

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA, 1917-1936

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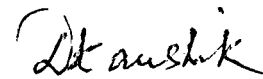
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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P R E F A C E

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In this study an attempt has been made to examine the formal aspect of the Constitutional development in Central Asia. Secondly, at a more analytical level, it is proposed to examine the social and economic processes and forces responsible for the above development. It is this second part that seeks to assess the cross currents of social forces involved in the process and to go into the nature of social formations at different stages that have had a bearing on the constitutional development.

This study has been divided into four chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter seeks to analyse the Western and Soviet approach to constitution and its role in society.

The second chapter deals with the Marxist-Leninist theoretical model for solving the national question and the problem of choosing the path of development. It also seeks to examine the application of this model to Central Asia. These two chapters are intended to provide the ideological and theoretical background of the study.

The next two chapters are directly concerned with the subject matter. The third chapter examines the socio-economic factors and other relevant conditions which

have had decisive impact on the constitutional advancement in the region. The fourth chapter assesses the specificity of constitutional development in the region.

An essential issue which emerges from this study is that despite the specific social structures which have played an important role in the process of constitutional development, these structures were also influenced and transformed by the Marxist-Leninist ideology which excited the parameters of constitutional development.

The methodology followed in this study is mainly analytical based on the data contained in primary and secondary sources.

I feel deeply indebted and obliged to my Supervisor Dr R.R. Sharma of the Centre for Soviet and East European Studies for his encouragement and able guidance, which sustained my interest in the subject for the completion of this dissertation. I am also indebted to my friends for all the help and encouragement given by them.

I gratefully acknowledge the assistance rendered to me by the staff of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Library and the Indian Council of World Affairs Library at Sapru House, New Delhi.

Finally, inadequate as my words are, I would like to thank my parents for making all this possible.

Shahnaz Bano
(Shahnaz Bano)

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CHAPTER-I

SOVIET PERCEPTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SOVIET PERCEPTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The study of constitutionalism occupies a significant place in the sphere of political ideas. It is interesting at the first hand, to take note of how the complex phenomenon of constitutionalism has been conceived by the Western scholars on the one hand and by the Soviet writers on the other.

Constitutionalism in the West:

From the time of Aristotle the term 'constitution' has come to mean the 'way of government', implying that each government works in a definite way and creates its own legitimacy. The relativity in the concept of legitimacy kept the term 'constitution' somehow value free till the time of the glorious revolution when a definite value was attached to it. Constitutional government, since then became identified with a 'regulated' or a 'limited' government.¹

Constitutionalism, structurally represents a set of institutionalized relations between: (1) the people and the government, (2) the different levels of government and (3) the different institutions of government.²

1. S.B. Chaube, The New Constitution of the USSR (Calcutta, 1978), p. 1

2. Ibid., p. 3.

The first relation depends upon the rights and duties, the second upon the extent of centralization and the third depends upon the functional mechanism. While the first two relations deal some kind of philosophy of the State, the third is operational and therefore, value-free. The first relation involves a choice between individualism and collectivism and the second between federalism and unitarism. The third relation is considered value-free for a governmental machinery is regarded merely as an instrument of fulfilling the needs of the people in any way that the prescribed norm of the State may demand. Thus, within the framework same political objectives there may be different kinds of governmental mechanism.³

In its early phase constitutionalism was employed to create a "free market society" which confirmed to liberal view of constitutionalism. It treats constitutionalism as an end in itself, it only provides for a mechanism suited to management of public affairs without determining the actual course of social change. It leaves the function of determining social policy and programme to the different political parties competing for power in an open market.

3. Ibid., p. 4.

The classical writers on constitutionalism particularly James Bryce and K.C. Wheare were primarily concerned with the evolving a suitable definition of constitution. Bryce defined constitution as "a frame of political society, organized through and by law; and that is to say one in which law has established permanent institution with recognized functions and definite rights".⁴

K.C. Wheare has defined the idea of constitutionalism as a mechanism of imposing restraints on the arbitrary power of government in order to safeguard the freedom of citizens. "Constitutions" writes Wheare, "spring from a belief in a limited government whatever the nature and extent of the restrictions however, they are based upon the common belief in a limited government and the use of constitution to impose these limitations."⁵

Same idea was properly developed by C.H. Mcilwain in his constitutionalism and the changing world. He observed:

"A constituted authority is one that is defined, and there can be no definition which does not of necessity imply a limitation. Constitutional government is and must

4. C.F. Strong, Modern Political Constitutions (London, 1930), p. 10.

5. K.C. Wheare, Modern Constitutions (London, 1966), p. 7.

be "limited government" if it is constitutional at all. Whatever its form may be, whether monarchical, aristocratic, or democratic, in any state that we may properly call constitutional, the supreme authority must be defined and defined by a law of some kind. That law may be unwritten and entirely customary, as it has been for the greater part of its history; or it may be set forth in a single official document as in our state and federal constitutions, but in every case it is a law that puts bound to arbitrary will."⁶

Other Western writers and liberal thinkers like Thomas Paine, Alexis de Tocqueville, Harold J. Laski, H. Finer, C.J. Friedrich and others who developed a model of democratic constitutional order by adding the principle of democracy tend to look at the structures and process of liberal democracy as the normal mechanism of constitutionalism. They regard constitutionalism as an end and a means both. According to Thomas Paine "where the constitution cannot be presented in the visible form, there is no constitution because the human rights could be protected by a written constitution alone."⁷ On this ground Thomas Paine refused

6. C.H. Mcilwain, Constitutionalism and the Changing World (Cambridge, 1969), p. 244.

7. The Constitutional System of the Soviet Union, ed. by Research Board, Research (Delhi, N.D.), p. 52.

to accept the existence of the British Constitution. It is hardly convincing in view of the fact that a constitution may not necessarily be in one form of a specific document made at a particular time of history, the rules may either be written, or they may exist in the form of connections of the constitution and both of them may have the same source of application.

Mcilwain expressed the following views:

- (i) There is a fundamental difference between the government of the people and the constitution of the people. The people is the sole authority and the fountain head of power. The people sanction the formation of government. Constitution is more important than the government.
- (ii) the power bestowed with the government by the constitution is defined by the people. Thus the people restrict the powers and also check it from becoming arbitrary. Constitution is very significant from this point of view.
- (iii) the government is formed on the basis of constitution. Constitution is framed first and then the government is formed.
- (iv) constitutionalism does not support the abuse of power.
- (v) where constitution and the government is considered one and the same, in fact, there

is no constitution, because no control exists to check the government from becoming arbitrary.⁸ According to him it must be a written constitution to restrict the powers of the government. Mcilwain thus has kept the means and end of constitutionalism in view.

As a means constitutionalism has 3 main objects: (1) Liberty (2) democracy (3) interest of the nation or community. Laski has added equality as the fourth aim. As an end it guarantees the fundamental rights and liberty and protects them. It checks the state to be arbitrary or to concentrate all the power in itself.⁹ According to Friedrich:

"Constitutionalism by dividing power provides a system of effective restraints upon governmental action. In studying it one has to explore the methods and techniques by which such restraints established and maintained... It is a body of rules ensuring fair play, thus rendering the government responsible."¹⁰

8. Ibid., p. 53.

9. Ibid., p. 52.

10. C.J. Friedrich, Constitutional Government & Democracy (Oxford, 1968), p. 24.

Under constitutionalism two types of limitations impinge on government. "Power is proscribed, and procedures proscribed." If these arrangements are short circuited or contravened, the government action is not legitimate.¹¹ A democratic constitutional order writes Karl Loewenstein must provide for not only distribution of powers among different organs of government in order to avoid concentration of power in a single organ or a single person and to ensure their co-ordination, but also for the method by which constitutional order can be peacefully adjusted to changed conditions - constitutional amendments. It must include a bill of rights with effective civil liberties. While granting the individual citizen a subjective right they are not automatically and directly enforceable against the State, they require action on the part of the public authority to make them realizable.¹²

The model of democratic constitutional system thus contains two basic conditions to serve the purpose of constitutionalism. First an effective distribution of power functional as well as spatial to avoid the concentration of power. Secondly, a bill of rights provides effective

11. W.G. Andrews, Constitutions and Constitutionalism (New Delhi, 1971), p. 13.

12. Karl Loewenstein, "Constitutions, Constitutional Law" in C.D. Kernig, ed., Marxism, Communism and Western Society: A Comparative Encyclopaedia (New York, 1972), vol. 2, p. 172.

safeguards for liberties of the citizens to which some social and economic rights may occasionally be added.

A society having such arrangements came to be described as an "open society" and its government came to be recognised as an agency of reconciling the conflicting interests of different strata of society. This view of constitutionalism is known as the liberal pluralist view admits:

- a. plurality of interests in society;
- b. capability of each section of society to identify and articulate its interest through its organisation; and
- c. availability of a mechanism through which the conflicting interests can be resolved into authoritative policies and decisions.¹³

This modern view of constitutionalism assumes existence of conflict and consensus in society at different levels. According to William G. Andrews, "The matter of consensus has an important bearing on constitutionalism. Order may be imposed through force, violence and arbitrary action by a dictator or oligarch even if the extent and intensity of consensus in a community are low."¹⁴

13. O.P. Gauba, Constitutionalism in a changing society (New Delhi, 1984), p. 6.

14. Cited in Andrews, n. 11, pp. 13-14.

According to liberal pluralist view different sections of society advance conflicting demand for "authoritative allocation of values" in their favour. At the same time there is a consensus regarding the mechanism and process through which their conflicting claims can be resolved and translated into authoritative policies and decisions.¹⁵

This liberal pluralist view of constitutionalism is categorically rejected by the Marxist theory. According to them plurality of view in the society is not possible because "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles",¹⁶ and "society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other; bourgeoisie and proletariat."¹⁷

According to the Marxism state is primarily an instrument of oppression. Its most important institution is "public force", comprised of armed men, prisons and the various appendages of oppression. Its function is to assure peace and public order so as to permit the continuation

15. Gauba, n. 13, p. 7°

16. K. Marx, and F. Engels, Selected Works (Moscow, 1950), vol. I, p. 33.

17. Ibid., pp. 33-34.

of production in a society divided by class antagonisms,¹⁸ and project a wrong image of reconciliation of interest with the help of religion, morals and other implements of culture.

The Western liberal writers equates democracy with constitutional limited government. Logically, the power of the people cannot be limited. The concept of a limited government on the other hand has been known since at least the time of Greeks. In ancient Greece and Rome it meant the rule of the oligarchy. It was after the renaissance only that, in Europe the movement for constitutional government arose to check the dynastic autocracies and became associated with the democratic aspirations of the people.¹⁹

Thus we see a liberal constitution whether its structure conforms to parliamentary model, presidential model or any combination of the two, only provides for a mechanism of management of this political process. It does not preclude social change but the pattern and degree of social change allowed by it is determined by the interplay of political forces. The sophisticated mechanism of liberal constitutionalism uses representative institutions

18. C.D. Kernig, ed., Marxism, Communism and Western Society: A Comparative Encyclopaedia (New York, 1973), p. 99.

19. Chaube, n. 1, p. 8.

only to create the ideological misconception. Lenin held that the essence of liberalism was summed up in its assertions that "bourgeois parliamentarism destroys classes and class divisions, since the right to vote and the right to participate in the government of the country are shared by all citizens without distinction".²⁰ In opposition to this Lenin set forth his own view that the "parliamentarism does not eliminate, but lays bare the innate character even of the most democratic bourgeois republics as organs of class oppression".²¹ Lenin had always urged that the tactical opportunities afforded by the parliamentary system should be exploited the full. However, for him the conventional bourgeois concept of parliament never represented a means for achieving the "proletarian democracy" which the working class was to create after seizing power once again in his polemic with Kautsky Lenin expressed his views on parliamentary system.

"Take the bourgeois parliament can it be that the learned Kautsky has never heard that the more highly democracy is developed, the more bourgeois parliaments

20. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1963), vol. 15, p. 36.

21. Ibid., p. 36.

were subjected by the stock exchange and the bankers? This does not mean that we must not make use of bourgeois parliament (the Bolsheviki made better use of it than probably any other party in the world for in 1912, 14 we won the entire workers curia in the fourth duma) but it does mean that only a liberal can forget the historical limitations and conventional of the bourgeois parliamentary system as Kautsky does."²² This character of the modern constitutionalism according to the Marxist theory was nothing but a device for legitimization of an exploitative capitalist system. Thus Marxist model of constitutionalism calls for a different mechanism.

Soviet Perception of Constitution:

Soviet approach to the constitution is based on the Marxist-Leninist understanding of society, state and law, as also the actual requirements of the socialist society. This approach conceives a contention as an outcome of the prevailing constellation of social forces.

On the basis of searching analysis of human history Marx and Engels demonstrated that political institutions as well as morals culture of society at any historical stage were determined by the character of the prevailing

22. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1965), vol. 28, p. 246.

economic relationship emanating from the prevalent mode of production. In Marxian terminology, the economic mode of production.

In Marxian terminology, the economic mode of production current in history determines the character of the entire social super structure, and the first and most ideological element created by the mode of production in one social super structure is the state. It is further says that the entire structure of the state is based on the property relation. The private property creates class interest and finally class antagonism, class hatred and constant struggle in the womb of history. In their Communist Manifesto they observed that:

"The executive of modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."²³ "State" writes Lenin, "is a product and manifestation of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms the State arises, when and insofar as class antagonisms objectively cannot be reconciled and conversely, the existence of the State proves that the class antagonisms are irreconcilable."²⁴ The Communist programme consists in the realisation of complete stateless and classless society through revolutionary

23. K. Marx and F. Engels, "The Communist Manifesto", in Marx and Engels, Selected Works (Moscow, 1950), vol. I, p. 35.

24. V.I. Lenin The State and Revolution (Moscow, 1977), pp. 10-11.

action of the working class. This proletarian revolution will destroy the old State machine and replace it by a new one. Marx had already formulated his theory of the proletarian state in Communist Manifesto. On the basis of June insurrection of Paris in 1848 and the subsequent class struggle in France, he developed the concept of 'parasitic State', which must be smashed in proletarian revolution and elaborated his specific conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Marx says, "dialectically that proletariat (which emerges as a result of capitalist mode of production) learned through struggle, i.e., (politically) that bourgeois republicanism is its enemy."²⁵

For Marx, every form of political power is class power and thus dictatorial with regard to the other classes of society that do not shape it. Hence every state whatever is class base is dictatorial. The political rule of the bourgeois is the dictatorship of the bourgeois, even if it is cloaked in parliamentary garb, consequently, the political rule of the proletariat is always a dictatorship of the proletariat. Political rule as such dictatorial and therefore the ultimate aim of socialism is not merely to substitute the class rule of the bourgeois, because in that case just one form of dictatorship would be replaced

25. Alan Gilbert, "Salvaging Marx from Avineri", Political Theory (London), Vol. IV, no.1, February 1976, p.23.

by another. The aim of communism is the abolition of political power because all power is dictatorial.²⁶

In the Manifesto, Marx outlined his basic conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat, though he did not give it this name. He spoke of a vast movement of workers overthrowing the old ruling class,²⁷ and establishing its own rule. This democracy Marx argues will also be 'despotism' over the bourgeois by depriving it of its capacity to exploit.²⁸ Later the idea of proletariat rule was fully advanced by Lenin. He wrote... "The liberation of the oppressed class is impossible not only without a violent revolution but also without the destruction of the apparatus of State power which was created by the ruling class and which in the embodiment of this "alienation".²⁹ Only the Socialist revolution brings about a state which exercise all its function in the struggle of the working people and society's progressive development.³⁰

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26. Shimo, Avineri, "How to save Marx from the Alchemist of revolution", Political Theory, Vol. IV, no. I, Feb 1976, p. 30.
27. Marx and Engels, Selected Works (Moscow, 1962), vol. I, p. 44.
28. Ibid., p. 53.
29. Lenin, n. 24, p. 12.
30. V.M. Chkhivadze, ed., The Soviet State and Law (Moscow, 1969), p. 18.

Lenin comprehensively substantiated the historic mission role and significance of proletarian dictatorship during the transition from capitalism to socialism. The dictatorship is needed above all to abolish private ownership and the exploitation of man, to smash the old state machine of coercion, suppression and oppression of the people to crush the exploiting classes, resistance to handover to the working people of the main means of production.³¹ Lenin stressed the idea of that the dictatorship of the proletariat was a continuation of the working class struggle by new means. He wrote that the State was merely an instrument in the class struggle of the proletariat, and that the socialist state is therefore "democratic in a new way for the proletariat and the propertyless in general, and dictatorial in a new way (against the bourgeoisie)."³²

In his 'A Great Beginning', Lenin wrote, "It was natural and inevitable in the first period after the proletarian revolution that we should be engaged primarily on the main and fundamental task of overcoming the resistance of the bourgeoisie, of vanquishing the exploiters,

31. E. Chekharin, The Soviet Political System Under Developed Socialism (Moscow, 1977), p. 21.

32. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1964), vol. 25, p. 412.

of crushing their conspiracy.... But simultaneously with this task another task comes to the forefront just as inevitably and even more imperatively as time goes on, namely the more important task of positive communist construction, the creation of new economic relations of society." ³³

Thus the society would pass through two stages, lower and higher. In the lower phase the dictatorship of the proletariat and its variations. Material-technical base of the Communist society would be built even the "whole of society will have become a single office and a single factory, with equality of labour and pay...." ³⁴ When all have learned to administer social production, independently keep accounts and exercise control over the parasites... then the door will be thrown wide open for the transition from the first phase of Communist society to its higher phase, with it so the complete withering away of the State." ³⁵ The constitutional development in the Soviet society has reflected distinct phases of the socio-economic and political transformation in the history of one single experiment - the building of socialism.

33. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1965), vol. 29, p. 419.

34. Lenin, n.24, p.96.

35. Ibid., p. 97.

The Socialist Constitutionalism thus provides a mechanism for transformation of society along socialist goals. Socialist constitutions are not merely the frame for the operation of the political process, by government parliament and political parties but a programme of action is a prominent feature of socialist constitutionalism. The rules and institutions of Soviet constitutional law, wrote Chkhivadze, embody:

- (a) Principles underlying the Soviet social structure;
- (b) organisation of State system and State power;
- (c) legal status of persons; and
- (d) foreign affairs.³⁶

In the view of Soviet jurisprudence constitutions are but juridical expression of the actual correlation of social forces in the State, one must distinguish in analysis between the real force underlying all phenomena of State life and the document in which the nature and attributes of of this force are expressed. A constitution is a reflection of reality where there is a divergence between the constitution and the balance of social forces

36. Chkhivadze, n. 30, pp. 240-42.

in a state the constitution is a mere fiction.³⁷

Lenin keeping with the fundamental Marxian approach to all socio political phenomena that 'the essence of constitution lies in the fact that the fundamental law of the State... express the actual correlation of forces in the class struggle. A constitution is a fiction when law and reality part, not a fiction when they meet.³⁸ The achievements and progress made towards socialism in the country when formally recorded is considered to be the constitution. The struggle for socialism and the achievements are made are visible in the constitution. Stalin observed that Soviet constitutions are "the mirror of our success upto the day."³⁹

Same view was reinforced by Vyshinsky. He argued that "the Soviet constitution represents the sum total historic path along which the Soviet State has travelled. At the same time they are the legislative basis of the subsequent development of State life... changes in the socio-political life of our country are reflected in the

37. Julian Towster, Political Power in the USSR (Oxford, 1948), p. 18.

38. Ibid., p. 18.

39. Cited in R.R. Sharma, The USSR in Transition: Issues and Themes (New Delhi, 1985), p. 179.

corresponding changes of Soviet constitutions accepted by the highest organs of State authority."⁴⁰

In 1936 Stalin made an interesting distinction between constitution and programme. 'Whereas a programme speaks of that which does not yet exist, of that which has yet to be achieved and won in the future, a constitution on the contrary, must speak of that which has already been achieved and won now, at the present.'⁴¹

In fact constitutional development in the USSR has remained a guiding factor in the framing of socialist constitution in a number of countries. They have adopted this model with their respective cultures, physical and economic conditions. The Soviet constitution has always been viewed as "a principled political document designed to assert an active and positive impact on the course of society's political, economic, social and cultural development."⁴²

According to Vyshinsky "It is impossible to understand the content of Soviet constitutions and their

40. A.Y. Vyshinsky, The Law of the Soviet State (New York, 1948), p. 87.

41. S.V. Stalin, Problems of Leninism (Moscow, 1953), p. 548.

42. Boris Topornin, The New Constitution of the USSR (Moscow, 1980), p. 7.



characteristics without analysis of the historic setting in which they were developed and adopted and of the conquests whose formal record and legal confirmations they were." 43

A most important feature of the Soviet constitution is that the fundamental democratic institutions of the Soviet laid down by the constitution, including the fundamental rights and duties of Soviet citizens are valid and are expressed in practice. The Soviet constitution does not continue itself to proclaiming these rights but concentrates on their material, legal and other guarantees. 44

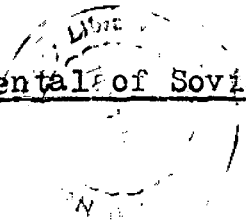
The present declaration formulated a new State structure in conformity with the socialist goal. It sprang from the Marxist theory that the rights of citizens are relative to the specific socio-political structure. Accordingly right of worker can only be secured when the authority of the working class is established over the State and the rights of the workers could be ensured. From this view constitutional development in the Soviet

43. Vyshinsky, n. 40, p. 87.

44. L. Grigoryan, Y. Dolgopolev, Fundamentals of Soviet State Law (Moscow, 1971), p. 24.

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State "represents an unbroken process of increasing material guarantees to actualise - to actualize its reality and to extend rights and freedoms. This process is directly reflected in Soviet constitution in the separate stages of their development."⁴⁵

The Soviet constitution has the function and properly reflecting, consolidating and developing the comprehensive collaboration of all social forces characterized by socio-political and ideological unity. Thus the politics of constitutionalism has to be understood in the totality of a country's socio-economic situation and only then we can judge the value of this important political concept of constitutionalism.

45. Vyshinsky, n. 40, p. 89.

CHAPTER II

SOVIET PERCEPTION OF NATIONAL QUESTION

CHAPTER II

SOVIET PERCEPTION OF NATIONAL QUESTION

Every constitution is essentially a compromise between socio-economic, political and cultural forces, responsible for its creation. A constitution is a living organism, like life itself, to constant change. Constitutional development, thus is meant a study of the different stages of socio-economic growth. Vyshinsky writes that "each stage of development of Soviet Constitution was marked by a progressive broadening of socialist democracy. Even the first Soviet Constitutions were the most democratic in the world, in as much as they confirmed by the authority of the toilers and the participation of the broadest popular masses in state government. They were the legal bases for the further development of Soviet democracy in the period of transition to socialism."¹

The constitutions are thus to be studied in relation to Central Asian Society as it has advanced since 1917, which made significant breaches in the traditional socio-economic structure. The Bolsheviks emerged victorious on a 'most barren socio-political soil, society inherited a multistructural economic characterised by consequent diversity

1 A.Y. Vyshinsky, The Law of the Soviet State (New York, 1948), p. 88.

of class structure. The region and its people presented a picture of what is called a large 'ethnological museum'. As the object of constitution was to provide a federal structure for a multinational state it may be appropriate to review briefly the Bolshvik attitude to the national question, which finally emerged as the cornerstone of the Soviet federal polity.

At its origin Russia represented a multinational society with various nationalities, living under the various levels of socio-economic and political development. They had their different traditions, customs, ways of life. The national oppression was burdened by a lack of political rights; racial and religious discrimination, which assumed the most barbarous and ugly form; remnants of serfdom and the patriarchal feudal relations and tyranny of Tsarism and its colonial administration. The peoples of the outlying colonial districts, constituting 56.7% of the population of the empire numerically.² Peoples who had glorious historical past and a rich and distinctive culture were slighted as 'alien tribes' and subjected to force 'Russification' on the part of the orthodox missionaries and Tsarist officials. Thus, the national question was one of the sharpest and most

2 K. Fortunatov, The National Provinces of Russia (St. Petersburg, 1906), p. 4.

complex problems in pre-revolutionary Russia. Lenin devoted tremendous attention to working out the theoretical and practical aspects of this problem from the first steps of his revolutionary activity. The well composed study on the national question was drawn up by Lenin and taken as the basis for the national programme of the Bolshevik party, had its origin in the need to "link the revolutionary struggle for socialism with the revolutionary program on the national question".³

This programme required that the people oppressed by Tsarism be given the right to self determination even including the right to secede and form independent states, abolition of all national religious privileges and restrictions; the free development of the national minorities and ethnographical groups inhabiting on the territory of Russia,⁴ were an absolutely important condition for solving the national question in Russia.

The solution of the national question together with the eliminating of the economic and cultural backwardness prevalent in Soviet Central Asia was made possible because of a tremendous ideological theoretical, political and organizational work of the Leninist party.

3 V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1964), vol. 21, p. 408.

4 Maxim Gorky and others, The History of Civil War in USSR (London, 1947), vol. 2, p. 592.

In its treatment of national question Marxism has always proceeded from the class interests of the working class, and in doing so it analysed and generalised the objective laws of the development of the national liberation movement. By taking these factors into account Marxism was able to create and develop a comprehensive theory of national liberation.

Marxism's first general ideas on the national question were set forth in 1848 in the Manifesto of the Communist Party. They showed that the concepts "nation" and "national" were products of the era of the rise of capitalism and were closely connected with the division of society into two basic classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and the class struggle. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie paves the way for a drawing together of nations. "In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end."⁵

Developing the propositions of Marxism in the new historical condition (era of imperialism and proletarian revolutions) Lenin showed that as capitalism moves into a new stage the national question develops into a most acute

5 K. Marx and E. Engels, Selected Works (Moscow, 1969), vol. 1, p. 125.

international socio-political issue of the abolition of national colonial oppression. Lenin regarded the nation as an socio-historical category belonging to a specific period that of capitalism and revealed the connection between its origin and the formation of capitalism and also showed that all further evolution of the nation was linked to the development of the economy which is first capitalist and then socialist.

The nation develops on the basis of the law of the two trends: "The first is the awakening of national life and national movements, the struggle against all national oppression, and the creation of national states. The second is the development and growing frequency of international intercourse in every form, the breakdown of national barriers, the creation of the international unity of capital economic life in general of politics, science etc."⁶

Marxism presupposes the posing of the national question on a class basis. It is impossible to understand a nation if it is regarded as some kind of phenomenon, standing outside or above classes. Lenin approached the national question on the basis of the sum total of factors and tendencies of social development and the elaboration and application of the entire strategy of the proletarian party in the working class struggle

6 Lenin, n. 3, vol. 20, p. 27.

for democracy and socialism.⁷ He regarded proletarian internationalism as the essence of the Marxist world outlook in national question. Substantiating the demand for the liberation of all colonial nations, Lenin argued that "such a demand is obviously meaningless unless it is accompanied by a series of revolutions in all the advanced countries. Moreover it can't be accomplished without a successful socialist revolution."⁸

Lenin clearly demarcated the various historical types of ethnic communities and gave them precise characteristics. He called the communities of people existing under a primitive society as community based on "blood ties", communities existing in the pre-capitalist slave owning and feudal epochs as communities based on "territorial ties", and the historical category of ethnic communities formed in the capitalist epoch as communities based on "bourgeois ties" and also "bourgeois-nation" or simply "nations".⁹

A nation is thus "a historically evolved stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language,

7 V. Zevin, "Soviet Experience in Building a Multinational State", Problems of the Contemporary World (USSR Academy of Sciences), vol. 4, no. 29, 1974, p. 66.

8 Lenin, n. 3, vol. 22, p. 341.

9 D. Kaushik, Socialism in Central Asia (Delhi, 1976), p. 5.

territory, economic life and psychological make up manifested in the common culture".¹⁰

The Marxist definition of a nation concrete and historical in character, differs sharply from the shallow definitions current in bourgeois scholarship which are wholly divorced from their essential material roots. Marxism firstly links the existence of nation with a definite historical period and secondly, isolates the essential socio-economic phenomena of that period, upon the basis of which one nation came into being.¹¹

H. Kohn, an American sociologist, views a nation as a group of people, the most essential element in the formation of which is "a living and active corporate will".¹²

Professor R. Polin believes that "the idea of the nation shapes on the basis of a collective idea combining highly heterogeneous opinions, judgements, standards, feelings, convictions and motivations. This collective notion reflects the unity of ethnic origins and history, traditions, customs, culture, habits and so on. Appearing as a product of

10 J.V. Stalin, Marxism and the National Question (Moscow, 1950), p. 16.

11 I. Zhuskina, Soviet Nationalities Policy and Bourgeois Historians (Moscow, 1976), p. 109.

12 H. Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism : A Study in its Origin and Background (New York, 1945), p. 15.

civilization at a definite stage of its historical development, a nation is both a historical reality and a historical collective nation".¹³ Earnest Barker argued that the community of economic life finds no place. He wrote "Take first a territory add some form of organisation (or state) to hold its inhabitants together; by its weight; let some community of belief and worship unite the spirit of man - and then from the crucible of time and the fermentation of centuries a nation will emerge".¹⁴

The idealist thinkers approach the nation from an subjective and metaphysical point of view, without giving a satisfactory explanation for the emergence of nations in a particular period of history. In fact it is the material conditions which effect the spiritual life of a nation, its outlook, national culture, national consciousness, national psychology and the content and forms of national traditions.¹⁵

Nation is the prevalent form of social collective in the capitalist as well as socialist epoch. Although it is the product of rising capitalism, nation continues to exist until

13 Cited in Victor Shevstov, The State and Nations in the USSR (Moscow, 1982), p. 9.

14 Sir Ernest Barker, National Character and the Factors in its Formation (London, 1948), p. 14.

15 M. Kulichenko, Nations and Social Progress (Moscow, 1984), pp. 38-39.

the advent of world socialism. And hence the division into bourgeois and socialist nations.¹⁶

The bourgeois nations arises in the era of developing capitalism are not socially unified. They lack internal solidarity and are divided into antagonistic classes. The bourgeois national culture, as Lenin observed, also consists of two cultures : the culture of the dominant class and the democratic and socialist culture of the working people. There is, as such no united social consciousness in a developed bourgeois nation but only class consciousness.¹⁷

The chief guiding force of such nations is the bourgeoisie, which controls the means and instruments of production and tries to maintain class peace. Its basic aim is to acquire maximum profit, for which it not only exploits and stresses its own working masses and national minorities, but wherever possible also seeks to seize and exploit the territories of other peoples. Thus it creates distrust and hatred against other nations and kindles strifes against them.¹⁸

Both types of nations are marked by the same four features: a common language, a common territory, an economic life and a common psychological make up. Yet there

16 Kaushik, n. 9, p. 11.

17 N.N. Agrawal, Soviet Nationalities Policy (Agra, 1969), p. 81.

18 Ibid.

are differences in their economy class composition, spiritual complexion and social and political interests and aspirations.¹⁹

The fate of bourgeois nations is linked up with the fate of capitalism with fall of capitalism, the bourgeois nations too will disappear.²⁰

The socialist nations radically differ from the bourgeois nation. The hegemon in the process of the formation of socialist nations is the working class.... Together with its allies it forms the majority of a nation, cements it and ensures its stability. The economic foundation of a nation in socialist society is the socialist mode of production which completely rules out class antagonism within a nation. Therefore socialist nations are characterized by increasing social homogeneity which finds its expression in their social political and spiritual unity.²¹ The socialist nations which came into being on the one hand through the transformation of nations of a bourgeois society into socialist nations and on the other through the formation of socialist nations out of the nation, nationalities and tribes which were either unable or have no chance to develop into nations under the old regime. Alongside the Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian and other

19 J.V. Stalin, The National Question and Leninism (Moscow, 1950), p. 16.

20 Ibid., pp. 14-16.

21 G. Glezerman, Class and Nations (Moscow, 1979), p. 25.

nations which took shape in Tsarist times, there were many nationalities and tribes (Kazakhs, Kirghizes, Tadjiks and others) which solidified into nations only with the advent of Soviet power.²² The process of national consideration which took centuries to be completed in West Europe was over in just about two decades in Soviet Central Asia under socialism.

A nation like any other historical phenomenon, is subject to the law of change. It has its history, its beginning and its end.²³ Communists argued that mankind will one day reach a stage where national differences would ultimately disappear. But that would happen in near future. Lenin also wrote national differences will remain in existence for "a very long time even after the dictatorship of the proletariat".²⁴

The classics of Marxism-Leninism teach that any theory is a generalisation of process and phenomena which take place in reality on the level of abstract reasoning. Marxist-Leninist theory of nations make it possible to comprehend the most intricate processes of political life.²⁵ This is

22 *Ibid.*, p. 23-24.

23 Stalin, Marxism and the National Question (Moscow, 1945), p. 15.

24 V.I. Lenin, Selected Works (Moscow, 1952), vol. 2, p. 420.

25 Kulichenko, n. 15, p. 72.

especially important because the idealist thinkers tried to explain the rise of nations in terms of a subjective and psychological feeling, will or consciousness without giving satisfactory explanation for the emergence of a nation. Marxist-Leninist theory of the nation make it possible to overcome the negative influence of the bourgeoisie and to use the nations on the principles of proletarian internationalism and fraternal friendship in their joint struggle for progress and socialism.

The nation's right to self-determination derives from the Marxist-Leninist Socio-historical theory of nation, who always proceeded the national question from the class interests of working class and analysed the objective law of development of the national liberation movement. In his critical remarks on the National Question Lenin wrote that "the principle of nationality is historically inevitable in bourgeois society and, taking this society into due account, the Marxist fully recognises the historical legitimacy of national movements. But to prevent this recognition from becoming an apologia of nationalism, it must be strictly limited to what is progressive in such movements, in order that this recognition may not lead to bourgeois ideology obscuring proletarian consciousness".²⁶ Lenin adopted above idea with respect to the period of bourgeois-democratic revolutions and attendant national movements.

26 Lenin, n. 3, vol. 20, p. 39.

The greatest representatives of consistent democracy of 19th century Marx and Engels had realized the necessity of recognising the political independence of atleast the major nations of Europe and had considered their liberation to be essential for the emancipation of the working class itself, this was the reason why they had profound sympathy for the Irish freedom movement and the 'disperate exertions of Poland, Italy and Hungary under the Austerian empire'.²⁷ Marx and Engels declared that "no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations".²⁸

The second international in 1896 also pronounced itself in favour of the full autonomy of all nationalities and called for united action of the working class.²⁹ A more explicit assertion of this right was adopted in point 9 of this programme at its second congress in 1903, contained the following definitions of policy on the national question:

(7) The abolition of the system of social strata and complete equal rights for all citizens irrespective of sex, religion and nationality.

(8) The right of the population to receive an education in its own language, a right to be secured by the setting up of the necessary schools at the expense of the

27 Marx and Engels, Selected Works (Moscow, 1951), vol. 1, p. 150.

28 V.I. Lenin, National Liberation Movement in the East (Moscow, 1962), p. 87.

29 V.I. Lenin, Selected Works (London, 1943), vol. 4, p. 269.

state and of the organs of local government, the right of every citizen to express himself at meeting in his own language. On equal terms with the state language in all local, public and state institutions.

(9) The right of self-determination for all nations comprising the state.³⁰

The adoption of this programme by the RSDRP did not indicate unanimity of opinion of the question of right to self-determination.

In the years following its adoption Lenin repeatedly defended his programme and clarified its main points in detail. He declared that right of nations to self-determination was to be understood solely in terms of their right to political self determination, i.e. the right to secede, to form an independent nation and it had nothing in common with the national cultural autonomy advanced by the Austrian social democrats.³¹

The controversy on the right of self-determination in the social democratic circles did not end there. The Polish social democrats and the Bundists who had tried to prevent the point 9 in the 1903 Congress, began an energetic

³⁰ Robert Conquest, Soviet Nationalities Policy in Practice (London, 1967), p. 6.

³¹ Lenin, n. 3, vol. 20, p. 57.

campaign against it openly. They charged that point 9 was vague, sweeping, a mere platitude, a fashionable term etc.³² Rosa Luxemburg asserted that the right of self-determination of small nation had been rendered illusory "by the development of great capitalist power and by imperialism".³²

Lenin criticized the Rosa Luxemburg's argument that the programme adopted by the second congress did not say "yes or no" to the question of secession in the case of every nation. Lenin argued such type of argument is absurd in reality and metaphysical in theory, which in practice leads to subordinating the proletariat to the bourgeoisie's policy. The bourgeoisie always places its national demands in the forefront, and does so in categorical fashion.³⁴ That is why Lenin wrote that "there can be no question of the Marxists of any country drawing up their national programme without taking into account all these general, historical and concrete state conditions."³⁵ The bourgeois nationalism of any oppressed nation has a general democratic content that is directed against oppression, and it is this content that we unconditionally support. At the same time we strictly distinguish

32 R. Vaidyanathan, The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics (Delhi, 1967), p. 253.

33 Lenin, Selected Works (Moscow, 1947), edn. 2, vol. 1, p. 566.

34 V.I. Lenin, Selected Works (Moscow, 1947), vol. 1, p. 563.

35 V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1972), vol. 20, p. 401.

it from the tendency towards national exclusiveness; we fight against the tendency of the Polish bourgeois to oppress the Jews etc. etc.³⁶ Lenin said that proletarian must say a plain 'yes' in favour of the secession of a particular nation rather than in favour of all nations having the right to secede... and assess any national demand, and national separation from the angle of the workers class struggle.³⁷

Lenin, thus judged the right to self-determination from the 'class historical viewpoint' and it helped in resolving the national question. He admitted that "the national question has now become prominent among the problems of Russian public life. The aggressive nationalism of the reactionaries, the transition of counter revolutionary bourgeois liberalism to nationalism (particularly Great Russian but also Polish, Jewish, Ukrainians etc.) and lastly increase of nationalist vacillations among the different "national" (i.e. non Great Russian) social Democrats, who have gone to the length of violating the party programme - all these make it incumbent on us to give more attention to the national question than we have done so far."³⁸

36 Ibid., p. 412.

37 Ibid., p. 411.

38 Ibid., p. 19.

In the resolution on the national question adopted by the Porovlo conference of the RSDLP central committee in 1913 consisted of 5 items:

- ‘(1) That national peace under capitalist conditions would be possible only under a fully democratic republican form of government which would guarantee to all nations the right to use their native language freely in their social life and in schools, and by including in the constitution a provision which would do away with all class privileges on the one hand, and would protect the rights of national minorities on the other. In particular there is need for a wide measure of regional autonomy and full democratic local self-government; the demarcation of the boundaries of these regional autonomies and self governing units must be undertaken by the local population themselves in conformity with their economic and ethnic distinctions and national composition etc;’
- ‘(2) Separate national school administration within a given state is absolutely harmful from the point of view of democracy in general and the interests of class struggle in particular. The peak of the so-called ‘cultural national autonomy’ or the ‘creation of institutions guaranteeing the freedom of national development’ adopted in Russia by the bourgeois parties of the Jews and others correspond to such a division;’
- ‘(3) The interest of the working class demands the union of workers of all nationalities of a given state in proletarian organizations;’

- (4) The party supports the right of the oppressed nations of the Tsarist monarchy to self-determination, i.e. to secession and formation of an independent state;
- (5) The question of the right of nations to self-determination must not be confused with the question of expediency of separation of any given nation. This issue must be dealt by the party separately in each individual case from the point of view of the whole social development and the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat for socialism.³⁹

Lenin pointed out that democratic centralism did not exclude "autonomy". In his letter to S.G. Shaumin, Lenin gave most categorical expression to his view on this SUBJECT. He wrote that "we are in favour of autonomy for all parts, we are in favour of the right to secession (and not in favour of every one seceding). Autonomy is our plan for organizing a democratic state."⁴⁰

Some western liberal writers criticized Lenin for opposing the federal form of state union for nations in the tsarist empire. But Lenin opposed the principle of federation because it would weaken the "economic ties" that

39 Vaidyanath, n. 32, pp. 258-9.

40 V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1968), vol. 19, p. 500.

had already been formed between the working people of the different nationalities and which were essential for the victory of revolution. The party also took into account the advantages afforded by big states, which Lenin considered indisputable, both "from the standpoint of economic progress and from that of the interests of the masses".⁴¹

Before 1917 party opposed the principle to federation. But Lenin's rejection of federation was never absolute. They always favour closest unity of the proletarians of all nationalities. It is only in isolated and exceptional cases, wrote Lenin that "we can advance and actively support demands conducive to the establishment of a new class state or to the substitution of a looser federal unity, etc. for the complete political unity of a state".⁴² Later he pointed out that federation might be preferred to national inequality as the only way to democratic centralism. In his famous work "State and the Revolution" Lenin analysed the idea of close connection between reconstruction of the state and the national question. Quoting Marx and Engels he declared that the federation is a "step forward" on the road to a democratically centralised multinational state under conditions when the national question has not become outdated. But

41 Lenin, n. 3, vol. 22, p. 146.

42 Ibid., vol. 6, p. 454.

Lenin always stressed the transitional character of the state forms such as federation and national statehood. On the contrary he viewed them as a means and state political measures found to be necessary under certain concrete conditions to achieve the more distant objectives. The ultimate aim of Marxism-Leninism is not the perpetuation of the state isolation but also complete elimination. This can't be achieved through administrative measures or the general state policy of federation, Only a real drawing together of nations under conditions of political and social democracy can achieve it.⁴³ In the seventh Congress of the party held in April 1917, some of the Bolsheviks stalwarts like Stalin, Pyatakov and others turned against the Leninist interpretation of the right of self-determination. The drafting commission of the Congress under their influence adopted a resolution which declared that the national question could only be solved by "the method of socialist revolution under the slogan away with frontiers" and rejected the solution of "splitting of great state formations into small national states", and branded the right of self-determination as "simply a phrase without definite content".⁴⁴

The adoption of this resolution angered Lenin very much. In a speech before the Congress he denounced the resolution as being an expression of chauvinism. Finally

43 D. Kaushik, Soviet Political System (Moscow, 1983), p. 144.

44 Vaidyanath, n. 32, p. 263.

this draft was rejected and the Congress by substantial majority adopted a resolution on the national question which declared: For going regional autonomy; abolition of control from above; abolition of compulsory state language; drawing of boundary lines of the self-governing and autonomous regions on the basis of consideration by the local population itself of economic and ethnic conditions, of the national composition of the population, etc.⁴⁵

At the 8th Party Congress of the Bolshevik Party in March 1919, the new centralist tendency in dealing with national problems inside Russia was expressed in an extremist form by Bukharin who proposed the slogan of "national self-determination" only for under developed colonial areas, which to the advanced nations to slogan of "self-determination of the working class" should be applied.⁴⁶ Lenin attacked this stand and qualified it as "Great Russian Chauvinism". On Lenin's suggestion Congress adopted a national programme which retained the right to national self-determination, with certain qualifications:

(2) In order to overcome the suspicion of the toiling masses of the oppressed countries towards the proletariat of the states which had oppressed countries, it is necessary to destroy all and every privilege enjoyed by whatever national

45 Ibid., p. 263.

46 R. Pipes, Formation of the Soviet Union Communism and Nationalism (Cambridge, 1954), p. 109.

group, to establish full equality of nations, and to recognize that the colonies and the nations which possess full rights have a right to political secession.

(3) For the same purpose, as one of the transitional forms on the way to full unity, the party proposes federative unification of states organized on the Soviet pattern.

(4) As to the question who is the carrier of the nation's will to separation, the Communist party stands on the historic class point of view, taking into consideration the level of historical development on which a given nation stands on the road from the middle ages to bourgeois democracy or from bourgeois democracy to Soviet or proletarian democracy and so forth.⁴⁷

During the Tenth and Twelfth Party Congress held in 1921 and 1923 respectively, the people of the land of Soviet stood at different stages of socio-economic development; semi feudal relations prevailed in a number of regions; some nationalities even preserved a fundamentally patriarchal tribal system. Lenin stressed that for the proper application of the party's policy, it was necessary to consider the degree of development and distinctions of the non-Russian districts.

The 10th Party Congress raised in full measure the task of consistently eliminating the remnants of national

47 Ibid., p. 110.

inequality in all spheres of social and economic life. At the same time Lenin pointed out that, in non-Russian regions "a slower more cautious and more systematic transition to socialism" was required.⁴⁸ It called upon the party to adopt the following measures:

- (a) to develop and consolidate the Soviet statehood in their lands in conformity with their national and domestic conditions;
- (b) to develop their own courts of law, administration, economic bodies and organs of government operating in their native languages and comprising local people who know the life and psychology of the local population;
- (c) to develop their own press, schools, theatrical and club activities, cultural and educational institutions in their native languages;
- (d) to lay and develop a broad network of courses for general education as well as vocational training in their native languages.⁴⁹

The Twelfth Party Congress in 1923 stated a three-fold task before the party,

- (1) a declaration in the first place of an all out struggle against the remnants of great Russian chauvinism.

48 V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1965), vol. 29, p. 317.

49 Yumus Desheriev, "The Soviet Experience in Developing National Cultures on the basis of native languages", Problems of the Contemporary World, vol. 4, no. 29, 1974, p. 136.

(2) a struggle for the abolition of actual inequality between nationalities by raising the cultural and economic levels of the backward peoples and a struggle against the nationalist survivals among the formerly oppressed peoples.⁵⁰

The report adopted by the Twelfth Party Congress contained recommendations for the future constitution of the Union of Soviet Republics. It stressed that such a union be founded on the basis of equality and voluntary consent of workers and peasants of individual republics and that there should be special organ to represent all the national republics and regions on the basis of equality. It also recommended wide financial and budgetary powers for national republics enabling them to take initiative in cultural and economic spheres. The party was asked to see that all state organs of national republics and regions were composed of indigenous people fully familiar with local customs and traditions, that special laws were framed guaranteeing the use of native languages in all government organs and institutions, and that all violations of national rights were punished with revolutionary severity.⁵¹

50 Kaushik, n. 9, p. 23.

51 Ibid.

The above discussion reveals the inseparable connection between national and constitutional development because national question is in the final analysis linked up with the socio-economic questions. The question of national self-determination does not emanate from merely a change in the status quo. It is deep rooted in the socio-economic conditions of a nation, comprising as its main content of revolt against imperialism. It leads us to search the real foundations of national republic. The development of a national republic is the result of historic change, i.e. not only overthrowing of imperialist yoke but also the revolutionary change in social structure putting an end to the class antagonism the bone of hostility among nations. Lenin aptly stated that Soviet constitution served and would constantly serve the working people.⁵² It was a powerful weapon in the fight for socialism. A new type of state power, he said, "is being created for the first time in history, a power that the will of the revolution has called upon to wipe out all oppression and slavery the world over".⁵³

In the next chapter an attempt would be made to analyse the socio-economic factors and other relevant conditions which have had the decisive impact on the constitutional advancement in the region.

52 V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1969), vol. 42, p. 105.

53 Lenin, n. 3, vol. 26, p. 480.

CHAPTER III

CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA -
A SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT

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Constitutional development in Central Asia can be analysed best in its specific historical framework because the question of nationalities is organically linked to social and class structure of the society and with the type of ownership of the means of production in the region.

The 19th century Central Asia by and large included the three Khanates - Kokand, Bukhara and Khiva. All the three khanates were economically backward feudal states. Among the Turkmen, Kazakh and Kirgiz nomads there existed powerful remnants of tribal system. The main occupation of the people was cattle breeding and horticulture. Small quantity of inferior quality cotton was also produced in Central Asian Khanates. Towns were centres of handicraft production and trade, cotton and silk cloth produced by craftsmen in Bukhara, Kokand, Tashkent and Samarkand were sold in the peripheral countries of the East and also in the neighbouring Russian empire. The territory though rich in natural resources had no large-scale mineral extracting industry.¹

1 Devendra Kaushik, Socialism in Central Asia (Delhi, 1976), p. 53.

The division of the peoples of Central Asia into innumerable tribes, clans and the differences of economic life manifesting in distinct division between the nomadic economy and the agricultural economy of the sedentary regions, the political dismemberment leading to the inclusion of different parts of one and the same people under the rule of different states. The feudal oppression and incessant internecine wars, the religious bigotry of the clergy, the total illiteracy and ignorance of the masses impeded the economic, political and social growth of the region, Pierce describes the situation as follows:

"Trade was poorly developed and sapped by heavy taxes. Carvans were prey to the nomads. Almost constant warfare between the Khanates or the bekdoms placed a heavy burden on inhabitants. Irrigation system could not be repaired or expounded, flocks were driven off, and sown areas varied in extent, depending on the ability of the inhabitants to defend them. Thus, though Central Asia had achieved a high level of prosperity in earlier times, by the middle of the 19th century the region was in a state of decay, isolated from the modern world, its population static and economy depressed."²

Russia had contacts with Central Asia for centuries but remoteness of that area did not interest in that region very much. The Russian conquest of Central Asia began only in the middle of the nineteenth century as in the context of

2 R.A. Pierce, Russian Central Asia, 1867-1917 (California, 1960), pp. 12-13.

the British policy of expansion, thus region was considered by Russia as important from economic, military and political point of view. Russia needed cotton from Central Asia for its textile industry, and in the days of colonial expansion by other European powers, Russia felt that it would enjoy vast prestige as a great colonial power such position could be used in bargaining with other European powers. Russia therefore started its campaign for the conquest of that region in 1864.³

The Russian campaign of capturing the whole of that region was completed in 1885. "The Emirate of Bukhara and Khanate of Khiva became the vassal states and the Kokand Khanate was annexed to the Empire. Russia's frontier with Afghanistan was settled by the joint Afghan-Russia Boundary Commission in 1895."⁴ The annexed territory was organized into the Governor-Generalship of Turkestan. The Governor-General was to be in overall control of the Khanate of Khiva and Emirates of Bukhara, which had direct administrative control. The Turkestan administration was intended for the realisation of colonial exploration of Central Asia. With this object, ~~the~~ military element was overwhelmingly planned in the civil administration and the Turkestan administrative unit

3 R.S. Chavan, Nationalism in Asia (New Delhi, 1973), p. 402.

4 Ibid.

was kept under in the care of Russian ministry of war.

The new administrative arrangements thus became an additional factor helping the social forces of stagnation, backwardness and the economic exploitation of the weak elements. Bribery and corruption were rampant in the entire administrative set up. The Palen Commission was set up later to go into this aspect of the administration, and its findings came as a rude 'shock'. But most of the Palen Commission were deliberately ignored, or conveniently forgotten.⁵

After the Russian conquest Central Asia was opened up for colonisation first by Cossacks and then by peasant settlers. By colonisation the imperial government sought to achieve two fold objectives. Firstly, colonisation was encouraged in order to relieve the rural part of Central Asia of its surplus population which had become economically impoverished and politically restive. Secondly, it was favoured as means of consolidating Russia's gains in Turkestan inhabited by non-Russian population. The advantages of settling of the Russians amongst the conquered and hostile people was obvious. These settlers had become the means of spreading the Russia's influence, culture and civilization. In short, colonization became a panacea for containing both revolutionary and national movements within the empire.⁶

5 R. R. Sharma, A Marxist Model of Social Change (New Delhi, 1979), p. 6.

6 R. Vaidyanath, Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics (New Delhi, 1967), p. 38.

The reaction of the Central Asian population to the Russian colonisation was bitterly hostile as the Government had followed the policy of land confiscation. But the Russian Government was able to suppress the native opposition. The influx of the Russian immigrants into Turkestan inevitably led to large-scale confiscation of land from the indigenous population. By 1908 the government had allotted for the utilization of 60,350 peasant settlers, 231,250 desiatins of land and 610,484 desiatins to the Cossack settlers (34,468 persons) in the semirechie oblast. With the arrival of new settlers, the size of land confiscation began to swell and by 1915 it reached the record figure of 3,963,000 desiatins. In many places the seizure of land from the nomadic population was almost complete. Consequently, thousands of nomads and cattle began to die out of sheer starvation.⁷

Socio-Economic Structures

Russia's interest in Turkestan were not only limited to military occupation and colonization but to preserve the region's raw materials entirely for the benefits of her own capitalist and landowning classes and open its market to Russian manufactured articles. After its annexation Central Asia was converted into a raw material supplying base for the

⁷ Ibid., p. 41.

metropolitan industries. In order to exploit the Central Asian region its isolation from the rest of the world had to be overcome. "The building of the Transcaspian railway was being pushed forward, which was to connect all the important cities of Russian Central Asia. In 1884 it was brought to Merv, in 1886 to Amur Darya and in 1888 to Samarkand (later to Tashkent and from there to Orenburg)."⁸ One of the objects of the Central Asian Railways was to facilitate quick transport of cotton to the industrial regions of Russia. The cotton crop grower in the region assumed such an important place in the region that Central Asia was famous as the 'land of the white gold'. The Tsarist government paid more attention to cotton cultivation and increased it at the expense of wheat and other agricultural products. The Director of land administration in Turkestan wrote in 1913: "Each extra pud of Turkistan wheat is competition for Russian and Siberian wheat; every extra pud of Turkestan cotton is competition for American cotton."⁹

The tariff on cotton imported from abroad served to protect the cotton growers of Central Asia by keeping the price market favourable to them. "The natives ordered to sow nothing, but American strains while the small holders were given the seed free and granted loans for the provision

8 E.D. Sokol, The Revolt of 1916 in Russian Central Asia (Baltimore, 1954), p. 27.

9 Ibid., p. 28.

of working capital. During the next years production rose sharply, every suitable bit of soil being put under cotton, and because cotton crops brought in better returns the cultivation of grain was allowed to decline."¹⁰ From the on American cotton became the staple crop in Central Asia, as well as the universally accepted commodity of barter. A few statistics will illustrate the great growth of cotton of the American variety.¹¹

Turkestan Cotton Exports to Russia

1888	873,000 puds
1889	1,470,000 puds
1890	2,673,000 puds
1890-96	4,300,000- 4,900,000 puds
1907	10,700,000 puds

The other basic oblasts registered the following increase in the cotton harvest for the years 1908 to 1913:

Syr Darya	210.8%
Samarkand	46.5%

A large number of cotton, firms, exchanges, banks and other

¹⁰ Count K.K. Pahlen, Mission to Turkestan (New York, Toronto, 1969), p. 95.

¹¹ Sokol, n. 8, pp. 27-28.

credit institutions made their appearance in Central Asia; they endeavoured to stimulate a further expansion of cotton growing and to secure the entire cotton output of the region for the textile mills of Russia.

But the development of cotton cultivation did not improve the material conditions of the dehkans (peasants) who lived in poverty as before. A new exploiter entered the scene when metropolitan capital began to finance cotton cultivation through local firms. The cotton purchaser, acted as a sort of middlemen between the industrialist and the cotton producers exploited them. The credit advanced to the dehkans bore an exorbitantly high interest rate as a result of middlemen. The middlemen, who obtained credit from private banks and cotton firms at the rate of 8-9 per cent interest advanced it to the cotton producers at the rate of 40 to 60 per cent interest. The debts accumulated by a majority of small peasants were so high that they could not be repaid within a life time. They were often obliged to sell their land to the bais to meet their debt obligations.¹² With the growth of cotton cultivation there was an increase in the marketability of agricultural economy leading to penetration of capitalist relations into the villages, but there did not appear large

12 D. Kaushik, Central Asia in Modern Times (Moscow, 1970), p. 69.

capitalist cotton plantation using hired labour. The crop sharing system continued to be the dominant system in Central Asia. Thus the cotton cultivation was the all important problem of the institutional structure of land tenure. The land tenure system may be divided into two: one was prevalent among the nomadic population and the other practiced by the sedentary natives.

"Among the nomad the land tenure was determined by family organisation and by the conditions of their stock raising economy. The nomad group, comprising numerous households governed on a patriarchal basis moved about as a basis and held grazing lands of the various groups were only vaguely defined. They shifted with variations in rainfall and with the waxing and waning of tribal strength. The winter camp was in a more definite location. Only around the winter camps did there exist what was in effect the private ownership of land. There the poor and the aged, who did not migrate with the herds, grew a small amount of grain on tilled plots or gathered hay of meadows."¹³

The settled population inhabiting the irrigated oases of Turkestan had a more complex system of land ownership. The principles of land utilization there were already ancient when the Arabs conquered the region at the beginning of the

¹³ Pierce, n. 2, p. 141.

18th century A.D. The conquerors merely regularized and defined these principles more accurately on the basis of shariat. There was a theoretical absence of private ownership of land. The Emir or Khan regarded as the viceroy or deputy of the Caliph was recognized as having supreme control over all lands. Land used by the population was considered a part of the state holdings loaned out in perpetuity.¹⁴

Land in this system fell into three major categories:

(1) Amlyak - land belonging to the state. This included most of the uncultivated land, the land used by the nomads and such land as was cultivated by private persons paying certain fees. In practice these lands might be classed as private property inasmuch as the occupier could dispose of it; (2) Mulk land in private ownership given by the state in return for service; (3) Vakuf - land given to some mosque or religious school either by the state or by some private individual.¹⁵ According to some estimates cited by Devendra Kaushik "The private land of the Khan and other feudals in Khiva comprised two thirds of the total irrigated and fertile land; state and wakf land, one seventh and land under the ownership of peasants only one tenth.

14 Ibid., pp. 141-2.

15 P. Lyashchenko, History of the National Economy of Russia to the 1917 Revolution (New York, 1949), p. 606.

In Bukhara 65 per cent of the total cultivable land was under the feudals and 24 per cent was wakf land.¹⁶ Thus lands were concentrated in the hands of Kulaks and feudals and the main burden fell on the shoulder of peasants.

The native system of land tenure and water rights formed the basis of a complex structure of taxes, duties and obligations. As the economy was primarily agricultural the greatest burden lay upon land. "The important land taxes - kharaj and tanap were put together in the form of a land tax payable by the native peasants. Nomad population was required to pay a Kibitka tax - a sort of tent tax instituted on each household."¹⁷ The tax system paid a heavy burden upon the country and the burden of the tax farmer's exactions paralysed the economy and held the mass of the people in poverty.

Land tenure in Central Asia was closely associated with the question of water rights. Because of the regions and climatic conditions irrigation was the most strategic problem in Central Asia. Progress in the field of irrigation was limited in the colonial period. "In 1916, only 9,758,000 dessiatines of land were irrigated in the whole of Central Asia which was only 2.6% of the entire area. The total area

16 Kaushik, n. 12, p. 67.

17 Sharma, n. 5, p. 13.

of irrigated land in the five oblask of Turkestan was 2,808,000 and in Bukhara 1,600,000 dessiatives."¹⁸

R.A. Pierce writes about the achievements of the colonial regime in the field of irrigation.

"During half a century, only two major irrigation projects were brought to fruition in Russian Central Asia - one in the Hungry steppe and the other on the Murghab. Neither of these fulfilled the original hopes of these designers or the great expectations of those who had foreseen vaster achievements encompassing the entire region."¹⁹

In 1916, 80% of the population of the vast regions of Central Asia depended on agriculture and nomadism. While an overwhelming majority of the natives were landless labourers, the percentage of Russians owning lands and engaged in agriculture was never higher (about 68,000 in 1914) than 2 per cent of the total population; and they were concentrated in the three main provinces of Turkestan namely, Syr Darya Ferghana and Samarkand.²⁰

18 See Kaushik, n. 12, p. 66.

19 Pierce, n. 2, p. 181.

20 Zafar Imam, "Origin and Development of Socialism among the Muslims of Russia", International Studies (New - Delhi), vol. 15, no. 2, April-June 1976, p. 196.

Agriculture and cattle breeding in Bukhara and Khiva were primitive the labour productivity was very low. The land ownership was concentrated in the hands of feudals and Kulaks. The social structure of the agriculture was governed by the parasitic feudal elite with feudal beys. In this given institutional structure of landownership and the shortage of labour there emerged the Central Asian system of share cropping. The land system was thus described by William Mandel: "Huge tracts of land belonged to the Emir as such, as the chief feudal lord, and the income from them went into his personal treasury. There was also lands that were the hereditary possessions of the beys and others that belonged to the mosques and religious schools of this Mohammedan country. The land was worked generally on a share-cropping basis, with the peasant, dehkan, retaining only one-fourth of the crop. Most cruelly exploited were those on lands granted by the Emir to his favorites. These grants were for definite and limited periods of time, during which all taxes and income went to the temporary lord."²¹

Cotton growing thus developed into a most lucrative agricultural pursuit. This proved disastrous to the well being of the lower economic strata . In the cotton districts of Turkestan for instance 30% of the entire population were

21 Cited in W.P. and Zelda K. Coates, Soviets in Central Asia (London, 1951), pp. 55-56.

landless, 40% had only one head of cattle per family or no cattle at all, 30% were altogether property less and homeless. A vast army of landless peasants and agricultural workers wandered from one region to another in search of jobs. The indebtedness of the poorest section of the peasantry mounted by almost 100% from 1909 to 1911. The same was true of Bukhara and Khiva. Peasants lost their land. Farm tenancy was on the increase. Only the richer peasants, ^{the} Kulaks, the beys, those who could afford to cultivate cotton without having resort to loots, found cotton growing profitable. Also the usurers and the Russian firms waxed rich on cotton. For the majority of the native peasantry the transition of Bukhara from a primitive natural economy to commercial farming was the cause of infinite suffering and widespread ruin, the poor were becoming poorer; the rich richer; while wealth was being concentrated in the hands of the Russian bankers, the native moneylenders, and the beys.²²

The expropriation of the peasant's land did not lead to his employment in industry as in Europe and Japan. Russia looked upon this region as a colonial area to serve as a source of raw materials and an outlet for her manufactures. Naturally she could not look with favour upon any great development of industry there.²³

22 Joshua, Kunitz, Dawn over Samarkand (Calcutta, 1943), pp. 25-26.

23 Ibid.. p. 26.

Other than the exploitation of natural resources, the industrial activity of the Central Asia during the imperial period was confined mainly to the light industry devoted to the processing of raw agricultural material. After the end of the last century, the industrial output, particularly cotton processing and cotton seed-oil preparation increased considerably.

A majority of these plants came to be owned by wealthy natives although most of the larger ones were controlled by firms in 1911, 109 were owned by local firms and 48 by Russian enterprises and 3.4 for the local ones. Flour mills, tanneries and cocoon drying plants made up the remainder of the processing industrial in Turkestan.²⁴

The total numerical strength of the industrial proletariat in Turkestan in 1914 was 49.9 thousand (51 per cent) were engaged in industries and 24.4 thousand (49 per cent railways). The national composition of the workers was 72 per cent from nationalities and 23% Russians. In the railways however, Russian workers formed the bulk of the total strength (80%).²⁵

Most of the natives were employed in unskilled jobs with lower wages and harder working conditions. The table

24 Pierce, n. 2, pp. 196-7.

25 Kaushik, n. 1, pp. 59-60.

for 1916-17 is self-explanatory:²⁶

	Percentage of total labour force in industry	% of skilled labour force in industry	% of skilled labour force outside industry (Railways)
Russian	13.2	79.9	70.3
Natives	86.8	20.1	29.7

The industrial development of the region and the trade between European Russia and Central Asia was demonstrably to the advantage of each, yet Central Asia remained in a disadvantageous position. The industrial activity marked a break with the traditional natural economy of this region. This industrialization led to the growth of population in cities and in the rural areas the nomads started settling on land. "In 1887 the nomadic population of the region constituted as much as 84% of its total population but 1877 it had already come down to 47 and by 1977 it was not more than 30% of its rural population."²⁷ Because of this economic impact on the traditional tribal and nomadic social structure of life

²⁶ Zafar Imam, n. 21, p. 196.

²⁷ Vaidyanath, n. 6, pp. 47-48.

of the Central Asian people, a new occupation oriented social structure creating artisans traders, officers, peasants and industrial workers emerged in Central Asia. Because some of the commercial and industrial activities were carried on by section of the natives, they had become minded people, and thus a rich and aristocratic class was born in that region.

These were the economic realities of the time which held back the region's development - insufficient capital, lack of a trained working force etc. The process of capitalist development though they started but it had not undergone the whole length of capitalist development because tsarism and feudal regimes wanted to preserve the feudal and patriarchal relations.

Cultural Development

In the colonial period of the tsarist rule, ~~Central~~ Asia did not achieve anything significant in the sphere of culture except few developments, the Turkestan Governor General set up a system of so-called Russian and other schools. But this had no significant influence on native students due to exclusion of Muslim religious education from their curriculum. The greater mass of the people continued to live in conditions of illiteracy. The first All Russia census of 1897 showed a mere 21.1 per cent literacy rate in Russia as a whole and

1.2 in the Turkestan region, i.e. Central Asia.²⁸ The "Russo-native" schools were more popular when their curriculum was divided into two parts viz. Russian language and arithmetic taught by a Russian teacher and mullahs were hired for religious instruction. Their growth in Syr Darya oblast for example is shown by the following figures:

Year	No. of Schools	No. of Students
1894	12	254
1900	23	722
1908	34	1,354
1911	54	2,658
1915	65	3,410

In the entire Turkestan region there were 28 Russian-native schools by 1898, 83 in 1906 and 89 in 1911. If this was not impressive in absolute figures, it at least represented a considerable percentage gain.²⁹

Under the influence of Russian culture there emerged the idea of reform of the old schools so as to adopt them

28 Yunus Dëshriev, "The Soviet Experience in Developing National Cultures on the basis of Native Languages" in Problems of the Contemporary World (USSR Academy of Sciences), no. 4, 1974, p. 134.

29 Pierce, n. 2, p. 217.

to new conditions of life. This kind of school which made its appearance at the turn of the 19th century was the so called New Method (Usuli-Jadid) which was part and parcel of the Jadid movement. Its pioneer was Tatar bourgeois nationalist Ismail Bek Garprinsky. These schools were spread in many of the cities of the Central Asian region. Some idea of their success may be served by considering the number of schools they opened.

Places Schoolsopened	Number	Year of statistics
Tashkent	12	1912
Turkistan	2	1912
Semirechie oblast	17	1912
Kokand Uezd	13	1913
Perovsk "	1	1912
Samarkand (city)	2	1911
Bukhara "	5	1911
Andizhan Uezd	3	1912
Total	57	

Thus in seven years the Jadid opened 57 new method schools. This number testifies rather to the insignificance of their practical accomplishments than to their success.

However in spite of small numbers the result was important as it brought the creation of a secular and increasingly anti-clerical intelligentsia.³⁰ The imperial government did not take these new method schools very seriously. But the authorities had begun to apprehend the growing influence what Barthald has described as an 'alliance between Russian conservatism and old style Islam'. The government began to take an interest in the madrasahs whose number had greatly increased during the period of Russian rule. They were placed under official administrative and financial control and a system of inspection was inaugurated. Even the policy of not interfering in the curriculum of Mektebs showed signs of being changed.³¹ It was not surprising that the progressive Russian culture with its schools, libraries, museums, hospitals and theatre etc. did not penetrate into the life of the masses of the native people. There were many hurdles in its way. On the one hand tsarism and the Russian bourgeoisie, on the other native exploiting classes, Muslim religious leaders and feudal elements. R. Vaidyanath aptly writes:

30 Sokol, n. 8, p. 67.

31. G. Wheeler, Modern History of Soviet Central Asia (London, 1964), p. 203.

Russian policy with regard to social, religious and cultural issues in Central Asia lacked a positive content largely because of the conservatism of the bureaucracy and the army officials. As a result, many traditional institutions of the natives which had become wholly anachronistic instead of disappearing became revitalized..., all those things which symbolized social political and cultural retrogression in the native society, not only gained a fresh lease of life but in some spheres, were even strengthened..., it must not be forgotten that largely on account of this negative policy which Russia pursued in Central Asia, the latter remained, even in the 20th century, one of the most backward region in the Moslem world."³² Nevertheless, the emergence of new social and economic and cultural order in central Asia had its effect on the awakening of national consciousness of the people in the region which the tsarist government had never dreamt of it.

The impact of progressive democratic representatives of advanced Russian culture contributed to the development of democratic socio-political thought in Central Asia. Many popular educators and litterateurs propagated the revolutionary ideas of socio-economic change. Thus, the certain cultural advance was made in Central Asia at the end of 19th century.

32 Vaidyanath, n. 6, p. 50.

This progress were made in the sphere of the Russian Academy of Science, Geographical Society and other scientific bodies aimed at making a comprehensive study of Turkestan of its natural resources, economy customs, language, history and cultural monuments. All certainly made a contribution towards enriching the cultural life of Central Asia. The cultural interaction between the peoples of Central Asia and Russia in the 20th century took place under conditions of a growing bourgeois democratic revolution. It was during this period that first social democratic organization appeared in the larger cities of Turkestan. In 1905-7 progressive representatives of the local population, Russian workers and intellectuals, took part in the first Russian Revolution. The general discontent with Tsarist oppression drew together the progressive forces of Russian society and the peoples of Central Asia.³³

Such a movement for new cultural and educational advance is wrongly mixed up with Djadidism. The estimate of Djadidism as a progressive movement of local intelligentsia is the result of a historically erroneous assumptions regarding the disappearance, at the beginning of the 20th century from Central Asia, ~~of~~ the democratic movement for popular enlightenment and its replacement by Djadidism.³⁴

33 Kaushik, n. 1, p. 63.

34 Kaushik, n. 12, p. 77.

The national bourgeoisie of Central Asia at the beginning of the 20th century, began to use the cultural awakening of the people in its own interest. In due course, there formed an ideological and political movement which received the name Djadidism in historical literature. In their wider political orientation, they took sides with the Russian constitutional Democrats in demanding the institution of a constitutional monarchy. In this regard, their political attitude was almost identical to the Russian big bourgeoisie, which was closely linked to the Russian ruling class and consequently was not prepared to consummate its bourgeois democratic revolution. In the Central Asian cultural condition, they were unwilling, and also perhaps ideologically unequipped to complete their historical mission.³⁵

It is true that Djadidism had some liberal tendencies in comparison to clerical and feudal elements. The defence by the Djadidists of the new European culture and opposition feudal way was common to them. But they did not defend the interest of the entire people. They championed the interests of their own class bourgeoisie. They clung to their misplaced faith that the socio-cultural and political change could be realized through the revival of what they called 'the golden age of early Islam'. It would be improper to describe the Djadidists as the intellectual heralds of a

35 Sharma, n. 5, p. 20.

national liberation revolution. They endeavoured to speak in the idiom of the emerging native bourgeoisie which looked more to Pan Turkism for political inspiration.

To conclude the above discussion on the social and class structure of the peoples of Central Asia and their economic and cultural level of development, it is important to note that in spite of many important changes in their economic and cultural life in the colonial period, the general picture was still one of dominant pre-capitalist relations, of cultural backwardness and ignorance and of Islamic domination. The alienation process of the masses from the feudals, mullahs was also clearly marked in the period of the workers' revolutionary movement in 1905-1907 and later during the period of the national liberation movement in 1916. It reached its high mark in 1916 and subsequent years. It reached its high mark in period following the February revolution in 1917. The strategic problem thus was how to demolish the archaic structure of social relationship under this situation, Soviet system gave birth to the specific strategic of socio economic development which gave top priority to the formation of national republics. This was realized by intensifying such social processes as differentiation a radical programme of agrarian reform and the modernization of the nature of traditional education system. The Soviet policy in this regard was worked with a view to change the

traditional ideological apparatus of the native society and to cope with the specific situation.

Some writers argue that revolution in Turkestan lacked indigeneous roots and that the preconditions for it were absent. The content of their argument is that October revolution has no roots in Central Asia and was "imported" there from Russia by the Russian Bolsheviks.³⁶ But such an approach is contrary to the historical reality. Marxists considered that countries like Turkestan constituted a "suitable environment" not only for social revolution but for socialist transformation and even for the building of communism. Bourgeois historians ignore Lenin's highly important discovery that "with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and through certain stages of development to communism, without having passed through the capitalist stage".³⁷ Thus, besides the objective socio-economic factors the role of the subjective factors also governed the parameters of constitutional development in Central Asia.

36 See A.G. Park, Bolshevism in Turkestan (New York, 1957); and R. Pipes, The Formation of the Soviet Union (Cambridge, Mass., 1954).

37 V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1966), vol. 31, p. 244.

C H A P T E R I V

SPECIFIC FEATURES OF CONSTITUTIONAL
DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL ASIA
1917-1936

CHAPTER IV

SPECIFIC FEATURES OF CONSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
IN CENTRAL ASIA
1917-1936

In this chapter it will be our endeavour to pinpoint the specificity of constitutional development in the region.

In its first phase the Soviet nationalities policy in Central Asia proclaimed legal and constitutional equality of all the peoples in the region. It abolished all special national privileges and created a voluntary federal union of free and equal nations. In its first decrees, the Soviet state proclaimed and legally established the right of nations and nationalities populating Russia to self-determination. In its appeal to the workers soldiers and peasants, the Second All Russia Congress of Soviets held on 25 October (7 November) 1917 said that the Soviet State would guarantee the nations populating Russia the right to self determination. This right was confirmed by the Declaration of the Rights of the peoples of Russia, adopted by the Soviet Government on November 2, 1917. In this declaration Soviet state proclaimed the equality and sovereignty of nations and the free development of national minorities and ethnic groups, and abolished all national privileges and restrictions, defining the main principles of national policy and creating conditions

that enable nations to determine their future in a truly free way.¹

Lenin was therefore correct when he said that "there is no 'contradiction' nor can there be, between our propaganda of freedom of secession and our firm resolve to implement that freedom when we are the government, and our propaganda of association and merging of nations."²

Immediately after the October Revolution, the Soviet State recognized all the peoples of the former Russian empire to be ready for national state independence. Admittedly for various reasons (occupation white guard rule, economic dislocation etc.) not all the peoples could exercise their right to self-determination immediately. The factors that have strongly influenced the choice of this form of state on the basis of Lenin's teaching of the need to make an accurate analysis of economic reality, the political situation and the political importance of a decision before its adoption.³ Lenin's method of historical analysis is based on the study of the specific situation in all its aspects.

1 V.S. Shevstov, National Sovereignty and the Soviet State (Moscow, 1974), p. 71.

2 V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1964), vol. 23, p. 68.

3 Ibid., p. 65.

In 1917 due to their different political status, socio-economic level and the development of productive forces the formation of national republics for the peoples of Central Asia did not proceed at an equal pace in the Bukhara Emirate and the Khiva Khanate on the one hand and in Turkestan, on the other. The administrative-territorial divisions of each of the above territories did not coincide with the national ethnic boundaries. Under such conditions the self-determination of the Central Asian people could not have been national in either form or content. Nevertheless "self-determination in Central Asia was definitely anti-colonial and not only anti-imperialist but also anti-feudal and anti-capitalist in character, and, of course, it was social in content. It was rooted in the desire of the people of the multinational strata of working people, to cast off the social and national yoke of Russian colonialism and imperialism and the social yoke of the local feudal lords, money-lenders, bourgeois compradores who were not homogeneous in their national-ethnic composition."⁴

The self-determination in Central Asia had a specific character in so far as its subject was not already formed nation, or even a national, group in the process of

4 R. Tuzmuhamedov, How the National Question was Solved in Soviet Central Asia (Moscow, 1973), p. 69.

being consolidated into a nation but a multinational population united in its efforts to end colonial and social oppression. The formation of Turkestan ASSR was the first step towards the founding of national states by the peoples of Central Asia.⁵

Under this complicated situation of intense class struggle the Third Congress of Soviets of workers peasants and soldiers deputies met in Tashkent between 15-22 November proclaimed the formation of Soviet government in Turkestan.⁶

The question of power in the Turkestan was the issue of debate between the Mensheviks and the Right Socialist Revolutionaries and Bolsheviks. The right socialist revolutionaries and the mensheviks wanted to preserve the power of the bourgeoisie and pleaded for a coalition government with representative of petty bourgeois parties and bourgeois nationalists. But Bolsheviks categorically rejected any such coalition and suggested the transfer of all power to the Soviet of workers soldiers and peasant Deputies.

At the time of the Third Congress of Soviets there was also taking place in Tashkent the so-called Congress of

5 Devendra Kaushik, Socialism in Central Asia (Delhi, 1976), pp. 69-70.

6 R. Vaidyanath, The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics (New Delhi, 1967), p. 76.

Muslims, entirely composed of the representation of bourgeois nationalists and clericals. In November 1917 this Congress totally rejected the idea of a transfer of all power to the Soviets and proposed the formation of a regional organ of power from among the bourgeoisie-local and Russian. This was conveyed to the Third Territorial Congress of Soviets by Sher Ali Lapin, a leader of the Ulemas, who addressed the Congress and read the resolution passed by the 'Muslim' Congress on the organization of power. Lapin declared in the name of the Muslim Congress that "local ^{Soviets} must be organized from the representatives of Mussulman" and only those Russians "should be included who stand nearer to the Musslaman."⁷ Lapin proposed the establishment of a Turkestan Executive Committee as a higher organ of government with a total of 12 member: 3 from the Congress of Soviets of soldiers, and workers Deputies, 3 from town self rule institutions - the city Duma etc. and 6 from the Territorial Congress of "Muslims". This Executive Committee was to be responsible to another higher organ called the council consisting of 20 members: 5 from the Congress of Soviets, 5 from the town self-rule institutions and 10 from the "Muslim" Congress. Lapin declared that in any other organization of power Mussulmen would not take any part.⁸

7 Devendra Kaushik, Central Asia in Modern Times (Moscow, 1970), p. 135.

8 Ibid.

A declaration proposed by the Bolsheviks and the "Maximalists" proclaimed the victory of Soviet power in Turkestan and recognized the existing central power and its form of organisation. This Congress has been criticized for having ignored the question of autonomy and negative approach towards Muslims. Representatives of the indigeneous population were absent from the Congress. Park writes, and it was therefore natural that "the Congress adopted a special resolution excluding Moslems from governmental posts". A collection of articles by western historians ed. by E. Allworth, makes the same point as does Zenkovsky's book.⁹ The passage from the resolution upon which these writers focus their attention reads as follows:

"The inclusion of Moslems in the supreme territorial organ of revolutionary power, at the present time is unacceptable both in view of the native population's indefinite attitude towards the rule of the Soviets of worker's and peasants deputies, and in view of that fact there are no proletarian class organisations among the native inhabitants."¹⁰

There can be no question that the adoption of a resolution containing this clause by the 3rd Congress of Soviets

9 A.G. Park, Bolshevism in Turkestan, 1917-1927 (New York, 1957), p. 13; E. Allworth, ed., Central Asia: A Century of Russian Rule (New York, London, 1967), p. 225; S. Zenkovsky, Pan Turkism and Islam in Russian (Cambridge, 1960), p. 232.

10 Zenkovsky, *ibid.*

sprang from a desire to exclude peoples hostile to the Soviets from power. The counter revolutionary ulema, for example, had designs on a governmental role; Zenkovsky, in noting that the Soviets rejected this, interprets their decision as unwillingness on the part of the Russians to admit representatives of indigeneous nationalities into government. The real situation was quite different: the proletariat, having gained power by wresting from the exploiters, did not, naturally, wish to share it with them. At the same time these historians fail to take into account the fact that Communist party of Turkestan proclaimed at its very first Congress that it considered "the oppressed Moslem proletariat" to be the chief support of Soviet power in Turkestan important though this is in understanding the Bolshevik stand point.¹¹

The Third Congress of Soviets created the Council of people's commissars consisting of 18 members as the high organ of government in Turkestan. What has not been given due attention even in most Soviet works is that the Congress reserved 3 places in the Council of people's commissars for representations of Muslim workers. The Nasha Gazeta from 23 November 1917 clearly mentioned such reservation for

11 "Materials and Documents of the First Congress of the Communist Party of Turkestan", p. 51, cited in I. Zenushkina, Soviet Nationalities Policy and Bourgeois Historians (Moscow, 1975), p. 56.

representatives of Muslim workers on the council of people's commissars.¹²

The Third Congress of Soviets also adopted a resolution on local power structure. All power at local places was to rest with the Soviets of workers, soldiers and peasant's Deputies. The local Soviets were asked to organize Soviets of Muslim workers, Deputies where such Soviets did not exist. At places where such Soviets existed they were to be left autonomous.¹³

At that time the counter-revolution raised its head more easily far from the centre although in this particular case it was short lived.

"The autonomous government in Turkestan headed by Tanyshbayev, Shagi Akhmetov and Chokayev was formed in opposition to the Tashkent Council of People's Commissars at what was called a pan-Mussulman Congress convened by bourgeois nationalist organizations in November 1917 in Kokand (hence the term Kokand and autonomy) with the support of Russian white guards this government started civil war in Turkestan, but was overthrown in September 1918 by Tashkent and Samarkand Red Army divisions."¹⁴

12 Cited in Kaushik, n. 7, p. 137.

13 Kaushik, n. 5, p. 73.

14 J. Stalin, Marxism and the National Question, cited in W.P. Coates and Z.K., Soviets in Central Asia (London, 1951), p. 74.

The Fourth Regional Muslim Congress of Kokand meeting in an extraordinary session and expressing the will of the peoples inhabiting Turkestan on the matters of autonomy upon the basis proclaimed by the Great Russian Revolution, declares the territory of Turkestan to be autonomous but united with the Russian democratic federative republic. The task of determining the forms of said autonomy is left to the constituent Assembly of Turkestan....The date of Constituent Assembly of Turkestan was set for 20 March 1918. Before dispersing, the deputies elected a people's council of 54 members to perform the functions of a provisional parliament until March, and also an Executive Committee to serve as provisional government chairmanship of the council was entrusted to the head of the ulema, Lapin, whereas the Executive Committee chairmanship went to leaders of the Central Council, Muhammedzhan Tenichbaev and after his resignation, to Chokayev Membership in the Council was divided along national lines, 36 seats were apportioned to Muslims, 18 to Russians. The question of a merger with the South eastern union organized by the Cossacks, which was placed before the Congress by the Bashkhir leader Zeki Validov, was left open for the Turkestani Constituent Assembly to decide.¹⁵ Connected with this period of the

¹⁵ Richard Pipes, The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism, 1917-1925 (Cambridge, 1954), p. 93.

self-determination of the peoples of Central Asia in the history of the so-called Kokand autonomy. The Kokand autonomy was created by the local bourgeois nationalists and Russian capitalists who sought to safeguard their selfish interests. The situation is best summed up in Lattimore's following words: "As the revolution deepened from a political struggle into a class war the lines of cleavage more and more grouped together the possessors, Russian and non-Russian, fighting to preserve at least something of the old order and the dispossessed, Russian and non-Russian, trying to take complete possession of the new order."¹⁶

The explanation which has been given by Western writers in that the Bolsheviki were fundamentally opposed to the autonomy of Turkestan region. It was this that allegedly forced the politically aware section of the indigeneous population, seized by the desire to claim their right to self-determination, to set up the so-called Kokand autonomy. One of these writers G. Wheeler, went to the extent of saying that the "creation and extinction of the 'Kokand government', both within a period of 3 months, are among the most significant events of the whole Russian Revolution, which claimed to have granted self-determination to hitherto subject peoples".¹⁷

16 O. Lattimore, Pivot of Asia (Boston, 1950), p. 204.

17 G. Wheeler, The Modern History of Soviet Central Asia (London, 1965), pp. 105-6.

In this connection these writers should be reminded that the so called Kokand autonomy was not a special formation peculiar to Central Asia alone and resulting what these writers regard as self-determination of the peoples, inasmuch as after the October Revolution, during the civil war and foreign military intervention local bourgeois nationalists, tsarist generals and foreign interventionist created a large number of "governments" and "autonomies" on the territory of the former tsarist empire, including the centre of Russia. They were anti popular in character and in some cases stooped to outright political banditism. The revolutionary proletariat swept them out of the country together with the tsarist generals and foreign interventionists.... The short lived "Kokand Autonomy" show that the bourgeois nationalists juggle with the right to self-determination to further their own class interests and go as far as to betray the interests of the people.

The nationalist had hardly any comprehensive programme on the national question. Their concept of autonomy was very confused, self contradictory and religion oriented. According to Zenkovsky "After the First All Russian Moslem Congress in May 1917, the question of autonomy became more acute. The Jadids from Shuro-i-Islam, who dominated TMS

took up this issue. They believed as did other Russian Moslems in 1917, in the possibility of solving the nationalities problem by means of autonomy...but they did little to carry out even a Central Asian autonomy...ulema and clergy were interested neither in Central Asian Moslem population but solely in preserving the clerical influence over the Central Asian Muslim Congress."¹⁹ This became manifest at the second Extraordinary Regional Muslim Congress meeting in September 1917 had proposed that Autonomous Turkestan Republic should have a bicameral parliament; the upper house being a senate of the clergy, was to ensure that all laws framed by parliament confirmed to the shariat.²⁰

The question of Soviet autonomy for Turkestan was first put at the 4th Congress of the region's Soviets in January 1918, two months after the establishment of Soviet power and autonomy was actually proclaimed almost three months later in April of the same year and regional autonomy has been figured as one of the demands contained in the Communist party programme even before the revolution.²¹

Lenin confirmed this in March 1918 when he pointed out that democratic centralism "in no way excludes autonomy,

19 Zenkovsky, n. 9, pp. 229-9.

20 Kaushik, n. 5, pp. 75-76.

21 Zenushkina, n. 11, p. 72.

on the contrary, it presupposes the necessity of it."²²

In April 1918 the people's commissariat of Nationalities to the Soviets of Kazan, Ufa, Orenburg, Ekaterinburg the council of people's commissars of Turkestan etc. recognised that the way of life, the language differences and the economic backwardness of these borderlands have somewhat complicated the task of the consolidation of Soviet authority there. In order to make the masses of the people the bearers of this authority, it became necessary to use special means to draw the toilers and exploited masses of these borderlands into the current of revolutionary government. It is necessary to raise the masses to the level of Soviet authority and to draw the toilers and exploited masses of these borderlands into the current of revolutionary development. It is necessary to raise the masses to the level of Soviet authority and to draw the best native representatives into it. Such measures can be taken only if autonomous rule is enjoyed in these regions, i.e. if native schools, native courts, native administration, native organs of authority and local, public political, and educational institutions are established, and if the use of the native tongue is permitted in all spheres of public and political activity.²³

22 V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1965), vol. 27, p. 207.

23 Xenia Joukoff Eudin and Robert C. North, Soviet Russia and the East, 1920-1927 (Stanford, California, 1957), pp. 50-51.

To this end the Third Congress of Soviets has proclaimed a federative order for the Russian Soviet Republic. The bourgeois autonomous groups which came into existence in the borderlands last November and December are being gradually exposed in the process of the revolution in order that the native masses may be finally drawn away from these groups and rallied around the Soviets.²⁴

In April 1918, the Fifth Congress of Soviets of Turkestan Territory proclaimed the autonomy of the territory - the formation of the Turkestan ASSR. That was the beginning of the Soviet national statehood in Central Asia. Problems of national and state building in the republic were considered at the First Territorial Congress of Bolsheviki organization in June 1918 which decided to set up provincial and district commissariats on the national question. All official documents were to be published in the local languages. The course was steered to include representatives of the native population into the administrative machinery and the enlistment of local inhabitants into the Red Army was stepped up.²⁵

The Constitution of the Turkestan ASSR was the first to be adopted by an autonomous republic. It was natural that it should have been born out of discussion, disputes on theoretical points concerning the initial draft

24 Ibid., p. 50.

25 See Tuzmuhamedov, n. 4, pp. 86-87.

of the Constitution. The final text of the Constitution, adopted by the 6th Congress of Soviets of Turkestan in October 1918 was the result of joint efforts on the part of representatives of Turkestan and the RSFSR. In the propositions on the Turkestan Republic, which were ratified at the preceding Congress, the following clauses are to be found:

"(2) The Turkestan Soviet Federative Republic, which is governed autonomously...co-ordinates its actions with the central government of the Russian Soviet Federation...

(7) In order to determine mutual relations with the Central government the Congress shall elect a commission of five people, which will go to Moscow following the Congress for this purpose."²⁶

The delegation reached in Moscow in July and formed part of the membership of the Commission on Mutual Relations with the Centre which consisted of Commissariats of Justice, food, health. Nationality affairs, Military Affairs and number of other areas be placed under the control of the central government was drawn up and decided that a proposal on the confirmation of Turkestan autonomy should be put to the All Russian Central Executive Committee of RSFSR. A commission of the Central Executive Committee of Turkestan began to work on the preparation of a draft constitution.

²⁶ The victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Turkestan, Document No. 252, p. 207 (in Russian) cited in Zenkshkina, n. 11, p. 75.

The Commission drew upon the experience already gained in drawing up the constitution of the RSFSR. The declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People and the general principles of the constitution of the RSFSR, which formed the first section of the Turkestan constitution, were laid at its first foundation.

According to some Western writers who reaches at the conclusion that Moscow did not approve of the constitution, they explain that the constitution was not ratified in Moscow. It is true that official ratification was not granted and it is also the case that the commission on Mutual Relations with the centre did not complete its work. Such things happened because of the extraordinary situation prevailing in Turkestan in 1918. But Park characterizes the lack of official ratification for the Turkestan constitution by the All Russia Central Executive Committee as "refusal to grant the Turkestan republic a formal character of autonomy in the RSFSR."²⁷

This is rather contrary to the facts. A telegram signed by Lenin and Stalin was read at the Fifth Congress of Soviets of Turkestan held in the same month, which assured the delegates that the council of people's commissars would

27 Park, n. 9, p. 68. See also Wheeler, n. 17, p. 117.

support Turkestan's autonomy on Soviet principles.²⁸

The constitution also contained a list of rights possessed by the Turkestan Republic as an autonomous part of the Russian Federation. The list makes it clear that the rights of the Turkestan ASSR were considerably more extensive than those possessed at that time by other autonomous republics of the RSFSR. In particular, Article 7 section 3 of the 1918 constitution of the Turkestan ASSR established the right to alter the principles underlying military affairs, which had been adopted by the federal authorities in conformity with local conditions, to enter into direct relations through federal representatives with adjoining countries on matters concerned with the local economy, neighbourly contacts and the police, to float loans and conclude financial agreements with the borders of the Russian federation. Commissions on foreign affairs, military affairs, communication and financial affairs accordingly functioned in the Turkestan Republic.²⁹ The broad autonomy preserved in the constitution was still further *extended* by the civil war that severed the links between Turkestan and Central Russia when in September 1919 Turkestan finally

28 V.I. Lenin, Collected Works (Moscow, 1966), vol. 36, p. 486.

29 Congresses of Soviets in Documents 1917-1936, (Moscow, 1959), vol. 1, p. 389, cited in Zenushkina, n. 11, p. 79.

joined the RSFSR as a result of the defeat of Kokchak the 8th Congress of Soviets of Turkestan made a number of changes in the constitution of the Turkestan ASSR. The Congress recognized that the further existence of the republic's commissariat for foreign affairs served no useful purpose, noting that "external policy, especially at the present time must be assigned to the central authority".³⁰

When the 1918 constitution had been listed by time and changes had taken place in the situation a new constitution for the Turkestan ASSR was drawn up and adopted in September 1920. It gave legal standing to a more expedient reallocation of functions between federal organs and those of the autonomous republic in the interests of both the Soviet state and the Turkestan ASSR.³¹

In setting up a new constitution the 9th Congress of Soviets of Turkestan devised a series of practical measure to ensure the implementation of autonomy. Village Soviets and people's courts composed of people of local nationalities who knew the languages, customs and traditions, were set up almost everywhere in the period 1918 to 1924. Representatives of the local population now constituted the majority in the administrative bodies. Soviet power thus became genuinely popular... The Soviet government took local peculiarities into account and

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

in certain cases made concessions to the old customs for example alongside Soviet courts which administered justice in accordance with the new laws, there were the old Muslim courts in which Kazi administered justice according to Shariat. If a person was dissatisfied with the Kazi's rule, he could go to a Soviet court.³² The people were soon convinced through experience of the advantages of Soviet law which gave protection to the exploited and the Kazi courts gradually first turned into courts of arbitration and then disappeared completely.

Thus, the first of the struggle of the party for implementation of its Leninist policy was over. The task was now to prepare for economic growth and cultural advance in a former colonial border land of Russia within the Russian federation.

Establishment of Soviet Republics in Khiva and Bukhara

The revolutionary upheaval which took place in Russia and Turkestan had its great influence for the development of revolutionary struggle of the masses against the rules of Khiva and Bukhara. In December 1917 the Soviet government recognized the sovereignty of the Bukhara Emirate and the Khiva Khanate. The revolutionary movement gained popularity in these states very soon because there was great unrest in this region. Under such conditions people supported the new regime in the task of liberation from despotic rule of Khan.

32 Kaushik, n. 7, p. 150.

In 1918 Junaid Khan, a Turk~~merian~~ feudal lord who later became a notorious basmach chieftain, assumed dictatorial power in Khiva. Establishing contact with the British in Iran, on the one hand, and concluding an alliance with the K~~olchak~~ (which in itself was a violation of the treaty with the RSFSR) on the other. Junaid Khan attacked Turkistan ASSR ignored the treaty concluded with the RSFSR on 9 April 1919. This was a continuation of the internal policy of the reactionaries where peasant movements and actions by the working people were brutally crushed in 1918 and 1919.³³

Leadership in the liberation struggle transferred into the hands of the Bukhara and Khiva communist parties. The first was established in September 1918 and the other in February 1919. The Khan of Khiva was deposed on 1 February 1920 as a result of the popular uprising which broke out in Khiva at the end of 1919. At the request of the insurgents the uprising was supported by Red Army units most of which consisted of local nationalities and had many communists in their ranks.³⁴

The first All Khorezm Kurultai of People's Representatives on 30 April 1920 proclaimed the establishment of the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic and adopted its constitution.³⁵

33 Tuzmuhamedov, n. 4, p. 87.

34 Ibid., pp. 87-88.

35 USSR Sixty Years of the Union, 1922-1985 - A Collection of Legislative Acts and Other Documents (Moscow, 1982), p. 95.

which transferred all power in the centre as well in local places to the Soviets of working people. The constitution guaranteed to the people of Khiva the freedom of speech, press and assembly etc. The property of Khan and his high officials seized at the time of the revolution was declared to be public property. All persons of 18 years and over in age were given the right to vote with the exception of counter revolutionary Khans and their high officials. The constitution also proclaimed equality of rights for all nationalities.³⁶

On 13 September 1920 representatives of the Khorezm Republic and the Russian federation concluded a union treaty in Moscow. By this treaty RSFSR has proclaimed the right of all peoples to self-determination and has renounced the colonial policy of the former Russian governments which exploited and oppressed the former Khiva Khanate and its people, Russia unconditionally recognizes the complete independence and sovereignty of the Khorezm People's Soviet Republic (Article 1). The RSFSR will consider annulled all treaties and agreements concluded by the former government on the one hand and the governments of former Khiva Khanate on the other (Article 2). The RSFSR will transfer to the independent KHPSR all real estate, i.e. land, waters, urban plots, buildings, plants and factories situated on its territory,

³⁶ Kaushik, n. 5, p. 81.

which belonged to the Russian Republic and to Russian government agencies both by the right of ownership and the right of user (Article 3). Both the parties to this treaty agreed not to allow their territories to be made use of by any other governments, organisations, groups or persons having hostile motives or seeking to carry out either direct or indirect warfare against either one of them or against any other Soviet republic (Art. 16). The treaty also envisaged the establishment of a common plan of action, centralize leadership and ready the forces which will safeguard the independence and freedom of both republics and also the two contracting parties will conclude a military-political pact (Art. 17). The RSFSR undertakes to assist the KHPSR by sending instructors, teachers, teaching aids and books organising the printing industry etc. (Art. 18). By virtue of the same considerations, the RSFSR will grant the KHPSR an extraordinary subsidy of 500,000,000 rubles (Art. 19). The Khorezm Republic will not grant the right to open industrial mining, agricultural, transport or other enterprises to any states other than the Soviet republics (Art. 20).³⁷ This was the first ever international treaty concluded by an eastern country which legally ensured its people the right to self-determination.

37 USSR 60 Years of the Union, n. 35, pp. 115-9.

Like Khiva, Bukhara was also ruled by feudal oppression. There the resistance to the despotic rule of the Emir came mainly from the party of Young Bukharans. This party was a political offshoot of the former Djadists movement of Bukhara and in the early stages of its development, like Djadists movement of all other Muslim regions of Russia had interested itself mainly in actual revival activities and in attempts at modernizing the educational system. By 1917 it had transformed itself into a political party and started agitating for the establishment of a responsible government in Bukhara.

Under the impact of October Revolution a revolutionary movement was growing in the meantime in 1918. The aggravation of the class contradiction, the mounting discontent of the masses with the feudal oppression and increasing intrigues of the British led to an armed uprising in Bukhara against the Emir. The Red Army came to their assistance at their request and in September 1920 the Emir was overthrown. In October 1920 the First Kurultai met in Bukhara and proclaimed the establishment of Bukhara People's Soviet Republic.³⁸ The New Republic signed military, political and economic agreements with the RSFSR which confirmed "the right of free self-determination for all the peoples of the

38 Ibid., p. 68.

former Russian Empire" and both contracting parties shall consider null and void, since the signature of the present Treaty, all the treaties and agreements concluded by Russian Tsarism and by the subsequent bourgeois governments of Russia, as equally by the Turkestan BSR with the former Emir's government (Art. 1). In accordance with the desire of the population of the entire territory expressed at the Regional Congress of the Soviets of the Russian settlements in Bukhara (October 1920), the RSFSR shall transfer to the **BSR** the settlements which are under the jurisdiction of the Executive committee of the aforesaid Congress, with all the consequences, following therefrom, relinquishing all title to them for all time (Art. 13) and to provide immediate assistance to the BSR to meet its current needs. The RSFSR shall grant the BSR an unrepayable loan in bank notes in an amount to be established by both parties (Art. 13).³⁹

The revolutionary upheavals in Khiva and Bukhara were accomplished by the non-proletarian and peasant masses but owing to a number of objectives socio-economic, political as also psychological factor they could not develop into socialist revolution immediately. At that phase there was a specific transitional form of state power the People's

³⁹ Ibid., pp. 131-8.

Soviet Republics under which the precondition for the transition from precapitalist feudal formations to socialism, by passing the capitalist stage of development. This was the first successful experiment in non-capitalist development.⁴⁰

The state and social structure of these republics was marked by a broad democracy and popular character which made them higher than the usual bourgeois republics. At that time there were many features which distinguished them from socialist republics. Private property remained the economic basis of the BPSR and KPSR. The most striking departure from Soviet constitutional practice was made by declaring in Article 26 of its constitution that 'no published laws of the Republics may contradict the foundations of Islam'.⁴¹

In the meantime the policies of the governments of Bukhara and Khorezm also came for severe criticism at the hands of the People's Commissar for Nationality Affairs, Stalin, in the 4th conference of the central committee with the Responsible Workers of the National Republics and Regions held on 10 June 1923, criticized the composition of the Bukharan Council of Nazirs and the manner in which the funds of the State Bank of Bukhara and cattle seized

40 Lenin, n. 28, vol. 31, p. 191.

41 Vaidyanath, n. 6, p. 120.

from the Amir were allocated. He declared that the government of Bukhara were neither socialist nor popular and unless they were radically revised immediately, the Republic of Bukhara cannot be admitted in the USSR. The same applied to Khorezm as well.⁴²

The task of socialist transformation in Bukhara and Khiva was really very complicated one. There were many difficulties because the bulk of the population was poor, illiterate and fanatically attached to religion. The few industries stopped functioning. Sites in these cities were the main centres of handicraft with the trade capital domination. The establishment of industry and the formation of their own working class would have been for the Republics of Bukhara and Khwarezm. The work of decades were without the help of working class and its state.

Nevertheless under such difficulties, conditions for transition to socialist republics were ripened very soon. This was due to the political situation prevailed there. The bourgeois nationalist bois and merchants also kept into higher organs. The nationalists in Khiva and Bukhara created national discord between Uzbek and Turkmens. The Uzbek bourgeois nationalists in the organs of power in the Bukhara Republic followed a policy of national discrimination

42 Ibid., p. 150.

against Turkmen and Tajiks. In Khiva where relations between the Uzbek and Turkmen upper classes were antagonistic, the Turkmen tribal chiefs sought to exploit the situation to their advantage. The government of the Khwarezm Republic which was mainly composed of young Khivans continued such reactionary policies. This caused popular indignation and the people removed the government on 6 March 1921 and arrested several Nazirs (ministers). A revolutionary committee was established to prepare the summoning of the second Kurultai⁴³. The activities of the bourgeois nationalists impeded the development of the republics in the direction of a socialist system. The fight with the basmachis drew the working peasants and artisans nearer to the Red army. The Soviet government placed primarily importance on actively helping regions afflicted by them. For example, the All Russian Central Executive Committee of the RSFSR assigned 150 million rubles to rebuilding an irrigation network which had been destroyed by the basmachis and replanting the farms of Ferghana. Cotton growers which had suffered from their depredations were wholly relieved of paying taxes.⁴⁴ Now the indigenous people came to realize the class nature of Basmachi movement and the fact that the struggle with it was in the interests of the working masses only gradually, the process being impeded by nationalist, anti-Soviet propaganda.

43 Kaushik, n. 5, p. 86.

44 See History of the Uz'bek SSR (Tashkent, 1967), vol. 2, ^{cit. in} _{2, zenushkin}

The Party purges were started in 1922. The Bukharan Party had already been reduced in membership from 16 thousand to "not more than a thousand".⁴⁵ In Khwarezm it was alleged that nearly 50 per cent of the members of the Communist Party hailed from among traders and speculators. The purges were started there in 1923 and when completed only a few hundred of the several thousand members of the Communist Party remained within its ranks.⁴⁶ The Bukharan governmental apparatus was also thoroughly purged at all levels. Most of the young Bukharan officials, including ~~Filrat~~ - the nazir (Minister) of education were arrested, who opposed the socio-economic changes in the interest of working class.

The political and social changes in the life of the BPSR and KPSR also reflected many changes in the enacted laws, which marked the world's first transitional regime from feudal monarchy to socialism, established with the support of the people developed and strengthened in the struggle against the feudal lords and the Basnachi against the intrigues of the imperialists and bourgeois nationalists.

45 Seymour Becker, Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia: Bukhara and Khiva, 1865-1929 (Cambridge, 1968), p. 306.

46 Rudolf Sch. Acsinger, The Nationalities Problem and the Soviet Administration (London, 1956), pp. 71-72.

Thus, bourgeois democratic problems were solved and socialist problems were posed within the framework of this system which was backward in the socio-economic respect but relied on the more advanced political power and support of the socialist revolutions in Russia and Turkestan.

The Republics of Bukhara and Khwarezm had achieved considerable success in the task of economic recovery. The measures taken to implement the new economic policy has given positive results.

"In 1924 the total sown area in Bukhara almost reached the pre-war level. It stood at 54,486,000 tanaps (the figure for 1913 was 5,903,00 tanaps). The area under cotton cultivation showed a steady increase from year to year. In 1920 cotton was sown on 100,000 tanaps, in 1923 on 136,000 tanaps and in 1924 on 160,000 tanaps. In 1923, 16 cotton-cleaning plants were put into operation. The government took measures to encourage cattle breeding, especially the breeding of Karakulship. Special co-operative societies were organised to purchase Karakulship. These societies were given aid amounting 2 million gold rubles. In Khwarezm also the area under cotton increased from 8 thousand dissiatines in 1922 to 30 thousand dissatines in 1924. By the beginning of 1924, 6 cotton cleaning plants had been restored and enlarged."⁴⁷

47 Kaushik, n. 7, p. 198.

In March 1923 the Central Asian economic council union had been recommended a year earlier by the Turkestan commission, was established. Bukhara and Khorezm agreed to merge their economic planning, postal and telegraph system and foreign trade activities with those of Soviet Turkestan, to adopt the monetary system of the USSR, and to place their transportation system under the RSFSR Commissariat for communications.⁴⁸

The extraordinary session of the central executive committee of the BPSR summoned on 14 August 1923 was of great importance for socialist transformation of Republic. It took the decision by directives. The amendment of Bukharan constitution to disfranchise all former officials of the Emirs government and members of the upper bourgeoisie and to extend broader political rights to the urban proletariat and poor peasantry. In 1923 the fourth Kurultai of Soviets elected a new TSIK. The BCP underwent a final purge at the same time the workers and peasant members were being actively recruited.⁴⁹

In October 1923 the Fourth All Khorezm Kurultai assembled it, adopted a new constitution and proclaimed the transformation of the Khwarezm People's Soviet Republic into Khwarezm Soviet Socialist Republic.

48 Becker, n. 45, p. 308.

49 Ibid., pp. 306-7.

The constitution declares that Khorezm is a Republic of Soviets of workers, Red army and peasants' Deputies. All power centrally and locally, belongs to these soviets. Full power in the Khorezm Republic belong to the working people.⁵⁰

The Sixth All Bukhara Kurultai proclaimed the formation of the Soviet Socialist Republic in Bukhara. It also proclaimed that the Bukhara People's Soviet Republic is declared the Bukhara Soviet Socialist Republic. A Socialist republic is the organisation of the dictatorship of the proletariat of the working and exploited masses of workers and the poorest peasantry - against the oppressors and exploiters. The aim of this dictatorship is to effect the transition to socialism by means of bringing about socialist transformation and crushing all counter-revolutionary attacks on proletariat and the dictatorship... The Bukhara SSR declares its fraternal unity with the Socialist Union of Soviet Republics as a whole it advances for the joint struggle for the triumph of the world communist revolution.⁵¹

50 USSR 60 Years of the Union , n. 35, p. 110.

51 Ibid., p. 202.

Bukhara ceased to exist on 27 October 1924 following the national delimitation of Central Asia. The national territorial delimitation of Central Asia which brought into existence several national republics in place of the former multinational political entities of Turkestan, Bukhara, Khorezm. The fixing of national boundaries which in other conditions would have been impossible or at least extremely painful, was accomplished smoothly in central Asia in 1924 on the basis of Socialist Revolution. This plan has been a subject of controversy between Soviet and non-Soviet scholars. Mustafa Chokayev alleged that the plan of the "division of Turkestan into tribal states was invented by the Bolsheviks and Moscow to counter the attempt made by the 'Musalman Communists' to serve the unification of all the Turkic tribes around the nucleus of of Soviet Turkestan".⁵²

Prince Labanov Rostovsky a Russian 'emigre, scholar, stated that delimitation plan was 'less concerned with solving the ethnographical puzzle than with the political aspect arising from the problem, and that it was merely the Bolsheviks reply to the Bashmachi uprising.⁵³ yet otheYs see

52 Mustafa Chokayev, "Turkestan and the Soviet Regime", Journal of Royal Central Asian Society (London), vol. 18, 1931, p. 414.

53 Labanoff, Rostovsky, "The Muslim Republics in Central Asia", Journal of Royal Institute of International Affairs (London), vol. 1, no. 7, 1960, pp. 249-50.

in this reform a manifestation of the principle of divide and rule.⁵⁴ Though Seton Waston sees national delimitation as the "clear purpose" to manufacture "a number of different nations, which could be kept apart from each other, played off against each other and linked individually with the Russian nation". This was carried out in his opinion in order to remove "any danger of a common front of the Central Asian Muslims".⁵⁵

Such allegations are highly biased and far from any truth. It ignores the existence of a well worked out nationality policy and deny the complexity of national problems in Central Asia. In analysing the national territorial delimitation of Central Asia in 1924, the following facts should not be overlooked. Firstly, it was not an exceptional development that took place in Central Asia and no where else. The national ethnic principle became all inseparable in the course of the administrative territorial division in the whole of the Soviet State which took place immediately after the October Revolution. Second national territorial delimitation was of the utmost importance here because tsarist Russia like other colonial countries did all she could to aggravate the old and

54 The Central Asian Review. (London), vol. 8, 1960, pp. 342-3.

55 Hugh Seton Watson, The New Imperialism (London, 1964), Third Impression, p. 58.

encourage the new inter-tribal, inter-racial and international contradictions, especially in view of the dissemination of the bourgeois nationalistic views of the Young Bukharans, Youngs Turks and Young Khivans during the mounting liberation anti-colonial struggle, became a factor impeding the building of socialism, the achievement of self-determination. The incitement of national strife, the preaching of nationalism and its reverse side chauvinism hamper the national and social development of any nationality or nation.⁵⁶ Moreover, the idea of national delimitation was not invented in 1924. It had been present long before and was implemented in 1924 when historical conditions were matured. As early as 1913 Lenin in his work entitled "Critical Remarks on the National Question" has pointed out the need for changing the old medieval division of tsarist Russia and creating new division as far as possible in accordance with the national composition of the population.⁵⁷ It was prepared and carried out (September 1924- February 1925) in accordance with the will of the Central Asian peoples by their representative bodies - the Fifth All Bukhara and the All Khorezm Congresses of Peoples

56 Tuzmuhamedov, n. 4, p. 93.

57 Lenin, n. 2, vol. 20, p. 48.

representatives.⁵⁸ They granted similar rights on the various peoples inhabiting the Republic. On 14 October 1924 the All Russian Central Executive Committee confirmed the resolution passed by the Turkestan Central Executive Committee on 16 September and separated Turkestan ASSR from the RSFSR.⁵⁹ The All Russia Central Executive Committee decided in fulfilment of the express universal will of the workers and dehqan masses of the Tajik people to grant to the Tajik people the right to withdraw from the Autonomous Turkestan SSR and form an Autonomous Tajik SSR within the Union Uzbek Republic (Art. 5).⁶⁰

On 27 October 1924 the central executive committee of the USSR adopted a statute recognizing the national delimitation of the Soviet republics of Central Asia and the entry of the Uzbek SSR and Turkmen SSR into the union. The Central Executive Committee of the USSR confirms that the freely expressed will of the working people is the supreme law, and calls upon the Presidium of CEC of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to legalize the newly formed

58 USSR Sixty Years of the Union, n. 35, pp. 203-4.

59 Nepomnin, cited in Kaushik, n. 5, p. 210.

60 USSR Sixty Years of the Union, n. 35, p. 206.

Republics in Central Asia in accordance with the decision of the Congresses of Soviets of these Republics.⁶¹

The first Constituent Congress of Soviets of the Uzbek SSR assembled in Bukhara on 13, 1925. The Congress was attended by 588 delegates among whom were 404 Uzbek, 66 Tajiks, 65 Russians, 5 Kirzhiz, 48 from other national minorities of the Uzbek SSR. The Congress adopted a declaration on the formation of the Uzbek SSR and then addressed itself to the task of establishing the permanent legislative and executive organs of the Republic. A separate resolution adopted by the Congress stated that 'the toiling mass of Uzbek people declare their unanswering decision on the voluntary entrance (of Uzbekistan) into the USSR as an equal member on the basis of the declaration of the First Congress of the USSR guaranteeing the security and freedom of national development of peoples.'⁶² In accordance with the decision of the Central Executive Committee 960 member delegation from the Uzbek SSR sent to Moscow. The Third Congress of Soviets of the USSR on 13 May 1925 took a decision to admit the Uzbek republic into the Soviet Union. This Congress resolves:

61 Ibid., p. 207.

62 Vaidyanath, n. 6, pp. 211-12.

- (1) To extend in accordance with Article I(c) of the constitution of the USSR the validity of the Treaty on the formation of the union of Soviet Socialist Republics to the Turkmen and Uzbek SSR; and
- (2) To instruct the presidium of the Third Congress of Soviets of the USSR to draft amendments to the Constitution of the USSR proceeding from the fact of the entry of the two new Union Republics into the USSR, and to submit these for the approval of the present Congress of Soviets.⁶³

At the time of the formation of Turkmen Republic there were 2 oblasts, three vilaiets, 4 Uezds, 10 tamans, 7 shuros, 36 kents, 272 asksakaldoms, 20 volosts and 267 aulsoverts. By a decree of the Revolutionary Committee of the Turkmen SSR of 24 January 1925, all the old administrative units of the Republics were abolished and new administrative divisions were established. The whole territory of the Turkmen SSR divided into 5 districts, 26 areas, 7 volosts, 272 aksakaldoms and 307 aulsoverts.⁶⁴

On 20 February, the Congress of Soviets of the Turkmen SSR adopted a Declaration on the formation of the

63 JSSR 60 years of the Union, n. 35, p. 215.

64 Vaidyanath, n. 6, p. 216.

Turkmen SSR. It was stated in this declaration that Turkestan consisted of the following areas: Palterak, Mervi, Kerk, Leninsky and Tashauz. The Turkmen SSR, recognising the equal rights of citizens without distinction of race or nationality, declares that permitting any privileges or the advantages on this basis, and also any oppression of national minorities or curtailment of their equal rights on their inalienable right to use their native tongue are contrary to the fundamental laws of the Republic (Pt. 11). The supreme body of power of the Turkmen SSR is the Congress of Soviets of Dehkans, workers, and Red army Deputies of Turkmenia, and in the interval between Congresses the Turkmen Central Executive Committee (point 14).⁶⁵ On 13 May 1925 the Third Congress of Soviets of the USSR resolved to admit both the Turkmen and the Uzbek SSR into the Soviet Union.⁶⁶ This is a fresh proof that the USSR is indeed a voluntary association of equal peoples and a reliable bulwark of the formerly oppressed peoples. By agreement between the Third Congress of Soviets and the Uzbek SSR (May 1929) and the second Congress of Soviets of the Tajik ASSR (April 1929), the representative bodies of the national states of the Uzbek and Tajik peoples, the Khojent regions with

65 USSR 60 Years of the Union, n. 35, pp. 211-12.

66 Ibid., p. 215.

a population of 250,000 was united with the Tadjik Republic.⁶⁷

The swift political, cultural and economic development of the Tadjik ASSR enabled the Third All Tadjik Congress of Soviets (16 October 1929) to adopt a declaration on the transformation of the Tadjik ASSR into the Tadjik SSR. The declaration was approved at the Third Session of the USSR Central Executive Committee on 5 December 1929.⁶⁸

In 1932 the Kara-Kalpak Autonomous oblast was detached from the Kazakh ASSR, elevated to the status of an autonomous republic and was included within the RSFSR. Four years later once again separated from the RSFSR and included within the Uzbek SSSR. In 1936 the Kirghiz ASSR was separated from the RSFSR and raised to the status of a union republic and was included directly in the USSR.⁶⁹

There were some economic and political reasons which led to these changes. While other republics and autonomous oblasts were able to switch over to the constructive work, the Tadjik republic were occupied with the task of cleaning up the remnants of the Basmachi guerrillas. Normal conditions came to prevail within Tadjikistan only from 1926 onwards. However, within the short span of time the republic

67 Tuzmuhamedov, n. 4, p. 96.

68 USSR 60 Years of the Union, n. 35, pp. 222-6.

69 Vaidyanath, n. 6, p. 235.

made considerable headway in recovering the shattered economy.

In 1936 when the Kirghiz ASSR was given the status of a union republic, condition within Kirghizia in cultural and socio-economic sphere had undergone significant changes. The class differences, the patriarchal mode of production which impeded the growth of Kirghiz Republic began to disappear. During the first and second five year plans economy of Kirghizia underwent a radical change. "During the first five year plan, a sum of 77,751 thousand rubles was invested under the First Five Year Plan for cultural and economic development of Kirghizia. Industrial production in Kirghizia increased more than 4 times in comparison to 1929 and 61 times in comparison to 1913."⁷⁰ Since the Kirghiz ASSR and Tadjik ASSR has fulfilled the conditions which governed to the elevation of an autonomous republic to the state of a union republic, raised to the status of a union republic and included directly in the USSR.

The vast changes which took place in the socio-economic structure of the Republics between 1924 and 1936 reflected to some extent the profound transformation which had taken place in the USSR itself. The USSR was no longer the backward agrarian society as it had been in 1924

⁷⁰ Kaushik, n. 7, p. 218.

when its first constitution was adopted. The new constitution project published in June 1936 drew attention to these numerous problems which were brought into existence by rapidly expanding economy of the USSR. It stated that in view of such changes a need had arisen for "giving more precise definition to the social and economic basis of the constitution by bringing the constitution into conformity with the present relation of class forces in the USSR. The creation of new socialist industry, the abolition of the Kulak class, the victory of the collective farm system, the consolidation of socialist property as the basis of Soviet State."⁷¹

Thus, the process of constitutional development in the Central Asian region which had begun in the early twenties of the present century had brought to completion in 1936. One of the most important result of this stage was a remarkable socio-economic transformation of the Central Asia which led to the creation of the national statehood for the nationalities and nations. Following adoption of the new constitution the number of union republics increased from 7 to 11 (four republics were of the Central Asian region).

71 J. Stalin, Problems of Leninism (Moscow, 1947), p. 590.

C O N C L U S I O N

CONCLUSION

Soviet approach to constitution is based on the Marxist-Leninist understanding of society, state and law, as also the actual requirements of the socialist society. This approach conceives a constitution as an outcome of the prevailing constellation of social forces. Soviet constitutions represent the sum total of the historic path along which the Soviet state has travelled. At the same time they are the subsequent development of state life, changes in the social, political life of the country are reflected in their corresponding changes. The path traversed by the Soviet State shows the dynamism of its constitutional legislation. The dynamism of all social affairs, and the transition from one stage to another predetermined the revolution of constitutional legislation.

While the western writers and liberal thinkers tend to look at the structures and process of liberal democracy as the normal mechanism of constitutionalism. They treat constitutionalism as an end in itself. It only provides for a mechanism suited to management of public affairs without determining the actual course of social change. It leaves the function of determining social policy and programme to the different political parties competing for power in an

open market. This sophisticated mechanism of liberal constitutionalism uses representative institutions only to create the ideological misconception and it is a device for legitimization of an exploitative system. This liberal view of constitutionalism is categorically rejected by the Marxist theory. Therefore, an analysis of the socialist law must be made within the actual historical and especially ideological context of the Soviet Union.

In the beginning, Russia represented a multi-national society of various nationalities living under the various levels of socio-economic and political development. They had their different traditions, customs, ways of life. The most urgent task was to evolve a political system which could unite them by giving them right to self-determination. In the difficult conditions of civil wars and foreign intervention Lenin worked out a form of state construction which was most suitable for various nationalities as an equal and on voluntary basis into a federal form of state construction.

The content of the self-determination of the peoples of Central Asia included the choice of socialism as the road of social development and the solution of the national question in its entirety on this basis and the liquidation of the socio-economic and cultural backwardness inherited

from the colonial rule, the establishment of national statehood and political organisation in general, in keeping with the people's wishes and to ensure the flourishing of national culture.

The Soviet policy in this regard was just the reverse of the liberal notion of formal legal equality among nations. History gives evidence of the fact that the position of legal equality for people and nations living within one state does not solve the national question fully if economic and cultural inequality continues to exist. The existence of economic inequality brings to the fore the national antagonism sooner or later.

In the case of Central Asia, riven by different nationalities, the picture of consolidation into a political system looks most un baffling. This erstwhile backward peripheral region inhabited by non-Russian nationalities in many of which federal patriarchal relations were still dominant has turned into developed industrial society with a high level of culture and in growth rates and level of development left behind all the rival non-socialist countries. This was done for the first time by the socialist revolution only. These successes were evidence of the fact that in the USSR the progress of the entire multinational society as a whole is organically combined with the progress

of each of the Soviet peoples individually.

The emergence of a socialist federal state has created a considerable controversy among various scholars. They contend that Soviet multinational state is not in fact a true union of voluntary unified nations and federalism in Soviet Union is sham. It is rather a unitary centralized totalitarian state. There is thus, a need to analyse the concept of federalism carved out from the ideological basis of right to self-determination of nations which provided for every nationality to determine its own state political form and unite them with other nationalities. The Soviet perception of federalism seems not to accept the western notion about state and its form. Federalism in the western democracies is based on purely administrative consideration which is not the case with the Soviet Union where national territorial principle has been a significant factor in working out the form of state construction.

So far constitutional development in Central Asia is concerned, it had gone through many difficult stages. In the beginning, it was the most backward region. Political cultural vacuum and internal disorders reflected in the tribal feuds and in the absence of viable political order and leadership, Tsarist Russia was able to extend its rule

in Central Asia. The social rules and their functional structure in the pre-revolutionary Central Asian society was not only tribal, feudal and patriarchal in nature, but also rigidly religious. The dominant power elite took shelter behind religious symbolism in order to maintain its specific privileged socio-economic positions. They had exclusive control over socio-economic cultural and educational institutions which were used as instruments for transplanting inegalitarian and obscurantist values.

The people of this region suffered under the two fold oppression of the colonial administration and their own feudal rulers and Beys. The alienation process from feudal mullahs and the newly born national bourgeoisie was marked during the national liberation movement. The activity of the Bolshevik-Leninist contributed to the liberation of the national masses from the ideological influence of the great power chauvinists and bourgeois nationalists and helped to expose the nationalistic programmes of the Russian bourgeois-parties and the opportunist aims of the revisionist leaders. It reached its high mark period following the February Revolution in 1917.

The strategic problem which arose during this period was how to demolish the archaic structure of social relationship. Under this situation Soviet gave top priority to the formation of national republics. The formation of

their own independent states helped to overcome nationalistic and chauvinistic prejudices. The moral and political bases for uniting the independent Soviet republics into one union state was also laid. The combined struggle which the peoples of the Soviet republics were waging with foreign intervention and internal counter-revolution strengthened these moral and political bases and promoted the emerging of a military political union of Soviet republics, expressed by the union treaties concluded between the republics.

The military and political union of Soviet republics ensured their victory in the civil war. At the conclusion they realized a closer unification. The striving toward to federative association was inherent in the Soviet republics. This striving was dictated by the objective course of historical development and grew out of urgent tasks connected with the need for extremely rapid rehabilitation and reconstruction of the national economy. The formation of national republic was also intensifying such social processes as differentiation a radical programme of agrarian reform and the modernization of nature of traditional educational system. The Soviet policy in this regard was worked with a view to changing the traditional ideological apparatus of the native society to cope with the specific situations.

An important role in creating optimal conditions for the national consolidation of the peoples and for the

development of their languages and culture was played by the sweeping re-organization of the administrative and territorial division which had existed in Tsarist Russia, and by the formation of union and autonomous republics, autonomous oblasts and national districts which had been constructed on a national basis.

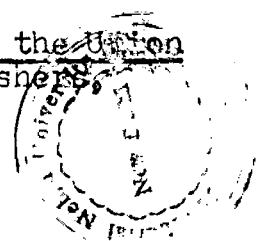
The solution of the national question, along with other revolutionary social, economic, and political reforms carried out by the Bolshevik Party, demolished the "prison of the peoples", which was tsarist Russia, and opened the way for socialist reconstruction. This process was reached by 1936 with the by and large completion of socialist construction. Thus, besides the objective socio-economic factors, the role of the subjective factors also governed the parameters of constitutional development in this Soviet region.

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