

1. Tajiks on the Crossroads of History, from Antiquity to the Age of Colonialism

It is impossible to study the process of change in any society in the modern era without exploring its historical setting. Establishing a multidisciplinary framework that first combines elements of ethnic history, social anthropology and comparative political development has obvious advantages when it comes to analysing such a complex and ancient society as Tajikistan's. Tajikistan has a rich and varied history that connects far beyond the area of present-day Tajikistan and Central Asia to the broader Eurasian landmass. It is notable that the caravan routes of what has come to be referred to as the 'Silk Road'¹ crossed the territory of what now is Tajikistan.² The road's northern trail went through Khujand and the Zarafshon Valley and the southern one traversed the Pamir Mountains of Badakhshan. This land had become the meeting point of Mediterranean, Indian and Chinese civilisations; people who lived here used this opportunity to adopt technologies, state concepts and religious teachings and to develop them further using vast local resources. There were, however, communities thriving here long before. Urban settlements that served as centres of commerce and craftsmanship were present in Central Asia in the early Bronze Age, circa 3000 BC.³ The influence of ancient civilisations in the region was complemented by the constant interaction between sedentary and nomadic cultures. In the beginning of the second millennium BC the Indo-Iranian tribes penetrated Central Asia. The onslaught of these steppe herdsmen was a lengthy process and it was not until five centuries later that they succeeded in assimilating the local peoples, adopting the latter's achievements and giving up to a considerable extent their pastoral way of life. As a result, a number of mixed-type cultures emerged in the territory of Tajikistan, which combined highly developed arable farming with cattle-breeding and extensive use of the horse for military purposes and transportation.⁴ The Aryans had laid the foundation for the formation of the Iranian ethnos and culture in the region; language continuity became a decisive factor in this process.

1 'Silk Road' is a term that was never used locally, but rather was coined in the nineteenth century by the German geographer Ferdinand von Richthofen.

2 The establishment of effective long-distance trade between China and the Mediterranean dates back to the late second millennium BC, whilst irregular trade and migratory contacts along the Silk Road might be far older. See: Andre Gunder Frank, *The Centrality of Central Asia* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 1992), p. 30.

3 Frank I. Holt, *Alexander the Great and Bactria: The Formation of A Greek Frontier in Central Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), p. 27.

4 V. M. Masson, 'The Decline of the Bronze Age Civilization and Movements of the Tribes', in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia*, Vol. I (Paris: UNESCO, 1992), pp. 350–1.

Prior to the rise of the Achaemenid Empire, centres such as Khorezm, Soghd and Bactria dominated in the region, while a number of lesser principalities such as Khuttal (contemporary Kulob) retained independence and ruling dynasties of their own; however, despite the ethnic homogeneity of the population and close cultural and economic bonds, these territories had not merged into a centralised state with a complex government machine. There still remained localised autonomies that once in a while recognised the supremacy of one over the others, for a short time only. In the wake of the military expeditions of Cyrus II in the middle of the sixth century BC, the central and southern regions of Central Asia became part of the Achaemenid Empire. Eventually, military defeats sustained by Darius III at the hands of Alexander the Great quickly led to the disintegration of the Achaemenid Empire. Alexander subjugated most of its eastern territories from 330 to 327 BC. In the centuries that followed Alexander's death in 323 BC, Transoxiana once again found itself a border zone, torn apart by different centres of power, such as Parthia, Graeco-Bactria and the Kushan and Sasanian empires. In the late fourth and early fifth centuries AD, a new force appeared in the steppes adjacent to Khujand—the north-eastern outposts of the Iranian civilisation—namely, the Turkic tribes of the Ephthalites⁵ and the Huns. Like all their nomadic predecessors, they quickly settled down, mostly in urban centres. The Turks would come to exert a great influence over the formation of ethnic groups in Central Asia before the Arab conquest, and long after it.

V. V. Barthold expressed the view that a period of more than 1000 years from Alexander the Great to the advent of Islam passed almost unnoticed in terms of state formation and political organisation in Transoxiana.⁶ By the time of the Arab invasion, the Central Asian lands were divided among as many as 27 petty princedoms.⁷ Their rulers did not enjoy absolute authority, as the real power lay with the traditional landed aristocracy (the *dihqans*), who had fortified castles and small private armies at their disposal. In times of trouble, princes had literally to grovel to their supposed vassals for help.⁸ The whole picture bore a striking resemblance to the post-Achaemenid period, when the political map of Central Asia was changing kaleidoscopically.⁹ The Central Asian principalities never formed a viable confederacy. On top of mutual mistrust and hostility, there had emerged more fundamental divisions between the communities in

5 The assumption that the Ephthalites were Turkic prevails, but some authors trace Iranian (B. G. Ghafurov, *Tojikon: Ta'rikhi qadimtarin, qadim va asri miyona*, Vol. 1 [Dushanbe: Irfon, 1983], p. 278) or even Mongol (Rene Grousset, *The Empire of the Steppes* [New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1970], p. 67) features in their making.

6 V. V. Barthold, *Sochineniia*, Vol. II, Part 1 (Moscow: Izdatelstvo vostochnoi literatury, 1963), p. 117.

7 H. A. R. Gibb, *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia* (New York: AMS Press, 1970), p. 8.

8 Iu. Yakubov, *Pargar v VII–VIII vekakh nashei ery* (Dushanbe: Donish, 1979), p. 41.

9 Some of the local oligarchs traced their roots down to the Kushan times. See: *Istoriia Tadzhikskogo naroda*, Vol. II, kn. 1 (Moscow: Izdatelstvo vostochnoi literatury, 1964), p. 45.

the Zarafshon and Oxus valleys by the seventh century AD. The populace to the north of the Hisor mountain range had become Turkicised to a considerable extent due to the endless immigration from the steppes.¹⁰ By the seventh century AD, religious affiliations also varied considerably: people in the north of what is today Tajikistan professed Mazdaism, Nestorian Christianity and Manichaeism, while the bulk of the inhabitants of Tokharistan and Khuttal in the south still adhered to Buddhism.

Such conditions of disunion favoured the piecemeal conquest of Transoxiana (Central Asia) by the Arabs. Beginning in 651 AD, they organised periodic marauding raids deep into the territory of what they called 'Mavarannahr', but it was not until 705 AD that the caliphate adopted the policy of annexing the lands beyond the Oxus River (Amu Darya). Ten years later the task was accomplished.¹¹ By the mid eighth century, the Arabs had managed to solidify their hold over Transoxiana. They checked the advancement of the Turgesh Turks at Isfijab and defeated a strong Chinese army at Talas in 751, thus putting an end, once and for all, to Chinese claims for dominance in Mavarannahr. In regards to religion, Islam had spread rapidly in Mavarannahr; as early as 728 the authorities of Bukhara trumpeted the complete conversion of Soghdiana to the Muslim faith.¹² The new religion was mostly received with popular acclaim, for it promised greater social mobility and created favourable conditions for trade. Islam provided the peoples of Central Asia with spiritual and cultural bonds and brought them closer to each other as nothing had before. With Islam there came Arabic—not only the language of the holy Quran and the Abbasid court, but also the language of science and poetry and the lingua franca of trade and diplomacy. It also, with the massive influx of loan words, stimulated the emergence of the modern Persian language (Dari).¹³ Based on the general economic rise in the region and the coexistence and fruitful interaction of Arabic and Persian literatures, the newly emerged Islamic culture reached its zenith during the rule of the Samanid dynasty (875–999). The Samanids, who originated from an old *dihqan* family, created a kingdom of their own that stretched from the

10 The migrants 'had swollen to such a mass as already to crush the original Iranian inhabitants under the exclusive dominion of the Turks'. See: Arminius Vambery, *History of Bokhara* (London: Henry S. King & Co., 1873), p. 18.

11 As Gibb noted, 'the existing dynastic houses were everywhere maintained, as the representatives of the conquered peoples and vehicle of the civil administration. The actual administrative authority in their territories, however, passed to the Wali, or agent of the Arab governor of Khorasan.' See: Gibb, *The Arab Conquests in Central Asia*, pp. 56–7.

12 Barthold, *Sochineniia*, Vol. II, Part 1, p. 456. Of course, the process of Islamisation in Transoxiana was somewhat more protracted, especially in its easternmost lands (Rushan, Shughnan and Vakhn in what is now Tajikistan); however, there is no doubt that the cultural reconciliation of Islam and Iranian tradition was accomplished in Transoxiana earlier than in the Iranian Plateau proper, where Zoroastrianism had become deeply entrenched, especially in the rural areas, under the Sasanian rule.

13 'The volume of Arabic lexicon, its share in the vocabulary of the Dari language remained exceptionally high until the first quarter of the nineteenth century.' L. N. Kiseleva, *Iazyk Dari Afganistana* (Moscow: Nauka, 1985), p. 40.

Persian Gulf to India. The relatively stable domestic and international situation allowed them to encourage learning and the arts. Intellectuals from all over the Islamic world came to Bukhara, the Samanid capital.¹⁴

The reign of the Samanids was brought to an end in 999 by the invasion of the Qarakhanid Turks, and power in Central Asia passed to Turkic rulers for the next nine centuries. One of the determining factors for the prosperity of culture and trades in Mavarannahr was that the new Turkic dynasties completed the process of liquidating the class of the old Iranian landed aristocracy, the *dihqans*, which had begun under the Samanids.¹⁵ As a result, the highly stratified elite culture so characteristic of the Achaemenids and the Sasanians became more diffused amongst much of the population. Iranian urban-based strata—merchants, artisans, tradesmen—rose to eminence, and often had a say in political affairs under the Turkic rulers of Mavarannahr, who used them as a counterbalance to the nomadic nobility. This transition away from an aristocratic community made an important contribution to the formation of a single Tajik ethnic culture.

Mavarannahr fell as easy prey to the invasion of Chengiz Khan during 1219–21. The consequences of the attack of the Mongol hordes were truly horrible. Arminius Vambery has observed, in regards to the territory of what is now Central Asia, that ‘no part of all Asia suffered so severely from the incursions of the Mongolian hordes as the countries bordering on the Oxus and the Yaxartes’.¹⁶ On top of the immediate consequences of the invasion, such as depopulation, interruption of trade links and decay of cities, which were overcome to an extent in time, was that it had dramatic, long-term ramifications for Mavarannahr. The military expeditions of the Mongols were not accompanied by large-scale resettlement and sedentarisation of nomadic peoples from Mongolia. Transoxiana was treated as a source of booty to be procured during periodic raids and as a grazing ground for herds. In the absence of state-sponsored maintenance, the irrigation systems declined gradually, and vast spaces of arable land turned to pastures or even desert. In the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries, whole clusters of villages and small towns disappeared from the map of Mavarannahr, especially in the basin of Syr-Darya.

After the death of Chengiz Khan in 1227, the Mongol Empire was divided amongst his four sons. While the Mongol rulers in Persia quickly converted to Islam, adopted all major elements of Iranian culture, language in particular, and readily employed local *ulamas* (Muslim scholars) to staff their relatively

14 Such was ‘the influx of scholars that Bukhara won the epithet “the dome of Islam in the East”, equal to Baghdad, because it was such a great meeting place for distinguished men of letters’. See: Richard N. Frye, *Bukhara: The Medieval Achievement* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 43.

15 As Barthold has put it, ‘in the beginning of the 13th century ... the *dihqans* did not play any role and the word itself was used only in the meaning of “peasant”’. See: Barthold, *Sochineniia*, Vol. II, Part 2 (Moscow: Izdatelstvo vostochnoi literatury, 1964), p. 332.

16 Vambery, *History of Bokhara*, p. 137.

complex bureaucratic machine, the situation in Central Asia was quite different. It has been mentioned already that the Mongols themselves did not move in great numbers from their inner Asian heartland. The main force of the Mongolian explosion under Chengiz Khan actually consisted of a number of eastern Turkic tribes. They played an ever-increasing role in the Mongol army and were incorporated into the Mongol *oboghs* (clans).¹⁷ By the beginning of the fourteenth century, the Chaghatai Mongol nobles in Central Asia had been thoroughly Turkicised and, as Samuel Adshead has pointed out, 'it was Turkish therefore that the collaborators learnt, and Turkish that they passed to the people of the oases generally'.¹⁸ From that time on, the word 'Turkestan' gained currency in reference to Mavarannahr (the Arab term for Central Asia).¹⁹

All political entities based on the tribal system proved highly unstable in Central Asia. Even the impressive structure created by Timur (Tamerlane) from the Barlas tribe (1370–1405) did not survive its founder. There was an evident dichotomy, even antagonism, between the Turks who clung to the old nomadic way of life and the Turks who had become sedentarised. Their coexistence within a unified state was problematic. It was not unusual for whole groups of tribes to secede from the parent polity and return to the nomadic way of life, creating state entities of their own and ravaging their former kin. That was definitely the case in the Chaghatai Khanate, the Golden Horde and the Timurid Empire. From the end of the fourteenth century, all nomadic clans of different extraction who lived on the steppes between the Ural and the Irtysh rivers were known under the collective name of the Uzbeks.²⁰ In the fifteenth century they formed an autarchic community with the beginnings of state organisation, of which the Chengiz-inspired 'decimal' military machine was the most notable feature.²¹ Like any other nomadic polity, it was bedevilled by the absence of legitimacy and clear rules of succession, and the central political authority remained viable only as long as it could wage successful wars, which provided clan aristocracy with plunder and status.

17 *Obogh*, or *unagan bogol*, is a tribal entity in which 'a single powerful clan subordinated completely some neighbouring groups of nomads, regardless of whether they were kinsmen or strangers'. See: L. P. Lashuk, 'Opyt tipologii etnicheskikh obschnosti srednevekovykh tiurok i mongolov', *Sovetskaia Etnografiia*, No. 1 (1968), p. 99.

18 S. A. M. Adshead, *Central Asia in World History* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993), p. 80.

19 In fact, there are three Turkestans to be found in historical and geographic literature: Eastern, Western and Afghan. The second, however, was always recognised as superior culturally and politically, henceforth the general designation was conferred upon it.

20 B. A. Ahmedov, *Gosudarstvo kochevykh uzbekov* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), p. 15.

21 The division of the army into units comprising 100, 1000 and 10 000 warriors was routine practice for steppe rulers long before Chengiz Khan; however, he applied this system as a centrepiece of the government machine: combat units became administrative units as well, and military commanders served as civil officials. See: Sh. Sandag, 'Obrazovanie edinogo mongolskogo gosudarstva i Chingiskhan', in *Tataro-mongoly v Azii i Evrope* (Moscow: Nauka, 1977), p. 35. In the Emirate of Bukhara each *vilayet* (province) consisted of several *tumans* (districts)—a word with the original meaning of a 10 000-strong army detachment.

By 1512, the Uzbeks had gradually conquered Mavarannahr and pushed vast masses of the sedentary population out of the fertile river valleys. This was the last large-scale influx of nomads into Turkestan. Afterwards, a distinctive demographic pattern emerged in what now is Tajikistan: mountainous regions were inhabited almost exclusively by the Tajiks; the broad river valleys and steppes were dominated by the Kipchak Uzbeks; while the expansive transitional areas between the two ethnic and geographic zones were characterised by a mixture of the indigenous sedentary population (Tajik and Turkic) and semi-nomadic Uzbeks.

Once the Uzbeks captured Mavarannahr, each clan was quartered around a certain city from which it collected taxes. In such circumstances the demise of the state of the nomadic Uzbeks was inevitable, but permanent warfare against the Safavids put it off until the mid 1580s. The Khans tried to find alternative means to create unity amongst the clans and sponsored Sufi orders, especially Naqshbandiya, to this end. This policy backfired, however, for the dervish brotherhoods failed to engender strong bonds in the society, and at the same time these orders became substantial economic and political forces themselves, due to lavish endowments made by the rulers. At the end of the sixteenth century, 'the Uzbek polity demilitarised itself and became a kind of Polish commonwealth: weak king, irresponsible aristocracy and dominant clericalism. The dervish orders became the leading institution in state, society and culture.'²² The period of feudal sedition that ensued had disastrous results for Turkestan, comparable with those produced by the Mongol invasion. The endless fighting amongst Uzbek clans, exacerbated by the dramatic decline of the transcontinental caravan trade in the seventeenth century, led to economic devastation, which reached its nadir in the first half of the eighteenth century, when 'there were no citizens left in Samarkand' and 'Bukhara had only two inhabited *mahallas*'.²³ Even the rise of relatively centralised states—the khanates of Bukhara and Khiva and later Kokand—could not reverse the trend. The history of the principality of Uroteppa is illustrative of this process. In the period 1800–66, Uroteppa (Istaravshon) suffered some 50 attacks; as a result, it lost two-thirds of its population and turned into 'one of the most devastated areas of Central Asia'.²⁴

22 Adshead, *Central Asia in World History*, p. 156.

23 A *mahalla* is a traditional neighbourhood community in a city, usually with a mosque as a centre of communal life. O. A. Sukhareva, 'Ocherki po istorii sredneaziatskikh gorodov', in *Istoriia i kultura narodov Srednei Azii (Drevnost i srednie veka)*, eds B. G. Gafurov and B. A. Litvinsky (Moscow: Nauka, 1976), pp. 133, 138.

24 A. Mukhtarov, *Materialy po istorii Ura-Tiube* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo vostochnoi literatury, 1963), p. 5.

Russia's Entry into Central Asia

In the mid nineteenth century the territory of present-day Tajikistan was divided between the emirs of Bukhara and the khans of Kokand, while Khujand, Uroteppa (Istaravshon) and Qarotegin (Rasht) remained disputed territories where dominance constantly shifted from one side to another. A number of eastern mountain *vilayets* (provinces), such as Bukhara's Darvoz and Kokand's Shughnan, Vakhan and Rushan, were virtually independent (they sent only occasional gifts to the emir or khan) and unpredictable in their political alignments, thus often presenting a liability rather than an asset for Bukhara and Kokand. In addition, Bukhara was engaged in permanent squabbles with Afghanistan over Balkh, Hisor, Kulob and the Pamir districts, and both Bukhara and Kokand had aspirations in Chinese Turkestan. On top of internal rivalries amongst constituent units and ongoing external conflicts, the khanates were cursed by a precarious dichotomy between the ancient oasis sites with their intensive agriculture, trade and urban life, on the one hand, and on the other autonomous groups of nomads who did not acknowledge the government's authority and exploited (or robbed) nearby towns at their discretion. The entry of Russia would eventually sweep aside these patterns of conflict.

In the eighteenth century, as Russia became a rapidly growing centralised land empire, it began to take an interest in expansion to the south, and took the bulk of the Kazakhs and Karakalpaks under its suzerainty between 1731 and 1742. The khanates of Turkestan, however, remained for the time being beyond the scope of Russia's imperial ambitions. The situation changed dramatically in the mid nineteenth century after Russia had suffered a number of setbacks in its European policy and, more importantly, lost its role as a major supplier of manufactured goods to world markets in competition with the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States. The share of grain and other primary produce in Russian exports to Europe reached 96 per cent, while textiles, machinery, metals and other processed goods made up 60 per cent of its sales to Central Asia.²⁵ In addition, Russia's nascent modern industry desperately needed raw materials, cotton in particular, which Turkestan could provide in large quantities. Such considerations induced the Russian authorities to conduct a more aggressive foreign policy in regards to the khanates of Bukhara, Khiva and Kokand. Russian expansion into Turkestan in the nineteenth century was 'a process apparently planned, logical and inexorable'²⁶ and so differed in this sense from the rather spontaneous mastering of Siberia. Adventurous expeditions, such

25 N. A. Khalfin, *Prisoedinenie Srednei Azii k Rossii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1965), p. 68.

26 Mary Holdsworth, *Turkestan in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Central Asian Research Centre, 1959), p. 46.

as the Cossacks' raid on Urgench in 1603 and Bekovich-Cherkassky's mission to Khiva in 1717, gave way to a methodical advancement, based on thorough planning, which could be divided into three stages.

Between 1856 and 1864, the Russians strengthened their military presence in border areas and carried out three major reconnaissance missions in the region. While dismissing any large-scale aggressive actions, the imperial government sought to encourage Russian trade in Turkestan, to prevent the United Kingdom from inserting itself into Central Asian affairs and to foster closer ties with the Emir of Bukhara—'the most reliable and strong ruler in Central Asia'²⁷—in order to exploit the animosity among the khanates.

Between 1864 and 1884, systematic conquest was launched and successfully completed. Even facing the threat of ultimate annihilation, the rulers of Bukhara and Kokand could not overcome mutual antagonism.²⁸ In 1867, the General-Governorship of Turkestan (GGT) was established, with its centre in Tashkent. It embodied all the territories of Kokand and Bukhara occupied until then by the Russian Army. In 1868, Kokand became a vassal of the Russian Empire and Bukhara ceded its northern cities of Khujand, Uroteppa, Panjakent, Samarkand and Qatta-Qurghon to the GGT and acknowledged its status as a Russian protectorate. Khiva followed suit in 1873 and the majority of petty principalities in eastern Bukhara (roughly corresponding with contemporary southern Tajikistan) were subjugated between 1870 and 1875. In 1876, Alexander II formally abolished the Khanate of Kokand, and in 1884, when the Turkmen city of Mary (Merv) surrendered, the whole of Turkestan was included in the Russian realm. In Hélène Carrère d'Encausse's adroit phrasing, 'despite initial anxieties as to the supposed strength of existing Muslim states and English opposition, the conquest of Central Asia had been, in the final analysis, rapid, and, on the whole, not very bloody, at least for Russia'.²⁹

In the period 1866–99, the Russian authorities were preoccupied with organising efficient government and development of the subjugated territories. By the end of the century Russian Turkestan comprised the GGT with five *oblasts* (administrative regions) and two protectorates: Bukhara and Khiva. Once again the Tajiks found themselves divided by administrative borders. The northern and eastern parts of present-day Tajikistan with the cities of Panjakent, Uroteppa (Istaravshon), Nau, Khujand, Isfara and Tashqurghon were included in the

27 N. A. Khalfin, *Politika Rossii v Srednei Azii: 1857–1868* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo vostochnoi literatury, 1960) p. 123.

28 Russian General Romanovsky reported in 1866 that 'they don't conceal hatred towards each other ... and more than once expressed to me their readiness to assist us in our advancement: the Kokandis—if Bukhara is to be attacked, the Bukharans—if Kokand is to be attacked'. See: Z. D. Kastelskaia, *Iz istorii Turkestanskogo kraia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1980), p. 16.

29 Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, 'Systematic Conquest, 1865 to 1884', in *Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule*, ed. Edward Allworth (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 149.

Samarkand and Ferghana *oblasts*, while the central and southern areas remained within the fold of Bukhara. In 1895, firm borders were established between Russian Turkestan and Afghanistan, which have survived until today. Rushan, Shughnan and part of Vakhan were acquired by Emir Abd al-Ahad of Bukhara in return for lands along the Panj River, which became part of Afghanistan. Russia retained garrisons in the Pamir *vilayets* of Bukhara and subsequently annexed them in 1905.³⁰

The Russian Government deemed it feasible to preserve the Emirate of Bukhara intact for a number of reasons. First, it served as a buffer state covering a 1500 km border with Afghanistan. Second, the introduction of Russian administration to a country with a population of two million plus with centuries-long traditions of feudal unrest would be a costly affair with unclear results. Finally, Bukhara was a religious centre, renowned not only in Turkestan but also throughout the world Islamic community. At the end of the nineteenth century, its capital city of 80 000 people had 80 *madrasas* with up to 10 000 pupils, including students from India, Kashgar, Afghanistan, China and Russia, some 260 mosques and dozens of sacred places (*mazors*) associated with various Sufi saints.³¹ The religious establishment played an important role in local politics, and the appointment of Russian officials there would have alienated Muslims far beyond the borders of Turkestan.

The relative isolation of Bukhara from the GGT led to a different pace of economic development in what is now Tajikistan. As Barthold has noted, the mining and manufacturing industries were in worse shape in the Khanates of Bukhara and Kokand in the beginning of the nineteenth century than under the Samanids in the tenth.³² The Russian conquest paved the way for the penetration of a capitalist market economy, which was facilitated by the construction of the trans-Caspian railway between 1881 and 1886 and the creation of a unified monetary and customs zone in Turkestan between 1892 and 1895. The area of what is today northern Tajikistan, however, found itself in a privileged position compared with the territories of southern Tajikistan belonging to Bukhara. The Russian industrialists and merchants treated the south predominantly as a commodity market and source of raw materials until the beginning of the twentieth century. The feudal land-tenure and taxation systems did not undergo any changes there; as a result, in the words of a Russian geographer, 'the economic management of Bukhara is carried out in a predatory way and has deplorable consequences ...

30 Governor-General Vrevsky remarked in 1895 that the reason for the annexation was that 'the Tajiks treat the Bukharans with animosity and we should value sympathies on the part of the Tajiks since all countries bordering the Pamirs—Badakhshan, Chitral, Gilgit, Kanjut, Tagarma—are inhabited by Tajiks who are related to the populace of Shughnan, Rushan and Vakhan'. See: *Istoriia Tadjhikskogo naroda*, Vol. II, p. 178.

31 O. A. Sukhareva, *Bukhara: XIX – nachalo XXv. (Pozdnefeodalnyi gorod i ego naselenie)* (Moscow: Nauka, 1966), pp. 288, 290, 308.

32 V. V. Barthold, *Sochineniia*, Vol. III (Moscow: Izdatelstvo vostochnoi literatury, 1965), p. 111.

The government sucks the blood of poor Bukharans and if some time Bukhara is attached to Russia, we will literally acquire a bunch of mendicant people.³³ The cause of promoting Russian economic interests in Bukhara was largely left to private enterprise. It is symptomatic that the Russian Political Agency was not established there until 1885. On the contrary, the development of the Samarkand and Ferghana *oblasts* of the GGT was largely inspired by the Russian Government, and the construction of railroads and irrigation systems there was financed from the state budget or through government-owned banks. In 1886, new landmark legislation on the GGT was approved, providing for private landownership in Turkestan. The Russian authorities encouraged cotton-growing in Turkestan, and during 1883–89, introduced high-yield American varieties of cotton. Soon it became the main source of capital accumulation for Russian and local entrepreneurs: ‘hundreds of clerks, officers, other government employees and merchants rushed to grow cotton ... The fathoms of raining gold, the dream of American wealth in Turkestan eclipsed everything else. They planted cotton everywhere a piece of irrigated land could be found.’³⁴ By 1915, cotton plantations had occupied 60 to 95 per cent of arable lands in the Ferghana *oblast*,³⁵ thenceforth, cotton monoculture prevailed in this area.

While northern Tajikistan was gradually being included in the all-Russian market and division of labour, Bukhara, especially its eastern parts, stood aloof. The number of factories in the whole Emirate of Bukhara in 1917–28³⁶ was less than the corresponding figure for the single Khujand *uezd* (administrative subdivision) of the Samarkand *oblast* in the 1890s.³⁷ Though the emir joined the ‘cotton rush’ in Central Asia, and even though by the end of the nineteenth century cotton accounted for 40 per cent of his country’s exports,³⁸ it was not until 1916 that a cohesive program was devised with the participation of the Russian Stakheev Concern to rationalise production and sales of cotton and to irrigate new, vast lands for cotton-growing.³⁹ Eastern Bukhara remained completely devoid of railroads, and pack animals were its main means of transportation.

The territory of Eastern Bukhara is of particular interest in this study, as this corresponds with the modern-day area that would see the worst of the civil war

33 L. A. Perepelitsyna, *Rol russkoi kultury v razvitiu kultur narodov Srednei Azii* (Moscow: Nauka, 1976), p. 8.

34 A. Aminov and A. Babakhodzhaev, *Ekonomicheskie i politicheskie posledstviia prisoedineniia Srednei Azii k Rossii* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1966), pp. 71–2.

35 A. M. Aminov, *Ekonomicheskoe razvitiie Srednei Azii (kolonialnyi period)* (Tashkent: Gosudarstvennoe izdatelstvo Uzbekskoi SSR, 1959), p. 143.

36 *Istoriia Bukhary s drevneishykh vremen do nashikh dnei* (Tashkent: Fan, 1976), pp. 172–3.

37 *Istoriia Tadzhikskogo naroda*, Vol. II, p. 146.

38 Hélène Carrère d’Encausse, *Islam and the Russian Empire: Reform and Revolution in Central Asia* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co., 1988), p. 42.

39 T. M. Kitanina, ‘Iz istorii obrazovaniia kontserna Stakheeva’, in *Iz istorii imperializma v Rossii* (Moscow and Leningrad: Izdatelstvo AN SSSR, 1959), pp. 123–4.

in Tajikistan, specifically Qurghonteppa, the Vakhsh River region and Kulob. These lands were, throughout all historical periods, the isolated periphery of empires or under the control of various autonomous local powers, but never home to any strong entity that could project power outside the region.⁴⁰ After the collapse of the Timurids, the region was under fluctuating levels of influence of the Shaybanid, Janid and Manghit Uzbek dynasties. In the first half of the eighteenth century, as the Bukhara Emirate started to lose authority in the area, the Yuz Uzbeks took control of the Vakhsh Valley and Qubodiyon from their base in Hisor. And at times during the eighteenth century the Vakhsh would come under the control of Kunduz to the south, or Kulob and Baljuvon in the east.⁴¹

In 1870 the Bukharan Emirate, now under a certain level of tsarist control that would last two years, expanded its control over Qurghonteppa and Qubodiyon with Russian assistance. Qurghonteppa, along with other eastern areas, became a sub-province of Hisor, and the wider region of modern-day southern Tajikistan came to be referred to as Eastern Bukhara.⁴² The Bukharan Emirate, allowed by the Russians to keep its bureaucratic structures and emir, *attempted* to create a bureaucratic structure that would incorporate local political, financial, judicial and religious structures at three levels of government, from top to bottom.⁴³ This is in line with the tsarist enactment in 1867 of an administrative and territorial reorganisation whereby civil and military powers were exclusively the domain of the military administration while ‘all local affairs were relinquished to the traditional hierarchies’;⁴⁴ however, the reality of Bukharan power was not quite so orderly. Hélène Carrère d’Encausse describes a state where many regions were ‘living in a situation of almost total independence or constant

40 The lower Vakhsh and Kofarnihon valleys were ‘under the orbit’ of ancient Bactria and Balkh, which is shown in the numerous archaeological sites there. The town of Qurghonteppa was first mentioned in historical sources in the seventeenth century as it began to prosper. See: Habib Borjian, ‘Kurgantepe’, *Encyclopedia Iranica*, n.p. (2005), online: <<http://www.iranica.com/articles/kurgan-tepe>> Borjian notes that Khottalon (Kulob) ‘remained a vassal of successive empires, but often with substantial degrees of autonomy due to its relative isolation’. Habib Borjian, ‘Kulab’, *Encyclopedia Iranica*, n.p. (2005), online: <<http://www.iranica.com/articles/kulab>>

41 Borjian, ‘Kurgantepe’, n.p. Borjian writes that Kulob, on the trade route from Hisor to Afghanistan, was an area of competition for surrounding Uzbek states, including the Janids in Balkh, the Loqay and the Qataghan Uzbeks in Kunduz (Beg Murad Khan appointed his son as ruler of Kulob). Influence from south of the Amu Darya lasted until the Durrani Empire took control of northern Afghanistan. After this point Kulob came under the expanding influence of Hisor. Then, for much of the nineteenth century, the area was a buffer zone between Bukhara, Kokand and Afghanistan. See: Borjian, ‘Kulab’, n.p.

42 Borjian, ‘Kurgantepe’, n.p. Shirin Akiner, *Tajikistan: Disintegration or Reconciliation?* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2001), p. 11.

43 Carrère d’Encausse, *Islam and the Russian Empire*, p. 26; Anita Sengupta, ‘Imperatives of National Territorial Delimitation and the Fate of Bukhara’, *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 19, Nos 3–4 (2000), pp. 399–401, 407.

44 Sengupta, ‘Imperatives of National Territorial Delimitation and the Fate of Bukhara’, p. 401. For a discussion of Russian administrative policy and local autonomy in Central Asia and Turkestan, see: Daniel Brower, ‘Islam and Ethnicity: Russian Colonial Policy in Turkestan’, in *Russia’s Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700–1917*, eds Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

rebellion'.⁴⁵ The Bukharan Emirate had little semblance of territorial integrity. Geographic factors of distance, isolation and mountainous terrain gave the Eastern Bukharan lands a high level of autonomy. Anita Sengupta notes that 'complete control almost entirely eluded the Emirs and people preserved their family community structures'.⁴⁶ She goes on to note the lack of stability, with 'a constant process of flux where assimilation of certain parts was constantly accompanied by the threat of secession by others'.⁴⁷ B. I. Iskandarov similarly argues that Bukhara's failure to unite its eastern domains under centralised rule allowed small, autonomous local social units to prosper.⁴⁸ Especially relevant to Tajiks from the mountainous regions, the people here were able, thanks to their geographic location, to sidestep the emirs' attempts at centralised rule.⁴⁹ In Eastern Bukhara, in the eyes of the traditional communities and their leaders, any centralising agent constituted a potential menace. The non-Uzbek peasants and *beks* treated the emir as an alien ruler and oppressor.⁵⁰

The period of tsarist rule in Turkestan ushered in a number of significant social and demographic changes. In the territories of the GGT, usage of the Uzbek language progressively increased from its already dominant position as the language of the majority. In 1868, people in Samarkand spoke Tajik almost exclusively; by 1904 it had given way to mostly Uzbek.⁵¹ This dramatic shift was caused by the fact that the Russian administration utilised Turkic Kazakhs, Tatars and Bashkirs as interpreters and sometimes staff members. The improvement in communications and education was conducive to the wider circulation of a normative Uzbek literary language rather than a handful of Uzbek dialects. Interestingly, of 415 students who completed their studies at the Tashkent Teachers' Seminary in the 25 years from 1879 to 1904 there were only 65 natives; of these, 54 were Kazakhs or Kyrgyzs and not one was a Tajik.⁵² Given that Tajiks accounted for 9 per cent of the population of Turkestan in 1897⁵³ and were settled compactly in the Samarkand and Ferghana *oblasts*, there was a deliberate policy of Turkicisation

45 Carrère d'Encausse, *Islam and the Russian Empire*, p. 25.

46 Sengupta, 'Imperatives of National Territorial Delimitation and the Fate of Bukhara', p. 399.

47 Sengupta, 'Imperatives of National Territorial Delimitation and the Fate of Bukhara', p. 399.

48 B. I. Iskandarov, *Vostochnaia Bukhara i Pamir v Pereod Prisoedineniya Srednei Azii k Rossi* (Tadzhikskoe Gosudarstvo, 1960), as cited in Sengupta, 'Imperatives of National Territorial Delimitation and the Fate of Bukhara', p. 399.

49 Olimova and Olimov state that 'hill valleys and their inhabitants with small pieces of cultivated land and no hope for irrigation came together in small groups and preserved their self-sufficient complex and independence from the central government'. See: S. K. Olimova and M. A. Olimov, 'Nezavisimi Tajikistan—trydni puch peremen', *Vostok*, No. 1 (1995), n.p., as translated and cited in Sengupta, 'Imperatives of National Territorial Delimitation and the Fate of Bukhara', p. 399. For example: while *hakims* had the responsibility of collecting taxes on behalf of the emir, areas outside effective central control such as Darvoz, Qarotegin and Karshi gave only occasional tribute to Bukhara. See: *ibid.*, p. 400.

50 Kirill Nourzhanov, 'Reassessing the Basmachi: Warlords without Ideology?' *Journal of South Asia and Middle East Studies*, Vol. XXXI, No. 3 (Spring 2008), p. 61.

51 Barthold, *Sochineniia*, Vol. II, Part 1, p. 168.

52 Gavin Hambly, *Central Asia* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969), p. 223.

53 Rahim Masov, *Tadzhiki: istoriia s grifom 'Sovershenno sekretno'* (Dushanbe: Paivand, 1995), p. 52.

on the part of the Russian administration, which was later complemented by Russification. In 1891, the governor-general instructed *oblast* governors that *volost* chairmen, *qozis*, village headmen and other native administrative officials use the Russian language in the course of their duties, and that a good command of Russian should be a criterion for selecting candidates to fill vacancies.⁵⁴ After 1876, the Russian administration tried to introduce modern Russian-type schools with a single, officially proclaimed purpose: to train indigenous personnel devoted to the tsarist regime who subsequently 'will be given the task of handling all issues pertaining to [the] local population that are not of political essence'.⁵⁵

In the beginning of the twentieth century there existed three types of educational institutions in Turkestan: 1) the traditional *maktab* and *madrasa*; 2) the so-called 'new method' (*usuli jadid*) schools, which combined Islamic education with modern European elements; and 3) Russian-type schools. The tsarist government grew more and more suspicious of the pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic activities of the Jadid schools, run mostly by well-educated Tatars, but encouraged their spread in Bukhara where they could undermine the influence of the conservative clergy. On the whole, the achievements in the field of public education both in Bukhara and in Russian Turkestan were very modest; in 1917 literacy varied from 1 to 2 per cent—'considerably worse than India at that time';⁵⁶ however, a small stratum of middle-class intellectuals came into being in Turkestan, whose views were not confined either to Islamic dogma or to the geographic boundaries of the Russian Empire. They formed the nuclei of future Tajik and Uzbek national intelligentsias who, decades later, would 'invite [the] masses into history'.⁵⁷

The struggle against Russian imperial domination had its own peculiarities in Bukhara and the Tajik-populated territories of the GGT. First, they did not suffer from the influx of Russian peasant migrants who had seized 49.2 million ha of the best land from Kazakhs and Kyrgyzs by 1907.⁵⁸ There were only 14 Russian settlements in northern Tajikistan (the Khujand *uezd*) in 1914; of these, 13 were located in the sparsely populated Hungry Steppe.⁵⁹ Consequently, popular revolts there were caused by excessive taxation and exploitation rather than by land confiscations. When Kokand was subjugated, the tax burden upon local peasants was somewhat lightened, but by the early 1880s it had increased

54 Perepelitsyna, *Rol russkoi kultury v razvitii kultur narodov Srednei Azii*, pp. 102–3.

55 Kastelskaia, *Iz istorii Turkestanskogo kraia*, p. 16.

56 W. P. Coates and Zeldia K. Coates, *Soviets in Central Asia* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1951), p. 54.

57 Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987), p. 137.

58 G. F. Dakshleiger, *Sotsialno-ekonomicheskie preobrazovaniia v aule i derevne Kazakhstana (1921–1929gg.)* (Alma-Ata: Zhazushy, 1965), p. 49.

59 A. Ia. Vishnevsky, *Leninskaia natsionalnaia politika v deistvii* (Dushanbe: Donish, 1982), p. 23.

two to threefold⁶⁰ and had become 'between 50 and 150 percent higher than those levelled upon the none-too-liberally treated people of European Russia'.⁶¹ Russian industrial workers in Turkestan received wages almost twice as high as their native colleagues.⁶² These grievances underlay peasant riots in Khujand (1872, 1889 and 1906) and in Uroteppa (1875, 1907) and tumult amongst native coalminers in Panjakent (1885). Periodic anti-feudal riots in Eastern Bukhara also gradually acquired an anti-Russian colouring, since Russian garrisons unfailingly helped government forces to suppress insurgencies. Interestingly, a huge peasant revolt headed by Abdul Vose that swept Baljuvon, Khovaling, Sary-Khosor and Kulob in 1885 and shattered the power of the emir⁶³ was one of the reasons for the establishment of the Russian Political Agency in Bukhara, which could advise local authorities how to avoid such calamities in future. At first, rebellious peasants of Eastern Bukhara constantly asked the Russian representatives to save them from the arbitrariness of the Uzbek *beks* and the emir officials,⁶⁴ but to no avail. Eventually Russian officers and travellers became the targets of a widespread form of spontaneous protest in Eastern Bukhara as well as in Turkestan: bandit attacks, assault and robbery. In the period 1899–1917, the number of such attacks registered more than a tenfold growth in Turkestan (from 50 to 547 annually).⁶⁵



The native population of Central Asia rose up, protesting against poverty, infringement upon customs and religious feelings (the 1892 cholera riots in Tashkent), and forced conscription to labour battalions (the 1916 rebellion, which began in Khujand and then spread throughout Central Asia).⁶⁶ All these uprisings, however, were 'sporadic and limited in scope ... and had no broader

60 Aminov and Babakhodzhaev, *Ekonomicheskie i politicheskie posledstviia prisoedineniia Srednei Azii k Rossii*, p. 99.

61 Coates and Coates, *Soviets in Central Asia*, p. 56.

62 Kastelskaia, *Iz istorii Turkestanskogo kraia*, p. 63.

63 The revolt began after several years of drought and locust invasions from Afghanistan had placed local farmers on the brink of complete ruin. It could not be pacified quickly because the emir's army at the time comprised just 'five or six units of soldiers, the majority of whom are thieves, gamblers, drunkards, some of them are mad and insane, others are lame and blind, who have never heard a gunshot'. See: Mirza 'Abdal 'Azim Sami, *Tarikh-i Salatin-i Manghitiya* (Moscow: Izdatelstvo Vostochnoi Literatury, 1962), p. 119. The uprising was crushed by the irregular Uzbek cavalry from Hisor and Qarotegin. In the Soviet period a district in Tajikistan was named after Vose, who was being depicted as a fervent fighter against the emir's feudal oppression.

64 *Istoriia Tadzhikskogo naroda*, Vol. II, kn. 2, p. 191.

65 Carrère d'Encausse, *Islam and the Russian Empire*, p. 74.

66 Interestingly, for the first time indigenous women took an active part in anti-government demonstrations in Khujand and Uroteppa. See: Sh. Iusupov and D. Berdiev, 'Vosstanie 1916g. v gorode Ura-Tiube i Ganchinskoi volosti', *Izvestiia AN RT. Seriya: vostokovedenie, istoriia, filologiya*, No. 4 (28) (1992), p. 77.

revolutionary significance for the Moslem masses or the Moslem leaders'.⁶⁷ By no means were they inspired by an organised nationalist and/or anti-colonialist ideology. The tsarist regime fully succeeded in at least two important elements of its imperial policy in Central Asia: it managed to divide local peoples by artificial administrative and cultural boundaries, and it sealed off the whole region from the world outside. Even one of the severest critics of Russia, Lord Curzon, had to acknowledge ultimately the impregnable position of the Tsarist Empire in the region: 'I admit that Russia has in her career of Central Asiatic conquest by devious, and often dishonourable, means achieved a successful and salutary end.'⁶⁸ Despite its position of power, the Russian tsarist administration did not attempt to introduce truly radical changes to Central Asian societies. The Soviet authorities, however, would have different plans, creating 'socialist nations' by applying an awesome arsenal of communist-style modernisation to the mosaic of traditional local identities.

67 Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia: The Case of Tadzhikistan* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), p. 17.

68 Alexis Krausse, *Russia in Asia: A Record and A Study* (London: Curzon Press, 1973), p. 138.