were not anti-Russian as such, but they reacted to the political inequality and injustice resulting from the Russian–Kazak division. A principal issue was access to land. This appears to be a good example of the kind of fusion of nationally- and economically-based identities that has been a main concern of Ronald Suny.[98] Kazakness became increasingly relevant as it was seen as the reason for experienced economic hardship. However, the intellectual elite recognized that notions of Kazakness were not prominent among the general population. Like national elites elsewhere, therefore, Bukeikhanov pointed to the necessity for the Kazak population to transcend tribal loyalties and to become aware of common interests and goals.[99] As opposed to the first generation, the elite of the early nineteenth century displayed a marked nationalist tint. They emphasized the need to preserve the national character of the "Kazak people", and the idea of a "national character" figured prominently in their thinking.

Even though more critical to Russian rule than their predecessors, the twentieth-century Kazak intelligentsia did not want to break with Russia entirely. When the Alash Orda Party was formed, the majority opted for Kazak national territorial autonomy in a democratic federative and parliamentary Russian republic. However, this option never materialized, and the Alash Orda government, which had been formed in December 1917, was doomed when the Red Army proved victorious in the civil war. The policy of the Alash government had been nationalist to a significant degree, something expressed in their territorial orientation as well as in the organization of their government. The mentioned activities of the Kazak elite were largely restricted to the Kazak population of the Steppe region. However, there was agreement within the Alash group that the boundaries of the new political entity were to reflect the national composition of the population. As a result, in December 1917, the founding congress of the Alash government decided that the Alash state, in addition to the Steppe territory (Uralsk, Turgay, Akmolinsk, Semipalatinsk *oblasts*), was to include the Kazak districts of Transcaspia, and the Kazak-dominated regions of Turkestan,

as well as Kyrgyz regions of Ferghana.[100] The attitude of the Alash on this point is an example of what Rogers Brubaker refers to as "transborder nationalism", that is, the struggle to remake state borders in order to include members of the state-bearing nationality living on the territory of a different state.[101] To achieve this, what the Alash government suggested was – to use Soviet terminology – a small-scale national delimitation of Central Asia.

It is also interesting to note that their project included not only regions perceived as Kazak, but Kyrgyz ones as well.[102] This testifies to the intimate relationship between the two groups. Even though regarded as distinct from each other, there were at this point no voices calling for a political separation of Kyrgyz from Kazaks. Alexandre Bennigsen's observation that a Kazak-Kyrgyz nationality was in the process of crystallizing at this time appears to be in line with these facts.[103]

Emphasis on nationality was not restricted to the question of territory. The Alash also decided that national affiliation was to be decisive for access to positions in government. Of the 25 members of the Alash Orda government, 15 were to be Kazaks while 10 would be Russians or other non-Kazak minorities. In this way, the Alash regime allowed ideas of national community to influence the institutional composition of the government. During the brief period of its existence, the Alash government was never strong enough to implement its "transborder nationalism", and these areas remained outside when the Kazak ASSR was established in August 1920. Later, the authorities of the Kazak ASSR repeatedly raised this question, and during the national delimitation the issue was put on the political agenda. Then, however, "Kazak" was defined not only in opposition to "Russian", even though that dimension remained important. Moreover, the Kazak-Kyrgyz relation grew more problematic.

Within the Turkmen population, there were few signs of nationalism at this time. The idea of a Turkmen genealogical community existed as before, but there was little to indicate that the relationship between the Turkmen patriarchal groups was about to change in any fundamental way. As before, the different groups of Turkmen lived in Khiva, Bukhara and the Turkestan Governorate-General, and unification of the groups was not an issue. As Adrienne Edgar has pointed out, the new orientation of the Jadids had little appeal and limited impact among the Turkmen population.[104] Indeed, it has been a major point in this chapter that the Jadids largely represented populations that served as a contrast for the identification of the Turkmen. The Turkestan of the Jadids was not a natural focus for Turkmen identity. For

the Turkmen, the tribal community remained the predominant frame of identity.

As we shall see in the following chapter, the last years of the Tsarist period saw the occurrence of a number of conflicts in Khorezm that have generally been referred to as Turkmen–Uzbek conflicts. However, these conflicts did not involve ideas of a wider Turkmen community. The differences between the Turkmen and the Kazak cases can be explained by the differences in their colonial experiences. No secular intelligentsia had developed among the Turkmen, and in the territories occupied primarily by Turkmen, the influx of foreign settlers had been much more limited as they were not as well suited for agriculture. This does not imply, however, that a sense of Turkmenness was necessarily absent. Rather, the political situation had not yet made Turkmen into a very relevant political identity.

The Soviet Revolution, however, changed this fundamentally. First, attempts were made at establishing a Turkmen government in the upheavals of 1917. Edgar maintains that a tiny nationalist movement emerged, centered on officers who were sympathetic to Jadid ideas. In addition to educational reform, the aspiring leaders favored the unification of all Turkmen tribes under the leadership of the urban intelligentsia.[105] Like other challenges to Bolshevik power, however, the Turkmen aspirations for autonomy were put down by force. Similar attempts were made during the civil war, when an all-Turkmen congress was held that declared its support for the overthrow of the Soviet government. The result was the formation of a Central Turkmen Committee, in which the various lineages were represented, but this turned out to be a short-lived experiment.

A couple of years later, voices began to call for the unification of the Turkmen in a separate political unit, this time within the framework of the Soviet state. As we will see in later chapters, this was the result of Soviet policies as well as of Bolshevik ideology.

The writing of national histories often involves a degree of anachronistic application of contemporary notions of community. In the case of the Central Asian post-Soviet republics, this problem appears to be particularly acute. As the discussion in Chapter 2 demonstrated, only a few decades prior to the national delimitation of Central Asia, the identities upon which the delimitation was later based were neither clearly defined nor particularly important. For the population at large, more limited identities were far more important, and a reorganization of the multiethnic Central Asian political entities according to identities such as Uzbek or Turkmen was unthinkable at the time. The

culture of nationalism had hardly any position in nineteenth-century Central Asia.

The Tsarist period, however, resulted in important changes in this field. While there was little change among the general population, new orientations developed among certain elites. This was particularly the case with the Jadids, whose thoughts were heavily influenced by the culture of nationalism. At the same time, their ideas were profoundly marked by historical, social, economical, and cultural divisions in Central Asia. Old terms were given new content, and "Uzbek" gradually appeared as an identity that served to distinguish the sedentary agriculturalists and the urban population from the surrounding tribal conglomerates with their traditionally nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyles. In the following chapters I will argue that this incipient crystallization continued in the early Soviet period, and that it played a vital role in connection with the delimitation. In the period prior to the delimitation, these distinctions characterized the activity of Central Asian communists. Political conflicts developed that followed this particular pattern. Uzbek versus Turkmen and Kazak became an important dimension well before the national delimitation. In the name of the Turkmen and the Kazak people, Central Asian communists began to assert themselves and complained that the Uzbeks prevented them from realizing their national rights. A kind of minority nationalism developed, which, however new in the region, followed historical divisions.

4
Splitting Up or Joining Together?

In the two preceding chapters I approached the delimitation of Central Asia from the perspective of identity. In this and the following chapters, the focus is on the delimitation process itself, and in this chapter I analyze the delimitation from the point of view of the central Soviet authorities. Why did the Soviet regime adopt a strategy that made ethnicity or nationality the main principle of territorial political organization in Central Asia? Was it, as the divide and rule thesis argues, a strategy primarily aimed at securing political *power and control* for the center over the non-Russian peripheries, or was it, perhaps, part of a wider strategy of *societal change*? What role, if any, did the official ideology of *national rights* play in the formulation of this strategy? Or was this great reorganization primarily a *practical measure*, aimed at improving and facilitating administration?

In order to answer these questions, I explore Soviet perceptions of Central Asia. The national delimitation was a response to a particular situation, and I believe that we can better understand the chosen solution if we have a clear understanding of (the perceived) situation into which it was introduced. For example, the divide and rule theory logically presupposes that the Soviet regime feared an anti-Soviet unification of Central Asian social forces. I will argue in this chapter that there is little evidence to support such an interpretation. In addition to discussing the Soviet regime's perception of the situation in Central Asia, I will analyze how Soviet authorities conceived of "nation" and "nationality" in general and as a principle of territorial political organization in Central Asia in particular. All these questions have implications for our understanding of the Soviet regime as a whole in this period, and I will argue that the image of the Soviet regime that

emerges against the background of these discussions differs in important respects from that of the Stalin era.

There is one problem involved in this approach. Ideally, this type of investigation would be based on the perceptions of those who ultimately made the political decisions. In this case the decision maker was the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party, perhaps with Stalin in a key position. However, as far as I am aware, there is no material available for this level. Central Committee archives contain only resolutions. Nevertheless, this does not force us to leave these important questions unanswered. Neither Stalin nor the other key members of the Central Committee actually worked in Central Asia themselves. Instead, as discussed in the introduction, the Central Committee organized an institution that was to represent it in the region, the Central Asian Bureau. In addition to being an important agent as regards policy implementation in Central Asia, the Bureau also served as the eyes of the central government in the region. It reported regularly to the Central Committee on the political, military and economic situation in Central Asia. Consequently, the conception that Central Committee members had of the situation in Central Asia to a great extent depended on the interpretations and presentations offered by the Central Asian Bureau. For that reason, the Central Asian Bureau influenced Central Committee decisions decisively.

On the basis of this relationship between the Central Asian Bureau and the Central Committee, throughout this chapter I refer to members of the former as "representatives of the central Soviet authorities". I will analyze how these representatives regarded the situation in Central Asia before the national delimitation and discuss the character of the delimitation project as it appears in their discourse. However, some additional comments must be made as regards the category "representatives of the Central Soviet authorities". On the one hand, it is not limited to the Central Asian Bureau members, and on the other, it does not include all of them. Indigenous Central Asians who were members of the Central Asian Bureau were not "representatives of the central Soviet regime" as I define them here. Rather, I focus on the leadership of the Central Asian Bureau, which did not include indigenous Central Asians.

Those who held positions such as plenipotentiary of the USSR in Bukhara or Khorezm were formally representatives of the central Soviet authorities. These were all Russians and Europeans. Other Europeans involved in the administration of Turkestan considered themselves representatives although they were not necessarily that in a formal

sense. In effect, the distinction is between the indigenous on the one side and the non-indigenous, mostly Russians and other Europeans, on the other. Even though there was no formal difference between indigenous and non-indigenous members of the local communist organization, in contrast to the indigenous communists, Russians and other Europeans sent to Central Asia to occupy the different positions saw themselves and were seen as representatives of the central authorities. It is the perception of these formal as well as informal representatives of the central Soviet authorities that is examined in this chapter.

An omnipotent regime?

In the divide and rule theory, the notion of an "omnipotent regime" and a "victimized population" has been central.[1] Obviously, the degree of power, real as well as perceived, would have great influence on policy making. It is therefore useful to begin this chapter with a discussion of the way in which Soviet authorities perceived the political situation in Central Asia in the first part of the 1920s.

There is much evidence that the power and influence of the Soviet regime and the Communist Party was quite limited in Bukhara, and particularly so in Khorezm. This contrasts with what has been the traditional understanding of relations between "Moscow" on the one side and Bukhara and Khiva on the other. In early 1922, the Communist Parties of Bukhara and Khorezm were merged with the Russian Communist Party (RCP), becoming branches of that party. From then on, according to the official Soviet version, the activities of the two parties were guided and directed on a day-to-day basis by the Central Committee of the RCP and its Central Asian Bureau (CAB).[2] Through the Central Asian Bureau, the Central Committee launched a program meant to bring the communist parties of the two republics more in line with the RCP. A number of resolutions were made in the spring of 1922, such as "On the reorganization of the Bukharan Party" and "On the improvement of the composition of the Bukharan Party".[3] Corresponding resolutions were made concerning the Khorezm republic. The cornerstone in the strategy of the RCP/CAB to "improve the conditions" in the two parties, by now only party branches, was a massive purge that was carried out in both republics during 1922 and early 1923. As a result of the purges, membership in the two party branches was drastically reduced. In Bukhara, membership went down from approximately 16,000 to 1,000, while in Khorezm, the purges reduced the membership to a few hundred.[4] To what extent did the purges and

the other actions taken by the RCP/CAB to strengthen its position in the two republics produce the desired results? In his detailed study of Bukhara and Khorezm/Khiva, Seymour Becker claimed that:

> By the fall of 1923 both Bukhara and Khiva had been transformed from subordinate allies into docile satellites, whose leaders were merely the instruments for executing policies formulated in Moscow.[5]

When reading documents from as late as early 1924, however, the picture appears much more ambiguous. In the archives of the Central Asian Bureau, there are a great number of documents that involve various assessments of the situation in Bukhara and Khorezm, as well as in the Turkestan republic, discussing the influence of the Communist Party and the Soviet organs. Some documents are discussions within the Central Asian Bureau, while others are reports from the Central Asian Bureau to the Central Committee in Moscow. Most of these texts express an evaluation of Communist and Soviet power that is much more restricted than what Becker suggested. In a session of the Central Asian Bureau on April 13, 1924, the vice chairman of the Central Asian Bureau, Otto Karklin, having returned from a mission to Khorezm seemingly surprised by the state of affairs, stated:

> Traveling in this little land, I saw nothing even slightly resembling our new system. All over one feels the presence of the remote Middle Ages. That is very sad. I could give plenty of examples: In Khojeilin the commander of the garrison ordered the execution of a person, removed the head from the body, placed it on a stake which was placed for three days before the eyes of the population in the center of the town. Another example: We asked how many people are held in prison. They answered 30 persons. But when we established a commission, we found that there were at least 300 persons, of which at least 200 do not even know on what charges they are there. We created a commission, through the Executive Bureau, and only during the period of our stay in Khorezm, 200 people were released in cases where no charges had been made ... We managed to correct some of the gravest errors of the local authorities.[6]

Indeed, the revolt led by Junaid Khan that took place in Khorezm in January 1924 was a proof that the hold of the Communist Party and the Soviet organs in Khorezm was limited. Moreover, deliberations by

the leadership of the Central Asian Bureau following the January revolt seem to indicate that the relationship between the Khorezm Party branch and the RCP was more complex than Becker's "instruments for executing policies formulated in Moscow" would suggest. At least, the leadership of the Central Asian Bureau appears to have been dissatisfied with local workers in Khorezm. In a letter to Rudzutak and Stalin in late February 1924, Karklin wrote:

> Local [party and state] workers [*rabotniki*] assure that the population went against the Soviet power only because of the power of Junaid. I think that is not entirely correct. Rather, the latest Soviet *kurultai* [congress] misjudged its strength. There was great dissatisfaction with tax collection etc. Junaid made use of both his power and our shortcomings.[7]

In a later letter from April that same year, Karklin stressed the need to intensify the economic support for the population in Khorezm that suffered the most from Basmachi activities. One problem was that resources for such purposes were scarce, but "the worst part is that at some places there is no power, or the power is so weak that it cannot meaningfully use even such limited resources, that do exist in Khorezm".[8]

In yet another April letter to Stalin, Karklin complains that "it must be decisively declared that many party workers who have been in Khorezm and some of which are still in Khorezm, have followed a wrong line".[9] Certainly, Moscow, taken to mean the Central Committee of the RCP, was at this time still struggling not only for power over the Khorezm republic as a whole, but for control with the party and the Soviet organs in the republic as well. Not that the Khorezm party and state organizations were pursuing a determined anti-Soviet policy in any sense, but the hold of "Moscow" over their representatives in Khorezm was far from absolute. To remedy the situation, the Central Asian Bureau took a number of actions. In order to fully apprehend the situation in Khorezm, the Central Asian Bureau dispatched several commissions to the republic. Further, personnel were transferred to Khorezm in order to "help local party-workers and improve our [the Central Asian Bureau's] connections [with Khorezm]".[10]

On the basis of the same kinds of sources, it can be established that "Moscow", or the Central Asian Bureau, felt that they had a much better hold on party and state organizations in Bukhara. The Bukharan Party and government were much more in line with the RCP. In a letter to the Central Committee of the RCP in January 1924, Karklin

contrasts the complaints concerning Khorezm with the following positive and optimistic assessment of the situation in Bukhara: "In Bukhara, the situation is presently good. We went there to attend the party conference, which took place in a rare consensus. Altogether, the Bukharan republic pursues a correct line."[11]

Yet, the satisfaction of the central Soviet authorities with the situation in Bukhara must not be exaggerated. In February 1924, having quite recently come to Bukhara as the secretary of the Bukharan Communist Party, Izaak Zelenskii, secretary of the Central Asian Bureau 1924–31, gave a much less positive evaluation of the situation. In a letter to the Central Asian Bureau and the Central Committee of the RCP he provided the following description:

> I arrived in Bukhara two months ago. The party work in BNSR is extremely weak, and there is no educational work what so ever. Sadly, the same applies to Soviet work, and the absence of power in certain places makes the situation even worse. (Measures from the government to improve the situation for the peasants have not given results so far.) The apparatus of local and central organs remains incompetent to the take on systematic work and is cut off from the masses ... The dekhkans are suffering from the Basmachi and their situation is poor. Formerly rich regions are turned into graveyards. Agriculture has a great and urgent need for support, but the government is not in a position to provide this. Taxes are collected unsystematically and almost without regard to class aspects. One main task is to increase the authority of the highest organ of power, the Bukharan CEC. There is also great need for party and soviet workers. There are few local party and soviet workers, the rest come from Russia, including Russians, Tatars and Uzbeks.[12]

On the basis of this background, the idea of an omnipotent Moscow vis-à-vis Bukhara in 1924 must be considerably qualified. It can perhaps be objected that the Bukharan party might have done little, but what was in fact done was not necessarily the activity of "docile satellites, whose leaders were merely the instruments for executing policies formulated in Moscow".[13] There is much to indicate that "Moscow's" hold was far from absolute, in reality as well as in Moscow's own perception. One example is the dissatisfaction with taxation practice as expressed in the letter referred to above. Other examples are the frequent complaints from the leaders of the Central Asian Bureau as well as from Russian secretaries of the local party organizations that local

party branches were deeply influenced by "old disagreements" and conflicts between the local workers.[14] I will return to this issue later in this chapter. For now, suffice it to say that an adequate understanding of Central Asia in 1923–24 should not be based on an image of an omnipotent Moscow.

The Basmachi uprising

The discourse of the Soviet authorities in Central Asia in 1923 and 1924 was not that of an omnipotent regime. Instead, the Soviet regime perceived several threats and limitations to Soviet rule in Central Asia. In the following, I will discuss the challenges and obstacles the Soviet regime identified in Central Asia, and discuss to what extent the establishment of national political entities can be seen as an attempted solution to these problems.

A major challenge to the establishment of Soviet power in the years after the revolution was the so-called Basmachi uprising (*basmachi*, originally meaning "brigand", was a derogatory term introduced by the Soviet authorities and later adopted by the resistors themselves). In the following, I will analyze Soviet perceptions of this phenomenon, and their influence on policy. In accordance with the general pattern, Western and Soviet interpretations of the Basmachi differed fundamentally. In Soviet historiography, the Basmachi was interpreted primarily in terms of class. It was first and foremost a reactionary and counter-revolutionary phenomenon, the reaction of the "enemies of socialism" to the new regime, which represented the interests of the proletariat and the peasants.[15] In characteristic Soviet logic, the Basmachi were even a necessary an inevitable result of the political changes in Central Asia. The socialist revolution would inevitably lead to a reaction by the class enemy, and in the official Soviet interpretation of Central Asia in the 1920s, the Basmachi was the manifestation of this expected reaction. This interpretation must be seen in relation to the position that the concept of class was given in Soviet officialdom after the revolution. As Sheila Fitzpatrick has pointed out, the Bolsheviks' political use of the idea of class corrupted it as a sociological category. In the Bolsheviks' usage, class soon lost any connection to economic realities, and came to be defined by degree of loyalty to the Communist regime: "Proletarian soon became a term denoting political loyalty and ideological correctness rather than social position."[16]

Most Western scholars viewed the Basmachi in a very different and generally quite positive light. In this view, the Basmachi represented a

struggle for national liberation from foreign, i.e. Russian, rule. A typical representative of this position is Baymirza Hayit, according to whom the Basmachi was a concerted effort by fighters for national freedom.[17] Edward Allworth represents more or less the same position, although in a less morally charged tone.[18] While Allworth recognizes the available evidence to be scarce, Hayit found the evidence for his position in Soviet denouncement of the phenomenon. He refers, for example, to a statement by Stalin saying that the Basmachi movement had the aim of separating the Central Asian republics from the Soviet state.[19] However, one should not take Stalin's statements in such contexts at face value even if they happen to support one's own position. In the Soviet perspective within which Stalin's utterance was made, the opposition to various kinds of so-called nationalist deviations had been firmly established; such accusations were directed towards Europeans and Central Asians alike. Moreover, with Russia and its Communist Party representing the revolution and all that was progressive, separation from Russia was by definition counter-revolutionary. Within such a framework, the Basmachi could be denounced both in principle and on an ideological basis. It would undoubtedly have been much more problematic to present the Basmachi as a reaction to the miserable conditions offered by the Soviet regime.

In both Hayit's and Allworth's views, there is a link between the Basmachi and the policy of the national delimitation. The Basmachi represented the struggle for a unified Turkestan or Central Asia that holds such a crucial position in the divide and rule thesis.[20] More recent research, however, has argued that there is not evidence available to sustain the image of the Basmachi as a unified movement for national liberation. Rejecting the traditional Soviet and Western interpretations, Adeeb Khalid argues: "Instead, the revolt was a response to the economic and social crises produced by the famine and the resulting bacchanalia of robbery, requisitioning and confiscation on the part of Soviet authorities."[21] Further, Khalid argues that the movement was "embedded in local solidarities which remained alien to the more abstract visions of national struggle held by those who sought to co-opt it to their goals".[22]

In the following, I will discuss how the Soviet authorities viewed the Basmachi at the time. Did they see it as a predictable class-based resistance, a unified movement for national liberation, or perhaps a more or less spontaneous response to a social and economic crisis?

Let us first look briefly at the Basmachi from a "quantitative" perspective. To what extent did Basmachi activity cause problems for

Soviet authorities in the years preceding the national delimitation? Archival material involving assessments of the Basmachi is quite abundant. Local organs, such as the local Central Committees and the Revolutionary Military Council of the Turkestan Front, reported to the Central Asian Bureau, which repeatedly debated these questions, and in its turn reported to the Central Committee in Moscow. The quantity of such material alone clearly testifies that the regime saw the Basmachi as a considerable threat. However, by the second part of 1923, the general tone indicates that the Basmachi was losing strength, although there were some important exceptions. The most important one was eastern Bukhara, where the Basmachi remained strong for some time. However, the general picture was that the threat from the Basmachi was by this time gradually reduced, and in June 1924, on the basis of a report from the Revolutionary Military Council of the Turkestan Front, the Central Asian Bureau made the following conclusions. First, the Basmachi was weakening in western Bukhara, and attitudes in this region were developing in favor of the Soviet power. To a somewhat lesser extent, the same was true of the central regions of Bukhara as well as Khorezm. Second, in the Turkestan ASSR, the Basmachi problem was settled in Ferghana, while there were some rather minor occurrences in Samarkand *oblast*. In the Turkmen *oblast* there was some limited Basmachi activity.[23]

It appears that the Soviet regime's view of the Basmachi was quite different from what the "national-liberation thesis" would suggest. In the many reports discussing the Basmachi, there are very few references to pan-Islamism, pan-Turkism, or ideas of a Great Turkestan or a unified Central Asia. There is little to suggest that the Soviet regime believed that the Basmachi uprisings were the response of a unified Turkestan. To a great extent, the contemporary analysis of the Basmachi corresponds to those of later Soviet historiography. In the different assessments of the Basmachi, economy, if not class, emerges as an important category. This is not to say that national dimensions or the aspect of national liberation were altogether absent. A report on the situation in eastern Bukhara discussed in the Central Asian Bureau early 1924, stated that: "Not long ago, the Basmachi was a broad social movement that under religious, national, and political slogans united all classes of the Eastern Bukharan society."[24] Similarly, in a private letter to Karklin in February 1924, Boiarshinov, who had then recently been sent to Khorezm as the representative of the Central Asian Bureau,[25] relates in a report concerning the January uprising that the uprising had taken place under slogans such as: "Down with the Soviet

power and the Bolsheviks", "Down with the Russians who have made revolution in Khorezm", as well as "Muslims unite", seemingly an expression of pan-Islamic sentiments.[26]

Nevertheless, in spite of the *appearance* of national slogans, they did not represent the *essence* of the phenomenon. At least, that was the interpretations of the Soviet authorities. However pragmatic and power-oriented the Soviet regime was, elements of Marxian thinking are here clearly present. National and religious aspects were merely guises for the true, economic nature of the Basmachi phenomenon. Basmachi leaders, the landowners, and the clergy, made use of the slogans in order to attract the lower classes to their anti-Soviet struggle. Even though the mentioned report acknowledged the presence of national and religious slogans, in the final analysis the interpretation of the Basmachi was based on concepts such as "bourgeoisie", "class", "reactionary" and "counterrevolution".[27] This was a genuine conviction and not something that was declared for propaganda purposes. The *Thesis on Soviet work in Eastern Bukhara*, adopted by the Central Asian Bureau in the first half of 1924, concludes that the Basmachi in eastern Bukhara consisted of two groups. First, there were the "feudal exploiting elements", the landowners, and the clergy, and second, there were the peasants, the exploited, who were being manipulated by the first groups. In this view, the Basmachi in eastern Bukhara was chiefly a phenomenon aimed at preserving or restoring the feudal order of society. Consequently, it mobilized against Soviet power, as this represented the manifestation of the interests of the toilers.[28]

When investigating Soviet perceptions of the Basmachi, one must take into consideration not only explicit interpretations, but also discussions of how the Basmachi could be suppressed and what was in fact done. As it is well known, the struggles of the Soviet regime against the Basmachi involved intensive fighting and bloody battles.[29] However, the military activities were paralleled by a political strategy aimed at weakening legitimacy of the Basmachi. This brings us to the core of the Bolshevik understanding of the Basmachi: what gave it legitimacy, and how could this legitimacy most effectively be destroyed? In a sense, the strategy adopted was based on the principle of divide and rule, but in a very different way from what the "traditional" divide and rule thesis suggests. The Soviet regime intended to weaken the Basmachi by disuniting various elements of the population, but economy, not "nationality" – however defined – was the main category in these efforts.

In a plan for the struggle against the Basmachi in Eastern Bukhara adopted in February 1924, the Central Asian Bureau emphasized three measures that were absolutely necessary for success. First, the exploiting classes, that is, the landowners and the clergy, had to be "neutralized", and deprived of their possibility to exploit the poor. Second, the proletarian elements, the peasants and the poor, had to be attracted to Soviet power to a greater degree than what had so far been the case. Third, the Central Asian Bureau established that it was necessary to rely on and make use of the merchant class as a progressive element in eastern Bukhara, to convince them that Soviet power benefited their economic interests. "Only by following this main direction can we take popular support away from the Basmachi and isolate the movement", concluded the Central Asian Bureau.[30]

In June 1924, the Central Basmachi Conference (*tsentral'noe basmachestvo soveshchanie*) discussed means for eliminating the Basmachi. Among various measures to be taken in central and western Bukhara, the conference suggested that the Bukharan CEC should direct the *volost* executive committees of Bukhara to compile a list of the poorer individuals among former Basmachi activists who had now surrendered to Soviet power. The purpose of these lists was neither surveillance nor control. Instead, they were meant to enable the Bukharan government to provide material assistance to poor ex-Basmachi activists.[31] At least a couple conclusions can be drawn from the choice of this tactic. First, it demonstrates that the Soviet regime employed different weapons in the struggle against the Basmachi. Clearly, the support of former Basmachi activists was aimed at making Soviet power more attractive to the remaining activists, as well as, probably, to non-Basmachis. Second, it suggests that economy was an important dimension of the Basmachi phenomenon, or at least in Soviet perceptions of it. If the Basmachi movement had primarily been a struggle for national liberation, economic support would not be effective in quelling it. It seems reasonable to argue that this strategy was based on a perception of the Basmachi not too different from the one given by Khalid, that the Basmachi "was a response to economic and social crises".[32]

This is not meant to downplay the Soviet regime's use of violence in the struggle against the Basmachi. On the contrary, violence remained essential in the anti-Basmachi struggle. Characteristically, having decided what had to be done in Bukhara in early 1924, the Central Basmachi Conference stated: "In the coming period it is necessary to concentrate all our attention on the liquidation of the following

shayks: Mulla Abdukagara, Agzam Khoji, Tashmydamu, Turdy Taksabo and Kilich Mergen."[33] However, it was not only the Basmachi activists who were subjected to Soviet aggression in this period, and the use of violence itself does not reveal much about Soviet perceptions of the Basmachi.

Later, the Central Basmachi Conference was criticized for not putting sufficient emphasis on the need to support the surrendered *jigits*, or soldier. In a report on the situation in Bukhara, Filippovskii, commander of the western Bukharan group of the Turkestan Front, saw "the absence of material support for the surrendered *jigits*" as one of the main reasons for the revitalization of the Basmachi in western and central Bukhara, where the Basmachi had been much weakened during the summer.[34] Here, the Basmachi was viewed in an economic-structural perspective. The commander argued: "The surrendered *jigits* remain with their former *kurbashi* [the Basmachi leaders] because they are dependent on them. They have little possibility for going over to peaceful work." On that background, he suggested that the *jigits* be granted material support, and in particular those *jigits* who had stayed with their *kurbashi*.[35] Even though this support did not materialize to the extent recommended, the discussion itself throws interesting light on Soviet thinking about the Basmachi. In fact, the Soviet struggle against the Basmachi reflects a regime that in important respects was different from the succeeding regime of the 1930s. As pointed out by J. Arch Getty in his analysis of the Stalin era and the Terror, that period was characterized by a fundamental sense of insecurity on the part of the regime. Stalin and other Soviet leaders were convinced that political support was beyond their reach, and concluded that effective control could only be achieved through coercion, violence and terror.[36] Conversely, the struggle against the Basmachi, violence and coercion notwithstanding, was carried out by a regime that believed it could win support for their political solutions.

When Soviet strategy towards the Basmachi was not one-dimensional, this reflects the fact that the Soviet regime attributed the term "Basmachi" to different phenomena. In contemporary Soviet discourse on the Basmachi, there was a distinction between *economic* and *political* Basmachi. The following words from a report on the political and military situation in Central Asia in the first part of 1924 are characteristic: "In Samarkand *oblast* the Basmachi is insignificant in scale, and has a robbery [*grabitel'skii*] rather than a political character."[37] The same report refers to the Turkmen *oblast* of TASSR in terms of "robbery Basmachi" (*grabitel'skoe basmachestvo*). While the former is restricted to

plundering and robbery, "the Basmachi with a political character" referred to activities based on an explicit anti-Soviet agenda.

How did the Soviet regime conceive of these two different kinds of Basmachi activity? According to scholars such as Hayit and Allworth, the application of the term "Basmachi" (*basmachestvo* in Russian) on the part of the Soviet regime was a deliberate strategy to weaken the legitimacy of a political movement.[38] I do not wish to discuss the background for the introduction of the term in the first place, but rather comment on how it was actually used in Soviet discourse. Even though a distinction was made between economic and political Basmachi, in the view of the Soviet regime this distinction was not perceived to be clear-cut. Furthermore, evidence suggests that this distinction was not always important to Soviet authorities. Rather, the situation was that Soviet rule confronted serious claims to authority, and if the population accepted these claims, this would represent a grave threat to the establishment of Soviet rule in Central Asia. Moreover, the idea of "*grabitel'skoe basmachestvo*" must be qualified. What is robbery to some may be fully justified for others. And what was termed "*grabitel' skoe basmachestvo*" was not restricted to raids and plundering, even if such activities took place. From the perspective of those involved, much of this activity appeared to be legitimate tax collection. For example, a report on the Basmachi in Zeravshan in early 1924 states:

> There are some *kurbashi* that have not surrendered (Jura-Amin, Khabib Avganets, Nur-Mamed Sfenid) ... The *kurbashi* ignore the Soviet organs and take on various administrative functions, and collect taxes etc. This reduces the authority of the government before the population.[39]

Therefore, whether or not the *kurbashi* involved had an explicit anti-Soviet agenda was not necessarily decisive, as whatever its aim, this kind of activity too obviously represented an obstacle to the consolidation of Soviet authority.

According to the "national liberation"-thesis, the Soviet regime confronted a largely uniform movement fighting for national liberation. While recognizing this situation, Soviet leadership sought to draw attention away from the fact by misrepresenting the movement as bandits. There is no doubt that the competition for authority between the Soviet regime and the Basmachi involved a Russian-Muslim dimension, and that the Soviet regime recognized this. Nevertheless, the

Soviet regime conceived of the authority of the Basmachi, real or potential, in much more limited terms. In most Soviet analyses, the main focus is clearly on the different *kurbashi* and on their hold over their respective *jigit* followers, a relationship that was interpreted as an expression of the patriarchal-feudal social and economic structures prevalent in Central Asia. Consequently, disrupting these ties became an important element in the non-violent aspects of the fight against the Basmachi. Almost without exception, the various *kurbashi* and their respective followers were discussed and dealt with separately. This suggests that the Soviet regime regarded the Basmachi as organized along vertical lines based on traditional social organization rather than along horizontal lines based on visions of a wider community. Facing the Basmachi, the Soviet regime did not see any unified all-Central Asian or all-Turkestanian force or potential. Rather, they perceived fragmented claims of authority on the basis of the traditional social structure. This echoes Khalid's previously mentioned observation that the Basmachi was "embedded in local solidarities which remained alien to the more abstract visions of national struggle".[40] Obviously, this does not mean that the Basmachi did not represent a serious threat to the Soviet regime, or that the regime did not consider it to be a serious threat. It only means that the character and basis of the Basmachi was different from what the "national liberation" thesis suggests, and that it would therefore require different solutions.

Even though the relationship of authority between the individual *kurbashi* and their *jigits* was important, the Basmachi also claimed to represent a more widely based authority. As mentioned above, a Muslim dimension was involved, but by at least 1924, the Soviet regime did not deem the potential for all-Muslim mobilization as a serious threat. More attention was paid to attempts to restore the Bukharan Emirate. A report on the Basmachi in eastern Bukhara in mid-1924 stated:

> In eastern Bukhara more than 30 major Basmachi leaders are operating, commanding a total of approximately 1800 persons at eight machine-guns ... Separate leaders unite under the command of Ibrahim Bek. The Basmachi commanders strive to give it the mark of military organization, even using the uniforms etc. from the Emir period.[41]

Here, Basmachi attempts to draw on the authority of Bukhara and the Emir were not at all unsuccessful. Regarding popular attitudes, the report said:

> [The population saw] the Basmachi as the power, and the commands of the Emir they see as binding on the population. To say that the people wholeheartedly support the Basmachi would be wrong, but that they take it into account, fear it, and support it to a greater degree than they support the Red Army, is a fact.[42]

In dealing with the Basmachi of eastern Bukhara, the Soviet regime believed that the Emir, having resettled in Afghanistan, in some way played an important role in Bukharan affairs, and in particular in eastern Bukhara. This belief was later confirmed. In a letter from the Turkestan Front in July 1924, Chicherin, the then People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, was informed that a liaison between the Bukharan Emir and the *kurbashi* of eastern Bukhara had been arrested. Confiscated correspondence brought the first reliable evidence that the Emir and his supporters from within Afghanistan played a considerable role in the Basmachi of eastern Bukhara.[43] Also, the author of the letter suggested to Chicherin that this discovery might have great impact on the future connections of the USSR with Afghanistan.

Again, the response of the regime was an attack along several fronts. Alongside military pressure that continued to be a key feature, the necessity of making Soviet authority more strongly felt in the region was underlined. The Central Basmachi Conference complained that while all participation in Basmachi affairs remained virtually unpunished:

> [E]very attempt on the part of the population or some of its representatives to support the Red Army has been punished by the Basmachi. The population knows that the Basmachi can be supported unpunished, while support of the Red Army or anti-Basmachi activity is dangerous.[44]

Therefore, it was deemed necessary to ensure a more rapid implementation of convictions: "The Basmachi have such immediate implementation, while the Soviet courts suffer from 2–3 months delay. This makes people see the power as a weak one, and one that fears to implement decisive measures."[45]

My conclusion to this excursion into the Basmachi is that there is little to support the view that the Basmachi should primarily be understood in terms of national liberation. Rather than a unified movement for national liberation, the Soviet regime saw in the Basmachi competing claims to authority based chiefly on traditional and local loyalties.

And in the cases where the Soviet regime identified appeals to a more widely-based loyalty, they did not identify any all-Central Asian or all-Turkestanian movement. Instead, they saw attempts by those who had benefited most from the old order to reinstall the Bukharan Emir. In 1928, Prince Lobanoff-Rostovskii, a Russian émigré scholar, argued that the national delimitation was merely the Bolsheviks' reply to the Basmachi uprising.[46] Considering the Bolshevik view of the Basmachi, this can hardly have been the case. Certainly, the Basmachi represented a challenge to authority that had to be dealt with, just like all other challenges to Soviet power. Moreover, like other competing claims to authority, it was met with military force. However, aggression was not the only strategy, and economic and social measures were employed in order to undermine the basis for the Basmachi from within. Conceptions of "nation" and "nationality", on the other hand, had no place here. In the end, the "divide and rule" and the "national liberation" perspectives were based on the principle that any rule by indigenous authority is more legitimate than rule dominated by non-indigenous political forces. Therefore, any antagonism between Central Asians, irrespective of social background, and the Soviet power, as a nationally alien regime, would be a logical result. But that is not how the Soviet regime itself viewed the situation. It seems to have maintained a genuine belief that it was possible to attract the support of the "proletarian" elements in Central Asia.

This view of the Basmachi was in complete accord with the Soviet view of Central Asia as a whole. Rather than a unified anti-Soviet Central Asia, the agents of the Soviet power saw a highly fragmented society. In the eyes of the regime, this fragmentation represented an obstacle, and unity was in many ways more a goal than a target for the Soviet regime in Central Asia.

Central Asian unity?

The perception of a fragmented Central Asia involved several levels. First, it related to the state level. Prior to the national delimitation, Central Asia consisted of the two peoples' republics of Khorezm and Bukhara, as well as the Turkestan ASSR. Reading the discussions of the interrelations between these entities, it seems clear that the predominating view was that the bonds between the different entities were too loose. For example, representatives of the central Soviet authorities complained that the government in Bukhara was entirely isolated from the rest of Central Asia.

Second, and this is more central to my argument, the Soviet authorities maintained an idea of *ethnic fragmentation*. The agents of the Soviet regime saw in Central Asia the existence of groups they most commonly referred to as *natsional'nosti* or *narodnosti*. Throughout the Soviet period the practice regarding the classification of ethnic communities was to some extent characterized by the Marxist view of the progressive stages of socioeconomic development. Accordingly, the different group designations such as *plemia, narodnost'* and *natsiia* were associated with specific levels of socioeconomic development.[47] In Soviet discourse on Central Asia in the 1920s, however, it is obvious that no such detailed theoretical differentiation was at work. There was nothing particularly Marxist in the Soviet authorities' understanding of ethnic groups in the Central Asian population. The Soviet regime regarded Central Asia and found a heterogeneous population. I believe Yuri Slezkine is correct that, in the final analysis, even internationalists such as the Bolsheviks believed humanity to be divided into a number of national communities. Instinctively, the Soviet regime sought to apply this model to the Central Asian population. How they conceived of the various categories had more to do with how numerous the different groups were considered to be than with Marxist ideas of historical development.

Soviet authorities found that the relations between the different groups were problematic and often led to conflicts. From that perspective, international conflicts represented an element of instability in the region and would make it difficult to govern Central Asia in an orderly fashion. The most commonly employed identities were Turkmen, Uzbek and Kazak (then called Kirgiz[48]). The fact that the different designations might well be problematic did not mean that Soviet authorities in fact problematized them at the time. What the Soviet authorities saw as the most problematic relation was that between the Uzbeks and the Turkmen, which was related to Khorezm, Bukhara and Turkestan. It was in Khorezm that the Turkmen–Uzbek dimension was seen to have the most serious implications. Tension between different population groups in the Khivan khanate was not a new phenomenon. In the words of Seymour Becker, "the problem of the chronic insubordination of the [Khivan] khan's Turkoman subjects had never been permanently solved".[49] In the period 1880–1905, there had been repeated minor disturbances among the Turkmen of Khiva, usually over water rights and questions of taxation. While the period that followed was relatively quiet in this respect, the last five years before the revolution were marked by a number of rebellions among

the Khivan Turkmen. The first one began in 1912, the second in 1914, and the last one in 1916. According to Becker, to the background for the conflicts, that of "the ancient dispute of water for irrigation and the traditional cultural antagonism between Turkomans and Uzbegs", was added attempts at tax reform that implied a huge increase in the tax burden of the Khivan Turkmen. Turkmen tribal leaders now played on the discontent of the masses, and open rebellion was the result. What Becker refers to as traditional cultural antagonism is related to the important distinction between the nomadic and the sedentary populations. As discussed above, this dichotomy also implies divisions and differences in a number of other areas such as religion (weakly islamicized versus strongly islamicized) and social structure (strength of lineages versus weakness of lineages). Even though the conflicts originally centered on economic questions of irrigation and taxation, the conflict patterns largely corresponded to the mentioned dichotomy, and this was what made it a Turkmen–Uzbek conflict.

In 1915, Russia had abandoned its non-intervention policy towards the khanates, and with the intention of achieving the greatest possible level of stability began to mediate in the Turkmen–Uzbek conflict in Khiva. In 1915, Russia pursued a pro-Turkmen policy, which among other things found its expression in seeing the most aggressively anti-Turkmen members of the Khivan government exiled.[50] Later, the pro-Turkmen policy was abandoned in the wake of the February 1916 uprising, in which Junaid declared himself Khan of Khiva.

At the time Soviet power was established in Central Asia, this conflict remained unsettled and still represented a potential source of conflict in the region. In the discussions of the Central Asian Bureau and in its correspondence with the Central Committee, the so-called national question in Khorezm was given great priority. The Turkmen–Uzbek question was no doubt regarded as a destabilizing factor in Khorezm. Karklin, on his return from a stay in Khorezm on behalf of the Central Asian Bureau in early 1924, reported on the national question in Khorezm:

> The national relations represent a very serious problem in Khorezm. I have never seen antagonism taking on such a severe form as here. If for instance an Uzbek appears on a horse in Tashauz, no doubt his horse will be taken and the Uzbek attacked. And if a Turkmen woman appears in Khojeilin, she will most certainly be attacked in all ways, only because she is a Turkmen among Kirgiz [Kazaks]. The same attitude to the Turkmen is found among the Uzbek.[51]

In Karklin's view, the Turkmen–Uzbek conflict in Khorezm had two main dimensions. First, there was the economic dimension, connected to the question of land and water. This was identified as the origin of the conflict:

> The old and great dispute among the Turkmen and Uzbeks is the land-water question. The Uzbeks control the upper of the *aryks* [irrigation ditches or channels], and the land that they occupy and use is beyond comparison the best one. The Turkmen on the other side are more or less deprived of any fair exploitation of water.[52]

However, in the eyes of the Soviet authorities, the Turkmen–Uzbek problem in Khorezm was not restricted to the economic sphere. In Central Asian Bureau discussions and in its correspondence with the Central Committee, the questions of Turkmen–Uzbek relations were extended to politics and government. In one of his reports to the Central Committee on the situation in Khorezm in the first part of 1924, Karklin concluded that there was a great deal of dissatisfaction in Khorezm, and that one important reason for this was the imbalanced representation in state and party institutions:

> From a proportional perspective, the situation of the Turkmen is dismal as they are severely underrepresented. Look at the party for instance. Of 600 members, only three are Turkmen. The same is true for the Komsomol, where even Russians are more numerous. And it is exactly the same in the central organs of power. It is true as the Turkmen say, that this is a strictly Uzbek government.[53]

Even though this Turkmen–Uzbek conflict was perceived as historical, it is very interesting to note that, in regards to Khorezm, the representatives of the Soviet regime commented that the interpretation of the conflict by those involved was undergoing a change. It has been maintained that the Soviet approach to groups and identities was objectivist.[54] However, discussions also demonstrated recognition of identity as something dynamic and flexible. Having returned from a mission to Khorezm, where he had been sent in the wake of the events of January 1924, Broido reported to the Central Asian Bureau:

> In the question about rights to water supply and irrigation, a new phenomenon has appeared, a kind of nationalism. Conflicts around

> water supply are increasingly being interpreted in national terms, i.e. as Turkmen versus Uzbek.[55]

Was Broido correct in this observation? Did national identities take on increased importance for (parts of) the population in this period? Obviously, Broido's statements alone are not sufficient evidence that such a development was taking place. Indeed, I argued earlier that both scholars and the state administration during Tsarism in many cases misinterpreted identity realities. In the following chapter, I will return to this question in greater detail. In this chapter, however, it is the central Soviet authorities' interpretation of Central Asian society that is in focus, and from this perspective Broido's interpretations are highly interesting.

The increasing emphasis on the Turkmen identity did not imply a fundamentally new level of cohesion among the population identified as Turkmen, as Broido continued: "Still, this is not an all-Turkmen nationalism, as this principle is non-existent or at least not developed among the Turkmen. If you ask a Khorezm Turkmen who he or she is, the answer will never be a Turkmen." But a lack of internal cohesion among those who were referred to as Turkmen does not necessarily prevent the same individuals from feeling that their "Turkmenness" was the reason why they were exposed to injustice. According to Broido, that was what the Turkmen felt. Moreover, this was not the opinion of Broido alone, neither was the increased focus on wider identities restricted to the Turkmen of Khorezm.

Discussions between the Central Asian Bureau and the Central Committees of the Communist Parties of Bukhara and Turkestan in June 1923 demonstrate the strength of the boundaries between the Central Asian political entities (that is Bukhara, Khorezm and Turkestan) as well as the limits of national identities, such as "Turkmen". It was not only in Khorezm that the Soviet authorities found ethnic or national relations to be problematic. In these deliberations, Pozdnyshev, secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bukhara, declared that the Turkmen question in Bukhara was a great problem that had to be settled:

> They are not represented in the higher organs of power, and partially, they have also been without a voice in the Council of Ministers. At present all that exists is the Turkmen Branch[56] and the Turkmen Minister of agriculture. But it must be said that the Turkmen Branch is nothing but a bureaucratic part within the Bukharan Central Committee with little significance or influence.[57]

While there was thought to be few candidates among the Turkmen of Bukhara, the Central Asian Bureau suggested transferring to Bukhara a Turkmen with a high position in Turkestan, Atabaev. However, this led to great discussion, and the bone of contention was whether the population of Bukhara would accept Atabaev, as one from Turkestan. Karklin put it in the following way: "Will the Bukharan population accept that the vice chairman of the Council of Ministers is not a Bukharan, but someone from the outside?"[58] This discussion clearly underscores the limits of Central Asian unity, while it simultaneously suggests that one may hardly refer to any all-Turkmen nationalism in Central Asia at that time.

At the same time, this debate introduces a perspective that holds relevance for the understanding of the national delimitation. Why was it a problem that Turkmen were underrepresented? On the one side, underrepresentation and lack of influence might lead to dissatisfaction and instability. However, there is also another aspect, namely the question of integration into the Soviet sphere. The Central Asian Bureau gave the following grounds for the need to attract Turkmen into the Bukharan organs and institutions of power: "It must openly be said that the Turkmen communities here represent a hotbed of counterrevolution. Turkmen population are increasingly alienated from the general leadership, and thus disappear from our view."[59] Seen in this perspective, it is difficult to interpret the national delimitation as an instrument for the division of an originally united societal elite. Rather, national mobilization on the part of the Soviet regime might well be seen as an attempt to avoid a situation in which entire groups remained outside the Soviet orbit. In contrast to Tsarist Russia's policy of segregation, Soviet thinking on this point represented ambitions of integration.

A great worry for the Soviet regime was the conflicts in the border areas between the Turkmen parts of Turkestan ASSR and the Kazak ASSR. In the eighteenth century, Kazaks had been moving westward into Mangyshlak. Here they had confronted Yomut Turkmen, and a struggle over territory had developed between the two groups. In the 1890s, the conflict had escalated, and in connection with the emergence of Junaid Khan in 1916–18 it had intensified further. In the early 1920s, it represented an obstacle to the establishment of Soviet (or for that matter, any other) order in the region. As a result, in September 1923, the Presidium of the All-Russian CEC appointed a commission to find a solution to the conflict. The commission concluded that the conflict was originally a tribal one between the Kazak Adaev

tribe on the one side and the Yomut Turkmen on the other. Significantly, however, the commission also concluded that the conflict was increasingly assuming a national character, as opposed to what had been the case in the past. According to the commission, the members of the two conflicting groups increasingly began to interpret the conflict in terms of "national hostility" between Turkmen and Kazaks.[60] That the Soviet regime understood this conflict in terms of national sentiments is also demonstrated by the actions suggested to remedy the situation. According to the committee, in order to reduce tensions in the area, it would be necessary to "regulate conditions for national minorities in the Krasnovodsk and the Adaevsk *uezds*". This indicates that the Soviet regime acted on the basis of an understanding that national sentiments were developing in Central Asia in this period, and that the same sentiments represented a source of conflict and instability. Moreover, at least in part, the solutions should involve a national dimension.

While the Turkmen–Uzbek dimension was most critical in Khorezm, in 1923 and 1924, in Bukhara and in the Turkestan ASSR, Uzbek–Kazak conflicts developed as well. The conflicts took place in the party and state institutions of the two republics. In early 1924, the plenipotentiary of the USSR in Bukhara, Znamenskii, reported to the Central Asian Bureau on the "national relations" in the republic: "Our Turkmen and Kirgiz [Kazak] workers in some cases accuse the Uzbeks of great power chauvinism."[61] Later, when the delimitation had begun, the notion of national antagonism always had an important place in the Soviet regime's arguments for the project. The division of Central Asia into different national republics would "bring an end to the conflicts between the various nationalities that are troubling the region".[62] In my opinion, the preoccupation with national conflicts should be taken seriously. The Soviet regime saw national antagonism as a reality in Central Asia, and believed that it represented a challenge to Soviet stability in the region. Moreover, there appears to have been a conviction that political and administrative changes could improve national relations. It is in this perspective we have to understand the establishment of the different national autonomies and entities within the various republics that took place prior to the national delimitation.

In Bukhara in September 1923, the Bukharan government decided to gather the Turkmen regions of Bukhara into a separate Turkmen *oblast*, and, further, to establish a Kazak *oblast*. In May the following year, similar measures were taken in Khorezm, when separate Turkmen and Kazak-Karakalpak autonomous *oblasts* were set up. According to the Soviet historiography, these measures were natural steps in the gradual

realization of the Leninist nationality policy of self-determination of nationalities. There is, however, little to indicate that these administrative changes were primarily conceived of in such terms by the Soviet regime. Rather, they were a part of a much more pragmatic approach. The decision in Khorezm, for instance, came about as a result of discussions between the leadership of the Central Asian Bureau and the "Khorezm comrades". In early April 1924, having first outlined the gravity of the national question in Khorezm, Karklin declared to the Central Asian Bureau: "We discussed it, and decided to establish autonomous *oblasts* for the Kirgiz [Kazaks] and the Turkmen."[63] In a letter to the General Secretary concerning the same question, Karklin stated: "With the purpose of putting in order the relations between the nationalities we decided to establish within Khorezm a Turkmen and a Kirgiz [Kazak]-Karakalpak autonomous *oblast*."[64] Concerning the situation in Bukhara in early 1924, USSR's plenipotentiary in the republic reported that the national relations had become less tense since the establishment of the national *oblasts*, and this was particularly the case with the Turkmen.[65] The examples provided here clearly link the introduction of national entities with the Soviet regime's perceptions of national antagonism.

In the next chapter, I will change the perspective offered here, and instead analyze the national delimitation from the side of the Central Asian political actors. What were their ambitions, and to what extent did they conform to national programs? At this point I will only conclude that perceptions of national relations prevalent among the representatives of the Soviet regime influenced the choice of strategy. The Soviet regime saw a Central Asia divided along several lines, the most important of which were national. However, nationality was not the only division, and the delimitation was not a response to national antagonism alone. Soviet authorities were well aware that the national groups to which they referred were themselves subject to important divisions. The national delimitation was also meant to be a solution to the problem of intra-ethnic divisions.

Intra-ethnic divisions

As discussed in the second chapter, descent groups and lineages were traditionally among the predominant foci of identity of Central Asians, especially for the traditionally nomadic groups. Even though the representatives of the Soviet regime identified a developing nationalism among elements of the Central Asian population, they fully recognized

the persistence of intra-ethnic bonds. These bonds made up patriarchal groups, most commonly referred to as *rody*, and translated into English as "clans". In the patriarchal social structure, the head of the respective groups (the *vozhd*) enjoyed great authority, and the Soviet regime perceived this authority as a threat to the establishment of Soviet power. The Soviet regime found that the Basmachi was strongest where this social structure was the most pronounced, such as among the Turkmen and in Eastern Bukhara.[66] I would argue that the establishment of national republics in Central Asia in the 1920s cannot be understood unless Soviet perception of these intra-ethnic bonds is taken into consideration.

In the beginning of 1924, there was considerable debate in the Central Asian Bureau in regard to the *vozhds*, with most attention paid to the Turkmen ones. There was a consensus that the Turkmen *vozhds* enjoyed considerable authority among their respective followers. Having first discussed the Turkmen–Uzbek question in Khorezm, Karklin, before the Central Asian Bureau, went on:

> Also there is the question of tribal hostility among the Turkmen themselves ... This is an old and important phenomenon, having great influence on events. For instance, in 1920, such antagonism led to the killing of Mamamedov and with him lots of Turkmen. Yet little has changed since then.[67]

While there was no discussion that this "old and important phenomenon" represented a great obstacle to Soviet power, there was disagreement as to how it should be dealt with. In general, the authority of the *vozhds* seems to have been perceived of as so strong, and the resources at the disposal for the Soviet side as so limited, that a full-scale attack might prove counter-productive. An instruction from the Central Asian Bureau to the Khorezm Communist Party (KhCP) on how to deal with the *vozhds* stated that a very careful approach was required. The primary goal should be to

> win the sympathy of peasant masses, and the confidence to Soviet power and the Communist Party in the clans [*v rodakh*], by pointing to the reality of the conflicting interests between *vozhds* and the masses.[68]

Again we see Soviet regime attempts to win support among significant sectors of the population for its political positions. This is not to say

that force was not a factor. The instruction also tells the KhCP "[to] strike brutally against *vozhds* who have turned their arms against us", and that in such cases great efforts should be taken to make the population realize the severity of the punishment. As in the assault on the Basmachi, the strategy was a carrot-and-stick approach.

In early 1924, the Central Asian Bureau adopted a new strategy towards the *vozhds* and their authority. While I argue that the national delimitation was not primarily a divide and rule approach, such a strategy had been employed towards the *vozhds* until early 1924. Following the January uprising in Khorezm, Karklin declared that to divide the various Turkmen clans into friendly and hostile groups, something that had "been characterizing our strategy until now" could no longer be considered satisfactory.[69] "This is not right, as the rod of Yakshi-Gel'dy, Niyaz-Vakshi and Guliam-Ali are neither worse nor better one than the other." In order to win the support of the various groups, Karklin stated: "We must establish equal relations towards all. When giving positions for example to the Turkmen, we must see to that there is a balance between the different tribes."[70]

Instead of pitting the different clans against each other, the Central Asian Bureau now chose a strategy that was nearly the opposite. Realizing that it would be necessary to attract those whom the divide and rule line had alienated from Soviet power,[71] the main question now became how to unite them. Broido, whose mission to Khorezm in early 1924 had laid the premises for the abandonment of the divide and rule strategy towards the *vozhds*, declared that the Soviet authorities should now carry on the attempts of Junaid to unite the Turkmen:

> Ideologically, Junaid is now liquidated, but the task that Junaid undertook, to unite all Turkmen *rody*, remains. And this is a work that we must continue. One might say that we must become "nationalists". That is our major challenge, and this must be the major pillar in our governance of Khorezm. To us, Junaid does not exist anymore, he has fulfilled his historical mission ... The Communist Party must play the role of the bourgeoisie, and organize national autonomy.[72]

Clearly, the main purpose of this strategy was not to pit the Turkmen against any other Central Asian group. On the contrary, the goal was unification of the various groups perceived to make up the Turkmen nationality. In my opinion, this must be understood against a dual background. First, the idea to "become nationalists" and to unify the

fragmented Turkmen nation was a truly pragmatic measure. There can be no doubt that it was aimed at removing the basis for the traditional *vozhd* authority, which throughout Central Asia was perceived of as an important obstacle to the establishment of Soviet power. The popular masses of Central Asia felt strong bonds of loyalty to and solidarity with the *vozhds*, and unless this social structure was dismantled, it would represent a permanent challenge to Soviet authority. If not a matter of public policy, this concern was nevertheless recognized as one of the motives behind the national delimitation, as in the following presentation of the project given by Zelenskii:

> The remnants of clan-based, tribal, and feudal relations are all reasons for the weakness, and in places, even lack of Soviet power and Soviet organs ... The national delimitation has taken up the task of eliminating clan-based, tribal, and feudal forms of power, and consolidating in one state heterogeneous tribes, and educating the masses in this spirit ... A determined policy to subordinate the tribal tendencies to the organs of Soviet power, has in wide dekhkan masses ... created a picture of a solid and authoritative Soviet power.[73]

In this perspective, too, the national delimitation was a pragmatic measure related to the question of political power. However, this was a strategy of unification rather than of artificial divisions. In an article from 1995, Steven Sabol claims that the national delimitation "in particularly hostile regions, such as Ferghana ... seemed to be the best way to separate the main tribal units".[74] There is little doubt that the Soviet regime perceived of the Turkmen regions of Khorezm and Turkestan ASSR as "particularly hostile". As seen, Soviet power had pursued a strategy that aimed at, if not separating, then at least pitting the "main tribal groups" against each other. Prior to the national delimitation, however, this strategy was abandoned and replaced with a strategy aiming at their unification. As a consequence, H. B. Paksoy's claim that "Moscow wished to ... foster the smallest possible identities"[75] must be considered inadequate.

Even though the power dimension was strongly present in the struggle against the patriarchal-feudal remnants, or the "tribal way of life", power was not the only aspect. This was also a struggle for what I would call modernization, largely in the economic sense of the term. This is evident from discussions regarding the political and administrative set-up organization (*raionirovanie*) of the Turkmen and Uzbek

SSRs following the delimitation. In a quite comprehensive presentation, the commission for the *raionirovanie* of the two republics provided an analysis of the situation as it had been prior to the delimitation, and of what the commission had attempted to achieve in the *raionirovanie.*[76] Although there had been some administrative changes in Bukhara and Khorezm since the revolution, in the view of the Soviet regime, the administrative organization in both regions was unfortunate. Concerning the Turkmen, the persistent importance of clan-tribal bonds was considered a major obstacle to the economic development of the region:

> Water is clearly the most important factor for the settlement structure among Turkmen, and in Turkmen economy in general. The second most import factors for settlement and economy are the tribe and the clan. But while common interests in water utilization in many cases play a unifying role, the clan-tribal complexity just as often plays a fragmenting role, resulting in discontinuity and, shortly, in an inefficient exploitation of existing resources. It frequently happens that groups join in a cumbersome way, not on the basis of economic efficiency or advisability, but on the basis of tribal lines.[77]

This was particularly characteristic of Khorezm and Bukhara. For the new *raionirovanie,* a main goal was to overcome these perceived shortcomings, and the main focus was to set up an organization that was administratively and economically efficient. As far as possible, according to the commission, that kind of efficiency was the basis for the adopted solutions. Common utilization of water was a major principle, as was economic community in other sectors such as pastoralism, agriculture and craft. As an example, the cessation of strip farming was one objective. However, the commission acknowledged that it had not been possible to go as far as one might have wished. In some places it had been necessary to take the clan-tribal relations into consideration, and to give them priority over economic and administrative efficiency. This was particularly the case in Tashauz region, where these bonds were very strong. Moreover, it was on the lower administrative levels that these concessions were allowed.

Concerning the *raionirovanie* of the Uzbek SSR, the commission stated:

> Only in Bukhara and Khorezm there are over 150 different tribal designations. These are often hostile to each other, partly as a result

> of instability of the Soviet regime at lower levels. This complexity of national composition and tribal relations in many cases made it impossible to establish the forms of organizations that would be desirable from an economic point of view.[78]

As in the *raionirovanie* of the Turkmen SSR, here, too, the commission presented economic expediency as the primary concern. In the Uzbek case, too, "clan relations" had been allowed to influence the administrative organization of the republic on the lower administrative levels. The commission on the *raionirovanie* of the two republics concluded that the establishment of the national republics of Central Asia already demonstrated some very promising results. First, Soviet authority was "coming closer" to the people; second, administration and governance had been simplified; and third, the new organization had proved effective in the struggle against clan principles.

This is valuable information for understanding the national delimitation, even though the work of this commission was carried out at a point at which the national delimitation was already a fact. The material from the *raionirovanie* commission supports my general argument that, from the perspective of the central Soviet authorities, the main problem was heterogeneity and fragmentation rather than a monolithic Central Asian unity. What the Soviet authorities called clan-tribal divisions represented an important aspect of the fragmentation, and this was seen as an impediment to Soviet power and authority as well as to economic rationality and modernization.

So far, we have seen that, in the eyes of the Soviet regime and for various reasons, conflicts and antagonism based on national or intranational differences represented a problem. In many cases, however, Soviet authorities detected conflicts and antagonism among Central Asians without being able to identify the sources of the conflicts. Correspondence between the Central Asian Bureau and the Central Committee is replete with such examples, and represents a fruitful source as to how representatives of the central Soviet regime perceived of Central Asians who were involved in the Soviet political organs.

It seems clear that the representatives of the Soviet regime in 1923 and 1924 identified the Central Asian communists with group conflicts. This related to both Khorezm and Bukhara, as well as to the Turkestan ASSR. In July 1923, group conflicts in Bukhara were on the Central Asian Bureau agenda, and the following resolution was adopted:

> The monopolization of power in Bukhara by one or another group (the groups of Mukhitdinov or Fayzullah Khojaev) must be considered unacceptable. To implement the resolution we must call on the Central Committee of the Bukharan Communist Party and also the responsible communists of Bukhara to counteract any further strengthening of this or that group. In the further Soviet construction we must seek to attract people of great initiative and honor, and who are not tied to any group.[79]

From the beginning of 1924, these internal conflicts in Bukhara greatly preoccupied the Central Asian Bureau. The result was an extensive correspondence with the Secretary General of the RCP (Stalin), the plenipotentiary of the USSR in Bukhara, and the party organs of Bukhara. In these conflicts, Fayzullah Khojaev played the key part, with Mukhitdinov as his main competitor. It appears that the representatives of the Soviet regime considered these conflicts largely the result of personal antagonism and not as a struggle over ideas or conflicting political positions. The following excerpt of a letter from Znamenskii, USSR's plenipotentiary in Bukhara in February 1924 is quite typical:

> All the workers of Bukhara are by now clearly won for the RCP. They are sufficiently farsighted not to distance themselves from the party. But this does not settle the conflicts about which we are talking here. It does not solve conflicts that emerge when someone is being passed over, and it does not solve all the intrigues etc. at which they are all great masters. I would like to see Bukhara embark on a policy having a clear class basis, but that will hardly happen as long as Bukharan politics largely consist of struggles between the various groups. Content is here in the background.[80]

In another letter to the Central Asian Bureau from November 1924, Znamenskii gives the following characterization of Central Asians:

> Our Eastern comrades have a peculiar character. In the political life, intrigues are constantly being spun, and their personal lives are characterized by some oddities, which to us appear as unnatural, but which are here simply a part of everyday life. Unfortunately, against such diseases, we have not yet any effective remedy.[81]

These examples typify the way in which Russian (and other European) communists saw their "Eastern comrades". Their political ability was

highly limited; they were irrational and prone to intrigues, and generally incapable of seeing "the big picture". This is the kind of European mentality that Edward Said criticized in his *Orientalism*.[82] Even though revolutionary socialists saw themselves as representing an alternative to Western exploitation of the East, they too were children of their time. Their thinking was deeply ingrained with the kind of East–West dichotomy at the heart of Said's "Orientalism". In typical orientalist spirit, European communists often provided very negative characterizations of the various Central Asian communists. Fayzullah Khojaev, for instance, was the subject of many such comments, and the attitude towards him on the part of Russians and other Europeans in the Central Asian party and state institutions was far from enthusiastic. He was seen as capricious and difficult to work with, and there are plenty of examples of both Znamenskii and Pozdnyshev, the secretary of the Central Committee of the Bukharan Communist Party (BCP), expressing great dissatisfaction with Fayzullah. In a letter from Pozdnyshev to the Central Asian Bureau regarding these Bukharan conflicts, the secretary complained that Fayzullah's behavior was complicating the situation further. "[He] not only fails to improve his tensed relation to Mukhitdinov, instead he is making the relation more critical as soon as he has a chance."[83] He was, according to Pozdnyshev, too insistent on having his way. The response from the Central Asian Bureau was unequivocal. Karklin answered that it was not strange that Fayzullah dared to be insistent, as he was clearly aware of Moscow's and the Central Asian Bureau's attitude towards him: "It is highly important to win him entirely for our party, even if someone (like Mukhitdinov) is insulted. I believe we will have to be indulgent as to his outbursts. At any rate: do not make him nervous."[84]

This exchange indicates that there was a special relationship between Fayzullah Khojaev and the central authorities in Moscow. Donald Carlisle has suggested that this close relationship is a key to understanding the delimitation: Fayzullah's loyalty to central Soviet authorities was rewarded during the national delimitation when the republic of Uzbekistan was deemed a "Greater Bukhara" with Fayzullah as its helmsman.[85] I am not aware of any evidence that can support or refute this idea. However, I believe Carlisle's argument puts too much emphasis on a single political actor. Even if there might have been a particular agreement between Fayzullah Khojaev and the central Soviet authorities, I believe it is still necessary to see the national delimitation against a much broader background. It was a strategy designed to serve a wide range of purposes, and not only to secure political support from a limited group of people in Central Asia.

Conflicts were also found in the Turkestan Communist Party in the beginning of 1924. The so-called "leftists", with Ishan-Khojaev as the most important figure, accused, among others, Khidir-Aliev and Rakhimbaev for not being genuine communists. Even though the fact that one side in the conflict was referred to as "leftist" suggests that political differences were involved, here, too, representatives of the Soviet regime failed to identify any main principle as the basis of the disagreement. Again, the orientalist spirit is evident. Having heard a description of the conflicts in the Central Asian Bureau, Liubimova, the leader of the Zhenotdel, the women's section, noted that she had been left with the impression that the conflicts were a result of personal antagonism, and that it was not a struggle over principles.[86] Zelenskii presented a similar picture of the situation, stressing the necessity to terminate group conflicts, as they had a detrimental effect on party and Soviet work. They represented complications and weakened the authority of Soviet and Communist power. An interesting aspect in Zelenskii's observation is that he saw a clear correspondence between struggles within and without the party:

> The struggles are not restricted to the party. Around each party-member, there will be a number of non-party intelligentsia, semi-intelligentsia and tradesmen. And all these, knowing what is going on within the party, if not overtly then covertly, take part in the struggles within the party. There is little doubt that these non-party members are exercising great influence on some of the comrades. This is the situation, and we must do something to improve it. The best thing would be to take away the entire leadership. But our misfortune is that they are all raised in the same way. Instead of party work, they engage in group struggles and on the whole consider party work to be group struggle.[87]

The opinion that the Central Asians were disposed to "intrigues" and "personal conflicts" seems to have been shared by the majority of Europeans involved in Soviet work in the region. Evidence of this attitude abounds, for instance, in correspondence between the Central Asian Bureau and the Central Committee of the RCP. While it is fully conceivable that the Europeans might produce such an interpretation as an instrument of power in relation to the Central Asians, there is no doubt that this was a genuine conviction on the part of the European communists. From the point of view of the central Soviet authorities, the perceived intrigues represented a problem. In their eyes, even

Central Asians who were principally loyal to Soviet power were prevented from constructive political activity because of their constant engagement in intrigues and personal conflicts. As a result, government, administration and policy implementation was impeded. From this perspective, too, the establishment of national republics might be a constructive solution. It was the hope of the Soviet authorities that the introduction of a national framework would promote cohesion and prevent quarrels among people who ultimately shared the same goals.

What was the national delimitation about, from the perspective of the Soviet regime? Was it a tactic for gaining power, a practical measure, the implementation of national rights, or a strategy for societal change? Even though it is impossible to distinguish the different aspects completely from each other, I would argue that the establishment of national republics in Central Asia was to a great extent a practical measure. First, it was a strategy that the regime hoped would bring an end to the considerable fragmentation that they felt characterized the entire region. According to interpretations of Central Asia offered by representatives of the central Soviet authorities, the population was fragmented along national as well as sub-national lines. This was a problem, and national republics might provide a solution.

According to Terry Martin, Soviet promotion of national entities, of which the delimitation is a prominent example, was to some extent the result of a dogmatic belief in the "nation" as a historically inevitable phenomenon. Similarly, Adrienne Edgar has claimed that in the eyes of Soviet policy makers, "a people had to become a nation before it could move on to the more advanced socialist and internationalist stages of human existence".[88] These statements, in my opinion, exaggerate the dogmatic dimension. In the discourse that I have analyzed here, this kind of rigid thinking fails to accurately characterize the Soviet approach to the national question. Rather, the Soviet Union's main concern was how nations and national political entities could be useful in the given situation. In my opinion, the Soviet approach to nationality was much more about practical state construction than about implementation of theories of historical stages of human existence. I would therefore rather agree with Jeremy Smith's conclusion that, for the Bolsheviks, nationality and national identity increasingly represented a solution to a problem rather than a problem.[89] The considerations made in connection with the establishment of national republics were to a great extent based on finding solutions that would facilitate the administration and governance of the region and the implementation of Soviet policy.

In this sense, the delimitation was also about societal change. But here too, the approach was founded on pragmatism and practical considerations rather than on dogmatic visions of "a people's" road to socialism. Soviet authorities focused on economic rationality and arrangements that allowed for more efficient exploitation of resources, and in this the Soviet regime was hardly unique. Soviet authorities believed that replacing existing political units with smaller ones would, nevertheless, result in larger economical entities. The idea was that a republic-wide economic perspective could obliterate smaller entities, for example tribes, as economic units. The idea of breaking down tribal organization was, of course, not only related to economy. As the traditional social structure in Central Asia to a great extent represented a potential base of rival authority to the Soviet regime, the national delimitation was from this perspective also about securing Soviet power. However, the delimitation was not first and foremost a "power game". The Soviet regime that has emerged in this analysis is one that, at least to some extent, was marked by a genuine belief that it was possible to win real political support among certain groups of the population. This demonstrates an important qualitative difference from the regime that was to put its tragic mark on the decade that followed.

In particular, there appears to be very little evidence to support the divide and rule interpretation of the national delimitation. I fully share Yuri Slezkine's point of view that implementing a strategy devised to break up a potential political entity was not a part of the self-understanding of the Soviet communists during the delimitation.[90] On the other hand, Slezkine focuses too much on the ideology of national rights and self-determination. To a certain extent, the Soviet communists in Central Asia did see themselves as implementing such an ideology. For example, when the representatives of the central Soviet authorities discussed the underrepresentation of Turkmen in Bukhara or Khorezm, their discourse reflected an attitude that took the question of national rights seriously. It was certainly a question of political consequences, but it was also a matter of justice. Nevertheless, these considerations were generally subordinate to the interests of the Soviet state. For the adoption of the strategy of the delimitation as a whole, therefore, practical considerations were more telling than ideological ones.

The national delimitation involved centralization and decentralization at the same time. It was decentralization in so far as Turkestan, until then a part of the RSFSR, now was separated from this entity.

However, this was a very limited decentralization, as the Communist Party remained highly centralized. The centralization aspect was of much more consequence for Soviet authorities. It is useful to consider Francine Hirsch's concept of "double assimilation". According to this concept, the population was to be assimilated to the respective nationalities within the more fundamental loyalty to the Soviet state. However, "double assimilation" is not an appropriate concept. "Assimilation" is meaningful when referring to the union republics. On this level, assimilation was an essential part of the project. In the Turkmen case, for instance, Soviet authorities hoped that various small and fragmented groups would coalesce around the concept of a Turkmen nationality. For the Soviet Union as a whole, however, "assimilation" is more problematic. Striving to develop loyalty and allegiance to a state is not necessarily synonymous with assimilation. This can very well be done within a context of diversity, which at least to some extent is what happened in the Soviet case. There was no attack on national differences *per se*.

5
Nation and Politics

I argued in the preceding chapter that Soviet authorities, prior to the delimitation, identified a number of national conflicts in Central Asia. In this chapter I change the approach and address the reality behind this perception. What was the role of national identity in the political activity of Central Asian communists in the early 1920s?

According to the Soviet version, the national delimitation was the result of the demands of the Central Asian population, even the realization of the age-old dreams of national statehood. Edward Allworth, on the other hand, expresses a widely held opinion among Western scholars when arguing that these alleged local aspirations had been fabricated by Moscow so as to present the delimitation as a response to local initiatives. In my opinion, both of these versions are much too categorical. I will argue instead that among the Central Asians included in the Soviet orbit, there was a development in group identities that foreshadowed the establishment of national entities in the region. National identities, such as "Uzbek", "Kazak" and "Turkmen", grew increasingly important. As opposed to both broader and more narrowly defined identities, they were subject to a marked politicization in the first half of the 1920s. There was a "nationalization of the political discourse" of the Central Asian communists in these years, and that process is the subject of the present chapter.

When the delimitation was carried out in 1924, it was not as foreign to Central Asian political actors as supporters of the divide and rule thesis argue. Furthermore, it is not sufficient to see Central Asians' support for the establishment of national entities simply as a result of co-optation. John Schoeberlein has argued that "it is clear that in the creation of national republics, a portion of the Central Asian leadership was co-opted to the Bolshevik cause as they saw opportunities to

promote themselves in the power structures associated with these new national units".[1] This may very well be correct, although it is difficult to find evidence that would support or refute it. In any case, I argue that the Central Asians' focus on and support of nationally-based entities was not primarily the product of the delimitation project and the political opportunities it created.

However, this is not to say that the establishment of Soviet rule in Central Asia was not a decisive factor in this "nationalization of political discourse". It clearly was. When Central Asian communists in the period prior to the delimitation increasingly made use of national identities in their political discourse, it was primarily because of events and policies in the post-revolutionary period. I will therefore briefly discuss how political, administrative, institutional, and other changes can influence the role and importance of "the nation" as a political category.

In Chapter 3, I argued that the culture of nationalism to some extent took root among certain groups of the Central Asian population in the last years of the Tsarist period. This was the result of political as well as cultural changes that followed the establishment of Russian rule. Here, this phenomenon was seen within a perspective of development, characterized by a wave of modernization that made itself felt throughout large parts of the Muslim world. As Rogers Brubaker has pointed out, the literature on nationhood and nationalism is characterized by a developmental perspective. The predominant tendency has been to focus on gradual emergence of nations and nationalism.[2] As an alternative approach, Brubaker has argued that one must instead focus on nation not as a collectivity, but as a practical category, not as an entity, but as a contingent event.[3] Instead of the usual question "what is a nation?", one should, according to Brubaker, ask how nationhood as a political and cultural form is institutionalized in and among states. How does nation work as a practical category, and how and under which conditions is this category used by or against states? From this point of view, nationalism is produced, or induced, by political fields of particular kinds.

Brubaker distinguishes between two different types of nationalism. On the one hand, there is the kind of nationalism that results in political divisions based on nationality, while on the other hand is the kind of nationalism that these divisions, in their turn, produce. This latter is Brubaker's concern. Brubaker's theoretical approach is closely linked to post-Soviet reality. The general argument is that post-Soviet nationalism is the result of the Soviet nationalities policy with its institutionalization

of ethnicity, nationality and nationhood. This created a political arena supremely conducive to nationalism; it involved, in Brubaker's terminology, a "nationalization of political space". Obviously, the delimitation was an important element in the institutionalization of ethnicity and nationality, and in Brubaker's perspective it becomes key to understanding post-Soviet political developments in Central Asia.[4]

Brubaker's perspective has become quite influential in post-Soviet studies. In my reading, however, it may also fruitfully be applied to both Central Asia in the 1920s and the process that I have called the nationalization of political discourse.

National identities institutionalized

In Central Asia, the national delimitation itself is obviously the most prominent expression of the institutionalization of national identity. However, well before the delimitation a number of similar measures had been taken, although smaller in scale. From the beginning of the Soviet period, nationality was awarded political and institutional significance in a way very different from what had been the case in pre-revolutionary Central Asia. First, national divisions were reflected in the organization of the state apparatus. Second, as outlined in the previous chapter, administrative and territorial organization increasingly came to be based on the same divisions.

The introduction of national identities such as Uzbek, Kazak and Turkmen into Central Asian political life took place very soon after the establishment of Soviet power. As inheritors of an empire with a greatly heterogeneous population, the Bolsheviks from the beginning paid considerable attention to the "national question", and in the central government, a separate ministry, the Narkomnats, was established to deal with this question. This governmental structure was duplicated in Turkestan, when, following the Fifth Congress of the Soviets of Turkestan in April 1918, a separate Commissariat for Nationality Affairs was established in the Turkestan republic (*Turkomnats*). According to the contemporary official version, the *Turkomnats* was meant to be the "representative and defender of the interests of the toilers of all nationalities that inhabit the territory of the Turkestan republic".[5] A resolution passed by the First Regional Congress of the Communist Party of Turkestan, which met in June 1918, emphasized that it was necessary to establish the organs of the Turkomnats throughout the republic. Moreover, the resolution stated that the organs of the Turkomnats should be utilized for propagating the ideas

of the Soviet regime among the indigenous population, for creating native cadres of propagandists and Red Army recruits, and for organizing the publication of communist literature in local languages.[6]

The initial territorial or geographical approach of the Turkomnats was soon replaced with one that focused on ethnicity or nationality. Already in September 1918, a committee composed of representatives of the various indigenous nationalities was created within the Turkomnats. In February 1919, a Statute of the Commissariat for Nationality Affairs of the Turkestan Republic was published. Although the statute in itself may not have been particularly important, I believe that it is indicative of the increased emphasis on nationality that took place soon after the revolution, and it might therefore be worthwhile examining it in more detail. Based on the instructions of the Narkomnats of the RSFSR, the statute charged the Turkomnats with the following responsibilities:

1. popularizing, through the medium of the mother tongues of the indigenous nationalities, the ideas and the ideals of the Soviet regime among them;
2. implementing the decrees of the Narkomnats of the RSFSR;
3. implementing the decrees of the Turkestan Central Executive Committee, the Sovnarkom and the Congress of Soviets of the Turkestan Republic;
4. taking all measures for raising the cultural level and class consciousness of the nationalities inhabiting the territory of the Turkestan Republic;
5. organizing the fight against the counter-revolutionaries in all spheres, and
6. gathering statistical information on the number, composition, and economic condition of the nationalities; the number of children of school- and pre-school-age; movements of population; increases and decreases of population; literacy; and so on.[7]

Shortly after the promulgation of this statute, the Turkomnats was reorganized according to nationality or ethnicity, and in March of 1919, separate national divisions of Uzbeks, Tajiks, Turkmen, Kazaks, Tatars, Ukrainians and Armenians were established within the Turkomnats. This suggests that for the Soviet regime, national identities such as Uzbek, Kazak, Turkmen and Tajik were important from the beginning, with nationality soon incorporated as an organizing principle. In my opinion, there is a strong element of continuity between this

reorganization and the later national delimitation. This continuity has largely been disregarded by those who have seen the delimitation as a plan developed by one individual, Stalin, immediately prior to its implementation in 1924–25.

According to the Soviet accounts, when the Soviet regime put such emphasis on ethnicity and nationality, and made institutional and organizational changes in accordance with national divisions, it was as an element in the gradual implementation of the Leninist nationality policy with its promise of self-determination. Typically, in these accounts the question of self-determination is treated rather simplistically. While the power aspect of self-determination is largely ignored, the concept of self-determination is more or less equated with the existence of political entities carrying the name of a particular group. In my reading of the events, however, pragmatic aspects are at least as important as theoretical and ideological ones. The first task in the above-mentioned instruction to the Turkomnats from the Narkomnats of the RSFSR was to propagate Soviet ideas and ideals in the mother tongues of the respective nationalities. This is a very important point. Even though at the time the statute was enacted the civil war still raged, the defenders of the revolution thought that Soviet rule could not be established in Central Asia if the entire population was antagonistic to the communists. As a result, it was necessary to win a measure of support among the indigenous population. While the civil war was fought with guns and rifles, language was the main instrument in the parallel war of propaganda and information directed at the indigenous masses.

As I will develop further in a later chapter, from the perspective of the Soviet authorities, the indigenous population of the Turkestan ASSR was composed of three main ethnic groups or nationalities: Uzbeks, Kazaks and Turkmen.[8] In conformance with this understanding, these three identities became essential in the Soviet administration and organization of the region. This was in agreement with the Turkestan Central Executive Committee's decision in 1918 to make Uzbek and Kazak official languages of the Turkestan Republic, besides Russian.[9] Shortly after, Turkmen was included among the languages of equal status. John Schoeberlein has pointed out the contrast between this idea of three main groups and the long list of Central Asian population groups developed shortly prior to the revolution: "What had been counted in dozens was now reduced to three."[10]

What was the reason for this emphasis on a few comprehensive identities? In my opinion, this focus was neither primarily the

implementation of an ideology of self-determination nor a first step in a carefully planned strategy for the fostering of national competition and hostilities. I see the national reorganization of the Turkomnats first and foremost as a pragmatic measure meant to facilitate the propagation of Soviet ideas among the indigenous population. If the native population of the region were to adopt the message of the Soviet power, it was crucial that they be approached by people perceived of as "their own" both linguistically and culturally, and not, at least not exclusively, by outsiders and foreigners. In this situation, a fairly limited number of nationalities and institutions would be much more convenient than "dozens", all the more so considering the great degree of central control preferred by the Soviet regime.

In June 1922, the Turkomnats was abolished, but not the national divisions. Instead, these were integrated into the Turkestan CEC, which was from then on organized into different national branches. A Kazak national branch had already been established in March 1921. The national branches were supposed to present to the Turkestan CEC the needs and requirements of the nationalities concerned and to exhort the CEC to adopt the necessary measures. The Kazak branch, for example, was supposed to be "shaping the policies of the Turkestan government in a manner conducive of the well-being of the Kazak-inhabited areas of the republic".[11]

At the same time, similar measures were enacted in Khorezm, where a Turkmen branch of the Khorezm CEC was set up in 1921. It was given the task to make a special study of the social, economic and cultural needs and requirements of the population in the Turkmen areas.[12] In 1922, a Kazak-Karakalpak branch of the Khorezm CEC was established as well. Moreover, as discussed in the previous chapter, in 1924 separate Turkmen and Kazak-Karakalpak *oblasts* were organized. In the Turkestan republic, the territorial-administrative changes along national lines began earlier. In 1921, the Transcaspian *oblast* became the Turkmen *oblast*. Even though this was primarily a change of names, it was potentially important in that it suggested that ethnicity, and not geography, was the main principle of territorial political organization. In April 1922, the Turkestan CEC established a separate Kyrgyz *oblast* by separating the Kyrgyz majority areas of Semirechie and Syr-Darya *oblasts* into the *gornaia* (mountain) *oblast*.[13] In Bukhara, the same development took place. A Turkmen national branch was organized in 1921, and by the end of 1923 a Turkmen *oblast* was established with its center in Charjou. However, the Bukharan government rejected the idea of a Kazak national branch of the Bukharan CEC.

Through these various political and administrative changes, national identities were institutionalized in Central Asia in the early 1920s. In Brubaker's terminology, these developments opened up a political field conducive to nationalism, as the rationale for the political, administrative and territorial entities increasingly was linked to national divisions. This is in my opinion crucial for the understanding of the nationalization of political discourse in Central Asia in this period. However, the implication is not that these developments alone led to the focus on national identities. At least to some extent, the changes were themselves influenced by and reinforced existing tendencies.

The nationalization of political discourse

According to what might be called the *co-optation view*, Central Asians sympathized with the national delimitation primarily in so far as they believed it to be profitable for their own personal careers. From this perspective, as far as the Central Asians are concerned, the link between politics and national identities was a strictly pragmatic one. However, this interpretation is unsatisfactory, as notions of nationality were not restricted to pragmatism and personal gain. Rather, such notions came to occupy an important position in the political thinking of many Central Asian communists, irrespective of their attitude towards the national delimitation.

The first example comes from the Turkmen of Bukhara. From 1921 on, the Bukharan CEC had a Turkmen branch. Within this branch, there was considerable dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in the Bukharan republic at the time, and in May 1923, the Turkmen branch sent a letter of complaint to Aitakov, then a member of the CEC of Turkestan ASSR:

> Most of the population along the Amu-Darya in the Bukharan districts of Kerki, Charjou and Termez are Turkmen. These Turkmen have for centuries been subject to the oppression of the Emir. After the revolution, these people have themselves seized power. But the other nationalities in the republic (Uzbeks and Tajiks) have not been willing to make arrangements for Turkmen development. They have not only failed to provide the necessary conditions; they have even deliberately tried to prevent such a development. At present, Bukhara is plagued by the most terrible of all diseases, national strife. Clearly, Uzbeks and Tajiks willfully exclude Turkmen from both political enlightenment and social and economic work.

> Turkmen youth who sincerely and honestly want to take part in Soviet construction or to study, and who for this purpose contact the appropriate institution, are, unlike others, simply ignored. Uzbeks and Tajiks cultivate these divisions, and are exclusively occupied with themselves and their own good and progress. No matter what we in the Turkmen branch do, nothing happens.[14]

The dissatisfaction of the Turkmen branch of the Bukharan CEC was presented in impassioned language in an address to the fourth all-Bukharan conference in September 1923. These were the main concerns of the Turkmen branch: first, they urged that schools must be opened to the Turkmen population. In spite of numerous appeals from the Turkmen branch to the Nazirat (Commissariat) of Enlightenment, little or no response had materialized. Second, the Turkmen branch argued that, concerning access to land and water resources, Turkmen must be given rights equal to those of the rest of the population in the republic. In its address, the Turkmen branch pointed to the previous all-Bukharan conference, which had adopted a decision that in regions with Turkmen majorities, both the Executive Committee and other state institutions are to be led by Turkmen. However, this decision had not been implemented. According to Anna-Gil'dy, who delivered the address on the behalf of the Turkmen branch, former vice chairman of the Bukharan Council of Ministers Atta-Khojaev had, in a conversation between them, "had the courage to say that this decision nowhere will be put into work". "Clearly," concluded Anna-Gil'dy, "this is against the politics of the Communist Party and the Soviet Power in the national question."[15]

The situation in Khorezm was in many ways similar. In the name of the Turkmen nationality, Turkmen communists argued that it was now necessary to break with Tsarist policy, which pitted Uzbeks against Turkmen. Turkmen communists of Khorezm demanded that allotment of land and water must be carried out on equal terms, and they complained that discrimination followed national lines. Moreover, they emphasized that new schools, and so on, must be opened for the Turkmen population in Khorezm. Finally, they argued that it was essential to change the composition of government and party organs, from which the Turkmen were largely excluded. These Turkmen communists argued that it was necessary to organize the Turkmen population in a separate *oblast* in order to adapt government to local conditions to a greater degree than had hitherto been the case.[16]

The nationalization of political discourse was not restricted to Bukhara and Khorezm. In the Turkestan ASSR, prior to the national delimitation, national distinctions clearly held great importance for Central Asian communists, and in the Turkestan republic, in 1923 and 1924, conflicts developed that had an Uzbek–Kazak as well as an Uzbek–Turkmen dimension. The conflicts took place in party and state institutions of the republic, and in this situation some Central Asians presented suggestions to the central authorities that were largely the same as what was later accomplished in the delimitation.

In December 1923, the Central Asian Bureau received a letter signed by 30 "responsible Kirgiz [Kazak] workers" of the TASSR. The most prominent of these were Ryskulov (chairman of the Turkestan Sovnarkom), Khojanov (People's Commissar for Agriculture), Asfendiarov (People's Commissar for Health), Sergaziev (People's Commissar for Enlightenment) and Aralbaev (People's Commissar for Internal Affairs).[17] Considering the high positions of the signatories, the letter must be considered representative of the Kazaks involved in the Soviet sphere in the TASSR. The essence of the letter is a complaint over Uzbek dominance over other groups within the TASSR, and the authors linked Uzbek dominance to the socioeconomic realities of Turkestan.

The letter maintains that Turkestan had two fundamental characteristics. First, there was the historic significance of the cities in this region, and second, there was the coincidence of national boundaries with particular forms of production as well as with other aspects of economic life. Prior to the Russian conquest, Turkestani towns were centers of the political, religious and economic influence of the ruling nation (*natsiia*) over the surrounding economically backward nations, almost exclusively rural peoples. Because of this, the rule of the city over countryside, by extension, implied the rule of one nation over others. As a consequence, "national antagonism has long existed between the different original nationalities of Turkestan". The letter also maintained that this was the reason why there was no Muslim unity against Russian dominance and exploitation in the Tsarist period, as the differences between the various groups were too great. For the oppressed and exploited population, the townsmen's appeal to Islam was ineffective. And the Kazaks were the most oppressed of these nations.

A key point in the letter is that while the national question had been placed somewhat in the background immediately after the revolution, the introduction of the NEP had made the relation between countryside and town, and as a consequence national relations, more pressing. The NEP regime was particularly hard on the Kazak and Turkmen

populations, both of which were economically underdeveloped. As a result, they became increasingly subject to the dominance of the urban ruling class, which happened to be Uzbek. The authors of the letter complained that far too little had been done to assist the rural population, and that

> what has been done, and the results that have been achieved in irrigation and cotton-farming, has largely benefited one nationality, or rather, the top layers among this nationality, primarily located in towns of Turkestan.[18]

The letter provides a number of examples of Uzbek dominance. Perhaps the most interesting example refers to "*ulama* members involved in Soviet enlightenment preach[ing] Islam to the Kirgiz [Kazaks] in the name of Soviet power, which according to them has recognized the Shariat as their law". Furthermore, they complained that power organs, for instance, were almost entirely composed of town-dwellers: "Instead of Kirgiz [Kazaks], urban Uzbeks are often appointed. This is common practice in Syr-Darya." All this, according to the letter, created fertile soil for national antagonism. The main point in the letter was to change the national composition of state and party organs in the Turkestan ASSR, introducing more Kazaks and Turkmen who would replace Uzbeks. Moreover, there was a focus on "national rights" such as language, and the authors demanded a "determined nationalization of state organs and the consequent use of local languages in administration, based on the language of the majority of the rural masses, and not the urban minority".

This is a very interesting perspective. A first important aspect is that these Kazaks included Turkmen in their reshuffling project as well. Supporters of the divide and rule thesis have often argued that the introduction of national divisions led to competition between various groups for as big a share (of political, economic or other resources) as possible for themselves. Why then do the Kazak "responsible workers" argue that the Turkmen must have increased representation as well? The answer is to be found in the traditional socioeconomic divisions of the region, and the fact that national identities, however novel in Central Asian politics, to a great extent elaborated upon these historical differences. I will return to this perspective in much greater detail in the next chapter.

Second, this letter of complaint is evidence of what I have called "the nationalization of political discourse" among Central Asian com-

munists at the time prior to the national delimitation of 1924. Obviously, it is much more problematic to use this as evidence of actual power relations between various groups. Indeed, concerning the "objectivity" of the claims made in the letter, one of the signatories, Sergaziev, sent what was in many ways a disclaimer to the Central Committee of the RCP. In this address, attesting that the national question was imperative in Turkestan, Sergaziev declared that it was not true that Uzbeks *en masse* were offensive towards the Kazaks, and that he found it "absolutely necessary to bring to an end the attempts of this or that nation to predominate. Based on the new census, one will be able to judge objectively on the size of the different groups."[19] Even though one might question the identification of "Kazaks" and "Uzbeks" as groups, it remains a fact that struggles were taking place in the name of "the Kazaks" and "the Uzbeks" respectively. In Sergaziev's view, the situation was extremely critical, requiring radical action, and what he suggested in 1923 was in principle the same as what was accomplished in the national delimitation:

> One might want to solve this question immediately, and I suggest that the best way to do this would be to divide Turkestan into two republics, an Uzbek one and a Kirgiz [Kazak] one. I suggest that this be done immediately, as the Kirgiz[Kazak]–Uzbek question that has been raised in the circles of the responsible workers might otherwise diffuse among the popular masses with grave consequences not even short of bloodshed or massacre.[20]

A much less dramatic expression of the nationalization of discourse among Central Asian communists was provided by Aralbaev, elaborating the difficulties experienced by the Kyrgyz. In accordance with the strategy for the institutionalization of national identities, the Inpros (Institute for Enlightenment) had been organized along national lines. In the city of Tashkent, for example, there was an Uzbek as well as a Kazak Inpros. In order to demonstrate the miserable situation of the Kyrgyz nationality, Aralbaev relates the following episode:

> A young Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz] from Ferghana arrived at Tashkent to attend the Inpros. First, he went to the Kirgiz [Kazak] Inpros, but as he spoke Uzbek, they told him to go to the Uzbek Inpros. At the Uzbek Inpros they looked at him and told him he looked like a Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz], and that he should go to the Kirgiz [Kazak] Inpros. In the end he was accepted nowhere, and returned to Ferghana.[21]

This brief narrative is informative in several ways. First, I see it as evidence that national distinctions were taking on greater importance. Second, it seems to indicate that this was a process that was developing unevenly in different segments of the population. The young man from Ferghana seemed to have been much less occupied with the national labels of "Uzbek" and "Kirgiz" than those who received him in the respective branches of the Inpros. It appears that the young man did not exclude (or perhaps not even prefer) either of the two national branches. Third, the story is an example of what might be called the ethnic complexity of Central Asia and of the difficulties involved in applying the concept of nationality in the region. The young man in the story was an "Uzbek-speaking Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz]". In the next chapter I will discuss this question more comprehensively. Here, the point is to demonstrate that national identity increased in importance in Central Asia in the first half of the 1920s. Below I will discuss the extent to which the nationalization of political discourse led to aspirations among Central Asian communists for political entities based on nationality.

That national designations such as "Turkmen" in fact became increasingly important in this period is not only seen in these and similar demands for autonomy, and so on. Another expression of the same phenomenon is the establishment of cultural associations organized along national lines. A case in point is the Turkmen Cultural Society, established in the Turkestan Republic in late 1922.[22]

The Soviet claim that the reorganization of Central Asia was the realization of the will of the Central Asian people was based on references to various "national demands" put forward before the delimitation by Central Asian communist organizations. In his oft-cited work from 1959, Gordienko presented the following as the most important precursors to the delimitation. In January 1921, about 600 delegates of the Kazak Regional Conference in Aulie-Ata raised the question of joining the Kazak population of Syr-Darya and Semirechie *oblasts* in Turkestan with the Kazak ASSR.[23] Kazaks presented similar requests to the Central Committee of the RCP as well as to the Soviet state organs in 1922 and 1923.

According to Gordienko, particularly strong aspirations to establish homogeneous national republics (*edinonatsional'nye respubliki*) developed during 1921–23 among the Turkmen of all the three republics of Bukhara, Khorezm and Turkestan. In 1922 and 1923, the All-Turkmen conferences of the Khorezm republics repeatedly stressed the need to include in the republican government representatives of

the Turkmen, and to reorganize the areas with Turkmen population into an independent (*samostoiatel'naia*) *oblast*. Further, they emphasized the necessity of joining with the Turkmen of the Turkestan republic. As a result, the third All-Khorezmian conference of Soviets in July 1922 included Turkmen representatives in the Khorezm government. Finally, in April 1924, a Turkmen *oblast* was established. Turkmen national demands were not restricted to Khorezm. In September 1923, the fourth conference of Bukharan Turkmen requested that the Bukharan republican government organize the territories with Turkmen population into a separate administrative *oblast*. This request was satisfied by the fourth All-Bukharan conference of Soviets in October 1923, where the "Turkmen population of Charjou and Karshin oblasts were organized into separate administrative oblasts governed by the oblast Turkmen executive committee, recruited among the Turkmen themselves".[24]

Having discussed the demands for a Turkmen republic, in late December 1923, the Executive Bureau of the Turkmen *oblast* committee of the Communist Party concluded the following: "Concerning the existing aspirations among the Turkmen population to separate the Turkmen people into an independent entity, the Executive Bureau finds it necessary to discuss the question."[25] The outcome of the discussion was that the Turkmen *oblast* committee presented to the Central Committee of the RCP and the Central Asian Bureau a request that Turkmen regions of Bukhara be consolidated and established as an independent national republic as a part of the USSR.

Furthermore, Gordienko argues that "the toilers of the Uzbek *oblasts* repeatedly declared before the central organs of power" their wish to unite with their co-tribals (*soplemenniki*) and establish an Uzbek republic. Finally, in 1924, at the twelfth conference of the Soviets of Turkestan ASSR, a number of delegates from the national *oblasts* pointed to the necessity of carrying out a reorganization of Central Asia according to the national principle. On the basis of these examples Gordienko concludes that "it is evident that the Kazaks, Turkmen, Kirgiz [Kazaks] and Uzbeks in 1921–1924 expressed their aspirations to unite with their co-tribals and to establish national statehood".[26]

There is no doubt that these various addresses were in fact made. The question is how to interpret them. Were they genuine demands and expressions of a growing desire among Central Asian communists to establish nationally-based political entities? Or were they more or less fabrications made by the central Soviet authorities? An analysis of how the Central Asian Bureau dealt with these demands can provide

clarification. Reports from the Central Asian Bureau to the Central Committee in late 1923 and early 1924 clearly indicate that the different initiatives were seen as genuine national demands. In a report to the Central Committee of the RCP in early January 1924, Karklin testified as to the strength of the demands on the part of Turkmen communists as well as non-communists:

> As far as I have been acquainted with Turkmen affairs, a strong tendency is developing among the Turkmen workers, members as well as non-members of the party, in favor of the separation of the Turkmen of Turkestan and Bukhara into an autonomous republic, with immediate relations to the RSFSR. They bitterly complain that they are being treated unfairly, that they are being paid little attention, and get too small a share in all matters. Comrade Atabaev insists that the question of the autonomy of the Turkmen must be raised in the Central Asian Bureau.[27]

An early demand for Turkmen political autonomy was expressed by Central Asian communists in 1923 in connection with the commission established by the All-Russian CEC to find a solution to the conflicts between Kazaks and Turkmen.[28] What is of interest to us here is the position held by the Turkmen members who dissented from the opinion of the majority of the commission. In their minority proposal they argued that:

> The Turkmen can only be pacified through political and administrative actions. Politically, the Turkmen must be separated into their own region [*okrug*] enjoying wide rights to self-determination. The Turkmen must be allowed to participate in the governance of Khorezm on equal footing.[29]

The response of Karklin and the Central Asian Bureau is interesting. Karklin continued his report to the Central Committee in the following way:

> I have categorically rejected their suggestions, finding this question presently premature. Perhaps within a year, or two, the question of Turkmen autonomy may be raised, but at present, definitely not ... The appointment of Aitakov as chairman of the Turkestan Executive Committee to some extent satisfied the Turkmen. They also suggest that one Turkmen, either Aitakov or Atabaev,[30] be adopted as a

> member of the CAB, and I have told them that I will inform the Central Committee about their suggestion.[31]

This note from the Central Asian Bureau to the Central Committee indicates that there were strong aspirations for an autonomous Turkmen political entity prior to the national delimitation, and that the arguments were based on alleged discrimination on the basis of nationality. This testimony becomes all the more reliable as the author clearly disapproves of the demands made. This brings us to another intriguing aspect of the letter, namely the fact that Karklin categorically opposes the Turkmen demands of autonomy.

What does this tell us about the manner in which the question of national entities was conceptualized? In the eyes of the leadership of the CAB, the possible establishment of an autonomous national republic clearly implied a *concession* to the nationality in question. Karklin did not deny that a Turkmen autonomous republic might be established in the future, but maintained that, in early January 1924, the time was not yet right. Karklin appears to have thought that a political reorganization of Central Asia according to nationality would have to be made at some point. This does not fit very well with the divide and rule thesis. Rather, it suggests that the leadership of an organization as important as the Central Asian Bureau conceptualized the question of the establishment of national republics in terms of national rights. Indeed, on the basis of the Central Asian Bureau's interpretation of the situation, one might very well argue that if the intention were to divide and rule, maintaining the status quo might have been more conducive. Failure to respond to the demands might very well have fueled the dissatisfaction of the Turkmen communists. Indeed, according to the CAB, making the Turkmen Aitakov chairman of the Turkestan CEC had, at least to some extent, satisfied and calmed the Turkmen.

These kinds of national demands were primarily made in the name of Turkmen and Kazaks. First, there were Kazak demands that called for a unification of the Kazak population of Turkestan ASSR with the KASSR, or "Greater Kirgiziia" as it was then often called. Second, there was the idea that the Kazak population of Turkestan ought to be organized into a separate political entity. To some extent Kyrgyz identity was involved too, while national demands in the name of Uzbeks or Tajiks appear to have been more or less absent in the period prior to the national delimitation. This requires some explanation.

At the twelfth party congress in 1923, Stalin discussed the question of national chauvinism and discrimination. He argued that while having been under relative control for some time, interrelations between the nationalities of the Soviet state had deteriorated as a result of the NEP.[32] While the much-discussed national question had been dominated by considerations of the relationship between Russians and non-Russians, Stalin here extended the perspective so that it included interrelations between different non-Russian groups as well. Stalin argued that three-quarters of the national question should be dedicated to the interrelations between the Russians and non-Russians, while one-quarter should be reserved for the question of the relations between the different non-Russian nationalities.[33]

According to Stalin, the introduction of the NEP stimulated "not only Russian chauvinism, but it stimulated local chauvinism too, especially in the republics with several nationalities".[34] While stressing that this local chauvinism "obviously does not represent such a grave danger as the Great-Russian chauvinism", Stalin maintained that it nevertheless was an impediment to "Soviet construction" in the respective regions and republics. He mentioned Georgia, Azerbaijan and Bukhara as the most important cases, and pointed to the situation in Khorezm and in the Turkestan republic as well. In Stalin's view, there were three nationalities in Bukhara: Uzbeks, Turkmen and Kazaks. He argued that the main national group, the Uzbeks, considered the two latter groups inferior. As a result, they were subject to discrimination on the basis of their nationality. In Khorezm, the same Uzbek chauvinism allegedly led to unfair treatment of the minority nationality of the republic, the Turkmen.[35] Stalin's attack on local chauvinism at the twelfth party congress in 1923 has been seen as an attempt to draw attention away from the real problem, the relationship between Russians and non-Russians. It has also been viewed as preparation for later attacks on non-Russian communists, who from then on could legitimately be removed from positions under the charge of chauvinism. However, without going into any analysis of Stalin's motivation at this point, it remains a fact that what he expressed corresponded to the experience of many Central Asian communists. Moreover, this discrimination was not restricted to Bukhara and Khorezm. In January 1924, the plenipotentiary of the KASSR in Turkestan ASSR reported to the Executive Committee of KASSR that even the administration of the Turkestan republic was based on "the oppression of certain national groups by others", referring to the Uzbek–Kazak and Uzbek–Turkmen relations.[36]

In my opinion, what developed was a kind of *minority nationalism*, and I believe that Rogers Brubaker's perspective on nationalism can help us understand the way in which Central Asian communists used the national designations politically prior to the delimitation. Brubaker has distinguished between three kinds of nationalisms, bound together in a single relational nexus. First, there is the "nationalizing" nationalism of the newly independent (or newly reconfigured) state. In such states, there is a sharp distinction between the core nationality and the citizenry on the whole. The nationalizing state serves the interests of the former, which is seen as the legitimate "owner" of the state. Second, and directly challenging the "nationalizing" nationalism, there is the "transborder nationalism" of what Brubaker calls "external national homelands". This category relates to the activity of a state acting on its perceived right and obligation to protect the interests of members of its core nationality who happen to live outside the state's borders. Third, there is the nationalism of the national minorities, groups that make claims on the grounds of their nationality: "Indeed it is such claims that make them a national minority."[37] The position of such groups is intimately related to the activity of the nationalizing state within which the group sees itself and is seen to constitute a minority.

Did those who used national divisions for political purposes live in a situation characterized by "nationalizing states"? This is a difficult question, but the important point is whether or not the actors *felt* that this was the case. I believe that the discussion above demonstrates that the individuals who identified as Turkmen and Kazaks felt that they were being discriminated against on the basis of their Turkmenness and Kazakness, respectively. In Khorezm and Bukhara, Turkmen felt that they did not receive their fair share of economic and political resources. As we have seen in the case of Bukhara, Turkmen communists argued that the predominant nationalities, Uzbeks and Tajiks, were concerned only with themselves, and paid little attention to the Turkmen population. This is the image – true or false – of a nationalizing state seen through the eyes of a self-conscious minority. From the perspective of this minority, the states (Bukhara and Khorezm) were dominated by people who promoted the interests of their own groups (Uzbeks and Tajiks), to the detriment of others (the Turkmen). To remedy the situation, the minority suggested solutions of the kind that minorities often do, including autonomy as well as separation. Similarly, also among those who identified as Kazaks in Bukhara and Turkestan, there was a sense that the state primarily accommodated one group (Uzbek) to the detriment of another (Kazak).

What did it mean that Turkmen and Kazaks felt that they did not receive their "fair share"? On this point, it is necessary to emphasize the impact of the Bolshevik ideology of equality. Bolshevik rhetoric towards the nationalities was based upon slogans and ideals of national equality. The main message was that, in the new society, non-Russians would no longer be subject to Russian supremacy. Certainly, this was also how non-Russians, including Central Asians, understood the message. However, the notion that Bolshevik nationalities policy consisted in supporting the weak against the strong was not restricted to the Russian/non-Russian dimension. Central Asia and its population did not only exist as objects to Russia, and some Central Asians applied the dimension of national equality to Central Asian society, whether in Bukhara, Khorezm or Turkestan. This was an important catalyst for the emergence of minority nationalism among Turkmen and Kazaks, as it provided a basis of legitimacy for minority national demands.

The emergence of minority nationalism in Central Asia at this time was something new. On the other hand, the way in which the various "nations" were conceptualized in this process represented deep historical continuities. This perspective will be further elucidated in the next chapter. The fact that minority nationalism emerged in post-revolutionary Central Asia at all must primarily be regarded as the result of changes taking place in that period. In addition to the Soviet ideology of national equality, the changing role of language and the policy of indigenization were among the most important factors.

Language, indigenization and politicization of nationality

In the literature on nations and nationalism, language is often allotted a central place. Benedict Anderson, for example, found linguistic changes to be among the key factors in the development of the nation as an "imagined community". His idea was that the decline of the usage of the old universal languages and the standardization of certain versions of each vernacular language led to the emergence of larger groups with shared identity on the basis of common language.[38] However, it is not only in that long, historical perspective that increased use of vernacular languages may be important. In Central Asia in the 1920s, changes in linguistic practice contributed much to the politicization of nationality. Language became one dimension upon which Central Asians experienced national injustice.

At the time of the revolution, literacy was extremely limited in Central Asia. This was seen as one important aspect of Central Asian back-

wardness. The Tsarist regime had made some rather limited efforts to improve education, but literacy remained low. In the Soviet project, however, literacy and education were given great emphasis. Increasing literacy was essential to the Soviet project of modernization and development, and it was equally important for propaganda purposes. Introducing Soviet style education in Central Asia could, of course, not be done without friction. For strategic purposes, the Soviet authorities found it convenient to build upon the reformed schools of the Jadids, who in their opinion had worked for "the establishment of schools similar to the European type, i.e. the introduction of worldly subjects into the confessional school".[39] Considering the resistance the Jadid project had met among the Central Asian population a few years earlier, it is not surprising that the Soviet authorities had to exercise considerable creativity. In a discussion in the Central Asian Bureau in April 1924, Broido, having recently returned from Khorezm, declared:

> To those who are familiar with the situation in Turkestan, in Khorezm it is a hundred times worse. Except for the mullahs, hardly anyone is literate, and that applies to the class following the Communist Party, looked upon as an avant-garde ... A congress of the clergy was established, at which the question of education was raised. We found in the Koran a place saying that it is necessary to teach the children and the people in accordance with the contemporary situation. We used this to win support for our views that it is necessary to teach geography, practical sciences etc. in the *madrasa* [traditional centers of Islamic learning, less formal than schools], because the peasantry needs veterinarians, agronomists etc. This was enthusiastically accepted by the congress. Later we must fight for the inclusion of other sciences in *madrasa* education, but this is a beginning.[40]

In the Soviet project, literacy was to be achieved not in Russian but in indigenous languages. In January 1923, the Executive Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkestan (CPT) passed a resolution including the following passage:

> Considering that the cultural development of the popular masses of the indigenous population must be accomplished in line with the national culture, Russian language is to be used only in middle and higher education, and even then only on the condition that there is no possibility for education in the local language. In the first three years, teaching must take place in the indigenous language.[41]

In William Fierman's view, the focus on indigenous languages must be understood in relation to the following concepts: penetration, participation, legitimacy, and identity production. First, the use of native languages was necessary in order to reach out to the indigenous population. Second, native languages would have to be employed if a certain level of local participation in Soviet party and state organs was to be achieved. Participation was in its turn intimately related to the principle of legitimacy. In my opinion, however, Fierman's fourth principle, identity production, was more the result of language policy than its motivation.[42]

To a great extent, the Russian/non-Russian dichotomy dominated the language question. As the quote given above suggests, in 1923, the language question represented an important arena in which Central Asian communists asserted themselves vis-à-vis central Soviet authorities. In July 1923, the plenum of the Central Committee of the CPT discussed the implications of the twelfth party congress for Turkestan, and the language question took center stage. Language was a vital symbol for relations between central Soviet authorities and Central Asian communists. The Central Asians claimed it was necessary to use indigenous language, not Russian, in administration, and they argued that effective measures had to be taken in order to implement the decisions already made regarding increased use of local languages in that field. Turar Ryskulov,[43] the then chairman of the Turkestan CEC, concluded that this would be difficult due to inertia on the part of the Great Russians. As a result, he argued, failure to comply with requirements on use of indigenous language should be met with punitive measures. The punitive aspect was particularly important in Turkestan, where violations were legion.[44]

The language question was obviously of chief importance for all Central Asian communists. Islamov (who replaced Ryskulov as chairman of the Turkestan Council of People's Commissars in January 1924), for instance, insisted that local languages be introduced into the administration immediately. He criticized the tendency to give greater weight to texts written in Russian than texts produced in local languages.[45] One of the indigenous communists said, "if the majority of the members of the presidium of the Turkestan CEC are Muslims, then one should speak a 'Muslim language'".[46] It seems fully justifiable, therefore, to say that, for the Central Asian communists, the question of language became strongly politicized, and that they saw language as a dimension through which they could assert their interests in relation to the Russian-dominated central Soviet authorities.

What was the attitude of the Russians to these questions? Did they fully realize the political implications that the use of this or that language had? The following statement by a Russian communist at the same plenary session leaves us in doubt:

> Karimov says that if the majority of the members of the presidium of Turkestan CEC are Muslims, then one should speak Muslim language. Still, that is not the point. But if we go to the countryside, gathering thousands of peasants, speaking to them in Russian would be a serious mistake, because the interpreter may distort the message. Here in the Turkestan CEC members know Russian. And whether or not we speak local or Russian language is a detail to which we should not pay too much attention. I do not think that the Russian language is so bad that it must be gotten rid of. For a long time [the population of Turkestan] will have to study by means of European textbooks etc.[47]

Against this background, it seems reasonable to support Yuri Slezkine's argument that the Bolsheviks were quite unaware of the important symbolic dimension of language, and that the Bolsheviks perceived of language as a "transparent medium".[48]

These discussions focused entirely on the Russian (European)/ Central Asian dichotomy. In this perspective, Central Asians represented a uniform position vis-à-vis the Russians. However, this should not be seen as evidence of a genuine Central Asian unity that was later ended by "Moscow". It is instead an example of the situational dimension of group formation. When Central Asian communists in this situation spoke with a single voice, this was not necessarily because they represented a fixed group. Rather, the reason was that, in the question of indigenization, they all confronted the same "other", namely Russia and the Russian language. Indigenization involved the two main categories "Russian" and "native", and in this context it was possible to refer to "Muslim language", which was done by Russians and Central Asians alike. As discussed earlier, however, there was no such thing as a "Muslim language". And when indigenization was to be implemented, this opened for different kinds of divisions. Now the question was to decide which local language to use in the different situations. There was no longer a "Russian" against which all the Central Asian communists could identify. The language question remained politicized, but divisions internal to Central Asia now came to the foreground.

Speaking in the name of their various national groups, Central Asian communists began to claim that their languages were underrepresented in education, and that the number of publications, textbooks or newspapers in "their" language was insufficient. In September 1923, for example, the Turkmen branch of the Bukharan CEC demanded that schools be opened for the Turkmen population of the Bukharan Popular Republic. To meet these demands, the all-Bukharan conference decided that "in order to initiate a program of education among the Turkmen, ten nomadic schools [*kochevye shkoly*] are to be established along with about 500 places in the schools and boarding schools in Kerki and Charjou, and in the teachers training college in Charjou".[49] Similar demands were made in the name of the Kazaks.[50]

It is interesting to note that Central Asians now made use of the rhetoric of "backwardness". As discussed earlier, backwardness was seen as characteristic of Central Asia as a whole. Again, however, Central Asia did not represent a unit, and some groups were seen and saw themselves as more backward than others. Thus, in the name of Kazaks, Kyrgyz and Turkmen, Central Asian communists "played the backward-card", insisting that their particular group was worse off than the others.[51] Arguing for the need to improve the situation of the Kyrgyz population of the Ferghana valley, Aralbaev stated that regarding schooling, education, and publishing activity, the situation was dismal:

> In Ferghana there are 64 schools, 20 children's homes and two technical schools. The total number of students and pupils in these institutions are approximately 11,800. I will be surprised if as many as 200 of these are Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz]. I'll be equally surprised if as many as five of the schools are for the Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz]. The problem is that in the state budget [of the Turkestan Republic] there is not one single school for the Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz]. Instead, the Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz] have been opening schools themselves, hoping that the government of the Turkestan Republic would respond by providing material support. But this has not happened. As a result, the schools have been closed.[52]

Similarly, Central Asian communists promoted their respective groups as regards the production of printed material. Employing the rhetoric of backwardness, the representatives of the various groups argued for the necessity of increased publishing activity in their language. According to Aralbaev, the needs of the Kyrgyz were disregarded in this field too:

> If we look at the newspapers that are published in the language of the indigenous population in the Ferghana oblast, there is not a word to be found in Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz]. Similarly, not even a single booklet is published in that language. All this bears witness to the considerable cultural backwardness of the Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz].[53]

Similar complaints were made in the name of Turkmen, first and foremost in regard to the situation in Khorezm and Bukhara,[54] but also in regard to the Turkestan republic.[55] The politicization of the language question became most pronounced during the national delimitation. However, this was not the result of the delimitation alone. Just as much, it was the result of the new role for written language in Central Asian society. This development emphasized divisions that, until then, had not been particularly problematic. Language was a crucial factor in the nationalization of political discourse, and there was nothing artificial in this development.

Based on this incipient minority nationalism, Central Asian communists made political demands that clearly resembled what was later accomplished in the delimitation. However, it was not necessarily the case that those who represented a nationalist outlook supported the idea of the delimitation, while those who were against it were anti-nationalists.

Those Central Asian communists who favored the establishment of national republics in the region very strongly emphasized the problem of national antagonism in Central Asia. They drew attention to the situation in the Turkestan republic, and to the great number of "scandals" that had taken place there in connection with elections and conferences. All the Central Asian communists of Turkestan who took part in the discussions of the delimitation project agreed that political activity in the Turkestan ASSR had been characterized by destructive conflicts among the Central Asians. But there was no agreement as to the nature of the conflicts. Those who favored the national delimitation, like, for example, Rakhimbaev, argued that all these conflicts in the final analysis stemmed from national differences, and that a national reorganization therefore was required. When the Central Asian Bureau discussed the delimitation question in mid-April 1924, Rakhimbaev stated:

> We must consider what has been going on in Central Asian since 1920. If we do that, it becomes clear that since then, in all meetings,

> conferences etc., we have been exchanging sarcasms over disagreements that have largely been based on differences in nationality.[56]

Concerning the Bukharan republic, Fayzullah Khojaev[57] focused on Uzbek–Turkmen relations when explaining why the Bukharan Central Committee was in favor of the delimitation project:

> The Central Committee of the Bukharan Communist Party considers the national delimitation a necessary step. This is primarily because the Turkmen question since the beginning of the Revolution in Bukhara has caused problems, and that which has been done has not satisfied the Turkmen. Unification of districts containing Turkmen population, establishment of national revolutionary committees etc. demonstrate that the Turkmen question is on our agenda. If you ask the Turkmen of Bukhara, they are still dissatisfied. Turkmen tribes of Bukhara strive for unification with Turkmen tribes outside Bukhara, and therefore the Turkmen must be separated from Bukhara. It is impossible to say that there is no Turkmen question in Bukhara, or that there is no national question in our republic.[58]

It is, of course, fully possible to assume that these arguments merely served as pretexts for Rakhimbaev and Fayzullah Khojaev, and that they supported the project for other reasons. From a co-optation perspective, for example, one might argue that this was something they said to win support for a project that they supported on strictly personal grounds and not on the basis of political or ideological conviction. Similar ideas were in fact expressed at the time, first and foremost by Khojanov, the Commissar of Agriculture and the most prominent Turkestan Kazak in the delimitation discussions.[59]

If we closely examine the above quotes of Rakhimbaev and Fayzullah Khojaev, we can identify a voice against which they are arguing. This voice can be attributed to different persons, but it is very similar to that of Khojanov, who was then the Central Asian communist most hostile to the delimitation. In some ways, Khojanov's position resembled what has been referred to as pan-Turkic or pan-Turanian ideas,[60] in that he argued for the indivisibility of Central Asia. Instead of national republics, Khojanov insisted on a Central Asian federation, with which the Kazak ASSR was to be joined.[61] Arguing against the delimitation plans, Khojanov attacked what was routinely presented as the rational for the reorganization, that is, the problem of national conflicts. Khojanov rejected the idea that the conflicts that had taken

place among the Turkestan communists stemmed from national differences, and he explicitly claimed that those who made this argument had an unspoken agenda. In the Central Asian Bureau in May 1924, Khojanov stated that "all these expressions of fear of national conflicts have another basis".[62] Concerning the previously mentioned "scandals", he referred to them as "the scandals that all here are so afraid of, or pretend that they are so afraid of".[63]

There was a great deal of discussion among the Turkestan communists regarding the nature of the different conflicts in the republic. While the supporters of the national delimitation argued that the conflicts exhibited a national character, others, such as Khojanov, claimed that the conflicts had little to do with nationality, and that they were largely the results of economic problems. However, the fact that Khojanov and other Turkestan Kazaks rejected the delimitation and favored federation does not mean that they represented a fundamentally anti-nationalist outlook, as has been claimed.[64] When we look at the discourse of Khojanov and those who sympathized with him, the picture becomes much more ambiguous. If Khojanov's conclusions have been interpreted as anti-nationalist in the sense that they played down the significance of divisions between "Uzbek", "Kazak" and other groups, they were presented in a discourse that was clearly nationalist. In fact, it was in many cases much more so than that of the supporters of the delimitation. Very far from being a pan-Turk or a pan-Turkestanian, Khojanov represented a fierce Kazak nationalist outlook with an anti-Uzbek character.

In the address from "30 responsible Kazak workers" to the Central Asian Bureau cited earlier, we have already seen one example of this anti-Uzbek Kazak nationalism. The address gave witness to a way of thinking based on a dichotomization between Uzbek and Kazak, and claimed that the latter was subject to the dominance of the former. This Kazak–Uzbek dichotomy was always present in Khojanov's persistent struggle against the delimitation, and it had an economic as well as a social and cultural dimension. Given the position of the concept of "exploitation" in Marxist theory and Soviet rhetoric, it is not surprising that intense discussion erupted when the Kazaks, and in particular Khojanov, argued that they were being exploited by the Uzbeks. Khojanov even suggested that the relation between Kazaks and Uzbeks was that of colonized and colonizer:

> So far, the national question has been understood only in the context of European on the one side and local nationalities on the

> other. Work has been going on exclusively within this dimension. But everybody knows that capital is heartless and that the colonizer can come from the East as well as from the West.[65]

Moreover, Khojanov's Uzbek–Kazak dichotomy encompassed a cultural dimension involving religion, everyday life (*byt*), and values. One of Khojanov's conclusions was that the Kazak culture more closely resembled "Western culture than the more Eastern Uzbeks", which, not least, meant that they had a more secular culture than the more religious Uzbeks.[66] Moreover, still according to Khojanov, the Kazaks did not "have the slave-like Eastern discipline typical of the Uzbeks".[67] In spite of these rather harsh categorizations, Khojanov declared: "When I appear here [the plenum of the Central Committee, CPT] it is not as a Kirgiz [Kazak]. It is as a member of the Central Committee and as a speaker. My Kirgiz [Kazak] origin I put aside at this occasion, it has nothing to do with this discussion."[68]

In Khojanov's view of the Uzbek–Kazak divide, a triple dichotomy was always present: oppressor and exploiter as opposed to oppressed and exploited, religious rigidity and perhaps fanaticism as opposed to secularism, and finally, Western as opposed to Eastern or Oriental. It is tempting to see these Kazak claims as attempts to win the support of the Central Soviet power, as all the qualities Khojanov in this way attributed to the Kazaks were greatly valued in the world-view of the revolutionary regime. If that was the intention, however, it failed, as Khojanov's opposition to the national delimitation turned out to be futile.

On this basis, one must conclude that among the Communists of Central Asia there was a development in which national identities such as Kazak, Uzbek and Turkmen became more important. It is important that even those communists, who often bitterly fought against the delimitation, did so within an increasingly nationalist framework. The following statement made by Khojanov in an article in the Kazak newspaper *Ak-Zhol* in June 1924 is a case in point:

> At the twelfth party congress, in the resolutions on the national question, it was established that the Uzbek nationality behaves chauvinistically towards the Kirgiz [Kazak], Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz] and the Turkmen. Therefore actions must be taken, largely the same ones that have been taken against the chauvinism on the part of Russians.[69]

Khojanov and those who shared his opinion passionately rejected the delimitation project, but this was done in a way that strengthened

the central Soviet authorities' belief that national relations in Central Asia were problematic.

One question must be answered: if the Turkestan Kazaks also increasingly interpreted reality in terms of national divisions and felt that they were treated unfairly because of their Kazakness, why did they then oppose the idea of political reorganization based on nationality? The main reason appears to have been that the Turkestan Kazaks feared being marginalized. The Turkestan Kazaks felt little affinity with a Kazak political entity centered in Orenburg. Indeed, Khojanov suggested that Orenburg be transferred to Siberia.[70] Turkestan Kazaks' primary attachment was to Turkestan, and they felt that being included into a Kazak republic with its capital in Orenburg might isolate them from Turkestan and Central Asia in general. Moreover, they feared that they would be increasingly marginalized in an Uzbek republic.

Economic aspects were important in the arguments of Khojanov and other Turkestan Kazaks. They argued that a division of Central Asia would be economically detrimental to most of the Central Asian population, as the region would be better off as one economic entity. With the exception of the Uzbek republic, the consequence of a division would be the establishment of entities that were not economically viable. In their view, this would result in only illusory independence.[71] The Uzbeks, represented by Fayzullah Khojaev, replied that economic viability was not a decisive criterion, as the entire region would remain within the same Soviet state. Obviously, this does not necessarily mean that the two had different opinions as to the significance of economic viability for "their" respective entities. For the Turkmen communists, however, economic viability was not essential. They fully recognized that the Turkmen republic would be economically dependent, but this did not hinder them from being positive to the idea. This suggests that Central Asian communists held quite different views of the idea of organizing nationally-based entities. While the Turkestan Kazaks passionately argued for a Central Asian federation, the Turkmen communists preferred direct subordination to Moscow.[72]

In a discussion about the possible establishment of nationally-based political entities at a plenary session of the Central Committee of the CPT in March 1924, a Turkmen representative said:

> All conflicts and quarrels that are taking place in the region can be traced back to the national question, and are based exclusively on this. It is sufficient to look at the publishing of newspapers, at

> education and at schools. In all areas there are conflicts between Uzbeks and Turkmen, and because of the conflicts no progress is made.[73]

As I have argued in this chapter, I believe that what this Turkmen speaker said reflected the outlook of many Central Asian communists in 1924. Significantly, it was not only those who favored national political entities who spoke of "the national question" in such terms. Even those who showed little enthusiasm for the delimitation or who expressed outright opposition against it appear to have shared these general views. This was the case for example with Paskutsky, later to become a member of the Turkmen National Bureau, who argued against the establishment of national republics, and at the same time referred to the "damned questions that arise everywhere all the time about language and schools, etc.".[74]

If national identities became more important in this period, this development did not necessarily apply to the Central Asian population as a whole. There was a considerable difference between those who were included in the Soviet sphere and the general population. This becomes very clear in the case of the Turkmen. Turkmen communists who expressed their grievances over the situation of the Turkmen population in Khorezm, Bukhara, and to some extent also in Turkestan, and who argued for the establishment of a Turkmen political entity, admitted, although reluctantly, that the general population did not necessarily think in the same way. For them, local perspectives and loyalties were more important.[75] It was first and foremost among Central Asian communists that nationality took on increasing significance. As a result, it is difficult to accept the Soviet view that the delimitation was the implementation of popular will.

The politicization of nationality among Central Asian communists was to a great extent the result of political changes since the revolution. When nationality was institutionalized in diverse ways from the beginning of the 1920s national divisions became increasingly relevant for Central Asian communists. They began to focus on the interests and well being of their respective nationalities, which indeed, was part of the rationale behind the introduction of national branches and divisions. Furthermore, as we have seen, language was also instrumental in this process. For Central Asian communists as a group, it was an important goal to reduce the use of Russian and to nativize politics and administration as much as possible. On the Central Asian level, however, a similar struggle ensued between different groups of Central

Asians emphasizing the rights of "their" languages, and this struggle was intimately related to the ideological dimension of the Bolshevik project. The pronounced Bolshevik support for the weak against the strong was by some interpreted as legitimizing support for Muslims or Central Asians as against the dominant Russians. It was in a similar perspective that Sultan Galiev elaborated his theory of the rule of the periphery over the metropolis. Others, however, interpreted Bolshevism as grounds for support for the Turkmen and Kazaks vis-à-vis the Uzbeks. Turkmen and Kazak communists during 1923 and 1924 repeatedly argued that the dominance of Uzbeks in Central Asia was incompatible with the Bolshevik ideology of support for the weak.

This ideological dimension was clearly an important element in the development of minority nationalisms among Central Asian communists. Increasingly, Central Asian communists made political demands in the name of Turkmen, Kazaks, and to a much more limited degree, Kyrgyz. In Khorezm, Bukhara, and the Turkestan republic, Turkmen and Kazaks felt marginalized by the dominating group, increasingly identified as Uzbeks. The result was a number of national demands, in the name of Turkmen and Kazaks, that the situation of their groups be improved in the respective republics. These demands included the dissolution of existing political entities and the establishment of new ones based on nationality. According to the arguments of the Turkmen and Kazaks, the Uzbeks dominated the different multinational political entities. They exclusively promoted the interests of members of their own group, while ignoring the interests of others. They behaved as "nationalizing states" in the eyes of Turkmen and Kazak communists.

Edward Allworth has argued that a main objective of the national delimitation was to isolate the Uzbeks from the other Central Asians, because the Uzbeks "exerted a pull of ethnic assimilation on the others that expanded the Uzbek population and enhanced their reach in nearly every field".[76] However, it was not only the Soviet authorities that reacted to this phenomenon. Inspired by Soviet ideology, those who were subjected to this "Uzbek pull" reacted by developing what Lenin had called "defensive nationalism".

This use of the national identities 1920s was something quite novel, and it was to a great extent the result of the policies and ideology of the newly established Soviet power. On the other hand, there was considerable continuity in the way in which the national identities were conceptualized, and the pattern that emerged in the early 1920s to a great extent reflected traditional and historical divisions in the Central Asian population. This is the subject of the next chapter.

6
Continuity and Change in Group Identities

The previous chapters have explored the background for why a policy such as the national delimitation was adopted. This and the following chapters investigate the developments that ensued after it had already been recognized that a political-administrative reorganization was to be accomplished. On the basis of the discussions in the first chapters, one might say that it was far from self-evident what Central Asia would look like if organized according to nationality. In this chapter, I examine the extent to which the newly-established entities corresponded to traditional patterns of identity, while in the following chapters I will explore the reasons for which the map of reorganized Central Asia came to look as it did. In Chapter 7, I discuss whether the delimitation was a dynamic process rather than the implementation of a ready-made plan, and, further, investigate whether the delimitation discussion itself triggered a development that decisively influenced the way in which the delimitation was accomplished. Chapter 8 presents an analysis of the border-making process of the delimitation.

The focus of this chapter is the role Central Asian communists assumed in the delimitation process, with an emphasis on their significance in the elaboration of traditional identities. The discussions are primarily taken from the various sessions of the Central Asian Bureau and the Territorial Committee, which was organized by the Central Asian Bureau as a forum for deliberations on the future make-up of Central Asia.[1] These were real discussions in the sense that the Central Asian communists involved believed that they would influence the delimitation, and, in the chapter on border making, I will argue that they did so considerably. In this chapter, I use these discussions to analyze the way in which Central Asian communists conceived of the

groups and communities involved. What did it mean to be Uzbek, Turkmen, Kazak or Tajik?

In many ways, the delimitation was a process by which various Central Asian groups such as the Turkmen and the Kazaks were separated from the Uzbeks. In that sense, the Uzbeks are literally at the center of the delimitation, which is reflected in the present chapter.

Nomads and settled; nations and sub-groups

In order to accomplish a reorganization of the region based on nationality, it was necessary to have an understanding of the national affiliation of the peoples affected. Who were Uzbeks, Turkmen, Kazaks, Kyrgyz or Tajiks? Differentiating between these groups was no simple task, as these designations were not among the most prominent in people's identification, and the boundaries between them ambiguous. Moreover, there were no passports in which a person's nationality was recorded. Accordingly, one important task for the Territorial Committee was to determine the national affiliation of the different population groups in Central Asia. This was the subject of a number of heated discussions, in which Central Asian communists were eager participants. The fact that the discussions were heated and impassioned, reflected the participants' perceptions that much was at stake.

The discussions reveal that the Turkmen identity was the least controversial; there was very little discussion as to who were to be considered Turkmen. Only in the case of Bukhara did controversy develop over the issue of ethnic boundaries between "Turkmen" and "Uzbek". The controversy was related to the Farab area on the Right Bank of Amu-Darya in what was still Bukhara. In the Territorial Committee, both the Uzbek and the Turkmen subcommittees claimed the population of Farab. According to the Uzbek committee, this population should be considered Uzbek, while the Turkmen committee insisted that the Farab population were their co-nationals, and not Uzbek.[2] As a result, the Territorial Committee decided to organize investigations into the national identity of the Farab population in order to establish whether they were Uzbeks or Turkmen.[3] As I will develop in greater detail in Chapter 8, it was not necessarily the case that borders were designed to coincide with such divisions. National affiliation was one among several criteria, and the intense discussions among the Central Asian communists suggest that they believed it was an essential one.

While it appears not to have been particularly difficult to distinguish between Turkmen on the one side and Uzbeks (or other national

groups for that matter) on the other, distinguishing between Uzbeks and Kazaks was much more problematic. It led to a very different level of controversy and conflict, and the work of the Territorial Committee came to be marked by an increasingly hostile atmosphere between Uzbek and Kazak representatives. Certainly, this was a political struggle over interests and resources between those involved. However, this was also a process of identification, and the discussions are indicative of how Uzbeks and Kazaks conceived of Uzbekness and Kazakness, respectively. Kazaks and Uzbeks discussed various population groups known by other names in order to establish to which nationality the groups belonged. The arguments that the Uzbeks and Kazaks used reveal what they perceived to be the main characteristics of the nationality they represented in the Territorial Committee.

In much of the writing on Soviet nationalities policy, great attention is often paid to Stalin's well known definition of nationality, produced in 1913.[4] In connection with the delimitation, however, hardly any mention appears to have been made of that definition. This is in line with Francine Hirsch's argument that "[u]p until 1924, ethnographers had used a laundry list of traits to differentiate between peoples, including language, religion, race, culture, *byt* [everyday life], and occupation".[5] According to Hirsch, it was only after 1924 that discussions of classification and representation of nationality began in earnest, directed towards a more systematic and coherent approach. The discussions of the national delimitation are in this sense firmly rooted in the "old regime".[6] Laundry lists were exactly what the Central Asian communists produced in the discussions. A number of aspects were drawn in, such as economy, way of life, language, genealogy, culture, and in some cases even religion. There seems to have been no coherent approach as to the inclusion or importance of categories, or even any real discussion of what a national community was supposed to be. Perhaps exactly for that reason, it is possible to discern what those involved saw as the key aspects of the various identities. In the Uzbek–Kazak case, there is no doubt that socioeconomic criteria were most emphatically and frequently emphasized, and this applied to both parties: "Uzbek" was settled and "Kazak" was nomad. Now, this historically important distinction between settled and nomads in Central Asia became a major dimension in the distinction between "Uzbek" and "Kazak". This is evident from the discussions of the various "sub-groups", many of which were claimed by both the Uzbek and the Kazak side.

Examples of such groups were the Kurama, the Turki, the Kashgarlyk, the Kipchak, and to some extent the Sarts. Of these groups,

Kurama was particularly important because of its size, and the question of the Kurama led to intense discussion in the Territorial Committee between the Uzbek and Kazak sides. The Turki and the Kipchak, on the other hand, had – according to the Uzbek group in the Territorial Committee – "no important role in the delimitation as they [were] too few".[7] In their arguments that the Kurama should be considered Uzbeks, the Uzbek side drew attention to socioeconomic criteria. The following argument is typical of how the Uzbek communists tried to convince the members of the Territorial Committee:

> Concerning the closeness of the Kurama to the Uzbeks there has been some doubt. However, there is no reason for such doubt. Like Uzbeks, the Kurama are agriculturalists. As is the case with Uzbeks, nomadism is not found among the Kurama. They have exactly the same economic structures and habitation patterns as Uzbeks.[8]

In the many discussions over the Kurama in the Territorial Committee, the Uzbek side constantly reiterated this argument: as the Kurama were sedentary agriculturalists and not nomads they were most closely related to the Uzbeks and not the Kazaks.[9] This line of thought was not restricted to the question of the nationality of the Kurama. In all cases concerning the boundaries between Uzbek and Kazak, the discourse was permeated by this distinction. It was clearly more important than both language and genealogy, even though these were employed as well; the Uzbek side stressed that studies of the language as well as the genealogy of the Kurama also concluded that they were Uzbeks.[10] However, the community that the Uzbek side now projected was more than a strictly linguistic community; it was first and foremost based on notions of a shared way of life. As we shall see later in this chapter, however, the settled–nomad distinction was not the only dimension of "Uzbek". In other contexts, other aspects became more important. But as far as the Uzbek–Kazak boundary is concerned, the settled–nomad distinction was the most important one.

The same settled–nomad divide played an important role in the conceptualization of boundaries between Uzbek and Kyrgyz as well. Moreover, it is important to realize that similar distinctions were made on both sides of the settled–nomad divide. During the discussions in the Territorial Committee concerning the Turki of the Andijan district, the Kyrgyz subcommittee argued in the following way:

> Now concerning the Turki. As far as we have understood, the Uzbeks see the Turki as Uzbeks or as related to the Uzbeks. In reality, however, they are nomads, and must therefore belong to the Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz] people.[11]

As mentioned, cultural as well as other aspects had historically been associated with the settled–nomad division. The existence and importance of tribal lineages, political organization, notions of authority, as well as the role of religion in society were all elements in this dichotomy. During deliberations on the delimitation, these dimensions were also brought in, giving content to the Uzbek and Kazak identities. The following excerpt from an address to the Central Asian Bureau from "activist Uzbek workers" from the Turkestan, Chimkent and Aulie-Ata *uezds* conveys thoughts that were characteristic of the delimitation process:

> Historically, the lives of Uzbeks and Kirgiz [Kazaks] have developed along completely different lines. The Kirgiz [Kazaks] lived as nomads with no possibility for uniting in a settled community. They lived in tribal groups obeying the patriarch who ruled according to his will, and who had no intent to establish any kind of order for culture, trade or crafts. At the same time, the settled Uzbek, cherishing cultivable land, gathered in such areas and soon developed political organization at a high level. Great progress was made in the fields of trade and crafts as well as in the sciences. As a result, the settled Uzbek and the nomad Kirgiz [Kazak] have developed a way of life and culture that are completely alien to each other.[12]

The address continues to develop this point in greater detail:

> As a result of the different conditions of the Uzbeks and the Kirgiz [Kazaks], their economic lives became very different. While the Uzbeks base their economic welfare firmly on the cultivation of land, the Kirgiz [Kazak] is essentially occupied with the growth of his herd. This is why he is totally disinterested in cultivable land, an expressive example of which is the outcome of the land reform in Chimkent uezd in 1920. Land that had been cultivated by Russian inhabitants was redistributed among Kirgiz [Kazaks], and within 2–3 years the land lay in complete decay.[13]

From the point of view of the Kazaks, the situation was of course interpreted very differently. Indeed, the view of the Kazaks represents in many ways a mirror image of that of the Uzbek side. The lack of order and organization pointed to by the Uzbeks, were turned into a love of freedom that was contrasted to the "slave-like discipline typical of the Uzbeks", mentioned in the previous chapter.[14] The religious dimension was emphasized as well, and the Kazak with his love of freedom and independence was juxtaposed against the religiously conservative Uzbek.[15]

According to Edward Allworth, "Uzbeks exerted a pull of ethnic assimilation" on other groups in Central Asia.[16] In the delimitation discussions, the Uzbek side used notions of ongoing assimilation in their arguments that the various groups ought to be considered Uzbeks. They claimed that the Uzbeks represented a point of gravity in Central Asia and that other groups eventually would be assimilated. This had, they claimed, already happened with "Sart", and probably the same would soon happen with "Kurama".[17] They argued that the Kurama were in the middle of an assimilation process, and that a great number of the Kurama had "already turned into Uzbeks".[18] This approach was based on a perception of changing identities. The Kazak side, on the other hand, rejected the idea of assimilation. Instead, much like the orientalists discussed earlier, they paid little attention to self-designation and tried to prove "who the Kurama really were". For instance, they often highlighted the facts that the Kurama had Kazak origins and that "Kurama" was a Kazak word, and they emphasized the intimate historical ties between the Kurama and the Kazaks.[19] The conclusion was that whatever the Kurama might mean of their identity at the time, they are historically, and therefore objectively, the kin of the Kazaks. According to Khojanov, the Kurama were "sartified and settled Kirgiz [Kazaks]".[20] The idea of "sartified and settled Kazaks" aptly demonstrates the importance of the settled–nomad dimension in Central Asian group identities, indicating that a settled Kazak was something of a peculiarity.

So far, I have discussed the question of sub-groups from the perspective of those who laid their claims on the different groups. But what was the perspective of those who were being claimed? How did these groups react to this struggle over their identity and nationality? As I will return to in the next section, there seems to have been no "Sart voices" speaking for the integrity of the Sarts as a group, or for the distinction between Sarts and Uzbeks. Indeed, to the extent that voices arguing for such a distinction were heard in the discussion, they

belonged to a "third party", notably Kazaks. With the Kurama it was different, as two larger groups claimed it simultaneously. Still, I have found no Kurama voices opposing the claimants. Moreover, no such voices appear to have been reflected in the discourse of the larger groups, which I believe would have been the case if they had been strongly present.

At any rate, this was the case with the Kashgarlyk (or Uigurs, which was the group's self-designation). As with the Kurama, both the Uzbek and the Kazak claimed that the Kashgarlyk/Uigurs belonged to their group.[21] The Uzbek side here, too, focused on economy as well as self-designation, and the following excerpt is indicative of the level of confusion that often characterized the discussions on identities in Central Asia in the mid-1920s:

> Why have we considered them [the Kashgarlyk] to be Uzbeks? They are today closely related to Uzbek regions. They are Turks and Kipchaks, but in their economic life they are closer to the Uzbeks. And they say themselves that they are Uzbeks. However, we do not have any particular material that would substantiate this position. The Kashgarlyk are originally Chinese Sarts and Uzbeks too.[22]

In this case, however, Uzbek and Kazak claims were not left unchallenged. The Central Asian Bureau received a number of addresses from Kashgar Soviet or Party workers on various levels, in which they expressed their dissatisfaction with becoming the pawns in the competition between other groups.[23] In an address from August 8, 1924, "representatives of the Kashgar Communists of Ferghana" expressed their dissatisfaction in the following way: "The question of the national delimitation has begun to worry us. The committees that have been appointed, the Uzbek and the Kirgiz [Kazak], both want to include us on their lists. For us, however, this is not correct."[24] At approximately the same time, Kashgar communists of the city of Andijan convened a meeting to discuss the same questions. The meeting was attended by the Osh organization of Uigur, representatives of the Uigur from Andijan, members of the *batrak* (farm-laborer) organization of Uigur, as well as the Uigur Regional Bureau.[25] On the agenda was the question of the delimitation and its relation to the Uigur in the settled parts of Ferghana.

The resolutions made had two main points. First, the Uigurs were to be considered a separate nationality and not the sub-group of any other. This is one of the few cases where Stalin's definition of a nation

is reproduced, and the Uigurs used it to argue for their status as a separate nationality. According to this thinking, the Uigur had a unique language, as well as a particular psychology and way of life, which distinguished them from the other groups and made them a separate nationality. A second point is that the Uigurs had been the subject of neglect, first during the Tsarist period and then later in the post-revolutionary years as well. While, the Uigurs complained, much had been done for nationalities such as Uzbeks, Kazaks, Russians and Tajiks, and even for national minorities such as Jews, Armenians, Tatars and others, for the Uigur poor nothing had been done. This is another interesting example of the effect of the institutionalization of nationality. The Uigur identity became more relevant as the feeling developed that this particular group had been neglected, which had led to their current bleak conditions. The convention demanded that the Uigurs of Ferghana be organized into separate autonomous *uezd*, as that would be the only guarantee for a positive development in the future. Not only must the Uigur avoid being considered a subgroup of another nationality; the status of a national minority was equally undesirable. This status would recognize the group as separate, but as a minority within a political-territorial entity that bore the name of a different group. Thus, they would be left without any institutionalized self-rule. This was also the situation of the Armenians in the Central Asian republics, and, for that matter, the Turkmen of Uzbekistan.

It is interesting to note that there is an element of threat in the address to the Central Asian Bureau. The address explicitly says that failure to satisfy the demands of the Uigur may provide ammunition for the reactionary and counter-revolutionary clergy in their struggle against Soviet power. In the chapter on border making, I will discuss to what extent such concerns influenced the political reorganization. While the Uigurs reacted to the struggle over their nationality by advancing their own demands, there was an even more important group for which there were no spokespersons at all – the Sarts.

From Sart to Uzbek: changing identities or new labels?

In an earlier chapter, we saw how the designation "Sart" puzzled the scholars of the Russian Empire. It did not fit with their ideas of a national community. In the 1897 census, the number of registered Sarts exceeded that of Uzbeks in the three main *oblasts* of Turkestan. For "Uzbek" to become the dominant identity in the Soviet republic of

Uzbekistan, therefore, it was necessary that the Uzbek group came to include those formerly registered as "Sarts". This is what happened in Central Asia in the first half of the 1920s, at least in censuses. The number of Uzbeks had risen considerably, while "the Sarts" seemingly had disappeared.[26] What was behind these figures? Was the change, as Soviet scholarship claimed, a natural and logical step in the consolidation of the Uzbek nationality? Or did this change merely reflect a political insistence on the introduction of new labels, which neither reflected nor led to new group conceptualizations? According to John Schoeberlein, the primary reason for the change was that the appellation "Sart" was banished from use. This was done under the pretext that "Sart" was a pejorative term, while the "real motivation was a political decision to establish a small number of 'nationality' categories at the expense of any other that could be collapsed into them".[27] Adeeb Khalid represents a third position, arguing that the shift reflected changing group identities. According to Khalid, a process had begun with the Central Asian Jadids in which "Sart" was being translated into "Ozbek".[28]

The discussions of 1924 between Central Asian communists may throw light on this question, as they provide us with the viewpoints of different sides with presumably different interests. On the one side, we find the arguments of those who, in the terminology of Schoeberlein, "were clearly nationalists of the 'Özbek nation'".[29] Of course, this material must be read with caution as one may reasonably assume that the "nationalists" were attempting to "pad" the Uzbek group as much as possible. It is more interesting, therefore, to consider the points of view of those to whom one may equally reasonably ascribe the exact opposite interests. The designation "Sart" differed from the other ones discussed above in that it did not refer to a group that was claimed by representatives of different nationalities. Moreover, there were no Sart voices claiming to represent any Sart people. Nevertheless, the designation "Sart" was discussed during the delimitation, also in the context of a struggle between the Uzbek and Kazak sides. The Uzbeks claimed that Sart and Uzbek were one and the same thing, while the Kazaks obviously feared a strong Uzbek political entity and argued that it was not correct to mesh the two.

Ingeborg Baldhauf has claimed that the term "Sart", used by Russian ethnographers, historians and specialists was rejected as a misnomer by those to whom it was attributed.[30] This coincides with the point of view of the Uzbek nationalists during the delimitation, as presented by Fayzullah Khojaev in the Central Asian Bureau in April 1924:

> I have heard now for the first time that a new nation is developing, the Sarts. Asking scholars as to the origin of this term, I was told that the word appeared with the Russians, and that it signifies "yellow dog". Sarts can therefore not be considered a nation, as it allegedly includes Uzbeks, Turkmen, Tajiks and Kirgiz [Kazaks].[31]

However, this argument was not typical of the Uzbek side, as they tended to argue in terms of changing identities rather than mistaken ones. They did not necessarily reject that Sart had been an important identity in the past, but they maintained that this was no longer the case in 1924. "Sart" and "Uzbek" were then indistinguishable:

> Our job is not to look into history. It is now completely impossible to distinguish "Sart" as a separate nationality. Whatever people have called themselves in the past, presently they consider themselves to be Uzbeks. Some say that we must let the Sarts be Sarts and the Uzbeks be Uzbeks. However, it would be both meaningless and impossible to separate Sarts from Uzbeks.[32]

Of course, a "nationalist of the Uzbek nation" may have had political interests in identifying "Sart" with "Uzbek". It is more interesting to note that the Kazak side largely confirmed the essence of Uzbeks' arguments. In their struggle to reduce the potency of the future Uzbek political formation, the Kazak side problematized the Uzbek–Sart relationship, arguing that Sart was not Uzbek.

As both Baldhauf and Schoeberlein have pointed out, Soviet authorities took political measures to prevent "Sart" from being used. Baldhauf dates these initiatives to 1924, the year of the national delimitation, and Schoeberlein agrees that it was at this time the tendency to deny the existence of the "Sarts" altogether gathered force.[33] In this light it is interesting to note that the Kazaks, in connection with the delimitation, dated the shift from Sart to Uzbek at an earlier point, around 1920, when "the urban elements began to take on the designation 'Uzbek'".[34] This would suggest that the shift preceded initiatives to abolish the term. On the other hand, although such initiatives had not yet been directly made, in 1920, in the constitution of the newly established Turkestan ASSR, Turkmen, Kazaks and Uzbeks were established as the main nationalities of that republic. Furthermore, censuses were carried out that year with categories that attempted to correspond to these main nationalities, although "Sart" was listed as a sub-category of "Uzbek" rather than disregarded

altogether.[35] It is therefore fully possible that that the shift was influenced by political developments.

However, more interesting than the temporal aspect is the character of the arguments that the Kazak side used. During the discussion of identities, the Kazaks frequently argued that outside forces caused people to conceal their true identities and register as Uzbeks out of fear or for convenience. According to the Kazak side, this was the case with the Kazaks in Bukhara, as well as with several other groups.[36] In a letter to the Central Committee, Kazak members of the Bukharan CEC complained that "[u]ntil this day, Kirgiz [Kazaks] refuse to call themselves by that name due to fear of reprisals".[37] In a number of situations the Kazak side pointed eagerly to external factors that may have led to a change in self-designation, particularly if it increased the number of "Uzbeks". The absence of similar allegations concerning the shift from "Sart" to "Uzbek" suggests in my opinion that in the eyes of the Kazaks, such factors were not particularly important. Here, no particular reason was given for the change in self-designation. Instead, based on an objectivist view of identities, the Kazaks contended that the identification of "Sart" with "Uzbek" represented an aberration of historical realities, and in that sense was artificial. Most importantly, the Kazak side attempted to prove their case by focusing on history. In the Territorial Committee, they argued the following:

> There is no such thing as an unambiguous Uzbek nation. Not all those who call themselves Uzbeks, are Uzbeks in reality ... Uzbeks are a rural people, while urban elements were called Sarts. Before 1920, the urban elements were not identified with Uzbeks, but approximately at that time the urban people began to use the designation Uzbek ... Consequently, there is no Uzbek nation, that is only a name. There are two nationalities, there are Sarts and there are Uzbeks.[38]

It was not only the urban–rural distinction the Kazaks emphasized in their struggle against the amalgamation of "Uzbek" and "Sart". As pointed out in Chapter 2, some students of nineteenth-century Central Asia argued that the existence or absence of tribal lineages was essential to the Sart–Uzbek distinction.[39] The Kazaks' arguments in 1924 reflected this understanding:

> Historically, "Uzbek" has a much more limited meaning than the way we use it now. Earlier, those in Samarkand, Bukhara, Khorezm

> and Amu-Darya who had kept their tribal way of life were considered Uzbeks. Others were called Sarts. Now, however, "Uzbek" is very widely used.[40]

The Kazaks' main point was that whatever the "Sarts" called themselves, they remain Sarts. The Kazaks did not deny that groups of people in Central Asia who had earlier been identified as Sarts in more recent times had begun to call themselves Uzbek. Indeed, as Khojanov once put it: "The Uzbeks are former Sarts."[41]

For the vast majority of those who by the mid-1920s were categorized as Uzbeks in Soviet official records, ideas of membership in an Uzbek nation had little or no interest. Generally, they had other things to worry about than whether they were Uzbeks, Kazaks, Kurama, Uigurs or Sarts. However, this does not imply that the concept of an Uzbek community was false. Rather, there was considerable continuity between traditional formations and the way in which Central Asian communists conceived of national identity in connection with the delimitation. In the conceptual distinctions between "Uzbek" on the one side and "Turkmen", "Kazak" and "Kyrgyz" on the other, the identification of "Uzbek" with "sedentary" was essential. While useful in these contexts, the "sedentary" quality of "Uzbek" was unsuited for the distinction between "Uzbek" and another identity, namely "Tajik". The relation between "Uzbek" and "Tajik" in the national delimitation is one of the most controversial and also one of the most puzzling aspects of that process.

Uzbeks and Tajiks – the absence of Tajik voices

Even though the rationale of the delimitation was the coincidence of ethnic and political territorial boundaries, there were many cases in which members of one titular nationality remained outside the republic to which their group gave name. Complete correspondence and homogeneity would hardly ever be possible in reality, and certainly not in the complexity of Central Asia. As regards the delimitation of Central Asia, it is a widely shared opinion that it was particularly in the Tajik case that political and ethnographic boundaries failed to coincide. At the heart of the matter are the cities of Bukhara and Samarkand. Prior to the delimitation, both cities had a largely Iranian- or Tajik-speaking population. In spite of this, the delimitation incorporated both into the Uzbek republic. Both Western observers and post-Soviet Tajik nationalists have attributed great significance to this fact,

as it allegedly deprived the Tajik republic of its natural cultural center. From this perspective, the delimitation was particularly unfair to the Tajiks and the Tajik republic. My analysis suggests that it is not sufficient to focus on political decisions, however motivated, made in Moscow. Instead I will argue that the Uzbek–Tajik relations primarily ought to be understood within a perspective of changing identities. This was a process that partly predated the Soviet regime, but it was later decisively, if not intentionally, influenced by the implementation of Soviet policy in Central Asia.

It is fair to say that the Tajik case during the national delimitation was unique. Chiefly, it differed from those of the other groups in that it is virtually impossible to identify any Tajik voice in the deliberations. There was no person or group who primarily claimed to represent a Tajik people and who argued passionately for the necessity of accommodating this particular group. The Turkmen republic had their spokesmen in Aitakov and Atabaev, while Khojanov and others spoke in the name of the Kazaks. Aralbaev and Abdrakhmanov argued on behalf of the Kyrgyz, while Dosnazarov made passionate arguments in the name of the Karakalpak population of Central Asia. Last but not least, the Uzbek republic had a considerable number of spokespersons, with Fayzullah Khojaev and Islamov as the most important ones. But no one seemed to speak in the name of a Tajik people on the matter of the delimitation.

When analyzing the documents from this process, one must agree with the Tajik historian Masov on one point: it seems as if no Tajik group existed.[42] "Tajik" had not been mentioned initially among the main nationalities of Turkestan, which were seen to be "Uzbek", "Turkmen" and "Kazak". As I return to in the next chapter, the constraining of nationalities to these three groups provoked reactions from other groups, or at least individuals claiming to represent groups that had been disregarded. This was particularly the case with Kyrgyz, and to some extent with the Karakalpak. In the name of Tajik, however, no such response seems to have appeared.

The Tajik identity appeared in the delimitation discussion through Fayzullah Khojaev's thesis on the establishment of an Uzbek republic in Central Asia. The thesis, which was accepted, suggested that a Tajik Autonomous *Oblast* be established in eastern Bukhara on the basis of Matchi, Karategin and Garm.[43] Later, however, the Tajik identity was more or less absent from the discussions, even though there were no changes in the plans to set up a Tajik *oblast*. As a result, at a meeting in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkestan on

March 23, 1924, the discussion was restricted to the three "main nationalities": Uzbek, Turkmen and Kazak. This provoked a reaction, but typically not from anyone claiming to represent Tajiks. Instead, it was Aralbaev who complained that the selected perspectives ignored both the Kyrgyz and the Tajiks.[44] As I will return to in greater detail in the next chapter, from then on "Kyrgyz" was included in discussions on the delimitation. "Tajik", on the other hand, remained peripheral.

When the Central Asian Bureau in April 1924 established a committee for the organization and implementation of the national delimitation, national subcommittees were set up as well. While "Kyrgyz" had now joined the "three main nationalities", no Tajik subcommittee was established. Instead, there was agreement that the Uzbek committee was to attract some Tajiks to their work.[45] Similarly, no mention was made of "Tajik" when the Central Asian Bureau in July organized temporary national bureaus for the developing republics and *oblasts*. Now, the Uzbek, Kazak, Turkmen and Kyrgyz temporary national bureaus appeared.[46] Finally, the same pattern repeated itself when the Central Asian Bureau created the Territorial Committee and its national subcommittees. While a subcommittee was organized for each of the four other groups, there was initially no Tajik committee. Only after the beginning of the committee's discussions in August was a Tajik subcommittee organized. Imamov, Khojibaev and Saidjanov were appointed Tajik representatives.[47]

Another important difference between the Tajik case and the other groups involved is the absence of conflicts regarding the establishment of the Tajik *oblast*. An analysis of the records of the national delimitation reveals that, as one might expect, it was a period rich in conflicts. Most of the conflicts had Uzbeks on the one side and Kazaks, Turkmen or Kyrgyz on the other in struggles over various pieces of territory or groups of people. The Tajik identity does not appear to have been involved in such conflicts. This may not seem too surprising, given what has been said about the failure to include the Tajik identity altogether. Was the reason simply that Tajiks had been excluded from the arena in which these conflicts would appear? I think not. Even though the Tajik subcommittee of the Territorial Committee was created relatively late, it did take part in the deliberations concerning the establishment of a Tajik political entity. Whether or not this subcommittee had any potential for influencing the result of that process is highly debatable. On the other hand, the Tajik subcommittee *did* have the opportunity to express its opinion. The records of the delimitation discussions are plentiful with examples where one part,

having realized that its demands would not be met, passionately protests against the result. The Tajik subcommittee, on the other hand, simply accepted the plans for the Tajik *oblast* as originally presented in Fayzullah Khojaev's thesis.

This seemingly unconditional acceptance was all the more striking considering the character of the projected *oblast.*[48] The Tajik republic became the poorest of the entities established in the delimitation, as well as the poorest of the union republics. Khojanov referred to the projected Tajik *oblast* in the following way:

> The cultural centers of the Tajiks remain within the Uzbek republic, while the mountainous and inaccessible areas are being made into a separate *oblast* ... If there is need for such an *oblast,* then it is difficult to understand why the Tajiks did not draw the border a bit deeper into Samarkand *oblast,* which would give the Tajik *oblast* much richer land ... To me it seems that this question has not been sufficiently well prepared, although the comrades Tajiks seem to be very happy with the decision ... What kind of autonomy is this if 800,000 of 1,200,000 remain outside the *oblast?*[49]

Imamov, one of the members of the Tajik subcommittee, admitted that it was true that the Tajik *oblast* would be left "largely with mountain tops", but stated that they nevertheless had "agreed with the Uzbeks on this question".[50] It is characteristic that it was a non-Tajik who raised the Tajik question. The Tajik subcommittee, on the other hand, accepted the project without protest, something which makes the Tajik example so distinct.

The Tajik subcommittee presented a proposal for the future Tajik *oblast* that completely coincided with the original Uzbek position. The proposal stated that there was a considerable Tajik population in Bukhara, in Samarkand, in the Khojent districts, and in Ferghana. However, it was only the Tajik population of eastern Bukhara that could be organized into a separate autonomous *oblast.* Recognizing that the great majority of the intellectual and educated parts of the Tajik population would be situated outside the Tajik autonomy, the authors of the proposal concluded:

> Tajiks outside the *oblast* (often urban and educated) may represent a reserve of workers for the party, the administration and so on. No doubt the urban Tajiks will take upon themselves the task of enlightenment among their less educated co-ethnics in the mountains.[51]

As regards the consensus between Uzbeks and Tajiks, the Central Asian Bureau confirmed the agreement by reporting to the Central Committee that "concerning the boundaries of the Tajik *oblast* full agreement has been reached".[52] According to Khojibaev, this plan would leave approximately 800,000 Tajiks outside the new *oblast*, which, according to the same source, represented somewhat more than half of the total Tajik population. However, he concluded, it was not possible to organize the *oblast* differently.[53]

From Uzbek to Tajik: the emergence of Tajik nationalism

As the examples demonstrate, there was little Tajik nationalism to be found in the position of the Tajik communists. If the delimitation triggered a competition among the different groups for a "Greater Uzbekistan", "Greater Kazakstan", and so on,[54] this was certainly not the case with the Tajiks. However, only a few years later, this situation was completely altered. In order to understand what happened in 1924 regarding the establishment of the Tajik ASSR and the Uzbek–Tajik delimitation, I believe it is necessary to more closely examine what took place later.

Many of those who, in 1924, consented to the Uzbek–Tajik delimitation, by 1929 represented a quite radical Tajik nationalist position. Both Imamov[55] and particularly Khojibaev, former members of the Tajik Territorial Committee, were now outspoken Tajik nationalists. Also, many of those who became ardent Tajik nationalists in the late 1920s had in 1924 participated on "the Uzbek side". Indeed, this was the case with Khojibaev, as I will return to shortly. Along with Khojibaev, perhaps the most pronounced Tajik nationalist in this period was Mukhitdinov, a former Young Bukharan and one of Fayzullah Khojaev's political competitors in Bukhara.

The same Tajiks who in 1924 had accepted the delimitation without uttering a word of protest, now completely rejected the boundaries of the Tajik republic. They demanded an extensive redefinition of boundaries, and the following areas were to be brought into the Tajik republic: the Khojent district, the city of Samarkand and the city of Old Bukhara, as well as the northern parts of the Surkhan-Darya *oblast*.[56] Also, the Tajik nationalists demanded that the Tajik ASSR be separated from the Uzbek republic. While this separation was in fact accomplished in 1929, as regards their territorial claims, the Tajiks were largely disappointed. With the exception of Khojent, which was trans-

ferred to the Tajik republic in 1929, all the disputed areas remained within the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic.

Bearing in mind the Uzbek–Tajik consensus of 1924, how can we explain the emergence of a radical nationalist position only a few years later? What had been the basis for the agreement in 1924 and what later produced the nascent Tajik nationalism? The explanations that have been given as to the establishment of the Tajik ASSR in 1924 can be divided into three groups. The first is a post-Soviet Tajik nationalist position, which focuses on pan-Turkism and forced Uzbekification. The second, prominent in Sovietology, sees in the Uzbek–Tajik delimitation the most obvious evidence of the divide and rule theory. Both these approaches have a strictly political focus. The third approach, in contrast, is based on a perspective of culture and identity, focusing on the boundaries between Tajik and Uzbek identities.

One representative for the post-Soviet Tajik position is Rakhim Masov. Masov's main proposition is that the national delimitation was a depreciation of the Tajik people and that the driving force behind it was pan-Turkism. Working within the Soviet communist paradigm, Masov supports the idea of the delimitation as a good and necessary one. In the troubled political realities of post-revolutionary Central Asia, however, this great project was corrupted by the pan-Turkism of the Uzbeks. From the very beginning of the Soviet period, the Uzbeks had had pan-Turkic goals of political unification on a Turkic basis. In the Muslim Bureau, which Vaidyanath called a "citadel of the pan-Turkic ideology",[57] the revolutionary slogans were nothing but a veil for pan-Turkic ideas. According to Masov, the idea of a Greater Uzbekistan at the expense of the Tajik people and the Tajik republic appeared as an alternative focus when it became clear that the original pan-Turkic project was not going to be accomplished. The pan-Turkic orientation characterized both the Turkestan republic and Bukhara, while it finally left its tragic stamp on the delimitation, which for the Tajik people was equivalent to ethnocide. In dramatic contrast to Western writers, Masov argues that the Central Asian pan-Turkists were so powerful that neither the Turkestan Commission nor the Turkestan Bureau nor its successor the Central Asian Bureau could really oppose them.[58] And in the bitter struggle between pan-Turkists and Russian party and soviet workers, the fate of the Tajik people was forgotten.

The pan-Turkists' suppression of the Tajiks was realized in different ways, most importantly through forced assimilation. Both in the Turkestan ASSR and in the Bukharan republic, argues Masov, Tajiks began, out of fear, to register as Uzbeks. Similarly, in order not to lose their

positions, the few leading party and soviet workers from the Tajik people had changed their national affiliation and joined the pan-Turkists. During the delimitation, these Tajiks, clothed as pan-Turkists, contributed to the suppression of the Tajik people, not least by their acceptance in the Territorial Committee of the Uzbek plans for the Tajiks. From Masov's perspective, pressure notwithstanding, this was an act of cowardice, as the Tajiks did not protest and thereby give voice to the interests of their people.

However, he suggests that this was not the only reason for the Tajiks' behavior in 1924, emphasizing that these Tajiks had grown up among Uzbeks, knew the Uzbek language, and liked Uzbek customs and traditions.[59] As I will demonstrate below, these are important points. Nevertheless, Masov's main argument is that Uzbek pan-Turkists forced their solutions on the weaker Tajik people. Even though Tajiks might occasionally appear in the name of Uzbeks, in the final analysis there was no doubt as to who were Tajiks and who were Uzbeks.

For Western scholars, the idea that any Central Asian group should be more powerful than the institutions of the central Soviet regime has been inconceivable. Yet the idea that the Tajik people were treated unfairly is a recurrent theme in Western literature as well. But here the malefactor was the Soviet leadership. According to Olivier Roy, for example, the fact that the city of Samarkand, located so close to the Tajik border and primarily populated by Tajiks, was included in the Uzbek republic was the result of "Machiavellian calculations to render any kind of independence impossible".[60] This explanation dismisses the idea of local agency altogether, and, like the Tajik nationalist approach, it focuses on the various groups in a static perspective. Uzbeks were Uzbeks and Tajiks were Tajiks.

More recently, other scholars have discussed Central Asian identities and the boundaries between them. In his dissertation, John Schoeberlein compares Soviet population statistics from the Samarkand district with pre-revolutionary statistics, and the differences are striking. While the number of Tajiks had been sharply reduced, in real number as well as in percentage, the number of Uzbeks has risen dramatically in the same period. Discussing the same statistical material, Masov finds the explanation in the repression and forced Uzbekification of Tajiks.[61] Largely rejecting the idea of repression, Schoeberlein finds the explanation in the fluidity of Tajik–Uzbek boundaries. His main argument is that, for the majority of the population, the labels Uzbek and Tajik were relatively insignificant. To change one's self-designation and register as Uzbek instead of Tajik was not necessarily perceived as

something dramatic, and did not mean that the individual was giving up something vital. Therefore, one should not assume that a change from Tajik to Uzbek would require strong pressure or use of force.[62] On the other hand, the "insignificance theory" does not exclude the possibility that pressure was applied.

This "fluid boundary perspective" is much more fruitful for the understanding of Uzbek–Tajik relations in 1924 than a perspective based on suppression and forced assimilation. The positions that the later-emerging Tajik nationalists held in 1924 were genuinely theirs, and they were the result of patterns of identity rather than of threats of force. The period of the delimitation was a time when concepts and identities were in flux, not least those of "Uzbek" and "Tajik". When later Tajik nationalists in 1924 seemed to have had few objections to the Uzbek project, it was because they identified with the Uzbeks. When, nevertheless, many of them later became Tajik nationalists, the main reason was that political developments had failed to meet their expectations. The Uzbek identity had moved in a different direction.

The "Uzbek" with which Tajik nationalists had identified in 1924 was closely related to the aspect of Uzbek that distinguished between the nomadic and the sedentary population. The settled–nomadic dichotomy had a parallel in the urban–rural dichotomy, and during the delimitation, "urban" was generally identified with "Uzbek". This was particularly pronounced in the Uzbek–Kazak case, where the Kazaks identified urban dominance with Uzbek dominance.[63] In this sense "Uzbek" was not what one would characterize as an ethnic community. Rather than visions of, for example, common descent or a linguistic community, it represented the sedentary and urban civilization in the Central Asian region. When those who later became Tajiks nationalists in 1924 supported the Uzbek project instead of representing the interests of "their people" (the Tajik population of eastern Bukhara, the projected *oblast*), it was because they felt a stronger sense of identity with this urban civilization than with the Tajiks of the mountains. They identified with the sedentary population of Transoxania rather than with other Tajik-speakers in eastern Bukhara.

During the delimitation, mention was frequently made of "the two groups of Tajiks". This refers to the urban Tajik population of Bukhara and the Turkestan republic on the one hand, and the "mountain Tajiks" on the other. The Tajiks involved in the delimitation all came from the group of urban Tajiks, and their discourse reveals that the socioeconomic dimension in their identification had priority over any sense of community with "their co-ethnics in the mountains". During

a discussion in the Territorial Committee of whether or not the two groups of Tajiks were to be united, Khojibaev maintained that the urban Tajiks of Bukhara and Turkestan "are both economically and otherwise very closely connected with the Uzbeks, and this is the reason why they must remain as a part of the Uzbek republic".[64] Imamov approved of Khojibaev's analysis, confirming that the urban Tajiks in culture as well as in economy had very much in common with Uzbeks. For Imamov, too, this was the main reason why the urban Tajiks were to remain in the Uzbek republic.[65] Moreover, one might add that in the many Uzbek–Kazak discussions, a later Tajik nationalist such as Khojibaev contributed with great energy and seeming enthusiasm on the Uzbek side. He seemed to have had no problems identifying with an Uzbek "we" that, in relation to the Kazaks, had "settled" and "urban" as important connotations.[66]

It is interesting to note the discrepancy between the arguments that these urban Tajiks used in 1924 and the arguments they later claimed to have used, speaking from the Tajik nationalist point of view in the late 1920s. Given that the radical demands of territorial redistribution in the late 1920s were presented largely by the same individuals who had accepted the delimitation a few years earlier, it is not surprising that the question arose as to why they had approved of the boundaries in the first place. Indeed, the representatives of the Uzbek republic, to which the Tajik territorial demands were made, used it against them. Explaining why they had accepted a Tajik republic restricted to eastern Bukhara, the Tajik nationalists referred to the political situation at the time. Bukhara was troubled by the Basmachi, and the solutions from 1924 had been accepted as a temporary solution, as a strategic compromise that was "dictated by objective political conditions", as it was put in Soviet parlance.[67]

No doubt these were compelling arguments for Tajik nationalists, as they allow for the continuity essential in nationalism. For the Tajik nationalists the goal had always been the same – the Tajik nation. When it was not realized, it was because of naive Tajiks, sly Uzbeks, and broken promises. Held up against the records of the delimitation process, however, the arguments seem much less convincing. There are few, if any, traces of the alleged provisions. True, Imamov mentioned briefly that the question of the unification of the two groups of Tajiks "might develop at some point in the future".[68] Yet, this was a rather vague hint, and did not suggest that this was his goal at the time. And even though some mention was made of practical arguments against Tajik unification in 1924, it seems obvious that the main reason why

the Tajik accepted the delimitation project in 1924 was that it corresponded with the urban Tajiks' sense of community.

When the Tajik nationalists of the late 1920s explained why they had accepted the delimitation plan in 1924, these practical arguments were what they emphasized most strongly. Masov, however, gives pan-Turkism and forced Turkification or Uzbekification greater explanatory power. To some extent, he does so on the basis of contemporary accounts. Justifying their stance in 1924, the late 1920s Tajik nationalists made a few references to pan-Turkism. However, they referred to it as a "disease" rather than as a political force. Masov has adopted the imagery, and maintains that the Tajiks at the time of the delimitation had been "poisoned by pan-Turkism".[69] This is a peculiar way of saying that the Tajiks in 1924 had acted out of free will and not under pressure, which is in accordance with my argument. On the other hand, there is no reason to see pan-Turkism as any major factor behind the Tajik–Uzbek agreement in 1924. If we look at the position of the Tajiks in 1924, we find instead that they *did* emphasize Tajikness. The following is what Imamov said as a representative of the Tajik Territorial Committee:

> Of course, neither Tajiks nor Uzbeks deny that Tajiks are carriers of an ancient Iranian culture ... And language and culture is important. It is therefore necessary that the rights of the national minorities be observed for those Tajiks who remain outside the Tajik *oblast*.[70]

In the same vein, Khojibaev emphasized that no one had the right to force another language upon the Tajiks. Further, he presented a request that the city of Samarkand become a temporary cultural center for the Tajiks where they could establish schools and other cultural institutions, as there were few possibilities elsewhere.[71] Evidently, the urban Tajiks did recognize a certain cultural affinity with the mountain Tajiks, as well as the idea that Tajiks were carriers of an ancient Iranian culture, which it was their right to cherish. On the other hand, this did not prevent them from, at the same time, considering themselves as parts of the urban civilization of Central Asia. When the question of boundaries arose in 1924, it was this dimension of their identity that informed their position. Regarding this perspective, I agree with Bert Fragner that traditional identity patterns of Transoxania played an important role in the political development, which he calls "the nationalization of Uzbeks and Tajiks".[72]

There can be no doubt that there was a striking discrepancy between what the Tajik members of the Territorial Committee said in 1929 and their position only five years earlier. Commenting on this in 1929, and rejecting any reference to pressure of force, an Uzbek communist gave the following simple answer: "Both Khojibaev and the others considered themselves as Uzbeks at that time."[73] They key to the change is to be found in the political development in the Uzbek republic since delimitation. The process of Turkification fundamentally changed the Uzbek–Tajik boundary. For many who had been sufficiently comfortable as Uzbeks, Tajik identity, with its emphasis on Iranian language and culture, now became the most pronounced.

Turkification and separation

While Turkification had not been a major factor in 1924, I believe this was what produced Tajik nationalism in the following years. However, Turkification was not an entirely new phenomenon. As discussed earlier, an increasing emphasis on Turkness made itself felt from the revolution on. And although Masov, in my opinion, offers an untenable interpretation of the Uzbek–Tajik relation, he gives some evidence that Turkification forces were active prior to the delimitation as well.[74] Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that Turkification intensified markedly after the delimitation. That is what the Tajik nationalists themselves said in the second half of the 1920s,[75] and the Russian and European members of the Central Asian Bureau appear to have shared this opinion.[76] Also, the Central Asian Bureau noted in 1927 that Uzbek–Tajik relations had become more critical. It looks as if the Tajik nationalist voice began to make itself heard in 1926, and the Tajik-language newspaper *Avoz-i-Tajik* was a key forum for Tajik protest. In a number of articles, some of which were not printed because of their radical nationalist content, Tajik spokesmen began to voice the need for change.

At the center of all the Tajik protest in this period was language. While the Tajiks in 1924 had declared that no one had the right to force another language upon them, according to these protests, this was exactly what had happened. In a December 1926 article in *Avoz-i-Tajik* on the situation of Tajik schoolchildren in Bukhara, the complaint was made that even though many of the children did not understand Uzbek language, teaching was carried out in Uzbek only. Nor was the Uzbekification drive restricted to language. According to the same article, the children were forced to declare themselves to be

Uzbeks; the teacher would scare the children, saying that those who wished to call themselves Tajiks would be sent off to Dushanbe. The article concluded that "if not today then tomorrow the Tajiks of Bukhara will cry out and say: 'we are Tajiks and we must learn in that language'".[77] The same points were reiterated in a number of articles in *Avoz-i-Tajik* in 1926 and 1927.[78]

Again, we are here concerned with a kind of minority nationalism that defined itself in opposition to "Uzbek". As in the case of the Turkmen and Kazaks discussed earlier, this development must primarily be understood on the basis of the Soviet ideology of national equality and national minority rights. The Central Asians took this official ideology seriously, and it influenced their political orientation. The Tajiks compared themselves with other national groups and concluded that their group was the most disadvantaged. They found that in no other case was the discrepancy between ideology and reality as great as in the case of the Tajiks in the Uzbek republic. This is a recurrent point in Tajik complaints from this period. A typical article in *Avoz-i-Tajik* asked: "Why is a different standard applied to the Tajiks of Uzbekistan than to the other nationalities such as Russians, Armenians and so on? Only Tajiks are forced in this way."[79]

How are we to understand the increased Turkification in the post-delimitation period? While similar tendencies had existed earlier, Turkification was then kept in check by other tendencies, which made the Uzbek/Turkic–Tajik division less relevant. In an earlier chapter, I maintained that the NEP in Central Asia had strengthened the urban–rural boundaries, and that conflicts had developed along these lines. Moreover, during the national delimitation, similar boundaries played an important role. The delimitation was not only a political process in which geographical borders were redrawn. It was also a process of identification. "Uzbek" was perhaps the least clearly defined identity before the Soviet period, and in the delimitation process it continued to be the most ambiguous one. It seems possible to distinguish between three main dimensions of Uzbek. The first is the notion of "Uzbek" as settled as opposed to nomad, which played an important role in distinguishing Uzbeks from Kazaks, Turkmen and Kyrgyz. The second dimension, which is related to the first one, is "Uzbek" as urban as opposed to rural. The third dimension is "Uzbek" as Turkic as opposed to Iranian. During the delimitation it was the first and second dimensions that predominated. The socioeconomic aspects of the delimitation were so strong that they outweighed the Turkic dimension of "Uzbek". For the later Tajik nationalists, the "Uzbek" to which they

felt most affinity, was that which emphasized the continuity of the sedentary, urban civilization of Central Asia.

Nevertheless, following the delimitation, the Tajik perspective changed. With the new republican boundaries established, the socio-economic dimensions of "Uzbek" no longer had the same relevance. Instead, focus shifted to the Turkic dimension, with the result that "Turkic–Iranian" now became the major distinction. As a result, people who only a few years earlier seemingly preferred to live within an Uzbek republic rather than join with their "co-ethnics in the mountains", now represented the opposite position. Now, the idea of a community of the carriers of an Iranian culture and language grew increasingly important. This community included urban Tajiks and mountain Tajiks alike.

If we stick to Rogers Brubaker's terminology, the Uzbek republic behaved as a nationalizing state in the eyes of the Tajiks, and this led to the development of another minority nationalism in the Soviet Central Asian context. Tajik nationalism was a reaction to a certain political situation and not a natural or historically inevitable struggle for a Tajik political community. If it were not for the nationalizing behavior of the Uzbek republic, a Tajik nationalism might very well not have developed at all, and those who appeared as Tajik nationalists in the late 1920s might have continued to feel comfortable within an Uzbek framework, as they had done until then. The nationalizing activity must be seen as a consequence of the political reconfiguration accomplished by the Soviet regime. With ethnicity thoroughly institutionalized, it was logical that ethnicity became an important dimension in the political life of the republics. On the other hand, Turkification was also the continuation of a development that predated the Soviet regime.[80]

It is in accordance with this development that Uzbek nationalists, in discussing the dialect base of Uzbek literary language, insisted on rural rather than urban dialects. Now, Turkic–Iranian had become a predominant distinction, and the rural dialects were seen as more pure forms of Turkic than the urban dialects, which had been subject to considerable Iranian influence. Such questions are of course always political ones. But in this situation, Uzbek–Tajik tension was not the only dimension that would influence the choice. In the end, it was the central urban group of dialects that was selected. As William Fierman has pointed out, this was in harmony with the importance of urbanism in the Soviet project, and it was the dialect that Russian scholars knew best.[81]

Others have interpreted the matter differently. Schoeberlein, for example, has interpreted Tajik mobilization against the Uzbek republic primarily as an expression of personal antagonism. From this perspective, what I call Tajik nationalism is an instrument used by, for example, Mukhitdinov, in his struggle against Fayzullah Khojaev, who became the leading figure in the Uzbek republic.[82] Moreover, it is a fact that many of those who identified as Tajiks both remained and had careers within the framework of the Uzbek republic. Nevertheless, the evidence seems to suggest that Tajik minority nationalism was too widespread a phenomenon to be explained exclusively from the perspective of personal antagonism and individual political ambitions. Moreover, also Soviet authorities interpreted the Tajik mood in terms of nationalism.[83]

In 1929, the CEC of the USSR decided that the Tajik ASSR would be separated from the Uzbek republic and organized as a separate Union republic (SSR). Was there any connection between this decision and the growing Tajik nationalism of the late 1920s? Was the separation a response to Tajik nationalist demands? On this point, too, the Soviet view was characterized by teleology and by the denial of any conflict within the harmonious Soviet family. A Tajik union republic had been the goal from the outset, and by 1929, the economic, political, and cultural situation allowed for its realization. Western scholars, for their part, focused on other aspects. Some have pointed to the practice, as far as I know never expressly pronounced, according to which only Union republics could have international borders.[84] The evidence that I have does not allow for more than a tentative answer as to separation of the Tajik republic from the Uzbek SSR. The decision appears to have been influenced by both developments in Tajik–Uzbek relations as well as the situation in Afghanistan. The discussions of 1929 indicate that there was considerable sensitivity in the Central Soviet leadership in regards to Uzbek–Tajik relations. Uzbek–Tajik tension was seen as a problem that had to be resolved.[85] At the same time, it is evident that the Soviet leadership saw the events in Afghanistan as a threat to Soviet power in the region. Reports analyzing the attitudes of various segments of the population in Uzbekistan and in the Tajik ASSR conclude that the situation for Soviet power was precarious. Although this applied to both the Uzbek SSR and the Tajik ASSR, the situation was regarded as particularly grave in the Tajik case. There was an expressed fear that considerable parts of the Tajik population might support Bache Sakov's forces against the Soviet Union.[86] The anti-Soviet potential was perceived as being both culturally and economically motiv-

ated. On the one hand, the reports state that there was much sympathy among Tajiks for the Afghan reaction to the great cultural transformation of the 1920s. In addition, unemployment and economic problems were also contributing to undermining the authority of Soviet power in the Tajik republic.

It is highly probable that the Soviet leadership felt that it would be strategically expedient to make some concessions to the discontented Tajik communists and nationalists. Furthermore, separating the Tajik republic from Uzbekistan and turning it into a Union republic would certainly be a small price to pay. However, Tajik demands were not restricted to the separation of the Tajik ASSR from the Uzbek republic. As we have seen, they presented a list of significant territorial demands. No doubt, these demands would be much more problematic to satisfy; concessions to the Tajik republic would cause dissatisfaction on the Uzbek side. The transfer of the Khojent region from Uzbekistan to Tajikistan was a compromise between these conflicting interests.

According to the traditional Western image portrayal of the delimitation, it corresponded poorly to existing patterns of identity. In this chapter I have investigated the way in which the Central Asian communists perceived the national identities upon which the delimitation was based. I have found an element of continuity that has been underrepresented in Western scholarly literature on Central Asia. The national communities were conceptualized in a way that to a great extent reflected historical divisions. The historically important distinction between nomads and settled was essential in the distinction between Uzbeks, on the one side, and other Turkic-speaking groups on the other. Old realities were interpreted in a new way. The Bolshevik ideology of egalitarianism and national rights resulted in the development of minority nationalism. At the same time, however, with the territorial, administrative, and political institutionalization of nationality, the Soviet regime established entities that were perceived as "belonging to" particular population groups. Indeed, the discussions between Central Asian communists testify that this was largely how they understood the existence of national political entities. Even though, contrary to official Bolshevik ideology, logically, the Turkmen would have a special position in the Turkmen republic and so on. In this there was a potent contradiction.

This contradiction dramatically emerged in the Uzbek republic shortly after its establishment. While the settled–nomad distinction had been important during the delimitation, once the Uzbek republic was a reality, an alternative historical distinction became more

relevant: that between Turkic and Iranian. The idea of a community of the sedentary population of Transoxania was now increasingly replaced with a vision of a Turkic Uzbek community. People who had identified with "Uzbeks" now increasingly took the position of a discriminated Tajik national minority, and accused the Uzbek government of behaving like a nationalizing state, to the detriment of the Tajiks. From 1926 on, the level of Tajik dissatisfaction appears to have escalated significantly, and the separation of the Tajik ASSR from the Uzbek republic in 1929 must be understood in the light of intensifying Uzbek–Tajik hostility in the second half of the 1920s.

7

"We Have Rights Too!" – The Dynamics of Division

We have now seen how both continuity and change characterized the Central Asian communists' conceptualization and utilization of national identities. In the cases of "Turkmen", "Kazak" and "Uzbek", the increasing importance of national identities was not simply a consequence of the delimitation. Well before the new national republics were established, a nationalization of political discourse was already taking place that prefigured the institution of new political entities. The delimitation contributed to this phenomenon, but did not create it. On the other hand, the case of the Tajik identity was different. When "Tajik" took on increasing importance in Central Asian political life in the latter part of the 1920s, this was primarily the result of a policy that followed the national delimitation. In this chapter, I demonstrate that the national delimitation itself was a dynamic process. When the delimitation process first began, it appears to have triggered a dynamic, the final result of which was markedly different from how Soviet authorities had initially planned. It was this dynamic that led to the establishment of Kyrgyz and Karakalpak political entities in connection with the national delimitation in 1924.

This point of view is directly opposed to Soviet accounts of this process. Soviet scholarship reflected the regime's eagerness to represent itself as the competent implementor of certain scientific principles, and there was no room for accident or unintended consequences. When the political map of Central Asia after the delimitation came to look as it did, it was purported to be in accordance with the "grand plan" of the Soviet authorities, as well as with the predominant patterns of identity and the aspirations of the Central Asian population.

In this chapter, I will argue that the delimitation should not be considered an implementation of a "grand plan". On the other hand,

the idea that the entities that were established corresponded to the aspirations of Central Asians should not be rejected altogether. In the cases of the Karakalpak *oblast* and the Kyrgyz republic, claims by Central Asian communists in the name of the respective groups influenced the delimitation decisively. However, such claims are not to be understood as expressions of ancient dreams of independent nationhood. Rather, they resulted from the dynamic that the delimitation project itself sparked. When the establishment of political entities based on national affiliation appeared on the agenda, previously relatively unimportant differences assumed heightened political significance. This development led to national demands in the name of the Kyrgyz as well as of the Karakalpaks, and, ultimately, such demands influenced the 1920s redrawing of the Central Asian political map.

The three "main nationalities"

When the delimitation project was first introduced in early 1924, no mention was made of the Karakalpak or Kyrgyz (or Kara-Kirgiz in the contemporary terminology), or as already discussed, the Tajik. When the Orgburo of the Central Committee first formally raised the question of these groups in January 1924, its instructions were worded as follows:

> During his travels to Turkestan [Rudzutak is to] organize a conference of the responsible workers of Bukhara, Khorezm and (if possible) Turkestan in order to initiate a preliminary discussion on the possibilities for a political organization of Kirgiz [Kazak], Uzbek and Turkmen *oblasts* according to the national principle.[1]

This directive reflected central authorities' understanding of Central Asian identities, and it was on this basis that the Uzbek, Kazak and Turkmen had earlier been declared official languages of the Turkestan republic. Like their Tsarist predecessors, the Soviet authorities recognized the complexity of Central Asia's "ethnic terrain". Nevertheless, they obviously believed that three main national groups could be identified, and that the great majority of the population affiliated with one of these groups: Uzbek, Turkmen or Kazak. The idea of the "three main nationalities" is found in public as well as in private discourse in the period prior to and during the delimitation. In addition to these main groups, the Soviet authorities identified a number of smaller groups, such as the Kyrgyz (then called Kara-Kirgiz) and the Tajik. What was

the reason that only the three first-mentioned groups originally were to "have their own" political entity? As suggested earlier, it had little or nothing to do with theoretical considerations of what constituted a nation or the level of economic development of the population in question. At least, I have come across no such considerations. Rather, the perceived size of the group appears to have been the decisive criterion, and, from this perspective, Turkmen, Kazak and Uzbek appeared to be the most important groups.

As discussed, "Uzbek" was the most problematic of these group designations. It appears that the central Soviet authorities' view of the group was closely related to the way in which "Uzbek" appeared in the discourse of the Central Asian communists, as discussed in the previous chapter. On the one hand, "Uzbek" represented the "unmarked Turkic population of Central Asia", and on the other, the group represented the settled and the urban population groups of Transoxania. On this basis, a division of Central Asia into Turkmen, Uzbek and Kazak entities appeared meaningful. Soon, however, the perspective changed, and other identities were included in the delimitation project. This led to the establishment of a Kyrgyz and a Karakalpak entity as well. What was the reason for this? Was it the result of a desire on the part of the central Soviet authorities to "foster the smallest possible identities"?[2] Or was this change the result of national demands made in the name of other groups who initially had been excluded from the project?

The Kyrgyz republic

Although no mention had been made of it in the first delimitation plan in early 1924, on October 14, 1924, the Kara-Kirgiz Autonomous *Oblast* (AO) was established. In May 1925, the name of the *oblast* was changed to the Kyrgyz AO. In February 1926, the Kyrgyz AO was renamed the Autonomous Republic (ASSR), before it was finally made into a Union republic (SSR) in December 1936.

There was a change in group designations in Soviet terminology at the time of the delimitation. Until 1925, "Kirgiz" was largely used with the same reference that "Kazak" has later had. Consequently, when the forerunner of today's Kazak republic was established as an autonomous republic in 1920, its name was the Kirgiz ASSR. In 1925, its name was changed to the Kazak ASSR, which brought official terminology more in line with the self-designation of the republic's population. At the same time, the designation Kara-Kirgiz was replaced with Kyrgyz,

and the name of the political entity changed accordingly. This confusing and fluctuating usage reflects the close relation between the two groups. Indeed, it might be discussed whether, in the context of Central Asia in the 1920s, it is justifiable to refer to (in pre-1925 terminology) "Kirgiz" and "Kara-Kirgiz" as two groups. As the designation suggests, to some extent "Kara-Kirgiz" had been seen as a sub-group of the larger group of "Kirgiz". They were "Kirgiz" with a qualification. Occasionally, the "other Kirgiz" were qualified as well, resulting in terms like "Kirgiz-Kazak" or "Kazak-Kirgiz" as opposed to the "Kara-Kirgiz".

What was it that distinguished the Kyrgyz from the Kazak? According to Alexandre Bennigsen, for whom group identity was primarily a question of objective features, the main distinguishing elements were slight dialectal differences and ways of life: "They [the Kyrgyz] were seasonal nomads or semi-sedentary mountaineers, as distinct from the pure nomads of the Kazakh steppe."[3] In accordance with the general teleological approach, Soviet scholarship made the distinction more fundamental and searched for the historical roots of the (in post-1925 terminology) Kazak and Kyrgyz nations respectively. From the perspective of Soviet scholarship, the Kyrgyz were a people possessing ancient roots, while a number of theories existed as to the character of these roots. Were the Kyrgyz the native inhabitants of the areas they now occupied, or was the Kyrgyz "ethnogenesis" the result of immigration from the areas between the rivers of Enisei and Irtysh?[4] Controversies notwithstanding, Soviet accounts universally agreed that the Kyrgyz, although far from united throughout history, represented a latent unity, and in that sense were destined to become a nation with its own political entity. Like modern Western approaches to nation formation, Soviet accounts also acknowledged that economic change, industrialization, education, and so on, were important elements for development of national identity and group formation. However, in the Soviet approach, these historical processes did not create the nation. Rather, they helped to accelerate history, the ultimate destination of which was in this sense predestined. They turned latent groups into real ones.[5]

However, more interesting than discussions of "ethnogenesis" is the question of what role this distinction played in social, political, and other relations. When Soviet accounts argue that "the Kyrgyz nation" was strengthened in the period following incorporation into the Russian Empire, they do so from an objectivist perspective. And when students in post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan are taught that "the Kyrgyz had

dreamt of separate statehood since antiquity",[6] this remains entirely undocumented. There is not much evidence that a Kyrgyz consciousness was becoming more important in the period before the October Revolution or the delimitation, and there was no sign that the establishment of a Kyrgyz political entity was imminent. The Alash Orda movement, typically described as a Kazak nationalist movement, did not correspond to the Kazak–Kyrgyz distinction. The Alash also recruited among what later developed into a Kyrgyz intelligentsia. Moreover, the behavior of the Central Asian communists in the period before the delimitation suggests that the Kyrgyz identity did not represent a critical dimension. The Kazak–Kyrgyz relation was, in important respects, similar to that between Uzbeks and Tajiks. Like the later Tajik nationalists who had previously felt comfortable within an Uzbek framework, people who in 1924 made passionate demands in the name of the Kyrgyz nation only one year earlier appear to have considered themselves part of a Kazak community.

I earlier argued that, in the first half of the 1920s, Turkmen and Kazak minority nationalism developed. Both primarily defined themselves in opposition to "Uzbek", and socioeconomic divisions were the most important ones. In this connection, therefore, the Uzbek–Tajik (here meaning Turkic–Iranian) division was not very relevant, and, for the same reason, neither was the Kazak–Kyrgyz division. As a result, the Kazak minority nationalism discussed earlier was represented by people who soon were to make political demands in the name of the Kyrgyz nation and who actively distanced themselves from Kazaks. Khojanov appears to have been fully justified when remarking in 1924 that "a few years ago we did not even distinguish between Kirgiz [Kazaks] and the Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz]".[7] However, this does not mean that boundaries were not recognized, or that those involved were not identified by others as Kyrgyz, as opposed to Kazak, or that they did not identify as Kyrgyz themselves. It means that in that particular context this distinction was not among those most relevant. There was no separate Kyrgyz nationalism in the period prior to the delimitation, as the boundaries that this identity expressed had little relevance for the division that was then the most important in Central Asian society, that between the two main socioeconomic formations. As we have seen earlier, national demands were made in the name of Kazaks and Turkmen before the delimitation process began. To my knowledge, no such demands arose in the name of the Kyrgyz.

Instead, when such demands appeared in 1924, it seems they were a direct result of the delimitation itself. In accordance with the

instructions given by the Central Committee, Rudzutak raised the delimitation question for discussion in Central Asia in the second half of February 1924. In a meeting with representatives of both the Bukharan and Turkestan republics, Rakhimbaev presented the idea of political reorganization according to nationality. In following with the initial ideas, Rakhimbaev's project was based on the notion of the three main nationalities. There was to be established an Uzbek and a Turkmen republic, while the Kazak population of Turkestan would be incorporated into the existing Kazak ASSR. This project met with immediate criticism from the Kyrgyz representatives in the involved institutions. They rebuked Rakhimbaev for having omitted the Kyrgyz from "his project", and maintained that this was typical of the attitude towards the Kyrgyz population in general:

> The interests of the Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz] are getting less attention than those of other peoples ... The Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz] are being disregarded by the Turkestan government and by the Turkestan CEC ... The Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz] differ linguistically and otherwise from the Kirgiz [Kazak], and the Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz] question must be raised independently from the Kazak-Kirgiz [Kazak], independent of whether or not the Jetisui *oblast* will be joined with the Kirgiz [Kazak] republic ... The Ferghana Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz] have close economic bonds and other relations to the Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz] of Semirechie. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to establish a separate entity for the Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz] ... No matter what solutions are chosen, whether or not it is to be joined with the Kirgiz [Kazak] republic, remain in some kind of federation, or join with Moscow [become a part of the RSFSR], it is necessary to establish an autonomous Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz] republic ... There are no schools, no textbooks, and the cultural situation of the people is ignored, even though the language differs from that of the Kirgiz [Kazak]. As a result, Kirgiz [Kazak] textbooks are not appropriate for us. We must have our own.[8]

This reaction raises two important questions: why did Kyrgyz national demands appear now, and to what extent did they have an influence on the course of events? It appears that the political reorganization of the region created a fear among some groups of being marginalized as minorities. Political resources were increasingly connected to national affiliation, and it was chiefly this that transformed relatively insignificant divisions into important ones. It is primarily in this perspective

that the sudden appearance of Kyrgyz national demands must be understood. At any rate, they cannot be considered a manifestation of ancient dreams of independent statehood. This interpretation is not too different from what supporters of the divide and rule theory have argued. However, I do not find the divide and rule paradigm adequate for the understanding of the national delimitation as a whole. Moreover, there is a quite fundamental difference between the minority nationalisms discussed earlier and the development of Kyrgyz national demands. The first ones emerged as a reaction to what was experienced as "nationalizing policies". The Kyrgyz national demands, on the other hand, should be understood not primarily in terms of (perceived) group relations but as an example of the utilization of identities that were, at the time, viewed as politically expedient. If it had not been for the national delimitation, therefore, Kazak–Kyrgyz relations might have developed very differently. Indeed, the Kazak–Kyrgyz community that, according to Bennigsen, had been developing since the late nineteenth century might have developed further.

However, when this did not happen, it was not primarily because "the Soviet authorities favored a consolidation not of three but of six socialist nations", as Bennigsen argued.[9] It was the result of Soviet policies, but hardly intentional. Rather, it grew from the dynamism that this reorganization triggered. When a Kyrgyz political entity was established, it was as a result of the demands that emerged.

With the emphasis on the "three main nationalities", the Soviet authorities were aware of the possibility that political demands might be made by other groups. In a letter to the Central Committee including a number of questions concerning the projected delimitation, the leader of the Central Asian Bureau asked: "How are we to react if the other nationalities (Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz] and Tajiks) demand that similar autonomous entities be established for them?"[10] This query probably reflected the fact that the Central Asian Bureau had a more developed understanding of Central Asian society than the Central Committee. That such demands might appear was obviously seen as a potential problem that had to be solved, and not as a desired result of an artful plan. As in the case of the Kyrgyz, such demands arose, and the way in which they were dealt with can perhaps throw some light on relations between different levels in the Soviet party and state hierarchy. Having received the different demands and considered them quite independently, the head of the Central Asian Bureau reported to the Central Committee and recommended a political solution. It appears that it was the rule rather than the exception that the Central

Committee endorsed such recommendations. In the Kyrgyz case, Karklin maintained that, on the basis of the direction the delimitation discussion among Central Asian communists had taken, he believed it would be necessary to establish a separate Kyrgyz political entity.[11] On May 11, 1924, the Central Asian Bureau passed a resolution saying that a Kyrgyz *oblast* was to be established within one of the other republics.[12] It appears that the Central Committee immediately accepted this proposition from the Central Asian Bureau.

At least to some extent, this suggests a different direction of influence than the commonly held opinion that the national delimitation was, in every detail, conducted from Moscow. The Kyrgyz example demonstrates that there was some influence from the opposite direction too, and that this influence had important consequences for the new political make-up of Central Asia. However, this point must not be exaggerated, as the influence allowed was highly limited, and kept within strict boundaries set by the central Soviet authorities. Moreover, as pointed out, the impulse upon which this kind of local influence was based had essentially been a product of Soviet policies, even though not necessarily intentional.

The Karakalpak Autonomous *Oblast*

Another group identity not originally part of the delimitation plan, but later included, was the Karakalpak. While no mention had been made of such an entity when the delimitation project was first introduced in the beginning of 1924, later that year a Karakalpak Autonomous *Oblast* was created and made a part of the Kazak republic.[13]

In Soviet historiography, the establishment of a Karakalpak political entity is presented in the same context of historical necessity, ancient and primordial identity, and "age-old dreams of national statehood". This too was the result of the "grand plan" of the Soviet regime, based on a strictly scientific approach. In *Istoriia Karakalpakskoi ASSR*, published in 1974, the establishment of the Karakalpak AO is presented in the following way: "It was only with the establishment of Soviet power ... that the Karakalpak achieved their national statehood. Thus the centuries old dream of the unification of Karakalpak land became reality."[14] Such is the essence in all Soviet accounts on the establishment of the Karakalpak political entity. Here too, however, the accounts fail to provide evidence for the interpretation. In this approach, the question of Karakalpak identity is conceived of primarily in objective terms. In a work published in 1971 on "Karakalpak history from

ancient times to the present", the authors conceive of Karakalpak history through a perspective of race. The book includes a long list of groups that, through their intermingling, are supposed to have contributed to the "ethnogenesis" of the Karakalpak nation or people. According to the authors, this process lasted from approximately 700 BC until the sixteenth century when the Karakalpak nationality was fully consolidated and distinguished from the other nationalities that had been formed in the Desht-i-Kipchak steppe.[15]

In this racial Karakalpak history, little is said about the subjective dimension of Karakalpak identity. Hardly any evidence is provided that Karakalpak identity played a significant role in social or political relations. It is a history of race, and of territory. It is Karakalpak history in the sense that it is concerned with events having taken place in the territories that after the national delimitation became the Karakalpak *oblast*.[16] The absence of references to historic occasions in which a Karakalpak community played an important role must mean that there are none to be found, or, at least, that the authors are not aware of any. In its efforts to demonstrate the historical character of the nationalities of Central Asia, Soviet scholarship did not miss any opportunity to emphasize their historical roots. Not only does the historiography of the Karakalpaks fail to give any credible evidence of a "centuries old dream" of Karakalpak unification, it also reveals that the significance of the Karakalpak identity remained very limited until the time of the national delimitation. It was on the basis of this lack of significance that Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay, in 1961, concluded that the concept of a Karakalpak nation was "artificial".[17] According to their article, there was little reason to distinguish Karakalpaks from Uzbeks and Kazaks:

> Nothing except a special dialect distinguishes them [the Karakalpak] from their Uzbek cousins or Kazakh brothers – neither their historical traditions, which are the same as those of the Kypchaks and the Nogays, nor their social and cultural traditions, which are midway between those of the Kazakhs and the Uzbeks.[18]

On this basis, it seems almost incomprehensible that a Karakalpak political entity was established. For some Western scholars, the establishment of a Karakalpak *oblast* has served as evidence of how poorly the delimitation corresponded to ethnic realities, or as an indication of how the Soviet authorities strove to foster the smallest possible identities.[19] Again, however, as in the Kyrgyz case, I believe that the answer

is found in the dynamism that the delimitation process itself unleashed.

Early in 1924, the Khorezm CP decided to establish a Kazak-Karakalpak *oblast* within Khorezm. However, this was not as a result of pressure from Karakalpaks. While I earlier argued that the establishment of Turkmen entities in Bukhara and Khorezm must be seen in the context of emerging Turkmen minority nationalism, there were, at this time, no national demands in the name of Karakalpaks. The "nationalization of discourse" discussed earlier does not seem to have considerably influenced the usage and significance of "Karakalpak" in the period prior to the delimitation. When a Kazak-Karakalpak entity was established in Khorezm in early 1924, it was rather because this kind of organization was extended to other major groups as well. Moreover, as discussed earlier, this was largely the work of the Central Asian Bureau. Later in 1924, the Khorezm CP made plans for a further organization of the Khorezm republic according to nationality. Now, however, the main intention was to satisfy the central Soviet authorities and not to accommodate minorities inside the republic.

At the time the delimitation project was introduced, representatives of the central Soviet authorities discussed the plan with local party organizations in Central Asia. Initially, all three republican parties (Turkestan, Bukhara and Khorezm) had approved of it. After a while, however, the Khorezm CP retracted this decision, and declared that the Khorezm republic must be left intact outside the delimitation and that Amu-Darya *oblast* was to be joined with it.[20] In Seymour Becker's opinion, this was not a very realistic approach on the part of the Khorezm communists.[21] Knowing what happened later, that seems to be a reasonable observation. However, the Khorezm communists did not know in 1924 what Becker knew about the Soviet Union in the 1960s, and their behavior provides interesting information as to how they perceived of the situation at the time. When the Khorezm CP informed the Central Asian Bureau that they no longer supported the delimitation or the dissolution of the Khorezm republic, they were eager to stress the reorganization they intended to accomplish. In addition to a Turkmen and a Karakalpak *oblast*, they wanted to create an Uzbek *oblast*. Of course, the Khorezm CP knew very well that the central Soviet authorities would disapprove of their rejection of the delimitation project. However, it appears they had a genuine hope that this emulation of the delimitation project within the Khorezm republic might soften the Soviet authorities' reaction. This suggests, therefore, that in the eyes of the Khorezm communists, the establish-

ment of national political entities was a goal in itself for the Soviet authorities.

Moreover, for the Khorezm communists, the Karakalpak group identity was useful in their claim that the Amu-Darya *oblast* of Turkestan should be joined with Khorezm. As this *oblast* to a great extent was populated by people considered to be Karakalpaks, joining Amu-Darya with Khorezm might be considered an act of national unification, which was what the delimitation was about. The Khorezm communists used this idea of an enlarged Karakalpak *oblast* tactically, and it was certainly not the result of Karakalpak nationalist struggle.

For the Soviet authorities, however, it was unacceptable that the Khorezm republic should be left outside the delimitation project, irrespective of how it was organized internally. When the Khorezm CP passed a resolution on July 26 fully supporting the delimitation, this was clearly the result of external pressure from Soviet authorities. The Khorezm CP now declared that it would no longer be meaningful to leave Khorezm intact. Instead, the areas populated by Turkmen and Uzbeks, respectively, were to become part of the embryonic republics. The Karakalpak population was to be organized into a separate Autonomous *Oblast*.[22] From now on, it was clear to all that the Khorezm republic would be dissolved. Furthermore, while there are few signs of politicization of the Karakalpak identity prior to this, the acknowledgement that Khorezm was to be dissolved appears to have had immediate impact. In the period between Khorezm's rejection of the delimitation and the about-face in late July, many Karakalpaks, communists and non-communists alike, supported the incorporation of Amu-Darya into Khorezm, even though they were not necessarily very enthusiastic about it. This development appears to be in full accordance with the idea that the promotion of a Karakalpak *oblast* was not the result of any internal Karakalpak pressure. However, when it became evident to everyone that Khorezm, too, would be split up, something happened. The Central Asian Bureau now received appeals that stressed the rights of the Karakalpak nation and emphasized the necessity of including the Karakalpak identity in the delimitation project and of establishing an autonomous entity for the Karakalpaks.

The leading figure among those whom we might call the Karakalpak national communists was A. Dosnazarov from Amu-Darya, secretary of the Orgburo of the RCP in 1924 and 1925. Dosnazarov and his like-minded Karakalpaks now began to address the Central Asian Bureau on the Karakalpak question, and this was their main point:

> It is absolutely necessary to establish an autonomous *oblast* for the Karakalpaks in connection with the delimitation. We have been severely oppressed in the Turkestan republic and we want something else for the future.[23]

Like other groups,[24] the Karakalpaks also "played the backward card", something which underscores the seriousness with which the Central Asian communists took the Bolshevik ideology of support for the "underdog". As the following passage from a speech by a Karakalpak representative at the plenary meeting of the second session of the All-Russian CEC in October 1924 demonstrates, the idea of backwardness was essential in the Karakalpak demands:

> In the six years of Soviet regime the Karakalpaks have had no possibility, no place in which to express their wishes etc. The Karakalpaks have been the most backward nation. Only now, at this session can they present their position. The Karakalpaks, like other peoples, wish to establish their own republic, and demand that attention is paid to this people as it is been done in relation to other peoples, such as Tatars, Bashkirs, Kirgiz [Kazak] etc.[25]

Equally interesting evidence of how Central Asians perceived of the establishment of national units and of the Soviet state as a whole is found in the following statement made by Dosnazarov in the Territorial Committee:

> There has been very little discussion of the Karakalpaks. And if I were not present here, no Karakalpak worker would be here, and there would be no question of a Karakalpak *oblast* at all. We are willing to go as far as to appeal to the Comintern. We are certain that we will find support for our points of view, and that we will have our autonomy.[26]

Dosnazarov obviously took the declared principles and slogans of Soviet nationalities policy very seriously, and appears to have believed that they were so binding on Soviet authorities that it might be useful to appeal to an external institution such as the Comintern.

The Central Asian Bureau responded to the Karakalpak demands by establishing a commission for discussion of the future organization of the Karakalpak regions of Amu-Darya and of the Khorezm republic.[27] Subsequently, Karakalpak representatives were introduced into the Ter-

ritorial Commission. Later, and on the basis of the discussions in the Territorial Commission, Karklin reported to Stalin that he believed it "would be necessary to separate the Karakalpak into an autonomous *oblast* ... and to make it a part of one of the republics".[28] As with the Kyrgyz case, here we also have an example of limited influence from below in the Soviet system. When the Karakalpak identity was included in the delimitation project, it was the result of initiatives introduced by Central Asians. This is also a good illustration of the way in which decisions in Moscow largely echoed what had already been decided rather independently in the Central Asian Bureau. The new political maps of Central Asia were not drawn up in dictates by "Moscow" or Stalin personally. At the same time, the establishment of the Karakalpak AO clearly demonstrates that there was an aspect of arbitrariness in the national delimitation. The Karakalpak case suggests that Soviet authorities were at least as concerned with the interrelations between the local communists as with the realities of group identification in the region. While I argue that the result of the influence from below in general led to a considerable degree of continuity, that was not the case with the Karakalpak *oblast*. And it is not accidental that of the entities established in the delimitation, only the Karakalpak *oblast* did not later become a Union republic. From this perspective one might agree with Alexandre Bennigsen, who maintained that the idea of a Karakalpak nation remained an artificial concept.[29] As for the Karakalpak *oblast*, it was not the case that historical and social realities were reinterpreted and reformulated through the idea of the nation and the national community.

The Karakalpak case is similar to that of the Kyrgyz. As opposed to the Turkmen case, there appears to have been no development of a Karakalpak nationalist sentiment or discourse in the period prior to the delimitation process. Instead, it was the delimitation project itself that appears to have triggered Karakalpak nationalist demands. The initial introduction of a Karakalpak entity in Khorezm had established a framework that later proved useful. When, in late July 1924, it was obvious that the Khorezm republic would be divided, it was clear that much of its territory and population would be incorporated into the Turkmen and Uzbek republics, respectively. For the areas and population recognized as Karakalpak, the situation was different. There was no other Karakalpak entity in the making in which they could be included, and Central Asians who identified as Karakalpak found that the Karakalpak framework might be politically expedient. According to Alexander Motyl, in an environment in which nationality appeared an

increasingly important political category, it was rational to make nationality the currency of one's political investments.[30] This was all the more so in light of the fact that the Bolshevik rhetoric of autonomy and self-determination was, to a considerable extent, taken seriously. In accordance with this rhetoric, political demands were introduced on behalf of the Karakalpak nation, and these demands were allowed to influence the political reorganization of Central Asia.

The national delimitation was a more complex phenomenon than Western scholarship has usually recognized. As has been mentioned earlier, Alexandre Bennigsen once argued that, by the early twentieth century, three communities were crystallizing in Central Asia: the Kazak-Kyrgyz community, the Turkmen community and the Uzbek-Tajik community. Bennigsen argued that a national political division of Central Asia ought to have been based upon these three main constellations. Indeed, initially, the delimitation project largely corresponded to the arrangement that Bennigsen suggested, with an emphasis on Uzbeks, Turkmen, and Kazaks.

When the ultimate result diverged so much from the original plan, it was not because the Soviet authorities preferred six nations to three, or wished to foster the fewest possible identities. Instead, it was due to the mobilization of various groups, such as Kyrgyz and Karakalpak. The division of Central Asia assumed its own dynamic, with less important divisions becoming accentuated and politicized. To the extent that this should be called "nationalism", it was of a different kind than the Turkmen and Kazak minority nationalisms. The latter were produced by historical and contemporary experience of social, political, and economic realities, and not primarily by the national delimitation. They were, to some extent, instances of what Lenin had called "defensive nationalism". The mobilization of the Kyrgyz and Karakalpak group identities, meanwhile, occurred only with the reorganization of the region. In a situation where national identities were perceived as becoming increasingly important in politics, there was good reason to become a nationalist on behalf of this or that group.

Moreover, national demands were not ineffective. When the Kyrgyz and Karakalpak identities were included in the delimitation process, it was chiefly a result of this national mobilization. In this respect, local agency had decisive influence on the new map of Central Asia. However, not in all cases did local demands lead to political consequences. As seen in the previous chapter, Uigur communists also insisted that the Uigur be considered a separate nationality, and that a separate

Uigur entity be established. Nevertheless, the Uigur identity remained excluded from the delimitation. In other words, local influence was only allowed if the demands that were raised corresponded to the central Soviet authorities' vision for the delimitation. Indeed, a variety of factors were taken into account when the new political map of Central Asia was drawn. This is the subject of the following chapter.

8
Drawing Borders

According to the Soviet authorities, the main goal of the national delimitation was the establishment of (more) ethnically homogeneous political entities. However, nationality is a problematic category, and in earlier chapters, I have tried to demonstrate the way in which Central Asian communists themselves perceived nationality and national boundaries in Central Asia. However, that Central Asian communists perceived group boundaries in a particular way does not, of course, imply that their views impacted the formation of political borders in the delimitation. Therefore, I will now focus on the process of border making in greater detail, investigating the main question: when the issue of which republics and *oblasts* were to be established was settled, according to which criteria were the borders between the various entities drawn?

If we take the pronounced ideals of creating nationally homogeneous entities seriously, we must ask how nationality was defined for the purposes of the delimitation. However, central Soviet authorities made little attempt to problematize nationality. It is, therefore, at least as interesting to discuss how nationality was balanced against other criteria, like, for example, economic and practical considerations. The answers are directly linked to the main topics of this study. First, an analysis of the border-making process provides an excellent basis for a discussion of central Soviet authorities' intentions for the delimitation. Second, in the context of border creation, one may discuss the relation between central Soviet authorities and local political actors. To what degree was local influence a factor in border creation? The answers must influence our understanding of the Soviet regime in the NEP era. Did the border-making process reflect a centralized and revolutionary power totally unsusceptible to local voices and opposed to any kind of

compromise? Or was border creation in Central Asia the work a regime oriented towards consensus, cooperation and compromise?

Francine Hirsch has argued that by 1924, Soviet border making was based on three main principles: national-ethnographic, economic, and finally the principle of administrative order.[1] The national-ethnographic principle implied correspondence between (perceived) national-ethnographic lines and political borders. Economic arguments focused either on the necessity of preserving economic formations that crossed national-ethnographic lines, or on the economic needs of the entities in the making. The principle of "administrative order", however, was, if not explicitly, based on all-union concerns.

Hirsch argues that "in practice the 'principle of administrative order' became shorthand for political and other considerations, which the regime did not always want to make explicit".[2] According to Hirsch, this vague principle was critical in the establishment of Central Asian borders. It was often used, she continues, in situations in which other evidence was inconclusive, and it legitimized the practice of disregarding national and economic claims that conflicted with all-union interests. Hirsch's distinction between these three principles seems meaningful. The principle of "administrative order" should be considered a collective category for the cases in which national-ethnographic and economic aspects were ignored. In this chapter, I will explore how these different factors came into play during the delimitation. Moreover, it is necessary to analyze more carefully what kind of decisions the collective category of "administrative order" involved. Was it used to render administration of the new entities as simple and rational as possible by sacrificing the principle of national-ethnographic unity? This was generally the officially provided rationale for breaking with the ideal of national-ethnographic unity. Was the Soviet regime sincere in its efforts at establishing ethnically homogeneous entities? Or was the principle of administrative order strategically invoked in order to break up (perceived) national formations and to leave potentially dissatisfied minorities outside "their" republics. Various scholars have put this last argument forth, while they have provided little or no evidence to substantiate their claims.[3] In this perspective, local agency is more or less disregarded altogether. Donald Carlisle, however, has suggested a somewhat greater role for local agency in the delimitation, suggesting a scantily documented alliance between "Moscow" and Bukharan or Uzbek communists.[4] I will discuss the different points of view by looking at some selected and important instances of border making.

Decisions, censuses and statistics

In order to discuss the principles of border making, one must first establish how decisions were made. Who drew the borders in the national delimitation of Central Asia? Concerning the Turkestan ASSR, the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (CEC) was, from a legal point of view, the key institution. By 1924, however, the political initiative had shifted from state organs to the Party's Central Committee. Moreover, Khorezm and Bukhara remained outside the Soviet state until the delimitation. As a result, neither the All-Russian CEC nor the Sovnarkom could legally pass resolutions concerning these areas. It was therefore logical that the All-Russian CEC played only a limited role in this process. When the All-Russian CEC passed the resolutions that abolished the Turkestan ASSR and decided that this territory was to be divided between the various new republics, there was no detailed discussion of borders. Representatives of the Kazak side tried to raise the border issue by pointing to various instances, in which they claimed to have been treated unfairly to the advantage of the Uzbeks. However, they were rebuked with the argument that it was not the task of the All-Russian CEC to go into detail about borders.[5] Instead, the All-Russian CEC largely rubber-stamped decisions that had been made elsewhere, namely in the Central Committee of the RCP.

This does not, however, imply that the Central Committee drew the borders. As discussed, beyond the resolutions themselves, little is known about how the Central Committee dealt with the delimitation, but it is commonly assumed that Stalin personally played a particularly important role.[6] Basing his position on published interviews with Molotov,[7] Paul Goble maintains that the Central Committee did not decide borders as a collective. As the majority of Soviet leaders displayed little interest in the national question, Stalin himself was left to draw the borders in a private and informal way. An advocate of the divide and rule theory, Goble maintains that Stalin deliberately drew the borders to create tension between the various Central Asian groups.[8] However, there is no support for this view in the cited interviews with Molotov.

The Central Committee was the key institution in the delimitation process in the sense that no border would be established without its approval. It had the authority "either to confirm or to overturn choices by those lower down the hierarchy".[9] I do not necessarily dispute the notion that Stalin personally played a special role. Nevertheless, it seems to me that postulating "Stalin drew the borders" is a

misleading simplification. Largely, the Central Committee approved of projects developed "lower down the hierarchy". When the decision had first been made to establish national republics in Central Asia, the Central Asian Bureau was given the task of preparing the practical implementation. The Central Asian Bureau made decisions about borders that represented the basis for the later resolutions of the Central Committee. The Central Asian Bureau usually based its resolutions on the decisions of the earlier mentioned Territorial Committee. Between the middle of August and early September 1924, the Territorial Committee held six sessions, in which they discussed and passed resolutions on borders. As a rule, the Central Committee confirmed the decisions of the Central Asian Bureau, which were in most instances identical with those of the Territorial Committee. Only in a few, but obviously important, cases did the Central Asian Bureau change the decisions of the Territorial Committee, and it was equally rare that the Central Committee ignored the decisions of the Central Asian Bureau. For that reason, a discussion of border making must primarily be based on lower rather than upper institutional levels. In order to discover the main principles in border making, one should consider the work of the Territorial Committee and the Central Asian Bureau. On the other hand, by examining the few instances in which central authorities intervened and diverged from these general principles, one finds a useful basis for discussion of central authorities' goals for the delimitation.

At a plenary session of the Central Committee of the CPT in March 1924, Ulmazbaev, representing the Uzbek side, maintained that "places where Uzbeks live must go to Uzbekistan", and that the same principle should apply to the other nationalities.[10] This sounds reasonable enough, but it represented a great oversimplification. Discussions in the previous chapter have established two important points: the significance of national identity in Central Asia was limited, and no "nationality statistics" were readily available. How then was the "national composition" of the population established for the purpose of the delimitation?

Establishing the "national composition" was a problem on two levels. First, there was a "qualitative dimension": it was necessary to establish the nationality of the population groups involved in the delimitation. Second, there was a "quantitative dimension": how large were the different groups? This represented a formidable challenge for the Territorial Committee, particularly in areas comprising a markedly mixed population. The chairman, Zelenskii, declared that it was

necessary to establish a basis that all could accept as a point of departure for the border discussions. What were the alternatives? There was the comprehensive census of Imperial Russia from 1897, and more limited censuses from 1911, 1917 and 1920. However, this material was restricted to Turkestan; for Bukhara and Khorezm, there was hardly any useful material whatsoever. Moreover, the committee failed to agree on a common statistical basis. First, the various censuses were not easily comparable as the use of group names and designations differed from census to census. The result was the struggle over "subgroups" that I discussed earlier. Second, the representatives of the various groups claimed that individual censuses, for various reasons, were inaccurate. The Kazak representative, Khojanov, for example, insisted that the count for Kazaks was too low in the 1917 census, as a great number of the Kazaks who had fled to neighboring countries in the aftermath of the 1916 rebellion had not yet returned. Consequently, he held that older figures should be used. Conversely, the Uzbek side claimed that pre-revolutionary figures were unsuited altogether, and that figures from 1917 and 1920 were to be preferred as the designations used in these two censuses corresponded to those in the delimitation scheme, with both "Tajik" and "Kyrgyz" (then Kara-Kirgiz) included. Consequently, the Territorial Committee voted (9 against 8) that no fixed statistical basis was to be used, and that they should discuss each case separately based on the material that the committee members found useful.[11] The result was "statistical anarchy" and a rather chaotic situation. Committee members picked the material that suited their project best.

The censuses were primarily used to settle quantitative questions, rather than qualitative ones. What was the approach when the nationality of a particular group was to be established? We earlier saw how nationality was discussed with reference to a "laundry list" of categories. Francine Hirsch has argued that the development of the Soviet Union as a multinational state of many territorial units was a long process in which specialists played an important role.[12] In the delimitation, this kind of expertise appears to have played no important role. Special committees were established following a failure of the Territorial Committees to make a decision in a few instances. However, in the great majority of cases, decisions were made simply based on discussions in the Territorial Committee, where the different sides presented their various arguments. In other words, the decisions were primarily *political* rather than founded on scientifically based determinations of group boundaries, as Soviet accounts claimed.

The Turkmen republic

The national subcommittees of the Territorial Committee presented projects in which they proposed borders for "their" respective republics. These were the basis for the discussions in the Territorial Committee. The Turkmen subcommittee appears to have had few major difficulties. There was a high degree of consensus as to what might be considered Turkmen territories, and the Turkmen project was the least controversial one. The Turkmen republic was to be made up first of the entire Turkmen *oblast* of the Turkestan ASSR, second of the Turkmen *oblast* of Bukhara and third of the Turkmen areas of Khorezm.[13] While the Uzbek subcommittee agreed that Charjou – being the center of the Bukharan Turkmen *oblast* – would become part of the Turkmen republic, the situation in Khorezm proved more controversial.

The intimate connection between national groups and socioeconomic realities became highly significant during the discussion of the Turkmen republic. The Turkmen subcommittee was deeply concerned with the fact that, from an ethnic point of view, there were no Turkmen towns. On this basis, the Turkmen maintained that the Turkmen republic would have to be given one of the cities of Khorezm, even though these had largely Uzbek populations. Preferably, the chosen city would be Tashauz, which represented a Turkmen–Uzbek border area, and was at the same time an important urban center for the Turkmen population of the region.[14] Similar arguments echoed throughout the delimitation process, reflecting the fact that urban populations often differed considerably from those inhabiting the surrounding areas. This was nothing unique to Central Asia. Exactly the same kind of problem appeared in the establishment of new national political borders in Europe in the wake of World War I: concerning the borders between Italy and Yugoslavia, for example, the town of Fiume (Rijeka) was claimed by both sides under the principle of self-determination. Italy focused on the urban population, which had an Italian majority, while the Yugoslav side focused on the nationality of the surrounding population.

While Italy and Yugoslavia argued on the basis of nationality and the principle of national self-determination, the Turkmen side did not restrict itself to such arguments regarding Tashauz. The Turkmen subcommittee also emphasized that cities were necessary for governing the future republic, and Aitakov argued: "Without Tashauz the Turkmen republic will have no center. It is the only place that can serve as a power center, and even though it is inhabited by more than 10,000 Uzbeks we ask that Tashauz be given to the Turkmen republic."[15]

The Central Asian Bureau and the Territorial Committee were sympathetic to these arguments. As maintained in an earlier chapter, one important aim of the delimitation was to accomplish a regional unification of a fragmented population. To achieve this, it would be necessary to provide the new entities with at least the minimum requirements for the development of a centralized and uniform administration. Moreover, cities played a crucial role in Soviet authorities' plans for social change. For the transformation of a nomadic culture into a modern socialist society, it was necessary to attract the population to an urban way of life. It was therefore quite logical that representatives of the Central Soviet authorities supported the Turkmen subcommittee in its claims to Tashauz.[16] The inclusion of Tashauz in the Turkmen republic was not primarily the result of arbitrary decisions made in Moscow offices. It was an element in plans for modernization. As one member of the Territorial Committee put it:

> The town of Tashauz is exclusively Uzbek. Some say that it for that reason cannot be included in Turkmeniia. Also, they say that the ancient hostility between Turkmen and Uzbeks makes such a solution inadvisable. However, in the process of attracting the Turkmen population to our side and to make them turn to peaceful work and a cultured way of life, they must have towns, and they have no town except for Tashauz. In order to establish a center for the Turkmen of present day Khorezm, it is necessary that Tashauz be given to the Turkmen. I am neither Uzbek nor Turkmen, but this is my point of view.[17]

As this statement indicates, the Turkmen claims to Tashauz met with some opposition. However, opposition was limited, and a closer look at the arguments may shed some light on the Uzbek project and on the limitations of Uzbek cohesion at the time. The way in which Uzbeks within and without the Territorial Committee reacted to the Turkmen demands corresponded to their regional background. It was primarily the Khorezm Uzbeks, such as Sultan-Kary, leader of the Khorezm CEC, who opposed including Tashauz in the Turkmen republic. Bukharan Uzbeks voiced no protest to the idea. This indicates that even though individuals of, for instance, Khorezm and Bukhara saw themselves and each other as "Uzbeks", there was also an important regional dimension in their identity and this influenced their positions. This also indicates that the center of gravity within the Uzbek communist movement was in Bukhara and Turkestan, and not in Khorezm.

Instead, the Uzbek subcommittee focused on the Farab district in the Charjou region on the Right Bank of the Amu-Darya. Both the Uzbek and the Turkmen subcommittees claimed Farab, and it is interesting to note that the Territorial Committee dealt with this issue in a way that was very different from the way in which the Tashauz question was settled. The arguments used by the two sides were different as well. Concerning Farab, there was no proposition that the inclusion of the village was necessary for the administrative, political or economic future of the respective republics. It was simply a question of the nationality of the population in the disputed area. Both subcommittees argued that their group represented the majority in the Farab district. In the end, Farab, along with the rest of the Charjou region, was incorporated into the Turkmen republic. Why?

As none of the subcommittees was willing to abandon its claims, the chairman of the Territorial Committee, Zelenskii, suggested that a commission be established to determine the nationality of the population of Farab. The Turkmen side responded that this was not necessary, as reliable figures already existed from a commission given the same task in connection with the establishment of the Turkmen *oblast* in Bukhara in 1923. Knowing that it would support their claim, the Turkmen side recommended that this material be used. Aware of its conclusions, Fayzullah Khojaev criticized the material for being inadequate and unreliable, and argued that this matter had to be addressed again. Based on these conflicting positions, the committee held a vote. The first alternative was to postpone the decision in order to make new investigations, and the second was to settle the matter based on the material from 1923. The latter alternative proved victorious, and a three-member committee was organized (Atabaev from the Turkmen side, Fayzullah Khojaev from the Uzbeks, and Karklin from the Central Asian Bureau) to find a solution. The result was that the Farab district was included in the Turkmen republic.[18]

What can these two examples of Soviet border making in Central Asia tell us? At the least, they demonstrate that border determination was based on different principles in different situations. In the Farab case, there took place a "national" delimitation in a literal sense: the final borders reflected understandings of national identity. Concerning Tashauz, on the other hand, arguments regarding economy and administration were decisive. It therefore appears that here nationality came second to other concerns. National affiliation seems to have had priority in situations where no other major issue was at stake. In Chapter 5, I argued that from the perspective of central Soviet authorities,

the national delimitation must be understood in terms of modernization. The establishment of the Turkmen borders supports that view. From the point of view of the Soviet authorities, the homogenizing potential of the nation could provide a counterweight to the fragmentation of Central Asian society. Even more fundamentally, however, the Soviet regime valued the modernity of the nation as well as its modernizing potential. The nation was a modern entity with cities and a centralized bureaucracy, administration, educational organization, and so on. It was these characteristics of the nation that the Soviet regime hoped to reproduce in Central Asia, and cities were required for the achievement of that goal. Consequently, the national composition of the city could not be given decisive weight. For the Soviet regime, an ethnically homogeneous entity had no value in itself, which makes the Soviet nation-building fundamentally different from a nationalist nation-building process. It was for this reason the national-ethnographic principle was abandoned in the decision regarding Tashauz, while it was the decisive factor for the republican affiliation of the Farab district, discussed at the same meetings.

Splitting up the Ferghana Valley

While establishing the borders between the Turkmen and the Uzbek republics proved relatively unproblematic, drawing the borders between the Uzbeks on the one side, and the Kazaks and Kyrgyz on the other, resulted in considerable controversy. The main reason for this was that the border areas between these groups were ethnographically more complex than those involved in the Turkmen–Uzbek demarcation. Moreover, the territory at stake represented more formidable economic resources than did the territory divided between the Turkmen and Uzbek republics. This was certainly the situation in the Ferghana Valley, where Uzbeks and Kyrgyz staked conflicting claims. The important cotton resources of this region made border making a matter of considerable economic significance. Most often, the claims concerned the towns of the valley, such as Kokand, Ferghana, Andijan, Osh and Namangan.

In these discussions, the approach of the Kyrgyz was similar to that of the Turkmen discussed above. Reflecting the coincidence of ethnographic boundaries and socioeconomic patterns, the Kyrgyz side recognized that there were no Kyrgyz towns from an ethnographic point of view. Like the Turkmen, they emphasized that a separate political entity without at least one or preferably several urban centers would

be meaningless. This was not a controversial position, and all parties accepted it in principle. The question was therefore which town or towns the Kyrgyz *oblast* should have. Like the Turkmen, the Kyrgyz focused on the double necessity of towns. First, towns represented the market for the non-urban Kyrgyz population, and second, an urban center was necessary for purposes of administration of the future Kyrgyz *oblast*.

When the Uzbek and Kyrgyz side presented their respective proposals, there were great disparities between them. The discussions had the character of negotiations between two parties, in which both parts made demands far beyond what they believed to be realistic. The Uzbek side recognized, in principle, the necessity of including an urban center with a predominantly non-Kyrgyz population in the Kyrgyz *oblast*. In practice, however, they were reluctant to assume the consequences. Considering each town separately and arguing that each had largely Uzbek populations, the main position of the Uzbek committee was that all towns ought to be included in the Uzbek republic. In particular, they rejected the Kyrgyz claims to Andijan.[19] While the Uzbek committee argued that the Ferghana towns were Uzbek, the Kyrgyz continued to maintain that several of the towns were important for the Kyrgyz people and for the future republic. In particular, the Kyrgyz focused on Andijan, and certainly much more than on the town of Osh. Nevertheless, when borders were drawn, Andijan, like most other Ferghana towns, was placed within the Uzbek republic, while Osh was included in the Kyrgyz *oblast*. That Andijan was particularly interesting to both sides was due to its economic importance. Along with Kokand, Andijan was the chief economic center of the Ferghana Valley, something that clearly left its mark on the debate.[20]

The two sides employed a wide range of arguments to promote their causes. Ethnographical, economic, socioeconomic, and geographical conditions were all drawn into the dispute. In general, the Uzbek side concentrated on ethnographical conditions, while the Kyrgyz side focused on economic and administrative needs. While accepting that republic borders could not always coincide with ethnographic ones, the Uzbeks at the same time emphasized that this must not be taken too far. Islamov of the Uzbek subcommittee stressed that the committee must not disregard the essence of the delimitation, the right to self-determination: "We must not forget the Uzbek majority. They have a right to self-determination as well. We must decide which groups that dominate the various regions, and offer them the right to

self-determination."[21] This kind of argument was used in situations where both parties agreed on the nationality of the population, which was most often the situation as far as towns were concerned.

Regarding the towns, the subject of debate was the nationality of the surrounding populations rather than that of the town-dwellers. Even though the Kyrgyz, in their claims to Andijan, focused on economic and administrative needs, it is clear that they viewed nationality as the most legitimate basis for their demands during the delimitation. While accepting that urban dwellers of Andijan were not Kyrgyz, they made considerable efforts to prove the Kyrgyzness of the population surrounding the town. This is very interesting, as it indicates how Central Asian communists perceived the delimitation. It appears that they took the idea of a *national* delimitation quite seriously. They saw themselves as participants in a process, which primarily involved establishing political entities based on the principle of national identity.

The urban–rural divide represented a permanent source of tension in the delimitation process in Central Asia in the 1920s. I earlier demonstrated that Central Asians perceived of national boundaries in a manner deeply influenced by socioeconomic differences. The arguments used in the border discussions were largely based on the same perceptions. During the Uzbek–Kyrgyz discussions, the Kyrgyz subcommittee emphasized socioeconomic factors: "We think that the Andijan *uezd* should go to us ... As it has become clear, the Uzbeks maintain that the Turki are related to them. In reality however, they are nomads, and must therefore be included into the Kyrgyz *oblast*."[22] How are we to interpret this? Was this simply a pragmatic approach, by which the different parties used all available weapons in order to acquire the greatest possible share in the delimitation? This is probably part of the truth but not the whole of it. In other situations where not as much was at stake, as in the case of a town, both parties accepted without further discussion that borders corresponded to socioeconomic differences.

Socioeconomic differences were evident when the two sides spoke of the needs of their respective future entities. Based on the largely nomadic or semi-nomadic character of the Kyrgyz population, the Kyrgyz side focused on the need for markets. Certainly, the delimitation took place in the NEP period, when "market" was a relevant economic concept.[23] The Uzbek side, however, primarily speaking in the name of settled agriculturalists, had a different focus. For them, the main economic interest regarded a resource of great scarcity in Central Asia, namely water. For the agriculturalists, access to irrigation was essential,

and the Uzbek side argued that it was sometimes necessary to abandon the national principle in order to preserve the unity of irrigation systems. One irrigation system should not be split up between different republics. However, the Uzbek committee argued, in some areas in Ferghana it represented a problem that the upper parts of the river were located in areas inhabited largely by Kyrgyz. Under such circumstances, the Uzbek committee claimed that the entire area would have to be included in the Uzbek republic. The Uzbeks used this argument in regards to the *volost* of Kashgar-Kishlak in Osh *uezd* and the Khan-Abad region of Jalal-Abad *volost*, which encompassed water resources necessary for much of the cotton production in the Ferghana Valley.[24]

The considerable number of appeals received by the Central Asian Bureau during the delimitation also demonstrates the importance of socioeconomic distinctions. Clearly, the delimitation was not the result of popular pressure or local initiative. Moreover, the Communist Party wanted to monopolize the discussion. There was to be no public debate about the delimitation other than that conducted and organized by the party itself. However, this did not entirely prevent information on the issue from being spread among the population. If what they heard about decisions or plans did not correspond to their own preferences, people sometimes reacted by sending the Central Asian Bureau appeals or letters of protest.

In the Uzbek–Turkmen delimitation, such local responses seem to have been more or less absent, with the exception of a few Uzbek protests to the inclusion of Tashauz in the Turkmen republic.[25] As regards the delimitation in Ferghana, the situation was very different. In this case, the Central Asian Bureau received a considerable amount of appeals and protests. These appeals were probably based on information from the discussions in the Territorial Committee and in the Central Asian Bureau, and they appear to have come exclusively from people who protested against being included into the Kyrgyz *oblast*. They demanded instead to be included in the Uzbek republic. All the appeals regarded the urban areas of Osh, Margilan, Andijan and Jalal-Abad.[26] Most appeals were presented in the name of the "citizens of" a certain district or region, while some appeals originated in the village soviet. Whatever the origin, the appeals usually included a large number of signatures, which in one case amounted to more than 2,000.[27]

In their communications, the appellants state that they are aware that a territorial political reorganization is under way and that the republican affiliation of "their territory" is being discussed. They

maintain that they have contacted the Central Asian Bureau in order to make popular opinion known. Their arguments for the necessity of incorporating the given district into the Uzbek rather than the Kyrgyz republic are invariably based on socioeconomic conditions. The following example, typical of these appeals, was sent to the authorities of the Turkestan ASSR in August 1924 in the name of the population of Ichkilik *volost* of the Margilan *uezd*.

> From the citizens of Osh *uezd* we have heard rumors that a delimitation of Central Asia is about to be accomplished, and that separate Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Tajik republics and *oblasts* are to be established. We, the 2,250 citizens of the Ichkilik *volost* who have signed this appeal, ask the Turkestan CEC that we in connection with the delimitation are left in the Margilan *uezd*, that is within the Uzbek republic. For decades we have been engaged in agriculture, there are no other professions to be found among us. Also, there is no division among us between Uzbeks and Kyrgyz; we live as one family. Our economic life is in every way connected with the Uzbeks. Taking all this into consideration, we hope that the Turkestan CEC will meet our request that we be left in the Margilan *uezd* of the Uzbek republic.[28]

Along with a similar request from another Margilan *volost* (Naiman), the Turkestan government forwarded this appeal to the Central Asian Bureau with the following comment. "The Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz] peasants [of Ichkilik and Naiman *volosts*] categorically refuse to be separated from the Margilan *uezd* and included in the Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz] republic."[29] Similar initiatives came from Osh, Andijan and Jalal-Abad as well. Without criticizing the establishment of national republics and *oblasts* as such, the appellants maintained that their sedentary way of life and engagement in agriculture made it necessary to include their group in the Uzbek republic. Citizens of the Bazar-Kurgan *oblast* of Andijan *uezd* stated: "We represent a largely agricultural society. There are no nomads among us, as is usual for the Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz], and our economy relates closely to that of the Uzbeks. As the Committee [probably the Territorial Committee] has raised the question of whether to include us in the Uzbek or Kara-Kirgiz [Kyrgyz] republic, we ask that we be included in the former."[30] Evoking the parallel between socioeconomic patterns and national groups, one appeal from Uzbeks of Osh maintained: "There are now more Uzbeks than Kyrgyz in the town." At the time of the census, they explained, the situation had

been different, as the census had coincided with the time when nomadic pattern of the Kyrgyz had led them to the town. Later, the nomads left the town, and few Kyrgyz remained in Osh at that time. "Therefore, we ask to be included in the Uzbek republic."[31]

These different examples suggest that, for the population of Ferghana, identification with wider identities such as Uzbek or Kyrgyz was not very important. The Ferghana Valley was obviously ill-suited for such a division, and only the delimitation caused people to relate to these identities.[32] Rather than abstract visions of an Uzbek nation, however, the appeals reflect a sense of affinity with a certain socioeconomic formation. The appeals do not reveal any enthusiasm for the new entities on the part of the authors. Instead, they display hostility on the part of the sedentary population to the idea of being included as a socioeconomic minority in a political entity dominated by a traditionally semi-nomadic population. However, the national delimitation was not about implementing popular will.

When the Uzbek and Kyrgyz subcommittees presented their respective proposals on the future borders, conflict erupted in several instances. Rather than through central dictate, however, the disputes were mainly settled by way of negotiations in the Territorial Committee. On August 20, the Territorial Committee arranged a special meeting between the two subcommittees at which the two sides discussed all the disputed areas. The conflicting claims were discussed one by one, and in accordance with its intention, the meeting concluded with a project that both sides accepted. First, the meeting confirmed that the borders of the Namangan, Margilan and Kokand *uezds*, decided upon in the plenary sessions of the Territorial Committee, were acceptable to both subcommittees. Second, it dealt with the disputed areas of the Andijan and Osh *uezds*. Here, in a spirit of negotiation, both sides relinquished some of their claims.[33] It was in this compromise that the borders between the Uzbek republic and the Kyrgyz *oblast* were established. Shortly after, the Territorial Committee accepted this project,[34] and Karklin could report with satisfaction to Stalin that they had reached complete agreement on the matter of the borders of the Kyrgyz *oblast*.[35]

This debate is interesting in several respects. First, it supports the conclusions of the preceding chapter that the Soviet regime in this period to some degree valued consensus, cooperation and compromise in politics. However, one should not exaggerate this point as these particular deliberations involved consensus and cooperation within rather narrow limits. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the central

Soviet authorities, the determination of the Uzbek–Kyrgyz borders did involve an element of consensus building. The conflicts were settled locally without the direct intervention of the center, whether the Central Committee or Stalin personally. Certainly, in the political situation of 1924, Stalin was tending to more important matters than border disputes between the various Central Asian political entities.

The Ferghana Valley was not very well suited for reorganization such as the national delimitation. Indeed, in late 1923, communists in Ferghana petitioned the Turkestan ASSR, requesting that Ferghana be organized into an autonomous *oblast* within the TASSR. According to Edward Allworth, this initiative was "probably the final Turkestanian effort to save heterogeneous Central Asian polity".[36] However, there is little to suggest that saving a heterogeneous polity was a main intention on the part of the authors of this proposition. At least it does not seem to have been perceived that way by the leadership of the Turkestan CP or by the Central Asian Bureau. When it was declared a "political mistake", it was not because a Ferghana *oblast* implied heterogeneity but because the project involved more autonomy from the Turkestan ASSR than was acceptable.[37] Still, the project does suggest that notions of ethnically homogeneous political entities had no prominent place in the visions of the Ferghana communists. Nevertheless, when the border-making process began in 1924, the manner in which the people of Ferghana perceived the national identities reflected the historically important socioeconomic divisions in the region.

Concerning the Uzbek–Kyrgyz border, the attempts at achieving consensus largely succeeded. In other instances, however, consensus was replaced with bitter conflict, and nowhere was conflict more bitter than in the struggle over Tashkent.

The struggle over Tashkent City

Tashkent City was at the heart of the Uzbek–Kazak tension. It is no surprise that both sides gave great priority to Tashkent as it was a most important center both economically and administratively. The Uzbek and the Kazak sides both insisted that the city and the *uezd* should be included in their republics. There was no room for negotiation on this issue, and the struggle over Tashkent came to poison the delimitation process, and in particular the work of the Territorial Committee.

The two sides used largely the same kind of arguments that we have found in the Turkmen–Uzbek and the Uzbek–Kyrgyz delimitations.

The point of departure was nationality: was the population Kazak or Uzbek? However, this question did not only refer to Tashkent City itself, as even the Kazak side agreed that, in terms of nationality, the city was "predominantly and perhaps even entirely Uzbek".[38] Instead, as a parallel to the Turkmen claims to Tashauz and the Kyrgyz claims to towns in Ferghana, the Kazaks focused on the surrounding population. The following is characteristic of the arguments of the Kazak side:

> True enough; today Tashkent City is predominantly and perhaps even entirely Uzbek. But at the same time, it is the center for *oblasts* and *uezds* with Kirgiz [Kazak] majority. When deciding the affiliation of a given region, one must take into consideration the ethnographic composition of the region as a whole, and not only that of the urban center. On this basis, we insist that Tashkent must join with the Kirgiz [Kazak] republic.[39]

Stressing that the Committee had to take the countryside, and not only the city into consideration, Khojanov argued that primary attention must be paid to economy, not nationality. The Kazaks maintained that while it would be "inadmissible to ignore the fact that Tashkent functions as a market for all northern *uezds*" there was no doubt that the southern parts of the region would manage well without Tashkent, as both Kokand and Samarkand would have similar functions.[40] The Kazak side could borrow some authority from Lenin on this point. Earlier, in connection with the organization of regions within the RSFSR, Lenin had stated that it was wrong to separate towns from their surroundings based on nationality. The Kazaks made active use of this statement, emphasizing that similar urban–rural relations existed elsewhere too.[41] Khojanov drew a rather unfortunate parallel: "All the cities of Czechoslovakia are inhabited by Germans, but the Germans respect that."[42]

The Kazak side did not base their arguments on economy alone. They also focused on what they characterized as the cultural needs of the Kazak republic. In a report to the Kazak CEC, the plenipotentiary of the Kazak ASSR in the Turkestan CEC maintained that Tashkent had enormous cultural significance for the Kazak people; it was a "Kazak Samarkand".[43] In later delimitation discussions, the Kazak side emphasized this argument strongly. According to the Kazaks, unless Tashkent was given to the Kazak republic, the economically strongest and culturally most developed part of the Kazak population would become separated from the rest of the Kazaks, "a people still in the process of

national formation". It would be a great loss if the most culturally advanced part of the population was to be taken from the republic.[44] For the Kazaks this was not only about getting their hands on as much territory as possible; the inclusion of Kazaks from Turkestan would change the Kazak republic in an integral way. In an article in the newspaper *Ak-Zhol*, Mendeshev, leader of the CEC of the Kazak ASSR, claimed that a Kazak republic without Tashkent would be like a body without a head:

> The question of the center of the Kirgiz [Kazak] republic is important. When the Turkestan Kirgiz [Kazak] join the Kirgiz [Kazak] republic, Orenburg can no longer be the center of the republic. The center must be located in an area more densely populated by Kirgiz [Kazaks]. Such a place is Tashkent. Both Orenburg and Semipalatinsk are located in the periphery of the Kirgiz [Kazak] republic, and are therefore ill-suited. The Kazak republic does not exist only for the Kazaks of Semipalatinsk or Akmola. In the south, it borders onto the Kirgiz [Kazaks] of Khorezm and Bukhara, as well as those of Syr-Darya and Jetisui *oblasts*. Therefore, the center of the republic must be located in the middle of this area, i.e. in Tashkent. A Kirgiz [Kazak] republic without Tashkent is a body without a head.[45]

The idea of the nation expressed here was more than a collection of people sharing a certain genealogical background. For a group of people to represent a national community, a common culture was required, but not reduced to a common psychological make-up as in Stalin's definition. From this Kazak perspective, the national community was a value in and of itself, and they perceived this community as something organic. This interpretation is obviously different from the strategic, pragmatic, and instrumental approach to nationality that characterized the Soviet regime.

Parallel to the economic and cultural arguments, the Kazak side emphasized the backwardness of the Kazaks. They projected an image of the backward nomads against the stronger and superior sedentary and urban population. Again, we see how the Central Asian communists believed that support for the weak vis-à-vis the strong was a fundamental element of Soviet policy. There is no doubt that the imagery of backwardness could be useful, and the Kazak side repeatedly played the "backward card" in the struggle over Tashkent. According to their view, the logic of Soviet nationalities policy implied support for the backward Kazaks as against the more developed Uzbeks. The following

statement is illustrative: "It is necessary to help the Kirgiz [Kazaks], the most backward of all people in the region, against the stronger Sartskii[46] *narod* in this matter. It is the only way in which to implement the Soviet nationality policy."[47] However, this appeal proved fruitless in the struggle for Tashkent.

While Kazak arguments emphasized the economic and cultural needs of the Kazak republic, the Uzbek claim to the city of Tashkent was much simpler. It was based on nationality alone. Khojibaev, the later Tajik nationalist, expressed the essence of the Uzbek position when he declared that the entire idea of the national delimitation would be meaningless if a city such as Tashkent with 96,000 Uzbeks and only 172 Kazaks should not be included in the Uzbek republic.[48]

Whether national-ethnographic or economic criteria were prioritized had great implications for the emerging entities. In Soviet terminology, the reorganization of Central Asia was often referred to as the "national-state delimitation" (*natsional'no-gosudarstvennoe razmezhevanie*), and Soviet accounts argue that the delimitation awarded the different Central Asian peoples' national statehood. How did the Central Asian communists perceive the new entities? Did they regard them as territorial entities exhibiting a certain level of cultural autonomy, or did they view the republics as states, something that would presuppose economic viability? On this point, there were differences in opinion between the Central Asian communists. The Kazak side always focused on the problem of economy. Ignoring economy to the advantage of national-ethnographic criteria would result in entities of little value: "Unless economic considerations are made, we will end up with fictions."[49] The Uzbek side, however, responded that these arguments were not relevant, as the USSR was not a federation of necessarily economically independent entities. Rather, the USSR was a unitary state in which the economic perspective was that of the entire state, and not of its component parts.[50] When the Uzbeks used this argument, they knew very well that the Uzbek republic would be the only economically viable entity in the period after the delimitation.

There is no doubt that the Uzbek view corresponded to the opinion of the central authorities in the delimitation. As we have seen, economic as well as administrative concerns led to the dismissal of the national-ethnographic principle in the organization of the Turkmen republic and the Kyrgyz *oblast*. However, the goal was not to establish entities that were viable or independent from an economical point of view. Rather, the motivation was that all the entities would have to be equipped with a minimum of facilities for purposes of economy and

administration. In the discourse of the representatives of the central Soviet leadership, there was hardly any reference to the principle of economic viability. On the other hand, there is nothing to suggest that it was a goal to avoid economic viability. Moreover, the idea of economic viability does not seem to have been prominent outside Kazak circles. Even though both the Turkmen and the Kyrgyz sides used economic arguments in the border discussions, neither of the groups appears to have pursued economic independence as any important goal. Indeed, the Kazak Khojanov criticized the Turkmen on this point, arguing that they were naive to accept an arrangement that would lead only to a fictive independence or autonomy.[51] Nevertheless, this argument failed to impress the Turkmen side.

The city of Tashkent represents a unique case in the border-making process. As discussed, the general rule was that the Central Asian Bureau confirmed the decisions of the Territorial Committee, and the Central Committee those of the Central Asian Bureau. It appears that Tashkent City was the only instance where central intervention interrupted initial discussion on lower levels. The decision was made long before the convention of the Territorial Committee, and there was no need for that committee to make any decision or even discuss the issue.

When the delimitation began in Central Asia in early 1924, it soon became evident that the city of Tashkent represented a potential source of conflict. In the plenary session of the Central Committee of the CPT on March 23, 1924, a heated Uzbek–Kazak debate developed.[52] However, it did not take long until the dispute was settled. On May 11, the Central Asian Bureau passed the resolution in favor of a national delimitation of Central Asia, and already this otherwise quite general resolution established that the city of Tashkent should be included in the Uzbek republic.[53] One month later, on June 12, the Politburo confirmed this pronouncement.[54]

The decision to give Tashkent to the Uzbek republic without the kind of discussion, to which the remaining Central Asia was subjected, caused great dissatisfaction among the Kazaks. At a plenary session of the Central Committee of the Turkestan CP on June 30, 1924, Khojanov criticized the decision of the Politburo, and maintained that it was in conflict with earlier promises. Referring to earlier contact between Central Asian communists and the Central Committee of the RCP, Khojanov claimed that "by Stalin and others we were given the impression that the question [of Tashkent] was to be left open, and we returned [from Moscow] with that impression". That had been accept-

able to all parties, and the apparent state of affairs had calmed down a tensed situation. "Obviously," Khojanov concluded his criticism, "the matter was later settled without us."[55] Karklin did not dispute this: "It is true that this was then everybody's impression. Later, however, based on relevant information, the Central Asian Bureau and the Orgburo changed this."[56]

The Kazak protest was not limited to the conventions of party or state organs. A few weeks after the Central Committee had passed the mentioned resolution, Karklin reported to Stalin and Rudzutak that Kazaks from the Tashkent *uezd* had held a demonstration on the premises of the Turkestan CEC. The Central Asian Bureau interpreted the demonstration, which gathered more than a hundred horsemen, as a result of the decisions about Tashkent. Karklin stated that "somebody must have organized the demonstration and given instructions", and suggested that the organizers were to be found among Kazak party members.[57] Moreover, Karklin noted that there was an extensive campaign for collections of signatures and letters of protest against the resolutions on Tashkent City. These appeals, involving hundreds and sometimes as many as thousands of signatures, were sent to Moscow.

How are we to construe the fact that Tashkent was – as was often expressed in the contemporary language – "given to the Uzbeks" without any open discussion? When the Kazak side asked the Central Asian Bureau why Tashkent City had to go the Uzbek republic, the answer was brief and simple: "Tashkent goes to the Uzbek republic simply because it is an Uzbek city. The great majority of the population are Uzbeks."[58] However, this can hardly be seen as a full explanation, as there were a number of instances in which the national principle was abandoned. Both Tashauz and Osh were such examples, and we find other examples in the Uzbek–Kazak delimitation as well. One example was the town of Chimkent. Even though all parties agreed that, from a national-ethnographic point of view, Chimkent was Uzbek, it was included in the Kazak republic. The intention was to provide the republics in the making with a minimum of facilities required for administrative and economic purposes. The fact that the Uzbek side was willing to "leave Chimkent to the Kazaks" should be seen in relation to their categorical insistence on Tashkent City. Claiming Tashkent, they offered the Kazaks Chimkent instead. Indeed, they made a major point of "their generosity".[59] With this in mind, the explanation that Tashkent went to the Uzbek republic because it was Uzbek from an ethnographic point of view cannot be considered sufficient. Indeed, the Kazak side did not accept the explanation and complained

that various principles were being applied arbitrarily. The only pattern to be distinguished was the unambiguous preferential treatment of the Uzbeks. I will return to this aspect later in this chapter.

Unfortunately, I have not discovered any archival material that would allow for any definite conclusion as to why Soviet authorities made these decisions concerning Tashkent. I can neither confirm nor disprove that this initiative originated in Moscow, as opposed to in the Central Asian Bureau, nor determine the role of Stalin or any other political agent.[60] Neither have I found any material explicitly stating the intentions and motivations behind the arrangement. Nevertheless, it is possible to offer at least some tentative answers. In a document entitled "Thesis on the Establishment of Nationally Homogeneous Republics in Central Asia" the following was stated as a separate point: "The city of Tashkent, where both the Central Asian Bureau and the Central Asian Economic Council are located, and which is largely inhabited by Uzbeks, is to be a part of the Uzbek republic."[61] This document was a set of instructions from the Central Committee of the RCP to the Central Asian Bureau concerning the delimitation, produced before the decision about Tashkent had been made known. This suggests that administrative concerns weighed heavily. As it had previously had for the Tsarist regime, Tashkent in the early 1920s held great importance for the Bolsheviks and for Soviet rule in Central Asia. The two key institutions of Soviet power were located in that city. Why, from the perspective of Soviet power, was it preferable to include Tashkent in the Uzbek SSR rather than in the Kazak republic? I have earlier argued that the Bolshevik regime perceived of its authority in Central Asia as limited, and this was particularly the case in Bukhara and Khorezm, which were not formally included in the Soviet state until the delimitation. In the Kazak republic, on the other hand, established already in 1920, Soviet power was more firmly established. I would argue, therefore, that when the central Soviet authorities preferred to leave Tashkent with the Uzbeks, it was because they found it desirable to have a strong foothold for Soviet power in a republic in which they considered themselves vulnerable.

In the divide and rule perspective, the rationale of giving Tashkent to the Uzbeks would be to pit the two groups against each other. As we have already seen, conflict and Uzbek–Kazak antagonism did indeed result from the decision to give Tashkent to the Uzbek republic. However, this does not imply that conflict was an intended result. Moreover, any solutions would have led to conflict, something the representatives of the central Soviet authorities fully recognized. Noth-

ing in the discourse on these conflicts indicates that Soviet authorities encouraged conflict and antagonism. Attention was focused on resolving conflicts, not invigorating them. In situations in which conflicts were expected, the choice was likely to be the one that was believed to generate the lowest level of conflict. In connection with the city of Tashkent, Karklin reported to Stalin and Rudzutak that if the Kazak government was placed in Tashkent, as the Kazaks wanted, the result would be massive conflict and opposition on the part of the Uzbeks.[62]

It appears, therefore, that the Soviet authorities found that the only realistic possibility was to incorporate Tashkent into the Uzbek republic. Without Tashkent, there would be no Uzbek republic, and without an Uzbek republic there would be no delimitation. The example of Tashkent confirms that administrative concerns were decisive, not only for the choice of the delimitation as a strategy but also in the border-making process as well.

Tashkent and Mirzachul' *uezds*

That the center aborted the discussions over Tashkent City did not herald the end of heated border disputes between Uzbeks and Kazaks. Several other areas resulted in intense Uzbek–Kazak exchanges. Two *uezds* in particular were the subject of dispute: Tashkent and Mirzachul'. In the words of Vareikis, the Tashkent and Mirzachul' *uezds* represented the "Achilles' heel" of the national delimitation.[63] As in the case of Tashkent City, the two *uezds* were the subject of conflicting Uzbek and Kazak claims. However, in these instances, there was extensive debate in the Territorial Committee.

The Uzbek subcommittee argued that, with the exception of the largely nomadic Irjar *volost*, the whole of Mirzachul' *uezd* should be included in the Uzbek republic. The Kazak side, on the other hand, claimed that not only the Irjar *volost*, but four other *volosts* as well (Slavianskaia, Etisai, Krestianskaia and Syr-Darya) should be included in the Kazak republic. According to the Uzbek subcommittee, the Tashkent *uezd* represented a special case in the delimitation. In no other place were the different groups (Uzbeks and Kazaks) so intermingled. As a result, the Tashkent *uezd* was a formidable challenge for the border makers.[64] The Uzbek subcommittee suggested that three whole *volosts* (Jausugum, Altynov and Uch-Tiube) and parts of five other *volosts* (Bulatov, Akjar, Jetisui, Uch-Tamgalin and Sharapkhan) be included in the Kazak republic, while the remaining Tashkent *uezd* was to be incorporated into the Uzbek republic. The Kazaks rejected this

proposition, too, and they listed a number of *volosts* that they claimed had to be included in the Kazak republic.

The two sides drew upon a variety of arguments to substantiate their claims to the two *uezds*. When the borders were finally drawn, all three main principles were employed: nationality, economy and administrative concerns. On one level, the territorial disputes were discussions about the nationality of groups such as the Kurama, the Turki or others. Again, socioeconomic distinctions were critical for the border-making process. The main argument for situating the Kurama in the Uzbek republic was that the Kurama were settled like the Uzbeks, and not nomads like the Kazaks.[65]

In other situations, the problem was one of numbers rather than definition. How numerous were the respective groups? Regarding the Tashkent *uezd*, struggle over statistics was particularly intense, with the two sides presenting their own figures and calculations. The members used census material from 1897, 1911, 1917 and 1920 in a flexible and pragmatic manner to prove that the respective nationality represented the majority in the given district.[66] Even in these instances, however, nationality was not necessarily the only argument, and in the dispute over the Tashkent *uezd*, the Uzbek side made extensive use of economic arguments. Focusing on water and irrigation, the Uzbeks maintained that, irrespective of national composition, regions that from the point of view of irrigation represented an entity should not be split up. On that basis, the Uzbek subcommittee concluded that "the strictly Kirgiz [Kazak] *volosts* located on the other side of Chirchik are so closely linked to the water supply of the Uzbeks that they must become a part of the Uzbek republic".[67] With the same logic, the Uzbek side also argued that several Tashkent *volosts* (Gaib-Ata, Osman-Tat, Toi-Tiube, Kirtai-Tiube and Maidantal') with indisputable Kazak majorities had to be placed in the Uzbek republic.[68] A division, they argued, would result in endless conflict between Uzbeks and Kazaks based on water supply, which would be detrimental to the cotton economy in the region.[69]

Economic arguments were also used regarding Mirzachul'. Here, too, the Uzbek side claimed that some *volosts* with Kazak majorities were to be included into the Uzbek republic. The Uzbeks argued that, from the point of view of economy, the entire Hungry Steppe region should be regarded as one indivisible entity, and the national principle would have to be set aside. Moreover, all the "settled parts of Mirzachul' *uezd* [were] economically very closely linked to Khojent on the one side and the Uzbek parts of Tashkent on the other", which made inclusion into the Uzbek republic a necessity.[70]

The Kazak side focused partly on nationality, partly on the cultural and economic needs of the republic. If the Uzbek claims in Mirzachul' and Tashkent were accepted, the Kazaks would be left without the most economically and culturally developed elements of the Kazak people. As a consequence, the Kazak side was not satisfied with the Uzbek argument that their plans for the Tashkent *uezd* would incorporate 31,000 Kazaks into the Uzbek republic, while more than three times as many Uzbeks would be included in the Kazak republic. This last would be the result of the inclusion of the towns of Chimkent and Turkestan in that republic.[71]

The discussions about Tashkent and Mirzachul' provoked intense conflict in the Territorial Committee. In the light of the Uzbek–Kazak antagonism that now developed, the image of the Achilles' heel does not seem entirely misplaced. In the Territorial Committee, almost every presentation by the respective sides ended with bitter personal attacks and accusations, making it difficult for the Committee to accomplish its tasks. Judging by the records of the committee, the Uzbek Islamov and the Kazak Khojanov led the struggle on their respective sides.[72] The Central Asian Bureau found this development disturbing, and on August 20, 1924, the Central Asian Bureau arranged a secret session exclusively for the discussion of "the incidents having taken place between some members of the Territorial Committee at the plenary sessions of this committee." The secret session, at which both Islamov and Khojanov were present along with Karklin, Vareikis, Rakhimbaev, Aitakov, Fayzullah Khojaev and Rykunov, led to the following resolution:

> At the sessions of the Territorial Committee personal, uncomrade-like mutual attacks have repeatedly been made by some comrades. Such behavior is totally inadmissible, and is condemned in the most resolute way. We demand that all comrade-members of the Territorial Committee with no exception refrain from any personal attack or uncomrade-like behavior. All members must be instructed to work in a practical, friendly and comrade-like manner. Appeals for the removal of this or that member from the Committee are turned down.[73]

The Kazak–Uzbek antagonism was not restricted to the Territorial Committee. Newspapers on both sides printed articles that waged harsh attacks against the other side.[74] Border making became the most debated issue in the press, and Uzbeks and Kazaks attacked each other

harshly. Not restricting themselves to the questions of the delimitations, the two sides attempted to discredit the other more extensively. Uzbeks and Kazaks, respectively, attacked each other for not living up to Bolshevik ideals. The Kazaks condemned the Uzbeks as colonizers, then a potent concept in the Bolshevik discourse on national relations. While usually related to the distinction between Russians and non-Russians, the Kazaks applied it to the Uzbek–Kazak relation. From this perspective, the Uzbeks were colonizers and the Kazaks the colonized.[75] The Uzbek side, on the other hand, questioned the class solidarity of Khojanov and his supporters, claiming that they socialized with people of the wrong class background.[76] In this way both sides tried to mobilize different aspects of Bolshevik ideology to win support for their respective positions. How did Soviet authorities respond?

In spite of the intense Uzbek–Kazak antagonism, the Territorial Committee continued to seek agreement between the two sides. Uzbeks and Kazaks returned repeatedly to the maps, proposing borders between the two republics. The first round of discussions served to demonstrate that the difference between the two sides was too great to be bridged, and the head of the Territorial Committee ordered the Kazaks and Uzbeks to work out revised proposals in the spirit of compromise. When the Uzbek subcommittee returned with their revised project, it had "accepted to leave the three Tashkent *volosts* Aleksandrovskaia, Ak-Jarskaia and Kosh-Kurgan to the Kazaks". This did not please the Kazaks, as they too suggested that these same *oblasts* be included in the Uzbek republic, because the population here largely consisted of *persy* (Persians).[77] As regards Mirzachul', on the other hand, the Uzbeks had made no changes.[78] Obviously, this did not lead to any Uzbek–Kazak consensus. In Mirzachul' the Kazak claims were also the same as before, and five *volosts* in the Tashkent *uezd* were subject to conflicting claims.[79]

The final decisions made by the Territorial Committee on the Tashkent *uezd* were to some extent a compromise, but they also favored the Uzbek republic. Among the compromises was the decision to divide the three Tashkent *uezds* of Zingi-Ata, Bulatov and Niiazbek according to nationality.[80] On the other hand, Kazak claims to the "undisputedly Kazak *volosts* of the Chirchik area"[81] were rejected. Yet not all the decisions of the Territorial Committee favored the Uzbeks, and the Committee's decision to include the Chinaz *volost* in the Kazak republic resulted in strong protests from the Uzbek representatives. Moreover, the Uzbek side resolutely opposed the decision of the Territorial Committee to include the four disputed *volosts* in the Mirzachul' *uezd* in the Kazak republic.[82]

In these decisions, all the three main principles of border creating are evident. The national-ethnographic principle was always at the center of the discussion, and in the majority of cases borders were drawn along perceived national lines. Furthermore, the Tashkent region is a good example of how administrative concerns forced the national-ethnographic principle into the background. When largely Kazak-inhabited areas close to Tashkent were included in the Uzbek republic, this related intimately to the previous decision to include Tashkent City in that republic. Even though that argument was not explicitly used in the discussion, there is some evidence that these areas with Kazak majority were included in Uzbekistan in order to prevent Tashkent City from being surrounded by a Kazak population, which would probably lead to instability and conflict.[83] It appears that the other groups recognized this as well. Even the Kazaks, while they characterized the decision as unfair, found this "understandable and explicable".[84] However, the arguments that the Uzbek committee members and the representatives of the Central Asian Bureau gave for including these areas in the Uzbek republic were based on economy, and primarily on irrigation. In several other instances, however, similar arguments were disregarded. The majority of the Territorial Committee turned down the Uzbek claims to the disputed areas of Mirzachul' *uezd*. Here the Uzbeks also based their arguments on economy. Economy alone, however, was not necessarily enough for the national-ethnographic principle to be set aside. One may therefore conclude that the principle of administrative order played a main role in border decisions. When conflict threatened, this principle became paramount.

While the Central Asian Bureau usually confirmed the decisions of the Territorial Committee, in the Uzbek–Kazak delimitation, the Central Asian Bureau modified the decisions of the Territorial Committee on two points. First, it changed the decision to include the four disputed Mirzachul' *volosts* in the Kazak republic, deciding instead that they were to be included in the Uzbek republic. Second, this was also the case with the Chinaz *volost*. These changes met with considerable protest, which throws interesting light on the delimitation. The most prominent representatives of the Kazaks, Turkmen and Kyrgyz signed the protest, and it was primarily a protest against the annulment of the decisions of the Territorial Committee. The complaint was that the Central Asian Bureau had yielded completely to Uzbek demands. These decisions, concluded the authors of the protest, represented a fundamental break with what had been the basis of the work of the

Territorial Committee. Moreover, it was inconsistent with the "main principles of the Soviet national delimitation".[85] This last is an interesting point. First, it indicates that Central Asian communists took the official version of the delimitation seriously. Second, it suggests that the members of the Territorial Committee had accepted that the committee largely had been working in accordance with the ideals of this official version. Admittedly, the protest also criticized the representatives of the Territorial Committee for having been pro-Uzbek, and complained that the Committee had been composed in a way that favored the Uzbeks. However, the given decisions appear to be exceptions to a practice otherwise considered standard, acceptable and legitimate. Moreover, this criticism of the Territorial Committee came only after some of the committee's decisions had been changed. The Central Asian Bureau's reversal of the Territorial Committee's decisions challenged legitimacy.

Furthermore, not only the Kazaks themselves reacted; the representatives of the Turkmen and of the Kyrgyz joined the Kazaks in their protests. When all the other groups united against the Uzbeks, it was an expression of the tension between the two main historical socio-economic formations. One side was concerned that the other was growing too strong. In the new context of a nationally-divided Central Asia, this took the form of a fear of Uzbek hegemony.

Why were these decisions then made? They do not seem to accord too well with my claim that it was a priority of the Soviet authorities to avoid conflict. Indeed, it would not seem far-fetched to regard these decisions as evidence of a divide and rule strategy. Again, however, I would argue that it was not an aim to pit different groups against each other. Instead, I believe that these controversial decisions were the consequence of the central authorities' perception that it was necessary to be particularly attentive to the demands of one particular group, the Uzbeks.

Uzbeks as a favored group?

The idea that the Uzbek side was favored in the delimitation is not new. We have seen that some contemporary Tajik nationalists maintain that the Uzbek–Tajik delimitation was the result of a deliberate pro-Uzbek, anti-Tajik strategy on the part of the central Soviet authorities.[86] Other scholars, meanwhile, have interpreted the delimitation very differently, such as Edward Allworth who considers the delimitation as an essentially anti-Uzbek strategy. One ought to stress, how-

ever, that the Tajik nationalists and Allworth are not really referring to the same things. The Tajiks focus on border making, maintaining that the Uzbek side was favored to the detriment of the Tajiks. Allworth, on the other hand, is less interested in what happened after the delimitation had already been chosen as a strategy. For Allworth, that strategy itself was anti-Uzbek, as it obstructed the assimilative forces that the Uzbeks, in his view, represented in the region. The successive distribution of territory between the republics was less significant.

If we focus on the process of border making and discuss the outcome for the various groups in that perspective, it seems impossible to defend a view that there was an anti-Uzbek dimension involved. On the contrary, there is good reason to argue that the Uzbek side was favored. First, Tashkent City was included in the Uzbek republic without any discussion in the relevant party organs. Second, when the Central Asian Bureau a few times changed the decisions of the Territorial Committee, it was in the favor of the Uzbek republic. Third, the discussions in the Territorial Committee indicate that the Uzbek side enjoyed a special position. In a heated struggle over Tashkent *uezd*, the Uzbek side (Islamov) maintained that:

> There is no need to seek an Uzbek–Kirgiz [Kazak] agreement on Tashkent. The differences are much too great and involve almost all volosts of the Tashkent *uezd*. However, if we, Uzbeks and Kirgiz [Kazaks] get too temperamental in this question, the Europeans will assist us and regulate the situation in a satisfactory way.[87]

This reliance on the Europeans' regulation of the conflict suggests that the Uzbek side felt confident that their interests would be accommodated. Moreover, the Kazak discourse reveals that the Kazaks largely shared the understanding of the Uzbeks. For that reason the Kazaks were much more skeptical to central intervention.[88]

It therefore seems fair to conclude that the Uzbek side enjoyed a level of preferential treatment. However, the reason for this was neither an anti-Tajik attitude on the part of the central Soviet authorities nor an intention to cause strife between groups. As discussed in Chapter 4, the central authorities perceived Central Asia as fragmented along a number of different lines. The delimitation must be understood in this context of perceptions of national and sub-national fragmentation, and the central authorities' hope that the establishment of national republics might end or at least reduce the fragmentation. In the eyes of the Soviet regime, significant sub-national divisions

characterized all the major population groups of Central Asia. However, the records of the Central Asian Bureau suggest that Soviet authorities were particularly concerned with the divisions between Uzbeks, and that the authorities considered these intra-Uzbek divisions particularly harmful. Throughout 1924, the Central Asian Bureau remained greatly concerned about the different conflicts and divisions, and correspondence between the Central Asian Bureau and the Central Committee indicates that containing conflict was a main objective.[89] It appears to have been particularly important for the Soviet regime to reduce conflict and factionalism among the Uzbek communists.[90] I believe that the Soviet authorities found it expedient to favor the Uzbek side in order to achieve this goal. Indeed, in the bitter delimitation discussions between the Uzbek and the Kazak side, the latter claimed that this was exactly what the central power did. They argued that even though political realities required that the development of a unified Uzbekistan be supported in every way, this could not take place at the expense of the other national groups.[91] The Uzbek republic was in many ways the key to the reorganization of Central Asia. In Soviet terminology, the Uzbeks represented the most "politically mature" population in Central Asia. Moreover, the Uzbeks were seen to represent continuity in relation to the historically important political centers in the region: Khiva, Bukhara and Kokand. In short, Uzbeks surpassed the nomadic neighbors in terms of political potential.

This contrasts with Carlisle's view that the fortune of the Uzbeks was the result of relations of a more personal nature between the Soviet leadership and some prominent Uzbeks, notably Fayzullah Khojaev.[92] It is, of course, possible that the favorable treatment of the Uzbeks was the result of the influence of Fayzullah Khojaev or other individuals. However, I am not aware of evidence that would support such a view. Instead, the central authorities dealt with the Uzbek communists as a group, albeit a highly fragmented one. The choice of capital is an interesting case in point. Although Soviet authorities were not always able to identify the essence of the divisions they observed, the difference between Bukharan and Turkestan Uzbeks was clear enough. For example, it was Turkestan Uzbeks who most implacably insisted that Tashkent must become a part of the Uzbek republic. The same Bukhara–Turkestan division came to the foreground in the choice of the capital of the Uzbek republic. The Turkestan Uzbeks insisted that the capital must be in Tashkent, while the Bukharans determinedly opposed this. Some Bukharans insisted that the capital must be Bukhara, while most were willing to agree on Samarkand. The choice

of Samarkand reflects the ambitions of the central Soviet authorities to achieve the reconciliation and unification of the different Uzbek groups.

If the Uzbek side was favored in the delimitation, favoring the Kazaks would most probably have resulted in an even greater level of conflict. In such a scenario, the entire Uzbek republic, the key to the delimitation, might have been endangered. From this perspective, the preferential treatment of Uzbeks was a meaningful strategy aimed at promoting stability and contributing to the cohesion of an aggregate of Uzbek communists.

"The real history of the writing of these borders is still to be written", maintained Oliver Roy in a recent work.[93] Obviously, this discussion has not been an attempt to offer an exhaustive account of how the new political borders of the 1920s were drawn. I have instead focused on some particularly salient examples in order to explore the main principles at work in the border-making process. One main conclusion is that the borders were not simply arbitrarily drawn up in Moscow offices – to the contrary, there was considerable local influence. First, Central Asian communists exhibited direct influence, as the borders were drawn in an interactive process between Central Asian actors and representatives of the Soviet political center. The borders thus established were the result of lengthy discussions, the basis of which were the various projects elaborated by the representatives of the different national groups. The discussions decisively influenced the new map. Second, the proposals that the various sides made during the discussions reflected, to a considerable degree, the historical social formations of Central Asia. This led to an important level of continuity in the delimitation process.

From the perspective of the central Soviet authorities, the process of border making involved a high degree of consensus building. My analysis suggests that, for the central Soviet authorities, a main ambition was to achieve consensus between Central Asian communist representatives of the various national groups. The Soviet authorities were looking for compromises that all groups could accept. In decisions regarding the Uzbek–Turkmen and the Uzbek–Kyrgyz borders, this approach succeeded, but in the Uzbek–Kazak delimitation no consensus had been possible. Here, central Soviet authorities intervened in support of the Uzbek side in order to avoid alienation of the important Uzbek group.

National affiliation was always at heart of the discussions. The ambition of the Soviet authorities was to create entities that largely

corresponded to the main national-ethnographic boundaries of the region. This was not because they valued homogeneous communities as fundamental goals in themselves, but because of the functions they believed such entities might serve in social, economic and political development. Consequently, the national-ethnographic principle was balanced against other interests in order to facilitate administration and government, and to avoid destructive political conflict and fragmentation.

9
Historical Implications

A major issue explored in the present study is the Soviet regime's choice to promote national identities and to establish political entities based on national affiliation. In concluding this study, I wish to focus on the implications and consequences of this strategy. Did the Soviet regime achieve its objectives? To what extent did national identities develop in the Soviet period, and what role did they play in the Soviet state? When the Soviet Union collapsed, some expected that the changes from the Soviet period would come undone. This chapter therefore ends with a discussion of the implications of the national delimitation for post-Soviet Central Asia.

National identities in Central Asia?

For the Soviet authorities, the delimitation related closely to the struggle to change a social structure regarded as "patriarchal-feudal". From the point of view of the Soviet authorities, this social structure involved identities and bonds of loyalty based on tribal organization as well as on religious authority. For various reasons, the central Soviet authorities found it desirable to replace these identities with others, and the delimitation was an important component of that project. Was the Soviet project a success on this point? Did the various identities prominent at the beginning of the Soviet period remain vital throughout the Soviet era, or were they eradicated and replaced? Did national identity, in the sense of affiliation with the various republics, or more precisely, with the population groups that had given the republics their names, develop during the Soviet period?

Soviet scholars' views on the question of identities in Central Asia were characterized by a strong sense of teleology. The ethnic groups in

the names of which national republics were established, subsequently consolidated into full-blown nations because of that strategy. Post-Soviet Central Asian nationalists have adopted this perspective.[1] Western scholars, on the other hand, have generally had a very different opinion on the matter, and hardly anyone has argued that nationality now has a hegemonic position in the self-identification of Central Asians. Most scholars argue that identification along national lines became somewhat more important during the Soviet period, but that it remained subordinate to traditional forms of identification, which, in spite of Soviet efforts, remained salient.

Concerning the Turkmen population, for example, Bennigsen and Wimbush have claimed that Turkmen society bears a closer resemblance to a tribal confederation than to a modern nation-state.[2] This point of view has subsequently been echoed in writings about the Turkmen Soviet republic, and later about sovereign Turkmenistan.[3] Nevertheless, not much evidence has been provided as to the role of the traditional tribal identities in Turkmen politics. In 1992, however, Mukhammetberdiev presented an interesting study on the topic, including a survey of the attitude of the Turkmen population towards tribal identity and their opinion of its strength and significance in the social life of the Turkmen. The study's conclusions are interesting. First, the majority of the respondents considered eagerness to distinguish between each other according to tribal affiliation a predominant tendency in Turkmen life. Second, half of the respondents answered that it was very important or desirable to know one's tribal background. Third, and perhaps even more interesting, two-thirds of the respondents declared that for them, personally, tribal affiliation would influence family relations and connections.[4] Considering that the Soviet (as well as post-Soviet) authorities condemned this phenomenon altogether, one may reasonably assume that the real strength of these bonds was possibly even greater than these figures suggest. Similarly, in the Kazak and Kyrgyz cases, a number of works exist that point to the persistence of traditional forms of sub-national organization.[5]

A very comprehensive study of identities in Central Asia is John Schoeberlein's dissertation from 1994. It was conducted in parts of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan among population groups who, in official statistics, figure as Uzbeks or Tajiks. His main conclusion is that nationality (meaning identification as "Uzbek" or "Tajik", respectively) had remained relatively insignificant into the 1990s, after seven decades of national republics. Instead, a variety of identities remained much more central for the bulk of the population. From Schoeberlein's

point of view, this state of affairs represented a "spectacular failure". Despite the fact that the Soviet regime had, in a variety of ways, stimulated the national identity while discrediting others, the latter remained more important than being an Uzbek or a Tajik.[6]

On the whole, there can be no doubt that national identification (Uzbek, Turkmen, and so on) still maintains only a limited position among the Central Asian population. How can this "spectacular failure" be accounted for? Is the reason that the national principle, which had emerged under quite different circumstances in Europe, was (and is) fundamentally foreign to Central Asia? Edward Allworth has claimed that the main obstacle to Uzbek group cohesion was the lack of a "real ethnic leader".[7] That is not a convincing argument, and it would suggest that such cohesion would be taking place today, as power is now in the hands of leaders sharing the same ethnic background as the majority of the population. Donald Carlisle, on the other hand, has claimed that the limitation of identification with national communities is the result of the political underdevelopment of the Central Asians. This echoes the points of view of the European orientalists of the Tsarist period who had believed that Central Asians had not yet developed a national identity. In any case, Carlisle's argument is circular. Yet a third possible explanation is that the national frames of identification have remained relatively insignificant because they mismatched the identities in the first place.

I believe that all these three perspectives are quite fruitless. Instead, one must focus on the *role* that national identification may play in people's lives. In what kind of situations, if any, was nationality particularly important? In the 1920s and early 1930s, national identification became politically relevant for several reasons. Terry Martin has shown how national affiliation in this period was a key element in the distribution of important resources such as education, job opportunities, and positions in administration and bureaucracy.[8] Much more than the creation of national costumes or the invention of national traditions, this strategy was likely to make nationality an important dimension in people's self identification. This was social experience of national divisions and, as one would expect, it led to considerable conflict. The Central Asians felt they had particular rights based on their nationality, while the Russians (or Europeans) experienced insecurity and felt that they were subjected to discrimination on the grounds of their nationality. However, being Uzbek, Turkmen, Kazak, and so on, was not necessarily the most important status in this situation. The earlier discussed distinction between Central Asians on the

one side, and Russians/Europeans on the other, may have been equally important. Moreover, this policy was largely aborted during the 1930s, or at least it became much less prominent.

The Soviet affirmative action strategy made national identification more important. However, the character of the Soviet regime in the postwar era created considerable room for other and more traditional kinds of identities. It did so in two ways. In the economic arena, scarcity of resources and a poorly functioning system of resource distribution characterized the Soviet regime. There was, for this reason, much space for alternative networks that might provide what the Soviet state failed to provide. In Central Asia, those kinds of networks were readily available; the well established and well functioning patronage networks could be of great value. Equally, the absence of open competition between alternatives in politics left considerable room for the same kinds of networks.[9] Although the Soviet regime condemned the traditional identities and wanted to replace them, the character of the Soviet state and society itself represented a *raison d'être* for the same identities.

John Schoeberlein has argued that "those promoting the concept of a 'nation' were, in a sense, working in the most ideal circumstances. They had very few real challenges to their authority, and they had extraordinary opportunities for the manipulation of symbols."[10] From Schoeberlein's perspective, it is in this context that the limited significance of national identification represents a "spectacular failure". Perhaps this should instead serve as a basis for reflection on the character of identity in general and national identities in particular. While scholars have long since abandoned the ideas of primordial communities, there has been much focus on the "constructedness" of identities. In this perspective, the manipulation of symbols has been understood as an essential part of the development of national identities. However, this does not imply that through the manipulation of symbols any identity can be developed. Even though the symbolic dimension of identity is important, identity is not purely symbolic. The case of Central Asia demonstrates that the effect of manipulation of symbols is limited when people do not experience the promoted identities as relevant in their own lives. To the extent that (national and other) identities are constructed, they are being constructed not simply by manipulation of symbols, but by social and political experience.

The institutional dimension of national identity is at least as important as the symbolic dimension. National identity is also the identifica-

tion with a state, based on an understanding that the state represents the interests of the members of the nation in question. In the Soviet context, different factors impeded such identification. First, there was the particular character of the Soviet state, which unintentionally provided a *raison d'être* for traditional identities. Second, in the Soviet quasi-federative system, the power and authority vested in the national (union) republics was greatly limited, while Moscow was the indisputable center of power. The national (union) republics were symbolic rather than real states, and could, therefore, not play the same role in the development of national identity as real states have been able to in other situations. To follow up Allworth's point of view, a major obstacle to Uzbek group cohesion was not the lack of a "real ethnic leader", but rather the absence of an institutional center with real authority, which could serve as a point of integration for the population.

However, the fact that, for large segments of the population, the significance of national identification remained limited into the post-Soviet period, does not necessarily imply that national boundaries were equally unimportant on the political plane throughout the Soviet period. Indeed, I have argued that national identification had an even more limited significance for the popular masses in the 1920s, but the concept of nationality still became highly influential in Central Asian politics. We will therefore turn to the role of nationality in Soviet and post-Soviet politics. What have been the political short- and long-term implications of the establishment of national Soviet republics in Central Asia? To what extent is the key to the Soviet demise to be found in national relations?

Nation, politics and the Soviet demise

The dissolution of the Soviet state in 1991 followed a wave of declarations of independence, as well as a number of conflicts in which the issue of nationality was involved. Against this backdrop, it might be tempting to attribute the demise of the USSR to the powerful force of nationalism. Some scholars have done that, yet all agree that the political developments of the late 1980s played a key role. A common interpretation is that the democratization of the *perestroika* necessarily led to nationalist separatist tendencies. Robert Daniels, for example, sees the breakup of the union primarily as an example of decolonization. From his perspective, national minorities (meaning all non-Russians) represented the Achilles' heel of democratization; if granted democratic

rights to express themselves freely, their immediate desire would be to pull out of the union.[11] However, he does not provide convincing support as to why non-Russians would necessarily wish to leave the Union. From her "Triumph of the Nations" perspective Hélène Carrère d'Encausse has made a similar argument, referring to the "return of national aspirations" as a natural result of increased democratization and reduced fear of repression. People were allowed and able to "reconnect with the past", and as "the truth was revealed to everyone", the peoples of the USSR realized that "their destiny must lie in their own hands", that is, that they must separate from the Soviet Union.[12] As a result, secessionist and separatist demands increased during *perestroika*, and the integrity of the Union could only be maintained through extensive coercion, which was no longer an option. In Ronald Suny's words, this approach represents a "sleeping beauty perspective".[13] The goals and aspirations of the various nationalities were constant, and the elimination of coercion awakened the long suppressed national sentiments.

Other scholars have criticized the "sleeping beauty" approach, while sharing the opinion that national divisions were a key factor in the Soviet demise. A prominent example is Ronald Suny and his "revenge of the past" perspective.[14] Suny argues that nations emerged within the empire, and in that process, the empire began to die.[15] However, this was not the awakening of constant but suppressed national sentiments; rather, the national self-assertion was the result of what we can broadly call Soviet nationalities policies. For reasons of political expediency, the Soviet regime had institutionalized ethnicity in state-building to a degree unprecedented in any other state. While the intention of the Soviet regime had been to eradicate national sentiments, the consequences, according to Suny, turned out to be quite the opposite. National consciousness among non-Russians actually became more pronounced during the Soviet period. On the political plane, de-Stalinization was accompanied by a variety of nationalist responses in the 1960s and 1970s, and by the time *perestroika* was introduced, a framework had been established for political mobilization based on nationality. From a similar perspective, Rogers Brubaker, discussing the significance of the institutionalization of ethnicity, has claimed that "intention and consequence [have seldom] diverged as spectacularly as they did in this case".[16] In this sense, the nationalist mobilization, and ultimately the breakup of the USSR, were the "revenge of the past". To what extent do these interpretations conform with actual developments in Soviet Central Asia?

I earlier argued that the Soviet regime's institutionalization of nationality had significant consequences as early as in the first half of the 1920s, and that it then contributed much to the nationalization of political discourse. Discussing the consequences of the delimitation, Francine Hirsch has demonstrated how Central Asian political players, in the wake of the delimitation, made active use of the national identities. The local population and, in particular, local leaders learned remarkably rapidly to "manipulate the language of nationality to advance their own interests".[17] Throughout the territories of former Turkestan, Bukhara and Khiva, official designations of nationality took on new significance as population groups and individuals used them to complain about injustices. Hirsch bases the argument on an analysis of political claims and petitions after the delimitation. She points to a number of emotional petitions and political requests in the name of Uzbeks in the Kyrgyz republic, of Kazaks in the Uzbek republic, and of other minorities. As I did from my own analysis, Hirsch concludes that the national identities, largely, reflected the historic socioeconomic divisions in the region. One main concern of those who protested in the name of Uzbeks in the Kazak republic was fear that they would be forced to give up their sedentary way of life and convert to a nomadic lifestyle.[18] Rejecting the divide and rule paradigm, Hirsch maintains that this was an unexpected development which surprised Soviet experts such as Bartol'd, the Soviet authorities in general, as well as the Central Asians themselves.

With the establishment of national republics in Central Asia, the Soviet regime had hoped to increase the level of cohesion among what Soviet authorities perceived as a deeply fragmented elite. However, the reorganization did not immediately end conflicts and antagonism within the different republican elites. The Central Asian Bureau continued to be concerned with intranational conflicts in the various groups.[19] For reasons discussed above,[20] it was the Uzbek communists and the Uzbek republic that received the greatest share of attention. However, it was in the Kyrgyz *oblast* that lack of unity was most pronounced, making the situation there chaotic.[21] Internal conflicts notwithstanding, the elites of the Uzbek Soviet republic, in the words of Roger Kangas, began to coalesce around the concept of Uzbek.[22] Of course, as mentioned, the Soviet republics did not enjoy the autonomy usually associated with the concept of state. Further, it is obviously correct, as Svante Cornell has argued, that the Soviet nationalities policy represented a fundamental devaluation of concepts such as "autonomy", "self-determination" and "independence".[23] Nevertheless, in

the decade that followed the national delimitation there was an element of local power, particularly in culture and education.[24] As a result, there was some limited room for the various republics and republican elites to pursue their own policies, "nationalizing" or other. In this period, Central Asian political elites asserted themselves in the name of their new national republics. While publicly giving priority to all-union interests, republican governments developed their own ambitions and agendas, in which their particular republic was the main priority.

In the 1930s, however, Stalin's repression curtailed this maneuverability. According to the most accepted understanding, Stalin felt challenged by indigenous republican elites who strove to attain autonomy much beyond the sphere to which the Soviet regime had wanted it to be restricted. The so-called Great Retreat in nationalities policy, that is, the rehabilitation of traditional Russian culture and the promotion of Russian nationalism, has typically been interpreted in this light: it was a strategy aimed at changing center–periphery relations in favor of the former.[25] Later, during the Great Terror, the republican elites suffered physical attack, in which most of the indigenous Central Asian leaders were killed, and replaced with a new generation.[26] As only a small minority of CPSU membership after the purges had experience from the pre-Stalinist period, a new elite with little experience from pre-Revolutionary times was installed in the Central Asian republics.[27] Although there is no evidence that non-Russians as a whole represented a particularly important target, the Terror clearly had a national dimension in that the indigenous republican elites of Central Asia were systematically eliminated. Rather than an example of "ethnic warfare", this was primarily an attempt to destroy alternative power bases. Indeed, during the Terror, all alternative sources of power, real or potential, were brutally attacked without consideration of nationality or ethnicity. An obvious example is the assault on the military elites shortly before Word War II. Whatever the essence and motives behind the Retreat and the Terror, in the Stalinist era there was hardly any room for the expression of national ambitions in the non-Russian republics. Based on the Great Retreat and the assault on national elites, Ronald Suny has argued that it was in this period the Soviet Union had the greatest resemblance to "an ideal type of empire".[28]

It was only with de-Stalinization in the second half of the 1950s that indigenous Central Asians were able to significantly influence the course of events in the region. In the words of James Critchlow, the republican leaders and elites were now able to assert national interests in a way that under Stalin would have invited instant repression.[29] In

the three decades that followed, an unprecedented degree of stability characterized Soviet Central Asia. Between 1960 and 1969, all the Central Asian republics acquired new CP first secretaries, who all remained in office until the 1980s. In all of the Central Asian republics, an increasing national orientation took place in this period, and in this process, reconfiguration of history was crucial. First, Central Asian communists who had been purged and killed in the 1930s, such as Fayzullah Khojaev and Akmal Ikramov of the Uzbek republic, were rehabilitated. Instead of nationalist villains, they became national heroes, celebrated as founding figures of the Uzbek republic. Second came the rehabilitation of intellectuals and of cultural history, both of which the Soviet regime had earlier condemned as intolerable. What had previously been unacceptable now became a source of national pride. However, it was difficult to make history compatible with the national political and administrative divisions of the Soviet period. While perhaps particularly strongly felt in Central Asia, this problem is integral to any reorganization of the past into separate national histories.[30] In this respect, the tendency of Central Asian nation-building in the cultural field manifested itself in scholarship as well. Typical "nation-building subjects", such as history, archeology, and ethnography became particularly popular among the indigenous Central Asians.[31] In addition, this must be seen in connection with the institutionalization of nationality, of which national histories as well as national academies of sciences were important elements. But was this necessarily the first step towards sovereignty?

Throughout the Soviet period, the relation between the central power and the Soviet republics changed several times. In the Stalin era, violent centralization replaced the relative maneuverability of the republics in the 1920s. With de-Stalinization, the autonomy of the republics once again increased. However, at least as far as Central Asia is concerned, this did not mean that visions or ambitions of secession developed. Rather, what happened was that republican leaders were able to develop a local base of support, and in Central Asia, this took the form of local patronage networks based on sub-national solidarities rather than on visions of a unified national community. When Gorbachev came to power, his first actions signaled that center–republic relations would once again take a turn towards centralization. Central Soviet authorities attacked the local support networks in Central Asia as "mafiocracies", and replaced Central Asian leaders.

With *perestroika*, however, the center–periphery relation changed completely. Yet if the demise of the Soviet Union primarily implied

new freedom for the peripheries, Central Asia does not fit well into this picture. Central Asia was not unaffected by *perestroika*, and new kinds of movements and social phenomena appeared here as in other parts of the Soviet Union. The relation between the republics and the political center was at the heart of the new political debates, but separation from the Soviet Union was hardly on the agenda in Central Asia. Rather than questioning the legitimacy of the Soviet Union altogether, what the new movements called for was a reformulation of the relationship between the center and the republics. An important aspect was the criticism of historical relations between Russia and population groups in Central Asia. In the Tsarist era, the Bolsheviks had condemned Russia's expansion into Central Asia as imperialist. In the Stalinist era, however, this attitude changed. Now, the incorporation of Central Asia was perceived as progressive, and it had been accomplished with the consent of the Central Asians. This was an important element of the "Great Friendship" concept, which developed in the 1930s. This was supposed to give legitimacy to the Soviet Union, claiming that there was a historical friendship between "Soviet peoples" older than the Soviet Union itself.[32] In the spirit of the *perestroika*, Central Asian intellectuals began to criticize this perspective of the incorporation of Central Asia into Russia, and instead emphasized Russian force and Central Asian national resistance.[33] This new position was a kind of national self-assertion vis-à-vis a Russian-dominated political center. In this fashion, Central Asians called for a change in relations between the central power and the republics, but they stopped far short of separatism.

Economic issues were important in the criticism of center–periphery relations. In Central Asia, a main issue was that of the so-called "cotton monoculture". Central Asians argued that the entire region suffered from the one-sided economy almost exclusively based on intensive cotton cultivation. This criticism of the "cotton monoculture" carried with it an important environmental dimension, which linked the Central Asian *perestroika* movements to other movements throughout the Soviet Union. In short, what the Central Asian *perestroika* movements called for was a greater level of republican self-determination vis-à-vis the center, but they did not want to end these relations altogether. In the March 1991 referendum on the preservation of the Soviet Union, between 90 and 95 per cent of eligible voters in Central Asia voted in favor of the Union.[34]

The fact that *perestroika* and democratization did not generate nationalist separatism in Central Asia does not imply that the "democra-

tization-separatism-dissolution thesis" is altogether invalid. Elsewhere in the Soviet Union, nationalist movements appeared with autonomy, independence or sovereignty on their programs. This was particularly the case with the Baltic republics and in Georgia. In all these republics, mass-based independence movements had emerged by early 1989. Especially in the Baltic republics, there was a mass-based pressure for secession from the Soviet Union, and even though the Soviet parliament in 1989 granted autonomy to these republics, this did not satisfy them. As far as the Baltic republics were concerned, it was clear that only force could keep them in the union. A democratic Soviet Union, including the Baltic republics, was not an alternative. Obviously, the Baltic republics differed from those in Central Asia in several important respects. First, in the Baltic republics there was a fresh memory of independent statehood in the interwar period. Second, there was the special history of the annexation of these republics. Third, their cost-benefit analysis of membership in the Soviet Union was different from that of the Central Asian republics. In what Victor Zaslavsky has called the "redistributive" Soviet state,[35] people in the economically relatively developed Baltic republics felt they were subsidizing the economically weaker parts of the Union, notably Central Asia. Fourth, the Baltic peoples saw by the late 1980s separation from the Soviet Union as a key to economic modernization, foreign investments, and improved relations with Western European and Scandinavian neighbors.

In Georgia, too, where, in the 1920s, the question of central and local power had led to particularly intense conflicts in connection with the establishment of the Soviet Union, there was a strong drive for independence. Like in the Baltic republics, there was in Georgia a strong memory of independent statehood, and ten years before the *perestroika*, in 1978, there were mass demonstrations in Tbilisi in defense of the use of Georgian as the state language. This anticipated what was to take place throughout the Soviet Union a decade later, and it was logical that, in the more democratic environment of *perestroika*, the demonstrations of 1978 transformed into massive demands for independence and sovereignty. The Baltic republics and Georgia, therefore, appear to provide solid evidence that democratization of the Soviet Union did lead to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. As David Kotz has pointed out, however, secession by the Baltic republics would not in and of itself have been crippling to the Soviet Union, given that they represented only 2.8 per cent of the population and had no important natural resources.[36] On the other hand, others have argued that the example of the Baltic countries proved contagious and inspired other republics to

adopt their independence stance.[37] There is no doubt that developments in the Baltic republics had considerable impact in other regions. The establishment of the Moldavian Popular Front (MPF) in May 1989 is one good example. With its focus on "Romanian-ness" the program of the MPF was, if not explicitly, then at least implicitly separatist. This was also how the Soviet leadership perceived their program. The separatism of the MPF was primarily based on irredentism, aiming at reunification with Romania. That the MPF, in the spring of 1990, won the elections to the Moldavian Supreme Soviet by a landslide demonstrated the level of popular support it enjoyed. However, the irredentist dimensions were not the most important aspect for the supporters of the MPF.[38] This is borne out by the fact that when the "Greater Romania perspective" was later abandoned, there was little popular opposition to this change of policy.

In June 1989, a popular front with a national democratic program was established in Belorussia. Not unlike similar movements in Central Asia, it focused on language and ecological problems (following the Chernobyl disaster). However, neither the majority of the population nor elite groups had independence or separation on the agenda, and in the March 1991 referendum, as much as 83 per cent voted in favor of the union. When Belorussia had produced a declaration of independence in July 1990, this presupposed the continued existence of the USSR. Was this declaration the result of the contagiousness of events in other non-Russian republics? In my opinion, much of the answer lies in the Russian sovereignty declaration of June 1990, primarily the result of Yeltsin's tactical struggle against Gorbachev and the Soviet Union government. As David Kotz has argued, this injected an entirely new element into the situation, and it is not accidental that a number of republics (Uzbekistan, Moldavia, Ukraine, Belorussia, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kazakstan) followed suit with sovereignty resolutions.[39] In most of these cases, the declarations of sovereignty did not correspond to any mass-based nationalist movements, but were made by communist leaders "positioning themselves to hold on to power if Yeltsin proved able to actually abolish the Union state".[40]

Ukraine appears to be a case in point. Unlike what had been the case in Belorussia, a nationalist movement, Rukh, had emerged in Ukraine during *perestroika*. However, it was largely limited to the Western parts of the republic. By 1990, there were no signs that this was developing into an all-Ukrainian movement. In addition, when Leonid Kravchuk, in 1990, to some extent turned himself into a Ukrainian nationalist and declared the sovereignty of Ukraine, this was not because of

internal pressure. It was, rather, the preparation for a possible future suggested by the recently passed Russian sovereignty declaration. However, the conclusion of the process was not yet clear. In the union referendum in March of the following year, 70 per cent of Ukrainian voters supported a renegotiated union treaty, and during the August coup, Kravchuk came out as a conditional supporter. As the coup proved abortive, Kravchuk further cultivated the nationalist aspect, and managed to keep his position in Ukrainian politics into the post-Soviet period.

In my opinion, therefore, it is difficult to support the idea that in a democratic environment non-Russians would necessarily prefer to leave the union because they were non-Russians and for them the Soviet Union represented a version of the Russian Empire with Russia at its core.[41] When the population of Ukraine, in a referendum in December 1991, by a great majority supported complete separation, economic considerations were important. In its electoral propaganda, Rukh had focused on what it considered the tremendous economic capacity of the republic, the full development of which Soviet "internal colonialism" prevented. According to Kolstoe, Rukh grossly exaggerated the optimistic estimates of Western specialists, and in that way connected separatism from the Soviet Union with future economic prosperity.[42] Moreover, and this is even more important, by December 1991, there was hardly any central power left in the Soviet Union. This takes us to the core of the Soviet dissolution. It was, in Moshe Lewin's words, not the nationalities that caused the downfall: "It was the decline and the de facto downfall of the regime that gave them the chance to leave."[43] Until the dissolution of the Soviet Union was a *fait accompli*, the majority in most of the republics supported the continuation of a union. Moreover, for many of the republics, the sovereignty declarations were insurance policies signed by a political elite eager to secure their political positions in a changing world. Also, once again to borrow Lewin's words, "the republics still kept coming to talk and sign, even when all that was left of the center was a lonely Gorbachev".[44] As far as most of the republics are concerned, therefore, a redefined federation seemed to be an acceptable possibility. However, such development would have presupposed both will and sufficient political power in Moscow. After August 1991, both were lacking.

In my opinion, therefore, "revenge of the past" is not a particularly well-suited concept for explaining the demise of the Soviet Union. Quite probably, the Soviet regime's institutionalization of ethnicity to some extent contributed to increasing national orientation, and, as seen in the case of the Central Asian republics, a certain level of

nation-building activities characterized the Soviet republics after Stalin. However, it was not primarily nationalist aspirations that brought the Soviet Union down. Moreover, the regions where the drive for independence was the strongest (the Baltic republics) had been the least exposed to Soviet "ethnic engineering". Soviet institutionalization of ethnicity did not create Baltic independence movements. Indeed, pre-*perestroika* autonomy aspirations in Lithuania were to a significant extent centered on a non-national framework, that of the Catholic Church. To the extent that Baltic separatism was the revenge of the past, what was revenged was the entire Soviet annexation of the region. In Central Asia, on the other hand, where the degree of "ethnic engineering" had perhaps been the greatest, people received independence almost unwillingly. In yet other cases, like for example in Moldavia, local political elites used Moscow's weakness, "rushing toward power in their own separate states".[45] The national structure of the Soviet Union can explain the *pattern* of the Soviet dissolution rather than the Soviet demise itself.[46]

When the Soviet Union came to its end in 1991, it was because the entire Soviet regime broke down. Rather than the result of an eruption of nationalism, the Soviet dissolution was primarily the consequence of an implosion of the political center of the Soviet state. The reason for this implosion is an enormous topic, which I cannot discuss in any depth here. However, hardly anyone would disagree that economic factors were paramount. From this perspective, the question of the Soviet downfall is, to some extent, the question of the Soviet economic collapse. One may argue that there was no collapse in the Soviet economy before *perestroika*, and that *perestroika* itself undermined the performance of the system.[47] However, the Soviet economy was in deep trouble at the time, and the experience of economic crisis was a major impetus for the introduction of reforms in the first place. What was the background for these economic problems? A commonly accepted understanding is that while the Soviet command-administrative system was useful in the process of intensive industrialization, it did not have the flexibility required in a more complex economic reality. The command-administrative system had the ability to mobilize resources, but not to use them efficiently; it could not handle the demands created by the scientific-technological revolution.[48] Manfred Hildermeier has problematized this notion, demonstrating that already during the collectivization in 1935 Stalin recognized the limitations of the command-administrative system. In Hildermeier's words, the incompatibility of ideology with reality represented the "life-lie" of the Soviet

regime.[49] In spite of this early recognition, it was only with Gorbachev's *perestroika* that the full consequences were realized.

While some have argued that the Soviet nationality policy ultimately laid the groundwork for the breakup, I find it easier to agree with Victor Zaslavsky's focus on the socioeconomic dimension of Soviet life. He argues that the Soviet Union proved an unviable and unsustainable form of social organization:

> Having fostered a specific type of a state-dependent worker as its major social base, the Soviet system created its own "grave-diggers": huge masses of people who loathed competition and craved stability, who were hostile to innovation or productive work ... Resistance to change and a general lack of innovative spirit characterized behavior on all levels in the Soviet social system.[50]

From this perspective, the Soviet system would have failed irrespective of the national composition of the Soviet population and irrespective of the strategy in the "national question". When the Soviet Union ceased to exist, it was not because of a spectacular divergence of consequence from intention in the nationalities policy. Quite the opposite, during the Soviet period, the Soviet approach to the national question had considerable success, in that it provided a significant degree of stability. When the regime itself broke down, however, the entire state disintegrated into its constituent parts.

Post-Soviet Central Asia

The dissolution of the Soviet Union fundamentally altered the situation of the former Soviet republics. Some republics, particularly the Baltic republics, left the Soviet Union with great self-confidence and entered the new era with optimism and high hopes for the future. In Central Asia, the situation was rather different. Independence was received reluctantly, and only a few months earlier, Central Asians had almost unanimously supported continued union membership. Unlike the Baltic republics, those in Central Asia had no pre-Soviet state tradition to lean upon; they were the products of the Soviet period. How would they manage on their own? Among Western observers, quite a few expected that the Central Asian republics might cease to exist altogether and that the borders drawn in the 1920s would lose significance as the Soviet Union fell apart. This expectation was based on the idea that Central Asian borders had been drawn and upheld by

Moscow, and when there was no longer any Moscow to dominate the region, the borders would disintegrate. The delimitation had been artificial from the beginning, and the dissolution of the Soviet Union would result in a reconfiguration according to real identities. Old pan-Turkism would again prevail, never having succumbed to the foreign imposition of new concepts of identity.[51] As Adeeb Khalid has pointed out, ideas of Turkic solidarity propagated by Turkic émigrés in Turkey and in some European countries influenced this perception.[52] However, the émigrés had precious little contact with daily life in Central Asia in the late Soviet period. While attractive to some Western observers, this emigrant vision had little appeal within Central Asia.

The fact that national identification remained relatively insignificant does not imply that pan-Turkic or Turkestanian identities were more salient. On the contrary, when the character of the Soviet state and society stimulated other identities than the national ones, these identities were more limited than, rather than more comprehensive than, national ones. Moreover, as argued in earlier chapters, the pan-Turkic vision had limited appeal in the 1920s as well.

When sovereignty came to the Central Asian republics, the political leaders who successfully clung to power had to reformulate their political approach. All of them chose the perspective of the national republics. Of course, the administrative positions that the former communist leaders wanted to keep were connected to the respective republics. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that, to the extent that discussions of various (limited) pan-Central Asian solutions have taken place in the post-Soviet period, the discussions have echoed the discussions of 1924. During the delimitation, the fear of Uzbek hegemony was something that influenced the behavior of the other groups. The pattern is the same in the post-Soviet context. While representing a compelling image for some émigrés, the idea of a unified Central Asia for post-Soviet Turkmen, Kyrgyz and Kazak political leaders implies a threat of Uzbek dominance, and thus their own political marginalization. To the extent that the vision of a politically unified Central Asia existed, it is typical that Uzbekistan was the chief proponent, while those residing in the other republics were much more skeptical to the idea.[53]

Western scholars have largely disregarded the national delimitation as a foreign imposition. In this view, similar to what took place in colonial Africa, the region was crudely divided into political-administrative entities that did not correspond to existing patterns of identity. From this perspective, it is a major problem that the delimi-

tation left members of the predominant nationalities outside "their" republics, which would presumably lead to demands for border revisions, and ultimately perhaps the disintegration of former Soviet republics. Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, several scholars and observers predicted that the Soviet heritage would haunt Central Asia in the era of sovereignty. The 1992 edition of *Border and Territorial Disputes* listed more than 20 territorial areas in Central Asia as potential sources of conflict.[54] Similarly, Hafeez Malik maintained that "there are at least a dozen major territorial problems, which have the potential of turning Central Asia into a hotbed of ethnic and religious antagonism and violence".[55] To what extent has this scenario materialized?

Without a doubt, problems have been legion in Central Asia in the decade that has transpired since the Soviet Union dissolved. Yet, although territorial disputes have occurred between the different Central Asian states, territorial demands and calls for border revisions have not developed to the extent that many had expected. Following Rogers Brubaker's reasoning, this would indicate that the Central Asian states have not been pursuing a "nationalizing" line. In fact, "nationalization" in Brubaker's meaning has characterized post-Soviet Central Asia only to a quite limited degree. Certainly, the former communist leaders of Central Asia soon turned to the discourse of nationalism to legitimize their continued rule in a new context. The Central Asian leaders immediately rejected communism and presented themselves in a nationalist garb.[56] To some extent, what happened was typical of decolonization. Local names replaced Russian names of streets, cities and other geographical features. Furthermore, a reinterpretation of history has taken place, which has prioritized nation-building elements that focus on the particular qualities and the antiquity of the national community. This was an intensification of earlier-mentioned trends from the late Soviet period.

The issue of nation building has been particularly acute in Kazakstan, with its bifurcated population. Here, national distinctions are more intensely present than in the other and more homogeneous republics. While it seems relatively unproblematic to conceive of, for example, Turkmenistan as "a state for the Turkmen people" the situation is much more complex in Kazakstan with its two large population groups. In Kazakstan, therefore, the question of the relation between the different population groups and the state has been a much more politically charged issue than in the other republics.

In general, however, the Central Asian states have behaved as nationalizing regimes only to a limited extent. An obvious example is

the way in which Uzbekistan deals with what the authorities recognize as ethnic Uzbek minorities living in neighboring states. Today an estimated 2.5 million Uzbeks live in neighboring Kyrgyzstan, Kazakstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. However, Uzbek authorities' attitudes towards these groups are very far from Brubaker's "transborder nationalism".[57] Uzbeks who fled to Uzbekistan during the civil war in Tajikistan were refused citizenship or residence and were forced to reside illegally. In March 2001, a group of Uzbeks with Tajik citizenship who had fled to Uzbekistan during the civil war was forcefully deported to the Tajik border. In general, the "outside Uzbeks" are prevented from free travel into Uzbekistan. Residents of southern Kyrgyzstan, for instance, may not enter more than 100 km into Uzbek territories.[58] For the Uzbek authorities, other concerns have priority over the idea of the unification of "the Uzbek people". As another example, when independence had become a reality in Turkmenistan, president Niyazov rapidly established the society "Turkmen of the World", which drew the attention to the Turkmen living outside the republican borders. However, this society has proved largely symbolic, and it has not had much influence on political practice.

I would therefore agree with Edward Schatz that the perspective of nation building must be applied with caution to Central Asia, and that it may represent a conceptual trap in the sense that it overshadows other and more important phenomena.[59] In both Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the regimes are authoritarian and repressive, and repression does not follow national lines. Moreover, the most important dynamics in politics appear to be sub-national rather than national divisions. Although not very much is known about the nature and role of these divisions, there is no doubt that various kinds of regional and other sub-national identities, loyalties, and patronage networks have profound influence on politics in the post-Soviet Central Asian republics. This situation is a legacy of the Soviet period and an expression of timeworn historical continuities. Instead of eliminating sub-national divisions, the Soviet experience represented an environment in which those kinds of divisions proved useful and valuable.

From this view, therefore, the fact that fragmentation and disunity rather than cohesion characterize the Central Asian republics is only partly the result of the Soviet experience. This is not primarily the legacy of the delimitation of the 1920s. The main problem is neither the fact that a number of Uzbeks, Turkmen, Tajiks or Kazaks live outside "their" republics, nor the heterogeneity of these groups themselves. The main obstacle for cohesion and consolidation is, now as in

the Soviet period, the role of the state. For identification with and loyalty to the state to develop, the state must become the reliable provider of basic needs such as security and justice. Today, the Central Asian states are rather associated with the opposite qualities.

Such cohesion is fully feasible in a context of heterogeneity and pluralism. In fact, that is to some extent what the Soviet nationalities policy was about, even though loyalty with the state remained limited, for reasons discussed above. Much has been written about the negative and disastrous effects of Communist rule throughout the former Soviet Union. However, in my opinion, it is also possible to highlight more positive aspects of the Soviet heritage, and, in the field of national relations, I believe there are some elements that might represent a valuable resource in post-Soviet Central Asia. Of course, the Soviet regime was repressive, and sometimes violence and repression followed national lines. The deportation of entire groups, such as, for example, Chechens and Koreans, are cases in point. However, Soviet repression was not, in principle, an attack on national differences. Bolshevik and Soviet ideology always emphasized the right of nationalities to retain their distinctness. Even though abysmal discrepancies between official ideology and political practice were the rule rather than the exception in the Soviet Union, I support Yuri Slezkine's argument that the Soviet regime did not attempt to or intend to abolish national differences *per se*. Expressions of national differences were primarily suppressed as far as they were incompatible with the authoritarian Soviet project in a more general sense.[60] As recent research has demonstrated, in some periods, notably the Stalinist era, what Soviet authorities perceived as political threats could be quite arbitrary and unpredictable.[61]

To a certain extent, Soviet attitudes towards manifestations of national differences were both liberal and tolerant. While clearly much less so than what official ideology would have us believe, Soviet practice was in some respects more liberal and tolerant than that in liberal and democratic states. Western observers have tended to see the Soviet Union as a Russian Empire, where Russians dominated over the other peoples. "Ethnic Russia" was overrepresented in the structures of power, and Russians in general felt superior to the indigenous population of the Caucasus and Central Asia. However, there were no legal differences between individuals based on ethnic, national or racial background as, for example, was earlier the case in the USA. Similarly, while there is no doubt that the Russian language, in spite of official ideology, had a dominant position in many important fields, there was no massive drive for linguistic assimilation of all non-Russian nationalities in the

Soviet Union. The right to use and to receive education in the different national languages was not restricted to theory, which, in Slezkine's words, turned the dictatorship of the proletariat into a Tower of Babel.[62] This, too, was very different from the policy towards national minorities found in many liberal and democratic countries. For example, Norway's policy towards the Lapp minority was a massive assimilation campaign targeted not only against the Lapp language but also against Lapp distinctiveness in general. In comparison with that kind of assimilation strategy, the Soviet approach was obviously pluralist.

Undoubtedly, there are innumerable tragic, disastrous, and catastrophic consequences of the decades of Soviet rule. Soviet communism has left its successors with a heritage of, among many other evils, authoritarianism, repression, and corruption. However, in the field of national relations, the Soviet era may have contributed something positive, namely, a general tendency to accept national differences rather than a drive to eliminate them. It was considered acceptable that people who lived in the same territory spoke different languages, wore different costumes, and identified with different national groups. Moreover, this was not only accepted, to a certain degree it was even encouraged.

In some ways, the establishment of national Soviet republics in Central Asia represented a divergence from the regional tradition of pluralism and heterogeneity. But even if national affiliation was to be the basis of the new entities, complete ethnic homogeneity was never an important goal for the Soviet regime. Soviet authorities did not consider the presence of different groups as a major problem, and they recognized such groups as national minorities with certain rights. Moreover, full correspondence between ethnic and political boundaries would in any case have been impossible, given the complexity of the Central Asian population. With good cause, Western scholars often ridiculed official Soviet references to the "Friendship of the peoples" and the insistence that the Soviet Union had solved the national question. However, there may be something of value behind the crude propaganda, in that a principal tolerance of national differences was present throughout the Soviet period. So far, in Central Asia, the doomsday prophesies of national turbulence and ethnic animosity have failed to materialize. For the sake of the political future of Central Asia, one must hope that this tradition of, albeit limited, pluralism and tolerance under the Soviet regime can be carried into the post-Soviet era.

However, in myriad other ways, the heritage of the delimitation represents great challenges for post-Soviet Central Asia. Economic via-

bility was not a criterion in the reorganization of Central Asia in the 1920s. The republics would all be components of the larger Soviet community, which managed the economy on a union-wide level. Subsequent to the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Central Asian republics have felt the consequences of this strategy. The considerable former economic dependency on Russia and Moscow has created an important barrier to the maneuverability of the newly sovereign states. As a result, the "independence" of post-Soviet Central Asia is greatly limited. This is one of the reasons for the economic hardship that almost the entire Central Asian population experienced in the first decade of sovereignty. However, their main problem is the unwillingness, on the part of the political leadership, to institute reforms, as these leaders cling to their positions at the cost of the welfare of their constituencies.[63] The combination of traditional patronage networks and the Soviet heritage of authoritarianism, repression and corruption is at least as serious a problem as the heritage of Soviet era patterns of economic dependence.

In addition, in terms of economic potential, there are great differences between the various post-Soviet Central Asian republics. Particularly in Turkmenistan, the political leadership began the era of sovereignty by projecting a bright economic future based on natural energy resources. For the republic of Tajikistan, however, the situation is quite different. The Tajik republic, as established in 1924, was restricted essentially to "mountain tops", and even though the Khojent (Leninabad) district was incorporated in 1929, the Tajik SSR remained the poorest of the Soviet republics. Unfortunately, the economic prospects for the future remain gloomy. This might represent a source of permanent instability for the republic, and civil war has exacerbated the problems. It is not difficult to agree with Tajik nationalists who consider the Tajiks the losing party in the delimitation, even though I do not share their interpretation of what happened in that process.[64] Furthermore, the Kyrgyz republic is in a similarly unfortunate situation, as it enjoys few natural economic assets. As a result, also in Kyrgyzstan, poverty may remain a reality in the foreseeable future.

Economic problems have plagued Central Asia since independence, and poor government and lack of reform has made a difficult situation even worse. In the cases of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, however, the situation would have been difficult enough even in the best of times. In fact, the limited economic potential of some of the newly independent states may be one of the most serious consequences of Soviet rule for the region. Looking at Central Asia at the beginning of the

new millennium, economy and poverty pose a considerable threat and certainly much more than does "the national question". At present, the dangerous combination of poverty and repression threatens to increasingly destabilize this region. Their limited economic potential therefore makes reform and efficient exploitation of resources in these republics all the more crucial, yet in both areas the challenges remain enormous. From this perspective, the heritage of the national delimitation of the 1920s may haunt Central Asia for years to come.

Conclusion

The Bolsheviks were originally quite unsympathetic to the ideas of the nation and national community. In Bolshevik thinking, the national community was primarily a bourgeois construction that served to draw the attention of the proletariat away from their real and objective interests. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union that the Bolsheviks established on the ruins of the Tsarist Empire was the first state to systematically base its political units on ethnicity. In the Soviet Union, national identity comprised the main principle of territorial political organization. I have explored this paradox through an investigation of a particularly prominent example of this strategy, the so-called national delimitation of Central Asia. In 1924, the Communist Party dissolved the multiethnic political entities of Bukhara, Khorezm, and Turkestan and replaced them with national Soviet republics (and *oblasts*). The national delimitation appears to be a particularly fruitful point of departure for a discussion of Soviet nationalities policy as it represented a fundamental reorganization of the region. What did the Soviet regime hope to achieve, and what kind of polity were the different national entities supposed to make up? On one hand, I have analyzed the discourse of the central Soviet authorities in connection with the delimitation in order to discuss how they perceived the introduction of national political entities and the role of these entities within the Soviet state. On the other hand, I have used the process of the delimitation as a basis for a discussion of the nature of the Soviet regime in the mid-1920s.

In addition, I have examined the delimitation from a local perspective, focusing on the relationship between central power and local political agency. Was the national delimitation a strategy conceived and implemented exclusively by the Russian dominated central

authorities in Moscow, or did indigenous political players exert decisive influence on the reorganization? Further, to the extent that local influence played a role, what was the relationship between the new organization introduced in the 1920s and social realities in Central Asia? In other words, was the delimitation in all respects a foreign imposition, or did it in any profound sense reflect important aspects of Central Asian society?

In most Western scholarship, the perception of the national delimitation as an imperial divide and rule strategy has held a predominant position. It has been an important argument in this analysis that the present evidence cannot justify comprehending the delimitation exclusively from a power perspective. The establishment of national republics was not primarily aimed at disrupting a unified Central Asia. In my analysis, the process appears a much more constructive strategy. In the central Soviet authorities' perception of Central Asia at the time of the delimitation, the idea of a unified Central Asia enjoyed no prominent place. As they saw it, Central Asia was much more characterized by fragmentation on various levels than by unity. From this point of view, even the Central Asian communists who were, in principle, loyal to and supported Soviet power, were prevented from carrying out constructive political work because they were involved in all kinds of conflicts driven by national, sub-national and personal antagonism. The discourse regarding the establishment of national political entities reveals that the Soviet regime hoped that the organization of national republics might counteract this fragmentation. If elites coalesced around the national republics, they might be more able to engage in "Soviet construction". In this sense, the creation of the national republics was more about bringing together than splitting up.

Rather than primarily being a power game, the delimitation was the strategy of a regime that had concluded that national political entities could prove useful in a variety of ways. Most importantly, the Soviet regime saw the establishment of such entities as a way of achieving centralization and socialist modernization. As opposed to the Tsarist regime, Soviet communists intended to change Central Asian society in a fundamental way. An important part of this project was to replace the traditional social structure. The Soviet authorities identified these social structures as patriarchal-feudal and as based on tribes and clans. According to the Marxist point of view, social change would follow economic transformation. However, the Soviet regime also hoped that identification with the new national political entities would replace traditional solidarities and loyalties. In this sense, one could say that

there was a significant power dimension involved in the delimitation. Still, the long-term objectives of social change were more important than short-term considerations of political power.

In the Bolsheviks' visions of socialist modernization, the replacement of small economical and political units with larger ones was essential. This centralizing aspect represented the progressive dimension of capitalism. Apparently, the national delimitation represented a move in the opposite direction, as the number of political units in the region grew with the reorganization. There is, however, no contradiction between theory and practice on this point, and Soviet authorities saw the delimitation as a means of centralization. The traditional social structure and the clan-tribal loyalties had previously represented a major obstacle to what the Soviet regime perceived as rational exploitation of economic resources. If these narrow perspectives could be replaced with a national republican one, this would represent a valuable contribution to the project of socialist modernization. In my analysis, therefore, the Soviet strategy of promoting national identity and making nationality the main principle of political territorial organization was not primarily a result of dogmatic thinking about necessary stages in historical development. Instead, Soviet authorities based the strategy on pragmatic considerations of what role national political entities might play in the Soviet reality of the 1920s. The Soviet approach to the nationalities question was the result of a development. If the concept of the nation and national identity had first represented a problem, the Bolsheviks gradually began to see it as a part of a solution to a number of problems experienced throughout the Soviet state.

Soviet nation-building in the non-Russian regions was part of a two-stage centralization process. The new national Soviet entities were to serve as a framework for centralization processes in the regions. In Central Asia, this was also a process of assimilation. Various groups and fragmented societies were to develop into larger and more coherent bodies of Uzbeks, Turkmen, and so on. At the same time, the regional centralization processes were parts of a union-wide centralization, as the national Soviet republics, in their turn, were subject to the supremacy of the political center. In a cultural sense, however, it was not really an assimilation process. Even though the Soviet regime aimed at establishing equal socioeconomic conditions throughout the Soviet Union, there was never an attack on cultural distinctness as such. The dissolution of the Soviet Union reflected this approach. In spite of the fact that separatist nationalism was not among the principal reasons for the Soviet breakdown, and that there was considerable skepticism towards

the idea of independent statehood in several republics, the Soviet dissolution clearly demonstrated that the notion of national distinctness was well and alive in 1990. There is, in my opinion, reason to hope that this principal acceptance of cultural differences can represent something positive in post-Soviet Central Asia.

What kind of polity was the central Soviet regime aiming to build with the national delimitation of Central Asia? Was this simply a remodeling of the Tsarist Russian Empire? There are obvious continuities. Largely, power remained in Russia in the highly centralized and Russian-dominated Communist Party. There was always a level of ethnic Russian dominance in Soviet politics. Moreover, the structure of the Soviet Union was clearly imperial in that all non-Russian republics related primarily to the center rather than to each other. The representatives of the central Soviet regime who were involved in the delimitation in the 1920s evinced an outlook that was, in many respects, imperialist. Like all imperialists, they believed they represented something superior to the Central Asian population. In part, this "something" stemmed from their knowledge of the principles of scientific socialism, but it also came in part from the sense of representing a superior culture and way of life. To some extent, the European revolutionaries were "missionary imperialists". The idea of introducing something valuable into Central Asia was an important part of their self-conception, and European communists often expressed dissatisfaction that Central Asians did not appreciate this contribution sufficiently.

In this sense, their project was fundamentally imperialist, even though it differed from classic imperialism. In the Soviet case, too, center–periphery relations remained asymmetrical, and power, highly centralized. The regime did not, however, use this power to exploit the peripheries economically, but to impose a fundamentally new kind of society in the peripheries. Even though Russians were perceived and perceived themselves as the "core nationality" in the Soviet state, and even though the new type of society the Soviet regime attempted to introduce in the peripheries had some features of Russian culture, the delimitation was not first and foremost a matter of Russification of the non-Russian peripheries. In this process of social change, the regime found that the framework of the nation could prove useful; an idea that led to the development of what Francine Hirsch has called the "empire of nations".[1] This is an adequate concept, as it expresses one of the most characteristic features of the Soviet state. The Soviet Union was not the only empire to promote ethnicity. For example, the British

did this as well in some cases for political expediency. Yet only the Soviet Union adopted ethnicity as a main principle of political organization.

The imperial dimension and the character of center–periphery relations do not imply that there was no local influence on the reorganization of the 1920s. Instead, a main conclusion of this study is that local political actors, as well as the social realities of Central Asia, exerted significant influence on the delimitation. In most cases, the new borders of Central Asia were the result of real discussions and negotiations that involved members of the various Central Asian population groups as well as representatives of the central Soviet authorities. Two aspects of this negotiation process are particularly interesting. The first relates to the nature of the Soviet regime in the middle of the NEP period. The delimitation discussions reveal a Soviet regime that, at least to some extent, was open to influence and initiatives from below. Several local initiatives influenced the delimitation decisively. Of course, one should not exaggerate this. Local initiatives were allowed to influence only as far as they did not conflict with overall Soviet ambitions and goals. In addition, this was also a period that experienced violent attacks, like in the case of the Basmachi. Nevertheless, these observations do point to a somewhat more liberal mode of operation that differed from what had been the case in the civil war period, and which was qualitatively different from the regime that developed under Stalin during the 1930s.

The second important aspect of the negotiations is that the territorial political entities corresponded to the historical and social realities of Central Asia to a much greater extent than has usually been recognized in scholarship. This was possible because of the significant role of Central Asian political actors in the delimitation. That national designations such as "Uzbek", "Turkmen", and so on, did not hold any prominent position in Central Asian society by the end of the nineteenth century does not necessarily imply that the entities established with those names 25 years later were artificial constructs. The idea of the national community had struck some root in Central Asia in the late Tsarist period. In the first half of the 1920s, a nationalization of political discourse took place among Central Asian communists. Largely as the unintended results of Soviet policies, "Uzbek", "Turkmen" and other national designations were politicized. Even though this "politicization" was something new, Central Asian communists conceptualized the different groups in a way that reflected historical realities. As these conceptualizations also considerably influenced

border making, the established entities came to represent a great deal of continuity.

In 1991, 67 years after their creation as Soviet republics or *oblasts* within the Soviet Union, the Central Asian republics became sovereign. In a wave of independence declarations and expressions of nationalism, the Soviet Union ended as a territorial entity. However, it was not nationalist or separatist aspirations that caused the Soviet demise, and least of all was it Central Asian nationalism. In the cases of the Central Asian republics, independence and sovereignty were not the results of a struggle for national freedom. Rather, Central Asia received sovereignty half-heartedly, as independence implied great problems. Certainly, the Soviet period left behind a troubled legacy which partly, but not primarily, can be traced back to the reorganization of the 1920s. For some republics, economic prospects are bleak, and the economic weakness can result in a level of poverty that can turn into a major threat in this volatile part of the world. Consequently, Central Asia needs reforms more than anything. Unfortunately, reality has so far failed to meet expectations.

Notes

Introduction

1 The use of "Kyrgyz" and "Kazak" is not unproblematic. The population group that today is referred to as "Kazaks" was in Russian terminology earlier referred to as "Kirgiz". As a result, the forerunner of today's Kazakstan was the Kirgiz ASSR, established in 1920. At the same time, what has after 1925 been referred to as "Kyrgyz" was then labeled "Kara-Kirgiz". This terminology was changed in 1925 when what had until then been called "Kirgiz" became "Kazak" while "Kara-Kirgiz" was replaced with "Kyrgyz". In line with this change, the Kirgiz ASSR became the Kazak ASSR in 1925, while the Kara-Kirgiz AO became the Kyrgyz AO. When I refer to these two categories in my text, I use "Kazak" and "Kyrgyz" as they were used in official Soviet-Russian terminology from 1925 on. I do this even when referring to pre-1925 discourse. In quotations, however, I stick to the original. In order to make clear to which category the text refers, I give the post-1925 designation in brackets when needed. Thus, in quotations including pre-1925 terminology "Kirgiz" will be followed by "(Kazak)". Similarly, the term "Kara-Kirgiz" will be followed by "(Kyrgyz)". I emphasize that these terms refer to conceptual categories and not to real entities.

2 The Tajik ASSR was originally established as Autonomous *Oblast* (AO) within the Uzbek SSR, but was remade into a separate SSR in 1929. The Kyrgyz SSR was first set up as the Kara-Kirgiz AO as a part of the RSFSR in 1924. In 1925 it was renamed the Kyrgyz AO, and in 1926 its status was changed into an ASSR. In 1936 it became the Kyrgyz SSR. The Karakalpak AO was originally set up as part of the Kazak republic. In 1936 its status was changed from AO to ASSR, and it was transferred to become a part of the Uzbek SSR.

3 Suny 1992: 28.

4 Hirsch 2000: 202.

5 Even though Soviet accounts all stress the local dimension in the process, they concur that the national delimitation essentially was the creation of the party. See for example Turgunbekov 1969.

6 Russian Center for the Preservation and Study of Records of Modern History (RTsKhIDNI) fond 62.

7 The State Archives of the Russian Federation (GARF) in Moscow.

8 Brower and Lazzerini 1997: xviii.

9 Anderson 1983, Gellner 1983, Smith 1991.

10 According to Alexander Motyl nationalism as a belief system is a political ideal that views statehood as the optimal form of political organization for each nation (Motyl 1990: 53). The problem with this view is that it takes "nation" or the national community for granted. In my opinion, however, nationalism as a belief system signifies the importance of ethnic criteria in

the conceptualization of group boundaries, but it does not necessarily imply that this group aspires towards statehood. In that sense one might say that nationalism as a belief system developed in Central Asia prior to and after the Russian revolution.

11 Smith 1991: 68ff.

Chapter 1

1 Letter from Marx to Kugelmann cited from From *Marx and Engels Correspondence* 1968. International Publishers. At <marxists.org/archive/marx/letters/kug/69_11_29b.htm>
2 Motyl 1990: 74ff.
3 Smith 1999: 21.
4 Pipes 1997: 23. For a detailed account of the different positions in the national question see Connor 1984.
5 Slezkine 1994: 416.
6 Siegelbaum 1992: 119.
7 Pipes 1997: 41ff.
8 Pipes 1997: 45.
9 Martin 1996.
10 Pipes 1997: 296.
11 In essence, this interpretive framework holds a prominent position in the works of Conquest (for example 1970), Connor 1984, Carrère d'Encausse 1992, Simon 1991, and Blank 1994.
12 Connor 1992: 21–4.
13 Carr 1950: 378.
14 Carr 1950: chapter 12.
15 Kommisrud 1996: 27.
16 Slezkine 1994: 414ff.
17 Refers to Stalin's famous slogan that the culture of the different Soviet peoples ought to be national in form and socialist in content.
18 Martin 1996.
19 Hirsch 2000.
20 Hirsch 2000: 203.
21 Smith 1999: 239–40.
22 Smith 1999: 240.
23 See for instance Gordienko 1959: 154, Tursunov 1971: 314, Khojaev 1932: 149, Turgunbekov 1969 and Vakhabov 1961: 386.
24 Khodzhaev 1932: 149.
25 Tursunov 1971: 314ff.
26 Vakhabov 1961 and Turgunbekov 1969 are examples of this orientation.
27 Vakhabov 1961: 387–8.
28 Vakhabov 1961: 388.
29 See for instance Nemchenko 1925 and Vareikis and Zelenskii 1924: 44. This is not entirely unlike an argument that will be made in Chapter 4. However, rather than increased tension between well established groups, what changed were perceptions of groupness, which quite probably concerned only very limited parts of the population. Secondly, these changes were

hardly the result of a divide and rule strategy, but rather of a combination of social, economical, cultural and political changes in Central Asian society.

30 Vareikis and Zelenskii 1924: 45–6.
31 Gordienko 1959: 159.
32 Gordienko 1959: 147.
33 Nemchenko 1925: 14ff.
34 Vareikis and Zelenskii 1924: 59.
35 Nemchenko 1925: 14.
36 Vaidyanath 1967: 105.
37 Wheeler 1964: 124.
38 See for example Hayit 1963.
39 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay 1967: 134.
40 Khalid 1998: 184.
41 Blank 1994: 140.
42 Blank 1994: 128.
43 Mustafa Chokaev quoted in Sabol 1995: 237.
44 Allworth 1990: 202 and 208.
45 Allworth 1990: 179.
46 Allworth 1990: 198.
47 Allworth 1990: 208.
48 Carrère d'Encausse in Allworth 1989: 256.
49 Roy 2000: 73.
50 Roy 2000: 68.
51 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay 1961: 27.
52 There is a clear parallel between this tendency and the emergence of new positions in studies of the Russian Revolution in the final decades of the Cold War period. While the traditional interpretations had seen the October Revolution largely as a result of the manipulation of ignorant masses by the central leadership of the Bolshevik party, less, or at least differently politically-charged research began to focus on the popular masses as conscious and rational actors in the revolutionary period. Far from being tools in the hands of a revolutionary minded intelligentsia: "the masses acted upon the political leaders as much as they were acted upon by them" (Acton 1990: 46).
53 Fragner 1989: 31.
54 Fragner 1989, in particular 29–31.
55 Khalid 1998.
56 Khalid 1998: 185.
57 Khalid 1998: 185.
58 Khalid 1998: 214.
59 Carlisle 1994: 104.
60 Carlisle 1994: 104.
61 Carlisle 1994: 104.
62 Allworth 1990: 201.
63 Sabol 1995: 235.
64 Siegelbaum 1992 and Tucker 1977: 79.
65 Pipes 1995: 390–1.
66 Pipes 1995: 374.

67 I will not go into details about the NEP economy. The essence of it, however, was liberalization and limited privitization as compared to the previous period. On the NEP economy see for example Carr 1952: chapter 19.
68 Typical representatives of this interpretation are Tucker 1977, Cohen 1971 and Lewin 1985.
69 Cohen 1980: 276.
70 Pipes 1995: 347.
71 Werth 1999.
72 Pipes 1995: 409.
73 Cohen 1980: 271–2.
74 Cohen 1980: 272.
75 Siegelbaum 1992: 115–16.
76 Tucker 1977: 81.
77 Siegelbaum 1992: 116.
78 On "nepmen" see Ball 1987.
79 Carrère d'Encausse 1992: 171.
80 See for example Bennigsen and Broxup 1983.

Chapter 2

1 Even though there was a clear link between the wish to control and the desire for knowledge, there was also an element of enlightenment and a civilizing mission involved as well. In an article arguing for the necessity of gathering material on Turkestan, knowledge is linked to "a cultural and peaceful development of the region, and its integration into the group of civilized countries" (Iomudskii 1910: 139).
2 Khalid 1998: 199 ff.
3 Samoilovich 1910: 267.
4 Samoilovich 1910: 267.
5 Bartol'd 1964: 313.
6 Schoeberlein-Engel 1994: 166 ff.
7 Schoeberlein-Engel 1996: 13.
8 Khoroshin 1874: 314.
9 Khoroshin 1874: 317–19.
10 Cited in Bartol'd 1964: 528.
11 Samoilovich 1910: 267.
12 Such as N. A. Aristov, cited in Khalid 1998: 200.
13 Schoeberlein-Engel 1996: 13.
14 Schoeberlein-Engel 1994: 20.
15 Bartol'd 1964: 528.
16 Samoilovich 1910: 269. "Ethnic" is here to be understood as referring to origin and linguistic practice as opposed to socioeconomic aspects or aspects concerning social organization.
17 Samoilovich 1910: 269.
18 Fragner 1989: 22.
19 Fragner 1989.
20 Bartol'd 1964: 528.
21 Mukhitdinov 1928.

22 See the discussion of "multiple identities" in Smith 1991: 3 ff.
23 Akiner 1995: 17 ff.
24 Demidov 1976: 14. Demidov concluded that the notion of *övlat* and their particular position in society was still a reality in Turkmenistan of the 1970s.
25 Demidov 1976: 19 ff. Examples of *övlat*-inspired names are ones beginning with Khoja-, such as Khojaberdi ("Khoja gave") and Shikhberdi ("Shikh gave").
26 Demidov 1976: 175.
27 Iazlyev 1992: 198.
28 Cited in Iazlyev 1992: 198.
29 John Schoeberlein has pointed out that this was acknowledged already by the orientalists of the Tsarist period (Schoeberlein-Engel 1994: 160).
30 Samoilovich 1910: 268.
31 This research strategy fits in very nicely with the political ambitions of the Soviet regime to weaken Islam's legitimacy. This project typically led to titles such as *Pre-Islamic Beliefs and their Survivals among the Kyrgyz* (Baialiva 1972).
32 Khalid 1998: 192.
33 This is based on analysis of various documents in the files of the Central Asian Bureau in the years 1922–24.
34 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 3, d. 9, l. 53.
35 Schoeberlein-Engel 1994: 227.
36 Nissman 1997: 642.
37 Lemercier-Quelquejay 1985: 22.
38 Allworth 1990: 236.
39 Khalid 1998: 188.
40 See for instance *Istoriia Turkmenskoi SSR* 1957, Wheeler 1964: 13, Bennigsen and Wimbush 1985a: 101.
41 Dzhikiev 1991: 332.
42 See for instance *Obychnoe pravo Turkmen (adat)* written by Lomakin in 1897 (published 1993).
43 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 102, ll. 62–6.
44 Saray 1989: 62 ff.
45 Saray 1989: 62 ff.
46 *Istoriia Turkmenskoi SSR* 1957 I, 2: 117 ff.
47 Saray 1989: 70.
48 The tribe of Teke is subdivided into two groups, the Akhal-Teke and the Mary-Teke. Historically, these two groups had separate leadership, but Nurberdy Khan is one of the rare examples of a khan common to the two groups (*Istoriia Turkmenskoi SSR* 1957: 46).
49 *Istoriia Turkmenskoi SSR* 1957: 72 ff., Saray 1989: 62.
50 *Istoriia Turkmenskoi SSR* 1957: 117 ff.
51 Carrère d'Encausse 1989c: 212.
52 Tarasov 1951.
53 Cited in Tarasov 1951: 114.
54 Smith 1991: 21.
55 Horowitz 1985: chapter 2.
56 Schoeberlein-Engel 1994: 22. Perhaps a parallel situation might be found in the Scandinavian countries. On the Norway–Sweden border, for instance, a

dialect spoken on the Norwegian side may be at least as close to the one spoken on the Swedish side as to dialects from other parts of Norway. This does not mean that the people in question are not Norwegian- or Swedish-speakers respectively.

57 Menges 1989: 72.

58 Whether the various Turkic language forms should be considered languages or dialects is a matter or some controversy, generally very politically laden. Those emphasizing the unity of Turkic-speaking peoples typically refer to dialects, while nationalists, seeking to highlight differences, are more likely to think of the various linguistic forms as languages.

59 See Dzhikiev 1991, particularly chapter 2.

60 *Istoriia Turkmenskoi SSR* 1957 I. An example of how dramatic and warlike events take on symbolic meaning, is the reassessments of the battle of Gök-Tepe among Turkmen scholars of the Glasnost period. Now, the battle was used to express aspirations of independence in relation to Russia (Annanepesov 1989). However, it is quite probably indicative of the status of national identity in contemporary Turkmenistan that, during fieldwork in the republic, I was told (by non-Teke Turkmen) that the event was being used by the Teke to strengthen their own position within the country, rather than as a nation-building device.

61 See for example Kolstoe 1995.

62 Dzhikiev 1991, *Istoriia Turkmenskoi SSR* 1957 I, 2: 7 ff.

63 According to Smith, "nationalism ... may be regarded as a form of culture as much as a species of political ideology and social movement" (Smith 1991: 71).

Chapter 3

1 Carrère d'Encausse 1988: 7.

2 Olufsen cited in Carrère d'Encausse 1988: xiii.

3 Becker 1968: 11.

4 See Chapter 2.

5 Kappeler 1992: 120.

6 Kappeler 1992: 117 ff. As opponents to this view have argued, there is no shortage of instances of aggression, violence, repression, discrimination and a complete absence of tolerance. According to Kappeler, however, these should be seen as examples of frequently occurring discrepancies between centrally formulated policies and local practices.

7 For a discussion of the role of the Emir in Russian society, see Becker 1968: 195 ff.

8 Kappeler 1992: 124.

9 Khalid 1998: 47.

10 *Istoriia Turkmenskoi SSR* 1957, Wheeler 1964, Carrère d'Encausse 1989a.

11 Carrère d'Encausse 1989a: 131 ff.

12 Khalid 1998: 45.

13 Kappeler 1992: 124.

14 For a detailed discussion of both the ideas behind the non-intervention strategy as well as its character, see Khalid 1998: chapter 2.

15 Carrère d'Encausse 1989a: 154.
16 Martin 1997: 257. While most scholars tend to focus on the stability and maintenance of traditional and local understandings and practices during the Tsarist period, Martin argues that this atmosphere of legal syncrestism changed conceptions of meanings embedded in customary laws and practices.
17 Olcott 1995: 101 ff.
18 Olcott 1995: 115.
19 The administrative and territorial organization of Central Asia changed during the Tsarist period. The indicated form of the Governorate-General of Turkestan was established in 1898. See Carrère d'Encausse 1988: 153 ff.
20 Carrère d'Encausse 1989a: 157.
21 Khalid 1998.
22 In particular, this related to the question of the preservation of the Ottoman Empire.
23 For an account of various attitudes to reform within the Muslim world, see Yapp 1987: 115 ff.
24 Voll 1994: 85.
25 Khalid 1998: 92.
26 Khalid 1998: 89 ff.
27 *Millets* were the administrative units in the Ottoman Empire for the non-Muslim community, organized on the basis of religious affiliation rather than ethnic origin.
28 Yapp 1987: 110 ff.
29 Yapp 1987: 216.
30 See Chapter 2.
31 In the nineteenth century a new doctrine appeared in the Ottoman Empire, claiming that the Sultan was the rightful Caliph, having inherited the office from the last Abbasid Caliph. From 1860 this pan-Islamic claim was used to justify Ottoman interests in Turkestan, from then on under Russian control (Yapp 1987: 181 ff.).
32 Yapp 1987: 194.
33 Khalid 1998: 198.
34 Carrère d'Encausse 1989a: 189.
35 Allworth 1990: 128.
36 The extensive presence of Tatars in reformed schools led to new legislation in 1907 which required teachers in elementary schools for the natives of Central Asia to be either Russians or of the same group as the students (Khalid 1998: 182).
37 Allworth 1990: 131.
38 Khalid 1998: 90.
39 The tendency to disregard differences between the Tatar reformers and their Central Asian counterparts is in a sense typical of much of Western scholarship in this field, having frequently been based on a dichotomy between Russians and non-Russians, relating to the Tsarist period as well as to the Soviet era. Focusing on conflict situations between non-Russians and Russians, the level of unity between non-Russians has often been exaggerated. Bennigsen was a prominent exponent of this orientation (see for example Bennigsen and Wimbush 1979). As far as the interrelation between

Tatars and Central Asians is concerned, Khalid (1998: 90 ff.) has documented that this was a complex one. Tatars generally saw themselves as leaders vis-à-vis the Central Asians, a position not necessarily congenial to the Central Asians themselves, who had their own ambitions. Moreover, Tatars often felt Central Asia to be strange to them. The following excerpt from a discussion in the Central Asian Bureau in 1924 underscores this feeling: "Tatars are disliked to the extreme in Khorezm. This is an unhealthy state of affairs. That being said, it must be admitted that the Tatars are everywhere trying to get into leading positions" (RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 20, l. 45).

40 Allworth 1990: 139.
41 Carrère d'Encausse 1988: 83 ff.
42 See Chapter 5.
43 Becker 1968: 11.
44 See for example Vakhabov 1961.
45 Khodzhaev 1926: 128.
46 The Bukharan Jadids, for instance, received invaluable material help from wealthy reform-minded merchants (Carrère d'Encausse 1988: 88).
47 Carrère d'Encausse 1989a: 206, Abduvakhitov 1994: 70.
48 Geoffrey Wheeler maintained that: "Since the peoples of Central Asia had not yet been affected by national consciousness and had not yet drunk the heady wine of genuine or synthetic nationalism, they were not offended by the phenomenon of alien rule" (Wheeler 1964: 96).
49 Carrère d'Encausse 1988: 120.
50 Menitskii 1926, Fedorov 1926, Kuz'min 1926.
51 Khalid 1998: 241.
52 Khalid 1998: chapter 5.
53 Khalid 1998: 136.
54 Cited in Khalid 1998: 136.
55 Kahlid 1998: 150 ff.
56 See Chapter 2.
57 See Chapter 2.
58 Smith 1991: 8 ff.
59 Carrère d'Encausse 1988: 86.
60 Carrère d'Encausse 1988: 86–7.
61 Khalid 1998: 172 ff.
62 Khalid 1998, especially chapter 5.
63 Khalid 1998: 184 ff.
64 Carrère d'Encausse 1988: 112.
65 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay 1964.
66 Yapp 1987: 181 ff.
67 The supportive attitude of the Jadids towards Russian war efforts in World War I is clearly demonstrated by Khalid, who points to Jadid poetry of the time unequivocally supporting Russia in the war (Khalid 1998: 241).
68 See Chapter 2.
69 Abdullah Awlani in 1914, cited in Khalid 1998: 209.
70 For the various treaties between Russia and Khiva/Bukhara, see Becker 1968: chapters 2–4.
71 Khalid 1998: 214.
72 Allworth 1990: 123.

73 Allworth 1990: 123.
74 This is based on the presentation of Jadid historiography given in Allworth 1990: 122–30.
75 Kangas 1992: 115.
76 Khalid 1998: 291.
77 Carrère d'Encausse 1988: 147.
78 Allworth 1990: 176–7.
79 See Khalid 1998, particularly chapter 8 and the epilogue. The perspective of competition between groups in society is an interesting one, and it deviates from the mentioned tendency to interpret native Central Asians only through their relations to Russians. In the view of many Western scholars, Central Asians represented an almost natural unity in opposition to Russia and the Russians, and failure to unite against Russia has been attributed to "misunderstandings", as in the following interpretation by Allworth, where he writes about the local anti-reform forces: "They failed to understand that the Reformists offered the best chance Central Asia might have to retain and improve its Muslim civilization and heterogeneous polities" (Allworth 1990: 120). This is similar to the notion frequently met in Soviet historiography of people who failed to see their "real" (class) interests.
80 An example of the growing importance of Turkness in the consciousness of the Jadids and in their thoughts about community was their rejection of the "Sart" category, used for those groups which did not correspond to the criteria of the nation (Khalid 1998: 203 ff.).
81 Khalid 1998: 214.
82 Khalid 1998: 208.
83 Allworth 1990: 179.
84 This use of "Uzbek" is documented in Khalid 1998: 206–7.
85 According to Khalid, "Russian officialdom mistook the striving for inclusion for separatism" (Khalid 1998: 244).
86 Allworth 1990: 161.
87 Election results presented in Khalid 1998: 261.
88 Cited in Carrère d'Encausse 1988: 136.
89 Carrère d'Encausse 1989a: 225.
90 Tursunov 1971: 173.
91 Tursunov 1971: 152.
92 Khalid 1998: 289.
93 Roger Kangas (Kangas 1992: 115 ff.) underscores that the Jadid reform movement was quite heterogeneous as regards political preferences. The more radical orientations among the Jadids had considerable common ground with the Bolsheviks.
94 Carlisle 1994: 106.
95 Becker 1968: 264.
96 Becker 1968: 301, Carrère d'Encausse 1988: 167, 174.
97 Olcott 1995: chapter 5.
98 Suny 1993: chapter 1.
99 Olcott 1995: 115.
100 Olcott 1995: 139.
101 Brubaker 1996.
102 Olcott 1995: 139.

103 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay 1961: 27.
104 Edgar 1999: chapter 1.
105 Edgar 1999: chapter 1.

Chapter 4

1 Khalid 1998: 185.
2 *Istoriia Bukharskoi i Khorezmskoi narodnykh sovetskikh respublik* 1971: 212.
3 *Istoriia Bukharskoi i Khorezmskoi narodnykh sovetskikh respublik* 1971: 212.
4 Becker 1968: 306.
5 Becker 1968: 307.
6 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 20, l. 44.
7 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, ll. 35–6. Karklin to CC RCP (Rudzutak, Stalin).
8 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, ll. 110–16. Karklin to Stalin 10/4–24.
9 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, ll. 110–16. Karklin to Stalin.
10 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, ll. 10–11.
11 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, ll. 4–7. Karklin to CC RCP 27/1–24.
12 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 88, l. 18. Secretary of CC BCP to Karklin, Stalin and Rudzutak.
13 Becker 1968: 307.
14 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 88, l. 18. Secretary of CC BCP to Karklin, Stalin and Rudzutak.
15 See for example Zevelev et al. 1981: 94ff.
16 Fitzpatrick 1999: 12.
17 A prominent example is Hayit 1963.
18 Allworth 1990: 174 ff.
19 Hayit 1963: 27.
20 Hayit 1963: 31ff.; Allworth 1991: 175 ff.
21 Khalid 1998: 286.
22 Khalid 1998: 286.
23 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, ll. 138–41.
24 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 27, l. 111.
25 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, ll. 10–11.
26 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 3, d. 22, ll. 4.
27 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 3, d. 22, ll. 4.
28 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 27, l. 111.
29 Carrère d'Encausse 1989c: 250ff.
30 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 27, l. 111.
31 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 122, ll. 13–18.
32 See above.
33 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 122, l. 16.
34 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 123, ll. 9–10.
35 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 123, ll. 9–10.
36 Getty 1998.
37 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, l. 140.
38 Allworth 1990: 175.
39 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 123, l. 12.

40 See above.
41 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 122, ll. 145–7.
42 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 122, ll. 145–7.
43 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 123, l. 8.
44 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 122, ll. 145–7.
45 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 122, ll. 145–7.
46 Cited in Vaidyanath 1967: 151.
47 Lallukka 1990: 36.
48 See note 1 in the Introduction.
49 Becker 1968: 229. This account of Turkmen–Uzbek relations in Khiva is primarily based on Becker 1968: 229–36.
50 Becker 1968: 233.
51 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 20, ll. 44–50.
52 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, ll. 110–16. Karklin to Stalin 10/4–24.
53 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 20, ll. 44–50.
54 For example Schoeberlein-Engel 1994.
55 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 20, l. 177.
56 The Turkmen Branch of the Bukharan CEC, established in 1922.
57 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 32, ll. 8–9.
58 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 32, l. 9.
59 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 32, ll. 8–9.
60 GARF fond 6987, op. 1, d. 1, ll. 2–4.
61 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 88, ll. 25–8.
62 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, l. 151–4.
63 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 20. l. 45.
64 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, ll. 110–16.
65 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 88, ll. 25–8.
66 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 123, l. 26.
67 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 20, l. 46.
68 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 23, ll. 24–7.
69 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 20, ll. 46–7.
70 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 20, l. 47.
71 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, ll. 110–16.
72 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 20, ll. 179–80.
73 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 89, ll. 18–19.
74 Sabol 1995: 234.
75 *Turkistan Newsletter*, Tuesday, June 20, 2000, Volume 4: 123.
76 It should be stressed that the material that I have made use of here was presented by the commission for strictly "internal purposes", and was not meant for publication or distribution. It is therefore reasonable to believe that the commission represented the matter as they saw it, and not as it could have been presented if the aim had been to give legitimacy to the project.
77 GARF fond 6892, op. 1, d. 36, ll. 1–16.
78 GARF fond 6892, op. 1, d. 36, ll. 19–20.
79 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 41–2.
80 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 88, ll. 12–13.
81 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 88, l. 119.
82 Said 1978.

83 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, l. 16.
84 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, l. 18.
85 Carlisle 1994.
86 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 17, l. 8.
87 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 17, ll. 8–9.
88 Edgar 1999: chapter 2.
89 Smith 1999: 239–40.
90 Slezkine 1994.

Chapter 5

1 Schoeberlein-Engel 1994: 23.
2 Brubaker 1996: 19.
3 Brubaker 1996: 16.
4 I will return to this question in Chapter 9.
5 Cited in Tursunov 1971: 150.
6 Safarov cited in Vaidyanath 1967: 90.
7 Vaidyanath 1967: 92.
8 See Chapter 7.
9 Vaidyanath 1967: 91.
10 Schoeberlein-Engel 1994: 150.
11 Vaidyanath 1967: 144.
12 Vaidyanath 1967: 145.
13 Khodorov 1925: 66.
14 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 51, ll. 53–4.
15 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 51, ll. 120–2.
16 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 3, d. 22, ll. 3ff.
17 The location of this address to the Central Asian Bureau is RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 8, ll. 59–68.
18 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 8, l. 62.
19 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 8, l. 69.
20 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 8, l. 69.
21 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, l. 96.
22 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 3, d. 9, l. 22.
23 Gordienko 1959: 152–4.
24 Gordienko 1959: 153.
25 Gordienko 1959: 153.
26 Gordienko 1959: 153–4.
27 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, l. 5.
28 See Chapter 5.
29 GARF fond 6987, op. 1, d. 1, l. 4.
30 Both Aitakov and Atabaev had early been integrated into the Russian orbit, and they had both worked as translators before the October Revolution. A striking similarity in their background is that they were both orphaned in early childhood, which might well be more than a coincidence. In the early 1920s they both had central positions in the communist apparatus, and after the delimitation they enjoyed prominent positions in the new Turkmen republic. As was the case with so many other Central Asian communists, neither of them survived 1937.

31 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, ll. 5–6.
32 That the introduction of the NEP had great significance for national relations was an opinion many Central Asians shared. I return to this issue at a later point.
33 *XII s'ezd RKP (b) 17–25 apr. 1923 g., Stenograficheskii otchet*, Moskva 1963: 488.
34 *XII s'ezd RKP (b) 17–25 apr. 1923 g., Stenograficheskii otchet*, Moskva 1963: 481.
35 *XII s'ezd RKP (b) 17–25 apr. 1923 g., Stenograficheskii otchet*, Moskva 1963: 488.
36 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, ll. 73–6.
37 Brubaker 1996: 5ff.
38 Anderson 1983.
39 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 133, l. 15.
40 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 20, l. 182.
41 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 3, d. 10, l. 9.
42 Fierman 1991: 50ff.
43 Turar Ryskulov, born 1894, was a Kazak politician and historian from a wealthy nomadic family. He had joined the national Kazak movement before World War I, and joined the Communist Party in 1917, having been jailed during the uprising in 1916. By 1920 he was one of the leading Muslim communists, and enjoyed a number of prominent positions until 1923–24. In 1923 Ryskulov was elected candidate member of the Central Committee of the RCP. From then on he gradually lost most of his influence in Central Asia, becoming Comintern representative in Mongolia in 1925. He was arrested in 1937 and executed the following year.
44 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 3, d. 9, l. 131ff.
45 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 3, d. 9, l. 54.
46 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 3, d. 9, l. 53.
47 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 3, d. 9, l. 53.
48 Slezkine 1994: 418.
49 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 51, l. 123.
50 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 9, ll. 59–68.
51 Central Asians were not alone in "playing the backward card". Terry Martin has demonstrated that a number of different groups also did this in order to secure special financial help (Martin 1996: 182ff.).
52 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, l. 96.
53 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, l. 96.
54 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 41.
55 See for example RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 9, ll. 59–68.
56 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 25, l. 60.
57 Fayzullah Khojaev was born into a wealthy merchant family in Bukhara in 1896. He was educated in a Russian school in Moscow, and he joined the Jadid movement. He became one of the most prominent Young Bukharans and, when the Young Bukharans in 1920 decided to dissolve and join the Communist Party, he became a member of the Central Committee of the BCP. He was a member of the Central Asian Bureau, and after the delimitation he was chairman of the Uzbekistan Sovnarkom, a position he had until Stalin's purges ended his life in 1938. Fayzullah Khojaev was sen-

tenced in one of the "show trials" and executed together with, among others, Bukharin and Rykov.

58 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 25, l. 57.

59 S. Khojanov came to prominence in the party organization of Semirechie in Turkestan in 1920. He became the head a group referred to as "Khojanovtsy", which included the former members of the Kazak-language organ of the Communist Party of Turkestan. Khojanov had never associated with the Alash Orda, and insisted on the preservation of the tribal structure among the Kazaks. This conflicted with the idea of the national delimitation, and Khojanov lost his position in the party shortly after the delimitation. Along with the rest of the so-called Kazak right-wing, associated with the "wrong" social elements, Khojanov was expelled from the party leadership in December 1925 (Olcott 1995: 212–13).

60 Vaidyanath 1967: 167.

61 Khojanov was not the only Kazak to oppose the national delimitation. On the contrary, the other Kazak communists of the Turkestan republic shared his position. Khojanov served as the mouthpiece for this group.

62 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 100, l. 21.

63 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 100, l. 21.

64 Vaidyanath 1967: 167ff.

65 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, ll. 172–3.

66 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, l. 107.

67 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, l. 107.

68 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, l. 108.

69 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, ll. 172–3.

70 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, ll. 53–4.

71 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, ll. 76ff.

72 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, ll. 28ff.

73 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, l. 90.

74 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, ll. 31–2.

75 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 22, ll. 219–22.

76 Allworth 1990: 196.

Chapter 6

1 The Territorial Committee was organized by the Central Asian Bureau when it had been decided that a political reorganization was to be accomplished. It consisted of representatives of the national groups involved, organized in separate subcommittees. In addition, the Committee included members of the central Soviet authorities.

2 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 46–55.

3 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 91–5.

4 A nation is a historically evolved, stable community based on a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture.

5 Hirsch 1997: 259.

6 As commented upon in the previous chapter, in discussions on the national delimitation there was no coherent application of the various concepts

such as *narodnost, natsional'nost, narod,* or *natsiia.* The way in which the various terms were used did not correspond to ideas about the different stages in historical development.

7 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 43.
8 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 115, ll. 3–15.
9 The records of the Territorial Committee are located in RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104 (*Stenogrammmy zasedanii territorial'noi komissii po razmezhevaniiu Srednei Azii*).
10 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 115, ll. 3 ff., RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 30–2.
11 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 24.
12 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 17, l. 112.
13 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 17, ll. 112–13.
14 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, l. 107.
15 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, l. 73.
16 Allworth 1990: 196.
17 A thesis on the establishment of an Uzbek republic stated that: "Probably, the designation Kuramintsy is disappearing in same way as did Sart" (RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 115, l. 3).
18 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 150–1.
19 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. d, 104, ll. 75–6. The Uzbek side was not slow to respond to the claims of historical ties. In a discussion in the Territorial Committee, Segizbaev argued: "The Kirgiz [Kazaks] now underline their good relations with the kuramintsy. However, we did not identify much support on the part of Kirgiz Republic to the Kurama when they were attacked and plundered by the basmachi" (RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 169).
20 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 103, l. 29 ff.
21 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 30–2, 60–9.
22 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 67ff.
23 These addresses are found in RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 109.
24 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 109, l. 183.
25 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 109, ll. 187–9.
26 See for example Schoeberlein-Engel 1994: 166 ff.
27 Schoeberlein-Engel 1994: 171.
28 Khalid 1998: 214.
29 Schoeberlein-Engel 1994: 171.
30 Baldhauf 1991: 81.
31 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 25, l. 59.
32 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 128.
33 Baldhauf 1991: 82, Schoeberlein-Engel 1994: 170–2.
34 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 112 ff.
35 Schoeberlein-Engel 1994: 149–52.
36 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 109, l. 10.
37 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 95, l. 249.
38 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 112–14.
39 Cf. Chapter 2, pp. 36 ff.
40 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. d. 104, l. 68.
41 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. d. 104, l. 79.

42 Masov 1991: 22.
43 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 76, l. 155.
44 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, l. 103.
45 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 100, ll. 28 ff.
46 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 24, l. 165.
47 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 1.
48 The Politburo of the Central Committee, RCP decided on October 11, 1924, that the Tajik entity was to have the status of an Autonomous Republic and not *oblast* (RTsKhIDNI fond 17, op. 3, d. 468).
49 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 237.
50 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 227–39.
51 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 102, l. 14 (*K proektu o organizatsii Tadzhikskoi avtonomnoi oblasti*).
52 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. d, d. 88, l. 86.
53 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 233.
54 Carrère d'Encausse 1989c: 256.
55 Chinar Imamov was, beginning in 1924, First Secretary of the Temporary Autonomous Republic of Tajikistan and a member of the Central Asian Bureau. From December 1924, he was the Director of the Communist Party Organization of Tajikistan, and Tajikistan's representative in Uzbekistan.
56 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 1744, ll. 6–8.
57 Vaidyanath 1967: 105.
58 Masov 1991: 10.
59 Masov 1991: 48.
60 Roy 2000: 69.
61 Masov 1991: 11.
62 Schoeberlein-Engel 1994: 167 ff.
63 See for example RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 9, ll. 59–68.
64 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 233–4.
65 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 235.
66 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 18–19.
67 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 1744, ll. 6, 106–18.
68 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 237–8.
69 Masov 1995: 89.
70 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 235.
71 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 236.
72 Fragner 1989.
73 GARF fond 3316, op. 12, d. 129, l. 31.
74 Masov 1991: 12–18.
75 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 1744, ll. 106–18.
76 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 89, ll. 18–37.
77 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 1744, ll. 115–18.
78 Many articles were translated by the Central Asian Bureau. Their archival location is RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 1744.
79 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 1744, l. 117.
80 See Chapter 3.
81 Fierman 1991: 104.
82 Schoeberlein-Engel 1994: 287, note 78.

83 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 1744, l. 29.
84 Kommisrud 1996: 187.
85 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 89, ll. 18–37.
86 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 1814.

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1 RTsKhIDNI fond 17, d. 112, l. 510.
2 Paksoy in *Turkistan Newsletter* Tuesday, June 20, 2000, Vol. 4: 123.
3 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay 1961: 27.
4 For an explication of the different positions, see Abramzon 1971: chapter 1.
5 See for example Vakhabov 1961: 40–9.
6 Chotonov 1998: 37.
7 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. d, 2. 104, l. 118.
8 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 102, ll. 40–1.
9 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay 1961: 27.
10 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, l. 82.
11 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 88, ll. 85–7.
12 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 20, l. 209.
13 In 1930, the Karakalpak AO was transferred from the Kazak republic to the RSFSR and renamed an ASSR. In 1932, it became a part of the Uzbek SSR, and in December 1991 it was declared an autonomous republic in sovereign Uzbekistan.
14 *Istoriia Karakalpakskoi ASSR v dvukh tomakh* 1974, II: 118.
15 Nurmukhamedov et al. 1971: 12–13.
16 Obviously, this phenomenon is not restricted to the historiography of the Karakalpak ASSR or to Soviet historiography on Central Asia in general. A similar teleological dimension is characteristic of national historiography in general, leading to an anachronistic attribution of categories developed at a later point in time. However, it seems as if, in the case of the Karakalpak ASSR, the teleological and anachronistic aspects were particularly strong.
17 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay 1961: 33.
18 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay 1961: 32–3.
19 See note 2 above.
20 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 3, d. 16, l. 241.
21 Becker 1968: 166.
22 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 3, d. 22, l. 65.
23 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 102, ll. 93–5. Address from the Karakalpak people of Amu-Darya to the Central Asian Bureau.
24 See Chapter 5.
25 GARF fond 1235, op. 26, d. 7, l. 135.
26 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 245.
27 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 88, l. 86.
28 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 88, l. 85.
29 Bennigsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay 1961: 33.
30 Motyl 1990: chapter 3.

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1 Hirsch 2000: 211.
2 Hirsch 2000: 211.
3 For example Roy 2000: 66 ff.
4 Carlisle 1994: 104.
5 GARF fond 1235, op. 26, d. 7, ll. 127–8.
6 Carlisle 1994, Goble 1995.
7 Chuev and Resis 1993.
8 Goble 1995.
9 Goble 1995.
10 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, l. 105.
11 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 21.
12 Hirsch 1997: 1 ff.
13 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 21–5.
14 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 22.
15 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 87.
16 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 23.
17 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 211.
18 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 93–5.
19 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 46–55.
20 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 122 ff.
21 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 128.
22 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 24.
23 It might be interesting to note that in the discourse on economy and market there are no signs that "market" is seen as being essentially alien to Soviet society or as something that would soon be abolished. There was no principal rejection of or opposition to market-based arguments.
24 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 52–3.
25 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 109, l. 75.
26 Here, one must take into account that while literacy was rare enough in the urban areas, it was almost entirely absent in the rural districts.
27 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 109, l. 58.
28 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 109, l. 58.
29 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 109, l. 57.
30 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 109, l. 18.
31 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 109, l. 15.
32 Olimov and Olimova 1998: 204.
33 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 103, ll. 14 ff.
34 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 188.
35 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 88, ll. 85–7.
36 Allworth 1990: 200.
37 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 90, l. 4.
38 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, l. 73.
39 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, l. 73.
40 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, l. 76.
41 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, ll. 68–9.
42 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, l. 76.
43 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, ll. 73–6.

44 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 103. l. 29.
45 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 107, l. 55.
46 "Sart" is here used in the same way as "Uzbek" was generally used for the purposes of the delimitation. When "Sart" was preferred here, it was obviously an attempt to reduce the legitimacy of the Uzbek category altogether.
47 GARF fond 1235, op. 26, d. 28, l. 4.
48 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 165.
49 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 100, l. 77.
50 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 100, ll. 17–18.
51 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 100, l. 23.
52 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 101, ll. 75–85 and passim.
53 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 20, ll. 240–1.
54 RTsKhIDNI fond 17, op. 3, d, 443, l. 4.
55 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 3, d. 16, l. 248.
56 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 3, d. 16, l. 248.
57 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 3, d. 16, l. 248.
58 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 3, d. 16, l. 247.
59 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 112–14.
60 It is quite possible that it was the memory of the discussion of Tashkent that made Molotov say that the borders in Central Asia were Stalin's work.
61 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, l. 77.
62 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 88, ll. 64–9.
63 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 146.
64 For more on the project of the Uzbek subcommittee see RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 46–55.
65 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 103, ll. 29–30.
66 See for example RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 68–9.
67 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 50.
68 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 46–55.
69 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 60–9.
70 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 49.
71 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 60–9.
72 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, for example ll. 177–80.
73 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 21, l. 194.
74 My discussion of these newspapers is based partly on translations of a selection of articles found in the archive of the Central Asian Bureau, and partly on discussions of the Central Asian press in the analyzed material.
75 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 102, ll. 45–6.
76 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 21, ll. 188–9.
77 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 194.
78 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 188–9.
79 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 190–2.
80 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 205. These *volosts* were split up into Kazak and Uzbek regions on the basis of the 1920 census. See RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 17, l. 111.
81 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 22, l. 100.
82 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 207.
83 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 22, l. 100.

84 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 22, l. 100.
85 This protest is located at RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 110, ll. 14–16.
86 See for example Choukourov and Choukourov 1994: 63 ff.
87 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, l. 184.
88 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 104, ll. 118–33.
89 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 87, l. 103. Letter from Karklin to Stalin.
90 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 17, ll. 4–10.
91 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 1, d. 21, ll. 198–9.
92 See Chapter 4.
93 Roy 2000: 69.

Chapter 9

1 See for example Masov 1991, Choukourov and Choukourov 1994, Chotonov 1998.
2 Bennigsen and Wimbush 1985a: 98.
3 See for example Bohr 1996: 348.
4 Mukhammetberdiev 1992: 116 ff.
5 On the Kazak case, see for example Schatz 2000, Esenova 1998. Concerning the Kyrgyz see Kostiukova 1994.
6 Schoeberlein-Engel 1994: 297.
7 Allworth 1990: 313.
8 Martin 1996: 176 ff.
9 This point has been elaborated by, for example, Edward Schatz 2000.
10 Schoeberlein-Engel 1994: 297.
11 Daniels 1993: 125 ff., 1998: 122.
12 Carrère d'Encausse 1993: chapters 3–6.
13 Suny 1992: 22 ff.
14 Suny 1993.
15 Suny 1992: 22.
16 Brubaker 1996: 25–6.
17 Hirsch 2000: 213.
18 Hirsch 2000: 217.
19 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 169, ll. 36 ff.
20 See Chapter 8.
21 RTsKhIDNI fond 62, op. 2, d. 169, l. 47.
22 Kangas 1992: 290.
23 Cornell 1999.
24 Kangas 1992: 255–6.
25 Recently, this interpretation of the "Great Retreat", and indeed the notion of a Great Retreat altogether, has been problematized. Terry Martin has argued convincingly that policy changes in the 1930s were intimately linked to Russian resentment with the Soviet practice of Affirmative Action in the favor of non-Russians (Martin 1996).
26 See for example Simon 1991: 138 ff.
27 Cohen in Tucker 1977: 13 ff.
28 Suny 1992: 29–30.
29 Critchlow 1991: 20.

30 Exactly the same kind of questions engaged Norwegian historians in the nineteenth century, that Norwegians more than other Nordic peoples were entitled to the Old-Norse literary heritage.
31 Poliakov 1992: 125.
32 Tillett 1969.
33 A good example is Annanepesov 1989.
34 Lapidus and Zaslavsky 1992: 14.
35 Zaslavsky 1997: 78.
36 Kotz and Weir 1997: 144.
37 Carrère d'Encausse 1993: 147.
38 King 1994.
39 Kotz and Weir 1997: 144 ff.
40 Kotz and Weir 1997: 145 ff.
41 Daniels 1993: 122.
42 Kolstoe 2000: chapter 9.
43 Lewin 1995: 271.
44 Lewin 1995: 272.
45 Lewin 1995: 273.
46 For example, a fact such as the Gagauz declaration of autonomy within Moldavia must primarily be understood in light of the history of the national question in the Soviet Union, and the role of the concepts of national autonomy and self-determination in Soviet theory and practice.
47 Daniels 1993: 121.
48 Goldman, Lapidus and Zaslavsky in Lapidus and Zaslavsky 1992: 3.
49 Hildermeier 1998: 1082 ff.
50 Zaslavsky 1997: 82.
51 Alexandre Bennigsen was an early proponent of the view that pan-Turkic and pan-Turkestan sentiments might develop into a considerable political factor (Bennigsen and Wimbush 1979: 61 ff.).
52 Khalid 1998: 185.
53 Sayeed 2000.
54 Allcock 1992: 186–91.
55 Malik 1994: 12.
56 See for example Bremmer and Taras 1997.
57 Brubaker 1996.
58 These examples are taken from International Crisis Group 2001, *Uzbekistan at Ten: Repression and Instability*: 20.
59 Schatz 1997: 5.
60 Slezkine 1994: 441.
61 Getty and Naumov 1999.
62 Slezkine 1994: 439.
63 International Crisis Group 2001, *Uzbekistan at Ten: Repression and Instability*: 27 ff.
64 See Chapter 6.

Conclusion

1 Hirsch 2000.

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Fond 62: Central Asian Bureau
Fond 17: Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union
GARF, Gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Rossiiskoi Federatsii
Fond 1235: All-Russian CEC 1919–38
Fond 1318: USSR Narkomnats 1917–29
Fond 3316: USSR CEC 1922–38
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Fond 6987: All-Russian CEC commission for disputes between Turkestan and the Kirgiz ASSR

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