CENTRAL ASIAN BOLSHEVIKS:
MEDIATING REVOLUTION, 1917-24

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is about why Central Asian elites participated in the establishment of Bolshevik rule in Central Asia, in 1917-1924; and it is also about how they did so. It focuses on Mustafa Chokaev, Turar Ryskulov, Faizulla Khojaev, and Akmal Ikramov as case studies of revolutionary behaviour in the former tsarist colonial borderland. This thesis challenges most histories of early Soviet Central Asia because it suggests that the first Central Asians to ally with and join Russian revolutionaries were not co-opted, but did so actively, and because of motivations based in local society. This thesis also suggests that these Central Asian Communists were mediators of foreign rule who are comparable to power brokers in other, traditionally colonial, international contexts. These Central Asians, like colonial subalterns, had the difficult task of translating the decrees of the centre into local reality in the periphery, while maintaining their own legitimacy as new authorities.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgments	iii
Table of Contents	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
PROLOGUE	26
CHAPTER 1 Navigating the Revolution, Choosing the Bolsheviks	32
CHAPTER 2 “Stalin’s Favourite” and the “Lenin of the Uzbeks”: Soviet Legitimacy in Memories of the Revolution	76
CHAPTER 3 “Not Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing”: Mediating Governance in Early Soviet Central Asia	112
CONCLUSION	162
GLOSSARY	167
APPENDIX – A	168
MAPS	172
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	173

INTRODUCTION

Central Asia experienced significant changes after the Russian revolutions of February and October 1917. Once a colony of the Russian Empire governed by the tsarist administration, Vladimir Lenin's victorious Bolshevik Party ushered in an era of Communist rule. It quickly formed plans to subvert the traditional Islamic structure of the regional pre-industrial society in favour of modernizing reform. Influential Central Asians were instrumental partners in the revolutionaries' success in establishing governing institutions and gaining indigenous support. From the beginning, they joined new ruling soviets (governing councils), strengthening them with their knowledge of the region, and often acting as intermediaries between Russian and Central Asian societies. Maintaining influence in the early 1920s, these local elites were key negotiators of the territorial delimitation of the region into Soviet socialist republics in 1924/25. The creation of these units as part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) signaled the Communists' firm establishment in the region. The degree of change that had already taken place is indicated by growing Bolshevik Party membership. Before 1917, there had never been a nation state in the region, and virtually no Central Asians belonged to the Bolshevik Party. By 1925, the Uzbek Communist Party (Uz KP) governed the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (Uz SSR).¹

This thesis is about why Central Asian elites participated in the establishment of Bolshevik rule in Central Asia; and it is also about how they did so. Traditional historiography of the period portrays these actors as relatively passive agents, coerced

¹ Douglas Northrup, footnote no. 10, *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 11.

into collaboration by the hegemonic power of Soviet Russia. I challenge this view by engaging an emerging body of scholarship on early Soviet Central Asia which contests “the omnipotence of ‘Moscow’” by focusing on local agents and conditions.² I aim to demonstrate that these non-Russians were actively engaged in revolution, and that they were not co-opted into working for the Party.

My analysis centres on four Central Asians who were very influential in the early Soviet period. Mustafa Chokaev (1889-1941)³ was the oldest of them. He was a Kazakh who abandoned employment with the Muslim bloc of the Russian Duma (parliament) in 1917 to participate in revolutionary activities in Central Asia. He fled this region after unsuccessful attempts to ally with Russian Bolsheviks in 1918, and became a major émigré critic of the USSR. Turar Ryskulov (1894-1938)⁴ was a Kazakh who joined the Bolshevik Party in 1917, and quickly rose to a number of high level positions, including Deputy Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars of the USSR, from 1926 to 1937.⁵ Faizulla Khojaev (1896-1938)⁶ hailed from Bukhara, where he led an important alliance between local revolutionaries and the Bolsheviks in 1920, later becoming Chairman of the Uzbek Council of People’s Commissars and a member of the Uz KP Politburo (political bureau), both from 1925 to 1937.⁷ Akmal Ikramov (1898-1938)⁸ joined the Party in 1918, and moved up its hierarchy to the post of First Secretary of the

² Arne Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics in Soviet Central Asia* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 6.

³ Bakhyt Sadykova, *Mustafa Chokai* (Almaty, Kazakhstan: “Alash,” 2004), 231-33.

⁴ V. M. Ustinov, *Turar Ryskulov: Ocherki politicheskoi biografii* (Almaty: Kazakhstan, 1996), 429-41.

⁵ Jane Shapiro, “Political Rehabilitation in Soviet Central Asian Party Organizations,” *Central Asian Review* 14 (3) 1966: 202.

⁶ Roger Kangas, “Faizulla Khojaev: National Communism in Bukhara and Uzbekistan, 1896-1938,” (PhD dissertation Indiana University, 1992), 367-68.

⁷ Shapiro, “Political Rehabilitation,” 206-7.

⁸ B. V. Lunin, ed., *Akmal Ikramov: Izbrannye trudy v trekh tomakh* (Tashkent: Izdatel’sstvo “Uzbekistan,” 1972), vol. 1: 523. Jane Shapiro, “Political Rehabilitation,” 202.

Uzbek CP from 1929 to 1937⁹. He, Ryskulov, and Khojaev were all killed during the Great Purge of Soviet cadres in the late 1930s. Chokaev for his part died in a Berlin hospital in December 1941.¹⁰

Ryskulov, Chokaev, Khojaev, and Ikramov are natives of the previously colonial geographic locale that became the Uzbek SSR in 1924/25 — roughly present-day Uzbekistan. Until those state lines were established, the region was divided by the colonial demarcations of the tsarist era. Between the mid-1860s and mid-1880s, the Imperial Russian army defeated the armies of the three regional principalities of Central Asia—the Amirate of Bukhara, and the Khanates of Kokand and Khiva — conquering most of the area bounded by the Caspian Sea, Afghanistan, Iran, Tibet, China, and Siberia.¹¹ Russia created a colony called the Governorate General of Turkestan out of most of the region, and two colonial protectorates out of the significantly diminished Khivan and Bukharan territories.¹² Unlike ‘traditional empires’ whose colonies were held overseas, Russia’s territories bordered the mainland of the metropole, but the political and economic relationship that emerged between them was otherwise characteristically colonial,¹³ and Central Asian life was a matter of foreign management.

⁹ Shapiro, “Political Rehabilitation,” 202.

¹⁰ Sadykova, *Mustafa Chokai*, 232.

¹¹ Today, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and part of Kazakhstan. See Maps 1 and 2, page 172.

¹² David MacKenzie, “Turkistan’s Significance to Russia: 1850-1917”, *Russian Review*. 1974 33(2): 184-86.

¹³ David MacKenzie, “Expansion in Central Asia: Saint Petersburg vs. The Turkistan Generals: 1863-1866,” *Canadian Slavic Studies* 1969 3(2): 286-311, and “Turkistan’s Significance to Russia,” 167-188; Dietrich Geyer, *Russian Imperialism: The Interaction of Domestic and Foreign Policy, 1860-1914* (Leamington Spa: Berg. 1987), 97-8; N.A. Khalifin, *Russia’s Policy in Central Asia, 1857-1868* (London: Central Asian Research Centre, 1964), 1-19; Mark Bassin, *Imperial Visions: Nationalism and Geographical Imagination in the Russian Far East, 1840-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 10-11; Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 45-46, and Andreas Kappeller, “Empire-Building in the Nineteenth Century: The Multi-Ethnic Empire,” in ed James Cracraft, *Major Problems in the History of Imperial Russia* (Chicago: D. C. Heath and Company, 1994), 401.

As Ann Laura Stoler and Carole McGranahan point out, the “dynamic, non-static quality [of colonial states] demands we attend less to what empires are than what they did and do.”¹⁴ They note that not only were there similarities between Imperial Russia and other colonial states, both also took cues from each other’s practices.¹⁵

All this appeared to change in 1917, when Central Asian elites, along with all the non-Russians of the former tsarist empire, were promised national self-determination after the February and October Revolutions. But the Provisional Government and Bolshevik regimes, respectively, abstained from acting on these promises in 1917-18. They were weak, and considerably preoccupied with the Great War. “It is a long way from Moscow to Central Asia. After the [October R]evolution this led to a great deal of discrepancy between priorities of the central Bolshevik authorities and practices in Central Asia.”¹⁶ The scarcity of cotton, food, and other resources on both sides extended political differences into the economic and social spheres.¹⁷ Also, politics in Russia and the borderland progressed somewhat in isolation because direct contact was blocked by counterrevolutionaries occupying northern Kazakhstan during the Russian Civil War of 1918-1920. Meanwhile, Russians prevented Central Asians from joining new soviets because they viewed the prospect of indigenous involvement as a threat to their

¹⁴ Ann Laura Stoler and Carole McGranahan, “Refiguring Imperial Terrains – 1,” *Ab Imperio: Studies of New Imperial History and Nationalism in the Post-Soviet Space* 2 (August 2006): 1, <http://catalogue.library.carleton.ca/search/tab+imperio/tab+imperio/1%2C1%2C1%2CB/1856&FF=tab+imperio&1%2C0%2C%2C1%2C0> (accessed 8 September 2006).

¹⁵ France, for example, modelled its agricultural and pauper colonies on practices in Catherine II’s Russia. See Stoler and Carole McGranahan, “Refiguring Imperial Terrains – 1,” 1.

¹⁶ Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics*, 3.

¹⁷ Jeff Sahadeo, “Under a Soviet Roof: City, Country, and Centre in Tashkent, 1918-23,” chap. 9 in *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865-1923* (Indiana University Press, 2007, Forthcoming), 5.

privileged colonial position.¹⁸ Central Asians responded by forming their own organizations, and appealed to Moscow to grant them a role in governance.

They were somewhat successful. The Bolsheviks in Russia calculated that alliance with the Central Asian elites was crucial because they knew the language and culture of the non-Russians of the region (at least 95 percent of the local population). In April 1918, a Moscow delegation convened the area's soviets, and established the Autonomous Republic of Turkestan (TSSR) as a constituent of the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic, with half the executive committee consisting of Central Asians. Increasingly, others joined Bolshevik institutions, but settler Russian antagonism and predominance persisted.¹⁹ Some members of the latter group viewed Central Asian Bolsheviks as nothing more than political appointees of the regime. In 1924, the Bolsheviks divided Soviet Turkestan politically, officially establishing the Soviet Socialist Republics of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan in 1925, then Tajikistan four years later, and Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in 1936.²⁰ This national territorial delimitation of Central Asia concluded the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics — announced in 1922²¹ — by inclusion of these national republics, as well as others where similar processes took place.²²

¹⁸ Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics*, 24-5; and Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 6-8, 247.

¹⁹ Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca*, 32; Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republic*, 85-7; and Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, *Islam and the Russian Empire: Reform and Revolution in Central Asia* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), 159; and Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 286-87.

²⁰ Northrup, *Veiled Empire*, 17.

²¹ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 31; and Robert Service, *The Russian Revolution, 1900-1927*, 2nd edition (London: Macmillan Education, Ltd., 1991), 68.

²² See, for example, a discussion of Kazakhstan, the Caucasus, and Siberia in Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, second edition (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1995); Firuz Kazemzadeh, *The Struggle for Transcaucasia, 1917-1921* (New York, Philosophical Library, 1951); and John Channon, "Siberia in

My analysis of the actions of Ryskulov, Chokaev, Khojaev, and Ikramov shows that, rather than being compelled, they chose to ally themselves with the Bolshevik Party in 1917-24. They did so in order to pursue uniquely Central Asian social goals, which transcended the revolutionary context. Although I focus on the importance of these similarities, it is the dissimilarities of the four actors, evident even in their backgrounds, that makes them even more important as case studies. For all but Chokaev, their social goals informed their behaviour inside the Bolshevik Party as well.

I came to this conclusion by assessing the impact of Russian colonialism on the behaviour of these Central Asians. Ryskulov, Chokaev, Khojaev, and Ikramov mediated the 'centre-periphery' nature of the Russia–Central Asia relationship in a manner comparable to colonized elites elsewhere. In colonial situations, local actors are, because of their familiarity with regional conditions, crucial to the successful domination of their own people by a foreign one. Older colonial studies refer to such actors as 'collaborators'.²³ I avoid the pejorative connotations of this term by taking the example of newer works and by using words like 'mediator', 'broker', and 'intermediary'. Colonial studies also commonly employ the term 'subaltern', meaning a person of subordinate position. Such actors occupy an intermediate position in the structures of colonial power. "They played a crucial mediating role between [the world of the colonizer and colonized] and indeed were instrumental in bringing about their mutual

Revolution and Civil War, 1917-1921," in *The History of Siberia: From Russian Conquest to Revolution*, ed. Alan Wood (New York: Routledge, 1991).

²³ See, for example, Ronald Robinson, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration", in *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, eds. Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe (London: Longman Group Limited, 1972); and eds. Robert O. Collins et al., "Problem II: Collaboration or Resistance to European Rule," in *Historical Problems of Imperial Africa*, 2nd printing of revised edition of original from 1970 (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), 57-100. All essays in the latter citation were published in the 1960s and 1970s.

transformation.”²⁴ There was precedent for this type of behaviour in Central Asia: by the late nineteenth century, the gap between the masses and the Imperial Russian administration was filled by intellectual elites, educated in Russian schools, who served in government as interpreters, translators, and other minor official capacities.²⁵

A more important precedent for colonial mediators is social status. I refer to Ronald Robinson’s general description of how this paradigm functions.²⁶ He claims that in many cases where colonizers challenge traditional hierarchy, they rely on alliance with non-traditional elites, who mediate the foreign regime’s governance. Accordingly, in Central Asia, the Bolshevik plan to modernize the backward region challenged the traditional Islamic order, and they needed allies to overcome it. In Robinson’s model, these are often individuals educated by the colonizer, who are aspiring to evade their subordinate status in traditional regional hierarchy. They do so by using alliance with the foreign power as leverage in local social competition. And the colonizer provides additional incentive in the form of careers and financial advancement.²⁷

Ryskulov, Chokaev, Khojaev, and Ikramov all fit Robinson’s pattern. All four were educated by the colonizer Russians. Partly as a result, they were exposed to European and Russian cultural and educational ideas, and empowered with skills such as literacy, uncommon in Central Asia. These actors wished to change their societies. But they were inhibited by the traditional Islamic hierarchy of colonial Central Asia, which was

²⁴ Northrup, *Veiled Empire*, 210.

²⁵ Richard A. Pierce, *Russian Central Asia, 1867-1917: A Study in Colonial Rule* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960), 251.

²⁶ Other studies of colonialism that accord similar agency to colonized actors include Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, Charles Lam Markmann, transl.. (New York, Grove Press, 1967), Catherine Hall, *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867* (USA: Polity Press, 2002).

²⁷ Robinson, “Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism,” 136.

enforced by the tsarist colonial administration. Although Imperial Russia defeated most of the top princes, warlords, and other local authorities of Central Asia, it protected the lower-level power structures, where Islamic clerics, law (*shariat*), and members of religiously linked dynasties reigned.²⁸ Russia calculated that avoiding interference with these actors would likely allow it to maintain political stability at a minimum cost. The colonial economy, however, demanded Russian relations with the area's merchants and employment of educated individuals in local administration. These actors represented a non-traditional class that emerged when the traditional economy was uprooted by Russia, but they had no authority to participate in the structures of rule.²⁹ So when the revolutions of 1917 overturned the old order of Imperial Russia, Central Asian elites like Ryskulov, Chokaev, Khojaev, and Ikramov welcomed the challenge to a society which did not want them to realize their potentials and ideals, and they were willing to work for a regime that seemed to promise this possibility.

My definition of 'elites' is based on Tom Bottomore's assertion that the term is generally applied to functional, mainly occupational, groups with high status in society. At the outset of the revolution, Ryskulov, Chokaev, Khojaev, and Ikramov aspired to membership in a subset he calls the 'political elite,' which inhabits the posts (occupational or hereditary) that accord political power in a society. Their activities made them part of what Bottomore refers to as the 'political class': "those groups which exercise political power or influence, and are directly engaged in struggles for political leadership." This group is more difficult to identify since it may consist of any group or

²⁸ Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 62-8.

²⁹ d'Encausse, *Islam and the Russian Empire*, 37-47.

individual that affects politics “in varying degrees of cooperation, competition or conflict with each other.”³⁰

I follow Adeeb Khalid and Douglas Northrup in conceiving of how Chokaev, Ryskulov, Khojaev, Ikramov, and other agents of the political class interact by referring to Pierre Bourdieu. Khalid uses Bourdieu’s concept of competition for cultural capital in the “social field” to understand shifting degrees of influence of different actors in unstable settings.³¹ He shows how Bourdieu makes sense of elites in society through a “shift of attention from structures to practices, without denying the existence of structural constraints within which individuals and groups act, [and this] allows him to see the individual as an agent actively negotiating the social world,” identifying his limits and possibilities. Most importantly, Khalid points out that the values and rules of the social game are constantly contested by members of the political class, each with their own symbolic capital. But this does not take place in a rigid pyramid; it goes on in a “social ‘field’” which is “the arena for competition and contestation.”³² Khalid has demonstrated that a pre-revolutionary competition for cultural influence in Turkestan, between *ulama* and a secular Islamic intellectual group called the *Jadids*, transformed into a political contest after February 1917.³³ For Chokaev, Ryskulov, Khojaev, and Ikramov, the opponents in local social competition were represented primarily by the traditional religious and economic elites who had represented the social hierarchy of Central Asia for centuries.

³⁰ Tom Bottomore, *Elites and society* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 7-8.

³¹ Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 6-8; Northrup, *Veiled Empire*, 245.

³² Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 6-8.

³³ *Ibid.*, 6-8.

One of the main deficits of traditional scholarship on the 1917-1924/25 period is acknowledgement of Central Asian agency, and of their dynamic relationship with the Bolsheviks. This is due to highly restricted access to the region during the Cold War, and dearth of interest in Central Asia until very recently. Even today, access to archives is not unrestricted.³⁴ As a result, the processes of 1917-24 have “received little serious attention,” as Khalid points out.³⁵ Most histories overemphasize hegemonic influence of Russian Bolsheviks, as well as the evolution of nationalism. Historians of Central Asia were ill-prepared to grant Central Asians agency until they acknowledged the different interests among Central Asians themselves. One of the breakthroughs in the field was Khalid’s *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, a discussion of regional society during and after Imperial Russian occupation.³⁶ Khalid’s distinction between Central Asians of traditional Muslim and newer outlooks is crucial because it was mainly Central Asians with Western-type education who successfully joined the Bolshevik Party in the immediate aftermath of the revolution. Khalid attributes this to the “massive transformation in notions of identity,” especially during the Civil War.³⁷ The religious Muslim identity of Jadids and Western-educated Central Asians transformed into a related secular national one, while their former, educated admiration of European civilization was replaced with a patriotism guided by Bolshevik, anti-European anti-imperialism.³⁸

³⁴ John Samuel Schoeberlein-Engel, “Identity in Central Asia: Construction and contention in the conceptions of ‘Ozbek,’ ‘Tajik,’ ‘Muslim,’ ‘Samarquandi’ and other groups” (Unpublished PhD Diss., Harvard University, 1994), 2.

³⁵ Adeeb Khalid, “Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia: The Transformation of Jadidism, 1917-20,” in *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, eds. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 145.

³⁶ Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics*, 24-5.

³⁷ Khalid, “Nationalizing the Revolution”, 147.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 154, 158-59.

My analysis addresses this era of political contest and conceives of the USSR as a state comparable to ones that are traditionally considered colonial and imperial.³⁹ These two terms are problematic, often confused, and require definition.⁴⁰ I see 'colonialism' as a discourse of power relationships in which a colonizing state ('centre' or 'metropole') exploits the people in a foreign territory ('periphery') by extracting their natural resources, and using them as a 'captive market' for the goods it subsequently produces.⁴¹ Colonialism is a project of control, whose benefits to the colonizer are best ensured by imperialism. 'Imperialism' is a state disposition which produces cultural technologies (i.e. knowledge) which legitimize the unequal relationship through factors like law and scientific information.⁴² Once economic control is established in the form of dependency, it operates at a political level where precise coercive control is not necessary.⁴³

The USSR was characterized by many parallels to these concepts, which can be brought to light by specific comparisons. Power in the Soviet Union was expressed across lines of hierarchy "creating distinct centres (metropolises) [mainly in Russia] and

³⁹ For other studies that do this, see Northrup, *Veiled Empire*; Paula Michaels, *Curative Powers: Medicine and Empire in Stalin's Soviet Central Asia* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), Cassandra Marie Cavanaugh, *Backwardness and biology: Medicine and power in Russian and Soviet Central Asia, 1868-1934* (Unpublished PhD Diss, 2001); Walter Kolarz, *Communism and Colonialism, Essays* (New York, St Martin's Press, 1964); and Gregory Massell, *The surrogate proletariat: Moslem women and revolutionary strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919-1929* (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1974).

⁴⁰ Padmini Mongia, *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory: A Reader* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 6.

⁴¹ Loomba claims that what differentiates modern colonialism from older forms is that it structures "the moral and economic communities of the natives, which brought them into a complex relationship where there was a flow of both human and natural resources between the colony and metropole." See Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 2-4.

⁴² Nicholas Dirks, "Forward," in Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: the British in India* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), ix. See also Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 13, 25.

⁴³ Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 4, 6-7.

peripheries (colonies),” such as the republics of Central Asia.⁴⁴ Russians monopolized most of the high-skill and high-wage jobs, and primary resources were harvested for processing outside Central Asia. Uzbekistan is famous for its cotton monoculture, but it had little control over it, since most cotton textile manufacturing plants were in Russia.⁴⁵ Meanwhile, “policies were largely determined in Moscow, and local interests were subordinated to all-Union goals.”⁴⁶ The relationship was also characterized by an imperial-type civilizing mission. The Bolsheviks promised progress and modernity over the backwardness of the regional population, which was largely illiterate in 1924/25. In this capacity, the Bolsheviks subsequently standardized Central Asian languages, and dismantled most of the Islamic institutions that were the pillars of society.

Many critics of the practice of comparing the USSR with colonial states make telling points about certain parallels, but rarely succeed in proving them illegitimate. Those who remark at Soviet Central Asia’s level of economic development by contrast with other, developing countries of the capitalist world rarely take into account that “the economic structure of the region was molded to fit the requirements of the larger whole.”⁴⁷ Critics of the parallel argument include Yuri Slezkine, who argues that the Soviet project was not that of an imperial empire, but a modernizing state that wanted to transform its citizens.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Northrup, *Veiled Empire*, 17, 22.

⁴⁵ Boris Z. Rumer, “Central Asia’s Cotton Economy and Its Costs,” in *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*, ed. William Fierman (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 83.

⁴⁶ Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 112-13.

⁴⁷ Oleg Zinam, “Soviet Russian Colonial Practice in Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaidzhan, and Central Asia,” chap. 10 in *Russian Empire: Some Aspects of Tsarist and Soviet Colonial Practices*, ed. Michael S. Pap (Cleveland, Ohio: Institute for Soviet and East European Studies, John Carroll University, and Ukrainian Historical Association, Inc., 1985), 172.

⁴⁸ Yuri Slezkine, “Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Socialism,” *Russian Review* 59 (2000): 227-34. Other scholars who support this view include James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to*

Adeeb Khalid is the most recent proponent of this view. His criticisms are flawed because they do not differentiate between scholars who seek to define the USSR as a colonial state and those who draw parallels between the power relationships within Soviet and other “empires.”⁴⁹ Khalid also fails to see colonialism as anything but a state activity, perhaps most evidently when he accuses such scholars as Northrup of neglecting an easy comparison of Soviet and colonial economies in favour of “the cultural work of Soviet power, a much sexier topic than the history of cotton.”⁵⁰ Khalid thereby obscures the interconnections between state culture and administration, provided by Bourdieu for example. This focus on the state has a direct bearing on the lack of supporting evidence for his main point, that the modernizing mobilizational state of Kemalist Turkey in the 1920s is a better comparison to early Soviet Central Asia than any colonial empire.⁵¹ In his comparative descriptions of Imperial Russia and Kemalist Turkey with early Soviet Central Asia, Khalid only acknowledges the important influence of subaltern agency on state discourse in the case of the latter, namely the Jadids (the primary area of his

Improve the Human Condition Have Failed (1998). Other rejections are more simplistic. Terry Martin argues, rather unconvincingly, that the USSR cannot be a colonial type state because it was not an empire since it acknowledged the existence of non-Russian nations inside the state through administrative units. See *Affirmative Action Empire*, 19-20.

⁴⁹ Adeeb Khalid, “Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization: Early Soviet Central Asia in Comparative Perspective,” in *Slavic Review* 65 (2) Summer 2006: 251. Khalid’s article is part of a debate in colonial studies about the relation between empire and nation. See Laura Ann Stoler and Carole McGranahan, “Refiguring Imperial Terrains – 2,” *Ab Imperio: Studies of New Imperial History and Nationalism in the Post-Soviet Space* 2 (August 2006): 2, <http://catalogue.library.carleton.ca/search/tab+imperio/tab+imperio/1%2C1%2C1%2CB/1856&FF=tab+imperio&1%2C0%2C%2C1%2C0> (accessed 9 September 2006).

⁵⁰ Adeeb Khalid, “Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization: Early Soviet Central Asia in Comparative Perspective,” *Slavic Review* 65 (2) Summer 2006: 232, fn. 3.

⁵¹ His strongest justification for this view appears to be that his “own research on Central Asia across the revolutionary divide leads me to opposite conclusions.” See Khalid, “Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization,” 232.

expertise). He thereby fails to address colonial parallels to Soviet processes in terms of colonized elites, as Northrup has forcefully demonstrated.⁵²

Scholarly understanding of post-revolutionary Central Asia stands to benefit a great deal from investigation of its various global parallels. I agree with Northrup, who acknowledges that while some aspects of the Bolshevik governance “are not colonial per se,” the different manner in which modernizing policies were applied to Russians and Uzbeks in many cases “makes clear the uniquely colonial and cross-cultural aspects” of Soviet policy.⁵³ I believe Khalid’s rejection of such objectivity does disservice to his own immensely valuable previous work on Jadids in Imperial and Soviet Russia, which I rely on heavily in this thesis.

I believe that 1917-24/25 was a period in which these power relations were being re-negotiated after the fall of the tsarist administration. Robinson explains that generally, in a newly colonized territory, elite cooperation with a foreign power was a function of indigenous politics, and that successful occupation was the result of good rapport between local and external forces.⁵⁴ In newly Soviet Central Asia, non-Russians like Ryskulov, Chokaev, Khojaev, and Ikramov had significant influence on the governance relationship that emerged thereafter. They represent important continuities between tsarist and Soviet Central Asia. Such Soviet mediators did work similar to that of the Turkestani administrators and interpreters before 1917. The Bolshevik claim to freeing the Central Asians from feudal oppression, tradition, religion, and backwardness — from themselves — echoed statements made by other Russians, or servants of Russia since the

⁵² See Douglas Northrup, “Subaltern Dialogues: Subversion and Resistance in Soviet Uzbek Family Law,” *Slavic Review* 60 (1) Spring 2001: 115-39.

⁵³ Northrup, *Veiled Empire*, 23.

⁵⁴ Robinson, “Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism,” 118, 121, 123.

1860s and earlier. In the former, as in the latter, “modernization sharpened its colonial character as the economic development of some regions became increasingly dependent on the centre and its industries.”⁵⁵ Daniel Brower has shown that, in fact, a significant portion of the ethnographers and ‘scientific’ information used to classify Central Asians for the purpose of national territorial delimitation in 1924/25, formerly did such work for Tsar Nicholas II.⁵⁶

This issue of delimitation poses a special problem for my research because most studies of the lead-up to it focus on the emergence of nationalities, and I do not. The processes of 1924/25 are a significant point of reference for any study of early Soviet Central Asia because they have analytical implications for local identity and political dynamics. For this paper, it represents a turning point in, if not a preliminary conclusion to, the re-negotiation of relations between Russia and Central Asia, in which Ryskulov, Chokaev, Khojaev, and Ikramov were very important. Although I do not focus on the event, I agree with Francine Hirsch’s view that the national territorial delimitation may be viewed as “a state-sponsored effort to turn so-called backward peoples into nations . . . *within* the context of a unified state with a colonial-type economy and administrative structure which gave the Soviet Union its distinctive form.”⁵⁷ Hirsch evokes the considerable doubt I share with other recent works about the degree to which support for these demarcations was the expression of local identities, rather than a symptom of

⁵⁵ Andreas Kappeller, “Empire-Building in the Nineteenth Century: The Multi-Ethnic Empire,” in *Major Problems in the History of Imperial Russia*, ed. James Cracraft (Chicago: D. C. Heath and Company, 1994), 401.

⁵⁶ Daniel Brower, *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 176-81. For a summary of colonial continuities across 1917 in Central Asia, see Sahadeo, *Creating a Russian Colonial Community*, 9-10.

⁵⁷ Emphasis in original. Hirsch, “Toward an Empire of Nations”, 204.

colonial power dynamics.⁵⁸ Arne Haugen most recently stated that the borders created in 1924/25 correspond to the most prominent identities in the region.⁵⁹ This is thrown into question by anthropologist John Schoeberlein-Engel's study showing that the majority of Central Asians "belong to essentially a single culture that is at the same time highly diverse and highly intermixed, making it impossible to identify a distinct culture of the 'Tajiks' or 'Uzbeks'".⁶⁰ Schoeberlein-Engel claims that, although contemporary national boundaries of the region have given a kind of reality to the corresponding nationalities, these are not strongly developed, especially given the perseverance of older identities, which cut across republican state lines.⁶¹ One of the most important influences on regional identities is Islam. Even after the territorial delimitation, most Central Asians continued to refer to themselves, above all, as 'Muslims'.

I believe the power dynamic I aim to describe reflects how the related negotiations took place. I do so by privileging the voices of Ryskulov, Chokaev, Khojaev, and Ikramov, and by emphasizing their perspectives of the revolutions of 1917, and accounts of the events they were involved in. Ryskulov, Chokaev, Khojaev, and Ikramov used the concept of 'nationality' as a tool of the revolutionary discourse in which they engaged in 1917-24. As Haugen notes "the new borders of Central Asia were the result of real discussions and negotiations that involved members of the various Central Asian

⁵⁸ See, for example, Gero Fedtke, "How Bukharans Turned Into Uzbeks and Tajiks: Soviet Nationalities Policy in the Light of a Personal Rivalry" (Forthcoming), 1-24; Northrup, *Veiled Empire*, 17, and Muriel Atkin, "Religious, National, and Other identities in Central Asia," in *Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of Identity and Change*, ed. Jo-Ann Gross (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992).

⁵⁹ For two examples of careless argumentation, see Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics*, 110, 132.

⁶⁰ Schoeberlein-Engel, "Identity in Central Asia," 21. See also Ingeborg Baldauf, "Some Thoughts on the Making of the Uzbek Nation," *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* XXXII (1), janviers-mars 1991: 79-96; and David Abramson, "Identity Counts: the Soviet Legacy and the Census in Uzbekistan," chap. 7 in *Census and Identity: The Politics of Race, Ethnicity, and Language in National Censuses*, eds. Dominique Arel and David I. Kertzer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 176-201.

⁶¹ Schoeberlein-Engel, "Identity in Central Asia," 23-4.

population groups as well as representatives of the central Soviet authorities.”⁶²

Documents from the era indicate that, although these Central Asians identified closely with nations and touted the propaganda of the Bolshevik Party, they were fully aware of the discrepancy between identity and how it could be manifested to create national categories, as well as the imperialist nature of Bolshevik policy.⁶³ Gero Fedtke has persuasively demonstrated that, to a significant degree, such members of the Central Asian political class as Khojaev identified with nations to acquire or maintain office.⁶⁴ I do acknowledge, however, as Ronald Grigor Suny does, that while a national community is “an ‘imagined community’ . . . [it] is not an imaginary community,”⁶⁵ and that republican nations of Central Asia quickly acquired reality after they were formed.

This view of Central Asian participation in the delimitation diverges significantly from Cold War histories. These typically characterize the changes of early Soviet Central Asia as being directed by the Russian Communist Party (RKP) and administration. Soviet scholarship is characterized by a teleological perspective of nations, whereby Moscow emancipates the region’s “nascent” nationalities from the tensions of life in a common state, formerly perpetuated by the tsarist regime. As aspiring Soviet citizens, this version goes, the Central Asians were encouraged to develop their cultures, and as socialists they overcame the apparent backwardness of tribal society, including illiteracy and adherence

⁶² Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics*, 237. He does this even while admitting that the formation of “national” categories is a process which involves privileging some cultural continuities of the past, while leaving others behind, and noting the orientalist bias of the Russian anthropologists who defined them. See Haugen, *Establishment of National Republics*, 6-7.

⁶³ See, for example, G. Safarov, *Kolonial’naia revoliutsiia: opyt Turkestana*, First published in Moscow by Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel’stvo, in 1921 (Almaty: “Zhalyin,” 1996); and Mustafa Chokaev, *Turkestan pod vlast’iu sovetob (K kharakteristike diktatury proletariata)*, edited version based on original published in Paris by “Iash Turkestan” in 1935, A. S. Takenova, editor, (Alma-Ata, 1993).

⁶⁴ Fedtke, “How Bukharans Turned into Uzbeks and Tajiks,” 1-24.

⁶⁵ Suny, *The Revenge of the Past*, 11-12.

to religion.⁶⁶ A similar problem characterizes Western Cold War histories, which were politicized to delegitimize the USSR. These portray an “aggressor-victim dichotomy” in which delimitation completed a ‘divide and rule’ project to undermine collective elite opposition by making them compete with each other in an arbitrarily defined national republic framework.⁶⁷ More nuanced, newer studies recount abortive cooperation between Central Asians and Bolsheviks, but emphasize the latter’s final betrayal of promises of autonomous government to the former. Steven Sabol tries to negate convention by depicting the Soviets as pursuing a flexible “policy of absorption” through which they opportunistically seduced local non-Russian elites with the promise of self-determination they were never allowed to enjoy.⁶⁸

The processes of 1917-24 were much more complicated, however. They cannot be understood through such simplistic formulas, and in terms of one side defeating another. The nature of Soviet governance established through this period, and after, was the result of dynamic interactions among Central Asians and Russians, in Tashkent and Moscow, and in between. The purpose of this thesis is to show that Ryskulov, Chokaev, Khojaev, and Ikramov, like other Central Asians, had a significant role in the establishment of Soviet governments where they lived.

⁶⁶ Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics*, 19. M. A. Nemchenko was among those who set the standard Soviet formula in early scholarship for the rationalization of the dynamic between the core and periphery in the legacy of Imperial Russia as class conflict. See M. A. Nemchenko, *Natsional'noe razmezhevanie Srednei Azii* (Mozkva: NKID, 1925).

⁶⁷ See, for example, Alexander Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan, 1917-1927* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957); and Edward Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1990).

⁶⁸ Steven Sabol, “The Creation of Soviet Central Asia: The 1924 National Delimitation,” *Central Asian Survey* (1995) 14 (2): 226-38. See also Donald S. Carlisle, “Modernization, Generations, and the Uzbek Soviet Intelligentsia”, in *The Dynamics of Soviet Politics*, eds. Paul Cocks, Robert V. Daniels, Nancy Whittier Heer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

My findings are based on primary sources available in North America. These materials consist of document collections, memoirs, newspapers, and journals, mainly in Russian, but also in English and French. Most of these were available at Indiana University's (Bloomington) Herman B. Wells Main Library (often thanks to its interlibrary loans service), as well as the Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies (RIFIAS) on campus. The remainder were obtained through the Interlibrary Loans Service of Carleton University's MacOdrum Library, or my advisor, Dr Jeff Sahadeo. I use documents which represent the words, written or spoken, of the four actors I focus on. In the case of Ryskulov, Khojaev, and Ikramov, this involved intensive study of biographical edited document collections.

Addressing edited collections of documents proved somewhat frustrating, since my technique for source selection was primarily determined by what I could obtain on a given topic. In the case of the first volume of Faizulla Khojaev's *Izbrannye trudy* (selected works), for example, there is no information provided about the principle used in the selection of written materials, or why none of Khojaev's pre-1920 writings are included. "Such materials would reflect liberal, nationalist and religious aspects of Faizulla's earlier career which Soviet historians would rather ignore."⁶⁹ Also, my sources do not provide for a thorough discussion of the national delimitation.

Locating subaltern agency in Soviet primary sources is a tricky business, but my documents have proven to be a rich supply of information about the independent actions of these four actors. The utility of these files was a concern when this project began because only a small number of Soviet Central Asian documents, from any period, are

⁶⁹ Donald Carlisle, "Review of Faizulla Khojaev, *Izbrannye trudy* (selected works), vol. I," *Kritika* XIII (1) Fall 1971: 55.

available outside of the former USSR and even a comprehensive review of these is beyond the scope of this project. Another early concern was related to the fact that so little has been written about each of these four men. I have consulted biographies in Russian or English for all but Ikramov. Only Roger Kangas' unpublished biographical PhD dissertation on Khojaev provides comprehensive information, although even it is often faulty.⁷⁰ Bakhyt Sadykova's biography of Mustafa Chokaev is stimulating, but too short and too uneven in its analysis.⁷¹ Meanwhile, V. M. Ustinov's study of Ryskulov provides limited information of value.⁷² I have succeeded in supplementing the information provided by these works with other secondary sources, mainly in English, but also in Russian and French. Such documents also exist in Central Asian languages.⁷³ Most are from the Soviet era, but those published since the mid-1990s, like many Russian publications, continue to rely on heavily censored information and studies from the latter period.

I have sought to overcome unique analytical difficulties related to my sources by referring to methodologies developed in the scholarly fields of colonial and Soviet studies, since problems peculiar to both of them characterize the documents I examine. These sources shape my account because I purposely privilege the four Central Asians' voices, and all but Chokaev expressed themselves as agents of the Soviet state. Northrup has shown that it can be difficult to "identify the discursive universe in which such actors

⁷⁰ See Kangas, "Faizulla Khojaev".

⁷¹ See Sadykova, *Mustafa Chokai*.

⁷² Fedtke claims that "a biography [of Ryskulov] meeting critical standards does not yet exist." Fedtke, "Bukhara," 5, fn. 14.

⁷³ For example, the Uzbek biography of Khojaev: see Majid Hasanov, *Fayzulla Kho'jaev* (Tashkent, 1990), cited in Adeeb Khalid, "Society and Politics in Bukhara, 1868-1920," *Central Asian Survey* 19 (2000) 3/4: 39, fn. 41.

were participating,” be it Soviet or Central Asian, since “the mixture changed at different times, with different audiences, and when different purposes were pursued.”⁷⁴

Colonial studies provides a methodology for seeing beyond the official rhetoric of the Soviet state. Individuals invested with authority sanctioned by a foreign ruler engage in what Homi Bhabha calls ‘mimicry’ when they express themselves in a colonial context. These mediators’ written documents and speeches are usually characterized by double articulation, “a complex strategy of reform, regulation and discipline [in writing], which appropriates the Other [the colonizer] as it visualizes power.”⁷⁵ Mimicry thereby makes the norms of the colonial state apply to a colony, where they are abnormal, by imitating and appropriating its symbols and languages of power. Bhabha claims “the space of writing . . . [must be recognized] as a specific *colonial* temporality and textuality of that space between enunciation and address.”⁷⁶ Although the writing and speeches of colonized elites use the rhetoric of the foreign power, they reveal a great deal about the place and people it affects, when they are the content of the expression.

Rey Chow, however, warns that this inherently anti-imperialist methodology is flawed because it seeks to fit evidence into models to find a consistent vision of the subaltern.⁷⁷ I acknowledge that, although there are commonalities between the USSR and different states with colonial characteristics, it is important to recall and search for the unique qualities of each, especially where it concerns indigenous elites.⁷⁸ Parallel literature puts

⁷⁴ Douglas Northrup, “Subaltern Dialogues,” 117.

⁷⁵ Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” chap. 4 in *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 86.

⁷⁶ Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man,” 46.

⁷⁷ Rey Chow, “Where Have All the Natives Gone?” in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory*, 127-30, 139.

⁷⁸ Compare Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Poststructuralism, Marginality, Postcoloniality and Value,” in *Contemporary Postcolonial Theory*, 207.

early Soviet Central Asia in a global context, but the Soviet experience (like any other) has its own distinctions.

The majority of the Soviet sources I refer to are attributed to Ryskulov, Khojaev and Ikramov in the period after they become Communist cadres. These materials are part of a memorial discourse about what happened in Central Asia, 1917-24. As a result, they present challenges as objects of personal narrative about what was a universally significant revolution in the eyes of the Communist regime. The utility of Soviet memoirs as historical sources has generally been little explored⁷⁹, so I refer to Hirokai Kuromiya's method for overcoming questions about reliability of such memorial works.⁸⁰

Kuromiya acknowledges that such documents justify and legitimize the ruling regime of the respective states the actors live in, glorifying appropriate achievements and treating certain topics with a great deal of enthusiasm while ignoring others completely. He claims distortions and falsifications of facts through self-, and official or editorial censorship are difficult, if not impossible to penetrate without access to original versions and other, reliable primary and secondary information on a given subject.⁸¹ This is one of the guidelines of this study, and I contextualize narrative as much as possible. I analyze my sources with an approach similar to John Keep in his evaluation of Lenin's letters in the fifth edition of his *Works* (vols. 50 and 51, published in 1964 and 1965). He outlines the importance of acknowledging the political period and context in which any Soviet document is published, and using whatever information is available since the

⁷⁹ Hirokai Kuromiya, "Soviet Memoirs as a Historical Source," in *A Researcher's Guide to Sources on Soviet History in the 1930s*, eds. Sheila Fitzpatrick and Lynne Viola (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1990), 233.

⁸⁰ Kuromiya focuses on memoirs of the 1930s, but his discussion is widely applicable.

⁸¹ Kuromiya, "Soviet Memoirs as a Historical Source," 234, 238-39.

documents are presented somewhat in isolation. This technique helps isolate the reliability of such sources.⁸²

Other factors to consider are less related to the paradigm of the USSR because they are universal characteristics of memorial discourse. “In the Soviet Union, as in other societies, upwardly mobile individuals, especially those turned heroes, take special pride in their achievements and often are given to writing about their lives; the political authorities never fail to take advantage of success stories to add legitimacy to the regime.”⁸³ The works of actors like Ryskulov, Khojaev, and Ikramov, may be viewed in a sense as those of upwardly mobile heroes, who are at the same time the political authorities.

Chokaev’s writings fall into a somewhat different category since he was disenfranchised from the Communist regime. Such émigré memoirs, Kuromiya remarks, were frequently subject to the market forces of the Western publishing industry, and were often overly sensationalistic.⁸⁴ “Authors of émigré and dissident memoirs generally share a common attitude toward the Soviet regime: they reject the idea of living with it on its own terms.”⁸⁵ In spite of such problems, Kuromiya claims émigré literature’s value lies in the fact it often addresses the “blank spots” in the history of the USSR, and “reveal[s] what alienated them from the Soviet political regime.”⁸⁶ Chokaev’s writings are extremely valuable not only because he details his own experience working with the early

⁸² He also notes that the reference to secondary information at the back of Soviet collections of documents is less than helpful. See John L. H. Keep, “Lenin’s Letters as a Historical Source,” in *Power and the People: Essays on Russian History* (Boulder: East European Monographs, 1995), 359-64.

⁸³ Kuromiya, “Soviet Memoirs as a Historical Source,” 245.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 255.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 257.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 262.

Soviet regime in Central Asia, but also because he comments on the other subjects of this study, and the events they discuss.

I have acquired some of the original works of Ryskulov and Khojaev, as well as Chokaev. The former are censured significantly only once; that is, not a second time by volume editors. For example, Khojaev rewrote his 1926 *K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare* (History of the Revolution in Bukhara) in 1932 to accommodate official criticism of topics the earlier version touched on. His *Selected Works* includes this second edition.⁸⁷ Similar problems are found in the case of the selected works dedicated to Ryskulov in 1984. A comparison of his 1935 “*Iz istorii revoliutsionnoi bor’by v Kazakhstane*” and its reproduction in the *Izbrannye trudy* shows, for example, that the latter excludes a politically sensitive paragraph. Its description of violent Russian discrimination towards Kazakhs calls into question the official myth, well established in the USSR by the 1980s, that nationalities of the Union existed in proletarian harmony prior to 1917.⁸⁸ Fortunately, a second collection of documents relating to Ryskulov, *Sobrannye sochineniia v trekh tomakh* (Collected Works in Three Volumes), published in 1997 in Kazakhstan, does not need to be approached with suspicion about this second level of Soviet censure.

Combined methodological strategies of Soviet and colonial studies demonstrate Central Asian agency and participation in the formative years of Bolshevik rule. Chapter 1 shows how Chokaev, Ryskulov, and Khojaev each chose to ally with — and in the case of the latter two, join — the Bolsheviks for reasons based on local and personal

⁸⁷ Carlisle, “Review of Faizulla Khojaev, *Izbrannye trudy*,” 67.

⁸⁸ See the second paragraph in “*Iz istorii revoliutsionnoi bor’by v Kazakhstane: Revoliutsiia 1905 i Kazakskie trudiashchiesia*” [From the History of the Revolutionary Struggle in Kazakhstan: the 1905 Revolution and the Kazakh Workers], in *Revoliutsiia i natsional’nosti* 49 (11) 1935: 43, as compared to paragraphs 3-4 in *Izbrannye trudy* (Alma-Ata: “Kazakhstan,” 1984), 1: 233.

conditions, not on account of a belief in an inherent truth of the Bolshevik program, nor from being co-opted. I address Ryskulov's and Khojaev's motivations for attempting to shape a peculiarly 'Soviet' history of aspects of the Revolution they were a part of in Chapter 2. Their works are a form of propaganda which represent an act of mediation, typifying their role in merging the Bolshevik and Central Asian worlds. This chapter allows me to describe the symbols of power they translated into local life. Chapter 3 follows on these themes to describe the manner in which this process was practiced in everyday politics. Here, I present an analysis of the testimonies of all four actors to provide a multi-sided view of the colonial mediator paradigm in Soviet Central Asia. Its parallels with that of other empires is striking and gives credence to the notion that there is a need to take a closer look at the processes of power in the region, in 1917-24, to understand better the period which came after.

PROLOGUE

Russian Revolution in Central Asia

Imperial Russia ruled most of Central Asia before the February Revolution of 1917 unseated the tsarist administration in Petrograd'.¹ Until then, the only occurrence of rebellious activities which had posed a significant threat to Russian administration in the borderland region were the uprisings of 1916. These were a response to the tsarist government's decision, in late June 1916, to conscript labour mobilization of legal non-Russians² in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and Siberia, to aid the weakening Imperial army in the Great War. Non-Russians had never before been expected to participate in state conflict.³ Central Asian protests starting in Turkestan's capital of Tashkent in July led to the deaths of dozens of tsarist officials, Russian and non-Russian alike, and rioters. Rebellious activity spread throughout Central Asia until they were brutally put down in the fall.⁴

In 1917, political events in Tashkent reflected those in Petrograd, but with uniquely Central Asian features. After the February events, the Provisional Government which replaced the tsarist administration in the Russian centre, existed in a precarious, "dual power" relationship" with the Petrograd Soviet. The latter, 'socialist' organization acted as watchdog over the former, 'liberal' one, and official representative of the national

¹ During the Great War, 'Petrograd' replaced the designation 'St. Petersburg.' Nicholas V. Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 2nd ed (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1969), 505.

² These peoples were grouped in the loose legal category of *inorodtsy* (aliens), and were traditionally exempt from conscription. The decision was made in the late spring after much debate over relating needs of the army and citizenship. Brower, *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire*, 1.

³ Notice of the draft decree arrived in Tashkent by telegram on June 28, and an administrative conference was held July 2 to arrive at the details of the call. They were to fulfill a quota of 250,000 workers — approximately 8 percent of the estimated population of 3.5 million. Importantly, the conference calculated that potential unrest might be eliminated if the draft exempted such influential leaders as *mullas* and judges. Pierce, *Russian Central Asia*, 271-2.

⁴ Sahadeo, "Creating a Russian Colonial Community," 315.

duma (parliament).⁵ A similar system of parallel organizations emerged in Tashkent.⁶ Here, the Provisional Government was represented by a Turkestan Committee (Turkkom) sent from Petrograd. The Turkkom was widely acknowledged, in Russia and Turkestan, as ineffective. Its rival was the Tashkent Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. "As elsewhere in Russia during this period, the Soviet proved the most aggressive in accumulating power."⁷ In fact, the Tashkent Soviet was the real authority in Turkestan's capital, willing to cooperate with the Provisional Government, but having more *de facto* local support and strength than the Turkkom.⁸ Central Asians also formed their own organizations, but their authority was limited by the organizations of the former colonials in power.⁹

Over the course of 1917, the legitimacy of the Provisional Government declined throughout the empire. As this occurred, "the commitment to constitutional procedure on the part of Russians in Tashkent, never strong to begin with, rapidly gave way to concern for survival."¹⁰ The Tashkent Soviet challenged the local representatives of the Provisional Government, and took power on 23 October, after four days of fighting. The beginnings of a Soviet government were therefore already in place in Central Asia two days before the October coup in the Russian capital. The Bolsheviks "stormed" the Winter Palace in Petrograd to take power from the Provisional Government.¹¹ The Party

⁵ Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 34.

⁶ Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, 40-43.

⁷ Sahadeo, *Creating a Russian Colonial Community*, 351.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 344, 347.

⁹ Adeeb Khalid, "Tashkent 1917: Muslim Politics in Revolutionary Turkestan," in *Slavic Review* vol. 55 (22) Summer 1996: 279-80.

¹⁰ Khalid, "Tashkent 1917," 291.

¹¹ Shoshana Keller, The Central Asian Bureau, An Essential Tool in Governing Soviet Turkestan," *Central Asian Survey* 22 (2/3) June/September 2003: 281.

thereafter used Russia's regional soviets to spread the revolution to other centres and towns, including Moscow.¹²

Whereas the Bolshevik Party dominated the Soviet that took power in Petrograd, the soviet which now ruled in Tashkent was as a coalition of Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, and Left Socialist Revolutionaries.¹³ The Party divisions of the Tashkent Soviet solidified between only the Social Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries, and then only in early August. No major policy issues separated the two groups, but the Social Democrats had become increasingly vocal about their desire to overthrow the Provisional Government and seize power. It is not clear when members of the Bolshevik faction of the Social Democrats in Turkestan began to identify as 'Bolsheviks', though reputable secondary sources refer to them as such only in the period after the October Revolution.¹⁴

In Russia, the Bolsheviks became the only clearly legitimate Party as of approximately December 1917 and January 1918, when most parties became illegal, and as the Party began to be identifiable with the state.¹⁵ As the government of the October coup became established, the Russian capital was moved from Petrograd to Moscow in February 1918. The first Soviet constitution was adopted 10 July, creating the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR). From the beginning, the ruling power was in reality held by the RKP, especially its Central Committee (TsK) and Political Bureau (Politburo), whose

¹² Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 528.

¹³ Shoshana Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca: The Soviet Campaign Against Islam in Central Asia: 1917-1941* (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2001), 31. The Bolshevik and Menshevik Parties were two factions within the Social Democratic Party — distinctive since 1903, primarily on account of the former's greater emphasis on organizing as a tight-knit group of professional revolutionaries — which separated for independent action at the end of August 1917. See Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 450.

¹⁴ Jeff Sahadeo, "The Exploiters or the Exploited? Russian Workers, Colonial Rule and Revolution in Tashkent, 1917-8," chap. 8 in *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865-1923* (Indiana University Press, 2007, Forthcoming), 22, 27.

¹⁵ Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 528-30.

representatives also held top government posts.¹⁶ In Tashkent, the Communist Party of Turkestan (KPT) was established on 17 July 1918.¹⁷ Most of its members were Russians, although it made somewhat successful superficial efforts to recruit Central Asians, as required by Moscow. These did not begin in earnest until 1920, however.

From 1917 to 1924, Central Asia was “an intricate, often tangled web of competing centres of political power.”¹⁸ The Russian Civil War (1918-20) between the Bolshevik ‘Reds’ and the counterrevolutionary ‘Whites’ postponed the consolidation of Soviet power. From March 1920, Turkestan existed as an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (TASSR) within the RSFSR. In the same year, Bolshevik authority extended to Khiva and Bukhara when Bolshevik coups took power there, in April and September, respectively, establishing Soviet People’s Republics (KhNSR and BNSR, respectively). From then on, Soviet authority based in Moscow, and its ability to prescribe official activity, grew as its institutions of governance multiplied and became entrenched throughout the former tsarist territories.

Although the TsK of the RKP (TsK RKP) and the KPT had important bearing on what happened in Soviet Central Asia, government organs representing Moscow in the borderland were most directly responsible for controlling and shaping rule of the region. The first such organization was the Muslim Bureau (*Musbiuro*), established in May 1919 to draw Central Asians into the Party. It was very successful in this capacity, but difficult for the centre to control, so it was disbanded in the fall of 1920. A more permanent Moscow organization was a council of commissars called the Turkestan Commission

¹⁶ Ibid., 540.

¹⁷ R. Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics: A Study in Soviet Nationalities Policy, 1917-1936* (New Delhi: People’s Publishing House, 1967), 77.

¹⁸ Keller, “The Central Asian Bureau,” 281.

(*Turkkommissia*). It was established 10 October 1919 to represent the TsK RKP and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK), respectively party and state sectors of the central government. In late July 1920, its functions became completely governmental when a Turkestan Bureau (Turkbiuro) was established in the region to ensure that Party decisions in Moscow became reality there. The staff of the Turkbiuro were gradually replaced over the course of early 1922, as the organization was restructured and renamed the Central Asia Bureau of the Central Committee (Sredazburo), in existence from 1922 to 1934. It was only one of eight regional bureaus established by the Bolsheviks, as early as 1920, to guide Party activities far from Moscow.

In October 1920, meanwhile, these organizations were joined by a division of the People's Commissariat for Nationality Affairs (Narkomnats), the state organization concerned with central policies toward the nationalities.¹⁹ 1922 signaled the induction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (30 December), as a federation of Russia, Ukraine, and the Caucasus.²⁰ Narkomnats, meanwhile, guided plans for the national territorial delimitation of Central Asia, completed in 1924, and taking place in 1925. The TASSR was divided into the Uzbek and Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republics (Uz SSR and Turk SSR, respectively). The Uz SSR incorporated most of the former Bukharan amirate, while the remainder of the BSPR was incorporated into the Tajik ASSR, which was a semi-independent entity within the Uzbek Republic.²¹

¹⁹ Ibid., 281-87.

²⁰ Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 540.

²¹ Shoshana Keller, "The Struggle Against Islam in Uzbekistan, 1921-1941: Policy, Bureaucracy, and Reality" (Unpublished PhD Diss., Indiana University, in Bloomington, 1995), v-vi.

This thesis follows on most current research by referring to governing authority in Russia with the terms 'centre' or 'Petrograd', and then 'Moscow' for the period after February 1918, except when the name of a specific organization better highlights the significance of an event or relationship at issue.

CHAPTER 1

Navigating the Revolutions, Choosing the Bolsheviks

This chapter examines why Turar Ryskulov, Mustafa Chokaev, and Faizulla Khojaev chose to actively engage in the February and October Russian Revolutions and ally themselves with the Bolsheviks between 1917 and 1920. These actors were among the few Central Asians who did so prior to the establishment of the KPT in July 1918.

Involvement then rose, and increased considerably when the Red Army won the Russian Civil War in 1920. Ryskulov, Chokaev, and Khojaev did not court the Bolsheviks out of belief in Party principles. Their reasons were more complicated: in the immediate aftermath of the February and October Revolutions, these actors wanted to challenge the fundamental nature of Central Asian politics and society by assuring themselves a higher position in the changing hierarchy of the former tsarist empire.

Evidence of this emerges in the personal stories of Ryskulov, Chokaev, and Khojaev. Their first significant interactions with Russian revolutionaries in 1917 will frame the chronology of this essay, against the backdrop of revolution in Central Asia as a whole. The chapter is structured to show how each of these three hailed from a common colonial political context. It provided them with similar social goals and strategies for attaining them, despite the significant differences in the particularities of their personal stories. I begin by discussing the common biographical factors which pre-disposed them to ally with Russian revolutionaries. Frequent interactions with Russians set Ryskulov, Chokaev, Khojaev, and other Central Asians like them, apart from the rigid regional hierarchy, and motivated them to challenge it. These factors are contextualized in the historical background of the revolutionary year of 1917 in Central Asia to facilitate

discussion of their specific actions after the tsarist administration was overthrown. I highlight each actor's participation in these turbulent politics in successive sections, emphasize reasons for allying with non-Central Asians. All three consistently calculated that cooperation with Russian revolutionaries would accord them advantage in local social competition with members of the traditional and colonial hierarchies. The latter were represented by Russians in positions of authority, traditional Central Asian religious and economic elites, as well as colonial administrators from both regions.

I will portray Ryskulov's, Chokaev's, and Khojaev's specific rationale for allying with Russian revolutionaries by analyzing each one's story as he tells it. This requires a careful approach since they told the story in the form of a memorial account. As Kuromiya notes, "in the Soviet Union, as in other societies, upwardly mobile individuals, especially those turned heroes, take special pride in their achievements and often are given to writing about their lives; the political authorities never fail to take advantage of success stories to add legitimacy to the regime."¹ And indeed, they constrain the scope and structure of my analysis somewhat: the discussions of Chokaev and Khojaev allow for a great deal more contextual information than that of Ryskulov. I interpret these documents as pieces of propaganda, highly biased in favour of the authors and the state they live in — in the case of Ryskulov and Khojaev, the USSR, and Chokaev, anti-Soviet France. In this chapter, I seek to demonstrate that they reflect a great deal about the political dynamics of the early USSR. I will address the peculiar challenges they present analysis in Chapter 2.

My approach challenges the predominant historiographical view that such actors were co-opted into Party work. This body of scholarship implies that members of Central

¹ Kuromiya, "Soviet Memoirs as a Historical Source," 245.

Asia's political class would not, of their own will, have aided a party whose program appeared to challenge the fundamental pillars of local society — and, in retrospect, obfuscated as many of them as possible, as quickly as possible. Alexander Park, for example, claims the Jadids were nothing more than “convenient instruments for political rule during the transition to a socialist form of government.”²

More recent discussions of Central Asian history indicate that the approach Ryskulov, Chokaev, and Khojaev brought to power relations in 1917 may be founded in traditional authority dynamics. Beatrice Forbes Manz has demonstrated how the traditional system of princely succession in the former Khanate of Kokand was transformed by the Russian conquest of the late nineteenth century. Royal dynasties fought with each other for the right to rule and made alliances with outside nomadic tribes to ensure victory. The tsarist conquest greatly weakened tribal leaders, and the khans came to favour Russia as outside ally in dynastic competition.

The second half of the nineteenth century shows a regular and continuing pattern of political contests and disorders in Ferghana, which the Russian conquests of 1875-6 altered but did not interrupt. . . . Only the few who aspired to greater power attacked the real rulers of Ferghana, the Russians Most of the disturbances that occurred in Ferghana under Russian administration, therefore, had their origins not in protest against the conditions of Russian rule, or even in the existence of non-Muslim rulers, but in the structure and politics of the Kokand khanate which had earlier controlled the area.³

Edward Allworth, meanwhile, accounts for Jadid alliances in the twentieth century along similar lines. He theorizes that traditional relationships between the ruler and ruled in Central Asia shaped modern conceptions of legitimacy in governance. He describes the “idea of authority [in Uzbek history] as a compact between legitimate domination and subordination of groups,” in which a tribal style of equality gave everyone access to the

² Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 57.

³ Beatrice Forbes Manz, “Central Asian Uprisings in the Nineteenth Century: Ferghana under the Russians,” in *The Russian Review* vol. 46 (1987): 267- 273.

leaders as well as the ability to take part in decisions.⁴ Allworth and Manz indicate that Central Asian political culture held authority as a liable for contestation by willing actors.

This suggests that there may have been a socially held concept of authority informing Ryskulov's, Chokaev's, and Khojaev's belief they had a right to take part in the rule of revolutionary Central Asia. Neither Manz or Allworth, however, provide conceptual methods for understanding the dynamics of the behaviour of these three Central Asians, as colonial studies contained useful parallels. They suggest that influential individuals from a recently colonized population, such as the three studied in this chapter, emerge to participate in the new ruling administration. Ryskulov, Chokaev, Khojaev belonged to a political class of Central Asia's colonized elites that emerged in a socio-political environment limiting their upward mobility. These elites were a byproduct of the necessities of tsarist colonial rule, but existed outside official authority structures. After Russia conquered Central Asia, it subordinated much of the existing hierarchy of the region instead of replacing it.⁵ Unofficial power structures, nonetheless, changed significantly when Russia intensified natural resource production and trade, causing the emergence of an urban middle class consisting of merchants and middlemen who did not belong to the traditional authority structure and were not allowed to participate in any of its activities. They were exposed to European and Russian cultural and educational ideas, and empowered with new wealth, prestige, and skills uncommon in Central Asia. The merchant class, already accustomed to Russians through trade, aided in the establishment of Imperial rule, while enlarging their fortunes, as well as the influence of their class.⁶ At the same time, intellectual elites entered government service as interpreters, translators,

⁴ Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks*, 14.

⁵ Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca*, 5.

⁶ Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 62-8.

and other minor official capacities, mediating the gap between the masses and the administration.⁷

When the tsarist regime was overthrown in 1917, these actors aspired to roles as political elites. They saw participation in the revolutionary regime challenging the old hierarchy as an opportunity to do so themselves. Ronald Robinson claims, of colonial parallels, that in cases where the colonizer's ambitions challenge traditional hierarchy, the former relies on cooperation of non-traditional elites, often educated by colonial institutions. These intellectuals for their part, use alliance with the foreign power as leverage against members of the upper local hierarchy, that is their competitors in local social life.⁸ The political biographies of Ryskulov, Chokaev, and Khojaev are comparable to Robinson's generalizations.

Ryskulov, Chokaev, and Khojaev were familiar with multiple cultures, languages, and educations, and therefore had a complex perspective on life which had no official place in the rigid structures of colonialism, although they had a great deal more social mobility than Central Asians outside their political class. Turar Ryskulov's Russian education took place at a *russko-tuzemnaia shkola* (Russo-native school) in Merkenskiy region (1907-1910), the Pyshkek agricultural school (October 1910 – September 1914), and the Tashkent Teachers' Institute in 1916 and 1917.⁹ He was also involved with anti-tsarist rebellious activity. He was orphaned at eleven years old after his father was arrested for killing the regional *major domo* out of anger derived from debt. Ryskulov also

⁷ Pierce, *Russian Central Asia*, 251.

⁸ Robinson, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism," 132-37.

⁹ Ustinov, *Turar Ryskulov*, 429-30; and T. R. Ryskulov, "Kratkaia avtobiografiia" ("A Short Autobiography"), Presented to the RKP March and December 1921, *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh* (Almaty: "Kazakhstan," 1998), 3: 198-200.

participated in anti-conscription uprisings that swept Turkestan in 1916.¹⁰ Mustafa Chokaev's political activism was legal. He worked as a secretary for the Muslim fraction of the Russian Duma in the imperial capital of Petrograd during 1916-17. He was qualified for this job because he completed Russian *gimnazium* (secondary school) in Tashkent in 1910, and then graduated from the Faculty of Law in Petrograd.¹¹ Khojaev was also educated in a Russian scholastic system, having spent four years studying in Moscow, where he became very skilled in the language of the colonizer. He left this school in 1912, when his father died, and returned to Bukhara to the trade business of his wealthy merchant family — one of the richest in the amirate — which interacted regularly with Russians.¹²

The question why he, Ryskulov, Chokaev, and other members of the region's new political class wished to ally with the Bolsheviks has seldom been analyzed in terms of their upward mobility in social hierarchy. Most studies rightly try to link their pre-revolutionary intellectual and political dispositions to later sympathy for the Party. These assessments generally fail to offer more than circumstantial evidence. The majority of them rely greatly on discussion of the Jadids, often forfeiting necessary discussion of the other such co-regionals active in the revolutions as Ryskulov, Chokaev, and Khojaev. All three have all been called Jadids, but they are more appropriately referred to as 'secular intellectuals,' a group of educated elites who had little interaction with the Jadids before 1917.¹³

¹⁰ T. R. Ryskulov, "Kratkaia avtobiografia," 198.

¹¹ Sadykova, *Mustafa Chokai*, 231.

¹² Gero Fedtke, "Jadids, Young Bukharans, Communists and the Bukharan Revolution: From an Ideological Debate in the Early Soviet Union," in *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries*, eds. Micheal Kemper et al., Vol. 1. (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1998), 510.

¹³ Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 106.

The Jadids' pre-revolutionary activism makes them the most conspicuous Central Asian group characterized by the new visions and aspirations of the new political class.¹⁴ They are most frequently linked to the Bolsheviks in traditional sovietology, because the educational reform project they called for prior to 1917 found resonance in initiatives of the Bolshevik government. The Jadids' proposal to modernize and redefine the way that Central Asians were educated, and thought about the world was a significant challenge to the established authority, and their activities, especially in the scholastic sphere, were heavily circumscribed. Traditional schooling was "a fully developed system of education which occupied a high position in the esteem of the people . . . the most learned and respected men in their communities [typically *ulama*] held forth, schooling the rising generation in the ways of its elders" in the *mektebs* (primary schools, usually in mosques) and *madrassas* (higher schools).¹⁵ Jadid establishment of New-Method secular Islamic schools, heavily influenced by Russian and European education, including the *russko-tuzemnye shkoly* was a signpost of transformation in the Muslim communities of Central Asia, and they were heavily censured.¹⁶ "For the Jadids," according to Khalid, "the [February] revolution was a summons to action, and they acted to realize their long-held wishes."¹⁷

As the most important contributor to analysis of the Jadids, it is notable that Khalid also recognizes that many other Central Asian elites — in fact, he claims they greatly outnumbered the Jadids. Ryskulov, Chokaev, and Khojaev also clamoured to stake their claim in the emerging new order. While many of the non-clerical Muslim organizations

¹⁴ Khalid, "Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia," 146.

¹⁵ Pierce, *Russian Central Asia*, 211.

¹⁶ Brower, *Turkestan and the Fate of the Russian Empire*, 70-1.

¹⁷ Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 253.

formed in the first weeks of the revolution were concerned mainly with Jadidist cultural or educational issues,¹⁸ others had more overtly political aims.¹⁹ The major common characteristics of political coalitions that formed was the youth of groups' members — significant because most traditional authorities were community elders — and their willingness to participate in the politics of revolution.²⁰ Still, Khalid and others continue to emphasize the Jadids role because it provides some tangible reasons for why Central Asians cooperated with the Party. Haugen writes

The number of Muslims who now [in the years following the establishment of the Communist Party of Turkestan] entered the party organs greatly exceeded those who had been active in the Jadid movement. Nevertheless, according to Khalid, even if the Jadids themselves did not represent a majority group among the Muslim communists, these Central Asian communists 'represented in many ways a direct connection with the main thrust of Jadidism.' This is not too surprising, as there were striking parallels between the Bolshevik project and that of the Jadids. Both aimed at modernization, and, while their ultimate goals diverged enormously, both projects strove for a reformation of society based on secular knowledge, education, and enlightenment. These similarities represented an important common ground for the Jadids and the Bolsheviks. . .²¹

This is a rather simplistic explanation for why Jadids, and other educated elites, became Party cadres. Although it identifies education as an important factor which gave Central Asians intellectual tools for engaging in a political discourse with the Bolsheviks, it implies that union with them was somewhat predestined, and forgoes attribution of specific decisiveness to either side.

Ryskulov, Chokaev, Khojaev were leaders of the formation of Central Asian political groups throughout Turkestan and Bukhara. Their members united, like other non-Russian groups elsewhere in the Russian empire, motivated by the prospect of self-governance

¹⁸ S. M. Iskhakov, *Rossiiskie Musulmane i revoliutsiia (vesna 1917 g. – leto 1918 g.)*, [Russian Muslims and the Revolution (Spring 1917-Summer 1918)] (Moscow: "Sotsial'no-Politicheskaiia MYSL'," 2004), 460-61.

¹⁹ Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 251-53.

²⁰ Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865-1923*, 143.

²¹ Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics*, 69.

indicated by the new regime.²² As the February Revolution spread across the former tsarist empire, minority peoples expected the Provisional Government to grant their emancipation.²³ To Central Asians, it appeared that possibilities were boundless – if only they would take advantage of them. An April article in the *Kengash* newspaper read: “[If we let this moment go,] it will be an enormous crime, a betrayal of not just ourselves, but of all Muslims. . .”²⁴ The three actors analyzed quickly abandoned what they were doing to be involved in politics.²⁵

The Provisional Government which replaced the tsarist administration existed in a precarious, “‘dual power’ relationship” with the Petrograd Soviet. The latter, socialist organization, intended to act as watchdog over the former, liberal one.²⁶ A similar system of parallel organizations emerged in Tashkent where the Provisional Government representative, the Turkkom, vied with the much stronger Tashkent Soviet. The term “dual power” obscures the multiplicity of influential Russian and Central Asian actors, whose relative cooperation was motivated in part by Petrograd’s promises of change. The revolutionaries in Russia’s capital planned to establish a constitutional democracy in the old empire at a Constituent Assembly “to be elected by the Russian people as soon as circumstances permitted.”²⁷ Both the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet

²² Hélène Carrère D’Encausse, *The Great Challenge: Nationalities and the Bolshevik State, 1917-1930* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1992), 7; Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 257; and Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 509.

²³ D’Encausse, *The Great Challenge*, 71.

²⁴ Muallim M. H., “Bukun qanday kun?” *Kengash* (Kokand), 15 April 1917, 12, as cited in Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 253-54.

²⁵ Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 254.

²⁶ Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, 40-43.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

declared that they were in favour of national cultural autonomy of some sort, but postponed legislation until the representative assembly could convene.²⁸

Central Asians were spurred on by this stated intention. But their actions were limited because the February leaders in Petrograd were paralyzed by the demands of on state resources resulting from the Great War and the general dislocation of the former empire.²⁹ So the Central Asians “adopted a legalistic approach [which relied on Petrograd as authority] of holding all major problems in abeyance until a constituent assembly could be elected.”³⁰ The three analyzed here interacted with Russians in Central Asia and Russia as much as possible to advance their agendas. Each one’s written discussions of the period demonstrate his determination to make the promises of the Provisional Government a reality.

Turar Ryskulov

Turar Ryskulov’s discussion of his revolutionary experience in early 1917, as analyzed here, is based in two documents. “*Kratkaia avtobiografia*” (“A Short Biography”) is the transcript of his biographical speech given in 1921 before the Tenth Congress of the RKP (8-15 March). The second is “*Iz istorii revoliutsionnoi bor’by v Kazakhstane*” (“From the History of the Revolution in Kazakhstan”), an article published in the *Revoliutsiia i natsional’nosti* newspaper in 1935, where he traces a Kazakh history of the October revolution from 1905. In both documents, Ryskulov portrays himself as actively

²⁸ It is notable that in one transaction between Turkestanis and the centre on political autonomy, the Provisional Government proposed “self-government on the model of the English and French colonies.” See Mustafa Chokaev, *Otryvki iz vospominanii o 1917 g.*, originally published in Paris in 1937, in Turkish. Russian version discovered, annotated and indexed by Salavat M. Iskhakov (Tokyo-Moscow: 2001), 12-3.

²⁹ Riasanovsky, *A History of Russia*, 509.

³⁰ D’Encausse, *The Great Challenge*, 71-2.

participating in politics. Analysis of his story demonstrates that he was persuaded, through practical experience, to believe the Bolshevik Party was the most likely to protect his interests in the post-revolutionary order. He clearly identifies his opponents in local social competition as former colonial authorities and beneficiaries. These two documents also show that Ryskulov participated in politics on terms defined in revolutionary Russia, finding authority in such proclamations as promised rights of equal representation in government for non-Russians. These themes are convincingly expressed in common in both documents. Even so, they diverge on the facts related to key issues, most notably when Ryskulov committed to siding with the Bolsheviks. Neither denotes exactly when he did so. Despite these differences, the 1921 and 1935 accounts provide significant information for reconstructing how Ryskulov wanted history to see his revolutionary activity.

According to both documents, Ryskulov made initial contact with the Bolsheviks immediately after the February Revolution. The Party demonstrates its usefulness as an ally by helping Ryskulov in a revolutionary struggle which he initiates himself. His description of this event and the lead-up to the October Revolution portray him as the primary actor in his story, popularly supported, and valuable to the Bolsheviks. His story begins when he rushes to his home region of Aulie-Ata where he comes to the defense of peasants who were being exploited by colonial era authorities, despite the revolution which had challenged their legitimacy. He writes that,

From the very start of the February Revolution and from the moment that notice was received that the Tsar was overthrown, I abandoned my studies at the teaching institute in Tashkent. I went to Aulie-Ata uezd, in the Merkenskiy region, to be among the Kazakhs just in case, and in view of rapidly developing political events.³¹

³¹ Ryskulov, "Iz istorii revoliutsionnoi bor'by v Kazakstane," 43.

Ryskulov's first revolutionary act of 1917 ensues. He presents it as a continuation of his participation in the 1916 uprisings. In this context, Ryskulov portrays himself as a hero of the area's peasants, while also clearly presents his opponents and allies. On the day of his arrival in Merkens, he went to bazaar to attend a meeting, where traditional and emerging hierarchies clashed.³² He claims there were two groups in the square when he arrived: on one side were about a thousand Kazakhs representing peasant families from each *oblast* of the region, awaiting announcement from the other, a meeting of a local Provisional Government commission attended by Russian, as well as and Kazakh, *kulaks*. Those at the meeting were planning to confiscate fines from the first group as reparations for damage done during the uprisings of 1916. Ryskulov claims he interceded on behalf of the plebeian Central Asians, uniting them against the levy.³³ In his account, the events which follow lead to his challenge of the reparations committee, and alliance with the Bolsheviks, making this a seminal moment in his revolutionary story.

Ryskulov explains that, on arrival at the square, "I headed directly to the gathering of Kazakhs, who on recognizing me, surrounded me, looking for advice."³⁴ Ryskulov's description of the speech to the peasant representatives shows that he distinguished between the Provisional Government in Russia and that of Turkestan.

I informed them [the Kazakh peasants] that prior to my departure from Tashkent, a telegram was received from the Provisional Government, signed by [Prime Minister] Kerenskii. [It read that] losses incurred by the Russian population during the uprising of 1916 would be paid by the treasury, and recommended the Kazakhs not make any contribution. I was immediately arrested by police, who took me to the [Provisional Government] Committee meeting . . . As they led me there, the Russian kulaks almost tore me to pieces, the whole time yelling: "provocateur! rebel!" In front of the committee, where I was relegated on account of Kerenskii's decree, I declared its [the committee's] actions illegal. I announced that the committee was an illegal institution since it

³² Ibid., 43-4.

³³ Ryskulov, "Kratkaia avtobiografia," 200.

³⁴ Ryskulov, "Iz istorii revoliutsionnoi bor'by v Kazakstane," 43.

did not include one Kazakh representative, and thereby had no right to command the Kazakh population.³⁵

His interjection at the square is a challenge to the reparation meeting based on the assumed legal jurisdiction of the Provisional Government. Ryskulov thereby clearly distinguishes between the metropole and its supposed representatives in Central Asia. He was well informed about the fact that the Provisional Government had halted conscription of Central Asians, and had accorded participants in the 1916 uprisings amnesty.³⁶

The reaction of the reparation commission shows that it also viewed itself as having interests different from Petrograd. As a result of his intrusion in the meeting, Ryskulov was threatened with arrest and violent harm by these opponents.³⁷ He shows that this led to his first significant encounter with the Bolsheviks. Ryskulov states in both documents that he was saved from the Provisional Government committee by a Bolshevik member of the Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies (which he refers to as "Sovdep"). The Bolsheviks were at this time constituents of this organization. But the 1921 and 1935 accounts tell different stories of the immediate outcome of this event and his related relationship with the Party. Both documents are commensurate, however, on his rationale for allying with the Bolsheviks.

After Ryskulov's statement about the escape in his autobiography, he claims "I was a Bolshevik from almost this moment (1917)."³⁸ He gives no other details about this new affiliation, however. The statement therefore suggests that when the Soviet helped him, he was convinced the Bolsheviks in the organization were a worthy ally. His subsequent discussion in this document explains why he joined the Bolsheviks in relation to the event

³⁵ Ibid., 43.

³⁶ Jeffery Frank Sahadeo, "Creating a Russian Colonial Community: City, Nation, and Empire in Tashkent, 1865-1923" (Urbana-Champaign: unpublished Ph.D. dissertation: University of Illinois, 2000), 345.

³⁷ Ryskulov, "Kratkaia avtobiografia," 200; and "Iz istorii revoliutsionnoi bor'by v Kazakstane," 43-44.

³⁸ Ryskulov, "Kratkaia avtobiografia," 201.

at the square. He describes how associating with the Soviet provided him the security to pursue his revolutionary goals against the local social opponents he identified in the square. "Along with the representatives of the Soviet, I expanded my activities even more."³⁹ Ryskulov apparently went on to organize a Union of Revolutionary Kyrgyz (Kazakh) Youth⁴⁰ (URKY),⁴¹ to whom he attributes a great deal of philanthropic work against famine⁴² and oppression of regional peasantry by members of the colonial hierarchy still in power after February. Ryskulov's activism spread to the whole of the Aulie-Ata county, and he led the deposition the *uezd* Provisional Government representative.⁴³

This story suggests a complicated calculation on the part of Ryskulov. The active Russian revolutionary groups of workers and soldiers, as Khalid has shown, were quite wary of cooperating with Central Asians.

For the [Russian] labor movement, Central Asian society with its dark Asiatic masses signified little more than the panorama of backwardness that socialism was to conquer. It had failed to protest against the atrocities committed against the local population in 1916. . . . The case of the soldiers was even more obvious: Even the most humble Russian soldier in Turkestan was a member of an occupying force and derived his identity on the colonial fringe from that fact. . . . Russian peasants, mostly armed settlers competing with the local population for land and water, were also quick to organize soviets. . . . the soviets' claim to power thus violated the principle of autonomy of Turkestan on both "national" and territorial grounds, but their monopoly over armed force in the region at a time when all constituted authority was disintegrating ensured that they emerged as very significant actors.⁴⁴

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ *Revoliutsiia v Srednei Azii glazami musul'manskikh bol'shevikov* [The Revolution in Central Asia as Seen by Muslim Bolsheviks], Society for Central Asian Studies, Reprint Series No. 3 (Oxford, 1985), 6.

⁴¹ URKY is my acronym. Ryskulov notes the group was also known as "Bukhara."

⁴² See Marco Buttino, "Politics and Social Conflict during a Famine: Turkestan Immediately after the Revolution," in *In a Collapsing Empire: Underdevelopment, Ethnic Conflicts and Nationalisms in the Soviet Union*, ed. Marco Buttino (Milan: Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, 1993). See also: Sahadeo, "The Politics of Provisions in Revolutionary Tashkent: 1917-23," chap. 6 in *Creating a Russian Colonial Community*.

⁴³ Ryskulov, "Kratkaia avtobiografia," 200.

⁴⁴ Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 251-52.

So in March, for example, when a small Turkestani group of mainly construction workers tried to link up with the Tashkent Soviet, they were rejected by the Russians, and resigned to form their own soviet in the Asian side of the city.⁴⁵

Ryskulov does not describe alliance with the Soviet as unilaterally decided by himself, however. He shows that he also had to prove himself as worthy of its support. He credits his “active background,” including Party recruitment and education activities, and “the support of the Kyrgyz workers” for the trust the Soviet gave him. As a result, Ryskulov states he quickly became the leader of district Bolshevik organizations, and then Chairman of the Aulie-Ata Bolshevik Party Ispolkom by 1918.⁴⁶

The specifics of this early relationship with the Party do not become any clearer in this document. Many new details become apparent in his 1935 article, which add specifics about the events at the square of the bazaar, in March. This later account repeats Ryskulov’s emphasis on his own agency in the earlier version, and confirms his rationale for joining the Bolsheviks. The 1935 essay consists of some important dissimilarities, however. There is no hint of particularly strong affinity for the Bolsheviks or Soviet here. Rather, this discussion of his activities in the run-up to October is focused on his own revolutionary decisions. He implies the event at the square was an indication of his significant stature as a revolutionary, and then outlines the formation of the URKY under his leadership as a result of the high regard of the Kazakh youth for his reputation.⁴⁷

Unlike the autobiography, Ryskulov does not imply a great deal of immediate cooperation between this group and the Soviet. Here, the URKY acted independently,

⁴⁵ Sahadeo, “Creating a Russian Colonial Community,” 358.

⁴⁶ Also here a discussion of the fact that most of the food they were able to provide the starving came from the Central Asian (not the Russian) bourgeoisie, as well as beys. Ryskulov, “Kratkaia avtobiografia,” 200, 203-4.

⁴⁷ Ryskulov, “Iz istorii revoliutsionnoi bor’by v Kazakstane,” 43-4.

but came ever more involved with the Bolsheviks because their goals coincided, and were stronger together. The manner in which Ryskulov describes this process implies a degree of control over the course of events. He claims that after February the URKY

quickly associated itself with the soldiers' garrison in Merkens region, and with several Bolshevik soldiers from this garrison. At this time, a [Bolshevik] representative from the Tashkent Soviet arrived in Merkens and clarified the Bolshevik program for us. In this way, we were already, by mid-1917, siding with Bolshevik ideas.⁴⁸

Here, Ryskulov is only siding with the Bolsheviks, not joining them as in the other document. In this discussion, he and the members of the URKY are the agents who of their own will decide to ally with the Bolsheviks. Ryskulov states that it was not until the middle of the year that he, or any of them, knew just what the Bolshevik Party was about, and more importantly, the move was based on a rational decision about the quality of the Party's program.

This highlights independent action, but leaves open the question of when Ryskulov joined the Bolsheviks, since the two documents evaluated here diverge on even the approximate timing of his alliance with the Party. Ryskulov's biographer, V. M. Ustinov, suggests that, while Ryskulov became acquainted with the Bolsheviks and their program in August 1917⁴⁹, he committed to the Party at some point in early September by becoming a member. This makes Ryskulov one of the first Kazakhs to join the Bolshevik struggle before the October Revolution.⁵⁰

This timing is quite important because the Tashkent Soviet—which contained many the Bolsheviks—staged a failed coup in September, and Ryskulov ostensibly remained with them even though it was unsuccessful. More importantly, he would have done so even though the Soviet did not seek Central Asian participation. The Tashkent Soviet

⁴⁸ Ibid., 44.

⁴⁹ Ustinov, *Turar Ryskulov*, 35.

⁵⁰ Ustinov, *Turar Ryskulov*, 54-5.

was one of the most influential revolutionary organizations in Turkestan. The mass demonstrations and general strike it orchestrated on 12-16 September brought the city to a brief standstill⁵¹, before its Temporary Revolutionary Committee was dissolved by a Provisional Government army.⁵² One main weakness of the coup attempt was the total lack of Central Asian involvement. Coup leaders “did not solicit or expect Moslem [sic] support in overthrowing the Turkestan Committee.”⁵³ So if, in fact, Ryskulov had joined and stayed with the Bolsheviks even after the Tashkent coup,⁵⁴ demonstrates that “Ryskulov conclusively chose his path: that of a professional revolutionary-Bolshevik, a Communist-Internationalist [etc],” according to Ustinov.⁵⁵

As the following section shows, Ryskulov’s story is quite different from that of most Central Asian elites of the period, by simple virtue of the fact that he succeeded in becoming an ally and ostensible member of the Bolsheviks before the October Revolution. When the Bolsheviks took power, Ryskulov successfully climbed the Party hierarchy. By 1918, he was the Chairman of the *oblast* Ispolkom (Executive Committee) of Aulie-Ata and a member of the TsK of the Turkestan Autonomous Republic, formed in March. He rose to several high posts over the next two years, including Chairman of the TsK of the Turkestan ASSR and Chairman of the Turkestan Muslim Bureau.⁵⁶ His accounts of the early revolutionary period show that he played a significant proactive role in forming relations with Russians in Turkestan, benefiting from their support and from the proclamations of Petrograd. By choosing Turkestani Soviets as his allies in

⁵¹ Participants called for worker control of production, nationalization of the banks and the transfer of the land to the toiling peasantry, and “All Power to the Soviets.”

⁵² S. Muraveiskii (V. Lolukhov), “‘Sentiabr’skie sobytiia’ v Tashkente v 1917 godu,” [“The ‘September Events’ in Tashkent, 1917”], *Proletarskaia Revoliutsiia*, No. 10 (1924): 138.

⁵³ Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 9-10, 12.

⁵⁴ Ustinov, *Turar Ryskulov*, 54-5.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁵⁶ *Revoliutsiia v Srednei Azii glazami musul'manskikh bol'shevikov*, 7.

challenging the colonial hierarchy, Ryskulov positioned himself as a colleague of the groups who “inherited” rule over Central Asia.

Mustafa Chokaev

Unlike Ryskulov, Mustafa Chokaev did not achieve alliance with the Bolshevik Party, although his revolutionary behaviour was conceptually very similar to that of the former. After the February Revolution, Chokaev urgently left Petrograd aboard a train bound for Tashkent. He immediately became involved in political activities in the colonial city, along with most Central Asian revolutionaries. Like Ryskulov, Chokaev’s actions relied heavily on the supposed authority in the revolutionary decrees of Petrograd, especially as they pertained to self-determination. The Tashkent Soviet did not want to include Central Asians in local politics. Still, Chokaev and his associates continually tried to cooperate with Russians over the course of 1917. Their negative responses led Chokaev and his Tashkent colleagues increasingly to their fall 1917 decision to unilaterally pursue self-determination promised by the Russian centre.

This section is about Chokaev’s discussion of this decision. I refer to three of his accounts of this period: “The Basmaji Movement in Turkestan” (1928), “Turkestan and the Soviet Regime” (1931), and *Otryvki iz vospominanii o 1917 g.* (1937). Each one shows that due to his lack of support from the Tashkent Soviet, Chokaev put faith in Petrograd, the official source of local authority. Central decrees are therefore more fundamental to Chokaev’s discussions of his revolutionary experience than in Ryskulov’s case. Chokaev was one of the leaders of a group of Central Asians who contested the legitimacy of the Tashkent Soviet, which took power in October 1917. The challengers

disputed the Russian revolutionaries' legitimacy by forming a parallel, competing national administration in the nearby city of Kokand in December. Chokaev claims "1917 was the year of our 'political birth,' and 'autonomy' was our first uncertain step."⁵⁷

His accounts of the year demonstrate that, although he and his Central Asian colleagues were reacting to political realities, they were clearly initiated independent from Russian encouragement. More importantly, Chokaev's discussion shows that the so-called Kokand Autonomy was created because these Central Asians were engrossed with the social justice promised by self-government, and had high hopes for the authority of the Russian metropole, and its decrees and proclamations. Chokaev further demonstrates that the autonomous government established in Kokand was an idea with roots in the earliest revolutionary days of 1917.

Chokaev writes that the decision to form the autonomous government was the result of local Russian political antagonism in the earliest revolutionary days of the year. Central Asians had high hopes after the February Revolution, when the Provisional Government ordered new elections for all city dumas according to the principle of universal suffrage, promising national self-determination on the horizon. Russians reacted negatively in Tashkent, where the most visible politics of Turkestan took place. Some former colonials outright refused to cooperate, while others suggested forming separate Central Asian and Russian dumas.⁵⁸ So the Central Asians put their stock in Petrograd, while forming their own organizations, which became a source of widespread influence. A *Shura-i Islamiya* (Muslim Council, hereafter referred to as *Shura*), formed in Tashkent on 13 March to be

⁵⁷ Chokaev, *Otryvki iz vospominanii*, 10.

⁵⁸ Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Culatural Reform*, 248.

the counterpart of the Tashkent Soviet.⁵⁹ It was dominated by Jadids and other members of the reformist middle class. It also included *ulama*, who the non-clerical leaders worked hard to include in the new politics, emphasizing strength in unity.⁶⁰

Chokaev's essays, charged to discredit the Russian Bolsheviks, put little emphasis on his relationship with the *ulama*, his class' opponents in local social competition, even though their former differences soon became insurmountable. The non-clerics were in a position of authority in the *Shura*, winning debates on such crucial issues dividing them as the question of how revolutionary Turkestan should relate to Russia. At the First Turkestan Muslim Congress, 16-22 April, the *Shura's* statement of support for the establishment of a federal democratic republic of Turkestan within Russia (and equal rights to all residents)⁶¹ was a victory for the non-clerics over the *ulama* demands for full separation from Russia. Such sharp differences between the educated youths and the older clergy soon made cooperation quite difficult. The Jadids, for example, began campaigns against corrupt clerics. By mid-summer differences became so acute that the *ulama* in Tashkent departed from the *Shura* to establish their own organization — the *Ulama Jamiyati* (Society of Clerics).⁶² This group had a considerably more radical agenda than the *Shura*, notably calling for full separation from Russia.⁶³

⁵⁹ Ibid., 248.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 258-59.

⁶¹ Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 70-1; and Sahadeo, "Creating a Russian Colonial Community, 359.

⁶² As a new type of social organization for the region, it acted as a political facilitator and party much of the time, and its membership was not restricted to clerics (ex.: it was headed by Sher Ali Lapin, a Russian-educated Kazakh).

⁶³ In pamphlets published during campaigns for the Tashkent City Duma election in July, "the Shura stressed that its candidates would be able to function fruitfully in the duma because they had modern educations and were fluent in Russian . . . [while the traditionally educated *ulama* were] ignorant of the times and of contemporary politics." Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 259; and Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republic*, 71, 260.

The *Shura* members' differing position on Turkestan's future relationship with Russia reveals their motive in local politics. As Georgii Safarov notes, the secular elites feared that abandoning federalism would have robbed them of the Russian support they needed to exert influence over their clerical opponents.⁶⁴ Chokaev confirms this by stating that his faith in the idea was regularly enforced by several Provisional Government representatives. Over the course of the summer of 1917, he claims, these Russian colleagues privately confirmed they would openly support the notion of Turkestan autonomy in a Russian federation when the Constituent Assembly was convoked.⁶⁵ But they warned against broaching the issue until then. Central Asians and other interest groups of revolutionary Russia increasingly pressured the Provisional Government to hold the assembly, in spite of political instability of 1917, as they became more desperate to have their voices heard.

Chokaev's continuing support for federalism and the Provisional Government represented trust in Russian revolutionary institutions and goals, — he apparently later learned to be false — and as he claims an inability to conceive of politics in which Russian authority was absent.⁶⁶ “We ourselves were [not] becoming extreme Nationalists [sic]. Our modest desire for a local autonomy for Turkestan we were ready to leave to the decision of the Constituent Assembly of All-Russia.”⁶⁷

Due to their faith in Petrograd, and doubts derived from the uncertainties of politics in Turkestan, the *Shura* members did not consider including local organizations during its

⁶⁴ Safarov, *Kolonial'naia revoliutsiia*, 91-2. Safarov was a Russian Bolshevik who represented Moscow in Turkestan in 1919-21. His book is highly critical of Bolshevik policy in Central Asia. As Sahadeo notes, Safarov's book condemned the continuation of colonial politics in Tashkent, and the actions of the Tashkent Soviet. It was quickly censored by the government. See Sahadeo, “Under a Soviet Roof,” 420-21.

⁶⁵ Chokaev, *Otryvki iz vospominanii*, 13-4.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 16-7.

⁶⁷ Chokaev, “Turkestan and the Soviet Regime,” 405.

discussions about autonomy. Chokaev shows that he and the other members were provided little hope for resolution of differences with their Russian and Central Asian competitors. He claims:

We were seeking a closer relationship with the Russian Socialists, but we observed in the Soviets, which were composed entirely of Socialists, tendencies very alarming to us. . . In Russia, the Soviets fought against the privileges of the former ruling classes, while here, in Turkestan, the Soviets consisting of the representatives of the ruling nation defended the privileges of the Russian workers and the Russian peasants against the pretensions of the local population.⁶⁸

Russian fears about the prospect of equitable elections were confirmed when the *ulama* won majority 62 of 112 seats in the Tashkent Duma at the end of July.⁶⁹ “Once elected, the Tashkent Duma found it increasingly difficult to accomplish much in the chaotic situation of the summer except to provide further evidence of the tensions that existed between the ulama and the Jadids” as well as the *Shura*, and the Central Asians and the Russians.⁷⁰ When the Russians chose not to solicit Central Asian help in the September coup attempt, the Central Asian leaders showed determined inclination to bypass local Russian organizations⁷¹ at the Second Extraordinary Regional All-Muslim Conference, convened in Tashkent after the coup. Participants in this late September congress also agreed on the form that an autonomous government would take within a Russian federation. It was a “blueprint” of the Kokand administration.⁷²

Following the October Revolution, the disjuncture between Chokaev and his colleagues, on one hand, and their local political opponents, the ulama and the Tashkent Soviet, on the other, became too great in the eyes of *Shura* members. Chokaev’s account of this dynamic is somewhat unclear because he makes little mention of the activities of

⁶⁸ Ibid., 405-6.

⁶⁹ The *Shura* representatives did not have the social electoral base to challenge them. For the Russian part, meanwhile, socialist parties were the most successful. See Sahadeo, “Creating a Russian Colonial Community,” 359-61.

⁷⁰ Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 260.

⁷¹ Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 9-10, 12.

⁷² Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republic*, 74-5.

the *ulama*, even though they initiated the process which led to these problems. *Shura* members stayed aside for the course of the battle of the October coup, and hoped to cooperate with the Soviet in its aftermath,⁷³ while adopting what Chokaev calls “a waiting attitude” to get a sense of the new politics.⁷⁴

The *ulama*, still in control of the Duma, called a Third Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies, held 15-22 November, in order to form a caretaker Turkestan Committee to administer the region. The *ulama*, however, excluded the *Shura* from invitation.⁷⁵ In the end, the Soviet refused *ulama* participation as well. Political disunity was completed when the conference resolved that “the inclusion of Muslims in the organs of higher regional revolutionary power appears at the present moment unacceptable.”⁷⁶

Chokaev and the *Shura* thereafter gave up on local cooperation and put all of their faith in Petrograd's decrees on their right to take part in Turkestan's politics, as he specifies.

If the conduct of the settler Russian workers, soldiers and peasants, tended to alienate us from their “local Soviet power,” the decrees and appeals of the central Soviet Government on the “rights of each nation, irrespective of the degree of its development or backwardness, to separation and to the formation of its own independent national state” and the right to demand “the withdrawal of the armies of a stronger nation” seemed to us capable of reconciling the Turkestanians to the new state regime in Russia . . .

We found ourselves compelled to take steps for the open expression of the will of our people.⁷⁷

This continued trust in the former metropole was motivated by ongoing positive signals it issued, and a long history of espousing the principles that were important to Chokaev.

⁷³ Sahadeo, “Creating a Russian Colonial Community, 369.

⁷⁴ Chokayev, “Turkestan and the Soviet Regime,” 406.

⁷⁵ Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 13; and Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 76.

⁷⁶ Sahadeo, “Creating a Russian Colonial Community, 369-70.

⁷⁷ Chokayev, “Turkestan and the Soviet Regime,” 406-7.

The Bolshevik position that the right of national self-determination and anti-imperialism are fundamental revolutionary values was spelled out in Lenin's "Manifesto on War", written November 1914. It advocated harnessing nationalist sentiment in alliance with proletarian disaffection for the overthrow of the oppressive establishment.⁷⁸ D'Encausse demonstrates that Lenin had always envisioned, in simplistic terms, what later became the complicated paradox of early Soviet politics, in which the temporary encouragement of diversity and national development was supposed to lead to "ultimate unity."⁷⁹ In the early revolutionary period of late 1917, Lenin maintained this line. On 20 November, during the Third All Russian Congress of Soviets, he gave a speech entitled "To All Muslim Toilers of Russia and the East," in which he "urged Muslims to take a leading role among the colonized populations of Asia in overthrowing the rule of the colonial powers of Europe."⁸⁰

Chokaev played a lead role in the process which led to the "necessarily unavoidable"⁸¹ establishment of the Turkestan Autonomous Government (TAG) by the Fourth Extraordinary Muslim Regional Congress, 26 November – 2 December,⁸² which he chaired. Chokaev's accounts show how the meeting threatened the Soviet in two ways. On one hand, the TAG proposed to usurp the popular source of the Tashkent organization's legitimacy. Chokaev recalls that in the lead-up to the meeting, the

⁷⁸ Ethnic diversity and national sentiment had always been a preoccupation of the nineteenth century socialist debates on accommodating nationalism in a socialist state, led by the likes of Karl Kautsky, Ottow Bauer, and Karl Renner.

⁷⁹ D'Encausse, *The Great Challenge*, 139.

⁸⁰ Sahadeo, "Creating a Russian Colonial Community," 377-78.

⁸¹ Mustafa Chokaev, "The Basmaji Movement in Turkestan," in *The Asiatic Review* XXIV (April 1928): 278.

⁸² This congress, according to Khalid "was not convened as a result of the rebuff to the ulama by the soviet congress." It was meant as a counterpart to the Third Muslim Regional Congress, held by the ulama in Tashkent, in early November. It excluded the *Shura* because most of its members were meanwhile absent, having left the city to avoid hostilities of the revolution, thereby excluding progressives. See Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 273-75.

regional Central Asian committees of Syr-Daria, Ferghana and Samarkand consulted with Russian political, social and economic organizations,⁸³ most of whom were supportive.⁸⁴ And in fact, a significant number of Russian (and Jewish) representatives, especially from the Ferghana region, participated the congress.⁸⁵ Chokaev claims the congress viewed the presence of a Tashkent Soviet envoy as proof that there was no popular support for the Tashkent Soviet in Turkestan.⁸⁶ Chokaev states none believed this Commissar Poltoratski when he told them he was “also for the autonomy of Turkestan.”⁸⁷ The Fourth Congress proclaimed *Turkestantkii Mukhtoriat* (the autonomy of Turkestan) on 27 November, inaugurating their Turkestan Autonomous Government, with a resolution, as recalled by Chokaev, stating that it expressed:

the will of the peoples of Turkestan to self-determination in accordance with the principles proclaimed by the Great Russian Revolution, proclaims Turkestan territorially autonomous in union with the Federal Democratic Republic of Russia.⁸⁸

On the other hand, the congress threatened Tashkent by forming parallel institutions to usurp its authority. The Central Asian meeting had laid groundwork for the formation of a ‘people’s militia,’ elected a 32-member delegation to attend the Constituent Assembly, and installed a Turkestan Autonomous Government in Kokand consisting of a Council of Toilers and a twelve-member “Council of Ministers of Autonomous Turkestan”.⁸⁹ Chokaev was Minister of External Affairs, and then the Prime Minister in January

⁸³ According to Chokaev, these included socialist-revolutionaries, representatives of peasant organizations, workers, bureaucrats, banks, and industrialists.

⁸⁴ Chokaev, *Otryvki iz vospominanii*, 13-4.

⁸⁵ Sahadeo, “Creating a Russian Colonial Community,” 374.

⁸⁶ Chokaev, *Otryvki iz vospominanii*, 13-4; and Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 14-5.

⁸⁷ Chokaev, *Otryvki iz vospominanii*, 13-4; and Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 14-5.

⁸⁸ Chokayev, “Turkestan and the Soviet Regime,” 407.

⁸⁹ Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 10-11, 16; Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 74-5, and Safarov, *Kolonial’naia revoliutsiia*, 103;

1918.⁹⁰ The congress even outlined the parameters for Russian representation in their organization, permitting them three to four seats, in accordance with the principle of proportional representation touted by Petrograd.⁹¹

The exact reason for the Kokandians' moderately inclusive approach, given the uncooperative stance of the Tashkent Soviet, is not clear. It is possible that they either held Russian cooperation in high regard on account of their colonial era authority, and believed it was attainable, or they viewed Russian alliance as necessary given the weakness of Petrograd. Chokaev states that "[we] didn't want to leave the Russians without government, so we went into talks with reps of the peasants and of the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, who at this time supported us on most questions."⁹² It is likely that apolitical residents of Turkestan were no more confident about the course of events than the Turkestani revolutionaries, and willing to show support to any potential ruler. As contenders to government in Turkestan, the Kokandians may also have tried to leave open the possibility for cooperation with the local Russian politicians because they were beginning to doubt both the will and the ability of Petrograd to support them. At the Fourth Congress, Chokaev indicated growing ambivalence toward the Russian capital, speaking "of the 'lack of government in Russia today . . . [which] makes the convocation of the Constituent Assembly doubtful.'"⁹³

Chokaev's accounts of the short-lived TAG, however, suggest its proponents remained loyal to the decrees and authority of Petrograd. He wanted readers to view the demise of the government he led as a result of its betrayal by the Soviet centre. Chokaev takes great

⁹⁰ The "Kokand Autonomy" was originally headed by the Kazakh, Muhamedjan Tinishpaev. Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 81.

⁹¹ Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 16-17.

⁹² Chokaev, *Otryvki iz vospominanii*, 40; and Chokayev, "Turkestan and the Soviet Regime," 407.

⁹³ Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 276.

care to insist on the Central Asians' compliance with the norms established by revolutionary decrees and ideals.

We, the organizers of 'Kokand autonomy,' were moved more by the faith we put in the Russian Revolution, in the sincerity of the revolutionary motives in regard to national 'self-determination,' than by faith in the possibility of organizing a struggle against the Russian central power, which in our eyes at the time was in the hands of the Soviet Government in Petrograd.⁹⁴

It stands out that Chokaev does not mention giving thought to trying to quell aggression from Tashkent, with its far superior military resources and strong ethnic ties to the centre. The threat Kokandians felt in actuality is reflected in the fact they did not send a delegation to the Constituent Assembly which met on 5 January 1918.⁹⁵ The TAG was still struggling to collect taxes in January, and had equal difficulty forming even a small standing army. Chokaev's lack of faith in Moscow is reflected in his government's failed efforts to gain material and armed support from the Ataman Dutov's counterrevolutionary White army, north of Turkestan, or that of the Kazakh Alash Orda regime.⁹⁶ The latter, whose name means Horde of Alash, was the first ever Kazakh political party and government, formed in 1917, and an ally of Dutov's at this time.⁹⁷

Chokaev's account of the lead-up to the confrontation of Kokand and Tashkent confirms both held the authority of the former metropole paramount, and that the TAG's behaviour was motivated by prudence in uncertain times. Petrograd played an important role in the clash of the two governments, after Kokand telegraphed the central authority

⁹⁴ Chokaev, "The Basmaji Movement in Turkestan," 279.

⁹⁵ Robert Service, *The Russian Revolution*, 54.

⁹⁶ Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 278.

⁹⁷ The Alash Orda fought alongside the Whites against the Bolsheviks until the counterrevolutionary Russians were clearly losing, and then gradually acquiesced to Moscow's government. Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, 4, 129.

for recognition over Tashkent. Instead, Stalin responded to the Turkestan Autonomous Government's request with the following inflammatory, yet ambivalent, response⁹⁸:

"The Soviets are autonomous in their internal affairs and discharge their duties by relying on their actual forces. Therefore, it will not behoove the Central Asian proletarians of Turkestan to appeal to the central Soviet authority with petitions to dissolve the Turkestan Council of People's Commissars which, in their opinion, is leaning upon the non-Moslem army elements, but they should themselves dissolve it by force, if such force is available to the Central Asian proletarians and peasants."⁹⁹

The TAG reacted with a challenge to the Tashkent Soviet steeped in the language of revolutionary ideals and rights, sending it a telegram 23 January 1918 regarding plans to convoke a "Turkestan Constituent Assembly." The document feigned authority by promising to reserve one-third of the seats for the non-Central Asian population¹⁰⁰ The Tashkent Soviet, empowered by Stalin's directive, no longer passively refused the proposals of Kokand. In Chokaev's words, "the Tashkent Bolsheviks, who, until now, did not dare to lift their hands against the autonomous Government, decided to liquidate the latter."¹⁰¹ On 14 February, Kokand was surrounded by Red Guard Russian troops, led by General F. I. Kolesov, and the city was taken by 19 February, during fighting which saw 14,000 Central Asians killed.¹⁰²

Chokaev's account of the siege demonstrates that the Kokandians remained committed to their belief in revolutionary ideals even at this time of danger. He discusses a meeting between the Kokand executive and Kolesov representatives, in which the Central Asians rejected Russian demands for dissolution of the Kokand government.

⁹⁸ Lenin had urged Stalin, then in charge of nationalities policy, to disband the Tashkent Soviet because of its chauvinistic attitude to non-Russians, but the latter refused. See Sahadeo, "Creating a Russian Colonial Community," 378.

⁹⁹ Quoted in Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 17.

¹⁰⁰ Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 18.

¹⁰¹ Chokayev, "Turkestan and the Soviet Regime," 408.

¹⁰² Soon after the siege of Kokand, Red Army soldiers were reported to appear in the bazaars of other towns selling what they had plundered. Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 21.

Chokaev claims his group told the delegation all they would prove by attacking and defeating the TAG is that might is right, not that they have popular legitimacy.

Our response was short: a refusal to take the ultimatum. I was authorized by my comrades to say the following to the Bolshevik parliamentarians: "Strength is on your side. On our side, there is no strength save the knowledge of our rights. We do not doubt your victory over us. But though we acknowledge the right of your might, we cannot acknowledge the Soviet government in Turkestan."

We replied in this way because we believed it would give us the moral right in the future war for liberation against the Bolsheviks.¹⁰³

In Chokaev's account, the Kokandians remained committed to the rules set by the metropole, and in so doing, they held on to the social contract he implies was broken by Russian Bolsheviks in Central Asia and Moscow¹⁰⁴ on that day. Twenty minutes after this encounter, the Kokandians were forced to flee to Old Kokand as Bolshevik forces fired on the house where the meeting had taken place.¹⁰⁵

There are indications that the Kokand Autonomy's brief existence confirmed the view in Moscow that Central Asians had to be included in the new regime. The long-term implications of the challenger government on Soviet policy are not, however, detailed by most secondary sources. According to S. M. Iskhakov, Soviet commentators went so far as to lie about the Kokand project, claiming it aspired to separation from Russia.¹⁰⁶

Khalid also denies its legacy, going so far as to suggest that "Kokand made surprisingly little difference for the Jadids" and, it seems, for anyone else. He reasons that, since the Turkestan Autonomous Government had never asserted its power outside the city, its fall did not affect anyone beyond its walls.¹⁰⁷ There is a lack of evidence demonstrating a

¹⁰³ Chokaev, *Otryvki iz vospominanii*, 14-5.

¹⁰⁴ The Russian political capital was moved from Petrograd to Moscow in February 1918. See Service, *The Russian Revolution*, 56.

¹⁰⁵ Chokaev, *Otryvki iz vospominanii*, 15-6.

¹⁰⁶ Iskhakov, *Rossiiskie Musulmane i revoliutsiia*, 462.

¹⁰⁷ Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 283.

link between the Kokand Autonomy and Soviet policy, especially since the Kokand government did not leave any archives behind.¹⁰⁸

But the actions of Moscow suggest it felt the need to acknowledge Kokand's belief in its ideals. During the fighting that brought down Chokaev's government, the Soviet centre feared what would happen if the "atrocities" there were too extreme and the Central Asian population were to find out about them. On 1 March, the Turkestan Congress of Soviets ordered "the Military Revolutionary Committee to refrain from active appearances in order to forestall a declaration of war by Moslems throughout the whole region."¹⁰⁹ At the same time, Stalin, as head the newly formed Peoples' Commissariat of Nationality Affairs (Narkomnats), sent a mission to Tashkent to oversee activities and the task of recruiting Central Asians. He also sent a telegram supporting the group, and emphasizing the need for a new political attitude in Tashkent. This letter identified a member of the mission as a former dissident who could now be trusted, and instructed the new regime also to attract Central Asians regardless of former affiliations, so long as they were willing to "serve Soviet power."¹¹⁰ Moscow's influence was still highly fragile, but nevertheless significant, as Khalid points out.

The civil war and the tenuousness of the Bolshevik hold on power in central Russia itself ruled out any direct intervention. Still, Turkestan's avowed adherence to Russia, an important pillar of its claim to legitimacy, gave Moscow some scope for moral suasion, which it sought to utilize to the fullest extent possible.¹¹¹

The Tashkent Soviet, and others in the region, accommodated Moscow to the extent it did not feel its members' traditional authority was threatened. Widespread recruitment efforts began.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 279, fn. 126.

¹⁰⁹ Quoted in Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 21.

¹¹⁰ Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 287.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 287.

Some of the most prominent Central Asians to join the new KPT when it was established in mid-summer were former leaders of the TAG.¹¹² Chokaev was not one of them. By choosing not to join the Party, the former leader of the Kokand Autonomy opted for a significantly different path from that of many of his former colleagues. He remained politically active in the region surrounding Turkestan for some time. Chokaev cooperated briefly with the Alash Orda before beginning his emigration from the Russian borderlands, via the Caucasus and Turkey to Europe and Paris, where he made his home by the summer of 1921.¹¹³ Chokaev's accounts do not explain why he left his home, but they indicate that the profound sense that he had been betrayed by Moscow may have made him uncomfortable with remaining in the Soviet lands. How he felt about Kokandians who became Communists is also uncertain. In Paris, he continued to demand that self-determination be finally awarded his co-regionals as they were promised at the beginning of the revolutionary period. Chokaev quickly became an outspoken critic of the USSR, and of the Central Asians who joined it, in such essays as those used here. His attacks are founded on his perception that there is a contradiction between Soviet policy and practice, and that the Russians betrayed the inhabitants of Central Asia, and continued to treat them like colonial subjects.

Faizulla Khojaev

The revolutionary story of Faizulla Khojaev appears to reflect his strong understanding of Soviet policy as a work in progress, as an object of a political discourse that he was a part of. In March 1917, Khojaev emerged as a leader of a revolutionary political class group

¹¹² Sahadeo, "Under a Soviet Roof," 482.

¹¹³ Sadykova, *Mustafa Chokai*, 232.

in the Amirate of Bukhara which became known as the Young Bukharans. They were a miscellaneous group of mainly Jadid youths who sought liberal reforms in the amirate, including the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. They saw the revolution as an opportunity to transform the traditional hierarchy of Bukhara and quickly formed alliances with Russians, and then the Bolsheviks. Khojaev's story is more similar to Ryskulov's than Chokaev's because the Young Bukharans became allied with Russian revolutionaries, notably the Tashkent Soviet. Khojaev's Young Bukharans most clearly worked against their traditional competitors in Central Asian society. The elite groups of the Bukharan social hierarchy are somewhat easier to ascertain than those of Turkestan, partially because Russian colonization was not accompanied by the emergence of functionaries in the protectorate as it was in the province of Turkestan. The pre-revolutionary hierarchy was centralized around the Amir as head of state, and the *ulama* had become "a state-sponsored estate." In this situation, calls for change were a challenge to the legal, moral, and intellectual authority of Islamic clerics, as well as to the ruling elite.¹¹⁴ The Young Bukharans succeeded in overthrowing the Amir only in 1920 with the help of the Red Army.¹¹⁵

The most persistent theme in Khojaev's descriptions of the period relates to his willingness to align with anyone or any group inclined to help overthrow the Amir, regardless of ideological or other persuasions — and the Russians were the largest, and strongest group available. Khojaev states this most strongly in a 1936 interview with a Swiss reporter: "In '17 our one object was the wipe out the 'Mir' [Amir]. But we were not strong enough alone, we had to link up with someone, and so we turned to the

¹¹⁴ Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 66.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

Russians.”¹¹⁶ The tone of this comment resonates with that of his other discussions of the period referred to in this thesis.

This analysis of why Khojaev joined the Bolsheviks is based mainly on two of the essays he wrote in 1926: *K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare* (both the 1926 original and 1932 rewritten versions) and *O mlado bukhartsakh*. Khojaev’s accounts demonstrate his centrality to relevant Bukharan events of the revolutionary period, and imply significant political skill on his part. To Khojaev, his ends in social competition justified the revolutionary means he used to attain them. This behaviour has often been read in a non-analytical tone. One of his biographers, Roger Kangas, claims 1917 “revealed Khojaev’s desire to win at any cost. Although only twenty-one years old, Khojaev [sic] actions suggest that he was willing to resort to quick measures in order to achieve his objectives.”¹¹⁷ Edward Allworth goes even further, blaming much of the political violence that befell the Young Bukharans on “a callous split between ethical principles and public behaviour that typified him [Khojaev] and some other ideological politicians.”¹¹⁸ Neither commentator’s claim leads to an understanding about Khojaev’s actions. In a related comment, Allworth comes closer to describing Khojaev’s relationship with power: “Deceptiveness to colleagues, manipulative opportunism in dangerous circumstances, and lack of long-range vision would soon make him a Central Asian leader most suitable to the Russian authorities in Moscow.”¹¹⁹

Allworth’s statement ignores Khojaev’s role in courting the Russians from the beginning of the revolution of 1917. At the head of the Young Bukharans, he worked

¹¹⁶ Ella K. Maillart, *Turkestan Solo* (London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1938), 196.

¹¹⁷ Kangas, “Faizulla Khojaev,” 144-45.

¹¹⁸ Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks*, 166.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 166.

hard to involve the Russians in their project. The Bukharan revolutionaries sent two consecutive telegrams — the second of which Khojaev was one of the main authors — to the Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The Provisional Government had chosen to support political continuity in Bukhara so as not to disrupt economic ties. It maintained a local "Russian Resident" with plenipotentiary status.¹²⁰ Petrograd was still the Amir's source of authority, so this appeal was a challenge to him. The Young Bukharans congratulated the Russians on their successful liberation of their nation, and called for aid in motivating the Amir Alimkhan to enact similar changes in the amirate.¹²¹ Rather than demand the overthrow of the traditional authority, they call for help in finding compromise. The Provisional Government responded by putting pressure on the Russian Resident Miller to encourage talks between the Bukharan reformers and their ruler.¹²²

The fallout of these talks, according to Khojaev, was an alliance between the Young Bukharans and revolutionary Russians on one side, and the traditional authorities of the Amir and *ulama* on the other. This occurred mainly because Alimkhan, under Russian pressure, originally planned to comply with many of the Young Bukharans' demands, including sharing authority with non-traditional authorities, as indicated in the form of a manifesto unveiled 30 March. This enraged the *ulama*, who claimed it violated the Sharia. On the day of a Young Bukharan march in support of the reforms, organized in part by Khojaev, the clerics showed their social influence by threatening it with a much

¹²⁰ Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 66.

¹²¹ Faizulla Khojaev, "O mlado-bukhartsakh," *Istoriik Marksist* 1 (1926): 131.

¹²² Khojaev, "O mlado-bukhartsakh," 131.

larger one of their own.¹²³ “It is important to remember,” Keller reasons, “that many of these ulama genuinely felt that the stakes were much higher than mere political advantage. In a social order based on divine revelation, change threatens to undermine or even destroy the sacred foundations.”¹²⁴ Alimkhan was therefore pressured by his domestic source of authority to renege on the manifesto, and his militia arrested many Young Bukharans.¹²⁵ Khojaev and many others fled to nearby Kagan where they made their first alliance with a Soviet, necessitated by their lack of support at home.¹²⁶

He claims that thanks to the active help solicited from the Russians of the Kagan Soviet of Workers’ and Soldiers’ Deputies, the Young Bukharans were able to reorganize in exile.¹²⁷ Khojaev shows the Russians were needed because of the Young Bukharans lack of popular support. This is unlike the case of Ryskulov, who claims the Soviet in Merkens provided muscle for his popularly supported leadership. And whereas Chokaev appeared to merely have public backing, the Soviet increasingly became his enemy. Khojaev claims that a week after the Young Bukharans fled Bukhara, they returned for a meeting organized by the Amir, where their need for Russian allies became clear. As the Young Bukharans made their way through the crowds of the city, they were stoned by mobs awaiting their arrival. Khojaev carefully notes the symbolism of the fact

¹²³ The Young Bukharan demands included: (1) the establishment of a bicameral, popularly elected representational body, under the Amir, to improve and control central and local administration; (2) elimination of taxes not coincident with Shariat; (3) freedom of education and publishing; (4) exclusion of fanatical and reactionary officials from the Amir’s cabinet. The manifesto was written by Miller and, apparently, the Amir did not even bother to read it. Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca*, 33; Kangas, “Faizulla Khojaev,” 132-33; and Khojaev, “O mlado-bukhartsakh,” 132.

¹²⁴ Keller maintains that that Islam allows the possibility of reform (*islah*) and revival (*tajdid*) from its very beginning, but through controlled channels. She also points out, importantly, that The ordinary Bukharans who participated in the ulama demonstrations probably knew little about the actual issues. In the general collapse of authority, many rural peasants had come to Bukhara. In the mass that had gathered, few had any real ideology, but shared a resentment of the Russians. Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca*, 34; and Kangas, “Faizulla Khojaev,” 136.

¹²⁵ Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca*, 33-4.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 33-4.

¹²⁷ Khojaev, “O mlado-bukhartsakh,” 135-37.

the *ulama* and the Amir were seated together at the abortive meeting in the amir's throne room, with the Young Bukharans and Russians were in their own group, behind Alimkhan's throne.¹²⁸ Khojaev claims his group, from the beginning, was unable to speak above insults being hurled at them, and lost its chance when the amir rose, stating "we have a misunderstanding'," and left the room. He apparently employed the clerics to gather the ignorant [*temnye*] masses into an army of many thousands."¹²⁹ On the way out of the city, the Young Bukharans only avoided arrest or mobbing by fleeing to Tashkent with the help of Kagan Russians.¹³⁰

The stresses of this situation caused the formation of divisions among the Young Bukharans, now organized as the Young Bukharan Party. Groups and individuals within it opposed one another on key issues.¹³¹ Khojaev claims he and many of the younger Young Bukharans were dubbed "leftist," and they increasingly promoted armed resistance. The other, "rightist" group, referred to by the Russians as the *mirnoobnovlentsy* (peaceful revisionists), consisted mainly of Old Jadids, so-called because of their age mostly. They were in favour of strengthening themselves and creating better relations with the Amir.¹³² Yet all these members shared Khojaev's goal of challenging the Bukharan hierarchy.

The immense importance the revolutionary Bukharans placed on Russian association is comparable to that of Mustafa Chokaev and the All-Muslim Regional Conferences.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 140; and Faizulla Khojaev, "K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare i natsional'nogo razmezhevaniiia Srednei Azii" [History of the Revolution in Bukhara and that national delimitation of Central Asia], in *Izbrannye trudy* (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo "Fan" Uzbekskoi SSR, 1970), 1: 132-33. This is the 1932 rewritten version of Khojaev's 1926 original. See Carlisle, "Review of Faizulla Khojaev, *Izbrannye trudy*."

¹²⁹ Khojaev, "O mlado-bukhartsakh," 134.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 9-12; and Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca*, 34.

¹³¹ Seymour Becker, *Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia: Bukhara and Khiva, 1865-1924*, Russian Research Centre Studies/54 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), 246-47.

¹³² Khojaev, "O mlado-bukhartsakh," 134.

Even when the TAG was formed, they continued to seek cooperation from the Tashkent Soviet. Meanwhile, Khojaev for example, claims that a temporary leader of the Young Bukharans, Mirz-Mukhitdin-Mansurov was chosen mainly because he had many ties to the Russian bourgeoisie, and was well received at the Russian Residency.¹³³ The crucial difference between the Young Bukharans and the Kokandians is that the latter were in competition with the Russian soviets after the October Revolution, while the Young Bukharans became increasingly close to them. In fact, Khojaev arrived in Tashkent in December 1917 to seek support from the Soviet for the Bukharan revolutionaries—at the same time as the Kokand Autonomous Government challenged its legitimacy. F.I. Kolesov, head of the Tashkent Soviet, advised him to postpone action until Kokand was dealt with. In early March 1918, Kolesov appeared unannounced in New Bukhara, and planned to attack Bukhara with Russian soldiers and about 200 Young Bukharan revolutionaries. Whereas the Red Army had easily invaded Kokand, this 14-17 March attack on the amirate was a failure, and the peace treaty signed with Alimkhan on the 25th, accorded independence to Bukhara.¹³⁴

The outcome of the event, nevertheless, seems to be the resolute alliance of the Young Bukharans and Bolsheviks. Even the retreat of Kolesov's defeated army bore signs of this. On 19 March, after two days of fleeing along a disabled railway, the General sent two officials to Bukhara in order to negotiate a peaceful departure from the amirate. The messengers, Vvedenskii and Mir Badalev, were considered expendable because of their former tsarist and Provisional Government affiliations. They returned with consent from the amir conditional on the return of Young Bukharans, Khojaev, Fitrat, and Burkhanov,

¹³³ He also, allegedly, had a business rivalry with a close ally of the Amir. See Khojaev, "O mlado-bukhartsakh," 137-38.

¹³⁴ Becker, *Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia*, 266-69.

to the old city. Kolesov refused, despite the protests of Russian civilian refugees who had joined them from Kagan.¹³⁵ The Russian Bolsheviks show of solidarity with the Young Bukharans demonstrates they valued them as allies. Khojaev and the 150-200 others who remained with the movement¹³⁶ resettled mainly in Tashkent and Samarkand where they pursued closer ties with the Bolshevik Party.¹³⁷ In fact, a faction of the left Young Bukharan Party led by Khojaev's political opponent, Abdulkadir Mukhitdinov, abandoned their party completely to join the Bolsheviks.¹³⁸ They formed the Bukharan Communist Party (BKP) on 25 September 1918 in Samarkand.¹³⁹ The alignment was reflected in the increasing antagonism of the Bukharan state, where one foreign traveler observed that by the fall of 1919 "no Russian could show his face in Bokhara."¹⁴⁰

Meanwhile, the Young Bukharans participated increasingly in Bolshevik Party meetings and activities. Khojaev's close relationship with the Bolsheviks was among the most conspicuous and immediately successful. His activities in 1918 and 1919 are demonstrative of the lengths he was willing to go to achieve Bolshevik support. In June, he left for discussions with Bolsheviks in Moscow, where he stayed from October 1918 to late 1919. I disagree with Kangas' claim that Khojaev fully sided with the Bolsheviks at this time. But circumstances do suggest he at least committed to them politically. In

¹³⁵ Ibid., 268.

¹³⁶ Several influential individuals of Bukharan society left the movement. These included members of the merchant class in particular. Although they were disposed to the opposition movement, few of them actually wanted outright revolution since they knew they had more to lose than gain from total upheaval. See Becker, *Russia's Protectorates in Central Asia*, 268.

¹³⁷ Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 45.

¹³⁸ The new group was much more effective than the other one: focused on drawing people into the party educational sessions, and developing services for emigrants. Tens of these went to work for the Russian Communist Party, while many others volunteered for the Red Army and fought on fronts in Ferghana, Zakaspiia and Aktiubinska, alongside Russian Communists, for the Russian proletariat. Khojaev stayed in the original group, which continued to work parallel with the Communist faction. Khojaev, "K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare i natsional'nogo razmezhevaniia Srednei Azii," 158, 174.

¹³⁹ Kangas, "Faizulla Khojaev," 158.

¹⁴⁰ Lt.-Col. F. M. Bailey, *Mission to Tashkent* (London: The Travel Book Club, 1947), 168-69.

Moscow, Khojaev worked to organize a Young Bukharan committee “in the presence of the plenipotentiary representative of the Turkestan ASSR and the government of the RSFSR,”¹⁴¹ and was also introduced to the works of Marx and Lenin. Khojaev returned to Turkestan with the Turkestan Commission and by some reliable accounts partook in its purging activities. In either case, he wrote positively of the organization’s work, and was confident the Russians from Moscow would pose a significant threat to the Amir.¹⁴²

Khojaev was not committed to the proletarian revolution touted by Marx and the Party. He was above all determined to create the best conditions for revolution in Bukhara. Although a Bolshevik, he continued to expound that it was necessary to maintain the cooperation of all those willing to participate in revolution, even the “right” Young Bukharans. He apparently held that only after the revolution should they cleanse the Party of non-conformist elements and educate them about communism.¹⁴³ Khojaev, with the help of Turkkomissia member M. V. Frunze, succeeded in securing the partnership of other Young Bukharan factions by late summer.¹⁴⁴ They even produced a Bolshevik program for the future revolutionary government on 25 August 1919. This occurred in a context where Turkestan’s relationship with Moscow changed significantly. The Russian Civil War was all but over, and the Red Army had gained access to the region after defeating Dutov’s White forces in 1919. The Bolshevik military was critical to the Bukharan rebellion. It trained and armed military units consisting of Bukharan allies of the Young Bukharans, which led the actual invasion on 28 August, and the

¹⁴¹ From A. I. Ishanov, *Faizulla Khojaev(ocherki zhizni i deiatel'nosti)*, (Tashkent: “Uzbekistan,” 1972), 15, as cited in Kangas, “Faizulla Khojaev,” 156.

¹⁴² Kangas, “Faizulla Khojaev,” 164.

¹⁴³ Khojaev, “K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare i natsional'nogo razmezhevaniiia Srednei Azii,” 177-78.

¹⁴⁴ Helene Carrere d’Encausse, “Civil War and New Governments,” chap. 9 in *Central Asia: 130 Years of Russian Dominance, A Historical Overview*, ed. Edward Allworth, 3rd edition (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 233.

victory parade on 5 September. Alimkhan managed to escape to Afghanistan, but his sons were sent to Moscow as hostages.¹⁴⁵

Khojaev continued his attack on old authorities by implementing Bolshevik reforms which radically changed local society. Yet he kept on his strategy for dealing with the Bukharan population cautiously, with a view to maintaining widespread support. Most of the Red Army returned to Tashkent within a few days of the coup, and Khojaev needed to form a provisional government in the aftermath of the invasion. To ensure this, one observer notes, Khojaev promised a conference of potential delegates that he was a devout Muslim, and that “the Russians did not want to establish a Communist regime in Bokhara.”¹⁴⁶ The Young Bukharan and Bukharan Communist Parties were formally merged 11 September, and the Bukharan People’s Soviet Republic (BNSR) was formally established. Faizulla Khojaev became head of the Council of *Nazirs* (Council of Ministers), and the BKP. This signaled the continuation of his successful career in the Party. One of the signs he planned major changes to disenfranchise the traditional hierarchy was the late 1918 declaration making Uzbek the state language, replacing the Persian of the amirs as well as of the Tajiks who made up 30 percent of the amirate’s population.¹⁴⁷

Conclusion

This analysis of the testimonies of Ryskulov, Chokaev, and Khojaev indicates that primary sources are filled with information on why they and other Central Asians chose

¹⁴⁵ There was a great deal of plunder. Even the amir’s throne was sent to Moscow as a trophy, where it remains. Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca*, 45.

¹⁴⁶ Manabendra Nath Roy, *M. N. Roy’s Memoirs*, Sponsored by The Indian Renaissance Institute (New York: Allied Publishers Private LTD, 1964), 449-50.

¹⁴⁷ Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca*, 45-6.

to join Bolshevik institutions. The documents assessed suggest that the narrow stratum of Central Asians who cooperated with Russian revolutionaries in the early revolutionary period, and later the Bolsheviks, were motivated to do so in order to overcome former social and institutional inhibitions to their upward mobility in the regional hierarchy.

To a certain extent, allying with the Russians required a degree of political savvy. The fates of the three actors analyzed demonstrate that allying with local Russians was crucial to their own success as revolutionary actors. Chokaev's story proves that while the faith they all put in the decrees and authority of the centre was an important element of their activity, revolutionary language needed to be recognized as part of a discourse in which the Russian politicians of Central Asia had an important stake. In exile, Chokaev's relationship with the Soviet regime and its cadres continued on the antagonistic tone began when he engaged the revolutions of 1917. His lamentations about Moscow's immoral betrayal seldom reached cadres of the USSR, however, and certainly were not commonly known to citizens.

The revolutionary paths of Ryskulov and Khojaev are representative of other new and aspiring Central Asian Bolsheviks who became adept in the discourse of the new regime, while conspicuously pursuing their primary motives in local social competition.

Tashpolad Narbutabekov, a Tashkent lawyer very active in politics from the beginning of the revolutionary period,¹⁴⁸ gave a speech to the First Congress of the Peoples of the East, which exemplified this dynamic. This September 1920 Baku congress was a "watershed" because most of the delegates left it feeling the Bolsheviks "would never ally themselves

¹⁴⁸ Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 254.

to an asiocentric strategy,” but resigned to cooperate with them anyway.¹⁴⁹

Narbutabekov told the gathering that the Turkestan representatives “declare that our Muslim peoples, and the peoples of the Orient, want no rule other than Soviet authority. We have no choice: either the English capitalists, or the labouring masses of Russia and the surrounding world.”¹⁵⁰ Narbutabekov explained that whereas the Occident had experienced a range of different types of government, from despotic to liberal, the Orient had only experienced despotism, whether traditional or under colonization of the capitalist Occident. Soviet Russia, he claimed, offered the only new option for the Orient. Since the first days of the Revolution, he claimed, the Bolsheviks had called for “the right of all peoples to dispose of themselves.”¹⁵¹ Although this speech was steeped in Soviet language, Narbutabekov retained the notion that alliance with the Communists should be subject to ongoing negotiation.

The declaration of the non-party comrades requires that respect for the varied interests of the Caucasus, of Turkestan, and of all the ancient marches of Russia be guaranteed; the task of the Congress is to underline these as we say to our [Bolshevik] government: Comrades, the Muslims will not abandon the Soviet regime, but on the condition that their particular interests be recognized and that enterprising measures to that end be applied by the power of the Soviets, rather than remaining on paper, dead letter.¹⁵²

This reflects Ryskulov’s, Chokaev’s, and Khojaev’s dependence on a belief in the decrees of the centre as an aspect of alliance with the Party to be used as a contract for leverage on opponents and accomplices.

¹⁴⁹ Alexandre A. Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union: A Revolutionary Strategy for the Colonial World* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 57.

¹⁵⁰ See Narbutabekov, speech at the Third Session, 4 September 1920, in *Le Premier Congrès Des Peuples de L'Orient, Bakou, 1-8 Sept. 1920*, Compte-rendu sténographique, “Réédition en Fascimile” of the Petrograd 1921 edition (Paris: François Maspero, 1971), 81-2.

¹⁵¹ Narbutabekov, speech at the Third Session, 4 September 1920, in *Le Premier Congrès Des Peuples de L'Orient, Bakou, 1-8 Sept. 1920*, Compte-rendu sténographique, “Réédition en Fascimile” of the Petrograd 1921 edition (Paris: François Maspero, 1971), 81-2.

¹⁵² Narbutabekov, speech at the Third Session, 83.

Such strategic acceptance of Soviet rule among Central Asian elites had likely contributed to the increasing participation of their co-regionals. No evidence conclusively indicates how many Bolsheviks there were in Central Asia between 1917 and 1920, indigenous or Russian, because of poor record keeping, the plethora of organization types, and the often loose and semi-official nature of political association in the chaos of the Civil War period.¹⁵³ Bolshevik Party cells sprang up in most of Turkestan's major centres and a number of small localities during the first half of 1918.

In February, the twenty year-old Akmal Ikramov left his pedagogical training to join the Bolsheviks in Tashkent, starting work as a teacher in a Soviet school almost immediately.¹⁵⁴ The Party organization of the capital meanwhile increased its membership from 64 in December 1917 to 261 in June 1918. It was the only regional Bolshevik Party to recruit Central Asians by mid-summer, and counted 28 as members, and 125 in the Old City of Tashkent (Asian side) as "Party followers."¹⁵⁵ A higher, Soviet estimate for the whole region suggests that those attending the inaugural conference of the Turkestan Communist Party, 17 July 1918 — 43 delegates from 12 regional organizations — represented about 1500 of a total of approximately 2000 Bolsheviks in Turkestan.¹⁵⁶ The new Party declared its commitment to recruiting Central Asians, but does not appear to have done so wholeheartedly. More work in this vein was done by semi-official Central Asian- and Musbiuro-led regional soviets. Their lack of

¹⁵³ D'Encausse, *The Great Challenge*, 141-43.

¹⁵⁴ Akmal Ikramov: *Izbrannye trudy*, 1: 523.

¹⁵⁵ Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 125.

¹⁵⁶ M. G. Bakhl'ov, "K 50-letiiu obrazovaniia Kompartii Turkestana: Pervyi s'ezd KPT i ego istoricheskoe znachenie," *Obshchestvennye nauki v Uzbekistane* (Tashkent: Izd-vo Akademii nauk Uzbekskoi SSR, 1968), 11.

'Soviet' legitimacy is demonstrated by the fact most were dissolved by Moscow or merged with other soviets in late 1920.

As Moscow gained an increasingly strong hold in Central Asia, Ryskulov and Khojaev adapted to the growing limits on their activity by identifying closely with the power structures they worked for. Mustafa Chokaev once called Ryskulov "Stalin's favourite"¹⁵⁷ because of the favour he was shown by Moscow through patronage, consultation, and privileged access to its members. Khojaev also acquired a nickname. In the early 1920s, he was sometimes referred to as the "Lenin of the Uzbeks," ostensibly because of his short stature,¹⁵⁸ although his role as the dedicated leader of the Bolshevik Revolution in Bukhara no doubt informed the epithet as well. He and Ryskulov were among the few Central Asians, heavily involved in the Party at this time, successful in mediating the use of its symbols of power in Central Asia.

¹⁵⁷ Mustafa Chokaev, *Turkestan pod vlast'iu sovetov*, 11.

¹⁵⁸ Alexandre Barmine, *Memoirs of a Soviet Diplomat: Twenty Years in the Service of the U.S.S.R.*, transl. by Gerard Hopkins (London: Lovat Dickson Limited, 1938), 132.

CHAPTER 2

“Stalin’s Favourite” and the “Lenin of the Uzbeks”: Soviet Legitimacy in Memories of the Revolution

Ryskulov and Khojaev were prolific contributors to the history of the Bolshevik take-over in Central Asia. This chapter is about interpreting what Ryskulov and Khojaev wrote about the revolutions of 1917, including the essays which informed Chapter 1. Each one’s works reflect his dual identities, and dual motives, as a mediator of foreign power in the region. As Party cadres, Ryskulov and Khojaev participated in creating a Soviet version of Central Asian history. As Central Asians whose own revolutionary activities had at times been independent of, and contrary to, Bolshevik ideals, the two actors highlighted the ‘Soviet’ characteristics of their roles.

Their application of Soviet concepts to Central Asia parallels the behaviour of colonial mediators in other contexts. Jeff Sahadeo has demonstrated how Russian colonial administrators and intellectuals of late nineteenth-century Tashkent competed to construct social memory of the conquest of Turkestan, and the Russian *mission civilisatrice*, in order to address political concerns of the day.¹ In the twentieth century, Central Asian power brokers like Ryskulov and Khojaev invoked the new, Soviet symbols of collective memory to glorify past, personal and collective examples of oppression and progressive social upheaval as predictors of the October Revolution and their justified role in its aftermath.

I illustrate how they did so in the following three sections. The first presents how these two actors’ general discussions of the Bolshevik Revolution in Central Asia

¹ Jeff Sahadeo, “Empire of Memories: Conquest and Civilization in Imperial Russian Tashkent,” in *Canadian Slavonic Papers* XLVI (1-2) March-June 2004: 395-416.

coincided with the official state version. Their work, however, refers a great deal to their own participation. So the subsequent two sections pertain respectively to Ryskulov's, and then Khojaev's, revolutionary autobiographies. I focus on how they situate their personal histories in the Soviet context. Each clearly demonstrates why he was well suited to joining the Bolshevik cause. Their discussions of colonial Central Asia bear many thematic and contextual similarities, but rarely address their respective regions of political activity in the early revolutionary period. Ryskulov and Khojaev both make factual errors, intentionally and accidentally, which I will point out when they have a significant impact on the themes I am presenting.

The ways Ryskulov and Khojaev personalize the revolution demonstrate the degree to which they manipulated Bolshevik officialdom to suit their own need for legitimacy. Kuromiya suggests it is important to differentiate between authors who emphasize individuality in their memorial discussions of the wider collective. The choice to emphasize individual endeavour, he claims, highlights the subjectivity of a historical comment, and represents a "challenge to history free of the safety of collectivity."² The extent to which this distinction had implications for the security of Ryskulov and Khojaev in the Soviet hierarchy of the 1920s is difficult to ascertain without access to archival documents on their relationships with other actors and the power structures they inhabited. The manner in which they arrived at their positions within the party affects which associations they highlight, or lack thereof as they tell the story of the revolution — Ryskulov ostensibly at the head of a revolutionary group, seemingly clear about who his allies and enemies were almost at the outset of 1917, and Khojaev, the flexible

² Kuromiya, "Soviet Memoirs as a Historical Source," 246-47.

opportunist, indebted politically and otherwise to a wide variety of interests within and without Bukhara.

The memorial histories written by Ryskulov and Khojaev were part of a discourse of power set in motion by the Russian revolutions. “The critical issue facing the Bolsheviks in 1917 [and thereafter] was not merely the seizure of power but the seizure of meaning,” according to Victoria Bonnell. “The Russian revolutions challenged old ways of comprehending the world and aroused profound uncertainty over the meaning of the past, present, and future.”³ The Party immediately undertook to delineate the fundamentals of a new system of meaning and identity which corresponded to communism: power and values were defined in terms of class struggle, history in terms of Marxist evolutionism, and enemies in terms which villanized the pre-revolutionary social hierarchy.⁴ Most of the few studies addressing this phenomenon focus on Russia, but, as Sahadeo has demonstrated, it played just as significant a role in Central Asia.⁵

Ryskulov’s and Khojaev’s participation in Soviet political and social life required acquiescence to new, revolutionary symbols of power. I use Orlando Figes’ and Boris Kolonitskii’s term, ‘language of legitimacy’, to encompass this symbolic system transcending speech, art, literature, and ritual — “at one important level they were the

³ Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters Under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), accessed online at Net Library [http://catalogue.library.carleton.ca/search/abonnell%2C+ victoria/abonnell+ victoria/1%2C1%2C9%2CB/1856&FF=abonnell+ victoria+e&3%2C%2C9%2C1%2C0], 1.

⁴ These elements of Bolshevik legitimacy remained relatively constant in the history of the USSR, even though the degree to which they were emphasized in relation to one another, and the manner in which they were interpreted in terms of immediate political realities shifted over time. Bonnell aptly shows how such realities are conferred through Russian language political posters between 1917 and the end of the Stalinist era. For an interesting discussion of the crucial and complex struggle over symbolic authority and the meaning of symbols common to a variety of groups between the revolutions of 1917, see Orlando Figes and Boris Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution: The Language and Symbols of 1917* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

⁵ See Sahadeo, “Creating a Russian Colonial Community,” 334-36.

object of the fight itself.”⁶ Bonnell claims the Soviets produced this language⁷ for the purpose of

‘establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority.’ Revolutions, such as the one in Russia in October 1917, discredit and destroy existing institutions and relations of authority, opening up the discursive field for an entirely new definition of the social order of political power . . . The former dominant classes, and the Provisional Government that had ruled Russia since February 1917, lost power as a consequence of the October Revolution. In their place was the Bolshevik party and the new Soviet state, with its commissars, secret police, Red Army, and a small but vociferous band of true believers, fellow travelers, opportunists, and henchmen. The Bolsheviks recognized very early that power without legitimacy provided a precarious basis for a new regime. A key element in their legitimation strategy was the formulation and dissemination of their own master narrative of world history, which justified the establishment of a ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ under Bolshevik leadership and fortified the party’s authority among the population.⁸

Ryskulov and Khojaev used this master narrative of the language of legitimacy to justify the authority of the Bolshevik Party in Central Asia. In doing so, they also established grounds for their own legitimacy as agents of the new regime.

Ryskulov’s and Khojaev’s proficiency in the emerging symbols and language of the October Revolution may be attributed to a number of factors associated with the nature of revolutionary society in the former Russian Empire. Figes and Kolonitskii explain that, to Russians of the early twentieth century, a number of symbols had become key elements of the revolutionary discourse. And so the “language of class” became the medium of discourse thanks to its flexibility as a term that could encompass many

⁶ Figes and Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution*, 1.

⁷ Bonnell refers to this symbolic matrix using Eric Hobsbawm’s term “invented traditions,” i.e.: “a set of practices . . . which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.” Invented traditions, according to Hobsbawm, can perform three (possibly overlapping) functions. First, they are created for the purpose of ‘establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities.” See Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 1-2.

⁸ Ibid.

different identities, while describing different ideals of social justice, and yet uniting them in a common political struggle.⁹

Most of Ryskulov's and Khojaev's works considered in this chapter were written in the 1920s. The historical essays of Ryskulov and Khojaev contributed to this effort to portray the Bolshevik Revolution as having Central Asian roots, not Russian ones. They were heavily influenced by Soviet nationalities policy of this time, which encouraged an approach to institution- and regime-building called *korenizatsiia*. Meaning nativization, or more literally 'rooting', this is the key Russian term for the Bolshevik policy of nation-building, or *natsional'noe stroitel'stvo*. This policy's goal was representing the Revolution as something the non-Russians of the USSR felt they were a part of, something they had a stake in. It emerged as the leaders of the Bolshevik Party faced the reality of secessionist national movements and the need to gain the support of non-Russians without allowing a path to separation. Gerhard Simon captures the urgency felt by the Party at this time, noting that "even after 1921, Soviet power was not at all established in many non-Russian territories; in some, like Central Asia and Kazakhstan, it barely existed."¹⁰ In 1922, a Russian called S. Dimanshtein predicted the thrust of the policy in his call to action in a *Zhizn' Natsional'nostei* article, as follows.

If we now take to gathering historical materials, draw the [indigenous] nations themselves into this business, and give them (and, in some measure, ourselves) their true history, they will be grateful to Soviet authority for it.

[We must take] special notice of those historical events, tied to various national uprisings against the inhumane yoke of autocracy, which were brutally suppressed, and after which national memory was left with an indignation [for Imperial Russia] — such as, for example, the Kyrgyz

⁹ Figes and Kolonitskii, *Interpreting the Russian Revolution*, 2. See also Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Ascribing Class: the construction of social identity in Soviet Russia," chap. 1 in *Stalinism: New Directions*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick (New York: Routledge, 2000), 20-47.

¹⁰ Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society* (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1991), 23.

uprising in 1916, and so on. We would benefit a great deal from opposition to all the past horrors they discover in their freedom under Soviet rule.”¹¹

When *korenizatsiia* became policy in 1923¹², the Bolsheviks changed emphasis in nationalities policy from national self-determination to inclusive nation-building, in terms of ethnicity within the state framework rather than an autonomous state.¹³ Ryskulov and Khojaev complied with these guidelines in the 1920s, and tried to write about the October Revolution as an event with origins in Central Asia.

Colonial Backwards

“Because of the Bolshevik identification with the historical process, history is both more political and more vital in the USSR than in other societies,” wrote Lowell Tillet.¹⁴

Ryskulov and Khojaev wrote about pre-revolutionary Central Asia as a place that needed the October Revolution. They portray the event as signifying the end of past wrongs, and the beginning of a just future: they put special emphasis on colonial Russia’s oppression of the region to justify the Bolshevik coup and the nature of the new order. Adherence to *korenizatsiia* stipulated that all legitimate Soviet citizens were to be portrayed as having an innate revolutionary character before 1917, or a past marked by revolutionary activity.

Ryskulov and Khojaev also highlighted colonial-era resistance movements led by Central

¹¹ S. Dimanshtein, “Metody revoliutsionnoi i kommunisticheskoi propagandy na vostokey,” *Zhizn’ Natsional’nostei* 26 Apr 1922 (8): 6.

¹² According to Terry Martin, “the coining of the word *korenizatsiia* was part of the Bolsheviks’ decolonizing rhetoric, which systematically favored the claims of indigenous peoples over ‘newly arrived elements’ (*prishlye elementy*). In 1923, however, *korenizatsiia* was not yet in use. Instead, the term *natsionalizatsiia* was preferred, which emphasized the project of nation-building. This emphasis was echoed in the national republics where the policy was simply named after the titular nationality: *Ukrainizatsiia*, *Uzbekizatsiia*, *Oirotizatsiia*.” See Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*, 12.

¹³ William Fierman, “The Soviet ‘Transformation’ of Central Asia,” in *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*, ed. William Fierman (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1991), 22,29; D’Encausse, *The Great Challenge*, 153-54; and Simon, *Nationalism and Policy*, 9, 13.

¹⁴ Lowell Tillet, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969), 5.

Asians in order to downplay the fact that the revolutions of 1917 were imported from Russia.

This section addresses Ryskulov's and Khojaev's strategies for establishing such histories. I will describe how they apply key symbols of the emergent language of legitimacy to their historical discussions of the oppression of Central Asians' revolutionary character. Both of them comment on pre-colonial Central Asia in general, but as their narratives approach 1917, their discussions become increasingly focused on their own regions of activity — Ryskulov on Turkestan, and Khojaev on Bukhara. I will also show how they differently use the language of legitimacy to describe the 1916 uprisings in Central Asia, a key event in the Soviet mythology about Central Asian teleological development as revolutionaries.

Ryskulov's and Khojaev's accounts differentiate regarding aspects of colonial life, and therefore liberation from colonial life, they emphasize. In the two subsequent sections of this chapter, I will show how these distinctions are strongly tied to their personal stories. Ryskulov focuses on the change to local socio-economic relations when Russia brought economic development to Central Asia. In an essay focused on Kazakh regions, he sets the stage by describing the pre-colonial hierarchy of the agrarian economies of Kazakh areas as relatively benign. Here the overlordship by *manapy* (wealthy Kyrgyz farmer) and *pukhary* (ploughmen) was a long-established social institution, which, like nomadism, was almost naturally suited to social and economic relations in the region.¹⁵ These tangible social phenomena are of lesser interest to Khojaev. He was more intent

¹⁵ T. R. Ryskulov, "Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskii i bytvoi stroi Kirgizskogo naroda do revoliutsii: do perekhoda v poddanstvo" ["The structure of the socio-economic and everyday life of the Kyrgyz (Kazakh) nation up to the revolution: towards citizenship in Russia"], from *Kazakhstan* (1927), in *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, (Almaty: "Kazakhstan," 1998), 2: 296-98.

on themes relating to the Bolshevik civilizing mission. He describes pre-colonial Central Asia as ruled by tribes and nations coexisting in a general state of political and economic backwardness, never ruling the region as a whole because they failed to cooperate peacefully.¹⁶ Khojaev therefore views the revolution as the seminal event in the social, political, and educational enlightenment of the Central Asian population through Bolshevik Communism.

The tone and content of Ryskulov's and Khojaev's accounts of the pre-revolutionary period corresponds to that of Mikhail N. Pokrovskii, the dominant Soviet historian of the 1920s, and a key player in shaping the era's language of legitimacy. Tillett claims that Pokrovskii's commentaries constitute "the harshest indictment of the Russian Empire that has ever been published." The so-called Pokrovskii School saw nothing less than senseless brutality, corruption, and economic exploitation in the conquests of the former regime, and viewed its exploits as worse than those of other colonial empires, including the British. Pokrovskii mocked the tsarist civilizing mission which accompanied the conquest of Central Asia because he believed Russian culture to be quite low.¹⁷

Ryskulov's and Khojaev's discussions of the past enjoin this school by identifying the *vragi* (enemies) of the post-revolutionary period as the rulers of the pre-revolutionary period. This approach legitimized the Bolsheviks as rulers of the new era because they had unseated them. One of the ideas informing this approach is the concept of Great Russian chauvinism, or "the tendency for Russians to take a superior or haughty attitude

¹⁶ Faizulla Khojaev, "Deciat' let bor'by i stroitel'stva," originally published in Tashkent by Uzbekskoe Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo in 1927, in *Izbrannye trudy v trekh tomakh*, 2: 116-18.

¹⁷ Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 21, 26-31.

toward non-Russians, and to dominate them politically and economically.”¹⁸ This language equated national or ethnic tensions to symptoms of political-economic relations, as required by Communist doctrine. Phrases referring to individual *vragi*, which did not imply kinship, include the term “class enemy.”

In the USSR, such political terms and concepts as ‘class enemy’ were typically shaped in content and form by Soviet leaders like Ryskulov and Khojaev, and, perhaps as a result, used by the general population rather seriously.¹⁹ “However naïve or absurd they may appear today, such political concepts as ‘class enemy’ . . . which framed the political thinking of the [Soviet] time, were at once comprehensible and quite meaningful” to those who used them, as well as their target audience.²⁰

In Russia, *vragi* were all eligible for vilification and persecution under the terms ‘*burzhuaziia*’ (‘bourgeoisie’) and ‘capitalist’. Ryskulov and Khojaev translated such terms, derived from an industrial society (inasmuch as Russia was in 1917), into applications for their agrarian borderland home. The most important *vragi* in the 1920s were people whose position under the old regime was considered reprehensible to Bolsheviks. They were referred to in general as *byvshie liudi*, or “former people.” The Central Asian equivalents of nobility and tsarist servants included amirs and khans and their staff. Russian categories of capitalist occupations, such as merchants, factory owners, bankers, and *kulaks*, had Central Asian parallels in *bais* (wealthy farmers), the *manaps*, and *beks* (large landowners). Enemies in organized religion, such as priests and

¹⁸ The Party made eradication of the problem a constant resolution at Party congresses until 1930, as an acknowledgement that the theory of cooperation between the nationalities at the Party level was not a reality of the revolution.

¹⁹ Kuromiya, “Soviet Memoirs as a Historical Source,” 240–42, 244.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 245.

rabbis, had Islamic equivalents in the *mulla* (religious cleric), and *ulama* (the intellectual elite of the Muslim clergy).²¹

Some other terms, however, did not require translation. In Soviet Central Asia, Great Russian chauvinism was the legacy of tsarism. Widespread hatred of the Russians after the October Revolution was explained by identifying nation with class. In discussions of the pre-Revolutionary period, colonials were therefore considered bourgeoisie, and the colonized or oppressed borderland peoples were viewed collectively as proletarians.²² This concept lends itself conveniently to the characteristically colonial relationship that emerged between tsarist Russia and Central Asia. The latter's role as a source of raw materials for the former emerged as a force when construction of the Central Asian Railroad began in 1880, and a whole host of local cottage industries was evicted.²³ After 1900, Turkestan became the metropole's major source of agricultural and raw products, and a primary source of cotton and silk. A cash economy developed as production in the colony grew, inflating land prices and causing indebtedness and landlessness among Central Asians.²⁴

Ryskulov focuses on Central Asians who allied with the colonizer. He claims that, as the relationship between Russia and Turkestan became more exploitative, so also did that among local actors.²⁵ The *bais* and *manapy* increasingly had access to more of the best

²¹ Bonnell, *Iconography of Power*, 191-92, 201-2; K. N. Nurpeisov and V. K. Grigor'ev, "Kratkii slovar' tiurkizmov, ustarevshikh i malopotrebliaushchikhsia slov", *T. R. Ryskulov: Sobranye sochinenii v trekh tomakh* (Almaty: "Kazakhstan," 1998) 2: 376-77; d'Encausse, "Glossary of Arabic, Persian and Turkish Terms," *Islam and the Russian Empire*, 255-59; and Bennigsen, "Glossary," *Muslim National Communism*, 225-28.

²² Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 18-25.

²³ Pierce, *Russian Central Asia*, 251.

²⁴ MacKenzie, "Turkestan's Significance to Russia," 179-84.

²⁵ Ryskulov, "Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskii i bytovoi stroi Kirgizskogo naroda," 296-98.

lands, and managed them in an increasingly nepotistic manner.²⁶ In Ryskulov's words, the traditional economy was transformed into a "commodity-money" economy, in which traditional elites became modern exploiters and therefore enemies of the people.

Colonization affected the protectorate of Bukhara somewhat differently, although many of the same processes were present. Russia had supported the centralization of local governing and religious authority in the tsarist protectorate, a process that stabilized by the mid-1880s.²⁷ Capitalist development increasingly spread through the region with the railway, and Russians arrived to establish or work in factories, businesses, or banks, and agrarian production became commercial. The social consequences were similar to those in Turkestan, as traditional social-economy was uprooted and a Bukharan bourgeoisie emerged. The new class included the Amir, whose wealth helped him retain his traditional and newfound authority.²⁸

Despite the amirate's similar history to the Governorate General in Ryskulov's discussions, Khojaev does not give the same attention to social and economic change. In fact, he associates the new reality of Russian control with Bukharans' inability to change their intellectual dispositions. His discussion of the colonial era concerns how the combination of Russian and Central Asian worlds affected Bukharans' access to modernity. He equates and attributes oppression to backwardness of the subordinate peoples. In "O mlado Bukhartsakh," he mentions the spread of Russian market economy, and the speed with which economic relationships were changing. But he remarks that there was little change in social life. To Khojaev, the amirate had in the twentieth century become "a strange and ugly anachronism, reflecting political and economic

²⁶ Ibid., 301.

²⁷ Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 66.

²⁸ d'Encausse, *Islam and the Russian Empire*, 37-47.

contradictions remaining from dozens of years of contact with tsarist Russia.”²⁹ Here, the social and political status quo was artificially stopped in time, as a result of the amirate’s protectorate status. The *mullas*, as the amir’s subjects, became *de facto* colonial subjects, for whom enforcement of this hierarchical stasis was in the interest of their careers and privileged positions.³⁰ Deep in the heart of Central Asia, the amirate was far from the

high roads of modern culture, but at the very centre of international antiquity, with a downtrodden, illiterate population. At the same time, there were at every step footprints of Arab-Persian high culture, presenting our times with another anachronism: heavy despotism of the Amir and the whole structure of ancient despotism, artfully conserved and severed from [other] political forms by Russian bayonets . . . there was no legislative organ aside from the will of the amir, no laws aside from the religious laws of the Shariat, and no guarantee of personal or property rights.³¹

Other significant differences between Ryskulov and Khojaev emerge in their discussions of revolutionary teleology. Both of them joined the Pokrovskii school in praising colonial-era uprisings and resistance movements in Central Asia as premonitions of October 1917.³² Ryskulov’s discussion refers to a long revolutionary tradition among Central Asians. He traces Kazakh uprisings against Russian colonialism to 1730.³³ And he points out that even when the Khan of Kokand was defeated during the conquest of Turkestan, the Kyrgyz people still fought the Russians. Ryskulov situates these discussions in a class-conflict context. By the twentieth century, he notes, when the colonial relationship had stabilized, uprisings were not only against the colonizing Russians, but also against the Central Asian propertied class ‘exploiters’, the *verkhushki*

²⁹ Khojaev, “O mlado-bukhartsakh,” 123.

³⁰ Ibid., 125.

³¹ There is a similar summary of the anachronism of Bukhara in K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare, as cited in Kangas, “Faizulla Khojaev,” 93. Khojaev, “O mlado-bukhartsakh,” 123.

³² Until 1940, all revolts against tsarist colonialism were considered progressive. See Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 171.

³³ “Even in 1730, after the Small orda and part of the Middle orda joined the Russians . . . the latter, dissatisfied with Russian governance, started fighting it for the return of their forfeited independence.” T. R. Ryskulov, *Kazakhstan* (Moskva-Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel’stvo, 1927), 42.

(elites).³⁴ “Just so, the tsarist regime was closely tied to the landholding class and the Russian bourgeoisie, and it served their interests, conjunctly with the exploitation of the toiling masses.”³⁵

Khojaev could not convincingly demonstrate a history of uprisings in Bukhara. The most recent uprisings he could call on were in the 1860s, when his political opponents, the *ulama*, demonstrated to convince the Amir to fight the Russian conquest.³⁶ Khojaev claims that there were individuals in the Amirate with anti-colonial dispositions commensurate with Bolshevik values, but that they were unable to realize them. He explains this as yet another colonial anachronism: a poorly developed local economy meant there were no proletarians. Moreover, the colonial government’s support for traditional hierarchies, despite the new emerging economy, caused stasis in of pre-industrial class identities. He also claims that those wealthy Bukharans who had the connections, education, and will to rise up, were themselves inhibited by indebtedness to Russian banks.³⁷

Khojaev’s focus on the backwardness of pre-capitalist/industrial society extends to the whole of Central Asia. Although Central Asians had an innate revolutionary spirit, they were not able to marshal it due to their lack of enlightenment under colonial oppression.

There’s a reason why the nations of Turkestan endured this beggarly existence, a reason why the whole country was shrouded in the darkness of backwardness and ignorance. How else could one explain that until the revolution there was not one Uzbek or other national with a higher education³⁸, and the fact that 95-98 percent of the population was illiterate?³⁹

³⁴ Ibid., 44; and T. R. Ryskulov, *Kirgizstan*, originally published in Leningrad and Moscow by Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’svo in 1929, in *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, (Almaty: “Kazakhstan,” 1998), 2: 310.

³⁵ T. R. Ryskulov, “Po povodu vystupleniia tov. Menitskogo,” in *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, 3: 276.

³⁶ Khalid, “Society and Politics in Bukhara,” 369.

³⁷ Khojaev, “O mlado-bukhartsakh,” 124, 126-27.

³⁸ This was not the case: Ryskulov, Chokaev, and Ikramov, for example, had higher educations, as noted above.

His negativity about revolutionary activity in colonial Turkestan diverges significantly from Ryskulov. This difference is exemplified by their comments on the uprisings of 1916. Ryskulov and Khojaev differentiate on their interpretation of the 1916 uprisings because they both had a different relationship with them. The most significant distinction is that, whereas Ryskulov was involved in the rebel movement, Khojaev was not. In fact, the latter had no role in any pre-1917 revolutionary activity. These differences are expressed in the ways they interpret specific aspects of the uprisings of 1916, although both use the same language of legitimacy. His and Ryskulov's accounts of the uprising both carefully stipulate it sparked the unrest culminating from half a century of colonial oppression. Indeed, in the former's words, "the order for mobilization only poured butter on the fire."⁴⁰ According to Ryskulov, rebellion like this was the only way out, and he claims the uprising was so effective that it disrupted the imperialist ambitions of the Russians on such neighbouring countries as Afghanistan.⁴¹

The 1916 uprisings were the first time Central Asians succeeded in significantly affecting Russia through rebellion. Demonstrations beginning in Tashkent on 4 July spread through the Semirechie region quickly, in the form of protests, riots, and murderous rampages, in which Imperial officials and Russian immigrants, as well as property were indiscriminately targeted. Anti-tsarist sentiment which sparked the uprisings gave way to anti-Russian behaviour, where rioters rarely discriminated between

³⁹ Khojaev, "Deciat' let bor'by i stroitel'stva," 120.

⁴⁰ Faizulla Khojaev, "Istoricheskoe znachenie vosstaniia 1916 goda (Rech' na narodnom mitinge v Tashkente, 1 Avgusta 1936)," ["The historical meaning of the 1916 uprising (Speech at a national meeting in Tashkent)," originally published in *Pravda Vostoka*, 5 August 1936] in *Izbrannye trudy v trekh tomakh* (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo "Fan" Uzbekskoi SSR, 1970), 3: 484. Onto pg 486 on this theme.

⁴¹ T. Ryskulov, "Iz Istorii bor'by za osvobozhdenie Vostoka" (Vosstanie kirgiz Turkestana protiv tsarizma v 1916 g.), ["From the history of the fight for the liberation of the East (The uprising of the Kyrgyz of Turkestan against tsarism in 1916)"], *Novyi Vostok* 1924 (v. 6): 268-70.

peasant settler and government official as a result, in large part, of massive colonization. The result was a significantly more violent, and prolonged, backlash on the part of the better armed Russian government and settlers. Although the bands of rebels were put down in the Syr Daria region of Tashkent by the end of July, new uprisings took root in the surrounding *oblasts*. The Russians did not defeat those in Transcaspia and the Kazakh Steppe until late December.⁴²

Khojaev suggests that the very reason the 1916 uprisings failed was the lack of good leadership available to the peasants, craftsmen, and other pre-proletarian social groups.⁴³ To Khojaev, the Central Asian rebels of 1916 were furthermore extremely vulnerable to the colonial establishment owing to a lack of guidance.⁴⁴ Since the revolution was of a wide social nature, he claims it easily fell under the influence in many places of the *bais*, *beks*, and *manapsy*, who, along with the Jadids, took charge and delivered the rebellion to the generals and other colonials.⁴⁵ As a result, he claims, the workers of Central Asia learned to seek guidance from proletarians.⁴⁶ In a 1936 speech, he states “the [1916] uprising had huge political-educational significance for millions of workers of the Turkestani population. It was one of the most important liberating stages in the fight of the Central Asian workers against colonial exploitation and national oppression.”⁴⁷

Ryskulov also believed the outcome of the 1916 uprisings had made a revolutionary population, but he comes to an opposite conclusion about its dynamics. He states that its

⁴² Pierce, *Russian Central Asia*, 273-92.

⁴³ Khojaev, “Istoricheskoe znachenie vosstaniia 1916 goda,” 486-88.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 488-89.

⁴⁶ Ibid.,

⁴⁷ Ibid., 484.

leaders were not fallible, but heroes of the international fight against capitalism.⁴⁸ They rebelled not only against Tsarism, but also against the exploitative elites of the Central Asian population.⁴⁹ He comments on those bourgeoisie, that is *bais*, *mullas*, and others who Khojaev claims joined to serve their Russian allegiance, had no choice but to do so because of the strength of the uprising.⁵⁰ Ryskulov thereby emphasizes the strength of the revolution and not its downfall. He rather differently claims that even though the uprisings were put down, they led the way for the Bolsheviks to finish the job.⁵¹ In fact, historian Salavat Iskhakov notes “many Turkestanis, especially the older generation, perceived the 1917 revolution as the logical conclusion to the 1916 uprising, which had set up an insurmountable barrier between Russian tsarism and Turkestan.”⁵² The death toll accounts for some of this statement. An estimated 3,700 Russian civilians, and 170 militia-men were killed between July and the last rebellions. The number of Central Asians, involved in the rebellions or not, who were killed in the reprisals is impossible to calculate, however. One Soviet demographer estimates the total Central Asian population loss — including emigration, which is elsewhere estimated at 300, 000 — between 1914 and 1918 to be 1, 230 000, mostly attributable to 1916.⁵³

The different ways Ryskulov and Khojaev portray the 1916, and all of Central Asia’s pre-Revolutionary history, derives from their need to portray the events of 1917 in Turkestan and 1917-20 in Bukhara, respectively. Their own stories of personal

⁴⁸ Ryskulov, “Iz Istorii bor’by za osvobozhdenie Vostoka,” 270.

⁴⁹ Ryskulov, *Kirgizstan*, 313.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 312.

⁵¹ Ryskulov, “Iz Istorii bor’by za osvobozhdenie Vostoka,” 270.

⁵² Salavat M. Iskhakov, “The Consciousness of Muslim Peasants in Russia: The Dynamics of Change, 1905-1920,” *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review*, 27 (2-3) 2000: 211.

⁵³ “Official punishment . . . was comparatively light”: 51 died at the hands of the courts, 168 were sentenced to hard labour, 228 to correctional labour detachments and 129 to imprisonment. Pierce, *Russian Central Asia*, 293.

participation was after all at stake in how carefully they crafted these memories. As their memorial discussions of their own roles in the aftermath of February demonstrate, their pre-Revolutionary biographies had a singular impact on the way that they illustrated the history of October.

Ryskulov

Turar Ryskulov had a positive view of the 1916 uprisings because he was involved in leading them, and he wanted official history of them to contribute to his revolutionary legitimacy. His memorial essays portray him as an ideal Bolshevik leader: in his capacity as a formerly oppressed Central Asian, he was the kind of person who was supposed to benefit from the revolution; he was also an educated, colonial-era rebel, embodying many Bolshevik ideals even before October 1917. This section addresses how Ryskulov invokes the Soviet language of legitimacy within the context of its master narrative of the October Revolution. I will highlight his use of official symbols, first in discussion of his childhood, and then in transition to his participation in the early revolutionary period analyzed in Chapter 2. I emphasize the Bolshevik ideals of revolution — enlightenment, innate proletarian and revolutionary character — which he projects.

Ryskulov's behaviour — and Khojaev's, as I will demonstrate in the next section — parallels that of intermediaries of colonial governments elsewhere. I refer to Mary Louise Pratt's use of the terms 'autoethnography' and 'authoethnographic expression' to conceive of the Central Asians' historiographical comments as "instances in which colonized subjects undertake to represent themselves in ways that engage with the

colonizers's own terms." She claims that "autoethnography involves partial collaboration with and appropriation of the idioms of the conqueror."⁵⁴ This type of expression, Pratt believes, is very widespread in what she calls the 'contact zone' between colonizer and colonized, the concurrently literal and abstract space of encounter between two previously separated peoples. She finds such occurrence, for example, in the nineteenth-century poetry of Venezuelan Creole Andres Bello, whose narrative of progress, she claims, legitimizes Europeanization by nativizing the discourse of modernity. The key to his poetry is in his acquisition of the language, ideas, and cultural authority of Alexander von Humboldt.⁵⁵

There are many 'contact zones' between Soviet cadres and Soviet government in Ryskulov's "*Kratkaia avtobiografiia*" ("A Short Autobiography"). Ryskulov identifies himself with the workers and the poor, groups entitled to the fruits of the revolution. The working class was virtually faultless in popularized Bolshevik ideology on account of its oppression. Ryskulov's association with this group suggests he was also virtuous according to the discourse of class. He begins his account by establishing that he was poor and oppressed by the capitalist order, of the colonial era, like a common Central Asian.⁵⁶

I emerged from the most downtrodden and oppressed strata of the Kyrgyz people. I experienced a life so unfortunate, it is known only to the poorest nomad of the steppe. I suppose that, as far as this goes, there are few among the enlightened Kyrgyz who could claim more oppressed origins than I, especially in Turkestan . . . the double oppression of tsarist administration (Russian and indigenous), the crude exploitation by one's own kinsman — bais, etc.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 7.

⁵⁵ Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 6-9, 172, 178.

⁵⁶ One brief and cursory biography of Ryskulov's life suggests "he was born into a wealthy and aristocratic family." The author and source of this information is unknown, however, and other available evidence contradicts this. See *Revoliutsiia v Srednei Azii glazami musul'manskikh bol'shevikov*, 6.

⁵⁷ Ryskulov, "Kratkaia avtobiografiia," 197.

His childhood experience was marked by famine, and like any oppressed Central Asian, he was supposedly willing to do anything, no matter how degrading, to earn money from the exploiting *bai* landlords. Importantly, he uses the word ‘proletarian’, ‘cattleherder’, and ‘nomad,’ associating the latter pre-industrial designations for oppressed groups in the colony with the Bolshevik ideals of an oppressed class.

In the early 1920s, “the tenets of Bolshevism were disseminated to everyone willing to read them,” according to Robert Service. “The Soviet proletariat was advertised as the vanguard of world socialism, as the embodiment of the great social virtues, as the class destined to remake history for all time.”⁵⁸ Meanwhile, Bolshevik Party leaders tried to identify themselves with, and personify, this ideal ordinary person with “unflamboyant tastes.”⁵⁹

Ryskulov paints himself as an ideal beneficiary of the revolution. His background is characterized by revolutionary influences and tendencies, and recognition of the need for the skills acquired through modern education. The ideal of the new ‘Soviet man’ was the Party model for transformation of social attitudes and behaviour. This person attained literacy, numeracy, and other educational skills which empowered to self-improvement and productivity.⁶⁰ Ryskulov shapes this part of his story thus: “on one hand, I grew up in such *wild* conditions, and on the other, I persistently sought to achieve a European education.”⁶¹

Yet, when Ryskulov wrote this, he was careful to accommodate the friction between the regime and the intelligentsia beginning in the early and mid-1920s. This tension was

⁵⁸ Robert Service, *A History of Twentieth-Century Russia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 142.

⁵⁹ Service, *A History of Twentieth-Century Russia*, 142.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁶¹ My emphasis. Ryskulov, “Kratkaia avtobiografia,” 197.

part of the discursive struggle for legitimacy which shaped the notion of *obshchestvennost'*, “the self-conscious public sphere, in early Soviet Russia.”⁶²

Following the Bolshevik coup, most of the professional and intellectual communities, including physicians, teachers, engineers and academicians, used to voicing their opinions with authority, spoke out against the illegality of October. The consensus among the Party leadership was that there should be no differences of opinion in the public sphere of the new revolutionary society, and they felt greatly threatened by the often dissenting voices of the still relatively respectable intelligentsia. Stuart Finkel suggests that the 1922-23 deportation campaign against dissenting Russian intellectuals marked the beginning of a project of defining norms of intellectual public behaviour in Soviet life, although exile, and occasional hard labour, are nowhere near as harsh as the fate of the intelligentsia under Stalin. “The inconsistency in dealing with intellectuals during the 1920s had more to do with the regime’s youth than with its moderation.” A significant portion of the Soviet population harboured suspicions of the intelligentsia.⁶³

Ryskulov acknowledges that Soviet discourse is critical of intellectuals, and singles himself out as unique and justified among them. The crucial foundation of Ryskulov’s image in his story locates him in a revolutionary family from a revolutionary tribe.⁶⁴ He portrays a crime committed by his father as a formative turning-point in his own revolutionary life. In 1905,⁶⁵ when Ryskulov was about 10 years old, his father apparently lost patience with colonial oppression and his debts, and he shot the major-

⁶² Stuart Finkel, “Purging the Public Intellectual: The 1922 Expulsions from Soviet Russia,” *The Russian Review* 62 (October 2003): 591.

⁶³ Finkel, “Purging the Public Intellectual,” 590-93, 610-13.

⁶⁴ Ryskulov, “Kratkaia avtobiografia,” 197-98.

⁶⁵ Anvar Ismailov, “Zhizn’ i syd’ba Turara,” *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda* website, 25 November, 2004, accessed April 13, 2006, at http://www.kazpravda.kz/index.php?lang=rus&uin=1087809932&chapter=1101342618&get_archive=1&archive_date=2004-11-25

domo of the *volost*, as mentioned in Chapter 1.⁶⁶ Ryskulov was allowed to join his father in jail in Semirechie where the boy could be safe from reprisals by the family of the murdered man.⁶⁷

In jail, I began my first lessons at the jail literacy school. Circulating among the arrestees, I studied jail life well. Here was where I first learned who these 'revolutionaries' are (there were many of them). I had a great deal of respect for them, I was drawn to them, and I often even visited them in their cells.⁶⁸

This image of Ryskulov spending a formative year among anti-colonial revolutionaries as he learned Russian in the jail-house school is fantasy-like.⁶⁹ Available evidence suggests that he at least was allowed to accompany his father in the prison, if not interact with the prisoners, etc.⁷⁰ Ryskulov confirms this story in *Iz istorii revoliutsionnoi bor'by v Kazakhstane* over a decade after giving his autobiographical speech. Here, he cites the authoritative proof that "page 260 of the statute on inlagation" stated that children of sentenced persons, under the age of fourteen, were eligible for this kind of treatment.⁷¹

The remainder of Ryskulov's pre-revolutionary autobiography evolves quite smoothly from this moment. He continues to pursue his education even while he works for subsistence like the typical Central Asian, often running up against the limitations imposed on him by the discriminatory colonial establishment; and he becomes increasingly determined to overcome these inhibitions by forcing his way down the path of education. Ryskulov claims he continued his education at a Russo-native school in Aulie-Ata *uezd*, where he lived with his uncle after his father was relocated to Siberia following a year in jail. He claims his uncle was increasingly persecuted by *bais*

⁶⁶ Ryskulov, "Kratkaia avtobiografia," 197-98.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁶⁹ K. N. Nurpeisov and V. K. Grigor'ev, "Turar Ryskulov i ego vremia" [Turar Ryskulov and his time], *Turar Ryskulov, Sobranye sochinenii v trekh tomakh* (Almaty: "Kazakhstan," 1998) 1: 10.

⁷⁰ See Nurpeisov and Grigor'ev, "Turar Ryskulov i ego vremia," 10; and Ustinov, *Turar Ryskulov*, 21-22.

⁷¹ Ryskulov, "Iz istorii revoliutsionnoi bor'by v Kazakhstane," 39.

collecting commission, and Ryskulov was forced to help by selling livestock in town. He notes that “because of this, my hate for my oppressed state began to grow.”⁷²

Ryskulov’s trust in the legitimacy of Russian authority in Russia over those in Central Asia also emerges in his pre-revolutionary activities. He recalls that, in 1915, he applied to a Tashkent teachers’ college, but was rejected, as prescribed by Russian law, on account of the fact he did not practice Orthodox Christianity. Ryskulov complained to the local head of education, who threatened to arrest him. So the young man wrote to the government in St. Petersburg to review the decision.⁷³ As an educated Central Asian, he knew his rights under the Russian regime. Nurpeisov and Grigor’ev suggest that Ryskulov’s protest also demonstrates his trust in the Russian system of government, and his ability to use and navigate its possibilities.⁷⁴ The central government reply in late 1916 granted him access to the school.⁷⁵

Ryskulov is also careful to point out that this was the year he began his revolutionary activities in the 1916 uprisings, which he viewed in a very positive light. When conscription began in the summer of 1916, he claims he quickly returned to his home region of Aulie-Ata, where he aided in organizing the uprising. Ryskulov’s revolutionary activities were ostensibly interrupted at this time because he was arrested. According to K. N. Nurpeisov and V. K. Grigor’ev, the editors of *T. R. Ryskulov: sobrannye sochinenii*, police units were given information about his whereabouts by Central Asian informants. These may have been some of the same uprising leaders Khojaev accuses of working for the colonial establishment. The Jadids and some other intellectuals involved

⁷² Ibid., 199.

⁷³ Sahadeo, “Under a Soviet Roof,” 428; Ryskulov, “Kratkaia avtobiografiia,” 198-200.

⁷⁴ Nurpeisov and Grigor’ev, “Turar Ryskulov i ego vremia,” 10.

⁷⁵ Ryskulov, “Kratkaia avtobiografiia,” 198-200.

in the uprising were actually in favour of conscription. Nurpeisov and Grigor'ev point out that Ryskulov and many other intelligentsia were true to the uprising.⁷⁶ Ryskulov became sick in jail after they arrested him, and thereafter went back to Tashkent for more schooling.⁷⁷

Ryskulov's discussion of 1916 sets necessary precedent for his revolutionary activities the following year. In 1917, he claims his anti-colonial ambitions won over his educational ones. "I didn't complete my studies at the indicated [teachers'] institute because, after the February Revolution, I was drawn into revolutionary work."⁷⁸ Enlightenment, however, was still important to his work, as he demonstrates in discussions of his early revolutionary activities at the head of the Union of Revolutionary Kyrgyz Youth (URKY). Ryskulov's past clearly informs this period, not least because he emphasizes the Kyrgyz revolutionary organization formed on his initiative to continue the anti-colonial work he began in 1916. The URKY, he claims, formed on account of his leadership and respect in the local population.⁷⁹ He has some reason to boast since this was one of the first indigenous revolutionary organizations in Central Asia active until the beginning of 1918.⁸⁰

In fact, Ryskulov claims that there were no other parties of Central Asians.⁸¹ In fact, there were other parties, but he may not have known this at the time of writing, so soon

⁷⁶ Nurpeisov and Grigor'ev, "Turar Ryskulov i ego vremia," 11-12.

⁷⁷ Neither he, nor Nurpeisov and Grigor'ev, however, explain why he was released at a time when many of the key players in the uprising were being arrested. See Nurpeisov and Grigor'ev, "Turar Ryskulov i ego vremia," 12.

⁷⁸ Ryskulov, "Kratkaia avtobiografiia," 200.

⁷⁹ T. R. Ryskulov, "1917 god: Soiuz revoliutsionnoi Kirgizskoi molodezhi (Aulie-atinskii uезд)" ["Union of Revolutionary Kyrgyz Youth (Aulie-Ata Region)"], originally published in early 1917, *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, (Almaty: "Kazakhstan," 1998), 1: 64-5.

⁸⁰ M. K. Kozybaev et al., eds., "Primechaniia: No. 1" ["Notes: No. 1"], in T. R. Ryskulov, *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, (Almaty: "Kazakhstan," 1998), 1: 325.

⁸¹ Ryskulov, "1917 god: Soiuz revoliutsionnoi kirgizskoi molodezhi," 64-5.

after 1917.⁸² The groups and movements which vied for influence in revolutionary Turkestan consisted of a bewildering array of diverse actors, whose memberships and loyalties overlapped in sometimes contradictory and indecipherable ways.

Ryskulov's discussion of this period also is important because, although he draws attention to his organization's successes, he also points out they still needed the help of Russian revolutionaries. Civilizing mission is important in his portrayal of the URKY's fight against former tsarist administrators and Russian *kulaks*, who had a stranglehold on the local population. "The Communist Youth of Turkestan, risen out of the fire of the Revolution, summoned to sweep away the patriarchal-feudal remnants, backwardness and ignorance, were the builders of a new, bright future."⁸³

Ryskulov's account is shaped to maintain his position as opponent of Central Asian traditional elites who were allies of his enemies, the colonial Russians. His discussions of the post-February period also try to remove him from the confused path followed by other members of the Central Asian political class. Mustafa Chokaev and the Kokand Autonomists, for example, allied briefly with members of the Provisional Government and any other Russians who were willing, and then mistakenly challenged the Bolsheviks. Ryskulov also suggests that many of these other Central Asian revolutionaries sought cooperation with the enemy groups because of common economic interest.

These organizations included representatives of the Kazakh national intelligentsia (Mustafa Chokaev and others) . . . In the beginning, because of calls for autonomy, the native bourgeoisie and intelligentsia met opposition from the Russian bourgeois-liberal side. But with the development of subsequent events, and the coming proletarian revolution, the native propertied

⁸² Kozybaev, "Primechaniia: No. 1," 1: 325-26.

⁸³ Ryskulov, "1917 god: Soiuz revoliutsionnoi kirgizskoi molodezhi," 64.

elements and bourgeois-nationalist intelligentsia came to find a common language with the Russian bourgeoisie.⁸⁴

Since Ryskulov identifies these Central Asians as non-Bolsheviks, unlike himself, their motive for allying with Russians appear different from his. As demonstrated in Chapter 1, however, the rationale which informed the process by which he and Chokaev tried to cooperate with Russians in 1917 was similar. Marxist teleology is conspicuous in this quote. Not only was Ryskulov's merger with the Bolsheviks predestined, but so was the alliance between bourgeois Central Asians, so-called in retrospect, and non-Bolsheviks, whose fate was defeat by the leaders of October.

In Ryskulov's words, he emerges in the Revolution as a leader on account of his personal revolutionary skills and predisposition to Bolshevik ideal behaviour. The reality was different. Firstly, available evidence shows that it is highly unlikely any local Social Democrats in Central Asia identified themselves as Bolsheviks in the summer of 1917, or even until after the October Revolution. Ustinov, meanwhile, suggests that in the immediate post-February period, Ryskulov came to personally know many local Russian politicians, *eserovki* (Socialist Revolutionaries) and Social Democrat alike.⁸⁵ Given that these parties did not yet differ significantly on policy issues, this is probably the case.⁸⁶ This fact places Ryskulov firmly in the wider indigenous political movement in Turkestan — contradicting the claims of his own work.

His proficiency in the Bolshevik language of legitimacy, and his close acquaintance with revolution in Central Asia, allowed Ryskulov to contribute forcefully to the myth of October. More importantly, his works also allowed him to shape the 'myth of Ryskulov',

⁸⁴ Ryskulov, "Iz istorii revoliutsionnoi bor'by v Kazakstane," 45.

⁸⁵ Ustinov, *Turar Ryskulov*, 45-6.

⁸⁶ Sahadeo, "The Exploiters or the Exploited?" 22.

as part of the Bolshevik master narrative. Other revolutionaries, historians, and commentators were writing about the revolution, and could discuss it as they pleased. It would be difficult, however, for them to shape events relating to Ryskulov without referring to what the subject had written.

Khojaev

Faizulla Khojaev's autobiographical discussion employs a strategy akin to Ryskulov's in that he claims that he was a member of a group lobbying for goals similar to those of the Bolsheviks prior to October 1917. His interpretation of the revolution is quite different from Ryskulov's, however. The two were quite different people, after all, starting their careers in relatively dissimilar places, and had very different backgrounds. But since Khojaev's rise was so crucially identified with the Young Bukharans he also has to account for the fact that by 1924/25 many of these early co-conspirators — including, most importantly, the Jadids — were intellectual and economic elites, and often no longer part of the revolutionary teleological trajectory, or at least that of the Bolsheviks. Indeed, the reason Khojaev's accounts of Central Asia's revolutionary history focus on abstract themes related to emergence from backwardness is that he had to portray himself, and the other Bukharan revolutionaries, as politically backward to account for their pre-Bolshevik characteristics. Khojaev could never effectively portray himself as anything but an elite. Nor could he represent the rebellion he led in September 1920 as a proletarian act. This section is about the way Khojaev applies the Soviet language of legitimacy to his pre-Revolutionary biography in Bukhara.

Khojaev comments very little on his personal pre-revolutionary identity or his childhood in pre-Revolutionary Bukhara. His Soviet biographers also “spend very little time addressing the pre-Revolutionary period, except to set the stage for the oncoming changes.”⁸⁷ These official histories avoid his early life because it diverged significantly to the official ideal. Privilege shaped Khojaev’s life and outlook. He was born into one of the amirate’s wealthiest families. His father, Abdulla Khojaev, was a successful *karakul* (the pelt of a Central Asian lamb) and textiles merchant who traded outside the amirate, often with Russians. His family was typical of the emerging business class in that it was not within the inner circle of the royal court, held no land, and was not associated with the *dekhkans* (peasants). Kangas claims this signified the family therefore lacked allegiance to the standard social order. Khojaev’s Central Asian identity was traditional in several important ways though. His parents managed the household largely in a “traditional Muslim way.” As a boy, he attended a traditional Islamic *mekteb*, and spent two years studying the Koran in a *madrassa*.⁸⁸ Even so, Khojaev’s father’s wealth allowed him the best educational opportunities. The boy studied in Moscow in 1907-12, then returned home upon the unexpected death of his father. The extent of bourgeois influence on his life becomes a fact of more potent importance because he spent almost three years abroad living with a wealthy merchant and Constitutional Democrat, where, a Soviet journalist claims, he “absorbed the ‘ideals of a bourgeois reconstruction of Russia.’”⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Kangas, “Faizulla Khojaev,” 86.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 12-15, 91-2; Carlisle, “Review of Faizulla Khojaev, *Izbrannye trudy*,” 56; and Khojaev, “O mlado-bukhartsakh,” 133.

⁸⁹ This information comes from G. Dimov’s article, “On vyros v bor’be” [He emerged from the Struggle] in *Pravda Vostoka*, 27 May 1966, as cited in Carlisle, “Review of Faizulla Khojaev, *Izbrannye trudy*,” 56.

The influence of social stature on Khojaev's life and opportunities was quite significant. For example, he himself points out that he was able to attend the unveiling of the Amir's manifesto only on account of the fact that his uncle, Latif Khojaev, had a high enough rank in the government to provide him with this opportunity. Khojaev may have included this fact as a weak attempt to give the appearance of personal separation from some of the privilege he was probably known to have. In a society where family relations were quite important, this would not have been convincing, however.

A much greater problem in Khojaev's discussion of his past was that, as a leader of the Young Bukharans since February 1917, he was a definitive associate of the Jadids, a group increasingly vilified after the national territorial delimitation. Even if Khojaev could have found a way to make his childhood seem less privileged for the purpose of official propaganda, it would always be overshadowed by this fact. The Jadids had always been viewed with suspicion by the Soviet regime because they were intellectual elites, and many of them were economic and religious elites as well. The Communist Party started a campaign against the Jadids during Party cleansing throughout the USSR in 1925-26. This vilification program became part of the Party's policy against the intelligentsia. In fact, the Russians did not use the term 'Jadid' until the group became its enemy. The term had a negative connotation in the regional language of Chaghatay Turkic, and until it was used by the Soviets, the word was employed only by Jadid's Central Asian enemies.⁹⁰

Khojaev addresses this problem by demonstrating that the Jadids, like their Young Bukharan associates, learned to think and behave as proper Bolshevik revolutionaries in

⁹⁰ The Jadids preferred to refer to themselves as "*tarraqqaparvarlar* ('progressives'), *ziyolilar* or *munavvarlar* ('enlightened ones'); later *yoslar* ('the young') also came into use." See Fedtke, "Jadids, Young Bukharans, Communists," 486-87, 509.

the aftermath of October's example. He claims many of them learned how to act like Communists, and that those who did not lost touch with the organization. This plot-line is the foundation for his concept of the Bukharan Revolution as the overthrow of backwardness. Here, adept Jadids throw off their former faulty identities for the more progressive ones of the Revolution.

A crucial part of his argument is stating (correctly) that as the Young Bukharans and Jadids became Communists, they eventually incorporated some of the toiling masses. Khojaev's main problem lies in the fact that the Jadids can in no way be depicted as proletarians. These Central Asians were regardless of economic class — although few were poor — relatively privileged on account of their intellectual status. He points out that “there were almost no workers or peasants in this first [pre-1917] period of [the Jadid] organization. Later, after the February and, especially, October revolutions, this changed: the revolutionary movement encompassed *dehkans* and soldiers, but this is no longer the period of Jadidism.”⁹¹ Khojaev paints the Jadids, along with the Young Bukharans, as a group consisting of miscellaneous classes trying to find the right revolutionary path. He states they consisted mainly of ‘middle-class’, that is students of spiritual schools, small shopkeepers, and low-level bureaucrats. Some of these were former *dehkans*, yet, there were also large merchants. Young Bukharans hailing from the latter category were a minority, he claims, and they did not work in the organization so much as they supported it financially and materially. Clearly, he means to limit the bourgeois and moneyed influence apparent in the organization's history, just as he does his own. He further demonstrates the cross-class support for the Young Bukharans by noting there were about a dozen high-level spiritual leaders who actively supported the

⁹¹ Khojaev, “K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare i natsional'nogo razmezhevaniia Srednei Azii,” 88.

intellectual movement.⁹² The critical point of this process is when the Right and Left Young Bukharans merged into a Communist Party of Bukhara in the fall of 1920. “The other part of the former Jadids, neither understanding nor accepting the revolution, completely abandoned the revolution” at this time.⁹³

The effort Khojaev put into accounting Jadid participation is quite significant because he was not one himself. To the student of Central Asia, Khojaev’s identity in relation to this group is quite important because associating with the Jadids carries with it a great number of implications about his role in, and relationship to society, as well as his view of how it should have been reformed. I agree with Fedtke’s description of Khojaev as a “secular intellectual”. Unlike the Jadids, such actors were nobles with more of a Russian than Muslim education. “Less anchored in a Muslim world view, they addressed more the Russian state than Muslim society.”⁹⁴ Meanwhile, the Jadids of Turkestan, as Khalid defines them⁹⁵, were cultural elites, often themselves children of cultural elites. They articulated a program for the reform of Muslim society from within, and engaged in dialogue and debate with other Central Asians over the future of their community. Khalid does not, however, define the class nature of the Jadids specifically. Many of them were relatively well off financially. Some were wealthy, and others were not. More important is that the Jadids and new moneyed elite of Bukhara, as in Turkestan, were both “part of the same phenomenon, i.e., the transformation of the Central Asian

⁹² Ibid., 87.

⁹³ Ibid., 178.

⁹⁴ Fedtke, “Jadids, Young Bukharans, Communists,” 509-10.

⁹⁵ Fedtke refers to Khalid in his definitions.

economy under Russian rule.”⁹⁶ The problem of understanding such associations is summarized by Khalid:

although the lives of the Jadids are chronologically not very distant, they can be extremely difficult to reconstruct. They were born in a society in which written documents did not mark a person's progress through life . . . Often the most basic details of their biographies are difficult to establish with any certainty.⁹⁷

Confusion over Khojaev's Jadid relationships have been perpetuated in recent scholarship because there is considerable circumstantial evidence demonstrating that he was connected to the Jadids. These include his family's social position, his educational background, and his emergence as the leader of the Young Bukharans in February 1917. Such factors have led to mistaken interpretations of primary sources. Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, one of the eminent scholars on pre- and revolutionary Bukhara, for example, miscites Khojaev as including himself in the description of a Jadid group exiled from Bukhara in 1914.⁹⁸ In fact, both she and Roger Kangas attribute active pre-1917 participation in the Jadid movement to Khojaev, yet they do not cite conclusive evidence, or even a claim by Khojaev to this effect.⁹⁹ According to Fedtke, such mistakes relating to the classification of Jadids have occurred, to a significant degree, on account of the Communist Party's successful propaganda against them.

⁹⁶ Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 102-3.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 94.

⁹⁸ The passage at issue is on page 130 of *O mlado Bukhartsakh*. Khojaev writes: “Kogda v 1913 godu i v nachale 1914 goda emir zakryl novometodnye shkoly, Fitrat, Ata-Khojaev i mnogie drugie pokinuli Bukhary i v vec'ma korotkoe vremia sumeli organizovat' set' takikh zhe shkol po raznym gorodam.” [“In 1913 and the start of 1914, when the Amir closed the new-method schools, Fitrat, Ata Khojaev, and many others escaped Bukhara and managed to organize a network of such schools in various cities.”] Please see d'Encausse, *Islam and the Russian Empire*, 99.

⁹⁹ For an example of why the Kangas discussion is confusing on this issue, see especially pages 112-13, Footnote 54, in “Faizulla Khojaev”. It — especially the statement “Faizulla returned to take over his father's business and, as it turned out, his father's support for the Jadidist movement” — cites page 126 in *O mlado Bukhartsakh*, where there is no reference to Khojaev's return from Moscow, or to his father for that matter.

D'Encausse accepts Khojaev's claim that the Jadids did not represent any one social class. Her view draws largely on the fact that Siddridin Ayni, a Jadid Young Bukharan who also worked for the Soviets, confirms Khojaev's words.¹⁰⁰ Ayni was a prolific Jadid who wrote a great deal about the history of the Revolution of 1920 in a manner which focuses on history of the Bukharan Jadids and their attempts to establish New Method schooling in the amirate. But the reliability of his account is somewhat questionable. Khalid claims, meanwhile, that although Ayni's narrative "provides the framework within which all accounts of the revolution operate, regardless of the political or methodological inclinations of their authors," it contains factual errors which calls its adequacy into question.¹⁰¹ Khojaev himself points out that he believes there are problems with Ayni's story, most importantly in the fact that he "treats Jadidism and Bolshevism as one inseparably tied whole."¹⁰² Ayni's attempt to appropriate Marxist evolutionism to protect the Jadids threatens Khojaev's story. Khojaev takes a different approach, granting the Jadids similarity to the Bolsheviks, but removing their fateful confluence.

He highlights the revolutionary background of the Jadids, leading opposition against the Amir in Bukhara, to demonstrate their early disposition to alliance with the Bolsheviks. In fact, Khojaev claims that the revolution of 1920 completed what the Jadids had begun as a movement after the revolution of 1905.¹⁰³ He points out that the Jadids began convening to discuss the reformation of Bukharan culture around 1905, forced to do so in secret because of their challenge to the Amir and *ulama*. This is an attempt to mirror their historical activity on the major revolutions in Russia, beginning

¹⁰⁰ D'Encausse, *Islam and the Russian Empire*, 95.

¹⁰¹ Khalid, "Society and Politics in Bukhara," 367.

¹⁰² Faizulla Khojaev, *K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare* (Tashkent: Uzbekskoe Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1926), 3.

¹⁰³ Khojaev, "K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare i natsional'nogo razmezhevaniiia Srednei Azii," 178.

with the 1905 Revolution. But there are factual problems in Khojaev's account. His timeline, for example, is overly short. Khalid points out that starting in the late nineteenth century, merchants of the amirate, wishing to master the skills necessary for relations with the Russians, sought ways to educate themselves and their children according to European norms, leading to the establishment of Russo-native schools. "For all the traditionalism of the amirs, the integration of Bukhara into the global economy had proceeded apace and produced its own imperatives." By 1900, the concerns which led to these changes "turned into a systematic dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in Bukhara, as the merchants chafed at the arbitrary rule of the amir and his functionaries."¹⁰⁴ This inaugurated the era of Jadid secret societies, as well as the era of semi-secret New Method schools starting in 1907. These gave rise, as Khojaev also notes, to a semi-legal, educational reform movement, which was banned in 1914.¹⁰⁵

Khojaev shapes his account of the Young Bukharans learning process in the revolutionary era, after February 1917, by accounting for a range of mistakes they made.¹⁰⁶ He admits that, in the early aftermath of the February Revolution, the Young Bukharans fully supported the development and prosperity of capitalism.¹⁰⁷ It is possible he wrote this because the Young Bukharans' demands on the Amir, in March, were in written form and traceable also to correspondence between Russian Resident Miller and the tsarist government. This included calls for the regularization of amirate budget and financial system, the eradication of arbitrary taxes, and the protection of private property. It is also worth noting that, while Khojaev acknowledges these pro-bourgeois demands,

¹⁰⁴ Khalid, "Society and Politics in Bukhara," 375.

¹⁰⁵ Fitrat became the intellectual leader of the Jadid movement, in the pre-revolutionary period. Khojaev Khojaev, "K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare i natsional'nogo razmezhevaniiia Srednei Azii," 89-94.

¹⁰⁶ Khojaev, "K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare i natsional'nogo razmezhevaniiia Srednei Azii," 121.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 89.

lest he be vilified by them in the Soviet language of legitimacy, he does not highlight the fact that those demands also supported the continued rule by *shariat*, and other pro-Islamic references that might have been considered a sign of backward or counterrevolutionary religious behaviour. Although identification with Islam was allowed in Soviet Central Asia, its official status was not yet clear in the 1920s, and the manner in which it was practiced was already heavily circumscribed by the state. Khojaev also admits the *dekhkans* were at this time deaf to the words of the Jadids, and did not participate in the revolutions as they might have. This is his way of addressing the fact the Young Bukharans operated in a sophisticated, literate environment, addressing upper-class concerns.¹⁰⁸

More importantly, he discusses Young Bukharan participation in the revolution as an educational experience for them as potential Bolsheviks. As Young Bukharan activities became more tied to the Party, he claims, they learned to shed their former mistaken, bourgeois dispositions. This claim that dissenters did not understand the relevance of the Revolution is key to Khojaev's idea of the event as a portal to Bolshevik enlightenment. It is also commensurate with the Jadids' conception of intellectual awakening through revolution.¹⁰⁹ Khojaev refers to dissenters as "*neponiavshye*", meaning "not understanding", or "not in the know". This implies that the former Young Bukharans, Jadid or not, on the Soviet side following the overthrow of the Bukharan amir were not necessarily correct in a black and white sense, but were more politically adept or enlightened. It also suggests a discrepancy referring to intelligence and modernity.

¹⁰⁸ D'Encausse, *Islam and the Russian Empire*, 128-31; and Azade-Ayşe Rorlich, "Islam and Atheism: Dynamic Tension in Soviet Central Asia," in *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*, ed. William Fierman (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1991), 186-218.

¹⁰⁹ "Jadidism: A Current Assessment," *Central Asian Review* 12 (1) 1964: 36. Author unknown.

Being *neponiavshye* involved lacking the ability to see ‘right’ in terms of ‘might’, and assimilating to it.¹¹⁰ In short, the Communist side of the Young Bukharans merged its fortune and destiny with that of the Bolsheviks, and the international Communist movement for worldwide revolution, while the other Jadids remained as before the October revolution, maintaining political inclinations held even before the February Revolution.¹¹¹

[These] old Jadids remained unchanged, and life, which is fundamentally ever-changing, passed them by.

They remained on the outskirts of life, for they did not learn any of the lessons of the revolution, and forgot nothing of their pre-Revolutionary arsenal of Jadid ideas.

... Even the thunder of October’s cannons in Leningrad, Moscow and Tashkent, failed to awaken these Jadids, it did not wake them from their stupor, to rethink and re-evaluate anew their ideals.¹¹²

This was not so in the case of the Young Bukharan’s leader, however. Khojaev looks back with dismay at the mistakes of his former colleagues. He places little emphasis on his leadership of the group, since that would imply responsibility. Instead, his personal revolutionary journey is one of enlightenment, shared with Bolsheviks throughout the Soviet world.

Conclusion

Ryskulov’s and Khojaev’s discussion of the pre- and revolutionary past demonstrates their commitment to the Soviet regime. Each one demonstrates clearly why they believed they were so well suited to joining the Revolution, at the same time as they were partially responsible for making it happen. Ryskulov emerges in the Revolution due to his revolutionary skills and predisposition to Bolshevik ideal behaviour, and Khojaev on account of his enlightenment. Both claim the unique ability to see that the Bolshevik way

¹¹⁰ Khojaev, “K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare i natsional’nogo razmezhevaniia Srednei Azii,” 178.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 178-79.

¹¹² Ibid., 179.

is the right way. The aptitude with which both actors appropriate the Bolshevik language of legitimacy to indigenize its validity by vilifying traditional and tsarist authority demonstrates their skill as mediators, and the efforts they were willing to make in order to maintain their new positions of authority.

The legacy of their memorial efforts also stands as a signpost of the Soviet regime's need to establish authority by shaping memory and historical identity. The fundamental symbols and language of the Revolution, although official representation of them was as yet in flux in to the 1930s, remained a constant of immense relevance throughout the Soviet era. In 1927, the regime committed to a wholesale attack on "the Muslim version of Russia's kulaks — that is, the *bai*, *manap*, and *kishlak* notables generally."¹¹³ To a certain extent, Ryskulov's and Khojaev's words became dated. As time went on, the rebellions which they had highlighted became the subject of intense scrutiny by official historiographers, and a cause for many conferences and debates. Interpretation of the nature of their significance changed as nationalities policy rejected *korenizatsiia* in the 1930s, giving way by the 1950s to the concept of 'Friendship of the Peoples', but they remained events of fundamental import. The way the pre-revolutionary past was discussed always reflected the pressing political concerns of the regime of the day and, as they did in the case of Ryskulov and Khojaev, its leaders as well.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Donald S. Carlisle, "Power and Politics in Soviet Uzbekistan: From Stalin to Gorbachev," in *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation*, ed. William Fierman (Boulder: Westview Press, Inc., 1991), 99.

¹¹⁴ Tillett, "Classifying the Central Asian Revolts," chap. 9 in *The Great Friendship*, 171-93.

CHAPTER 3

“Not Wolves in Sheep’s Clothing”: Mediating Governance in Early Soviet Central Asia

I told the meeting that such conferences cannot take place, and that if they are interested in the work of the Congress, they are allowed to come and see. I also talked about the fact that there can only be real revolutionaries in government, not wolves in sheep’s clothing.¹

Comrade Pecharnikov gave this report to the Third Session of the Sixth Extraordinary Congress of Soviets of the Turkestan Republic, on 9 October 1918. The Russian was reporting on his attendance at an unauthorized workers’ conference, taking place in a Tashkent workshop, at the same time as this meeting. Turar Ryskulov and other Central Asian participants in the Sixth Congress had also attended the parallel event on the eve of the Third Session, ostensibly to stay abreast of all political discussions. This indicates the tenuous state of Bolshevik authority, when unauthorized meetings were attended not by police, but regular politicians. Pecharnikov recalled that he had told the illegal meeting they could not gather like this. The “wolves in sheep’s clothing” he referred to are political actors who participated in the regime and Party with, or aspiring to, unauthorized views, or digressing goals — actors who said they were Bolshevik but were not. Most of the Russians suspected Central Asian politicians of such ‘double-talk.’²

Chapters 1 and 2 illustrated the motives Ryskulov, Chokaev, Khojaev, like many other Central Asians had for participating in the Party and Russian revolutionary politics. These individuals sought to overcome their local competitors in traditional social hierarchy, and maintain their own newfound status. These dispositions informed their rationales for remaining in the Bolshevik organizations, despite great Russian antagonism

¹ “Iz otcheta VI Chrezvychainogo s’ezda sovetov Turkestanskoi respubliki, 3-e zasedanie, 9 okt[iabria] 1918” [“From and Account of the VI Extraordinary Congress of Soviets of the Turkestan Republic, 3rd Session, 9 Oct[ober] 1918”], in *T. R. Ryskulov, Sobrannye Sochineni v trekh tomakh*, 1: 96.

² “Iz otcheta VI Chrezvychainogo s’ezda sovetov Turkestanskoi respubliki,” 95-96.

towards Central Asian cadres. At the Sixth Congress, for example Pecharnikov also protested the presence of members of the Kokand Autonomy in his audience, pointing at two attending the congress, as ostensible “wolves”. Such actors were often encouraged to stay in the Party by less hostile Russians, especially those representing the centre. Moscow Bolsheviks viewed Central Asians as an important connection to the local population for the Soviet regime. It is that at the Sixth Congress, Kolesov, the organizer of the siege of Kokand, came to one Kokandian’s defense against Pecharnikov’s hostility. “You [Pecharnikov, et al.] throw unnecessary insults at he who was the first to organize cadres of the Muslim proletariat.”³

This chapter is about how Central Asian Bolsheviks mediated Soviet governance by appropriating Soviet discourse. Ryskulov, Khojaev, Ikramov, and other non-Russians in the revolutionary vanguard in Turkestan and Bukhara invoked the symbolic authority of the Bolsheviks in Moscow — that is, their laws, principles, and goals — to push for social change advantageous to them and their social group. Such change was important to these Central Asians, above all because it was disadvantageous, even blatantly hostile, to their opponents in the traditional local hierarchy. In this chapter, I show that, although Ryskulov’s, Khojaev’s, and Ikramov’s aspirations coincided with the social upheaval planned by the Bolshevik regime, the manner in which they viewed its implementation was characterized by distinctly Central Asian political concerns. The variations in the conduct of these actors reflect the complicated discourse they negotiated as mediators translating Bolshevik policy into local reality; it also reveals their own vulnerability as concurrent students and servants of foreign power.

³ Ryskulov, “Iz otcheta VI Chrezvychainogo s’ezda sovetov Turkestanskoi respubliki,” 96.

I address these issues in three main areas of analysis. The first section of this chapter is a discussion of how these three Central Asian political elites, and others, used their privileged positions as Soviet cadres to try to influence Soviet policy. Then, in the second section, I will discuss how Ryskulov, Khojaev, and Ikramov represented, and participated in, Bolshevik projects to establish rule. Here, I focus on how these processes coincided with their aims in local social competition. The third section evaluates how these Central Asians invoked the Bolshevik language of legitimacy to jockey against other revolutionaries, with whom they once shared goals. This tripartite approach demonstrates the significance of semantic nuance in their speeches and written work: the actors analyzed here rarely had the teeth to act as wolves without support from the Party — real or decreed — but they were still Central Asians beneath their garb as Bolshevik followers.

The main analytical premise of this chapter is that, in the early Soviet period, Ryskulov, Khojaev, and Ikramov acted like colonial mediators. Edward Steinhart's definition of the alternate term 'collaboration' in comparable colonial situations tellingly emphasizes that "it does not mean submission, defeat, or resignation. On the contrary, it is an active policy of cooperation and compromise. In an African context . . . [it] can be understood as one option among several open to African leadership in the situation of crisis and conflict engendered" by colonization.⁴ In Central Asia, Ryskulov, Khojaev, Ikramov, and other actors seeking local authority needed to maintain a certain degree of acceptance among the regional population. They tempered and filtered the regime's projects, implementing them to such a degree as would allow stability. Their conception

⁴ Edward Steinhart, "Collaboration or Resistance to European Rule: Conflict and Collaboration," in *Historical Problems of Imperial Africa*, eds. Robert O. Collins et al. (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), 94.

of an enemy in traditional society coincided with those of the Bolshevik Party, and so reform projects had the added incentive of obliterating their competition for authority.

Ryskulov's, Khojaev's, and Ikramov's political success increasingly required their participation in the normalization of Soviet standards. Moscow became involved in Central Asia with growing intensity in the two years following the Sixth Congress, especially after regaining access to the region in late 1919, during the Civil War. This context coincides with Robinson's description of "imperialism in the industrial era . . . whereby agents of an expanding society gain inordinate influence or control over the vitals of weaker societies by 'dollar' or 'gun-boat' diplomacy, ideological suasion, conquest and rule, or by planting colonies of its own people."⁵ In such situations, the colonizer has greater control of mediators and requires challenges to traditional hierarchy, but relies on mediators who offset it.⁶ Ryskulov, Khojaev, and Ikramov propagated Soviet norms by mimicking them, and by acting like the ideal Soviet person, as they understood him. As Bhabha has demonstrated, mimicry satisfied mediators' debt to the colonizer investing them with authority, and it encouraged the legitimization of new symbols of power among those they governed for it.⁷

Mimicry played an important role in non-Russians' participation at the Third Session of the Sixth Congress. A Ryskulov speech after Pecharnikov's address provides an example of this. The Central Asian Bolshevik had himself attended the unauthorized meeting, but as part of an investigating commission sent by the congress. His speech about the experience reveals his coincident devotion to the Party, his challenge to

⁵ Robinson, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism," 118-19.

⁶ Ibid., 132-37.

⁷ Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man," 46.

Russians who wish to exclude his countrymen from it, and also his view that Central Asians who participate in regional politics must do so according to the rules he espouses.

I am surprised at one thing [about the unauthorized conference]: they spoke of the dictatorship of the proletariat, at this meeting, at the same time as they spoke against the Bolshevik Party, the leaders of this dictatorship. The reason has to do with the fact they want to subordinate the will of the Congress of Soviets to dictate their demands. I find such behaviour impermissible, and disjoining for our ranks.

I declare that this is a congress of all the workers of Turkestan, and nobody can command its will . . . [Central Asians] constitute 95 percent of the population of Turkestan . . . Therefore, in the name of all native delegates, I demand the Congress be prolonged past its normal time . . . [to hear] the opinions of all of Turkestan.⁸

Like a colonial intermediary, Ryskulov skillfully discusses the relationship between ruler and ruled as a cooperative work in progress. As a Soviet cadre, he outlines guidelines by which non-Russian aspirants to the political elite were supposed to adhere. As a Central Asian, however, he recognizes their concerns, and quantifies the significant influence they wield locally to give them voice. By mediating this discourse of power, Ryskulov claims unique personal influence across both extremes of the new, Soviet Central Asian paradigm. The tone of his speech suggests a lack of humility in front of his Russian and Central Asian colleagues — a posture he may have viewed as necessary during the heated exchange at the meeting. The congress refused Ryskulov's demand to extend the duration of the congress. This predicted the future of Russian reactions to his attempts to influence expressions of Soviet authority. In the bigger picture, it also reflects the fact that Moscow and the Russians remained in a position to have the final word, as became increasingly apparent, and increasingly demonstrated.

⁸ Ryskulov, "Iz otcheta VI Chrezvychainogo s"ezda sovetov Turkestanskoi respubliki," 97-98.

Wolves?

Many of Turkestan's Russian Bolsheviks and workers dismissed the idea that Central Asians, formerly subordinate to them, and differentiated from them by religious, cultural, and social norms, would all of a sudden be willing allies in their politics. Their suspicions were confirmed in Central Asians' efforts to use Party membership to influence the politics of the Bolshevik regime in ways that threatened ethnic Russian privilege in the former colony. This section evaluates the significance of such attempts by focusing on a group led by Turar Ryskulov as a case study.

Ryskulov challenged Moscow institutions, principally by denying their position that Central Asia needed to be divided into national republics. This happened because he wrongly assumed the extent of his own official authority, in 1919 and 1920. He did so by arguing that the Turkestani population belonged to a single Turkic nation, and his efforts were supported by many political class Central Asians. Moscow was unwilling to entertain Ryskulov's challenge to its authority, and he was expelled from the Party as a result. This situation has parallels in colonial studies. Colonized elites comparable to Ryskulov overestimate their personal mandate and transgress the flexibility of the metropole. In these cases, the centre reclaims the intermediary's representative authority. As Robinson notes about comparable "Afro-Asian dependencies . . . The permutations of collaboration shifted whenever a collaborating element, whether of the modern or neo-traditional elite, grew too powerful or too dissatisfied, and above all, whenever a major element in colonial politics, whether cooperating or in opposition, threatened to unite an urban elite" with a popular following.⁹

⁹ Robinson, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism," 137.

Ryskulov's misadventure began when he became the leader of a new organization called Muslim Bureau of the Turkestan Regional Party Committee (known as *Musbiuro*) at about the time Faizulla Khojaev was joining the Bolsheviks. The formation of the Musbiuro began in March 1919, under the direction of Stalin, the Commissar of Nationalities, and was officially established by the Third Congress of the Communist Party of Turkestan, 31 May-13 June 1919.¹⁰ Its purpose was to mediate between Central Asians and the Party, since local Bolshevik institutions tended to exclude non-Russians. Under Ryskulov's leadership, the organization became so influential, and so closely identified with him, that members of the executive of the Musbiuro, including the Bukharan Abdulkadir Mukhitdinov¹¹, were referred to as *ryskulovshchine* (Ryskulov groupists). The Russian suffix '-shchine'¹² bears a negative connotation, so the nickname was established by opponents of the institution.¹³

Although the Musbiuro was established by the central government, it quickly became politically problematic to Central Asian Soviet and Moscow authorities. The Russians ruling Central Asia were the first to be threatened because the Musbiuro quickly attracted many 'Muslims' to the Party. The new organization's first mission, according to d'Encausse, "was to transform a predominantly Russian organization into a Moslem-

¹⁰ Keller, "The Central Asian Bureau," 282.

¹¹ Other members included Nizametdin Khojaev, Iu. I. Ibragimov, and Iu. Aliev. See Keller, "The Central Asian Bureau," 282.

¹² -*щина*, or -*щина* (transliterated -*shchina*) in the undeclined nominative form.

¹³ This suffix is applied in a great variety of ways in the Russian language, and evokes a *gestalt* of connotations. Another example is *ezhovshchina*, which means 'Yezhov Era'. "This term takes its name from N.I. Yezhov, the NKVD (secret police) chief, who helped carry out Stalin's 'Great Terror' (1934-38), which resulted in the arrest, torture, death or imprisonment of millions and millions of Soviets. Use the term around Russians who lived through those times and a shiver runs down their backs." See "TOPIC: The *Gestalt* of 'Zhirinovshchina' and Other '-Shchina' Words," article on the *Russian Language Mentor* website [<http://russianmentor.net/gram/mailbag/topics/shchina.htm>], accessed 30 August 2006 (no date of online posting available).

controlled party in order to make it an attractive model” to Central Asians.¹⁴ This, however, required it to challenge the authority of the settler Russian-run soviets. The Musbiuro drew great antipathy from them by acting on behalf of the otherwise disenfranchised majority population of Turkestan, creating “Muslim soviets” in localities, and recruiting large numbers of non-Russians. This was commensurate with Stalin’s 2 March 1919 call on all Bolsheviks to help liberate the formerly oppressed masses by giving them their own soviets.¹⁵ The “indigenization” program was so successful that 128 of 248 delegates at the Third Congress of the Communist Party of Turkestan (1-15 June 1919) were Central Asians.¹⁶

The Musbiuro also challenged the central authorities on questions of regional government, including the assessment that Turkestan needed dividing into smaller national republics. In the end, the Musbiuro was disbanded, and the *ryskulovshchine* were forced out of the Party.¹⁷ Like the Kokand Autonomy, however, the Musbiuro’s challenge to the supremacy of Russian Soviet authority stands as an important example of Central Asians transgressing practical limitations by putting faith in dictates of Moscow. Here, moreover, such actions represented the, perhaps unexpected, and albeit temporary, success of an organization established by the metropole itself. The Musbiuro’s accomplishments resulted in its own downfall. And Ryskulov, as its leader, waged the last great Central Asian institutional challenge to the authority of the Soviet centre in Russia, as well as its co-national settlers.

¹⁴ D’Encausse, *The Great Challenge*, 141.

¹⁵ N. Stalin, “Nashi zadachi na Vostoke,” *Zhizn’ Natsional’nostei* No. 7 (15) 2 March 1919: 1

¹⁶ d’Encausse, *The Great Challenge*, 142.

¹⁷ Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca*, 56; and Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republic*, 94.

In “*Kratkaia avtobiographia*,” Ryskulov contends that the Musbiuro was also succeeding in bringing harmony to the region’s ethnicities. This document is a speech Ryskulov gave in 1921, one year after the *ryskulovshchine* and the Musbiuro were disbanded. The statements he makes in it must, therefore, be considered highly significant to his personal Soviet legitimacy.

The Musbiuro united not only native communist elements (including the Young Bukharans, Young Khivans, and Azerbaijanis), but also the Russian comrades, who understood the verity of our views . . . Internally, the consequence of the work of the Musbiuro was the appearance of local soviets, ispolkoms, and party cadres in kishlaks and auls.¹⁸

His emphasis on growth of Party organizations is accurate, though his claim that Russians and cooperated easily in politics is misleading. By mid-1919, Turkestan’s Party organizations were meeting in separate Russian and Muslim sub-groups, and did not communicate with one another.¹⁹ Ryskulov’s next autobiographical statement accounts for his inaccuracy. The challenge of the Musbiuro to the status quo would be better painted as a universally popular event, where “with the weakening of colonizing elements, political influence was transferred from Central Russia into the hands of workers and indigenous masses.”²⁰ Soviet discourse conceived of non-Russians in Central Asia as an oppressed mass with proletarian qualities. So Ryskulov’s fabrication provides great justification to his activities.

At mid-summer, the *ryskulovshchine* were threatening the former colonials’ positions of responsibility. Ryskulov and four other Central Asian Communists were elected to the Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Turkestan, during the Third Regional Congress of the Communist Party of Turkestan, in June, and drew a significant hostility from the “Old Communists.” Although this so-called Kazakov-Uspenskii group still

¹⁸ Ryskulov, “*Kratkaia avtobiografia*,” 204.

¹⁹ Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 107-8.

²⁰ Ryskulov, “*Kratkaia avtobiografia*,” 204-5

held the majority, and A. A. Kazakov²¹ remained Chairman of the Turkestan Central Executive Committee (TurkTsIK), its antagonism grew steadily because the rapid success of the Central Asians and their plans for change in Turkestan. Ryskulov describes some of these with a threatening tone in a speech to the June meeting.

The Communist Party . . . holds to the principle of the self-determination of the workers of every nation. . .

In order to the class self-determination and independence among the *inorodtsy* of Russian imperium . . . it is essential to give them full possibilities to construct their own national workers associations. The Kokand Autonomy [...] it is understood, was narrowly nationalist and bourgeois in character [...] but this period has passed, and now, with the strengthening of Soviet power the toiling masses of Muslims are gradually finding their way to class consciousness . . .²²

The Musbiuro and Old Communists were thrown into even stronger opposition by the arrival of a TsK directive from Moscow in June 1919 stating

‘it is necessary (to ensure) a wide proportional participation of the indigenous population of Turkestan in the state activities without the obligation of their belonging to the Party, it is enough if the candidates are workers of the Muslim organizations. Stop requisitioning the properties of the Muslims without the consent of the regional Muslim organizations . . .’²³

Although the Musbiuro’s power came from its jurisdiction over all of the ‘Muslims’ of Turkestan, its authority came from the central government in Moscow, whose interest was stability. Through July and August, Central Asians called for implementation of the directive. And the Musbiuro began to challenge the activities of older Soviet organs by performing parallel functions, and hosting parallel conferences.²⁴

Central support for the Musbiuro increased dramatically at the end of the summer, and appeared to signal victory over the Kazakov-Uspenskii group and other opponents of the *ryskulovshchine*. The RKP saw that Turkestan was on the verge of upheaval due to

²¹ Helene Carrere d’Encausse, “The Fall of the Czarist Empire,” chap. 8 in *Central Asia*, ed. Edward Allworth, 221.

²² T. R. Ryskulov, “Doklad na III s’ezde kompartii Turkestana o natsional’nykh kommunisticheskikh sektiiaikh” [“Report on Communist Sections at the Third Congress of the Turkestan Communist Party,” June 1919], in *Izbrannye Trudy* (Alma-Ata: “Kazakhstan, 1984), 56-57.

²³ Quoted in Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 95.

²⁴ Ryskulov, “Doklad na III s’ezde kompartii Turkestana,” 64-8; and Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 98-9, 160-62.

tensions partly caused by the success of the Musbiuro. By the fall of 1919, the Red Army had virtually defeated White forces in Kazakhstan, and was no longer blocked from Central Asia, so Moscow dispatched a new organization to mediate problems between the “Old Communists” and the new ones. The *Turkkomissiiia* was formed on 10 October 1919, by the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) (TsK RKP [b]) and the Organizational Bureau (Orgburo), and therefore represented the party and state sectors, respectively. According to d’Encausse, its immediate goal was to address the perversions of policy perpetrated by the KPT, and clean the local Party organizations of “Great Power chauvinists.”²⁵ The Turkestan Russians came under fire quickly, and many were excluded from Party institutions, which served to empower the natives.²⁶ The *Turkkomissiiia* soon had to move to circumscribe the autonomous behaviour of the Musbiuro as well, however.

The Ruskulov group, had quickly come to view the *Turkkomissiiia* as a threat to the Musbiuro’s authority, as well as that of the KPT, because it usurped their decision-making power. The *Turkkomissiiia*, more importantly, threatened the Musbiuro’s very existence by supporting plans to divide its jurisdiction of Turkestan into smaller national administrative units.²⁷ The *ryskulovshchine*, according to Safarov, responded by threatening the *Turkkomissiiia*’s authority. The Musbiuro executive, firstly, advertized itself as a middle way, a mediator, between the *Turkkomissiiia* and the Central Asians. The *ryskulovshchine*, moreover, rejected the *Turkkomissiiia*’s view that Turkestan needed

²⁵ d’Encausse, *The Great Challenge*, 142.

²⁶ By the end of 1920, the Commission exiled “175 former police officials, 443 former ‘white guards,’ 340 bribe takers, 92 who had indulged in extortion, 231 who had misused their official positions, 153 work-deserters and 192 ‘chauvinists.’ See Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 104-5.

²⁷ Keller, “The Central Asian Bureau,” 282, Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics*, 3; and Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca*, 35-6.

dividing into smaller national republics. By November 1919, the Musbiuro was openly propagating the contrary idea that the peoples of Turkestan belonged to a single “Turkic” race, and passed a series of resolutions denying the existence of smaller nationalities.²⁸ The significance of this challenge, Safarov writes, is borne out by the fact that the fight for national determination turned into a trivial fight to dominate the individuals of the Ryskulov group.²⁹ The Turkestan Commission worked to fight “‘the petty bourgeois nationalist deviation’ of some Muslim members of the party.”³⁰ The Musbiuro was so strong, however, that few of its members were affected at this time.³¹

The strength of the Musbiuro is reflected even more in Moscow’s relationship to this debate between Soviet institutions in Turkestan. The Muslim Bureau’s rejection of *Turkkommissiia* policy was theoretically a challenge to the centre which deserved repercussions. Instead, the argument over nationalities policy progressed as a competition between the two institutions for the attention of Moscow. The Turkestan Commission adopted a special decree, meanwhile, stating it essential to recognize the Turkmen, Uzbek-Tajik, and Kyrgyz ethnic groupings, and demarcate the region administratively. It also adopted a decision calling for the abolition of the Musbiuro and Muslim committees in favour of all-inclusive ones. Ryskulov meanwhile enjoined his own supporters in calling for the formation of a Turkic republic that included all Turks in

²⁸ Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 107-8.

²⁹ Safarov, *Kolonial'naia revoliutsiia*, 185.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

the world.³² The *ryskulovshchine* also for their part, called for the abolition of the Turkestan Commission on grounds it violated regional autonomy.³³

After many months of dispute, the Turkkomissii appeared to gain the upper hand because it succeeded in convincing the Fifth Regional Congress of the Communist Party (12-18 January, 1920) to disband the special interest parties. The *ryskulovshchine* chose to respond by radically changing their tactic when this set-back was followed by the TsK and the All-Russian Central Executive Committee (VTsIK) adopting the 'Statute on the autonomy of Turkestan' on 23 March 1920. This recognized the Turkestan Autonomous Republic of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, with *oblast* divisions corresponding to national groupings.³⁴

The nature of the *ryskulovshchine*'s reaction demonstrates the confidence they had in their own ability and entitlement to authority in their homeland. They sent a delegation headed by Ryskulov to Moscow, at the end of May 1920, to have the spring decisions overturned. Ryskulov gave a speech to the TsK RKP³⁵ in which he demanded the disbandment of the Turkkomissii³⁶, and lamented the suffering caused Central Asians by settler Russians over the years. He moreover challenged the self-contradictions of the central government's Turkestan policy head-on: "Turkestan, because of its uniqueness

³² Keller, "The Central Asian Bureau," 283, and Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 107-8.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 108-11; and d'Encausse, *The Great Challenge*, 143.

³⁵ M. K. Kozybaev, "Primechaniia: No. 30" [Notes: No. 30], in T. R. Ryskulov, *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh* (Almaty: "Kazakhstan," 1998), 3: 409.

³⁶ Turar Ryskulov, "Doklad polnomochnoi delegatsii Turkestanskoi respubliki V. I. Leninu, 25 maia 1920" [Report of the Plenipotentiary Delegation of the Turkestan Republic to V. I. Lenin, 25 May 1920], in *Sobranie Sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, 3: 181.

and ethnographic make-up, is an indivisible part of the East, and has already experienced exploitative colonial conditions.”³⁷

In this speech, Ryskulov invoked the allegiance of Turkestan’s indigenous Communists to the regime, noting the great work they did on behalf, and according to the guidelines of the centre.

Turkestan occupies an advantageous geographical position in the East, and is an important economic and strategic point in the war with international imperialism. At the same time, it represents the first country in this oppressed East where, in the depths of Muslim backwardness, the first [of them] came to be inculcated with the principles of Soviet rule, where, through experience and mistakes, [we] came to develop such methods and forms of government that would serve [well] as examples and for agitation throughout the East.³⁸

Ryskulov also uses the language of backwardness: calling on logic that resonates with Khojaev’s discussion of the revolutionary experience of the Young Bukharans, Ryskulov paints Turkestan Bolsheviks as loyal Party members learning proper behaviour through trial and error. He paints a compelling picture of Central Asians’ place among the non-Russians of the former tsarist lands and Asia, positing that Turkestan should be the leader of the Revolution in the East.³⁹ Ryskulov’s discussion is also a comment on his own situation. As head of the Musbiuro his political career — his mistakes and good intentions — with that of this organization and the Central Asians it represented.

Ryskulov’s pleas convinced Moscow to consider the issue he raised. The policy resolution process which ensued demonstrated the influence of the *ryskulovshchine*. It also showed the threat they posed Moscow’s authority: and this is likely why it decided in their disfavour. The summer was marked by two significant events in this dynamic. Both were set off by Moscow decisions, spear-headed by Lenin. On 5 July 1920, Lenin

³⁷ Ryskulov, “Doklad polnomochnoi delegatsii Turkestanskoi respubliki V. I. Leninu,” 174.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

sent a document entitled “First Draft Theses on the National and Colonial Questions” to all party members, asking that they give their opinions on it, albeit ““in the shortest (not more than 2-3 pages) form.””⁴⁰

Ryskulov, along with other Central Asian and non-Russian Party notables, including Faizulla Khojaev — himself concurrently in Moscow, as the Young Bukharan representative to the Central Party Bureau — co-wrote a critical response, lacking much of the patronizing, acquiescent tone of previous communications⁴¹: “There is a Turkic saying . . . ‘dirt should not clean dirt.’ Just so, the native poor should not be liberated from colonial servitude by their colonizers, or the hand of local power dependant on colonizers.”⁴² The authors condescendingly challenged the regime’s image as liberator to demand a role in Central Asians’ future on their own terms.⁴³

Although Lenin chose not to take much of their advice, the subsequent decisions of the Politburo demonstrated significant influence of the Ryskulov group. Most importantly, Moscow refused the Turkkomissiiia authority to alter laws without the consent of central organs in Russia and Turkestan, and the implementation of systematic measures for the gradual sharing of power with regional Soviets. The more elaborate official decree of 29 June included calls for the immediate restoration to the Kazakh and Kyrgyz populations of lands taken since the 1916 uprisings, and the equalization of the rights of Central Asian and Russian urban populations in terms of food distribution, etc.⁴⁴ The document

⁴⁰ M. K. Kozybaev et al, eds., “Primechaniia: No. 35” [Notes: No. 35], in *T. R. Ryskulov: Sobranye sochinenii v trekh tomakh* (Almaty: “Kazakhstan,” 1998), 3: 411.

⁴¹ Kozybaev, “Primechaniia: No. 35,” 3: 411.

⁴² Turar Ryskulov, “Dobavleniia k tezisam tov. V. I. Lenina po natsional’nomu i kolonial’nomu voprosam, 16 iunია 1920,” [Addendum to the Theses of Comrade V. I. Lenin on the National and Colonial Questions, 16 June 1920], in *Sobrannye Sochinenii*, vol. 3: 183.

⁴³ Ryskulov, “Dobavleniia k tezisam tov. V. I. Lenina,” 183-84.

⁴⁴ Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 111-13.

also included a section rejecting the other, more pressing, demands of Ryskulov and his supporters. He and his May delegation voiced their disapproval between 16-18 July, and resigned from their posts in protest.⁴⁵

These protests were not widely known among contemporaries and Cold War historians is unclear. Most secondary sources, citing Soviet documents, including Safarov's, do not discuss the *ryskulovshchine*'s protests. These analyses claim that when the Ryskulov group returned from Moscow, its members were forced to admit that bourgeois nationalism represented by their behaviour only encourages exploitative enemies of the regime. The actual relationship between this event and Ryskulov's resignation is central to understanding his influence, since he reappears as a Party member and Soviet employee in 1921. According to this common story, the *ryskulovshchine* accepted their mistakes at a joint conference of the Turkestan Central Executive Committee, and Party Regional Committee and the Turkestan Commission. Members of the group were excluded from the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee, and a number of them, including Ryskulov, were exiled from the region in August, and the Musbiuro was closed in September.⁴⁶ The content of their discussions does not appear, although it would likely reveal much about the negotiation which allowed *ryskulovshchine* like Ryskulov and Mukhitdinov to return to Soviet politics.

Some of the explanation of how the actors were able to return to the Party after they were excluded emerges in the wider Soviet context. The *ryskulovshchine*'s divorce from the Communists occurred at the beginning of the 1920-21 period. At this time, members

⁴⁵ Kozybaev, "Primechaniia: No. 30" [Notes: No. 35], 3: 410.

⁴⁶ Vaidyanath, *The Formation of the Soviet Central Asian Republics*, 113-14. And a new presidium was chosen by the Turksib, the head of which was Rakhimbaev, the internationalist-communist. See Safarov, *Kolonial'naia revoliutsiia*, 196.

of Soviet opposition factions in the 1920-21 period were generally punished administratively, often through varying terms of exile or Party posting to remote regions.⁴⁷ The *ryskulovshchine* may be considered one of a number of factions within the Bolshevik system, becoming increasingly problematic to consensus and the authority of Lenin. Such factions emerged as a result of the early revolutionary period principle of democratic centralism, which meant that Party members could freely debate issues before a policy decision was reached, so long as they acceded to the final verdict. Lenin began a successful campaign to destroy factions in 1921, and pushed through a resolution at the Tenth Party Congress, in March of that year, which disallowed their existence.⁴⁸

This helps explain Ryskulov's fate, but it does little to account for the nature of his challenge to the Party, which seems, in retrospect, rather rash, and even naïve. This atmosphere of political discipline emerged, somewhat paradoxically, alongside initiation of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1921. This was a response to economic disaster of "War Communism" during the Civil War, when nationalization and state distribution of resources was the norm. NEP enacted a more liberal approach to the non-political sectors of Soviet life. Private industry, banking, and foreign investment were allowed, while such formerly free services as education and medical now had to be paid for.⁴⁹ This somewhat lax approach to the institution of Soviet rule was already present in Central Asia, and it is conceivable that, to the extent that Ryskulov and his supporters identified with average Central Asians, certainly to differentiate themselves from colonial Russians as a nation of proletarians, they perceived relaxation of norms to apply to their socially relevant political activities. "NEP meant concessions to the peasantry, the intelligentsia

⁴⁷ Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution*, 89-93.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 71-2, 85-7.

and the urban petty-bourgeoisie; relaxation of controls over economic, social and cultural life; the substitution of conciliation for coercion in the Communists' dealings with society as a whole."⁵⁰ And though Lenin made it very clear that relaxation should not extend into the political sphere, it may have seemed possible in the complex Soviet symbolic matrix that applied differently to Central Asia..

Ryskulov published some comments on the period which try to account of his actions by putting him in this changing political context. The 1936 article, "*Otvet tov. Togzhanovu*" ("Reply to Comrade Togzhanov"), in *Bolshevik Kazakhstana*, is a defense against Togzhanov's criticisms of him, printed in the same publication in 1935.

... regarding the so-called "ryskulovshchine." Yes, such a deviation was present in the Turkestan Republic in the 1920-1921 period (just as there were dozens of other such deviations). The essence of this deviation has to do with the fact that a group of workers, headed by myself — who had really kept to the Bolshevik line and united the workers of the indigenous population around the Soviet institution since the start of the revolution — made a number of big mistakes in 1920-1921. Having defeated the "colonialist deviation," and taken up the leadership of the Turkestan Republic (I was the chairman of the Turk TsIK), we got carried away with nationalist slogans, and wanted to be "national leaders." ... As a result of this nationalist deviation, and disagreements with the centre, I, along with other functionaries, handed in my resignation in 1920. Yet, I was soon working in Moscow, from 1921-1922.⁵¹

Ryskulov does not provide clarifying details about his departure from and return to the Party. But the article is an interesting combination of defense of his actions and skillful use of the language of legitimacy. As a mediator who wanted to maintain his privileged position, he makes it clear that his activities as head of the Musbiuro were meant to satisfy the requirements of the Party. He takes the opportunity to boast of his accomplishments over the "colonial deviation" represented by Russian politicians excluding Central Asians from local institutions. On the other hand, he agrees with his

⁵⁰ Ibid., 88.

⁵¹ T. R. Ryskulov, "Otvét tov. Togzhanovu" ["Reply to Comrade Togzhanov"], originally published in 1936 in *Bolshevik Kazakhstana*, no. 1-2, pp. 110-129], *Izbrannye trudy*, (Alma-Ata: "Kazakhstan," 1984), 250-51.

political masters, and acknowledges he overstepped the limits of reasonable action. It is important to note that Ryskulov's self-described period of deviance in the article does not begin until 1920, apparently after January, when he became head of the Turk TsK. The period he refers to extends to 1921, beyond the August/September date secondary sources note. This suggests his "nationalist" activities continued for a time, or that he simply classified himself a deviant until his return to work for the Soviet regime.

Ryskulov restarted his career working in Moscow for the Commissariat of Nationalities. Ironically, this was the organization responsible for orchestrating the territorial delimitation of Central Asia. And still, his stint as head of the Musbiuro followed him until he was purged from the Party in the late 1930s on charges of 'national deviation.'⁵² "*Otvet na tov. Togzhanovu*" was published on the eve of the Great Purges, and it reads as a defense in anticipation of this possibility. In fact, Ryskulov emphasizes that he already recanted his mistakes once (perhaps a reference to "*Kratkaia avtobiografia*"), and wants to work for the Party line with genuine enthusiasm, free of his previous deviance.

The mistakes of that period were very well known in the central organs in Moscow, and when I started working for the Narkomnats apparat toward the end of 1921, I admitted my mistakes and set to quickly correcting them. I was obligated to do so, just as so many other national workers were, in the great task of influencing national politics through the former Narkomnats organization, headed by Comrade Stalin.⁵³

Ryskulov is adamant that from that period on, he worked very hard to enforce the party line, and work against remnants of bourgeois elements in Turkestan. He ends the discussion on a sober note, probably indicating he was wary of the danger his past represented in the political climate of the late 1930s, on the eve of the Great Purges:

⁵² The exact year of his expulsion is unknown. See Shapiro, "Political Rehabilitation," 202.

⁵³ Ryskulov, "*Otvet tov. Togzhanovu*," 250-51.

“The mistakes of 1920-1921 taught me to be a strong Bolshevik in my daily work, and I hope I never slip off this path.”⁵⁴

Ryskulov's political problems in 1919-20 were an important signal to other Bolshevik Central Asians with plans to act on individual ambitions. Faizulla Khojaev's behaviour appears to support this. His career as a Communist leader began officially in September 1920, after Ryskulov's divorce from the Party in late summer. Khojaev was overall a cooperative middleman, not trying to influence Moscow confrontationally. In the former amirate, Khojaev was indebted to a wide variety of interests as a result of his inclusive approach to alliance and recruitment prior to the 1920 Bukharan revolution, and he did not have the economic or political resources to institute radical Bolshevik social change. Khojaev appears to have followed a strategy of subversive acquiescence to comply with the often divergent interests of the centre and Bukhara. He pursued those domestic and personal interests which contradicted Moscow's by influencing the centre passively.

One example of Khojaev's subversive acquiescence derives from a comparison of two letters he wrote in 1921, as he strove to establish a Bolshevik regime in Bukhara. His letters reflect the tensions he navigated, mediating the dynamic between Soviet centre and periphery. The first is an open letter to the Bukharan population, published in May 1921. In it, Khojaev admits the Russians are “friends who occasionally want too much.” He claims future talks with the Russians can only proceed on the basis of equality, informed by full independence of the Bukharan republic in military, political, and

⁵⁴ Ibid., 252.

economic relations.⁵⁵ Yet the tone of the second letter, sent privately to Moscow in July, suggests he is writing to different audiences. While the earlier letter implies Bukharan political independence, Khojaev now assures the Russians his government will never forgo their relationship by acting without consultation. He also pleads for sympathy and patience as he tries to modernize a backward people. The second letter also contradicts the first one's claim that economic relations with Russia will proceed on the basis of equality and independence. Instead, Khojaev laments the state of the Bukharan economy, calling on Russia for help, and any aid possible.⁵⁶

It is no accident that the Bukharan leader appeals to the paternalism of Moscow. The centre conceived of its role in the region as that of teacher, and harboured aspects of the colonial disposition of the Tsars. A 1921 article written about guerrilla resistance in Ferghana, for example, emphasizes the region's significance in cotton growing.⁵⁷ Another commentary from the same newspaper, in 1922, hails the "epoch of the nations of Turkestan" in the context of Russian ethnographic expeditions to define identities of the region, rather than national movements among Central Asians.⁵⁸

Members of the Bukharan and Turkestani political elite learned to operate within a framework of increasingly specific limitations on their behaviour, and a growing number of Central Asian mediators supported the Turkestan Commission's plans for the national territorial delimitation. These actors clamored on behalf of the new nations to assure

⁵⁵ Faizulla Khojaev, "Nota protesta revoliutsionnogo pravitel'stva Bukharskoi Narodnoi Sovetskoi Respubliki," [Note of Protest from the Revolutionary Government of the Bukharan National Soviet Republic,], in *Izbrannye Trudy*, vol. 1: 436-40.

⁵⁶ Faizulla Khojaev, "Otvét na pis'mo upolnomochennogo NKID RSSR po Srednei Azii D. Iu. Gopnera ot 15 iul'ia 1921 g." ["Response to the Letter of D. Iu. Gopner, Representative of the NKID of the RSSR to Central Asia, 15 July 1921"], *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1: 413-17.

⁵⁷ "Basmachestvo i Ferganskaia problema," in *Zhizn' Natsional'nostei*, No. 18 (16 September 1921): 2.

⁵⁸ "V Turkestane," in *Zhizn' Natsional'nostei*, 31 January 1922: 3.

themselves a place in the order that emerged. Fedtke notes that most scholars, such as Francine Hirsch, who discuss the delimitation process, take for granted that elites were enthusiastic about one nationality or another. He believes that the paths elites followed to choose a nationality to support reflects a great deal about the dynamics which decided the future political and geographical shape of Central Asia. In the case of many elites, Fedtke claims there was little to no indication of national affiliation until plans for the 1924/25 delimitation began.⁵⁹ As Northrup notes, “indigenous identities were complex, multifaceted, and changeable, and they corresponded poorly to these new political borders [that emerged]. Such stark national distinctions, for example, meant little in places such as multilingual, multicultural Samarqand.”⁶⁰ But Northrop claims that the new elites, schooled in Bolshevism and its aims, were only too happy to defend it.⁶¹ Nisar Mukhamedov, a leading official in Tajik ASSR, admitted in 1928 that when it became obvious that Turkestan would become part of the Soviet Union, Turkestani alliances shifted to collaborate with the Soviet regime, and “leaders ‘put on a Soviet mask’ and promoted the idea of an autonomous Uzbek nation within a Soviet federation.”⁶² Such subaltern behaviour has parallels in colonial Africa. The Southern Tswana, for example, instructed in the language of legitimacy, “were encouraged to see their ‘tribes’ as antecedents, in miniature, of the European nation-state.”⁶³

Fedtke describes the paths chosen by Khojaev and Abdulquadir Mukhitdinov to demonstrate that although their decisions were not arbitrary, they were not based on

⁵⁹ Fedtke, “How Bukharans Turned into Uzbeks and Tajiks,” 3-4.

⁶⁰ Northrup, *Veiled Empire*, 17.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁶² Hirsch, “Toward an Empire of Nations,” 219.

⁶³ Camaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 492.

strong national identity.⁶⁴ Khojaev himself participated in these discussions as a supporter of the incorporation of the Bukharan Republic into an Uzbek SSR. He was originally opposed, and wanted to retain the existence of the Bukharan Peoples' Soviet Republic, and was apparently against its economic union with Turkestan and Khiva in early 1923. But he acknowledged that the emerging discourse of national delimitation in Central Asia did not include a Bukharan nation. The delimitation project sparked by Moscow resulted in a dynamic in which what Haugen calls "previously unimportant" differences became hugely significant in politics.⁶⁵ As Fedtke notes, "according to the Stalinist criteria for a nation (shared language, territory, economy and culture), the Bukharans could have formed a single nation instead" of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, given the bilingualism and common culture of most inhabitants.⁶⁶ Khojaev was allegedly also afraid of losing his position as head of a republic. Fedtke claims the first time Khojaev declared his allegiance to a future Uzbekistan at a Party meeting, in late 1923, this otherwise shrewd politician started crying because he was so unsure of this new discourse. Thereafter, he became one of the most important speakers on the Uzbek side of the debates.⁶⁷

Mukhitdinov also supported Uzbek identity, but then changed his mind in the late 1920s, choosing Tajik identity and supporting an autonomous Tajik republic. In the September 1928 issue of the Sredazburo magazine *Za Partiiu*, he claimed that the people of Bukhara were mostly Tajiks who were forced to comply with Uzbekization.⁶⁸ In fact, Mukhitdinov's choosing Tajik identity was a move to gain greater influence in Soviet

⁶⁴ He also shows how Abdulla Rahimboyev and Abdurahim Hojiboyev both identified themselves as Uzbeks first, and then Tajiks.

⁶⁵ Haugen, *The Establishment of the National Republics in Central Asia*, 165-66.

⁶⁶ Fedtke, "How Bukharans Turned into Uzbeks and Tajiks," 7.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

Central Asia. As Khojaev's rival since 1917, he faced considerable opposition to his upward mobility in the USSR. He succeeded in becoming head of the Tajik Autonomous Region from 1926-28, forced to step down and work for economic organs before the region achieved republic status in 1929.⁶⁹

In the Bukharan Soviet Republic, Mukhitdinov was not forced to be an Uzbek. He chose to be one in order to remain important in the Party. Other Central Asian mediators were willing to support Moscow's visions for the future of the region. Balancing local and Soviet influence remained a necessity, however, and Ryskulov's political story may epitomize it. He proved his importance in Central Asia as head of the Musbiuro, and despite his delinquent challenge to the Party in 1920, his previous local support, and political skill, no doubt assured him a Soviet career when he compromised his former position. Ryskulov's resurgence as a Bolshevik cadre in Narkomnats, however, also reflects the increasing restrictions on local improvisation in the interpretation of Soviet policy, and Moscow's increasingly firm establishment in Central Asia.

Sheep's Clothing?

In 1917-24, Ryskulov, Khojaev, and Ikramov were in a precarious position among the local population, as the representatives of a foreign-based regime, growing in strength and proposing to uproot and dismantle many of the pillars of traditional local society. Their speeches and written work suggest that the three implemented Soviet projects in Central Asia with a view to influencing local soviets to secure their personal authority. This section aims to demonstrate how they discussed projects relating to recruitment into

⁶⁹ Fedtke suggests that the circumstances of Mukhitdinov's job change are little known due to a lack of historiographical investigation. Fedtke, "How Bukharans Turned into Uzbeks and Tajiks," 15.

the Party, as well as fighting counterrevolutionaries, as occasions for disenfranchising such traditional economic and religious elites as *bais* and *mullas*.

To a certain extent, therefore, Ryskulov's, Khojaev's, and Ikramov's motives for managing these Soviet initiatives were the same as their motives for joining the Communist regime, discussed in Chapter 1. Their behaviour as power brokers of the centre therefore has parallels in colonial studies. Like colonized elites, the manner in which Ryskulov, Khojaev, and Ikramov worked to secure their interests in local social competition was circumscribed by the limits of acceptance in regional society. They did not want to evoke too much antagonism towards the regime, and thereby themselves. These three actors sought to cater to the interests of both the new ruler and its new subjects, coincidentally, and according to each side's relative strength. The ideal outcome of this negotiation would be a situation in which both sides had the same interests as the mediators.

Recruitment of Party members or allies in Central Asia was one Soviet project which provided such an opportunity.⁷⁰ To the state, the growth of Communist numbers, if not only popular acceptance of the regime, helped ensure the stability of its institutions. Increased support for the Soviets represented a decrease of backing for counterrevolutionary actors. As for the new members, allies, or recipients of one of the new regime's services, they had an implicit stake in its survival. Power brokers like Ryskulov, Khojaev, and Ikramov, therefore, had a great deal to gain from the convergence of Soviet and Central Asian interests through recruitment.

⁷⁰ While the motivations for individual recruitment campaigns was probably different, but they share many themes and effects. See, for example, an interesting discussion of the various interpretations of the so-called Lenin Levies in John B. Hatch, "The 'Lenin Levy' and the Social Origins of Stalinism: Workers and the Communist Party in Moscow, 1921-1928," *Slavic Review* 48 (Winter 1989) no. 4: 558.

Their discussions of this activity reflects the mediators' dual identities as Communists and Central Asians. In the capacity of the former, they served Moscow well, since it was easier for Central Asians to recruit from the local population than it was for foreigners. For example, as a Musbiuro functionary named Shagabutdinov explained in a telegram, since he took over the job of recruiting to the Muslim Red Army, both Communists and Muslims joined since this "work has been fine-tuned, and is going satisfactorily."⁷¹ The distinction he draws between Communists and Muslims reflects an inclusive approach to recruitment among non-opponents of the Bolsheviks likely to ensure the widest possible support. A Ryskulov speech to a September 1919 conference enforces these categorizations by highlighting Bolshevik interests specific to Central Asians. As an advocate of the Soviet government, he states that non-Russians were accepting the new regime graciously because "the Turkestani proletariat is fully conscious that Soviet power is its power."⁷²

As a Central Asian in need of local support, however, Ryskulov could not ask potential Communists to simply give in to foreign rule. At the September conference, on the eve of Turkkomissii's arrival in Tashkent, he drew attention to Central Asians' own strength in the face of Moscow. The head of the Musbiuro claimed that "in spite of our demands and the instructions we receive from the centre, politics here in Turkestan are not fully in accordance with its interests." He was referring to Moscow's assurance that once there were enough Central Asian Communists and active workers, they could take over all leadership positions in government. "We do not agree with this . . . [it is] necessary to draw in the Muslim proletariat into the government structures now. This is

⁷¹ Shagabutdinov, "Kopiiia telegramy iz Vernogo na imia kraiMusbiuro," in *Turar Ryskulov: Sobrannye Sochineniye*, 255.

⁷² Ryskulov, "Doklad na II kraevoi konferentsii musul'manskikh organizatsii RKP(b) Turkestana," 67.

the only practical way to prepare it [the Muslim proletariat].”⁷³ Ryskulov’s speech also demonstrates his own interests as a regional power broker with a need for leverage against the demands of the centre and other local organizations, since his influence was based on support of Central Asians. Ryskulov’s political behaviour was admittedly exceptional, and extreme in some cases, during his tenure with the Musbiuro. Yet it was also conceptually representative of local mediators in general.

Most Central Asians were not quickly willing to join these Party cadres or accept their authority in their daily lives. So mediators often offered incentives to individuals willing to work for the soviets. Khojaev’s Bukharan government, like the Musbiuro, needed the broadest possible support at home in order to survive the turbulent politics of early Soviet rule, and recruited from diverse groups, before and after the September 1920 coup.⁷⁴ A pamphlet recruiting Bukharans to the revolutionary army, for example, suggests anyone could join so long as they do not belong to exploitative groups of the population.⁷⁵ Those who joined apparently also saw an “improvement in their material situation.”⁷⁶ Khojaev further recalls, in one document, how in the trying early days of Communist Bukhara, the government awarded “a variety of privileges” to parents whose children attended Soviet schools.⁷⁷ Such examples suggest that non-counterrevolutionaries could only benefit from Soviet authority if they behaved in a manner approved of by the new government.

Instructions on Soviet decorum were implied in offers of the most significant benefit the Party had — the security of a job with the regime. At a 1921 congress in Semirechie,

⁷³ Ibid., 67.

⁷⁴ Khojaev, “K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare i natsional’nogo razmezhevanii Srednei Azii,” 177-78.

⁷⁵ Faizulla, Khojaev, *K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare* (Tashkent: Uzbekskoe Gosudarstvennoe Izdatel’stvo), 66.

⁷⁶ Faizulla Khojaev, “Sovetskoe stroitel’stvo: natsional’naia politika” [“Soviet construction: National Politics”], in *Izbrannye Trudy* (Tashkent: “Fan,” 1970), 246.

⁷⁷ Khojaev, “Sovetskoe stroitel’stvo: natsional’naia politika”, 246.

a declaration reminds delegates that “we will always be behind your backs, supporting you and your families. Your debt is to embark upon the path of defenders of working class interests of the Russian and Muslim populations alike.”⁷⁸ Non-cadres were also subjected to threats masked by calls to duty. An order to collective farms, in Semirechie, on the need to surrender agricultural taxes bi-weekly, appeals through the authority of the state. “All citizens who do not consider themselves enemies of Soviet power in course of these fifteen days must prove it by handing over the predefined lot of produce.”⁷⁹ This, it was implied, was the cost of self-government. Another example derives from a 1922 speech in which Akmal Ikramov, then regional Party Secretary in Ferghana⁸⁰, appealed to the careerism of youths of the Turkestan Komsomol by hinting that privilege and job security could come from diligent service for the Party.

The Soviet of Communist Youth is the support, the hope, and the future composition of our Party, and will continue the fight against international capitalism . . . and if the Soviet of Communist Youth succeeds in establishing a good work ethic here, and if it succeeds in sticking together and bringing new strength into its ranks, local strength, then we expect the Soviet of Communist Youth of Turkestan — where work is still extraordinarily complicated and difficult — will fulfill, to its credit, those tasks entrusted it by the Party.⁸¹

⁷⁸ “Nakaz trudiashchikhsia s gerasimovki svoim delegatam na i semirechenskii oblastnoi s’ezd sovetov, 26 iul’ia 1921” [“Order from the Workers of Gerasimovki to their Delegates at the I Congress of Soviets of the Gerasimovki Uezd”, 26 July 1921], *Sovetskoe stroitel’sтво v aulakh i selakh Semirech’ia, 1921-1925* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel’sтво, 1957), 54.

⁷⁹ “Prikaz obkoma soiuzа koshchi o mobilizatsii chlenov soiuzа koshchi dlia provedeniia dvukhnedel’nika po sdache prodnologa, 5 fevralia 1922” [“Order of the obkom of the Soviet of the Koshchi on the mobilization of members of the Soviet of Koshchi for the Realization of the Semi-Monthly Surrender of the Agricultural Tax, 5 February 1922”], *Sovetskoe stroitel’sтво v aulakh i selakh Semirech’ia, 1921-1925* (Alma-Ata: Kazakhskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatel’sтво, 1957), 104.

⁸⁰ Donald S. Carlisle, “Modernization, Generations, and the Uzbek Intelligentsia,” in *The Dynamics of Soviet Politics*, eds. Paul Cocks et al. (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1976), 245.

⁸¹ Akmal Ikramov, “Rech’ pri otkrytii I konferentsii soiuzа kommunisticheskoi molodezhi Turkestana 17 marta 1922 g.,” [Speech at the opening of the I Conference of the Soviet of Communist Youth of Turkestan, 17 August 1922], in *Izbrannye Trudy* (Tashkent: “Uzbekistan,” 1972), 121.

In Ikramov's view, the Party needed to ensure its employees were happy and paid on a timely basis. Otherwise, Ikramov posited three years later, they would either take to receiving bribes from counterrevolutionary sources, or go work for them.⁸²

Attracting membership was inextricably tied to the persecution and exclusion of enemies of the Soviet regime in Central Asia. In fact, recruitment to, and purging from the Party were complementary practices, since the benefits associated with Communist membership also motivated many *vragi* to join.⁸³ These counterrevolutionaries knew that inside the Party they could remain abreast of political events and influence agendas, particularly in remote localities. In early Soviet Turkestan "the apparat was filled with bais and their stooges,"⁸⁴ claimed Ikramov, in 1925.⁸⁵ "They put personal interests ahead of the government and the nation," and hired only their kinsmen and supporters.⁸⁶ Recruitment was a priority in Soviet Central Asia after 1920, and the KPT began active enrollment of Central Asians, and appointing them to "conspicuous positions." The success of the campaigns is indicated by the fact that at the Sixth Regional Congress of Turkestan in mid-1921, half the delegates were Central Asians, at a time when the party membership counted approximately 65,000.⁸⁷ In the former amirate Communist numbers counted approximately 14,000 at this period.⁸⁸

⁸² Ikramov, "Doklad na IV plenum TsK KP(b) Uz 1 sozyva 25 sentiabria 1925," 158.

⁸³ For example, a 1924 article reads: "During the last cleansing the Party excluded more than 200 people — mainly mullas, merchants, bureaucrats and bais — while in November/December about 190 dekkhans and workers were recruited." See "Bukhara," *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'*, 1924 (2-3): 238-39.

⁸⁴ Akmal Ikramovich Ikramov, "Rech' na vtoroi partiinoi konferentsii Tashkentskogo starogorodskogo raiona 19 sentiabria 1925" ['Speech at the Second Party Conference of the Old Tashkent Region, 19 September 1925'], *Izbrannye trudy v trekh tomakh*, vol. 1 (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo "Uzbekistan," 1972), 149.

⁸⁵ Jane Shapiro, "Political Rehabilitation in Soviet Central Asian Party Organizations," *Central Asian Review* 14 (3) 1966: 206.

⁸⁶ Akmal Ikramovich Ikramov, "Rech' na vtoroi partiinoi konferentsii," 149.

⁸⁷ Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 129.

⁸⁸ D'Encausse, *The Great Challenge*, 140.

Yet, as Ikramov pointed out, their motives were questionable. The large number of new Communists in Turkestan and Bukhara quickly drew the suspicions of Moscow. Few of the new members knew much about the Party or its aims, joining to either maintain their position in traditional regional hierarchy or advance it by promoting personal careers.⁸⁹ The situation was especially dire in Bukhara, where policy implementation was still rather hampered by the old regime following the 1920 overthrow. Although the amir was gone, the elites who knew how to run the judicial, financial, and educational systems were still in place because there were not enough ‘true’ Communists to replace them, nor were there economic or political resources to quickly overturn the amirate’s previous institutions.⁹⁰ Moscow recognized there was a problem and the TsK sent the KPT a circular letter on 11 January 1922 which directed Turkestan to “harden its native cadres.”⁹¹ This set off a series of purges which lasted into mid-1923.⁹² By 2 August 1923, the membership stood at 13,156, with 4,000 candidates — just a fourth of the 1921 figure. The same took place in Bukhara, where a Central Asian Bureau report to Stalin in the fall of 1922 complained that party comrades were deciding questions on their own initiative, using discussion and compromise.⁹³ As a result, in 1922 alone, 15, 000 out of a registered 18,945 BKP members were purged.⁹⁴

The cause for such problems of *vragi* participation in spite of institutionalized antagonisms is the fact that, for a long time, this antagonism was not yet a social institution. In 1922, Ryskulov pointed out that, because “the situation of the new

⁸⁹ Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 129.

⁹⁰ Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca*, 46-7.

⁹¹ Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan*, 129.

⁹² D’Encausse, *The Great Challenge*, 143.

⁹³ Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca*, 73-4.

⁹⁴ d’Encausse, *The Great Challenge*, 143.

political economy” — NEP — required the resurgence of the former role of the *bais*, many of the traditional elite were striving to “return themselves to economic rule of Turkestan” and many succeeded.⁹⁵ Khojaev, looking back after delimitation, faults insufficient work of the Party. “The great influence of religion and the clerics, the strength of the old customs and traditions were not sufficiently challenged by revolutionary actions, and the type of measures that facilitate activization of the poor, and rally them around the Party and Soviet power, were not carried into life.”⁹⁶

Ikramov’s accounts demonstrate the obstacles which such traditional social relations continued to pose for the formation of Soviet institutions, both within and outside the Party. Even after delimitation, many traditional elites continued to join the Party establishment, frustrating recruitment efforts and the establishment of soviets.⁹⁷ In one speech, Ikramov complains that there are too many *musul’mane-kommunisty* (Muslim Communists), who “sometimes call themselves Communists, and sometimes Muslims.”⁹⁸ This address is notable because he identifies these actor’s efforts to use Soviet symbols to gain legitimacy despite their unorthodox identity as ‘Muslims’. Ikramov goes to great lengths to criticize them for such behaviour by using the same symbols, in combination with derogatory comments, which were important because they were directed at clerics typically respected in local society. These scoundrels, so-called by Ikramov, mocked Moscow’s constitution and goals.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ T. R. Ryskulov, “Vazhnaia zadacha nashei partii,” [“Impotent Task of Our Party,” 29 Nov 1922] in *Izbrannye Trudy* (Alma-Ata: “Kazakhstan,” 1984), 87-8.

⁹⁶ Khojaev, “K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare i natsional’nogo razmezhevaniiia Srednei Azii,” 228.

⁹⁷ I. Sel’ts, “Partiinaia zhizn’: PKP v Turkestane,” in *Pravda*, 21 April 1922: 3.

⁹⁸ Akmal Ikramov, “Vystuplenie na II s’ezde KP(b) Uz,” 198.

⁹⁹ Akmal Ikramov, “Zakliuchitel’noe slovo po vystupleniiu natret’ei sessii TsIK Sovetov UzSSR, 4 oktiabria 1925 g.,” [Concluding words in a speech at the third Session TsIK of the Soviets of the UzSSR, 4 October 1925], in *Izbrannye Trudy* (Tashkent: “Uzbekistan,” 1972), 180.

They pointed out here [at the conference] that it sometimes occurs that when one man was asked 'What do you do here?', he will answer 'I am a *mulla* of this mosque and the Chairman of the village Soviet.'

This, comrades, is the kind of situation that exists: he is a *mulla*, and at the same time is a Chairman of [one of] our soviet."¹⁰⁰

Such actors were especially conspicuous in rural regions, administered for a long time by Revkoms (Revolutionary Committees), not soviets. "We refer to these as *Revkomamy* [Revkom mothers]," quipped Ikramov at a conference, "since they are inhabited, now and then, by *mullas*, *bais* and *aksakals* (elders)."¹⁰¹ The derogatory reference to the age and masculinity of his enemies barely hides his concern for the fact that the participation of such actors was antithetical to Soviet dogma.

Yet, Ikramov's attack on the Islamic clerics is softer than that against other traditional elites.

In many places the poorest peasant still does not know where to go. They do not go against the *bais*, but against the *mullahs* and the *ishanovs*. This isn't right. Our main forces need to go against the *bais*. The *bai* is our main opponent, and the *mullahs* and *ishanovs* are their accomplices and associates.¹⁰²

Since Islam was one of the main identity affiliations in the region, Central Asian mediators needed to nuance their attacks on its representatives. This aspect of the fight against counterrevolutionaries, however, coincided with the Bolshevik attack on Islam.¹⁰³ As in Russia, atheist societies and propaganda spread through the region, with the goal of confronting the especially religious. Campaigns attempted to assert control of the Muslim clerical hierarchy, by closing institutions associated with it, including mosques, schools, and religious endowments (*waqf*).¹⁰⁴ Anti-Islamic propaganda and anti-religious groups began making their way through the region around 1922, but Russian

¹⁰⁰ Ikramov, "Zakliuchitel'noe slovo po vystupleniiu natret'ei sessii TsIK Sovetov UzSSR," 181-82.

¹⁰¹ Ikramov, "Doklad na IV plenum TsK KP(b) Uz I sozyva 25 sentiabria 1925," 153.

¹⁰² Ikramov, "Doklad na IV plenum TsK KP(b) Uz I sozyva 25 sentiabria 1925," 158.

¹⁰³ Northrup, *Veiled Empire*, 41.

¹⁰⁴ Northrup, *Veiled Empire*, 74.

Communists did not understand that Islam was a fundamental component of Central Asian identity.¹⁰⁵ Some of the strongest objections to anti-Islamic propaganda came from Turkestani Communists, since most of them considered themselves Muslim.¹⁰⁶ Most attacks on Islam came about in spurts and did not begin in earnest until the late 1920s.¹⁰⁷

Ikramov and other Central Asian mediators, therefore, needed the active support of the traditionally lower class elements of the population. Peasant support for the Soviet regime was an act of inherent dissent to the old order. As such, supporting Bolsheviks was associated with increase in popular vilification of the traditional elites. Central Asian peasants were viewed as valuable allies of mediators because they knew localities, and could guide persecution of *vragi*.¹⁰⁸ To a certain extent, these non-elites were mimicking the behaviour of actors like Ryskulov, Khojaev, and Ikramov appropriating Soviet symbols to disenfranchise their traditional 'oppressors'.

Ikramov applauds a case in which "two or three men" were responsible for rooting out a counterrevolutionary *bai* member of the apparat and Party. "That they exclude him from the Party is not important [to him]; what is important to him is that they are removing him from his post . . . The political face of the population is starting to show itself more forcibly. Dekhkans have started coming to us in the Soviet organs with grievances against aksakals, mullas, bais, and so on. The people are coming out actively against the mentioned [anti-Soviet] elements."¹⁰⁹ Encouraging lower classes to do so was

¹⁰⁵ Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca*, 63.

¹⁰⁶ "Islam puts more emphasis on orthopraxy (right action) than orthodoxy (right belief). It creates a community of believers (*umma*) through common actions, as exemplified in the five pillars of the religion . . . Not participating in these actions would cut one off from the community, something that very few Turkestanis were willing to risk." The five pillars are: prayer, the statement of belief (*Shahada*), charity, pilgrimage, and the fast of Ramadan. See Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca*, 64.

¹⁰⁷ Northrup, *Veiled Empire*, 76.

¹⁰⁸ Ikramov, "Doklad na IV plenum TsK KP(b) Uz I sozyva 25 sentiabria 1925," 156.

¹⁰⁹ Ikramov, "Doklad na IV plenum TsK KP(b) Uz I sozyva 25 sentiabria 1925," 154-55.

difficult because they lacked the sophistication to use the language of legitimacy. More importantly, the very people they were meant to complain to were unwilling to help because of links to traditional hierarchy. In Mirzachul'skii *uezd*, the head of militia was revealed as a guerrilla counterrevolutionary, who "organized a gang and committed robberies by night."¹¹⁰

As in Turkestan, counterrevolutionary activity against the Soviet regime in Bukhara was also counteracted by pleas for support from the local population. A strong example of this was the state's offensive against the semi-organized guerrilla movement known throughout Central Asia as the *Basmachi*. Khojaev's accounts of the 1917-24 period reflect the great emphasis he placed on associating the Basmachi and Alimkhan, allies briefly, with all non-cooperative actors and old elites in the new Soviet republic. In an account provided after delimitation, Khojaev claims that, in the immediate aftermath of the Revolution of 1920, the state and Party organs were so weak that many former allies who were unhappy with the direction of the regime supported the growing Basmachi in the still unconquered outskirts of the former amirate.¹¹¹

In Bukhara, all pre-revolutionary authority had been tied to the Amir, so campaigns against the Basmachi associated him and the traditional order with the guerrillas. Khojaev's accounts show that he and the Bukharan government used derogatory comments and misinformation about the amir and the Basmachi to establish the virtue of the new regime and gather support for the fight against its opponents. As in Turkestan, the recruitment of Party members, and military personnel was construed as a weapon

¹¹⁰ Ikramov, "Doklad na IV plenum TsK KP(b) Uz I sozyva 25 sentiabria 1925," 153-54.

¹¹¹ Khojaev, "K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare i natsional'nogo razmezhevaniia Srednei Azii," 229.

against *vragi*. This emerges in the way Khojaev discusses the threat posed by the counterrevolutionaries, thereby mediating the discourse of Moscow to make it intelligible for the local population.

Khojaev and his government expended great efforts to educate the public about the fight he viewed as a civil war¹¹², and to demonstrate that the Basmachi were illegitimate in the eyes of the Soviets, the new rulers. The first step in this process was to explain to the population who the Basmachi were. Even today, the guerilla group is not well understood. Moscow, however, placed a great deal of importance on them. In a 1922 speech, Khojaev joins his government in exaggerating the significance of the movement.

What is the Basmachi which menaces the National Soviet Republic in Bukhara?
The main part of it consists of supporters of the *Amir*, striving for the reinstatement of the former regime, and the return anew of the violating *Amir* to his bloody throne. By taking advantage of the ignorance and simplicity of the wide toiling masses, they intimidate them, provoke them, and push them into an aimless bloody war.¹¹³

Both Soviet and Western historiography also placed greater importance on the Basmachi than evidence can sustain. Basmachi was a derogatory term, meaning brigand, introduced by the Soviet authorities, and later adopted by the subjects themselves. Their action began in Turkestan, in the Ferghana valley in early 1918, and has been mistakenly associated with the fall of the Kokand Autonomy. In fact, the movement was “a response to the economic and social crisis produced by the famine and the resulting ‘bacchanalia of robbery, requisitions and confiscations on the part of the Soviet authorities.’”¹¹⁴ It was, in fact, a loosely organized movement representing one strategy on the part of the

¹¹² Faizulla Khojaev, “Oдно iz osnovnykh dostizhenii,” [“One of the Basic Achievements”] in *Izbrannye Trudy* (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo “Fan” Uzbekskoi SSR, 1970), 248.

¹¹³ Faizulla Khojaev, “Obrashchenie revvoensoveta bukharskoi gruppy voisk k naseleniiu voiskam krasnoi armii” [“Address of the Revolutionary Soviet of the Group of Bukharan Troops to the Population and the Troops of the Red Army,” 9 April 1922], *Izbrannye Trudy* (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo “Fan” Uzbekskoi SSR, 1970), 1: 442.

¹¹⁴ Khalid, *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 285.

population to cope with the turmoil of the time, and relatively resistant to attempts by some to centralize its energies, into a nationalist struggle for example.¹¹⁵

In Khojaev's discussions, the goal of defeating of the Basmachi comes across as inextricably linked to the support and recruitment of the Bukharan masses to the Party and its army, like the challenge to supporters of the old order in Turkestan. Conditions in the former amirate necessitated positive support to the ongoing Russian military presence, in propaganda and BKP meetings.¹¹⁶ In appeals for joiners to the Red Army, Khojaev calls for recognition of Russian blood spilt in Bukhara. He portrays the military force as a group martyrs, even fellow countrymen, who need help in the war for Bukharan freedom. "It is necessary to establish unity of the Red Army and the population, fuse them together in order to knock that weapon of the enemies — with which they agitate among the titular population against the Red Army, and against all the politics of the Red Army — out of their hands."¹¹⁷ The tone of this appeal indicates a position of weakness, however. It does not refer to prospects or examples of victories against the enemy. Instead, the language is careful, and reflects on the Bukharan regime's own lack of strength. As in some regions of Turkestan, difficulties with Basmachi in Khojaev's home region were linked with inhabitants' low and unenthusiastic participation of the in Soviet organizations.¹¹⁸ This may be why Khojaev relied on highly simplistic language to make his case, and the reason he relied on associating counterrevolutionaries with fear.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 285-86.

¹¹⁶ "V Bukhare," in *Pravda* 3 September 1922: 5.

¹¹⁷ Khojaev, "Obrashchehie revvoensoveta bukharskoi gruppy voisk k naseleniiu voiskam krasnoi armii," 443.

¹¹⁸ L. B., "Partiinaia zhizn': v Samarkandskoi oblasti," *Pravda*, 12 March 1922: 3; and Khojaev, "Oдно iz osnovnykh dostizhenii," 248-50.

The extent to which Khojaev was willing to use such semantics to gain the support of the local population is demonstrated in a comparison of two instances in which he cites alleged statements of the amir. Both of these are selected to paint the amir as a threatening enemy. The citations are almost opposite in content, however, and would have evoked very different reactions from their target audience. The first alleged statement was made in the 1922, during the war with the Basmachi. Between 1921 and 1923, the guerrilla group appears to have been strong enough in Eastern Bukhara that they regularly challenged the Communists publicly or in the form of letters.¹¹⁹ Khojaev claims that “in the amir’s letters, he writes that he will return quickly and behead all those who did not support him when he was under attack of the revolution come to dethrone him.”¹²⁰ Such a statement would have worried its audience. Since it appears to close any doors to cooperation with the former head of state, the citation also implies obligation to join the new regime. The second statement Khojaev cited appears in a rather different post-delimitation account. Here Khojaev claims the amir distributed “illegal leaflets promising to forgive participants in the Bukharan revolution if they cross over to the side of the Basmachi, and if they facilitate his work.”¹²¹ Like the first, this citation is informed by an implied competition between Khojaev and the amir for authority grounded in local support. The significantly softer tone of the second statement may indicate that Khojaev worried that the greater information available to the average person after delimitation on such topics as the fight with the Basmachi. Meanwhile, any political

¹¹⁹ Khojaev, “K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare i natsional’nogo razmezhevaniiia Srednei Azii,” 231.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 442.

¹²¹ Faizulla Khojaev, Khojaev, “K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare i natsional’nogo razmezhevaniiia Srednei Azii,” 231.

purpose he was serving with this new story, different from the trying days of the early 1920s, is unclear.

Khojaev's two discussions, both published in the same selected works volume, instead reveal plainly that misinformation was a key component in the act of mediation in early Soviet Central Asia. It exemplifies the persistence of mediator strategies as brokers of the symbols of Soviet power in Central Asia. By 1924, Ryskulov, Khojaev, Ikramov, and other non-Russian Party members had become experts in the symbolism of Bolshevik authority, and therefore experts in the perpetuation of the inclusive and exclusive, abstract language of its power. In practical terms, these power brokers became adept at policing each action and expression in a way that vilified their enemies while justifying Moscow.

‘Tovarishchi!’¹²²

Most of this thesis has focused on aspects and examples of political elite mediation of relations between Central Asians, local Russians, and the Russian centre. The efforts of Central Asian cadres to maintain and influence authority of the Soviet regime represented an important stake in the foreign government. Using its symbols of authority to persecute enemies antithetical to them became more difficult as the regime became more established and the traditional social hierarchy represented a lesser threat. The Soviet regime needed enemies, it seemed, and soon the habit of seeking them out came to affect individual relationships of leading Central Asian revolutionaries, often informing conflict between former allies or fellow-travelers.

¹²² “Comrades!” was a typical salutation initiating Soviet speeches and written address.

This section addresses Ryskulov's, Khojaev's, Ikramov's, as well as Chokaev's critiques of each other. These are considered in the context of Central Asian cadres' need to concurrently legitimize the Soviet regime and themselves, their critiques of regional colleagues can be understood as a personal survival strategy meant to accommodate the increasingly strong revolutionary government they worked for. I focus on how these Central Asians' use of Bolshevik symbols for delegitimation of traditional competitors in local society was reflected in interactions between individuals. Two such cases are examined here. Khojaev's political career in 1917-24/25, firstly, exemplifies a number of ways that Central Asian cadres improvised their interpretation of power in the 'contact zone' between the Bolshevik language of legitimacy and regional interpersonal concerns. Related themes appear in how the politics of the period affected relations between Bolshevik cadres and political class émigrés, reflected by the works of Ryskulov and Chokaev. In both the cases addressed, there unfortunately is little evidence — in the primary and secondary sources consulted for this study — to account for the motivations that informed the behaviour of the actors analyzed.

Khojaev had a number significant rivalries with other Soviet cadres over the course of his political career, which became quite personal.¹²³ The existence of sharp differences between him and actors who appeared to have similar goals demonstrates the degree to which the struggle for success in local social competition was neither unified amongst groups with similar goals, as in the cases of the Young Bukharans and Kokand Autonomists, and nor was it waged among perfect allies within those groups. The extent to which his position as leader of the Young Bukharan Party, BSSR, and Uz SSR invited

¹²³ Fedtke, "How Bukharans Turned Into Uzbeks and Tajiks," 18.

antagonism, and how much he pursued it, is unclear, but Khojaev's professional experiences in the 1920s consist of examples where he was both the victor and loser of such contests. And the common element at stake in each such case discussed below is Bolshevik legitimacy.

One of the most significant challenges Khojaev defeated was waged in Bukhara by Abdulkadir Mukhitdinov, from the beginning of the revolutionary period in 1917. The clash of the careers with these two actors is a good example of how Party officialdom was used by Bolshevik officials to pursue goals which were unofficial. Fedtke claims that

Muhiddinov used the whole range of political terminology the language of the Bolsheviks offered: from the categories and terminology of "social revolution" and communism, the "left" and "right" wings in the party to [sic] the negative bourgeois nationalism . . . In the least cases the [sic] activists regarded them as empty phrases which they merely would have instrumentalised [sic] – it was their own terminology, which they filled with their own meanings and [sic] which they used even before the Bolsheviks took over in Central Asia.¹²⁴

Prior to the September 1920 coup in Bukhara, Mukhitdinov used Bolshevik language to try to gain Soviet favour over Khojaev. His attempts to defeat the leader of the Young Bukharans took him on many travels. In late 1918, Mukhitdinov left the Khojaev-led Young Bukharan Party to join the Central Committee of the Bukharan Communist Party (BCP), in existence since September. He then also joined the Russian Communist Party in 1919 and became a member of the Central Bureau in Moscow. He and the BKP competed against Khojaev and the Young Bukharan Party for the attention of Moscow, until the summer of 1919 and the lead-up to the September Revolution.¹²⁵ After the overthrow of the Bukharan Amir, Khojaev had a much more successful reputation among

¹²⁴ Ibid., 19.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 10.

the as well as the Russian population. The personal competition continued, however, and Mukhitdinov attempted a coup in 1921, and then again in 1922.¹²⁶

According to Fedtke, part of the competition for influence between Khojaev and Mukhitdinov was decided by their relative ability to mediate between the central power and the local population in the context of symbols of authority.

Khojaev apparently understood better how to use the appropriate symbols of the “communist” language. This is reflected in the report of an employee of Yurenev, the Soviet representative to Bukhara: “[Khojaev] was wearing a simple uniform. Only in public did he put on a turban and draped himself with a glowing silk khalat. When I visited his rival [Mukhitdinov], an oriental man of the traditional type, I met him in a small, dark room in the palace of the Emir dressed in his traditional clothing ...sitting on his heels according to the countries customs.” The Soviet representative noticed furthermore the less communistic but rather religious terminology Muhiddinov used when speaking to the people of Bukhara.¹²⁷ [sic]

Mukhitdinov, nevertheless, succeeded in rejoining the very Bukharan regime he had challenged. Exactly how he gained enough support to negotiate his return is unknown to date; but it was apparently in part thanks to Ryskulov, his former boss in the Musbiuro, interceding on his behalf late that year. Mukhitdinov became the Bukharan representative to the Central Asian Economy Council, in May 1923.¹²⁸

Khojaev’s discussions of 1917-24 referred to in this thesis, have little reference to critical or negative views of specific Bolshevik allies such as Mukhitdinov. His inclusive approach to recruiting help for the September 1920 revolution probably precluded vilification of former, and perhaps continuing political supporters with local influence. Certainly, a situation in which Khojaev was rather forgiving of an enemy of the Party suggests he mediated the demands of the Bolsheviks on his personal relationships case by case. In 1923, Khojaev met, by request and in secret, with a Tatar named Zaki Validi Togan, a former Bolshevik who had fallen out with the Party. Togan later followed a

¹²⁶ Ibid., 11-13.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 11-12.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 12-13.

path similar to Chokaev, criticizing the Soviet regime from self-imposed exile, although in the former's case, from Turkey. At their meeting, Togan gave the Bukharan some information on the plans of a future Basmachi leader. The Tatar also noted that he planned to go into self-imposed exile. Khojaev exercised considerable mercy by allowing Togan to leave. Khojaev had just returned from a Moscow meeting with Stalin, who had flown into a rage in discussing the Tatar, and ordered his arrest at the first chance. Khojaev should have detained Togan. The kindness represented by the fact this did not happen probably derived from an episode in which Khojaev's life was saved by the Tatar. According to the Tatar's recollections, he saved Khojaev from uncertain fate by paying for his release from the White army of General Dutov, in the summer of 1918. The Bukharan had been captured on his way to Moscow from Bukhara. At the 1923 encounter, Khojaev cautioned his friend that were he to "go over to the *Basmachi*, we will fight you openly . . . This may be our last meeting."¹²⁹

Evidently, Khojaev could not shake the legacy of the revolutionary associations of his early political career. This problem also related to later historical interpretations of the revolution. Akmal Ikramov was one of the most significant actors to criticize Khojaev's non-Soviet relationships. Ikramov's increasingly hostile behaviour towards Khojaev, in the context of their emerging competition for power, depended greatly on the Bukharan's background. The former's challenge can be traced to his descriptions of Khojaev during nominations of fellow Bolsheviks to lead republic positions at the first all-Uzbek congress in 17 Feb 1925.

¹²⁹ Zaki Validi Togan, "Vstrecha s Faizulloi v Sitarai-Makhi-Khossa," in *Vospominaniia: bor'ba narodov Turkestana i drugikh vostochnikh musul'man-tiurkov za natsional'noe sushchestvovanie i kul'turu*, V. B. Feonovoi, transl., Supplementary notes provided by S. M. Iskhakov, Originally published in Istanbul in 1969 (Moskva, 1997), 311-12.

The slight against Khojaev is so nuanced, it is only apparent because it was juxtaposed with a much more positive appraisal of another cadre. Immediately preceding the statement on Khojaev is Ikramov's nomination of Iuldash Akhunbabaev for Chairman TsIK UzSSR. "The comrade chosen by our party must be a dehkan, a batrak [day labourer],"¹³⁰ Ikramov reasons, since his country of dehkans will relate better with a chairman who is one of them. This appraisal of the need for an ideal Soviet leader is followed by warm enthusiasm in support of the candidate they were lucky to have. The nominator says they found such a candidate "in an agricultural oblast' in Ferghana. There, we found a batrak, without a shred of land, just starting out as a worker, and working in Margilan *uezd* in a Koshchi soviet — named Iuldash Akhunbabaev."¹³¹ Ikramov then immediately nominates Khojaev for Chairman of the Soviet of National Commissars. This nomination is impersonal, yet sufficiently enthusiastic to seem genuine. Khojaev remained influential at this time, and it was likely necessary for cadres to openly support him. Ikramov claims Khojaev is someone who can be trusted by the nations working masses "and others," and "whose qualities [are] efficiency, hard work and the know-how to make the tough decisions that stand ahead of our republic."¹³² In contrast with the other nomination at this session, however, Khojaev's was minimally complimentary. Most Party members would have known Khojaev's wealthy background, and colourful politics, so the juxtaposition was noticeable.

The insult in these nominations may have been important precedent in the competition that occurred between Ikramov and Khojaev later, and may have been a deliberate

¹³⁰ Ikramov, "Vystuplenie na pervom vsezbekskom s'ezde sovetov," 130.

¹³¹ Ibid., 130.

¹³² Akmal Ikramov, "Vystuplenie na pervom vsezbekskom s'ezde sovetov rabochikh, dekhkanskh i krasnoarmeiskikh deputatov, 17 fevralia 1925 g." ["Address at the First All-Uzbek Congress of Soviets of Workers', Dekhkans', and Red Army Deputies, 17 February 1925"], *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1: 130.

beginning to the creation of a negative image for the latter here. In 1927, Ikramov launched a major critique of Khojaev's *K istorii revoliutsii v Bukhare*, stating that “we have to fight against . . . the absurd thought that Bolshevism sprang from a Jadid group — that Jadidism was the beginning of Bolshevism.”¹³³ On several occasions that same year, he forced Khojaev into defensive speeches against accusations of membership in a secret counterrevolutionary ‘Group of 18’, which was claimed to be exploiting poorly cadres.¹³⁴ Ikramov’s attacks became more vociferous after he became the First Secretary of the Uzbek SSR in 1929, along with many Russian Bolsheviks who also charged Khojaev with overzealous nationalism.¹³⁵ Kangas claims that although the Ikramov-Khojaev rivalry is noted in many sources, the content of their dislike for each other is not known, except that they often seemed to be at odds about plans to intensify production of cotton.¹³⁶ Khojaev was apparently against the emerging Uzbek monoculture.¹³⁷ The dislike between the Khojaev and Ikramov was likely closely related with the latter’s recent rise in Party status, and perhaps Khojaev’s attempts to limit his influence.

Central Asian Bolsheviks’ criticisms of one another had to be made within the limits set by official Bolshevik discourse, and they were very dependent on regional conditions. As such, the most serious criticisms of these actors by contemporaries came from outside the Soviet world. Mustafa Chokaev’s essays about Soviet Central Asia show a great deal about the strained relations of the Central Asian Bolsheviks with Soviet projects and with

¹³³ Fedtke, “Jadids, Young Bukharans, Communists,” 490.

¹³⁴ Kangas, “Faizulla Khojaev,” 289; and Critchlow, “Did Faizulla Khojaev Really Oppose Uzbekistan’s Land Reform?” 32.

¹³⁵ Carlisle, “The Uzbek Soviet Intelligentsia,” 246.

¹³⁶ Kangas, “Faizulla Khojaev,” 295.

¹³⁷ James Critchlow, “Did Faizulla Khojaev Really Oppose Uzbekistan’s Land Reform? (An Old Document Surfaces),” *Central Asian Survey* 9 (3) 1990: 38.

each other. He made these statements from self-imposed exile in Europe, where he and other expatriate counterrevolutionaries aspired for the overthrow of the Bolsheviks. Chokaev's main charge is that Central Asian leaders repeat lies when they claim their region was liberated by Russian Bolsheviks. He points out that a number of Bolshevik leaders, including Ryskulov, Khojaev, and Ikramov often referred to the continuing colonial situation there, against official propaganda, even in the late 1920s.¹³⁸ He also points out a very simple form of mediation on the part of Bolshevik cadres. He says that, on the job, they speak of class conflict, Marxism and Leninism, but then at home, in their kishlaks, they "go to the former landowners and say: 'we are not at fault for the land reform.'"¹³⁹ The contents of his work are demonstrative of various faces of Central Asian mediators, just as Soviet reactions only reinforced them.

Yet, Chokaev was a greater threat to the Soviet regime and its Central Asian cadres because of the type of information he had, and how he used it. Even in the expatriate's earliest critiques, his accurate knowledge of private government affairs in Central Asia became apparent, and a cause for concern. The essays he wrote state plainly that the myths of a glorious proletarian revolution in Central Asia were untrue, and that the local populace was no more in control of its own affairs than during the colonial era. The essays I refer to in this analysis refer mainly to the post-delimination period where they contain his critiques of specific actors. But these are representative of his work in general, according to available evidence.

The sources which informed Chokaev's essays represented a problem almost as damaging to the Soviet regime as the works themselves. Chokaev's accurate knowledge

¹³⁸ Chokaev, *Turkestan pod vlastiu sovetov*, 48-9.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

of goings on in his homeland implies he had contacts among Bolshevik affiliates in Central Asia. Sadykova, Chokaev's biographer notes the frustration of Kazakh cadre S. Mendeshev about the fact that Chokaev wrote so regularly with reference to newspapers available only in Central Asia, as well as government information not published in them. Mendeshev claims "this shows that there [in Turkestan] are active remnants of his Kokand government."¹⁴⁰ She cites statements of intelligence officers who support this view, including one who identifies several of Chokaev's contacts — including his former secretary, Kopzhasarov, now a Party member.¹⁴¹ The USSR spied on Chokaev from 1926 until his death.

The Bolshevik regime launched a propaganda campaign against him almost immediately after he left the region, and it continued into the 1930s and 1940s. Ryskulov, one of his major detractors, lodged a major critique of him in a 1924 *Pravda* article, defending the Soviet establishment against ongoing criticisms from former Whites, and other counterrevolutionaries. Ryskulov was especially critical of Chokaev and others contributing to *Dni*, a Paris-based anti-Soviet newspaper. Ryskulov employs Bolshevik discourse to paint Chokaev as a traitor, whose bourgeois tendencies led him away from Central Asia. Ryskulov charges the expatriate with the perpetuation of colonial institutions, of which he calls Kokand an example.¹⁴² "The famous Mustafa Chokaev is currently acting as an ideal informer to the large White Russian population in

¹⁴⁰ Bakhyt Sadykova, *Mustafa Chokai*, 126.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 127-28.

¹⁴² T. R. Ryskulov, "Stat'ia v gazete *Pravda*: "Emigratsiia v Turkestane" ["Article in the *Pravda* Newspaper"], originally published 11 July 1924, *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, (Almaty: "Kazakhstan," 1998), 3: 262-63.

Paris.”¹⁴³ Ryskulov also shames émigrés for abandoning Turkestan, and accuses them of thereby defending the enslavement of its people.

The oppressed East absolutely does not wish to recognize the pitiful remnants of Tsarist imperialism in the guise of emigrants beyond the borders, among whom Chokaev finds himself . . . whose efforts in relation to colonial countries are very well known . . . [emigrants] dream up fallacies, and every lie dreamed up about Turkestan comes from the Turkestani emigrant Chokaev.¹⁴⁴

Ryskulov, no doubt, felt greatly threatened by the comments Chokaev made, especially because they both began their revolutionary careers as part of the same Turkestani political class.

One of Chokaev’s greatest criticisms of the Soviet regime in *Turkestan pod vlastiu sovetov* was about the leadership competence of its top cadres, and the lack of independence they represented to the Central Asian republics. He cites a Sredazbiuro document from before the delimitation which claims that many Central Asians in the Party “do not know the first quarter of arithmetic operations, cannot write in their native language, do not know where Paris and London are, are not acquainted with the history of the Party, and have not read the Party programs.” He thereafter also points out that since Lenin claimed that ‘an illiterate person resides outside politics,’¹⁴⁵ it follows that the only people who can take part in leading the government of the life of the country are those “filled with ‘Party myths and prejudice.’”¹⁴⁶ This he sees as proof that most Central Asians in the Party are *vne politiki* (‘outside politics’ or ‘inconsequential in politics’).

Chokaev launches a major criticism of the one he believes is the best example: Iuldashbai Akhunbabaev, the Chairman of the TsKUz. It was reported in 1925, according to Chokaev, that new cadre was illiterate. “Can you believe that . . . [someone]

¹⁴³ Ryskulov, “Stat’ia v gazete *Pravda*,” 259.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 262-63.

¹⁴⁵ Chokaev, *Turkestan pod vlastiu sovetov*, 46.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 46.

without understanding of the principles of socialist life can be a responsible leader of a socialist government?" He also notes that Akhunbabaev put his signature on many documents in this period. "Now Akhunbabaev quickly and smartly learned to sign his name and read on his own. But nevertheless, can we seriously say that this half-literate peasant land reformer really heads" Soviet Uzbekistan?¹⁴⁷

The difference between this criticism and Chokaev's comments on such veteran cadres as Ryskulov, Khojaev, and Ikramov bears an important distinction. His discussion of the latter three highlights the hypocrisy he sees in their continuing participation in the Soviet government. His appraisal of Akhunbabaev quite different denies he has any right to rule at all. This distinction appears to signify Chokaev's view that those joining the increasingly strong regime now, must do so on its terms. As an actor who continued to work for change in Central Asia until he died, Chokaev lamented the Soviet government's firm footing there, represented by the 'quality' of new recruits. His works do not focus on the political infighting which continued with increasing intensity into the late 1920s. The attacks Central Asian cadres made on each other within the Soviet government context, with increasing intensity after Chokaev left the region, also indicate their acknowledgement that the Communist government would stay, and that their enemies now consisted not only opponents of the regime, but also opponents of within the regime.

Conclusion

The most important indication of the growing strength of the Soviet regime in Central Asia was the great influx of Central Asians into the Party when the national territorial

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 47.

delimitation was announced. The number of Party members and candidates in Turkestan, in the lead up to the political change rose from 16,382 on 1 January 1924, to 24,166 on 1 September 1924.¹⁴⁸ After the form to take shape in the new republics was planned in mid-1924, the Party made significant efforts to expand to more remote regions, and actively recruit non-Russians. For example, in 1924 and 1925, 24 Party committees were created at the raion level, and 14 at the uezd' level.¹⁴⁹ Yet more important was that those Central Asians who wanted to remain in the Party as Ryskulov, Khojaev, and Ikramov, did needed to behave as Bolsheviks.

This chapter demonstrates that Central Asian elites who became Bolsheviks in early Soviet Central Asia behaved like colonial mediators. At while such participation benefited them, the manner in which it did changed significantly between 1917 and 1924/25. In the immediate aftermath of the Revolutions of 1917, these actors had so much freedom to cooperate with the Bolsheviks on their own terms that they could even challenge both Central Asian and central Bolshevik organizations under Russian control, as exemplified quintessentially by the cadres of the Musbiuro. The flexibility for influencing the regime lasted until about the time the Bolsheviks won the Russian Civil War. Party organizations became increasingly strong from this point on, and so did Moscow's ability to circumscribe and limit the activity of Central Asian Bolsheviks, as all the USSR's Party members. By helping the Russians re-establish rule in Central Asia,

¹⁴⁸ *Kommunisticheskaia partiia Turkestana i Uzbekistana v tsifrakh (Sbornik statisticheskikh materialov, 1918-1967 gg.)* [The Communist Party of Turkestan and Uzbekistan in Numbers (Compilation of Statistical Materials, 1918-1967)] (Tashkent: "Uzbekistan," 1968), 86, 92.

¹⁴⁹ *Kommunisticheskaia partiia Uzbekistana v tsifrakh (sbornik statisticheskikh materialov, 1924-1977 gg.)*, [The Communist Party of Uzbekistan in Numbers (Compilation of Statistical Materials, 1924-1977)] (Tashkent: "Uzbekistan," 1979), 428-29.

whether wittingly or not, its power brokers had worked towards removing the independence they had as political leaders and groups after the Revolution.

CONCLUSION

“Where did I find out about Khodzha[ev]? Oh don’t think that nothing has been written about him,” a Senegalese political scientist informed a Russian named G. Dimov in 1957. “It has been written, but by enemies of the USSR sympathetic to the West.”¹ Apparently this sparked Dimov’s interest, and led him to write a biographical article on Khojaev in *Pravda Vostoka*, published 27 May 1966. “*On vyros v bor’be*” [“He Emerged in the Struggle”] signaled the political rehabilitation of Khojaev in the USSR, the end of the ban on mentioning his name “favourably”, in place since he was excluded from the Communist Party during the Great Purge of the late 1930s, and executed.² The publication of the selected works dedicated to Khojaev in 1970 was a sign of his full rehabilitation, since it meant that his writing, albeit censured, could be read freely. Similar stories of rehabilitation apply to Ikramov and Ryskulov. The former’s rehabilitation began in 1957, although his selected works were not published until 1972. Ryskulov’s rehabilitation also began before Khojaev’s, but a volume of documents attributed to him was not published until 1984.³ Chokaev’s writings were never allowed in the USSR (perhaps Dimov’s informant refers to this émigré’s works as those “sympathetic to the West”). It is possible that the lack of attention international historiography has paid the role of Central Asian elites in the 1917-24 period derives from the fact that official discussion of them was forbidden in the USSR for a long time.

¹ Quoted in Carlisle, “Review of Faizulla Khojaev,” 70.

² Carlisle, “Review of Faizulla Khojaev,” 70. Another historian suggests that Khojaev’s rehabilitation was signalled by a similar, 25 May article by M. Vakhobov and V. Ustinov in *Izvestiia*, entitled “Verno sluzhil narodu” (“He Served the Nation Correctly”). See Shapiro, “Political Rehabilitation,” 207.

³ Shapiro, “Political Rehabilitation,” 203, 205-6.

I have tried to demonstrate that documents attributed to them are a rich source of information about their role in events that shaped the nature of Soviet governance in the republics south of Russia. Ryskulov's, Chokaev's, Khojaev's, and Ikramov's words, written and spoken, provide insights to their behaviour which have typically been overlooked or ignored. The documents addressed in this thesis show that these four individuals were significant participants in the revolutionary events that beset Turkestan and Bukhara after the February and October Revolutions of 1917. Not only were these actors engaged in the social and political upheaval of the time, but they actively pursued cooperation with Russian groups best positioned to be allies beneficial to their own causes.

The materials used in this thesis also demonstrate that Ryskulov, Khojaev, and Ikramov were autonomous agents of the Bolshevik Party they chose to join, and not unthinking or passive servants, wholeheartedly subservient to Communist ideology. As mediators of the establishment of early Soviet rule in Central Asia, these three actors, like other indigenous cadres, tried to coordinate their own aspirations for the reform of region's traditional social hierarchy and political structure with those of the new government. Yet, their own authority was closely tied to that of the regime, and so their actions served the dual purpose of legitimizing the regime as well as themselves. Their success in doing so is reflected as much by the privileged positions they maintained within the Party, as well as the large number of new Central Asian Communists.

Ryskulov, Khojaev, Ikramov, and other Central Asians who wanted to remain in the Party needed to behave in a manner that coincided with the Bolshevik language of legitimacy. This is another reason that sources bearing the words of the Central Asians

analyzed here have not been adequately evaluated in the past. They must be read in terms of the specific discursive context they address, since otherwise they appear as Bolshevik propaganda. I approached the documents assessed in this thesis as works of intermediaries of rule who, in order to ensure their own legitimacy, had to please the government they worked for, as well as the people it governed. Colonial studies of subalterns provided useful guidelines for interpreting such documents. The political situation of Ryskulov, Khojaev, and Ikramov bears conceptual parallels to power brokers in colonial situations, as do the ways they used terminology and social ideas of the regime. Only in recent years have such comparative studies been successfully employed in analyses of Central Asia, and more often in the social sciences. Historiography of the region still stands to gain a great deal from global comparisons, in part to compensate for a continuing lack of access to data.⁴ An international perspective of this Soviet borderland of Russia broadens the possibilities for understanding the processes and dynamics of power that characterized it. More importantly, it contributes to knowledge of local conditions and events throughout the Soviet era, so understudied and misunderstood, especially in those regions furthest away from Moscow.⁵

My use of colonial studies in this thesis suggests that the actors analyzed were subordinate members of a new emerging hierarchy who are comparable to colonial actors because of the way they performed their tasks. This also, however, implies that the power dynamics which characterized the nature of governance they helped establish in 1917-24, also informed the Moscow-Central Asia relationship in the period that followed.

⁴ James Critchlow highlighted the need for such scholarly innovations, in "Uzbeks and Russians," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 17 (2/3) 1975: 369.

⁵ Donald Raleigh calls the lack of local studies "the greatest lacuna in scholarship on the Soviet experiment." Some of these are addressed in his edited volume: *Provincial Landscapes: Local Dimensions of Soviet Power, 1917-1953* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001).

After the national territorial delimitation of 1924/25, and the creation of national republics with relevant Party and state administrations, Central Asia was a profoundly different place from the tsarist colonial world of the pre-1917 era. There was, nevertheless, a conspicuous continuity across 1917 in many of the governance relationships between the borderland and Russia. These became increasingly apparent in the late 1920s and 1930s, when the degree of change accelerated even more, Communist intentions were realized in radical social reform, and the fact that real power was held not in Central Asia but Moscow became obvious. “The meanings of ‘Soviet power’ in Muslim Central Asia were a work in progress, as party officials cast about and explored a variety of alternatives. It took almost ten years for them to focus on everyday life and culture.”⁶ A major campaign redistributing the land and water rights of *bais* and clerics to peasants in 1925-26, and the 1927 initiation of the *hujum* (assault) on women’s practice of wearing a veil, and other symbols of Islam was a harbinger of changes to come.⁷ The regulation of the everyday life was accompanied by a related reorganization of most social, economic, and political practices of the region in a manner which suited Soviet rule, and disenfranchised traditional social authority and practice. And this occurred, to a great extent, thanks to the efforts of Ryskulov, Khojaev, Ikramov, and Central Asians like them.

The results of Soviet rule are quite different from the visions of autonomous self-government that motivated many Central Asians to ally with the Bolsheviks in the first place. Indeed, the political careers of Ryskulov, Chokaev, Khojaev, and Ikramov ended with a certain degree of sad irony. Although each of them devoted his life to the

⁶ Northrup, *Veiled Empire*, 72.

⁷ Northrup, *Veiled Empire*, 72-76.

profession of revolution in Central Asia from early 1917 onward, they all died as official villains in their homeland, and at the height of Moscow's control of the region.

Moreover, all of them died at about the same time. Ryskulov, Khojaev, and Ikramov were all purged from the Party in 1937⁸, and died in the custody of the state they served in 1938. Chokaev, meanwhile, died in December 1940 in Berlin, where he had been in interviews with the Nazis on the topic of Soviet Central Asians since August.⁹

⁸ For an account of their trial, see *Report of Court Proceedings In the Case of the Anti-Soviet 'Bloc of Rights and Trotskyites,'* Heard Before the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the U.S.S.R., Moscow, March 2-13, 1938, Verbatim Report (Moscow: People's Commissariat of Justice of the U.S.S.R., 1938).

⁹ Sadykova, *Mustafa Chokai*, 233.

GLOSSARY

Russian and Uzbek Terms and Abbreviations

<i>Amir</i>	prince, commander, or chief
<i>Amirate</i>	the territory ruled by an amir
<i>Bai</i>	a Central Asian landowner or wealthy farmer
<i>Basmachi</i>	a Central Asian guerrilla movement fighting Soviet authority, ca. 1918-27
<i>Dekhkan</i>	a Central Asian peasant farmer
<i>Jadid</i>	a movement of Central Asian Muslim intelligentsia of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to modernize Islam by introducing Western educational methods into Muslim schools
<i>KPT</i>	Communist Party of Turkestan
<i>Mulla</i>	a Muslim trained in the doctrine and law of Islam
<i>Musbiuro</i>	Muslim Bureau of the Turkestan Regional Party Committee, established May 1919 and disbanded in fall of 1920
<i>Oblast</i>	a large province
<i>RKP</i>	Russian Communist Party
<i>Ryskulovshchine</i>	plural derogatory term meaning 'Ryskulov groupists', referring to members of the executive of the Musbiuro, led by Turar Ryskulov
<i>Shura</i>	council; as in <i>Shura-i-Islamiya</i> , which means 'Muslim Council'
<i>TsK</i>	Central Committee
<i>TAG</i>	Turkestan Autonomous Government
<i>Turkkommissia</i>	Turkestan Commission; established October 1923 and disbanded March 1923
<i>Uezd</i>	a medium sized Russian territorial division, abolished in the 1920s
<i>Ulama</i>	lit. "scholars", the most intellectual and orthodox of the Muslim clergy. Plural of the Arabic <i>alim</i> .
<i>Vragi</i>	Russian term for 'enemies'

APPENDIX -A

A Brief Chronology of Mustafa Chokaev's Political Life¹

1889	born near Ak-Mechet in the Kazakh steppe of northern Turkestan
1910	completed <i>ginazium</i> studies in Tashkent
1910-16	studied law at the University of St. Petersburg
April 1917	arrived in Tashkent to begin revolutionary activity
January 1918	became Prime Minister of the Turkestan Autonomous Republic
May 1918 – Summer 1921	departure from Tashkent and travel throughout Central Asia Kazakh region, southern Russia, the Caucasus, and Turkey, until arrival in Paris
1926-38	editor of the <i>Prometei</i> newspaper of the organization for the National Defense of the Nations of the Caucasus, Ukraine, and Turkestan
September – December 1941	required by the Nazis to act as their consultant on Central Asian politics
27 December 1941	died of a heart attack

A Brief Chronology of Turar Ryskulov's Political Life²

1884	born in the oblast of Almaty
1905-06	spent a year in the Vernenskii jail with his father
1907-10	attended a Russo-native school in Merk
1910-14	attended an agricultural secondary school in Pishpek
1914-16	worked as a gardener for-hire in Merk and Tashkent
1916	took part in the 1916 uprisings in Aulie-Ata uezd

¹ Sadykova, *Mustafa Chokai*, 231-33.

² T. R. Ryskulov: *Sobranie sochinenii*, 429-33; *Revoliutsia v Srednei Azii glazami Musulmanskikh Bolshevikov*, 6-11.

1916-17	attended a Tashkent teachers' institute
March 1917	began revolutionary activity in Aulie-Ata-uezd
Summer 1917	organized and led the Union of Revolutionary Kyrgyz Youth
September 1917	became a member of the Social Democratic Party in Tashkent
May 1918	became Chairman of the Ispolkom of the Soviet of Soldiers' and Workers' Deputies in Aulie-Ata
March 1919	became Chairman of the Muslim Bureau of the Communist Party in Turkestan
End of Summer 1920	Ryskulov leaves the Party
Beginning of 1921	assigned as plenipotentiary of the Commissariat of Nationalities to Azerbaidzhan
September 1922	named Chairman of the Soviet of National Commissars of the TASSR
Summer 1924 – July 1925	worked as the plenipotentiary of the Comintern in Mongolia
19 April 1926	named editor of the Kazakh newspaper <i>Egemen Kazakstan</i>
1926-37	Deputy Chairman of the Sovnarkom of the RSFSR
January 1927 – 1930	directed the committee of the construction of the Turkestan Siberian Railroad (Turksib)
21 May 1937	arrested
1938	executed
1956	political rehabilitation began

A Brief Chronology of Faizulla Khojaev's Political Life³

1896	born in Bukhara
1907-12	received education in Moscow
March 1917	became a leader of the newly founded Young Bukharans
October 1918 -late 1919	lived in Moscow, and likely committed to alliance with the Bolsheviks
September 1920	became head of the newly formed Bukharan People's Soviet Republic
15 May 1925	formally recognized as Prime Minister of the newly formed Uz SSR
1925-37	Chairman of the Uzbek Council of People's Commissars
1925-37	member of the Politburo (Executive Political Bureau) of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan
27 June 1937	removed from office and arrested
March 1938	tried and executed in Moscow
ca. 1966	political rehabilitation began

A Brief Chronology of Akmal Ikramov's Political Life⁴

1898	born in Tashkent
August 1917 – February 1918	received pedagogical training in Tashkent
February 1918	joined the Communist Party in Tashkent
1918-19	taught in a Soviet school in Old Tashkent (Asian side)
June 1919 – April 1920	was Deputy Chairman and then Chairman of the Muslim Bureau of the Party in the Namangan Gorkom (city committee)

³ Kangas, *Faizulla Khojaev*, 367-68; Shapiro, "Political Rehabilitation in Soviet Central Asian Party Organizations," 202, 207.

⁴ *Akmal Ikramov: Izbrannye trudy*, 1: 523-25, 2: 565-68; Shapiro, "Political Rehabilitation in Soviet Central Asian Party Organizations," 202, 206.

December 1920	Secretary and Head of the Kul'tprop (Culture and Propaganda Bureau) of the Syr Daria Obkom (Regional Committee) Party
7 February 1925	was chosen to be a member of the Presidium (permanent executive committee) of the Central Executive Committee of the Uz SSR
13 February 1925	became the Secretary of the Ispolburo (Executive Political Bureau, later known as 'Politburo') of the TsK UzKP (b)
18 December 1929 1937	First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan
September 1937	removed from Party posts
March 1938	tried and likely executed this year as well, although that is uncertain
1957	political rehabilitation began

Map 1 **Map 2****Map 2**
Soviet Central Asia (from 1924)

Original Maps in Northrup, *Veiled Empire*, 16-18.

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