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**RESURGENCE OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN
CENTRAL ASIA: THE CASE STUDIES OF
TAJIKISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN**

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DECLARATION

This dissertation titled "RESURGENCE OF CULTURAL IDENTITY IN CENTRAL ASIA: THE CASE STUDIES OF TAJIKISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN" being submitted to the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, by RAMAKANT DWIEDI, in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY, is entirely his own work and has not been considered for the award of any other degree either at this or any other university. We recommend that the dissertation be forwarded to the examiners for evaluation.

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Dedicated to my Parents

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CIS	:	Commonwealth of Independent States
CPSU	:	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CPT	:	Communist Party of Tajikistan
CPU	:	Communist party of Uzbekistan
DPT	:	Democratic Party of Tajikistan
IRP	:	Islamic Renaissance Party
NDPU	:	National Democratic Party of Uzbekistan
NRDP	:	National Revival Democratic Party
PDA	:	Popular Democratic Army
PDPA	:	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
PDPU	:	People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan
POF	:	Progress of the Fatherland
PPT	:	People's Party of Tajikistan
PPUA	:	Party of Popular Unity and Accord
PUM	:	People's Unity Movement
PVC	:	People's Volunteer Corps
SDPU	:	Social Democratic Party of Uzbekistan
TPEPR	:	Tajikistan Party of Economic and Political Renewal
TPF	:	Tajik People's Front
USSR	:	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

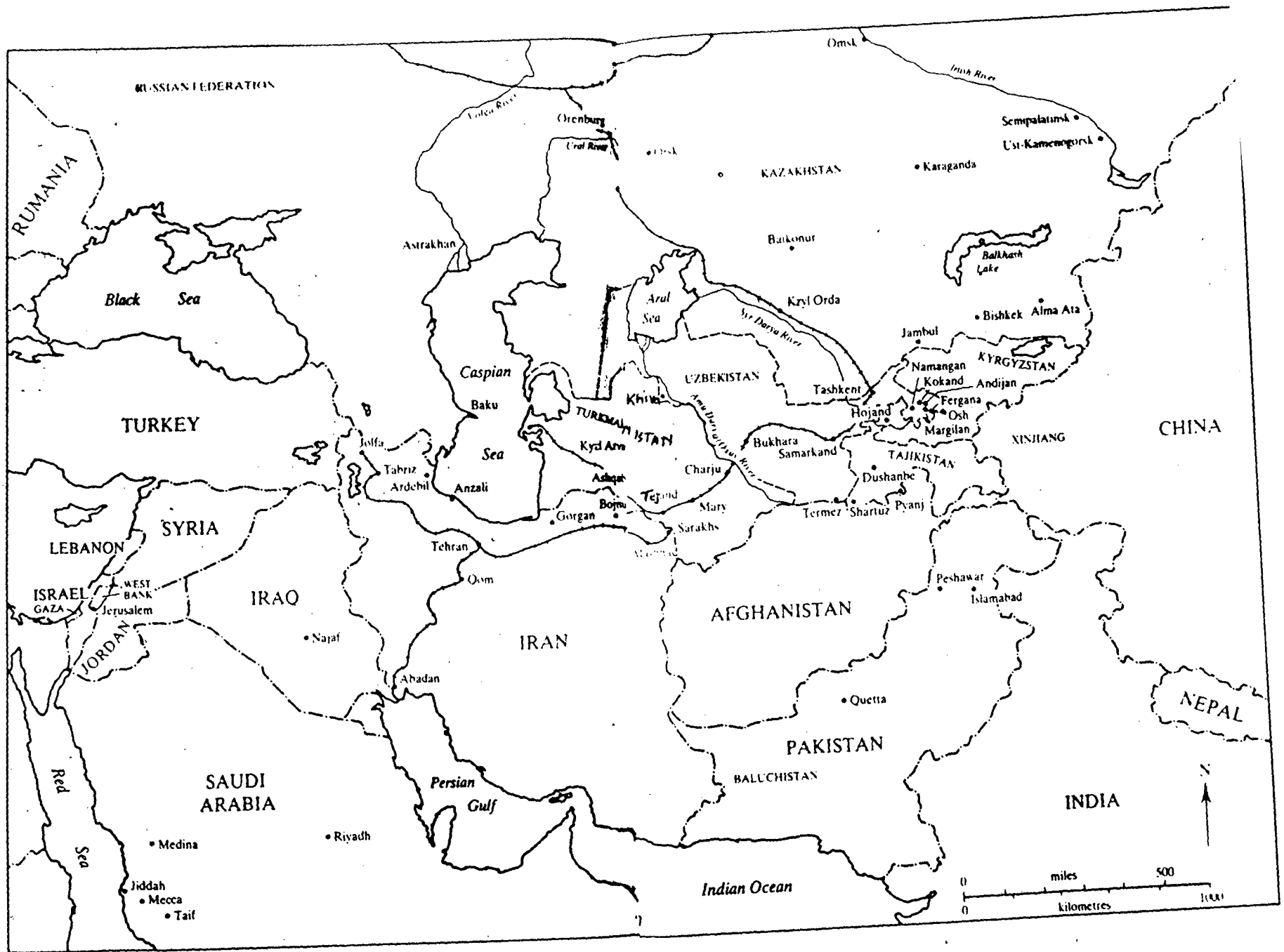
GLOSSARY OF FOREIGN TERMS

(P = Persian; *NR = Non - Russian; R = Russian)

adalat (P)	justice
adbiyat (P)	literature
birlik (NR)	unity
erk (NR)	freedom
gazeta (R)	gazette; newspaper
gulistan (P)	flourishing area
jamhuriyet (P)	republic
Jihad (NR)	holy war
kazi (P)	judge
madressa (NR)	religious school
majlis (P)	parliament, assembly
mashal (P)	torch
milli (P)	national
mufti (NR)	One who delivers fatwas, religious ruling
mujahedin (NR)	Holi warriors
pasukh (P)	answer
pravda (R)	truth

* Non-Russian languages include Arabic, Tajik, Turkish and Uzbek.

رآتوكلهز (P)	resurgence
sazman (P)	organisation
Soviet (R)	council
ulema (NR)	body of religious-legal scholars
wahadat (P)	unity



Central Asian republics and their neighbours today

PREFACE

Central Asia politically divorced or wedded with the greater Persia, it never detached itself culturally and culture has been a binding force between the two regions. The Iron curtain of the communist regime of the former U.S.S.R. rather strengthened cultural bonds between the two to the extent that as soon as the curtain was removed, the people found themselves face-to-face. The emergence of Central Asia a product of the Soviet collapse, has also generated a wave of strategic debate which raised diverse issues pertaining to both opportunities and challenges of the post - cold war era.

This Dissertation examines the indicators of the 'Cultural Resurgence in Central Asia with particular reference to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan'.

Chapter I concentrates upon the former Soviet Central Asian republics - their origins and history as well as their more recent past. Reflecting the republics' own current preoccupation with this issue, the chapter considers to what extent there was a central Asian identity, and to what extent attempts are now being made in the region to create one.

Chapters II and III analyse the factors in the background of resurgence of cultural identity in the republics of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan respectively.

Chapter IV consists of a set of conclusions drawn heavily from the earlier narratives.

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CHAPTER - I

**INTRODUCTION : ORIGINS, HISTORY AND
CULTURAL IDENTITY OF CENTRAL
ASIAN REPUBLICS**

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION: ORIGINS, HISTORY AND CULTURAL IDENTITY OF CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING :

Central Asia is vast land mass that stretches from Khurasan in north-eastern Iran to the Gobi Desert in Inner Asia. In its physical geographical limits, the region includes the present-day states of Afghanistan and Mangolia, the erstwhile five constituent republics of the, recently dissolved Soviet Union, and ethnic regions of China like Xingiang, Uigur and Tibet. The present study deals with 'Cultural Resurgence' in the republics of Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. But before coming to Tajikistan and Uzbekistan it is necessary here to make a brief survey of the former Soviet Central Asian republics of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, *Kyrgyzstan or Kirgizstan* Kinghizstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. The former Soviet Central Asian Republics together cover a territory of approximately 4 million sq. km with a combined population of some 55 million. To the north the region is bordered by the Russian Federation, to the east by China, to the South by Iran and Afghanistan, to the west by the Caspian Sea.

The northern tier of Central Asia is dominated by Kazakhstan. The second largest republic (after the Russian Federation) in the former Soviet Union, it encompasses an area of 27,17,300 Sq. Km. The two largest groups are the Kazakhs and the Russians. According to 1989 census, Kazakhs constitute some 40 per cent (6.5 million) of the total population of some 17 million, the later approximately 38 percent (6.2 million). Other ethnic groups of significant size include Germans (9,60,000 in 1989, but this number has now reduced considerably due to ongoing exodus), Ukrainians (9,00,000), Tatars (3,30,000) and Uzbeks (3,20,000).

The two republics of the plains, Uzbekistan and Turk^Kmenistan, are next in size. Situated in the southwestern corner of Central Asia, Turkmenisatan (4,88,100 Sq. Km.) has the smallest population (3.5 million in the 1989 census). Over 70 per cent of the population are Turkmen. There are several other ethnic groups such as Russians, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, but they are numerically quite small. The most centrally located of the five republics, Uzbekistan (4,47,400 Sq. Km.) cuts a diagonal swathe across the region from the frontier with Afghanistan in the southwest to the Aral Sea in the northwest. It includes within its boundaries the semi-independent republic of Karakalpakstan (1,64,900

Sq. Km.). Uzbekistan has a population of over 20 million. This includes 1.1 million in Karakalpakstan.

Uzbeks constitute the majority of the population (over 70 per cent), but many other ethnic groups are represented in significant numbers. Russians comprise 1.7 million; other groups include Tajiks (9,34,000), Kazakhs (10,00,000 approximately); Tatars (4,68,000) and Koreans (1,83,000).

The two smallest republics are those in the mountains of the southwest. Kirghizstan (1,98,500 sq.km.) has a population of 4.3 million, of which the kirghiz constitute 53.3 percent. There are also Russians (9,17,000), UKrainians (1,08,000) and Germans (1,01,000). But this number has reduced due to exodus from Kirghizstan. In the south, in the Osh province, there is fairly compact group of Uzbeks (in all, some 5,50,000 in the republic). Tajikistan (1,43,100 ~~km~~ sq. km), which includes within its boundaries Badakhshan (63,700 sq. km), formerly an autonomous region, now semi-independent, has a population of approximately 5.1 million (1989 census), of which 62 percent are Tajiks. These include some 1,60,000 so-called 'Mountain Tajiks', or Pamiris, in Badakhshan, who are only distantly related to the Tajiks 'proper'; the pamiris are almost all Ismali Muslims. The remainder population included, in 1989, 1.2 million Uzbeks (24 percent of the total) and 3,88,500 Russians (8 percent

of the total). An unknown number of these have now fled the republic; the Slav^a population has probably been reduced by at least a third. The Uzbeks live in compact settlements, mostly in the northwest; they do not appear to have left in significant numbers.

THE HISTORICAL LEGACY

The single most remarkable feature of Central Asian history has been the manner in which the region has continually both attracted and generated movements of population. Some of these have been the result of imperial conquest, others (in the more distant past) a consequence of sudden irruptions of nomad hordes. Trade, pilgrimage and the quest for knowledge have also prompted large and small groups of the people to traverse the region, as part of an ongoing interchange of philosophies, religions, technologies, commodities, languages, scripts, foodstuffs, items of clothing, 'high' culture, popular culture and much else besides.¹ Thus from the very earliest times, Central Asia has been a centre for cross-cultural fertilization. Indeed, some have argued that syncretism is its hallmark.

1. E.G. Browne, Literary History of Persia (London, Cambridge University Press, 1964), pp.120-22.

Others see it as a cultural continuum so dynamic that it has been able to absorb external influences without any bars of individuality. Evidence can be found to support either view, but what is certain is that Central Asia, with all its diversity, has shown an extraordinary ability continually to recreate itself, to accept change and yet to maintain continuity.

The history of the region prior to the twentieth century falls into two broad divisions: that of nomads and that of settled people. The domain of the former was in the north (modern Kazakhstan and Kirghizstan) and the far south (southern Turkmenistan); that of the latter, the fertile Oasis belt that stretches from the borders of western China to the shores of the Caspian Sea, running diagonally across the southern half of the region. The first Urban settlements in the south appeared around 1500 BC, probably founded by the people of Iranian origin. From the sixth to the fourth centuries BC this region was under the control of the Persian Achaemenian empire; politically this was little more than nominal significance, but the cultural impact was strong, as is evidenced by the fact that Zoroastrianism was wide practised. At the end of the fourth century BC Alexander the Great overthrew the Achaemenians and he and

his successors introduced a new element, that of Hellenism, to southern Central Asia. subsequently, from the middle of the third century BC, the eastern part (present-day Uzbekistan) formed part of the Graeco-Bactrian state, while the western part (present-day Turkmenistan) was incorporated into the Parthian Empire, and thus became subject to different cultural influences. However, the entire region was linked by the 'Silk Roads' which for almost two millennia serviced an economic network encompassing China, India, the Middle-East and the black Sea basin.²

In the third century AD, Iran, now ruled by Samanids, re-established its rule over southern Central Asia. It was to remain the major political, cultural, and economic force in the region for many centuries. However, it was itself transformed by the Arab invasion of the seventh century, which, in Islam, brought not only ^{new} few belief system but also a new social order and a new epistemology.³ Iran embraced this new world and subsequently became the physical as well as the intellectual conduit whereby it was introduced in Central Asia. The Arabs used Khorasan

2. John Rypka, History of Iranian Literature, (D.Reidel, Dordrecht, 1968) pp.220-25.

3. Browne, no.1, pp.140-45.

(northern Iran) as a springboard for their conquest of Khwarezm, Transoxiana and Fergana. The ancient cities of Merv, Bukhara and Samarkand were drawn into the cultural orbit of the caliphate and within a century had become important centres of Muslim learning. In time, they produced some of the finest scholars and greatest buildings in the Islamic world. The purely Arab presence was soon withdrawn, however, and administratively the region remained under the jurisdiction of Khorasan, thus still very much within the Iranian sphere of Influence. The first independent Muslim state in Central Asia, that of Samanids, was founded in 875 by an Iranian dynasty from Khurasan, which having established power base in Bukhara, built up an empire that, at its height, exercised suzerainty over Transoxiana, Khwarezm and large tracts of Iran and Afghanistan.⁴

The early history of the northern half of Central Asia is obscure. Archaeological excavations have revealed traces of a highly developed artistic tradition, but little is known of the people involved. However, the annals of neighbouring sedentary people, specially the Chinese, throw some light on the chronological sequence of events. It is principally from these sources that we learn of the eastward

4. *ibid*, pp.161-69.

surge of the powerful Ephthalites (white Huns), who dominated much of Central Asia during the fourth to the sixth centuries A D. They were eventually displaced by another nomadic wave, that of Turks. The first record of the presence of the later in Central Asia dates from the mid-sixth century.⁵ The Turks rapidly gained control of a vast territory, including part of the route of the 'Silk Roads'. Their empire survived in one form on another, despite frequent threats from the Chinese, until the mid-eighth century, when they were overthrown by yet another wave of Turkic invaders, the Uighurs. The progression of Turkic incursions into the region continued up until the sixteenth century. However, by the tenth century, the earlier inhabitants had been either expelled or overwhelmed, to the extent that much of Central Asia came to be known as 'Turkestain' ('land of turks') a term which is still sometimes used today.⁶ The implication was not that the region was united under a single ruler, which was certainly not the case, but that the majority of the population spoke Turkish language. Some of the Turkish tribes remained

5. *ibid.*, pp.173-75.

6. D.Sinor (ed.), The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.158-60

nomadic, but others, in the south, adopted a sedentary way of life. There they were converted to Islam, the first Turkish Muslim state was that of the Karakhanids, who established themselves in Bukhara (after overthrowing the Samanids), but extended their rule further to the east, to the Ili and Tarim rivers (modern Xinjiang). The sedentarized Turks in the cities of Transoxiana were heavily influenced by Iranian culture, and in the Bukhara-Samarkand region Farsi (Persian) continued to be the main vehicle for administration, literature and trade, despite the emergence of Turkish literary languages (e.g. Karakhanid and later Chaghatai).⁷

The last major Nomad invasion of Central Asia was that of the Mongols in the early thirteenth century. Their first appearance in the region was accompanied by havoc and destruction; later, however, they melded with the local population and adopted their language and culture. Tamerlane, the fourteenth-century potentate (1336-1405) who subdued Transoxiana, Transcaucasia, khorasan and a large

7. The educated elite of Transoxiana were bilingual; writers such as Movoi (1441-1501) and Babur (1488-1530) used both languages with equal mastery. Sadriddin Aini (1878-1954) maintained this tradition. See J. Deny et. al. (eds.), Philologiae Turcicae Fundamenta, (Franz Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1965), pp.173-75.

part of northern India, exemplified the fusion of these different elements. An Islamicized, Turkified Mongol, he made Samarkand his capital and beautified it with superb buildings and gardens, encouraged science and arts, yet retained the restless ferocity, even barbarity, of a nomad chief. After his death, his empire (which included most of the southern belt of Central Asia, but not the north) gradually disintegrated into even smaller units, ruled over by local war lords. By the sixteenth century, two centres have emerged as the chief regional powers, the khanates of Bukhara and Khiva. The former and larger (which adopted the designation of 'Emirate' in the eighteenth century) occupied a territory that coincided approximately with that of modern Uzbekistan, but also included parts of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan, Khiva, somewhat smaller in size, was situated to the south of the Aral Sea and occupied areas of Turkmen, Kazakh and Karakalpak lands. In the early eighteenth century a third power base took shape, that of Khanate of kokand, whose territory lay to the northeast and encompassed parts of modern Kirghizstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. These states, together with their smaller dependencies, were engaged almost ceaselessly in tortuous

territorial disputes.⁸

The northern steppes were dominated by the nomadic Kazakhs, who by sixteenth century had coalesced into three 'Hordes' which were, in effect, tribal confederations. Each had its own territory and a hierarchical structure of command under the rule of a hereditary leaders (the khan). The lands of the Little Horde lay to the north of the Caspian Sea, of the middle horde in the centre (between the Tobol and Intysh rivers) and of the Great Horde in the southeast, extending into Xinjiang. The Hordes were united for brief periods, but, as with the Khanates in the south, they were frequently engaged in internecine hostilities. At the same time, they, and the neighbouring Kirghiz tribes to the east, were under constant pressure from the Oirots (Jungarians), nomads from the northeast. The latter were defeated by the Marchus in 1758, and some of kirghiz and kazakhs were incorporated into the Chinese empire. At this time Islam had barely began to penetrate these regions. It gradually gained stronger foothold during the nineteenth century, but in the steps and mountains of the northeast it

8. F.H.Skrine and E.D.Ross, The Heart of Asia: A History of Russian Turkestan and the central Asian Khanates from the Earliest Time. (Methuen, London, 1899) pp.159-63.

was never practised with the same degree of orthodoxy as among the settled peoples of the Oasis belt.

The Russian has had diplomatic contacts with Central Asia from the mid sixteenth century. By this time the development of Maritime links between Europe and Asia had caused the balance of trade to shift from land to sea route. The trade that remained was mostly of regional nature. However, routes to the west, towards Muscovy, were, from a geographical point of view, relatively free of obstacles. In time this relationship came to be of major economic significance. Yet there were also dangers for Central Asia in this easy access. In the course of the eighteenth century the Russian began to extend their power south of the Urals; the Kazakh Hordes came even more firmly under Russian domination, until, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the power of their Khans was finally broken. In the second half of the century Russian troops moved southward, to capture Tashkent in 1865, Samarkand in 1868; the Emirate of Bukhara became a Russian Protectorate that same year, followed by Khiva in 1873. In 1876 the Khanate of Kokand was fully annexed, losing all semblance of autonomy.⁹

9. R.A.Pierce, Russian Central Asia 1867-1917: A study in colonial Rule. (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1960), pp.78-83.

The Tsarist administration, once in place, met with less resistance than most other colonial regimes. Economic relations between the 'centre' and the Central Asian periphery were strengthened, underpinned by the construction of a railway network that also served security and defence needs. There was little interference with native institutions, but some of the local elites were influenced by Russian ideas. Moreover, they were exposed to a major influx of muslims from other parts of the Russian empire, who introduced some reformist trends in education.

The Soviet Era

Soviet rule was established in Central Asia between 1918 and 1922. This was the prelude to a period of fundamental social transformation. The first step in this direction was the creation, within the framework of the Soviet Union, of proto-nation states. This territorial division, known as the National Delimitation of Central Asia, was based on the assumption that ethnic and linguistic affiliations coincided, and that together they formed the markers of 'national' identity. In Central Asia, however, although awareness of 'national' group identities was by no means entirely absent (the accounts of nineteenth century

ethnographers, philologists, historians, and travellers use ethnic designations for the various people, indicating that such distinctions were indeed recognised), they were not nearly as important as clan or tribal affiliations. The new territorial divisions, which cut across the boundaries of the Khanates and the tribal grouping, were an attempt to obliterate previous form of self-definition by providing an alternative focus for regional, sub-state identities (the state identity being Soviet). Within its own terms of reference the Delimitation was successful, since without any exchange of peoples, some 85-95 percent of the total population of the main ethnic groups were encompassed within the borders of their own titular republics. The one group which suffered severe territorial loss was the Tajiks: the largest Persian speaking group of the region, they had lived for centuries as one people with the sedentarized Uzbeks.¹⁰ It was impossible to make an equitable territorial division between these two groups. The Uzbeks, being more numerous and more powerful, recurred by for the larger share of the disputed land, including the historic Persian-speaking centres of Bukhara and Samarkand. The Tajiks have never

10. Shirin Akiner, Islamic people of Soviet Union, (London, Kegan Paul International 1986). pp.89-95.

ceased to resent this and it remain a cause of serious friction.

The National Delimitation took place in 1924. It embraced all the territory that had been under ⁸T~~ur~~arist rule and further incorporated the protectorates of Bukhara and Khiva. Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan were immediately given full union Republic status, while Tajikistan, including the 'Pamir province', later renamed Gorno-Badakhshan, was created as an Autonomous Republic within the Russian Federation. In 1929 Tajikistan acquired union Republic status, followed by Kazakhstan and Kirghizstan in 1936, Karakalpakstan, originally part of the Kazakh Republic, became an Autonomous Republic within the Russian Federation in 1932, and was transferred (with the same status) to the Jurisdiction of Uzbekistan in 1936; today, as noted, it has semi-independent status. There was some readjustment of borders during the Soviet period (e.g. Khojent province was transferred from Uzbekistan to Tajikistan in 1929), but in broad outline the territories of the newly independent republics of ⁸post-Soviet Central Asia are those that were delimited in 1924.

The physical creation of the Soviet Central Asian republics was followed by a comprehensive campaign to

modernize and Sovietize the region. This involved major feats of social engineering. The key mobilizing factors were collectivization and Mass education.

Collectivization was carried out in the early 1930s by workers, predominantly Russians, who were sent from other parts of the USSR to industrialize Soviet farming. The President of the USSR, Kalinin, remarked in 1929 that the aim of Soviet policy was "to teach the people of Kirghiz steppes, the small Uzbek cotton grower and the Turkmenian gardener the ideals of the Leningrad worker."¹¹

Mass education served not only to create a more efficient work force, but also to politicize the population and thereby incorporate it into the new system. According to the first Soviet census (1926), the average rate of literacy amongst the Uzbeks, Tajiks and Turkmen was less than 3 per cent, and among the Kazakhs and Kirghiz 6 per cent. A massive programme of teaching, training and the provision of textbooks was initiated, and by 1932 it was estimated that some 50 per cent of the population had achieved a basic level of literacy. This had risen to almost 70 per cent by 1939 and in

11. Fredrick. C. Barghoom, Soviet Russian Nationalism, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1956), p.69.

the 1970 census was recorded as even 99 per cent. ¹² Compulsory education for all children male and female, was introduced, being a limited primary curriculum, which was gradually increased to an eight year, later a ten year, and finally an eleven-year programme of study.

The education process was saturated with ideology. Other aspects of the modernization campaign were likewise, though sometime less obviously, motivated by ideological concerns. The creation of official 'national' language, literatures and histories, for example, far from being a purely academic exercise, was part of the struggle to remould the intellectual responses of society. The primary goals were, on the one hand, to inculcate sense of 'national' identity, but on the other hand, to ensure that this remained subordinate to an overarching Soviet identity. The new literary languages were based on selected local dialects, but their vocabularies were expanded in ways that enabled them to convey the material and ideological concepts relevant to Soviet society. The message was further reinforced by the forms of graphic representation : in the 1920s, use of the Arabic script was still permitted, but it

12. W.K.Medlin et al., Education and Development in central Asia, (Leiden, Brill, 1971). p.108.

was replaced by the Latin script around 1930 and by the Cyrillic in 1940. The new national literatures drew on local realia, but by using Soviet or western genres in prose and poetry, they also contributed to the development of different perceptions, different terms of reference.¹³ The national histories, which traced the emergence of each ethnic group from its 'ethnogenesis' through to its incorporation into the Soviet polity, were likewise aimed at giving substance and legitimacy to the new system.¹⁴

Alongside the efforts to instill new norms and values, a concerted onslaught was unleashed against every visible vestige of pre-Soviet culture. The chief target was, inevitably, Islam. Until the end of 1920s it was treated with uneasy tolerance, but thereafter, with minor variations in tactics, the official attitude of Islam was destroyed by such measures as the abolition of religious schools, colleges, Charitable endowment (waqf) and law courts. The great majority of mosques were closed and most of the

13. Akiner, no.10, pp.100-22.

14. The absurdity of trying to create separate national histories out of a shared cultural heritage, as well as the dangerously proprietorial feeling that such an exercise soon aroused, were well illustrated by the fierce arguments over the ethnic origins of cultural role-models such as Avicenna and al-Fanabi.

religious leaders either silenced or co-opted into the service of the new regime. Such factors as emancipation of women and the abolition of Arabic script, though not directly connected with religion, were nevertheless part of the campaign to undermine Islam and to destroy traditional society. The process of social transformation was hastened by the purges of the 1930s, which not only eradicated all potential sources of opposition, but also created such an all-pervasive climate of fear that it resulted in self-censorship, which in turn produced what can only be termed defence amnesia.¹⁵ Almost the only feature of pre-Soviet society to survive this pressure was the network of family and clan relationship. Virtually invisible to outsiders, such relationships provided a degree of protection against the arbitrary excesses of the system. This element of continuity in the most intimate areas of life provided a counter balance to the enormous changes that were taking place in the public domain. It acted as a safety valve, enabling a high degree of social transformation to be effected, while yet preserving an inner equilibrium.

15. See the poem 'Hatred' by Muhammad Salih (member of 'Birlik' and late founder of 'ERK'), published in Russian translation as 'Nenavist' (in *Nochnye metafory*, Tashkent, yash Guardiyya, 1989). p.19.

The social and cultural transformation of Central Asia was accompanied by political and economic integration into the Soviet system. A semblance of independence was provided by the creation of national emblems and institutions. In reality, however, all such bodies were entirely subordinate to the Central government. Areas such as defence, foreign policy and macroeconomic planning fell entirely within Moscow's jurisdiction. Investment allocation was decided in accordance with all-Union priorities, not those of an individual republic. In Central Asia, this led to extremely lop-sided economic development, with much emphasis on the production of primary commodities, but little attention was devoted to the creation of manufacturing industries. In turn this produced a high level of dependence on inter-republican trade. The main sectors of Central Asian republics' economies were agriculture, the extractive industry (mainly oil, gas, coal and minerals) and energy. There was some heavy engineering (specially in Uzbekistan), some metallurgy and several large petrochemical plants. ⁹ These ^{were} ~~was~~ also some military-industrial complexes, including the nuclear testing site at Semipalatinsk and the Baikonur space centre (both in Kazakhstan) and testing sites for chemical and biological weapons. Most of the larger enterprises, and all the



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military complexes, were under the direct control of Moscow. The republican governments not only had no control over them, but were not given access to production figures.¹⁶

In the second half of the 1980s the first signs of a 'national awakening' and 'cultural Resurgence' began to surface in the Central Asian republics, prompted in large measure by anger at the manner in which Central Asia was treated as the scapegoat for the ~~corruption~~^{corruption} that was endemic in Soviet system. Resentment at Moscow's high-handed treatment of the local ruling elites was palpable throughout society. There were at this time, too, the faint beginning of an Islamic revivalism, ⁱⁿ some areas of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan; the first sociopolitical movements also began to appear, mostly prompted by local environmental and cultural concerns. Declaration of sovereignty were made by all the Central Asian republics in 1990, but as with similar declarations made by other republics, the intention at this time was certainly not to leave the Union; rather, the declaration signalled a desire for greater autonomy in

16. It was only after the collapse of the soviet Union, for example, that Uzbek official first began to discover precisely how much gold was produced annually from the mines on their territory (some 80 tonnes in 1993, making Uzbekistan the eighth largest producer of gold in the world).

running their own internal affairs.¹⁷ In all-Union referendum of March 1991 the Central Asians voted overwhelmingly to maintain the Union. The immediate response of many to the abortive coup of August 1991 was to support the action of the coup leaders. When the coup failed, first Uzbekistan, than Kisghizstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan proclaimed their independence.

On 8 December 1991, however, the presidents of the three slav republics-Russia, Ukraine and Belarus-announced, without prior consultation with other heads of Soviet republics, that they were forming their own, three member union. There was no mention of the fate of the Soviet Union but without these three republics it was clear that it could not survive. Thus, by default without a liberation struggle or change of leadership, the Central Asian republics suddenly found themselves independent. The framework within which they had been created and had existed for over 70 years was no more. A fortnight later a summit meeting was conveyed in Almaty, and as a result of deliberations held there, a protocol on the formation of the commonwealth of

17. The term 'sovereignty' in soviet usage was not synonymous with 'independence'. The full legal implications of the term are not clear, but the main point at issue appears to have been that certain republican laws would, under certain conditions, take precedence over Soviet laws.

independent States (CIS) was signed by the leaders of eleven of the Union republics, including all five Central Asian republics. They were admitted to the United Nations in March 1992 and have since joined numerous other international and regional organizations. All the Central Asian leaders have emphasised their intentions to avoid being drawn into any exclusive ethnic or ideological grouping. Each republic has established direct diplomatic and commercial links with over a hundred countries in the West Asia, the far East, South east Asia, Europe, America and Africa.¹⁸ Domestically, measures have been undertaken in every sphere to consolidate political and economic independence.¹⁹

Before the establishment of Soviet power the Muslims from a nomadic tradition were far less orthodox in their beliefs and practices than were those from the sedentarized communists. The Soviet experience had a homogenizing effect:

18. Prior to 1992 the only foreign consulates in central Asia were located in Tashkent. They included those of India, Mongolia and Libya. There is now a rapidly increasing number of embassies and trade missions in all five state capitals.

19. New Constitutions have been drafted in all the republics; Ministries that were formerly subordinate to central institutions have been up graded and new areas of jurisdiction, national financial institutions have been created; new national flags, anthems and emblems have replaced those of the Soviet period.

it reduced all to a state of equal ignorance about religious matters. At the same time, however, Islam became, for both groups, a form of cultural defence. For the great majority of Central Asians, it represented a symbolic link with the world of their forefathers. It found expression in the token observance of Islamic rituals in ceremonies connected with rites of passage. The ritual may not have been correctly performed, it may not have been understood, and it may not even have been Islamic, but the perception was that it was 'right', that it imparted dignity and legitimacy to the proceedings. The chief markers of Islamic identity during this period were male circumcision, which was maintained almost without exception, and dietary precepts, although these were gradually eroded, especially in urban areas. The role of 'parallel' sufi movement in keeping Islamic belief alive was greatly exaggerated by foreign commentators. Knowledge of basic religious teachings was almost entirely eradicated.²⁰

20. Western commentators have frequently written about the supposed activities of sufi movements in Central Asia, and the importance of such movements in keeping alive the spirit and practice of Islam under Soviet rule. But now it has been becoming clear that no such movements existed or rather, if they did, they included very few people and were very low-key, interested more in abstract philosophy of Islam than the belief system as a living force in society.

During the 1980s, there were attempts to revive more orthodox Islamic practices. The so-called 'Wahhabis', on the borders of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kirghizstan spontaneously and without external sponsorship began to seek out knowledge about Islam and to live according to its tenets. They did not have a wide following but they aroused some interest, especially among urban intellectuals. Perhaps the most important contribution of the 'Wahhabis' at this time was that they rekindled a general awareness of the moral and intellectual qualities of Islam.

During the 1980s due to the implementation of 'glasnost' and perestroika', states became more accommodating towards Islam. Several new mosques were opened and informal religious classes were set up in many areas. The ruling elites, though still officially members of the Communist Party and thus forbidden to take part in religious ceremonies, nevertheless began to give official encouragement to the Islamic revival. This was in large part political gesture, an astute move to establish new credentials for themselves, rooted in local culture and not, therefore, dependent on Moscow. After the collapse of Soviet Union this stood them in good stead. Islam, provided a ready replacement for Soviet ideology. It was not, however, to be allowed to develop freely: from the very beginning, the

respective governments exerted firm control over religious policies; those who did not were persecuted much as they would have been during the Soviet period. Fear of fundamentalism was used as an excuse to suppress any form of opposition in Uzbekistan. This state sponsored form of Islam was in fact welcomed by many Central Asians, especially by the more educated, westernised urban dwellers who were happy to see Islam accorded a more prominent place in the cultural and ceremonial spheres of life, but did not want it to play a normative role in everyday affairs. In rural areas, particularly in the Ferghana valley, a more extremist form of Islam is reported to be taking hold. Alongside Islam, national culture in all its various manifestations is being promoted. This is part of conscious effort to create new 'state identity', new frameworks of individual and communal identification to give emotional content to independence. Linguistic questions are again receiving much attention. There are also calls for the rewriting of history to correct the biased version provided by the Soviet textbooks. However, there is as yet no agreement as to how, or by whom, this revision is to be undertaken. Undoubtedly, there is pressing need for a fundamental review of the interpretation of Central Asian

history that was presented by Soviet scholars, but there is a real danger that, as before, there will be little attempt to employ objective criteria: the past will again be used to justify the present, merely from a different perspective. Selected aspects of the past are already being emphasized in order to project a particular image of society. In Uzbekistan, for example, Tamerlane has been elevated to the status of founding father of the nations. In Tajikistan, there is a revival of interest in Zoroastrianism. These aspects will be discussed in chapters two and three in details.

CHAPTER - II

RESURGENCE OF CULTURAL IDENTITY: A CASE STUDY OF TAJIKISTAN

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The Republic of Tajikistan (formerly the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic) is situated in the south-east of Central Asia. To the north and west it borders Uzbekistan, to the north-east Kirghizstan, to the east the people's Republic of China and to the south Afghanistan.

Tajikistan today is seriously engaged in search of its modern democratic base but there are several instable factors of political economy that stand in the way of peaceful progress.

Traditional Central Asian society was divided into tribes. There were largely, though not exclusively, based on genealogical lines. Within the tribes there was a complex system of hierarchically structured subdivisions. In some areas, there were five or six levels of subdivisions. The basic unit was the nuclear family. This could be extended along blood lines to form large groupings, which could in turned be combined to create broader networks. At every level, within every unit, there was a clear, patriarchal leadership structure#. Within the family, it comprised the father and senior male members; within a clan or larger grouping, it would be centered on a male figure of authority

who, by his lineage, wealth and talent, was able to command the respect and unquestioning allegiance of his peers. Similarly, such a leader would give his loyalty to the leader of a larger grouping at the next level of seniority. Thus, society was held together by vertical chain of loyalty which reached upwards, layer by layer, to the supreme leader of group, the tribal khan.

During the Soviet period, these traditional structures became the basis for what was, in effect, a parallel system of power. The internal linkages were almost imperceptible to the uninitiated: such factor as name, place of birth or physical appearance provided few clues as to the clan or tribal affiliation. During the period of Soviet rule, behind a facade of ideological commitment, the regional groupings continued their long standing power struggles, but now using the system itself as a weapon. Islam, the predominant religion in Tajikistan and its multi-faceted cultural manifestations, were direct victims of Communist Regime. Today it is gradually being acknowledged that indigenous elites used the purges of the 1930s as means of eliminating their rivals.¹ Even when the physical annihilation of rival

1. Ahmad, Rashid, The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism, (Karachi, Oxford Press, 1995), pp.68-71.

groups was not their aim, members of a given clan would strive to position themselves in such a way as to hold a monopoly on power in their region, which in turn was a cell in a much larger network, encompassing at its largest extent the entire Republic. It was thus, through skillful manoeuvring and manipulation of the system, that within a few decades of the imposition of Soviet rule, in Tajikistan, the clan based on Leninabad/Khojent/Hojand dominated the political life of the republic from the 1930s and resentment over this was one of the factors in the civil war which broke out in 1992.

Among the politicians from Hojand, the centre of a tightly knit political machine, who achieved prominence in early 1970s was Rahman Nabiyeu (1930-93), a native of the village of Shai burhan. As Agriculture Minister in 1971, Nabiyeu had led a drive to expand the area under cotton cultivation, thus winning the attention and approval of Leonid Brezhnev, first secretary of the CPSU.

Because of the clan and blood ties between Tajiks in Tajikistan and those who had migrated to Afghanistan during the 1918-26 civil war, and because of the affinity of Tajiks with Persian, the events in Afghanistan and Iran were most likely to have an impact on Tajikistan than on any other

Central Asian republics.

In the mid 1970s Tajikistan began to feel, modestly, the impact of the rise of Islamic forces taking place in Afghanistan. Following the overthrow of king Muhammad Zahir Shah by his cousin Mohammed Daoud Khan in July 1973, and the declaration of a republic, the new ruler tried to curb Islamist oppositionists. His repression led in mid-1974 to the flight to Pakistan of two Islamic leaders, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Burhanuddin Rabbani, the latter an ethnic Tajik. In 1976 followers of Burhanuddin Rabbani and Gulbuddin Hikmatyar in Tajikistan established the Islamic Renaissance party clandestinely.² Most of the new groups backing came from Kurgan Tyube province, bordering Afghanistan, which had suffered economic neglect at the hands of a regime controlled by the Hojandis in the north. Among its young activists was Muhammad Sharif Himmatzade, a mechanic, who fifteen years later was to emerge as its official leader.

The emergence of the 'Islamic Revolution' in February 1979 in Iran gave a boost to religious forces in the region, The broadcast in Tajik beamed at Tajikistan by Iran's new

2. Dilip Hero, Between Marx and Muhammad : The changing face of Central Asia. (London, Harper Collins Publishers 1994), pp.90-93.

government began to gain a wider audience as the months went by, and helped to foster relations between the Islamic groups in both the countries.

Sharing a 1200-kilometer long border with Afghanistan, Tajikistan was more exposed to developments in Afghanistan. Keeping this in mind the authorities chose Dushambe as the venue for an international symposium on 'The contributions of the Muslims of Central Asia, the Volga and the Caucasus to the Development of Islamic thought, and the cause of peace and social progress'. It was the first time such an important gathering, attended by delegates from thirty Muslim countries had been organized in Dushambe.³

The economic misery suffered by the people and the political polarization did not prevent a cultural revival in Tajikistan in the first year after independence. The Tajiks have revived their literary past by once again popularizing the writings of Persian poets and philosophers such as Rudaki, Nasir-i-Khusran, Rumi, Saadi, Jami and Firdausi, whose statue now stands in the centre of Dushanbe. This Persian heritage was highly ignored by the communists, who cut Tajikistan off from its language and cultural links with

3. *ibid*, pp.94-95.

Iran. Some young Tajiks only realized for the first time in 1991 that their language, Farsi, is the same as that spoken in Iran. Taimur Zulfikarov has exemplified both assimilation and the tensions between the Russian and Persian literary heritages.

This cultural revival did little to stem the political crisis. Tajikistan was always one of the backwards of the Soviet Union and its problems barely reverberated in the corridors of power in Moscow. In 1979, however, Tajikistan was to be catapulted into the limelight as thousands of Soviet troops poured through Dushanbe on their way to Afghanistan. The city became one of the major bases for the Soviet supply line that stretched into Afghanistan. Thousands of Tajiks took part in the beginning,⁴ but within six months the worried Red Army high command has withdrawn them as it became concerned about the growing fraternization between them and the Tajiks mujahiddin. The influence of Afghan war on Tajikistan was immeasurable as it intensified the growth of Islamic fundamentalism, Tajik nationalism and clan rivalries in the countryside. Many Tajiks believe that the worst legacy of the Soviet Union was the Afghan war.

4. Ahmad, Hasan Dani, New light on Central Asia, (Delhi, Renaissance Publications House, 1993), pp. 20-24.

Tajik foreign minister, Lakim Kaqumov admitted this as early as December 1991, "Afghanistan is the most difficult and the complex problem we face, that we have ever faced, because we share long border with it. The Mujahiddin control most of the border region and there have been incursions into Tajikistan. If Islamic fundamentalism is very high in Afghanistan than it is natural it will influence Tajikistan also".⁵

At the Twenty second congress of the CPT in January 1990, now enjoying the support of 1,26,881 members⁶ leading party figures aired concern about the growth of mosques and Islamic publications, and the increasing participation of mullahs in the political process. To counter this trend, they urged the cadres to explain the party programme of economic development and social progress in a secure^{l 2}_{AA} environment to religious leaders, and to emphasize that the Republic's 1978 constitution, modelled along the 1977 USSR constitution, gave citizens freedom of consience.

But socio-economic development, in the wake of 'glasnost' and 'perestroika', was following unchartered

5. Interview with the author, Dushanbe, December 1991, p.5.

6. Great Soviet Encyclopedia Annual, 1990, p.167.

territory, creating unprecedented problems for the authorities. Given the freedom to express their grievances, against the background of a deteriorating economic situation, ethnic Tajiks, forming sixty percent of population of Tajikistan, with lowest per capita income in the USSR, became restive.

In February 1990 a state of emergency was declared in Dushanbe after riots broke out, just on the rumour that the Armenians who had fled the fighting in Nagorno-Karabagh would be given apartments in Dushanbe. On 12 February⁷ Kakhar Makhamov, the first secretary of the CPT, tried to address the angry crowds outside the CPT headquarters, but he was shouted down and in the ensuing melee five people were killed and seventy were wounded. Another thirty-seven people were killed two days later as the riots spread across the city. Some 5,000 extra troops were brought into Dushanbe as demonstrations continued outside the parliament building.

Public demands made during the demonstrations were first sign of the growing influence of the IRP, whose movement had remained underground until now. People demanded better housing, the closure of pollution spreading

7. Peter, Ferdinand. (ed)., The New Central Asia and its neighbours, (London, Pinter Publishers Limited, 1994), pp.70-75.

plants and of meat shop that sold pork, the opening of more mosques and an end to the Russification of Tajik names, A self-defense committee called Wahadad, or unity was formed.⁸

The February 1990 demonstrations were used by the CPT as the excuse to ban opposition candidates for elections to the supreme Soviet of Tajikistan in March. Thus 94 percent of those elected were communists, who re-elected Kakhar Makhamov as president of the republic. The refusal of the communists to accomodate opposition, at a time when other Soviet republics were liberalizing the political process, was to convince the IRP that there could be no compromise with the nomenklatura.

During the anti-Gorbachev coup from 19-21 August, Tajik president Makhamov extended his support to the coup leaders. There was uproar in the streets and after demonstrations outside parliament, Makhamov was forced to resign on 7 September. His replacement, acting president Kadridin Aslonov, from the liberal wing of CPT, sensing the direction in which the popular mood was moving, urged the supreme Soviet to ban the CPT. With ninety-three percent of the 310 deputies, elected in March 1990, affiliated to the CPT, the

8. M. B. Olcott, *Central Asia's past-empire politics*. (Orbis, Spring 1992), p.71.

supreme Soviet refused. When Aslonov persisted, the parliamentarians voted him out of office in early September, and put Rahman Nabiyeu in his place, Nabiyeu imposed a state of emergency and revoked the ban on the CPT.⁹

Once again the opposition took to the streets in protest. This forced president Nabiyeu to back down. He revoked the state of emergency and again banned the CPT. He also allowed the IRP to register as a political party provided it agreed to keep within the law. It did so by stating that it would employ exclusively democratic means in pursuit of its ultimate objective : a state based on the Sharia, Islamic law.¹⁰ President Nabiyeu announced a date for elections.

The opposition parties consisting IRP, Rastokhiz and DPT, chose Daulat Khudonazarov as their candidate for the presidential elections. In the elections held on 24th November 1991, Nabiyeu emerged victorious having secured 57 percent of the total votes polled and Khud^o~~a~~^azarov 34 percent

9. Ahmad Rashid, The Resurgence of Central Asia: Islam or Nationalism, (Karachi, Oxford Press, 1994), p.177.

10. Dilip Hero, Between Marx and Muhammad :The Changing face of Central Asia. (London, Harper Collins Publishers, 1994), p.210.

of the votes polled.¹¹ Nabyev victory was received rapturously by communist/Socialist stalwarts. With their leader in possession of a popular mandate, they felt they would be able to hang on to their power and privileges for another five years. In this they were not to be disappointed. Nabyev after getting elected for presidentship stated, "my aim is to create a multi-party system. But before I do that I have to put food into the shops".¹² The new president made it very clear that economic aims had to be achieved first before there was meaningful progress towards political liberalization.

Nabyev again revived CPT on 4 January 1992 and there was widespread crackdown on the opposition leaders. In March, 1992 the mayor of Dushanbe, Masud Ikramov, leaders of Rastokhiz and DPT were arrested. Within days of arrests massive street protests again gripped the capital. While tens of thousands of anti-government demonstrators camped at the martyrs square, Nabyev supporters camped in a counter demonstration in the Azadi square.¹³ The opposition

11. Voice of Islamic Republic of Iran, 1500 has dt.30-11-91.

12. Far eastern Economic Review, 9 January 1992, p.18.

13. Reuters, 'Demonstrators Hold protests in Tajikistan', Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 30 April, 1992.

protesters demanded the reinstatement of Iknamov, a new constitution, dissolution of supreme Soviet and fresh elections.

Nabiyev supporters argued that nobody had the legal power to disband the supreme Soviet before its term expired in 1994, and only counts had the authority to settle the question of Ikramov's guilt. But on 17 April the supreme Soviet agreed to concede the opposition demands for a new constitution and a fresh elections in return for a three-week moratorium on demonstrations. Rejecting the offer, the anti-communist camp set a deadline for the resignation of the hardline chairman of the supreme Soviet, Safrali Kenjayev.

Already cracks had appeared in the governmental side. A large section of the Tajik interior ministry troops, most of them being Badkhshani, a nationalist group, had defected to the opposite camp. They had done so in the aftermath of the supreme Soviet of Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region, forming forty-five percent of Tajikistan 's area, declaring the territory as Pamir-Badakhshan Autonomous Republic on 11 April, and endorsing the opposition's demands, especially

for closer links with Afghanistan and Iran.¹⁴ With these armedmen on their side, the protesters took several parliamentary deputies hostage on 21 April. The next day Kenjayevev resigned, and the hostages were freed. The supreme Soviet reciprocated by abolishing censorship, and fixing a date for the promulgation of a new constitution. President Nabiyevev ordered amnesty for all those who had participated in the demonstrations.

The opposition leaders were busy to finalize their strategy to face the new situation, kenjayevev supporters lead by popular front leader, Sangak Safarovev arrived in Dushanbe on 26 April. This worsened the prevailing situations in Dushanbe. The opposition supporters also reacted in a radical manner. With both the groups occupying two squares only 250 metres apart, tension arose. To tackle the situation, Nabiyevev declared the president rule which only helped in deteriorating the prevailing atmosphere. President Nabiyevev ordered the formation of a national Guard answerable directly to him, Nabiyevev's action encouraged the opposition to form its own armed militia called the People's Volunteer

14. The regional parliament acted on a petition, calling for the political-administrative upgrading of Badakhshan, signed by 15,000 supporters of Lal-e-Badakhshan, a party formed in 1989.

Corps (PVC). Emboldened by the Emergence of the national Guard, the supreme Soviet reinstated Kenjayev as its Chairman on 3 May.

Clashes broke out between the armed men of rival camps. On 7 May fourteen people were killed as the national Guard and the opposition's militias had numerous clashes across the city. Civilians were paralyzed with fear, as law and order broke down completely.¹⁵

The spread of the fighting and fears that the IRP was gaining an upper hand prompted Russian officer, commanding CIS military units in Dushanbe to organize talks between the opposition and Nabiyeu. After all night talks on 7-8 May, an agreement was reached to set up a coalition government of national reconciliation, with the opposition promising to disarm its supporters and lift the blockade around the capital's main building. The agreement was signed by the leading communist figures and Nabiyeu on the government's side, and from the opposition by Mohammed Sharif Himatzade, Chairman of the IRP, Sodmon Yusuf, chairman of the DPT, Tahir Abdujabborov, chairman of the Rastakhiz, Daulat Khudonazarov, chairman of the Cinematographers of

15. Reuters, "Tajik leader calls for support", Independent (London), 7 May 1992.

Tajikistan, and Amribek, chairman of the la'le Badakhshan organisation.

The installation of a new cabinet, bearing the comforting title of the 'national reconciliation government', did not in reality resolve the conflict, based as it was on deeply rooted clan and regional loyalties. But the new government was successful in publishing a draft constitution to be discussed by the supreme Soviet. It named the president as the head of state and the National Assembly (Majlis-e-milli) as the highest law making body. It confirmed the 1991 law on Tajik, which specified a switchover from the cyrillic script to Arabic/Persian over a period of five years, and limited the use of Russian. It ruled out dual citizenship, thus dimming the future prospects of Russian settlers.¹⁶

The tragedy of the past few months had been fuelled by the reluctance of the communists to share power or to bring about economic reform and equally by the impatient opposition, particular the IRP, who wanted power immediately. Faced with continued defiance from the officials in Hojand and Kulyab, Nabiyeu tried to convey

16. With the rise of Tajik nationalism over the past few years, the role of the Russian language, media and schools had declined sharply.

governments policies to people of these areas. But it proved to be a sterile exercise. Forty-two persons were killed in fighting between pro and anti government forces in late June. By early July 1992 civil war had begun in the south. There was a ceasefire on 7 July which lasted only few weeks. When fighting started again, it aroused strong criticism of president Nabiyeu for his failure to secure peace. During the supreme Soviet session, which began on 12 August, the erstwhile Kaji Turajanzade demanded Nabiyeu's resignation. Shodomon Yusuf , DPT leader, proposed that the presidency be supplanted by a temporary state council composed of representatives from all regions. However the president's supporters rejected these demands.

Tension rose further when the KNB deputy chief Colonel Juranbek Aminov, accused Hekmatyar, an Afghan Islamic leader of training of Tajik Islamists to overthrow the Nabiyeu regime, and the chief prosecutor was murdered in Dushanbe. Nabiyeu decided to act. He signed an agreement with the CIS secretariat in Moscow in late August authorizing the arrival of CIS military units in Tajikistan for peace-keeping . Prime minister, Akbar Mirzayev resigned from the office in protest against this agreement on 30 August. This led to demonstrations by the opposition members who occupied the

ground floor of the presidential palace and took thirty-five hostages, including ministers.

Following this development the presidents of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kirghistan and Russia issued a joint communique on 3 September warning the government and political organisation in Tajikistan of the severe consequences of continued conflict, describing the conflict as a 'danger to the CIS' and adding that their countries intended to intervene to stop the bloodshed.¹⁷ They also announced the dispatch of additional border troops to the Tajik-Afghan frontier.

On 4 September the scheduled supreme Soviet session in Dushanbe could not be held because of lack of quorum. The following day there were reports of clashes between pro and anti Nabiyeu camps in Kurgan Tyube, in which tens of people were killed. Nabiyeu, who was still ensconced in the CIS headquarters, declared a state of emergency in the province. On 7 September, Nabiyeu was forced to resign from the office and Iskanderov replaced him.¹⁸ Following this development civil conflict escalated throughout the republic, with total

17. Central Asian Monitor, no.5, 1992, p.5.

18. Ibid.

fatalities exceeding 2000 by the end of the September.¹⁹ In the anti-Nabiyev camp the main role was played by the IRP and the Kaji Turajanzade. Together these Islamist elements had marginalised secular, liberal, and nationalist forces within the opposition i.e, anti-Nabiyev camp. Acting president Iskanderov, trying to maintain neutrality between the opposition forces, appointed Abdumalik Abdullajanov as acting prime minister on 21 September, thus meeting one of the demands of the pro-Nabiyev camp from Kulyab, others being the dismissals of the IRP leader, Usman Daulat, as vice premier, and Turajanzade as the republic's highest ranking mullahs. Iskanderov appeal the CIS forces to control fighting in Kurgan Tyube but CIS high command had no intention of getting involved in local conflicts.

The civil-conflicts gave outside powers specially Iran, an unprecedented opportunity to establish their influence in Tajikistan. By the end of the 1992 Iran was backing a wide range of political parties with money, food and military supplies while Afghan Mujahiddin group and Pakistan's Jamat-e-Islami were also active in training and supplying Islamic fundamentalists in Dushanbe. In October, when entire foreign

19. Dilip Hero, Between Marx and Muhammad : The changing face of Central Asia (London, Pinter Publishers Limited 1994), pp.10-12.

diplomatic missions from six countries resident in Dushanbe numbered around twenty diplomats, the Iranian mission alone comprised twenty one official diplomats and some fifty unofficial diplomats.²⁰ Foreign diplomats claimed that the IRP was receiving air drops of weapons from Iranian aircraft. Iranian intelligence played a crucial role in toppling Nabiyeu by the opposition in September.

The supreme Soviet met in Hojand on Monday, 16 November, under the chairmanship of Iskanderov, with nearly 200 deputies attending the session. There it was resolved that Iskanderov would resign from both the chairmanship of supreme Soviet and the acting president of the republic. Immali Rahmanov was elected chairman of supreme Soviet. Rahmanov appointed Abdulmalik Abdullajanov as the prime minister. The following day the supreme Soviet decided that Nabiyeu's resignation was invalid because it had been offered under pressure. Having thus retrieved his honour, Nabiyeu resigned voluntarily, and this was accepted by a majority vote. This ended the most fractious political episode in the brief history of independent Tajikistan.

20. Ahmad Rashid, Far Eastern Economic Review (Dushanbe, 12 November, 1992), pp.7-9.

Rakhmanov's election signalled a severe defeat for the Islamicists and the democratic opposition as the members of the Khojand proved that they retained their grip on the parliament. In Dushanbe, IRP militia units and other opposition groups, now collectively called the Popular Democratic Army (PDA), set up barricades and resisted attempts by the new president to take up office, though communist forces led by the new Tajik interior minister Yakub Salimov retaliated with a full scale attack on the city on 5 December. Hundreds of people were killed in several days fighting and finally communist forces were able to enter in Dushanbe on 11 December. For all practical purposes the civil war was over by the end of December 1992 with communists almost fully back in power.

IRP leaders including Himatzade and Qazi Torajanzade fled to Afghanistan. Leaders of the DPT fled to Moscow. At president Karimov's urging, Russia agreed to send 3000 Moscow CIS troops in January, 1993 to patrol the Afghan-Tajik border, where a state of emergency was declared. In February 1993 Abbas Turajanzade was replaced as spiritual leader of Tajikistan's muslims by Fatkhullo Sharifov who was given the title of Mufti.

The main threat to the government came from the

potential for a factional dispute between the Leninabad elite and the newly-dominant Kulyab faction. In December 1993 Abadullojonov resigned from the premiership. But when the new government under Samadov was appointed in February 1994, Rahmonov announced that a priority would be the enactment of a new constitution and elections towards the end of the year. In early March Rahmonov declared that he was willing to negotiate with the Islamic/democratic opposition, and talks began in early April in Moscow, under the chairmanship of the UN and in the presence of Russian foreign minister, as well as representatives from Iran, Pakistan and the U.S.A. It resulted in a protocol on the establishment of a joint commission on refugees. In June 1994, a further round of talks between representatives of the government and the opposition took place in the Iranian capital, Tehran. In August 1994, the government did not renew the state of emergency, which had been in effect since October 1992, claiming that greater political freedom would be permitted for presidential election, which was scheduled to take place in September. In mid-September the DPT announced that it would participate in the election and that it had ended its two years old alliance with the IRP. However, DPT did not participate when elections were held in November, 1994, the only two candidates were Rahmanov and

⁶Abdullojonov. Some 85% of eligible voters were reported to have participated in the elections. Rahmanov won the election with some 58% of the vote cast, while Abdullojonov gained the support of about 35% of voters. At the same time as the presidential election, a plebiscite was held on a new constitution which was approved by more than 90% of voters.²¹

In early February 1995 a fourth round of peace talks between government and opposition representatives opened in Almaty, Kazakhstan, but little progress was achieved. After the talks the IRP announced that it would not take part in the parliamentary elections, scheduled later in the month. Neither did the DPT participate, although its leader, Shodman Yusuf, was reported to have sought the legalization of the party to enable it to take part. Despite the opposition boycott, elections to the new supreme assembly took place on 26 February, 1995. Although 350 candidates were reported to have contested the 181 seats, in some 40% of constituencies there were only one candidate. An estimated 84% of eligible voters participated in the poll.²²

21. Voice of Islamic Republic of Iran (VOIRI), 1500 hrs, dt. 5-12-1994.

22. Voice of Islamic Republic of Iran (VOIRI) 16000 hrs, dt. 03-03-1995.

In sum, while the old Communist are continued to rule in Tajikistan after a bloody civil war, it found itself unable to restore stability in the republic. This may be considered a typical transitional problem as the country changed from Marxist-Leninist ideology to Islamic culture, from centralized to market economy, what is clear is the rediscovery of Islamic culture and civil society. But even sense of cultural identity and social unity are not pan-Tajikistan because after Islam comes other re-enforcing factors as means of internal differentiation as evident in the powerful loyalties to once lineage or clan and to region.

CHAPTER - III

RESURGENCE OF CULTURAL IDENTITY: A CASE STUDY OF UZBEKISTAN

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The Republic of Uzbekistan (formerly the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic) is located in Central Asia. It is bordered by Kazakhstan to the north, Turkmenistan to the south, Kirghistan to the east, Tajikistan to the south-east and Afghanistan to the south.

The Uzbeks are descendants of nomadic Mongol tribes who mixed with the sedentary inhabitants of central Asia in the 13th century A.D. In the 18th and 19th centuries the most prominent political formulations in the region were the khanates of Bukhara, Samarkand and Kokand. Russian control of the territory between the Syr-Darya and Amu-Dar'ya rivers was completed when Russian forces conquered the Khanate of Kokand, in 1876.¹ The different phases of the Russian conquest of the region has been explained in Chapter one.

Soviet power was first established in parts of Uzbekistan in November 1917. In April 1918 the Turkistan

1. R.A. Pierce, Russian Central Asia 1867-1917 :A study in colonial Rule , (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1960), pp 78-83.

Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR), a vast region in Central Asia including Uzbekistan, was proclaimed, but Soviet forces then withdrew against opposition from the nationalist basmachi² movement. Soviet power was re-established in September 1919, although armed opposition continued until the early 1920s. Bukhara and Khiva became nominally independent people's Soviet republics in 1920, but were incorporated into the Turkistan ASSR by 1924. On 27 October 1924, the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) was established (including, until 1929, the Tajik ASSR). In May 1925 the Uzbek SSR became a constituent republic of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR, which had been established in December 1922). In 1936 Karkalpakstan was transferred from the Russian Federation to the Uzbek SSR, nonetheless retaining its autonomous status.³

The National Delimitation of the Central Asian republics of 1924-25 established, an Uzbek nation-state for the first time. Its formation was accompanied by the creation of corresponding national symbols including the development of new literary language (the ancient Uzbek

2. Local Uzbek guerrillas who fought against the communist forces.

3. D. Sinor, The Cambridge History of Early Inner Asia, (Cambridge, University Press Cambridge, 1990), pp.109-20.

literary language, chatagi, was accessible only to a small minority of the population).⁴

Campaigns promoting literacy were an integral part of the establishment of the Soviet ideology in the region, and the level of literacy rose from 3.8%, at the 1926 census, to 52.5% IN 1932. There was increase in the provision of educational facilities, which formed an important part in the policy of secularization in the region. The campaign against the religion, initially promoted by educational means became a repressive policy against all who admitted their adherence to Islam. Muslim schools, courts and mosques were closed, and Muslim clergy were subject to persecution.

There had been little industrial development in Central Asia under the Trarist regime, although the extraction of raw material was developed. Under the first two Five Year Plans (1928-33) and 1933-38), however, there was considerable economic growth, aided by the immigration of skilled workers from the Slavic republics of the USSR. Although economic growth continued at a significant rate after the second world war(during which Uzbekistan's industrial base was enlarged by the transfer of industries

4. M. Kirkwood (ed.), Language Planning in the Soviet Union, (London, Cambridge University Press, 1989).

from the war-zone), most Uzbeks continued to lead a traditional rural life style, affected only by the huge increase in the amount of cotton grown in the republic.

The policies of glasnost (openness) and perestroika (restructuring), introduced by the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, in the 1980s, did not result in significant political changes in the short term. The traditional respect for authority and the relatively small size of the intelligentsia in Uzbekistan allowed the leadership to hinder or actively oppose, attempts at political or economic reform. Nevertheless, there was greater measure of freedom of the press in the late 1980s, allowing discussion of previously unexamined aspects of Uzbek history, culture and contemporary ecological and economic problems. Many young Uzbek intellectuals tried to rediscover their national and cultural roots, and because these were intertwined with Islamic heritage, their quest led them to Islam. The resulting rise in Islam could not be properly satisfied by the official Islamic Administration, which was tightly controlled by the Government. Consequently, there was growth

in unofficial or 'parallel' Islam.⁵ The poor condition of the environment was one major source of popular dissatisfaction. The over-irrigation of land to feed the vast cotton fields had caused both salination of the soil and most importantly, the desiccation of the Arab sea, the southern part of which is in Karakalpakstan, and is a vital element in the ecology of the entire region. By the early 1980s it was evident that excessive drainage of the Amu-Dar'ya and Syr-Dar'ya rivers was resulting in dangerously low level of water reaching the Aral sea. The problem was not addressed, however, until the introduction of glasnost in the media.

In the political-diplomatic field, Gorbachev's agreement in early February 1988 with the Afghan Communist leader, Muhammad Najibullah to start withdrawing 1,15,000 Soviet troops from Afghanistan from mid-May onward, signified a political ideological setback for the Soviet Union in the face of continuing armed struggle by Islamic guerrillas against the Kabul regime. This seems to have tempered Gorbachev's view on Islam. During his visit to Tashkent in April 1988, Gorbachev's remarks on Islam were

5. Bohadan Mahaylo and Victor Swoboda, Soviet Disunion: A History of the Nationalities problem in the USSR, (Moscow, Progress Publication, n.d.), p.159.

described as 'affable', a contrast to what he had said eighteen months.⁶

In 1987 the finding of a survey of undergraduates with Muslim background of Tashkent University with sixty percent describing themselves as 'muslim', thirty percent being hesitant and only seven percent calling themselves atheist⁷ jolted the communist leadership.

The authorities had begun responding to the Islamic revival by activating the houses of atheism and the scientific atheism departments in the philosophy faculties of Universities. Following the old strategy of combating religiosity, these institutions sponsored lecture series and special days of atheism. They were not as effective as they should have been because those undertaking the task were deficient in numbers and qualifications. In the absence of a full grasp of Islam, a complex ideology, the atheist propagandists had failed to forge an appropriate tool to counter it. Also, unlike in the past, the general level of education of the new believers was high, and some of them

6. Pravada Vastoka, 10 April 1988, Gorbachev, while coming to India in 1986, in a stopover in Tashkent had warned Uzbek communist leaders, who were showing lenient approach towards Islamic activists to mend their ways.

7. Kehan Havai, 8 January, 1988, p.5.

were sophisticated thinkers. Besides the young in general, a particular social group that had come under rising Islamic influence was the old trading class of the traditional bazar. Having been dormant for many decades in the aftermath of the Bolshevik revolution, several merchant clans among Uzbeks showed sign of revival as traders as the state opened up opportunities for the cooperative sector in the economy. Such traders were in the vanguard when it came to staging a demonstrations in late January 1989 against the mufti of the Central Asian Muslim Spiritual Directorate in Tashkent, Shamsuddin Babsakhan, son of the previous mufti, Ziauddin Babakhan, and a relic of the Brezhnev era. Following the demonstrations he was forced to resign this event signaled a success for grass-roots politics, applied in this case to a religious matter.

'Birlik' staged protest demonstrations in Tashkent on 1 and 15 October 1989. These were preceded and followed by demonstrations demanding the adoption of Uzbek as the state language. Apart from this Birlik also raised some other emotional issues and helped the fledgling organisation, which had already held a national congress as a recognised

'public movement', but not as a political party,⁸ to widen its appeal quickly especially among intellectuals and students. As an umbrella organisation, which had by now appropriated such causes as a confederation of all Central Asian republics, prorogation of Islam, and a wider use of the Arabic alphabet for Uzbek, it had attracted not only Uzbek nationalists and pan-Turkists but also Islamists.

Environmental problems and the status of the Uzbek language were among the issues on which Uzbekistan's first major political movement 'Birlik' (unity) campaigned. This was a classic case of cultural resurgence in Uzbekistan. Birlik was principally concerned with issues relating to the national culture and the environment. It was formed in 1989 by a group of intellectuals in Tashkent, but quickly grew to be the main challenger to the ruling communist party of Uzbekistan (CPU). It was greeted with enthusiasm; not only were the questions it raised of concern to a large proportion of population, but the very novelty of unofficial mass meetings generated its own excitement. However, the 'Birlik' movement was not granted official registration, and

8. A movement, political or non-political, concerned itself with one or more general issues: environment, language welfare of soldiers, etc.; whereas a political party was expected to have an overall programme for society covering its various facets.

its attempts to nominate a candidate in the 1989 elections to the USSR's congress of people's Deputies were unsuccessful. Nevertheless, its campaign for recognition of Uzbek as the official language of the republic led to the adoption of legislation in October of that year, which declared Uzbek to be the state language. Acceptance of Birlik's main demands by the Government marginalised the movement. Personality clashes within the Birlik movement prompted the formation of a splinter group Erk (freedom) within little more than a year. At first the authorities were inclined to favour Erk : it was granted official registration and seemed in danger of becoming a puppet opposition. However, the government soon lost patience with Erk and by 1993 this group was being subjected to almost as much harassment as Birlik. Both parties were subsequently banned; the leading activists went into hiding, eventually to seek refuge in Moscow or countries outside the CIS.

The CPU's manifesto for the Uzbek Supreme Soviet elections schedule for March 1990 summed up the governing party's stance on religion thus: 'The republican party organisation is actively in favour of freedom of religion and the legal rights of believers, and for cooperation with religious organisation.... believers are entitled to all

opportunities for participation in the public life, political and cultural life of the Republic.⁹

On 18 February 1990 elections were held to 500 seat Uzbek supreme soviet. Members of Birlik were not permitted to stand as candidates, and many leading members of the CPU stood unopposed, as had been the tradition in old-style Soviet elections. In such constituencies there were isolated protest by opposition groups. The new supreme soviet convened in March and elected Islam Karimov, the first secretary of the CPU, to the newly created post of executive President. Shakurulla Mirsaidov was elected chairman of the council of ministers. In November there was re-organisation of government structure. The council of ministers was abolished and replaced by cabinet of ministers, headed by the president of the Republic.

In April 1991, Uzbekistan agreed, together with eight other Soviet Republics, to sign a new union treaty to redefine the state structure of the USSR. However, on 19 August, the day before the signing was to take place, a State Committee for the State of Emergency (SCSE) attempted to stage a coup d'etat in Moscow. President Karimov did not

9. Pravda Vartoka, 7, December, 1989.

initially oppose the coup, and some opposition leaders in Uzbekistan were detained. However, once it became clear that coup has failed, Karimov declared that the orders of the SCSE were invalid. On 31 August, after the coup had collapsed, an extra-ordinary session of Supreme Soviet voted to declare the republic independent and changed its name to the Republic of Uzbekistan. The CPU voted to dissociate itself from the communist party of the Soviet Union, and in November 1991 the party was restructured as the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (PDPU), with Karimov remaining as its leader.

On 13 December Uzbekistan (together with the other four Central Asian republics) agreed to join the CIS providing it would be acknowledged as a co-founder of the commonwealth. Uzbek membership was formalised at a ceremony in Almaty (Kazakhstan), on 21 December, when Karimov agreed, together with 10 other republican leaders to dissolve the USSR and formally establish the CIS.

Uzbekistan's membership of the CIS was followed, on 29 December 1991, by direct presidential elections, which were won by Karimov with a reported 86% of the total votes. His only rival (winning 12% of the votes) was Muhammad Solikh, the leader of the Erk, opposition party, which had been established as an offshoot of Birlik in 1990. A referendum

was held simultaneously, in which 98.2% of participants endorsed Uzbekistan's independence.¹⁰

Government's attitude towards its opponents during 1994, and despite a pledge, in May, by president Karimov that all political parties would be able to participate in the forthcoming election to the only Majlis, in the event, only the PDSU and its ally, progress of Fatherland (PF), were permitted to register and thus take part. At the election, which was held on 25th December (with a second round of voting in January 1995), the PDPU won 69 of the 250 seats, while the PF gained 14. The remaining 167 deputies elected had been nominated by local councils rather than by political parties, however the overwhelming majority of these deputies (some 120) were members of the PDPU, and thus the party's domination of the Majlis was retained. Approximately 94% of the registered electorate was reported to have participated in the election.¹¹ In January 1995 Karimov announced that the government would welcome a diversification of opinion in the only majlis and that it

10. Voice of Islamic Republic of Iran (VOIRI), 1500 hrs, dt. 05-01-92.

11. *ibid*, dt. 01.02.1995.

would not object to the formation of blocs within the assembly. In February a new political party, the Adalat (justice) social Democratic party of Uzbekistan (SDPU) was registered, and immediately declared its intention to establish such a parliamentary faction. A referendum, held in March, produced a 99.6% vote in favour of extending Karimov's presidential term from 1997-2000¹² ostensibly to coincide with parliamentary elections.

In April 1995 several members of Erk were imprisoned for attempting to provide military training overseas for Uzbek citizens in preparation for a coup d'etat. In May two new political formations emerged : National Revival Democratic Party and the People's Unity Movement. Both were reported to be pro-Government, and were officially registered in early June.

The task of building a strong nation-state was linked with the economy, which was deteriorating owing to factory closures caused by lack of spare parts, raw materials and fuel, as well as the flight of many Russian technicians and managers, since this problem afflicted all Central Asian republics, it was at the top of the agenda at the summit in

12. *ibid*, dt.05.04.1995.

Tashkent in early January 1993. The idea of a Central Asia Common Market was launched here.

The sharp ethnic diversity of the Uzbek republic suggests a volatile and conflicting future for Uzbek nationalism. The Samarkand issue can take a turn of Karabakh type bloodbath. The ethnic diversities enforce upon Uzbekistan the urgency to evolve an amicable policy in relation with its Muslim neighbours.

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSION

Is Central Asia going back to medieval Islam as it characterized the land before the coming of the Russian? Is it trying to Islamise the process of life? Is there any new spirit of 'cultural Resurgence' particularly in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan?

The region as a whole is in a state of flux. The notable points in the nebulous situation are that there is a sort of power vacuum. The new republics fall in the category of developing states. Resurgence of indigenous, spiritual, ethnic and cultural values and particularities has added to the ferment and shadow of "Islamic fundamentalism." The people of Central Asia are groping for their national identity. Geographical, historical, economic and cultural factors as well as unequal resource endowments are determining variables in the current nation/state building process. The intra-regional equations are in an embryonic state. The foreign policies of the republics are in an evolutionary phase. The aforementioned features are natural in states which though emancipated in names are dependent in substance.

The collapse of Marxism-Leninism created an ideological vacuum which only cultural nationalism or Islam could satisfactorily fill. Since the population and the politicians have no experience of western-style democracy or of private enterprise, neither have any chance of providing ideological ballast for the ruling parties in the newly independent Central Asian states of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In any event, since both the states are committed to a multi-party system and a market economy, there is no point in setting up a grouping with the aim of achieving these objectives. As for cultural nationalism and Islam, each of them offered two gradings: either cultural and ethnic nationalism per se, or within the overall context of pan-Turkism; Islam as a ^hfort of ethics and spirituality, part of Central Asian culture, or Islam as a socio-political ideology, informing and guiding society and government at large-Islamic fundamentalism.

In the changed climate of the former Muslim-majority Soviet republics functioning as independent states, the IRP - established originally in 1990 as an all union organisation to secure the same religious rights for muslims, as were then enjoyed by Christians, turned radicals. The IRP in Tajikistan, accorded legal status in September 1992, declared as its objective the setting up of an Islamic

state, to be achieved only through the ballot. The IRP in Uzbekistan, operating clandestinely, also had the same aim. The Wahhabi activists in Ferghana valley made no secret of their commitment for establishing an Islamic republic in Uzbekistan to replace 'the communist government in Tashkent'. But by concentrating on providing mosques and religious schools to the faithfuls, they had managed to avoid repression by the Karimov administration which feared that any action against them would be portrayed as 'crushing Islam'.

In the secular arena in Uzbekistan cultural nationalism had been appropriated by Birlik and Erk opposition grouping. With Birlik denied the status of a recognized political party, the role of fostering Uzbek cultural nationalism fell on Erk, which emphasized its nationalist, anti-communist credentials by adopting the flag of the Kokand Autonomous Government of 1917-18 as its own. With no immediate chance of gaining power, Erk could afford to be as nationalist as it wanted, thus pre-empting any lurch towards nationalism that the ruling PDP might find expeditious. On the other hand, with non-Uzbeks forming a third of the republic's population, any party propounding militant nationalism was unlikely to win power through the ballot box.

On the whole the existence of recognized and unrecognized Islamic and nationalist organisations in Uzbekistan reduced the PDPV's choice of a coherent ideology- a severe handicap for a ruling party which in desperation, had fallen back on the slogan of 'Discipline and order' and 'nation-building'.

However, militant Islam allied with anti-communist democratic forces had failed in Tajikistan, with a bloody civil war, causing 20,000-30,000 mainly civilian deaths, ending in its defeat at the hands of the local communists, who had been helped actively by Uzbekistan and tacitly by Russia. The reasons for its failure went beyond its comparative military weakness, they embraced constitutional provisions as well as geopolitics.

The events in Tajikistan from May to October 1992 demonstrated that whereas the Islamist-Democratic alliance enjoyed enough popular support to make it an effective opposition in a multiparty system, it faced insurmountable problems in winning and retaining power, or even sharing it with communists. It had to function within the republican constitution of 1978 which, like its predecessors, rested on a Leninist principle; 'All powers to the Soviets'. The provision of an executive president, inserted as an amendment to the constitution failed to take root, mainly

because the presidential election that followed threw up a serious rival to the official candidate, Nabiyeu, something communist deputies had not bargained for. Whatever concessions the Islamist-led alliance obtained through demonstrations and sit-ins, cabinet posts or the appointment of Akbarsha Iskanderov as the republic's acting president-needed to be ratified by the Communist-dominated parliament. Iskanderov's failure to convene the supreme Soviet owing to the lack of a quorum highlighted the fatal weaknesses of the Islamist-led coalition. As if this were not enough, there would have been further hurdles in store of the Islamist-led coalition if it had managed to legitimize its power by obtaining the necessary vote in parliament. The authorities in Hojand, which had taken to defying the Iskanderov administration, would have carried out their threat of seceding and returning to Uzbekistan, thus re-creating the situation that had existed before 1929, and depriving Dushanbe of a third of the republic's population. Any efforts by the government in Dushanbe to regain Hojand would have exacerbated the situation.

Instead of being satisfied with their military victory and acting in a humanitarian way towards their adversaries, the communists carried out a bloody vendetta against their

enemies, thus sowing the seeds of future conflicts through endless feuding. They made matters worse by seeking and getting increased Russian military aid to patrol the Tajik-Afghan border. The large-scale fighting that erupted along the frontiers in July 1993 demonstrated that relations between communist Dushanbe and Islamist Kabul had worsened considerably.

What had become clear in the course of the civil conflict in Tajikistan was that the regional country that had had most impact on the hostilities was Afghanistan - not Iran, which had long been portrayed by the West, particularly America, as the Islamic demon in the region.

Although there has been no organised discrimination against minorities, but there is a general perception that 'ethnocracies' are being created, in which those who do not belong to the titular nationality will be treated as second class citizens. The language laws, which require that all official business be conducted in state language, are felt to be symptomatic of a move to exclude the minorities from public life. This has prompted those who can find employment and accommodation elsewhere to leave the republics of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. There has been wave of emigrations from these republics particularly from Tajikistan. This exodus of workers and skilled professionals

is a serious blow to the already fragile economies of these newly independent states. The republican governments would like to stem the haemorrhage^f but are hampered by nationalistic considerations.

The issue of citizenship has brought the above mentioned question in sharp focus: some of minority groups insist that only dual citizenship will provide them with the security and reassurance that they feel is lacking at present. The governments of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan find this unacceptable, insisting that the minorities must choose their loyalties ~~De.~~

There is little clarity as to the role of religion in the new setting. Despite the growing literature on emerging "Islamic fundamentalism", "Pan-Islamism", and "Pan-Turkism"^{vn}, etc. in Central Asia particularly in Tajikistan and Uzbekistn, we practically know very little as to the extent of these ideologies that have penetrated to the masses. It is also not very clear what changes these have undergone in the process. All that we know is that the political formations representing these ideological trends have some pockets of influence in Central Asian republics of Tajikistan and Uzbekistn. However, the Central question that has to be squarely faced is to what extent this religious

ideology supports or conflicts with the economic and political modernisation on which the future of these young states essentially rests.

Central Asia, not for the first time in its long history, is in a flux. The forces for and against stability are evenly balanced. If the economic situation begins to improve and confidence returns, it is likely that the both Central Asian republics of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan will consolidate their independence and achieve a high level of prosperity. If, however, the tensions within society are highlighted, the region could descend into internecine civil strife, as in Tajikistan. The situation is complicated by the fact that it is not merely domestic events but also the influence of external forces that will determine the outcome.

**ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF CENTRAL ASIAN STATES OF
TAJIKISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN, 1989***

(Figures in thousands)

	TAJIKISTAN	UZBEKISTAN
TOTAL POPULATIONS	5,092	19,810
KAZAKHS	-	808 (4.1%)
RUSSIAN AND OTHER EUROPEANS	412 (8.1%)	2,204 (11.1%)
TAJIKS	3,172 (62.3%)	934 (4.7%)
UZBEKS	1,198 (23.5 %)	14,142 (71.4%)
OTHERS⁺	310 (6.1%)	1,722 (8.7%)

* SOURCE: Vestinik statistiki 11 and 12, 1990; 4,5 and 6, 1991.

+ Mostly non-Europeans.

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