



The Ambivalent Empire

Soviet Rule in the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic,
1945–1964

Claus Bech Hansen |

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of History and Civilization
of the European University Institute

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European University Institute
Department of History and Civilization

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ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses the functioning of Soviet rule in the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic from 1945 to 1964. The thesis contributes to a growing body of literature on the late-Stalin and the Khrushchev periods and sheds light not only on the tremendous influence Soviet rule had on Uzbek society, but also on the changes and continuities that occurred between Soviet rule under Stalin and Khrushchev. It focuses on the effects of two fundamentally opposing forces that characterised Soviet rule in Uzbekistan: On the one hand, the Moscow leadership held a strong claim to power resulting in quasi-imperial practices to ensure the implementation of central government interests in the Uzbek Soviet republic. On the other hand, even during the Stalinist dictatorship, the Uzbek periphery was subject to a continuous integration into the Soviet Union through central government investment in all spheres of the country in the name of communism. *Ambivalent Empire* is meant capture the essence of a state that disregarded imperial power and invested enormous forces to that very end, but paradoxically flanked anti-imperial policy with quasi-imperial practices in its pursuit of communist modernity.

This ambivalence of Soviet rule was accompanied by the condition of limited statehood, which is used as an analytical concept to provide a better understanding of the mechanisms that directed the centre-periphery relations in the Soviet Union. Instead of understanding limited statehood as a sign of weakness of the Soviet state or as opposition to the Soviet project on side of the Uzbeks, the thesis explores the meanings and strengths of limited statehood in the implementation processes. Far from being a one-sided expression of low efficacy of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR, limited statehood was produced the complex interplay between different forces that endowed it with dysfunctional *and* functional character to different actors at different times. As a consequence, the thesis provides a better understanding of the deeper functioning not only of the Soviet state but also of the forces holding it together.

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1. INTRODUCTION

“The collective farms that have ‘patronage’ (*shefstvo*) from regional and republican officials remain out of control, because leaders of regional, provincial, party, Soviet and agricultural organizations do not dare intervene and take control of their activities.”¹ The atmosphere in the Uzbek Executive Bureau was tense when Sirodzh Nurutdinov, secretary for agricultural questions to the Uzbek Central Committee, presented his explanation for the limping cotton production in the collective farms in the Uzbek SSR in August 1950. The Uzbek political elite had been summoned to the headquarters of the Central Committee by devoted Stalinist S. D. Ignat’ev, who had been deployed to Tashkent in 1949 to improve the state of affairs in the Central Asian Soviet republic.² Ignat’ev was not pleased with his findings and had just concluded a sharp reprimand to the Uzbek Executive Bureau members, when Nurutdinov cautiously pointed to the obstructive character of networks existing within Uzbek society. “Take several rural party officials”, Nurutdinov continued, “chairmen of collective farms etc., a great part of these leading cadres remains out of control, drops out of sight of the party...these chairmen frequently do not obey, make mistakes and often need be removed.”³ Sirodzh Nurutdinov touched upon a central theme of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR and put into words what the political elite in both Moscow and Tashkent already knew: Soviet power suffered tremendously beyond the urban border of the major Uzbek cities. In the Uzbek party and state institutions, Soviet political leadership continuously discovered those whom it deemed unruly incumbents, who disregarded orders, pursued their own interests, engaged in misappropriation of funds or even propagating “anti-Soviet” attitudes. Moscow held a no less grim picture of the Uzbek population. Marked by suspicion, the political leadership in the Soviet capital was distrustful toward the (real) ambitions of the Uzbeks, their cultural “backwardness” and their degree of devotion to the Soviet state. Through the historical sources, the reports of Soviet officials on the Uzbek SSR, speaks not only the voice of a state that was suspect and annoyed by its political policies’ limited effect on state and society in the Uzbek periphery. It is also the voice of an apparatus determined to fight the condition and uphold its claim to power.

¹ RGASPI, 574, 1, 23, l. 40.

² When the Uzbek SSR, the Uzbek republic and Uzbekistan are used interchangeably it reflects the use by the historical actors at play. If not stated otherwise, all refer to the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic according to the borders of 1929, after the Tajik ASSR was given the status of a proper Soviet Socialist Republic.

³ RGASPI, 574, 1, 23, l. 40

The story unfolding on the following pages is one that tells the tale of a state, seeking ways to penetrate the Uzbek periphery and secure its power and interests under the condition of limited statehood.⁴ The study focuses on the political relations between Moscow and Tashkent and how the Uzbek leadership implemented the Soviet rule. We begin our story in 1945 after the Soviet victory in the Second World War and end it with Nikita Khrushchev's political downfall in 1964. During these nearly twenty years, the relations Moscow and Tashkent were marked by considerable political tension. No less than five different individuals sat in the chair of the First Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party, while an unprecedented eight chairmen held the highest office of the Council of Ministers. This meant more personnel exchanges than at any other point of the Soviet period, and the Moscow leadership was clearly vexed by the situation in the Uzbek periphery.

The post-1945 Soviet and Uzbek history was a tumultuous time that was characterised by two seminal events: World War II and the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953. Despite its geographic distance to the battlefields, World War II had left the Uzbek SSR in deep crisis. The post-war years were marked by a reconstruction not only of the production basis, but also of the state's control over society, both of which suffered severe setbacks during the war. Furthermore, Uzbekistan did not escape the repressions of the late-Stalin period that struck the political elite and the intelligentsia. The death of Joseph Stalin ushered in a new period in Soviet history. The relaxation of repression, de-Stalinisation and the Thaw altered the nature of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR.

It is against the background of these general developments of Soviet history that we analyse how the relations between Moscow and Tashkent evolved. The policies of both Stalin and Khrushchev toward the Uzbek SSR have often been done away with as erratic and illogical.⁵ A closer examination of Stalinist and Khrushchevian rule in the Uzbek SSR, however, reveals quite a different picture. Stalin and Khrushchev both possessed very clear political rationales, but they focused their energy on retaining power and securing all-union interests, which were only partly congruent with republican interests.⁶ And while Stalin employed the

⁴ I understand limited statehood as territories, policy areas and/or certain social target groups, within which or towards whom a state is (temporarily) unable to enforce binding rules and/or its monopoly on violence. This definition is leaning on the work of political scientists: Thomas Risse and Ursula Lehmkuhl, "Governance in Räumen Begrenzter Staatlichkeit," *Aus Politik Und Zeitgeschichte* no. 20–21 (2007): 3–5.

⁵ Scholars largely agree, for example, on the political, economical and environmental irrationality of creating a cotton monoculture in Uzbekistan: James Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan: a Soviet Republic's Road to Sovereignty* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 61–77; Adeeb Khalid, *Islam After Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia*, 1st ed. (University of California Press, 2007), 85–98.

⁶ Stalin as a rational dictator: Paul Gregory, *Terror by Quota: State Security from Lenin to Stalin: (an Archival Study)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 1–32.

most vicious strategies to achieve it, Khrushchev was no less aiming for the same goals. Within a federal state structure, the production of such hierarchies between state and republican interests is neither surprising nor uncommon. Similarly, it is not unusual for a federal state that republican leadership is not always as compliant as the central government hopes for. More often than not, however, Stalin and Khrushchev, as well as the apparatus they spearheaded, saw in such discrepancies an obstacle to their effective claim for power and the mishandling of all-union interests in the Uzbek SSR.

Conflicts of interest between Moscow and Tashkent do not necessarily mean that Soviet rule in Uzbekistan is a story of Moscow repression and Uzbek resistance with a central apparatus forcing its policies upon the Uzbek leadership when required.⁷ It is a simplification and an unjust denial of political rationale to present the Uzbek political leaders as mere puppets of Moscow.⁸ Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR is thus a story of leaders on both all-union and republican levels seeking ways to best realise their individual political, economic and socio-economic agendas. Republican leaders were not merely “willing executioners”, victims or faceless puppets of Moscow, but pursued their own goals that, at times, correlated with central leadership’s visions and, at other times, did not.⁹ Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR from 1945 to 1964 was a process characterised by the pursuit of political ambitions of both sets of leaders. Yet, neither Stalin nor Khrushchev questioned what they understood as their prerogative to decide matters to their benefit. The quest for the Uzbek leaders was to adapt to the central government, play along, pursue and – under Stalin, quite literally – keep their own interests alive.¹⁰ It is well known that Khrushchev changed the face of the Soviet Union, but it was a

⁷ Ulrich Hofmeister, “Kolonialmacht Sowjetunion. Ein Rückblick Auf Den Fall Uzbekistan,” *OSTEUROPA* 2006, no. 3 (2006): 69–95; Alexandre Bennigsen, “Colonization and Decolonization in the Soviet Union,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 4, no. 1 (January 1969): 141–151; Douglas Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2004); Baymirza Hayit, *Sowjetrussischer Kolonialismus Und Imperialismus in Turkestan* (Oosterhout, Netherlands, 1965).

⁸ Kathleen Carlisle, for example, presents the Uzbek First Secretary Sharaf Rashidov as a “weakling” who was instrumentalised to fulfil central demands: Kathleen Bailey Carlisle, “Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan” (PhD, Boston College, 2001), 301.

⁹ “Willing executioners” is a term borrowed by David Goldhagen, describing the political attitudes of Hitler’s supporters: Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (Vintage, 1997). On Uzbeks merely as victims of Soviet rule: Baymirza Hayit, “Turkestan as an Example of Soviet Colonialism,” *Studies on the Soviet Union* 1, no. 2 (1961): 78–95. On Soviet decision-making and centre-local relations, pioneering: Jerry F Hough, *The Soviet Prefects: The Local Party Organs in Industrial Decision-Making*, Russian Research Center Studies 58 (Cambridge: Harvard U P, 1969); E. A. Rees, ed., *Centre-local Relations in the Stalinist State, 1928-1941*, Studies in Russian and East European History And (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

¹⁰ Vladimir A. Kozlov, “Denunciation and Its Functions in Soviet Governance. From the Archive of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1944-1953,” in *Stalinism: New Directions. Re-writing Histories*. (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 117–141. See also: Jörg Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde: Stalins Herrschaft der Gewalt* (Munich: Beck, C H, 2012), 265–266.

face-lift with consequences. His predecessor had created a system based on three essential pillars: A political order of a single-party dictatorship, the economic order of a non-market and, lastly, a system of mass state terror.¹¹ Be it for the sake of securing central interests or an affinity for violence, Stalin legitimised terror as a political practice to achieve his goals.¹² With the abolition of mass violence, Khrushchev was confronted with the task of ensuring all-union interests in the union republics in a manner he had never needed to rely on before. From a crude political standpoint, it is questionable if Khrushchev did himself a favour by loosening the reins of the Stalinist dictatorship. In Uzbekistan at least, his policies were met by objections and generated conflict between Moscow and Tashkent of a character that would have been inconceivable under Stalin. In fact, Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation campaign sparked a process where neither the republican leaders nor the Soviet population simply retreated to a position of gratitude, but instead voiced and pursued interests more determinedly than during the period of late Stalinism.¹³

The situation in the Uzbek SSR was no different from that in other Soviet republics and this study's view toward Central Asia does not find its justification in the singularity of the Uzbek case.¹⁴ The Uzbek leadership and the Uzbek population constituted an integral part of the Soviet Union, so that the analysis of Soviet rule in Uzbekistan sheds light on central features of the political challenges ruling a multiethnic and multicultural state entails. To be sure: Uzbek particularities influenced Soviet rule and generated certain idiosyncrasies to the development in Uzbekistan. The focus here however, is on the interests that guided Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR, in order to provide a better understanding of the deeper functioning not only of the Soviet state but also of the forces holding it together. Based analytically on the concept of limited statehood, the study asks how Soviet rule was implemented in the Uzbek SSR despite the clearly weak state and party structures so eloquently described above by S. Nurutdinov. Thereby, the changes and continuities that Soviet rule underwent from 1945 to 1964 stand the centre of attention. We analyse how the Moscow central government as well as the Uzbek leadership pursued and implemented their interests, how these developed over time under altering political conditions and what political conflict they generated.

¹¹ Amir Weiner, "Robust Revolution to Retiring Revolution: The Life Cycle of the Soviet Revolution, 1945-1968," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 86, no. 2 (April 2008): 209.

¹² Stalin's lust for violence: Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*.

¹³ For a general view on the Soviet Union: *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, BASEES/Routledge Series on Russian and East European Studies 23 (London: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁴ Analogous developments have been shown for the Armenian SSR: Maike Lehmann, *Eine sowjetische Nation: nationale Sozialismusinterpretationen in Armenien seit 1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2011).

The Ambivalence of Empire

The Soviet Union was not an empire in the traditional sense of the term. That conclusion must be drawn from the recent debate amongst historians on the Soviet Union and the empire question.¹⁵ Gone are hasty definitions that relied too heavily upon a rigid totalitarian concept or saw in the Soviet Union a *nation killer*.¹⁶ In their place has stepped an understanding that gives precedence to sensitive analyses of Soviet policies, the processes they released as well as their alteration over time. There is a certain commitment amongst empire theoreticians to include the Soviet Union into the family of empires, despite the difficulty of identifying a clear-cut analytical concept that would encompass all empires of human history.¹⁷ Empire, generally seen as an entity of vast geographical size with a dominant centre of power, a populous of multiple ethnicities and cultures and a strong ideology, appears to describe well the Soviet Union.¹⁸ In addition to these composite state elements, Ronald Suny defined the relationship between the central and the peripheral actors “as one of justifiable or unjustifiable inequity, subordination, and/or exploitation.”¹⁹

Although the Soviet Union carried traits of an empire *par excellence*, it was also marked by characteristics that question this categorisation and make it an odd fit in the family of em-

¹⁵ Participants include: Mark R. Beissinger, “The Persisting Ambiguity of Empire,” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 11, no. 2 (April-June) (1995): 149–184; Ronald Grigor Suny, “The Empire Strikes Out. Imperial Russia, ‘National’ Identity, and Theories of Empire,” in *A State of Nations. Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (New York/Mass., 2001), 23–66; D. C. B. Lieven, *Empire: the Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (New Haven ; London: Yale University Press, 2001); Jörg Baberowski, “Stalinismus Und Nation: Die Sowjetunion Als Vielvölkerreich 1917-1953,” *Zeitschrift Für Geschichtswissenschaft* 54, no. 3 (2006): 199–213; Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010).

¹⁶ Robert Conquest, *The Nation Killers: The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities*. (London: Macmillan, 1970), 133–134; Hélène Carrère d’Encausse, *De sovjetiske minoriteter (Orig. La Gloire des nations ou la fin de l’Empire soviétique, 1990)* (Cph.: Forum, 1991). The most comprehensive model of totalitarian states: Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965). For a comprehensive discussion on totalitarianism in comparison between Nazi Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union: Michael Geyer and Sheila Fitzpatrick, eds., *Beyond Totalitarianism: Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (New York, N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁷ Mark Beissinger argued for the strength of a temporally adapted use of empire as a political concept, which should be “understood in the broad sense of large-scale system of foreign domination” in order to fit it into the large family of different empires throughout human history: Mark R. Beissinger, “Soviet Empire as ‘Family Resemblance’,” *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 297. The debate on the Soviet Union as an empire is a branch of a larger debate aiming to decipher mechanisms of empire also as a present day occurrence heavily influenced by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri: Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).

¹⁸ Lieven, *Empire: the Russian Empire and Its Rivals*, xi–xii; Jurgen Osterhammel, *Kolonialismus* (Munich: Beck, 1995), 21 and 63; Suny, “The Empire Strikes Out. Imperial Russia, ‘National’ Identity, and Theories of Empire,” 26–27; Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 8.

¹⁹ Suny, “The Empire Strikes Out. Imperial Russia, ‘National’ Identity, and Theories of Empire,” 26.

pires. First of all, Lenin and the revolutionary guard were bent on creating the very anti-thesis to imperial suppression and exploitation and it is impossible to locate a clear and coherent Soviet imperial strategy over the entire course of the Soviet Union's existence.²⁰ Secondly, it is difficult to sustain an argument that the dominant populous of the centre (Russia) was tout court benefitting from its role as centre. This was not least due to the Soviet nationality policy that, thirdly, integrated and invested in the peripheral states to an unprecedented extent. On the political level, native cadres flocked into the state apparatus, a policy that differed substantially from the cooptation of elites as seen in other empires.²¹ Creating an elite of indigenous representatives was a bold move, for surely its members had little interest in colonialism or imperialism.²² Likewise, the sheer enormous economic investment in society and institutions are indications of state policies aimed not at dominating or exploiting as a foreign force, but at integrating and raising the natives of all Soviet ethnicities (including Russians) into a system of equals.²³

The odd fit of the Soviet Union in the imperial paradigm is also expressed in the diverse temporal stages of Soviet rule. For although the Soviet Union carried little resemblance to traditional empires during some periods, it was quasi-imperial during others. The imperial thrust of Soviet rule was inseparably connected to different periods, different political interests and, not least, different rulers. In the Uzbek SSR, this was particularly outspoken: Soviet rule was ensured through a bitter struggle in Central Asia, which was followed by respect of relative cultural autonomy in the 1920s.²⁴ With the Cultural Revolution, Stalin's "revolution from above" and the installation of the Stalinist dictatorship, Soviet rule took imperial form.²⁵ By

²⁰ The premise formed Lenin's book *Imperialism, the highest state of Capitalism*. Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism: a Popular Outline* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1965).

²¹ Osterhammel, *Kolonialismus*, 70–76.

²² On Soviet power as colonialism: Hayit, "Turkestan as an Example of Soviet Colonialism"; Hofmeister, "Kolonialmacht Sowjetunion. Ein Rückblick Auf Den Fall Uzbekistan"; Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia*. It is worth reminding in addition that the affirmative action policy never subsided from Soviet politics, even under of Stalinism. Peter Blitstein, "Stalin's Nations: Soviet Nationality Policy Between Planning and Primordialism, 1936-1953" (PhD, Princeton University, 1998).

²³ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 89. The enormous investment in the Soviet republics does indeed pose the biggest problem to the colonial empire paradigm and the Soviet Union. Belonging to the core features of colonial rule is the economic exploitation or gain from the periphery to the centre. In the Soviet case this did not add up as large subventions poured out of Moscow funds in the direction of the republics.

²⁴ On the revolutionary struggles in what was to become the Uzbek SSR: Adeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform Jadidism in Central Asia*, Comparative Studies on Muslim Societies 27 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent: 1865-1923* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), chap. 7 and 8; Buttino, "Politics and Social Conflict During a Famine. Turkestan During a Revolution," in *In a Collapsing Empire: Underdevelopment, Ethnic Conflicts and Nationalisms in the Soviet Union*, n.d., 257–277.

²⁵ Stalinism as imperialism: Baberowski, "Stalinismus Und Nation: Die Sowjetunion Als Vielvölkerreich 1917-1953."

various means and through habitual campaigns, the centre ensured its control over Uzbek periphery. Rigid legislation and campaigns against the “backward” Muslim culture kept the population in check, while purges ensured compliance from the Uzbek political elite.²⁶ The imperial thrust and political repression subsided under Khrushchev, but he too implemented socio-cultural campaigns and political purges to ensure Moscow interests in the Uzbek SSR. It was only under Brezhnev that the cohesive forces of the centre reached a minimum, when the republics were largely left at peace as long as the all-union economic interests were secured.²⁷

The decline in imperial thrust of Soviet rule was mirrored in the Uzbek responses to the Soviet crisis and implosion in 1991. It is an odd circumstance that of all the fifteen Soviet republics, Uzbekistan was one of the most reluctant to secede from the Soviet Union. In October 1990, the First Secretary Islam Karimov even announced that the Uzbek problems could “only be solved in the framework of a federation”, before circumstances left him no other choice than to make a remarkable turn and join the choir demanding independence.²⁸ The public referendum on Uzbek secession, however, was only held after Russia’s official separation from the Union in December 1991.²⁹ In other words, Karimov’s position in 1991 makes us question whether even an all-embracing loose analytical concept of empire based upon “foreign domination” is a sensible solution to describe Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR.

If we are to seek answers as to why the Soviet Union fits so awkwardly into the empire paradigm, we have to seek them in the anti-imperial strategy inherent to both Soviet ideology and political policy. Adeeb Khalid has argued against the adoption of the (pre-modern) empire paradigm, for as he pointed out, the key difference between traditional empires and the Soviet Union lay in the ideological premise inherent to the revolution: The Bolsheviks were concerned with the “conquest of difference” between rulers and ruled, while traditional empires

²⁶ On collectivisation: D. A. Alimova et al., eds., *Tragediia Sredneaziatskogo Kishlaka: Kollektivizatsiia, Raskulachivanie, Ssylka, 1929-1955 Gg.: Dokumenty i Materialy*, 1–3 vols. (Tashkent: Shark, 2006). On criminalisation of culture from the perspective of religion: Gregory J. Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919-1929* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ.-Pr., 1974); Shoshana Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca. The Soviet Campaign Against Islam in Central Asia, 1917-1941* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2001); Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia*. Political purges in the Uzbek SSR: Rustambek Shamsutdinov, *Repressiia, 1937-1938 Gg.: Dokumenty i Materialy* (Tashkent: Shark, 2005); Donald. S. Carlisle, “The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83),” *Central Asian Survey* 5, no. 3/4 (1986): 91–132.

²⁷ Political purges under Khrushchev: Jeremy Smith, “Leadership and Nationalism in the Soviet Republics, 1951-1959,” in *Khrushchev in the Kremlin: Policy and Government in the Soviet Union, 1956-64*, ed. Jeremy Smith and Melanie Ilić (London: Routledge, 2011), 79–93; Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, chap. 4.

²⁸ Cited from: Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*, 191.

²⁹ It is worth noting that two other Central Asian states were the very last to decide on secession, namely Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan.

“were based on the *perpetuation* of [this] difference”³⁰ and it is not least due to scholars’ strong emphasis on (the evil) empire that this key feature long fell into oblivion. Instead, Khalid suggests we interpret Soviet state action in terms of a “modern polity, the activist, interventionist, mobilisational state that seeks to sculpt its citizenry in an ideal image.”³¹ While the role of communist ideology within the mobilisational conquest of difference is an unresolved question and dependent on specific contexts, there can be no doubt that the conquest was driven by political interests in power and regulation, which the Soviet Union pursued with unprecedented force and determination.³² The young Soviet state’s obsession with counting and categorising³³, the quest for order³⁴, so to speak, through state sponsored evolutionism³⁵, affirmative action³⁶ and Cultural Revolution³⁷ – these were socio-cultural experiments aiming at “bringing the natives up to a universal standard, to force them to overcome their own backwardness, to bring them into the orbit of politics.”³⁸ The meaning and goals of upheavals in Central Asia during the 1920s and 1930s are simply turned upside down if we limit ourselves to an empire analysis, even on the loose basis of foreign domination. Hence, although the path chosen differed substantially from the one European states long held up as the ‘ideal type’ of the modern condition, the Soviet Union nevertheless pursued objectives intimately tied to modernity.³⁹

The emphasis on a modern mobilisational state as opposed to a pre-modern empire has nuanced our understanding of the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, the “mobilisational state” perspective too entails limitations. Already in 1920, Bertrand Russell recognised a deeply unmodern aspect of Bolshevism, for its devotion to ideology and its intolerance to other

³⁰ Adeeb Khalid, “Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization: Early Soviet Central Asia in Comparative Perspective,” *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 232 and 238.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 232.

³² On the importance of ideology: Michael David-Fox, “On the Primacy of Ideology: Soviet Revisionists and Holocaust Deniers (In Response to Martin Malia),” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 1 (2004): 81–105.

³³ Francine Hirsch, “Toward an Empire of Nations: Border-Making and the Formation of Soviet National Identities,” *Russian Review* 59, no. 2 (April) (2000): 201–226.

³⁴ Jörg Baberowski and Anselm Doering-Manteuffel, “The Quest for Order and the Pursuit of Terror. National Socialist Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union as Multiethnic Empires,” in *Beyond Totalitarianism. Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 180–227.

³⁵ Hirsch, “Toward an Empire of Nations,” 7–8.

³⁶ Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).

³⁷ Jörg Baberowski, *Der Feind Ist Überall. Stalinismus Im Kaukasus* (Munich: Deutsche Verl.-Anst., 2003), chap. 7.

³⁸ Khalid, “Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization,” 233.

³⁹ Michael David-Fox, “Multiple Modernities Vs. Neo-traditionalism: On Recent Debates in Russian and Soviet History,” *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas* 54, no. 4 (2006): 535–555. For a general discussion: Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 113–151.

world views “was a denial of the Enlightenment commitment to rational discourse.”⁴⁰ The Soviet Union did, however, not only contradict elements considered inherent to the modern state on an ideological level. In fact, several aspects of Soviet policy were profoundly anti-modern: The restriction of civil society, the impingement on any sense of citizenship, the impediments to free communications, the restriction on individual freedom and free expression.⁴¹ Furthermore, the overarching ideological goals of a communist modernity cannot explain the political practices implemented under a changing central leadership throughout the history of the Soviet Union. This aspect becomes most brutally evident in the study of Stalinism: The terroristic state that developed under Stalin cannot be understood except through close examination of the dictator himself as the driving force of the regime he ruled.⁴² Similarly, Terry Martin has rightfully pointed out that more often than not, the ideological, modernist agenda was trumped by other policy interests on a day-to-day level, most commonly of security or economic concerns.⁴³ Although Martin limits his study to the pre-World War II period, these interest priorities remained constant also in the years 1954–1964.

The discrepancy between theory and practice in the Soviet Union has thus produced an ambivalence that neither the empire paradigm nor that of the mobilisational state fully resolve. In his work on integration of society, Edward Shils saw integration in its most abstract sense as “the articulation of expectation and performance.”⁴⁴ Understood as a force, Shils held that integration was a product of coercion, payment, or consensus about moral standards, but contended that there are always some parts of society, which the centre cannot assimilate to the extent desired.⁴⁵ Thereby, integration can be understood as a coercive force, based upon one

⁴⁰ Cited from: E. A. Rees, “Introduction. The Sovietization of Eastern Europe,” in *New Perspectives on Sovietization in Central and Eastern Europe After the Second World War* (Washington D.C.: New Academia Publishing, 2008), 10.

⁴¹ Ibid. On the question whether or not the Soviet Union can be regarded a modern state, see also: David-Fox, “Multiple Modernities Vs. Neo-traditionalism: On Recent Debates in Russian and Soviet History.” Stephen. Kotkin, “Modern Times: The Soviet Union and the Interwar Conjuncture,” *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 2, no. 1 (2001): 111–164; Terry Martin, “Modernization or Neo-Traditionalism? Ascribed Nationality and Soviet Primordialism,” in *Stalinism. New Directions*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick (New York ; London: Routledge, 2000), 268–367; Baberowski, “Stalinismus Und Nation: Die Sowjetunion Als Vielvölkerreich 1917-1953.”

⁴² The most recent account underlining Stalin’s role: Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*.

⁴³ As an explanatory paradigm, Martin differs between soft- and hard-line policies and institutions, by which the hard-line overruled soft-line policies and institutions: Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 21–22.

⁴⁴ Edward Shils, *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology*, Selected Papers of Edward Shils ; 2. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), x.

⁴⁵ Ibid., xi. I understand centre as the party and governmental bodies that exercised power in deciding policy on the most important issues regarding the functioning of the state. By contrast, periphery is constituted by the republican administration but also the city, province and district level. I lean on: E. A. Rees, “Introduction,” in *Centre-local Relations in the Stalinist State, 1928-1941*, Studies in Russian and East European History And (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 3.

or several simultaneous interests (for example, imperial, ideological, economic or dictatorial etc.), but the crux of the matter is that integration can never reach the level desired. This latter aspect of Shils's integration theory is better understood in terms of limited statehood, which, in its broadest scope, captures a state's inability to enforce rules that enjoy automatic obedience.⁴⁶ Limited statehood is not necessarily the property only of weak states where the monopoly on the use of force and territorial integrity is threatened. Indeed, limited statehood subsists even in what political scientists define as strong, highly developed democratic states with a strong state apparatus and high levels of consent from their populations.⁴⁷

The analytical depth of limited statehood is not exhausted in the dichotomy of support versus resistance or weak state versus strong state, though. Rather degrees of limited statehood can vary considerably within a state structure and are best defined as realms, within which different interests are expressed, whereby their intensity can vary from manifestations of active rejection to mere private negligence. The strength of limited statehood as an analytical concept is its ability to shed light on the grey zone between a state's claim to power and its probability to enforce it.⁴⁸ As such, the concept captures a condition, in which the diverse interests of multiple actors find their expression in ways that are not by default directed against the rule of a state, but rather hamper the goal of the state's claim to power in their accumulative effect.⁴⁹ Moreover, it is not merely a characteristic of the modern state structure, nor the absence of it.

With regard to the centre-periphery relations in the Soviet Union, limited statehood is a powerful tool that allows overcoming the ambivalence between theory and practice. Scholars largely agree that the Soviet Union in the period 1945–1964 had a strong central state apparatus with a totalitarian claim to power that was challenged by weak institutional structures or,

⁴⁶ Sonderforschungsbereich 700, ed., *Working Paper 8: Grundbegriffe Der Governanceforschung. SFB Working Papers Series* (Berlin: Sonderforschungsbereich 700, 2009), 9. The definition leans on Max Weber's definition of power and rule: Max Weber, "Wirtschaft Und Gesellschaft. Grundriss Der Verstehenden Soziologie," *Textlog.de*, September 5, 2011, para. 16, <http://www.textlog.de/7312.html>. At the heart of Weber's definition lay G. Jellinek's definition of a state as an entity with a clearly delimited territory, a body politic and a state authority. Georg Jellinek, *Allgemeine Staatslehre*, 2. Ed. (Berlin: O. Häring, 1905), 381–420.

⁴⁷ Risse and Lehmkuhl, "Governance in Räumen Begrenzter Staatlichkeit," 3–5. It need be stressed here that limited statehood carries a somewhat negative connotation. For the sake of clarity: I use it as a neutral analytical term, deprived of any normative value. For an overview of a vast discussion on 'weak' and 'strong' states on the example of early Soviet Russia: Gerald Easter, *Reconstructing the State. Personal Networks and Elite Identity in Soviet Russia*, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics (Cambridge (a.o), 2000), 1–24. Instrumental: Michael Mann, "The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results," *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes De Sociologie* 25, no. 02 (1984): 185–213.

⁴⁸ Sonderforschungsbereich 700, *Working Paper 8*, 9.

⁴⁹ Risse and Lehmkuhl, "Governance in Räumen Begrenzter Staatlichkeit," 5.

better yet, limited statehood.⁵⁰ Moreover, one of the crucial properties of centre-periphery relations under Stalin and Khrushchev were the centre's constant attempts to integrate society further. Under the condition of limited statehood, however, the centre accumulated massive powers and implemented quasi-imperial measures, precisely because Soviet rulers were under the impression that their integrative campaigns were not bearing the desired success whether defined according to political, ideological, economic or dictatorial goals. Indeed, recurrent purges of the Uzbek party and state apparatuses as well as repressive campaigns toward the Uzbek population were tools of the central leadership to overcome interest conflicts in the integration of Uzbek society.

Unfortunately, features of limited statehood – such as bureaucratic deficiencies, (clandestine) power abuse by party and state representatives, corruption, the Uzbek population's continued religious observance or nationalist expressions – have been understood in much too rigid terms as Soviet rule's weak influence on Uzbek society or even as expressions of a growing opposition to the Soviet project.⁵¹ In the present study, this argument is, in fact, turned upside-down and limited statehood is understood as one of the main reasons for the longevity of the Soviet Union. For while limited statehood was dysfunctional to certain integrative goals of the Soviet central leadership, it was often functional on the Uzbek level as a means to mobilise resources, satisfy central government and accommodate popular demands. Thereby, limited statehood had an institutional and a popular dimension. On the one hand, limited statehood existed within the structures of the political system of the Soviet Union and in the Uzbek SSR, which interfered with the execution of all-union and Uzbek interests. On the other hand, the popular dimension of limited statehood is better understood in terms of the state and party institutions' inefficacy to penetrate and integrate Uzbek society to the desired extent. The lack of effect of Soviet policies was not always simply a result of limited statehood within the Uzbek institutions with regard to all-union leaders' policies. In fact, the Uzbek authorities often encountered difficulties in achieving the desired results because the Uzbek population was not obedient to the policies of the Uzbek state and party institutions.

⁵⁰ Graeme J. Gill, *The Origins of the Stalinist Political System*, Soviet and East European Studies 74 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Jörg Baberowski, "Totale Herrschaft Im Staatsfernen Raum. Stalinismus Und Nationalsozialismus Im Vergleich," *Zeitschrift Für Geschichtswissenschaft* 57, no. 12 (2009): 1013–1028. The question over strong or weak institutional structures sparked a heated debate between the so-called totalitarianists and revisionists: The totalitarianists contended that a strong state apparatus kept the population in check by total control and murderous repression. The revisionists countered that it was the institutional weakness that led the regime to spark terroristic campaigns time and again. The best introduction to the totalitarian debate: Michael Geyer, "Introduction: After Totalitarianism - Stalinism and Nazism Compared," in *Beyond Totalitarianism - Stalinism and Nazism Compared* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1–41.

⁵¹ Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*.

The focus of the present study is to track down and interpret the interplay between core Soviet policy demands with regard to the Uzbek SSR and the condition of limited statehood that Soviet rule encountered. What policies directed Soviet rule in Uzbekistan from 1945 to 1964? What forms did limited statehood take? What practices did Moscow and Tashkent implement to overcome limited statehood and secure policy goals? Which conflicts emerged between the Soviet all-union and the Uzbek republican leadership? How did Uzbek society respond to Soviet policies? These are the questions that stand at the centre of attention. Thereby, the main concern is to diversify our understanding of Soviet rule by breaking free of the dichotomy of a repressive (imperial) Soviet centre against a resisting Uzbek periphery. *Ambivalent Empire* is thus meant to capture the essence of a state that, on the one hand, disregarded imperial power and invested enormous forces to that very end, yet, on the other hand, paradoxically flanked anti-imperial policy with quasi-imperial practices in its pursuit of communist modernity.⁵² The recurrent repressive practices were not only a feature of the Stalinist dictatorship. They surfaced whenever central leadership pushed for the deepening Soviet structures to overcome limited statehood. In fact, it was only with Khrushchev's removal from office in 1964 that the Soviet central government retreated from interventionist policies to overcome limited statehood and launched the most stable period of Soviet history.

Nation, Traditionalism and Modernism

When the Bolsheviks invented the Soviet nations in the 1920s, it was a counter-intuitive compromise between *realpolitik* and ideology in order to overcome Lenin's *bête noire* Great Russian chauvinism and ensure the support of the formerly repressed peoples of the Russian Empire.⁵³ The compromise was an ideological stretching that understood the nation as a necessary step on the developmental ladder toward communism which needed to be created in order to jump-start development in the "backward" Central Asian regions. In the Soviet teleological understanding of history, however, the nation remained a step to overcome, although it constituted a step forward on the developmental scale toward communism. The result was a Soviet "ethnophilia" that provided citizens of the Soviet Union with a nationality according

⁵² Mark Beissinger hints at this paradox, but insists on the use of empire for the Soviet Union: Beissinger, "Soviet Empire as 'Family Resemblance'," 302.

⁵³ Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917-23*, Studies in Russia and East Europe (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 172–212; Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 8.

to territorial-political and ethnocultural models.⁵⁴ Inherently based upon a primordial understanding of nations, the Soviet authorities adopted a position of “state-sponsored evolutionism” based upon the assumption that the state could intervene in the natural process of development and ‘construct’ nations.⁵⁵ The Soviet nationality policy thus generated what could be termed a Soviet paradox: The nationality policy promoted nations, national consciousness, national cultures, languages and histories in the hope of overcoming them, thus creating an *Empire of Nations*.⁵⁶

The effects of Soviet nation-building efforts have long been heavily debated amongst scholars of Soviet Central Asia. Generally speaking, two powerful paradigms have developed, both of which emphasise a ‘conflictual’ centre-periphery relationship although they accentuate different reasons for this conflict. The first line of argument holds a primordial understanding of Uzbek society and contends that a specific socio-cultural traditionalism obstructed the Soviet modernising effort. Based on a primordial understanding of identity, it was particularly during the 1980s that scholars painted a bleak picture of socialism in the Uzbek periphery. The Soviet ethnographer Sergei Poliakov, for example, defined the cultural-religious heritage in terms of “traditionalism” that demanded “constant correction of life-style according to an ancient, primordial” model.⁵⁷ As a champion of Soviet modernising theory, Poliakov saw this “traditionalism” as a source of “an anti-Soviet background that [was] far from innocent.”⁵⁸ It celebrated the time before the Soviet Union and the Central Asian Soviet intelligentsia never spoke “positively of the Soviet period”, thus nurturing “traditionalism” from within the system.⁵⁹

The primordial view of identity was not held only by Soviet researchers. In the midst of the debate over whether or not the nation is an expression of a primordial sense of belonging or a

⁵⁴ Yuri Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (1994): 414–452; Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union: From Totalitarian Dictatorship to Post-Stalinist Society*, Westview Special Studies on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 20–71; Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 36–39.

⁵⁵ Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations. Ethnographic Knowledge & the Making of the Soviet Union*, Culture and Society After Socialism (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 2005), 8. Primordial means attachment ties of an ethnic group based upon a shared past, memories, traditions as well as a language and a common territory.

⁵⁶ Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*.

⁵⁷ Sergei Poliakov introduced the larger non-Soviet public through translating his book: Sergei P. Poliakov, *Everyday Islam: Religion and Tradition in Rural Central Asia*, With an introduction by M. A. Olcott (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1992), 4. On the dogmatic view on Islam within the humanities discipline of the Soviet Union up until the 1970s: Geoffrey Wheeler, “National and Religious Consciousness in Soviet Islam,” in *Religion and the Soviet State: A Dilemma of Power*, ed. Max Hayward and William C. Fletcher (New York: Published for the centre de recherches et d’étude des institutions religieuses by Praeger, 1969), 187–198.

⁵⁸ Poliakov, *Everyday Islam: Religion and Tradition in Rural Central Asia*, 134.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 126.

socially constructed identity, the influential Russian émigré historian Alexandre Bennigsen clearly chose the former. As a consequence, Bennigsen saw a strict opposition between Central Asia and the Soviet project based upon suspicious identity patterns founded on an unbreakable sense of Muslim brotherhood. “The several “nations” of Central Asia”, he argued in an influential article in 1979, “will have given way to one Muslim people” that were likely to subvert Soviet power and possibly give way to one Turkic state encompassing all of Central Asia.⁶⁰ Bennigsen’s view has been reproduced in several forms, most commonly with regard to regional clan identities that have been understood as generating stronger ties than the (superficial) identities provided by the Soviet nation-building.⁶¹ The traditionalist interpretation thus holds that the distinct socio-cultural context of Uzbek society generated a force that opposed and obstructed the impact of the Soviet experiment on Uzbek society.

Contesting the primordial identity scheme by Bennigsen, the second line of argument emphasises in modernist terms that the Soviet creation of nations did, in fact, succeed in generating a national identity, although it was largely artificially constructed.⁶² In one of the most comprehensive studies on Uzbek nationalism, James Crichtlow argues that being Uzbek had become internalised through the efforts of the Soviet system.⁶³ Also building upon an argument that acknowledged the effects of Soviet rule, Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone saw Soviet policy creating an legal orthodox and an ‘illegal’ unorthodox nationalism rise as a cause of

⁶⁰ A. Bennigsen saw three levels of ethnic consciousness among Muslims in Central Asia: A sub-national, a supra-national and a national, the former of which were deeply rooted in the culture of the area. The national, on the other hand were created on the basis of the Soviet constructed nationalities. See: Alexandre Bennigsen, “Several Nations or One People? Ethnic Consciousness Among Soviet Central Asians,” *Survey - A Journal of Soviet and East European Studies* 24, no. 3 (1979): 64.

⁶¹ Carlisle, “Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan,” 23–33; Demian Vaisman, “Regionalism and Clan Loyalty in the Political Life of Uzbekistan,” in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, ed. Yaacov Ro’i, Cummings Center Series (London; Portland Or.: F. Cass, 1995), 105–122; Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations*, Library of International Relations (Series) 15 (London: I.B. Tauris, 2000).

⁶² In the most extreme cases, modernists such as Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson saw nations and nationalism as imagined communities constructed by the elites of society. See: On the nation as construction: Benedict R. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1964). Strongly opposing was Anthony Smith who contended that nations must be understood as building upon pre-existing popular sentiments that saw the ethnic nation as the family and locality writ large. See: Anthony D Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism: A Critical Survey of Recent Theories of Nations and Nationalism* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), 130.

⁶³ Crichtlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*, 14–15. See also Michael Rywkin who argued that “an educated Uzbek manager and party member may speak Russian, ride to work in an automobile, and dress in Western style; but this has no bearing on his national-religious feeling.” Michael Rywkin, *Moscow’s Muslim Challenge: Soviet Central Asia* (Armonk N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1982), 91. The list is long of studies that have emphasised the conflictual character between the Soviet and Uzbek identity. See for example: Paul Geiss, *Nationenwerdung in Mitelasien* (Frankfurt am Main; New York: P. Lang, 1995); Carrère d’Encausse, *De sovjetiske minoriteter (Orig. La Glorie des nations ou la fin de l’Empire soviétique, 1990)*; Roy, *The New Central Asia*; Douglas Northrop, “Nationalizing Backwardness. Gender, Empire, and Uzbek Identity,” in *A State of Nations. Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford, 2001), 191–220; Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, “Islam and Nationalism: Central Asia and Kazakhstan Under Soviet Rule,” *Central Asian Survey* 2, no. 2 (1983): 7–88.

Soviet rule in Central Asia.⁶⁴ In similar veins, Donald Northrop views Soviet rule in Uzbekistan as a colonial experience and holds that the Soviet cultural revolutionary policy against the veil was the prime vehicle in generating the Uzbek nationalism. By framing the veil as a (backward) national symbol of the Uzbek ethnicity, Soviet rulers unintentionally provided the Uzbek population with a powerful symbol of self-understanding.⁶⁵ In contrast to the traditionalism paradigm, these scholars see the new Uzbek identity as a nationalism that was defined in opposition to a Soviet identity and Soviet rule.

Despite their different interpretations of the effects of Soviet integration projects, the traditionalist as well as the modernist paradigms produce an interpretation of centre-periphery in the Soviet Union defined by conflict. Moreover, they share the view that local Central Asian and Soviet identities were opposing one another, which harmed the Soviet cause. The implosion of the Soviet Union along the borders of the Soviet nations in 1991, ostensibly proved these interpretations right and they remain powerful explanatory models for our understanding of Central Asia under Soviet rule.

The binary understanding of opposition between Central Asian and Soviet identities has recently met increased critique from researchers. Despite the ongoing debate about what defines modernity, the one feature scholars widely agree on is its disruptive effect on tradition.⁶⁶ Marianne Kamp has thus rightfully suggested that we go beyond seeing such struggles in binary terms and adopt a multidimensional perspective. This allows for a more flexible analysis of the Soviet integration project and the multiple integrative and disintegrative processes enacted through Soviet rule.⁶⁷ This approach has been influenced by ethnologists and anthropologists that have emphasised the inner Uzbek conflicts that Soviet modernity⁶⁸ sparked, the merging identities and Soviet patriotism⁶⁹ and the changes in the religious-

⁶⁴ Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, "The Dialectics of Nationalism in the USSR," *Pro* 23, no. 3 (1974): 1, 10 and 21.

⁶⁵ Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia*.

⁶⁶ Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform Jadidism in Central Asia*, 1.

⁶⁷ Marianne Ruth Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan. Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling Under Communism* (Seattle - London: University of Washington Press, 2006), 221. On the complexity of the driving forces and multiple processes of modernity in Russia and the Soviet Union: David-Fox, "Multiple Modernities Vs. Neo-traditionalism: On Recent Debates in Russian and Soviet History."

⁶⁸ Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan. Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling Under Communism*; Marianne Ruth Kamp, "The Wedding Feast: Living the New Uzbek Life in the 1930s," in *Everyday Life in Central Asia. Past and Present*, ed. Jeff Sahadeo and Russell Zanca (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2007), 103–115.

⁶⁹ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, chap. 4. Adeeb Khalid has shown the multiple interests and the lack of a common identity among the political revolutionary elite in Central Asia: Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform Jadidism in Central Asia*, 250. On the supranational Soviet identity: Timothy Johnston, *Being Soviet: Identity, Rumour, and Everyday Life Under Stalin 1939-1953* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). In the course of European integration, political scientists have spent a great deal of energy on detecting to what extent a European identity is developing. In their efforts the "marble cake" has come into being

cultural setting.⁷⁰ Paul Geiss, for example, detected traditional and modern, ethnic and national, Central Asian and Turkestani, tribal and clan-related, Muslim and communist identities all present to a different extent in the Uzbek SSR.⁷¹

For the understanding of limited statehood in the Uzbek SSR, the sensitive approach to the processes elicited by Soviet rule is crucial. For instead of harping on the dichotomies Soviet versus Uzbek, modernity versus tradition and portraying the Uzbek SSR as a general entity hampering Soviet rule and creating limited statehood in all spheres of the political system and Uzbek society, we can better assert the multiple sources that produced limited statehood.

Soviet Rule and the Uzbek SSR

The historical actors that guide us through the history of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR from 1945 to 1964 are the members of the top-level Uzbek political leadership. In their position as political leaders of the Uzbek SSR, they were the representatives of the Uzbek populous as well as the executors of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR. For the Moscow leadership, they were thus the crucial entity for effective Soviet rule in the Uzbek periphery. On the one hand, we analyse how Moscow ensured their compliance in policy matters. On the other hand, we look at how the Uzbek leaders implemented these policies on the lower levels under the condition of limited statehood.

There has been a certain commitment by recent scholarship to view Uzbek politics as a local affair to which Moscow possessed no access. This is an interpretation primarily based on a reading of Uzbek politics along the lines of “clan politics.”⁷² Thereby, scholars emphasise Moscow’s inability to penetrate the Uzbek political sphere due to prevalent “clan structures” that determined political behaviour in the Uzbek SSR. According to this branch of scholars, clans are defined as “an informal organization comprising a network of individuals linked by kin and fictive identities”; clans are strictly hierarchical entities attributing power and auth-

to exemplify the intertwinement of different identities in a given individual. See: Thomas Risse, “European Institutions and Identity Change: What Have We Learned?,” in *Transnational Identities: Becoming European in the EU*, ed. Richard K. Herrmann and Marilyn B. Brewer (Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 251.

⁷⁰ Ewa A. Chylinski, “Ritualism of Family Life in Soviet Central Asia: The Sunnat (circumcision),” in *Cultural Change and Continuity in Central Asia*, ed. Shirin Akiner (London ; New York: Kegan Paul in association with Central Asia Research Forum School of Oriental and African Studies London; Distributed by Routledge Chapman & Hall, 1991), 161; Johan Rasanayagam, *Islam in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan: The Morality of Experience*, 1. publ (Cambridge [u.a.]: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2011); Privratsky, *Muslim Turkistan: Kazak Religion and Collective Memory* (Curzon, 2001); Victoria Koroteyeva and Ekaterina Makarova, “Money and Social Connections in the Soviet and post-Soviet Uzbek City,” *Central Asian Survey* 17, no. 4 (December) (1998): 579–596.

⁷¹ Geiss, *Nationenwerdung in Mittelasien*, 159.

⁷² Kathleen Collins, *Clan Politics and Regime Transition in Central Asia* (Cambridge - New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 102.

ority to kinship ties and deeply rooted in “tradition” such as values, beliefs and respect.⁷³ Following a primordial understanding of clans, “clan politics” thus created an informal regime in the Uzbek SSR, an arrangement of power and rules in which clans were the dominant social actors and political players. Their regional identities and kinship ties opposed the “superficial” Uzbek identity and directed their interests. In fact, “clan politics” denotes a political system that is transformed by clans: “Clan networks, not formal institutions and elected officials, hold and exercise real power.”⁷⁴

According to the champions of this clan-based paradigm, it was the Stalin’s retreat from rapid modernisation and cultural revolutionary campaigns as well as relative calm following the Great Purges that established strong clan networks in the Uzbek SSR. The humble backgrounds and rural roots of the new Uzbek elite extended even into the highest political echelons and Moscow compromised ideological goals of revolutionary change in order to secure economic and security interests.⁷⁵ Instead of abolishing pre-modern political structures and overcoming limited statehood in institutional structures, the compromise with clans effectively cemented “clan politics” in Soviet Uzbekistan.⁷⁶

It is undeniable that “clans” played an important role on the political level of the Uzbek SSR, but the clan-based paradigm underestimates Moscow’s capacity and devotion to control affairs in the Uzbek SSR and over-emphasises clans’ primordial ties. If we aim to understand how Soviet rule in the Uzbek periphery operated, we must look into the institutionalisation of politics and the patron-client relations, for these were the crucial factors in generating the centre-periphery relations and important instruments for Moscow to intervene with Uzbek politics.

First of all, the institutionalisation of centre-periphery relations changed the modality of rule in the Uzbek SSR. Centre-periphery relations were constitutionally ordered and institutionalised in a federal structure. The all-union executive and legislative bodies (Supreme Soviet and Council of Ministers) were flanked by the all-union party Central Committee, all of

⁷³ Kathleen Collins defines clan as “an informal organization comprising a network of individuals linked by kin and fictive in identities. These affective ties comprise the identity and bonds of its organization. Kinship ties are rooted in the extensive family organization that characterizes society in this region and in historically tribal societies. “Fictive kinship” ties go beyond blood ties and incorporate individuals into the network through marriage, family alliances, school ties, localism (*mestnichestvo*), and neighbourhood (*mahalla*) and village (*qishloq*.” Ibid., 17. See also: Gregory Gleason, “Fealty and Loyalty: Informal Authority Structures in Soviet Asia,” *Soviet Studies* 43, no. 4 (January 1, 1991): 618–620; Carlisle, “Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan,” 23–33.

⁷⁴ Collins, *Clan Politics*, 3; Carlisle, “Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan,” 271–277.

⁷⁵ Carlisle, “Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan,” 273–277; Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 106.

⁷⁶ Carlisle, “Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan,” 275; Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 106.

which included representatives from the union republics.⁷⁷ Despite the complex relationship between the party and the state bodies, in practice the party structure held a monopoly on power.⁷⁸ The all-union form of the single-party structure and the state institutions was replicated on the republican level and de jure the republics held sovereignty in party and government matters.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, both Stalin and Khrushchev were firm believers in what can be termed an all-union prerogative to disregard the federal principle and de facto interfere with republican policy and replace republican leaders at will.

Although the clan-based interpretation of centre-periphery relations downplays the importance of the institutional structure, it did fundamentally change the mode of political behaviour in the Uzbek SSR. Most importantly it systematised political decision making, which became traceable to central leadership and identified institutionally incumbents that Moscow could hold accountable for their actions. Nevertheless, these institutions were weak and several monitoring institutions were installed to ensure implementation of Moscow's will on the republican level. In the party and state apparatuses, secretaries and deputies from the centre were given prominent positions – as a rule the Second Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee and at least one of the deputy chairs of the Uzbek Council of Ministers were Russian/European – and the republican Party Control Commission remained an influential checking mechanism despite voices claiming otherwise.⁸⁰ Furthermore, non-natives from the European territories of the Soviet Union were proportionally high represented in institutions on the republican and regional levels in the Uzbek SSR. Lastly, central leadership frequently installed trusted affiliates of the Moscow ruling circle in key positions such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Uzbekistan in order to guarantee control and stability.

A second measure that Moscow leadership held to influence republican political matters, was a powerful informal patron-client relation that the clan-based reading of Soviet rule in Uzbekistan underestimates. Scholars largely agree that the patronage system in the Soviet Union was a result of the early Soviet period's "politico-administrative circumstances and the general conditions of life that encouraged everyone to rely heavily on personal connections and mutual favours for their daily bread, security and any luxuries that were going."⁸¹ In order to

⁷⁷ Jerry F. Hough and Merle Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union Is Governed* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 362–408.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 409–410.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 480–517.

⁸⁰ J. Arch Getty, *Pragmatists and Puritans: the Rise and Fall of the Party Control Commission* (Pittsburgh PA: Center for Russian and East European Studies University of Pittsburgh, 1997).

⁸¹ Thomas H. Rigby, *Political Elites in the USSR: Central Leaders and Local Cadres from Lenin to Gorbachev* (Aldershot, 1990), 69. See also: Easter, *Reconstructing the State. Personal Networks and Elite Identity in Soviet*

secure power and make writs run despite the low level of “infrastructural power” in the regions beyond immediate reach for the centre, central leaders vested authority in trusted individuals to control territorial administrations. This gave birth to a permeating patron-client network throughout the Soviet Union.⁸² With the further consolidation of state structures, patronage arrangements remained a prominent feature of Soviet governance, but while facilitating mobilisation and implementation it simultaneously restrained institutionalised power of the state.⁸³ The outcome was contradictory: On the one hand, patronage cemented the institutional deficit. On the other hand, patron-client relations were strengthened for the very goal of overcoming this deficit.

The result was a reciprocal patron-client system based on mutual trust and loyalty. The patron supported and protected the client in political rivalries on the republican level. Meanwhile, the client ensured the implementation of central interests and supported his patron on the all-union level.⁸⁴ Despite this reciprocity of the patron-client alliances, the clients were in a considerably weaker position than the patron. Particularly evident during the despotic rule of Stalin, the republican leaders remained the less powerful entity of the mutual dependency between patron and client throughout the Soviet period. Clients were acquiesced and their loyalty ensured by placing them under severe pressure through (often unfeasible) economic and production targets. In lack of a “rational-legal” bureaucracy with binding rules and norms providing security of incumbents, the fate of the client was decided upon according the goodwill of the patron, the performance and the fulfilment of expectations and not according to contravention and breach of rules.⁸⁵

Russia, 1–24; John P Willerton, *Patronage and Politics in the USSR* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 1–41; Andreas Oberender, “Die Partei Der Patrone Und Klienten. Formen Personaler Herrschaft Unter Leonid Brežnev,” in *Vernetzte Improvisationen : Gesellschaftliche Subsysteme in Ostmitteleuropa Und in Der DDR*, ed. Annette Schuhmann (Köln: Böhlau, 2008), 57–76; T. H. Rigby, “Early Provincial Cliques and the Rise of Stalin,” *Soviet Studies* 33, no. 1 (January 1, 1981): 3–28. I lean on Eisenstadt/Roniger and understand the patron-client relation as based upon an asymmetrical, reciprocal relation of informal nature. The patron holds a favourable position based on material or immaterial resources which allows him to dispense goods or power to a client who, in turn, awards the patron loyalty and support: S. N. Eisenstadt and Louis Roniger, “Patron-Client Relations as a Model of Structuring Social Exchange,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 22, no. 1 (January 1, 1980): 42–77.

⁸² Mann, “The Autonomous Power of the State”; Willerton, *Patronage and Politics in the USSR*, 1–5; Easter, *Reconstructing the State. Personal Networks and Elite Identity in Soviet Russia*, 13–16.

⁸³ Easter, *Reconstructing the State. Personal Networks and Elite Identity in Soviet Russia*, 15–16.

⁸⁴ Gill, *The Origins of the Stalinist Political System*, 314–316.

⁸⁵ The term “rational-legal” is from Gorlizki/Khlevniuk: Yoram Gorlizki and Oleg Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace. Stalin and the Soviet Ruling Circle, 1945-1953* (New York (a.o.): Oxford Univ. Press, 2004), 9–10. See also: Rigby, *Political Elites in the USSR: Central Leaders and Local Cadres from Lenin to Gorbachev*, 69; Oberender, “Die Partei Der Patrone Und Klienten. Formen Personaler Herrschaft Unter Leonid Brežnev,” 57–61; Willerton, *Patronage and Politics in the USSR*, 1–5.

The importance of personal relations between the patron and client was an important lever in the constitution of Soviet centre-periphery relations. First of all, the central leaders personally knew the people they were promoting to the republican leadership positions. Secondly, the promotions were guided by economic and security interests, but the devotion to ideology and the change of the political system did not subside. Thirdly, the relations between the patron and the clients allowed central leaders to personally judge and hold accountable the clients they promoted.⁸⁶

These elements had severe influence on the nature of the Uzbek elite. The historically most explicit example of a client exchange were Stalin's Great Purges when he replaced his early client basis with a younger Soviet generation of cadres.⁸⁷ After the revolution, Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR had been established by the support of groupings seeking to reform the existing societies. The Muslim reform movement, the Jadids, the Young Bukharans – these were groups with intimate ties to the traditional clan elite of Central Asia that fought for revolution and reform in Central Asia. Faizulla Khodzhaev, who became the first president of the Uzbek SSR, for example, was son of one of the wealthiest merchants of Bukhara.⁸⁸ The Bolshevik–Jadid coalition was a compromise that ensured Soviet rule in Central Asia in the light of a bitter civil war struggle.

The Great Purges removed the coalition partners of the early Soviet period and installed the *vydvizhentsy* generation (Khodzhaev and First Secretary Akmal Ikramov were both executed after the Moscow show trials).⁸⁹ As a consequence, power was relocated from established authorities in the Uzbek SSR to the “class of ‘38”⁹⁰, that more than anything else was a product of the Soviet integration projects. Its members had risen through Soviet institutions ever since their adolescent years, obtained a Soviet education and profited from the “indigenisation” (*korenizatsiia*) policy that positively discriminated native cadres into party and state positions.⁹¹ The majority of these beneficiaries of the affirmative action policy were of humble backgrounds and owed their upward mobility, new status and vast resources entirely to

⁸⁶ Willerton, *Patronage and Politics in the USSR*, 1–5.

⁸⁷ Sheila Fitzpatrick, “Stalin and the Making of a New Elite, 1928-1939,” *Slavic Review* 38, no. 3 (1979): 377–402.

⁸⁸ R. D. Kangas, “Faizulla Khodzhaev: National Communism in Bukhara and Soviet Uzbekistan, 1896-1938” (Indiana University, 1992); Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform Jadidism in Central Asia*.

⁸⁹ Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: a Reassessment* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 356–357. On the promotion of the new younger Soviet elite – the *vydvizhentsy* generation: Fitzpatrick, “Stalin and the Making of a New Elite, 1928-1939.”

⁹⁰ Carlisle coins the *vydvizhentsy* generation “class of ‘38”: Carlisle, “The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83),” 100.

⁹¹ Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, chap. 4.

the new regime.⁹² These influences had severe impact on the cadres and despite (or maybe because of) their humble background and rural roots they were quite willingly pursuing an *Uzbek* communist modernity.

The new clients were promoted according to different principles than the previous Uzbek elite. Communist Party membership, merits in the Communist Youth League (komsomol), education, active participation in workers' soviets, trade unions or the primary level party institutions were crucial for the advance in the Soviet hierarchy.⁹³ Furthermore, patronage relations, trust, submissiveness and merits within the Soviet structures became decisive for the support and promotion of clients, not clan affiliation.⁹⁴

The institutionalisation of politics, the all-union prerogative and the patron-client relations were crucial for the centre-periphery relations as it gave Moscow important levers to intervene with Uzbek politics. Nevertheless, this did not result in the eradication of clans, but it did change their nature. Adeeb Khalid has powerfully argued that the "clan" networks existing in the Uzbek SSR became more complex with the further consolidation of Soviet rule than the term "clan politics" suggests. Instead of rooting them in primordial patterns of behaviour, he views them as the product of "a rational and logical calculus of people confronted with the brutal, impersonal machinery of a modern state and an economy of distribution."⁹⁵ As a consequence, these groups were networks of mutual obligation based on kinship (real or fictive) or common places of origin and formed large regional entities.⁹⁶

Given the character of the centre-periphery relations described above, Moscow vested enormous power and responsibility in the First Secretaries. In their function as national leaders in the Soviet integration of society, their interests were guided by very real Uzbek *and* regional economic and political goals. Indeed, they had to be because the allocation of resources from Moscow was tied to regions only through the prism of the Uzbek SSR and it made the republican secretaries dispensers of vast resources on the republican level. With these resources at hand and facilitated by the Soviet shortage economy and scarce resources, party secretaries

⁹² Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 80.

⁹³ For the educational development of the political elite: N. T Bezrukova, *Kommunisticheskaia Partia Turkestana i Uzbekistana v Tsifrakh, 1918-1967 Gg.* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1968). A insightful study on the constitution of the Tajik elite: Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia: the Case of Tadzhikistan* (Baltimore : London: Johns Hopkins press, 1970), chap. 5.

⁹⁴ On clan affiliation as decisive in promotion: Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83)." On trust and submissiveness: Rigby, *Political Elites in the USSR: Central Leaders and Local Cadres from Lenin to Gorbachev*, 69; Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*, 265–266.

⁹⁵ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 90.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 89.

created vast patronage networks in order to secure their own power.⁹⁷ Given the relative low urbanisation rates in the Uzbek SSR and strong regional identities, these networks certainly carried geopolitical elements.⁹⁸ The party secretaries secured their power through the support of a regional base, which in turn supplied cadres for the network that could dispense resources to the lower levels of society.⁹⁹ These networks included kinship relations, but they did indeed encompass much wider circles that included friends, colleagues and friends of friends, the ties with whom were established and deepened through the institutional upbringing of cadres, patronage, friendship, trust and compliance.¹⁰⁰ As a consequence, they are better understood as political clans or political networks.¹⁰¹

The political clans permeated all levels of Uzbek institutions down to the primary levels. As S. Nurutdinov eloquently articulated in 1950, however, the patronage networks often turned unmanageable further down the local hierarchy, i.e. to some extent on the province (*oblast'*), but most certainly on the district (*raion*), city and collective farm (*kolkhoz*) level.¹⁰² On these very local levels, kinship is sure to have played a larger role than in the higher echelons of Uzbek politics.¹⁰³ Just as during the early Soviet period, these networks helped people “getting by” in everyday life that was hardened by the shortage economy and a dysfunctional bureaucracy.¹⁰⁴ Unfortunately, it remains impossible to determine with certainty who or what cause these lower level cadres within the Soviet apparatus in Uzbekistan answered to

⁹⁷ Collins, *Clan Politics*, 30; Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 87. James Critchlow argued that these networks were established because “rank-and-file looked instinctively for leadership to a chieftain and his council of elders.” Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*, 19. Michael Rywkin takes a similar stand but argues that it was the limited knowledge of communism and the desire for power that it was due to an indifference to dogma, opportunism and nationalist feelings that resulted in the dysfunction of the system: Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, 114.

⁹⁸ Carlisle, “Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan,” 109–110; Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 92–93.

⁹⁹ Carlisle, “The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83);” Vaisman, “Regionalism and Clan Loyalty in the Political Life of Uzbekistan.” See also: Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, 120.

¹⁰⁰ Rigby, *Political Elites in the USSR: Central Leaders and Local Cadres from Lenin to Gorbachev*, 69; Barberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*, 265; Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 89.

¹⁰¹ When I speak of “clans” throughout this study, it is this definition I bear in mind.

¹⁰² RGASPI, 574, 1, 23, l. 40.

¹⁰³ Collins, *Clan Politics*, 85–102.

¹⁰⁴ For a general account: Alexei Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: the Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006). For everyday life, “bricolage” and “blat” under Stalin see also: Johnston, *Being Soviet*; Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999). On similar networks in the Eastern bloc countries: Klaus Roth, “Trust, Networks and Social Capital in the Transformation Countries. Ethnological Perspectives,” in *Soziale Netzwerke und soziales Vertrauen in den Transformationsländern: ethnologische und soziologische Untersuchungen*, ed. Klaus Roth (Wien; Zürich; Berlin, 2007), 7–20. On Russia: Vjacheslav Popkov, “Werden soziale Netzwerke transformiert? Informelle Beziehungen im sozialistischen und postsozialistischen Russland,” in *Soziale Netzwerke und soziales Vertrauen in den Transformationsländern: ethnologische und soziologische Untersuchungen*, ed. Klaus Roth (Wien; Zürich; Berlin: Lit, 2007), 239–248.

(whether Moscow, Tashkent, regional kinship structures, cultural or national belonging, personal economic needs etc.), but they were unlikely to have been guided by one sole factor.

The most influential regional networks in the Uzbek SSR were constituted by Tashkent, Fergana region and Samarkand/Bukhara. There were different reasons for these geopolitical constellations. First, the absence of a national structure before the Soviet nationality policy had generated regional identities. The Uzbek SSR was puzzled together on the basis of the pre-revolutionary century-old Bukhara Emirate and the Khiva and Kokand Khanate, territorial pieces of which were divided between the new Central Asian Soviet republics.¹⁰⁵ Second, there was an ethnic divide between Samarkand/Bukhara (predominantly Tajik) and Tashkent (predominantly Uzbek). Fergana region stands out as a highly mixed area with Uzbek, Kirgiz and Tajiks living together and party in enclaves within different republics.¹⁰⁶ Third, the capital Tashkent was most heavily urbanised compared to Fergana and Samarkand/Bukhara, while Fergana was the most valuable agricultural region. Lastly, Samarkand had a strong identity due to its history as the centre of Central Asia and adding to the feud with Tashkent, Samarkand had been the capital till 1930, when it was decided to move it to the predominantly Uzbek Tashkent instead.¹⁰⁷

Compared to the remaining regions of the Uzbek SSR, these were ones with the most important political clans. Their everyday dealings and functioning are difficult to decipher. Scholars suggest they included heavy bargaining over resources, equal distribution of power or pacts to retain power.¹⁰⁸ Others see marriage unions between clan members as a way to appease internal feuds and accumulate power on the republican level.¹⁰⁹ Given their informal character, these struggles were never codified. As a consequence, we can only infer their presence by personnel exchanges amongst the top-level of Uzbek leadership.

¹⁰⁵ The Bukhara Emirate was divided between the Uzbek, the Turkmen and the Tajik SSRs; the Khiva Khanate between the Uzbek, the Turkmen and the Kazakh SSRs; the Kokand Khanate between the Uzbek, the Kirgiz, the Kazakh and the Tajik SSRs. See: Donald S. Carlisle, "Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan and Its Neighbours," in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, ed. Yaacov Ro'i, Cummings Center Series (London; Portland Or.: F. Cass, 1995), 71–103; Gero Fedtke, "Wie Aus Bucharern Usbeken Und Tadschiken Wurden: Sowjetische Nationalitätenpolitik Im Lichte Einer Persönlichen Rivalität," *Zeitschrift Für Geschichtswissenschaft* 54, no. 3 (2006): 214–231. See also: Vaisman, "Regionalism and Clan Loyalty in the Political Life of Uzbekistan"; Edward A. Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present. A Cultural History*, Studies of Nationalities in the USSR, 373 (Hoover Institution Press, 1990), 1–63 and 173–209.

¹⁰⁶ Carlisle, "Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan and Its Neighbours," 97–98.

¹⁰⁷ Fedtke, "Wie Aus Bucharern Usbeken Und Tadschiken Wurden"; Carlisle, "Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan and Its Neighbours."

¹⁰⁸ Collins, *Clan Politics*; Kathleen. Collins, "Clans, Pacts, and Politics in Central Asia," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 3 (2002): 137–152.

¹⁰⁹ Maksim Olenev, "Rody i Klany Srednei Azii: 'Karimovy, Rakhmonovy, Niiazovy'," n.d., <http://www.ariana.su/?S=8.0612010038>; Vaisman, "Regionalism and Clan Loyalty in the Political Life of Uzbekistan."

For the understanding of centre-periphery relations, these informal struggles on the Uzbek level are of limited importance. As one scholar rightfully noted, the Soviet leadership's influence on the Uzbek political arena was so powerful that a political clan had "no incentive to pact with other clans", when it enjoyed Soviet backing.¹¹⁰ In other words, if we aim to understand the constitutional pillars of centre-periphery relations between the Soviet and the Uzbek political leadership and the effect it had on different spheres of the Uzbek SSR, we must uncover what Soviet backing there was and how Uzbek leaders used it on the republican level.

In 1995, the long-time Uzbek politician Nuritdin Mukhitdinov recalled how Stalinism had deprived the Soviet republics of their rights. "If the union were to survive", he noted, - "politics had to strike a balance between the interests of the republic and of the union."¹¹¹ The study of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR from 1945 to 1964 is in many ways guided by the question how the Uzbek leadership attempted to achieve the balance of interests between Moscow and Tashkent. Formulated loosely around the notion of integration of society, we look into the complex effects the Soviet rule had on politics and society in the Uzbek SSR. The above described actors, interests and political practices form the red thread along which we navigate in order to shed light on the multiple forms of limited statehood in the Uzbek SSR.

Structure

A chronological structure of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR shapes the story evolving on the following pages. I draw attention to a number of key events, where the centre of power combated limited statehood in the Uzbek SSR with the aim of deepening its power and maximising its control. Broadly speaking, chapters two through four cover the late-Stalin period while chapters five through seven sharpen our picture of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR under Khrushchev.

Chapter two serves as a background section. The institutional setting and the historical actors are introduced and we look into the configuration of the Uzbek political elites. Furthermore, the section sheds light on Soviet rule in Uzbekistan during the Second World War, as it was the main cause of the multifaceted limited statehood that central leaders sought to overcome during the late-Stalinist period. Following this, in chapter three, is an analysis of the immedi-

¹¹⁰ Collins, "Clans, Pacts, and Politics in Central Asia," 144.

¹¹¹ Nuritdin Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni. Ot Stalina Do Gorbacheva. Vospominaniia* (Moskva: Rusti - Rosti, 1995), 189.

ate post-war conditions in the Uzbek SSR and the Uzbek leadership's struggle to overcome the legacy of war. In a second step, we analyse how the escalating political climate influenced affairs in the Uzbek SSR. Thereby, we follow the rising pressure from the Moscow central leadership on the Uzbek leaders. Furthermore, we analyse how the increased pressure resulted in a party purge and how the campaigns against the intelligentsia of the late Stalin years merged with long-standing Soviet policies in Central Asia related to "feudal-bai backwardness".

Overlapping on the temporal scale with the chapter three, chapter four takes a somewhat different angle and analyses the pursuit of economic interests within the area of cotton production. Having crumbled during the war, Soviet central authorities as well as the Uzbek leadership fought to reinstall their power over the rural regions and optimise economic output. As a consequence, a centralisation of power followed suit, which in turn released republican unrest due to the deprivation of power over former core republican political areas.

Chapter five sheds light on the deeper functioning of Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation of the Uzbek political scene, while simultaneously analysing Uzbek responses to the new course. With the change of leaders in Moscow followed a leadership exchange in Uzbekistan and we gain a closer look at the political concerns driving the policy interests in Uzbekistan. Central Asia experienced an overall upgrade under Khrushchev's tutelage and chapter five also deepens our understanding of how the new republican leadership explored the limits of de-Stalinisation. Chapter six looks at the political changes that followed from leadership exchange in the Uzbek SSR as well as at how de-Stalinisation changed socio-cultural policies. We look at religious identity, conflicts over women's rights and analyse the political tensions they resulted in. Meanwhile, chapter seven centres on de-centralisation and re-centralisation of the Khrushchev administration within the political sphere. The *sovnarkhoz* reform, the new party programme and the party reform of 1962 stand at the centre of interest and we backtrack how the Uzbek political elite reacted to and benefitted from them. Furthermore, chapter seven examines how the new Uzbek leadership consolidated its rule by instrumentalising the central government policies for its own gain.

Source Material

The nature of the topic has made it necessary to draw on a large array of sources. Archival material has been collected from the Russian Archive for Social and Political History (RGASPI), the State Archive of the Russian Federation (GARF), the Russian State Archive for Economics (RGAE) as well as the Russian State Archive for Newer History (RGANI). Unfortunately, it was not possible to gain access to Uzbek archives, a limitation somewhat remedied by the double security of Soviet institutions that harboured much Uzbek material in Soviet central headquarters.

In RGASPI, the former party archive, it was particularly the protocols from the Uzbek Politbureau (part of *fond 17*) that were of interests, as they offer insights not only into the everyday politics in Uzbekistan, but more importantly into the centre's communication with the republican leadership. Although the holdings continue through 1991, they are currently only accessible up until 1946, whereby inventories from the Organisational and Structuring Bureau (*fond 17*) and the Plenipotentiary of the Central Committee VKP(b) to the Uzbek SSR (*fond 574*) to a large extent makes up for the heightened secrecy of Russian archives concerning centre-periphery issues of the post-war period.

The holdings of RGASPI and RGANI split in the post-war period so that some of the important party departments such as the Department for Agriculture of the Central Committee are kept in both archives (*fond 17* in RGASPI and *fond 5* in RGANI). These are rich on crucial information concerning the implementation and conflicts arising within more specific policy related areas, shedding light on the compromises both central and republican leadership had to make. In addition to that, RGANI has the inventory of the Party Control Commission (*fond 6*) and later the Central Committee Department on Party Organs (*fond 5*) that entail critical accounts of how information about everyday politics in the Uzbek SSR reaching the centre of power. Despite the nature of these controlling institutions that biases source material toward triumphant criticism, the material was pivotal in shaping central leadership's picture of the republics and more often than not the basis for action against the republican state of affairs. Nevertheless, they need be treated with care in order to avoid the mistake of repeating Soviet discourse.

GARF has the holdings of the state apparatus, which were of importance to the study of the anti-religious campaign as the Council on the Affairs of Religious Cults belong to its inventory (*fond 6991*). In addition, the inventories of the state equivalent to the Party Control Commission, the State Control Commission, are kept here, which sharpened the view toward

Ministerial communication between centre and periphery (*fond* 8300). Lastly, the holdings of RGAE gave insight into the work of the Ministry of Cotton Production of the early 1950s (*fond* 9451).

All archival citations follow the commonly used structure of archive, *fond*, *opis'*, *delo*, *list*. Thereby, I have omitted abbreviations so that a reference will have the following form: RGASPI, 17, 122, 141, ll. 16–22.

Apart from archival material the Soviet Uzbek newspaper *Pravda vostoka* has been of importance as it offers not only a window into the chronological everyday affairs in Uzbekistan, but between the lines of victorious socialist lingo also entails critical voices to the political and ideological projects both of all-union and of Uzbek political institutions and policies. In addition it is an indispensable source of basic information about the political and social affairs in the Uzbek SSR. Furthermore, edited sources have been helpful where access has been limited thus providing documents that a favourable few Russians and Uzbek historians have access to.

Unfortunately, too few memoirs have been published but particularly N. Mukhitdinovs *Reka vremeni* has done much in shedding light on Uzbek politics that took place behind closed doors, although they of course need be approached by the usual caution of a historian.

Lastly, I have used the Library of Congress Romanisation of Russian names and words, although without the diacritic and two-letter tie characters. As a consequence, the Russian я and ю become ia and iu respectively. Furthermore, I have kept the common popular spelling of well-known names and places.

2. THE UZBEK POLITICAL SYSTEM AND WORLD WAR II

The Second World War left the Soviet Union in deep economic and social crisis. Although not devastated by war, Central Asia was subject to an all-out mobilisation of resources and man power demanded from the Moscow central authorities. Uzbekistan was no exception and the war had an impact in every sphere of the Soviet Socialist Republic: Men were drafted to war; industrial production had to be changed to suit wartime needs; evacuated plants and factories had to be setup; the agricultural production was expanded to include more foodstuffs; working hours were raised; evacuees needed shelter.¹¹² The chaos of war coupled with the all-out mobilisation had highly diverse influences on the Uzbek production and society that proved of lasting effect: While industrial output exploded to astonishing levels, agricultural production plummeted to a devastating low; while industrial workers suffered from malnutrition and farmers died of hunger, the city markets and rural areas had foodstuffs in abundance; crime and misappropriation rose both in the cities and in the countryside; state repression increased and imprisoned thousands of workers and kolkhozniki, while the war swallowed thousands of other lives, mostly of the able-bodied male population.¹¹³

The legacy of war was felt far into the post-war period, yet in spite of increased scholarly attention Alexander Werth's 1971 observation that the late-Stalinist period is "the most unexplored period in the whole history of the Soviet Union", aptly captures the state of affairs concerning the history of the Uzbek SSR.¹¹⁴ Apart from Soviet scholars' triumphalist celebration of political and economic achievements and recent studies' occasional mentioning of late-Stalinist purges, we have little sense of the forces and interests that guided Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR and the impact they had on Uzbek society in the late-Stalin period.¹¹⁵

This chapter serves as a prelude to a more comprehensive analysis of limited statehood in the Uzbek SSR in the post-war and late-Stalin years in subsequent chapters. Thereby, the goal of

¹¹² On the evacuees in Uzbekistan: Rebecca Manley, *To the Tashkent Station: Evacuation and Survival in the Soviet Union at War, 1941-1946* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Claus Bech Hansen, "»Wollen Sie Armee Und Bevölkerung Wirklich Ohne Hosen Lassen?!«Die Mobilisierung Für Den Zweiten Weltkrieg in Der Usbekischen Sowjetrepublik," in *Mobilisierung Im Nationalsozialismus: Institutionen Und Regionen in Der Kriegswirtschaft Und Der Verwaltung Des "Dritten Reiches" 1936 Bis 1945*, ed. Oliver Werner, 1., Aufl. 2013 (Schöningh, Forthcoming).

¹¹³ D. A. Alimova and A. A. Golovanov, "Uzbekistan," in *History of Civilizations of Central Asia. Towards the Contemporary Period: From the Mid-nineteenth to the End of the Twentieth Century*, ed. Madhavan K. Palat and Anara Tabyshalieva, vol. 6 (Paris: UNESCO, 2005), 225–246, here 232–233.

¹¹⁴ Alexander Werth, *Russia: The Post-War Years* (New York: Taplinger Pub. Co., 1971), ix.

¹¹⁵ I. M. Muminov, ed., *Istoriia Uzbekskoi SSR: S Drevneishikh Vremen Do Nashikh Dnei*, Institut Istorii (Uzbekiston SSR Fanlar Akademiiyasi) (Tashkent: Izd-vo "FAN" Uzbekskoi SSR, 1974), 431–473; Alimova and Golovanov, "Uzbekistan," 233–234.

the chapter is twofold: On the one hand, we look at the institutional setting of the Uzbek SSR and the constitution political elite in order to shed light on the actors that implemented Soviet rule in the Uzbek periphery. As a consequence, we will gain a better overview of where state power resided in the Uzbek SSR, the levers that the Soviet centre of power held to influence Uzbek politics and who the actors were. On the other hand, we explore Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR during World War II. The all-out mobilisation, the central government demands as well as the political practices implemented to fulfil wartime demands put Soviet rule under severe pressure. The result was a widening of limited statehood. The institutional reach of the state simply eroded on the lower levels of the institutional hierarchy. Simultaneously, popular limited statehood grew as the hardship of war resulted in low food supply and increasing state demands. The post-war and late-Stalinist periods can only be understood against this background.

2.1 THE POLITICAL ELITE AND INSTITUTIONS IN THE UZBEK SSR

The Bolshevik pursuit of a communist modernity in Uzbek SSR eradicated the institutions of pre-revolutionary Central Asian and installed a state apparatus based upon the notion of a modern state bureaucracy. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s the momentous nation-making program, the Soviet nationality policy, abolished traditional ownership laws, positions of religious authority and the political systems of pre-revolutionary state and society and supplanted them with a territorialised nation-state structure and a single-party system. Power and authority was no longer measured according to religious education, kinship or political standing in pre-revolutionary times, but tied to territorialised soviets, socialist nations and a new elite.

Several scholars have maintained the limited outreach and authority of the new state structures during this process and emphasised the refractory power of traditional society.¹¹⁶ The institutional system of the Uzbek SSR has often been obscured in this process, hampering the possibility to pinpoint who the institutional actors were, where power resided and how institutional power shifted over time dependent on the political elite. Our knowledge is particularly scarce when it comes to the late-Stalinist and Khrushchev periods, although they formed the starting point for several core developments that characterised Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR henceforth. Limited statehood in the periphery of the Soviet Union was, however, intrinsically connected to the political institutions, in which power operated, and the Uzbek political elite that implemented Soviet power. As a consequence, the following two sub-chapters seek to shed light on the Uzbek institutional setting and the political elite it harboured from 1945 to 1964.

¹¹⁶ Adrienne Lynn Edgar, *Tribal Nation. The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 2004).

The Uzbek institutional Setting

The Uzbek SSR was national republic within the Union of Soviet Republics. The governmental institutions were divided into a legislative and an executive branch. The former was topped by the Supreme Soviet with its legislative organ the Presidium that served between sessions; the latter, the executive branch of the state structure, was the Council of Ministers that was served by the Executive Bureau between sessions. The territorial sub-division below the republican level consisted of several further levels: The oblasti (province) and the Karakalpak Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic were the second level, while the raiony (districts/counties), the towns, the urban settlements and groups of rural villages followed.

State power of the territorial sub-divisions rested with local administrative units, the soviets, by which they were governed, whereby they were underlying a territorial subordination principle. Hence, a town soviet was subordinate to the raion soviet, while the raion soviet answers to the oblast' soviet. As an administrative unit in the territorial sub-division, the Uzbek capital Tashkent provided an exception, as it was not subordinated to the Tashkent oblast' but to the republican level government.¹¹⁷ In the post-war decades, the Uzbek oblast' structure was subject to frequent changes and their number oscillated between nine and twelve oblasti, while the Andijan, Bukhara, Fergana, Kashkadarya, Khiva, Namangan, Samarkand, Surkhandarya, Tashkent constituted the core group.¹¹⁸ These were sub-divided into 134 raiony, 76 towns and 86 urban settlements in 1976, although these numbers varied considerably over the duration of the Soviet period.

Following the territorial sub-division, the single-party structure was represented on all levels of the Uzbek institutional hierarchy. The highest party authority was the Congress of the Uzbek Communist Party (b) that was the party equivalent to the Supreme Soviet of the Uzbek SSR. The congress elected a Central Committee that was constituted by elected deputies from the electoral districts. The Central Committee usually convened four times annually, but was run by the Bureau between sessions. On the lower levels of the party hierarchy, deputies are elected into province party committees (obkom), city party committees (gorkom) and district party committees (raikom) and primary party organisations on the level of kolhozy and factories. With the official assignment to serve as a leading organ, party responsibilities ranged from intraparty assignments of member acquisition to political tasks such as ensuring politi-

¹¹⁷ Hough and Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union Is Governed*, 481–491.

¹¹⁸ Bezrukova, *Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Turkestana i Uzbekistana v Tsifrakh, 1918-1967 Gg.*; O. V. (et al) Khlevniuk, *Regional'naia Politika N.S. Khrushcheva; TsK KPSS I Mestnye Partiinye Komitety, 1953-1964 Gg.*, Dokumenty Sovetskoi Istorii (Moskva: ROSSPEN, 2009), 619–624.

cal stability, plan fulfilment and economic development.¹¹⁹

The party organisations and state institutions were closely intertwined. As we shall see in the breakdown of the institutional actors below, double-representation and over-lapping positions in state and party was common; decision-making power was held primarily by party functionaries rather than state representatives. Furthermore, the institutional setting was characterised by other factors such as patronage networks and an ethnic divide that underlined the Moscow leadership's ambivalent feelings toward leaving native cadres entirely in charge of republican politics.

Contrary to the Uzbek constitution, political power was rested not in the Council of Ministers but was firmly located in the hands of the Uzbek Communist Party's Central Committee Bureau, which was effectively functioning as the government of the Uzbek SSR.¹²⁰ The Bureau was elected from the Uzbek Central Committee and essentially the body that decided on policy matters and monitored implementation. Convening on a weekly basis, the Bureau effectively kept track of everyday developments. Membership was divided into full (voting) and candidate members, the number of which varied substantially. Hence, the Bureau totalled sixteen (eleven full and five candidate) members in 1940 but only nine full members and zero candidates in 1952.¹²¹

Several factors influenced the constitution of Bureau. First, Bureau membership was not codified but core posts in the Uzbek apparatuses entailed given Bureau membership. The First and Second Secretaries, a further Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee, the Chair and a deputy Chair of the Uzbek Council of Minister and the Chair of the Presidium of the Uzbek Supreme Soviet were always full members. Positions were also reserved for the Commander of the Turkestan Military District as well as, lastly, the Minister of Internal Affairs and/or the chief of State Security, whereby one or more of these often only held candidate membership. In addition to the unofficially prescribed seats, the First Secretary of the Tashkent obkom or gorkom and the Chair of the Uzbek komsomol often served on the Uzbek Bureau.¹²²

Secondly, the Bureau was characterised by an ethnic divide. As a result of the *korenizatsiia* (indigenisation) policy that sought to promote indigenous cadres to leading positions in the republics' political hierarchy as a means to produce support for Soviet rule, several core posi-

¹¹⁹ Hough and Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union Is Governed*, 491–493.

¹²⁰ Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83)," 122–129.

¹²¹ See Appendix I. See also: *Ibid.*, 119.

¹²² *Ibid.*

tions in the Uzbek state and party apparatuses were held exclusively by native cadres. As a rule, the First Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee, the Chair of the Uzbek Council of Ministers and the Chair of the Presidium of the Uzbek Supreme Soviet were Uzbeks. As a means to ensure Soviet power and control of the native cadres, the Second Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee, the Commander of the Turkestan Military District as well as the chief of State Security were consistently held by non-natives from the European regions of the Soviet Union.¹²³ While the two latter appointments were usually of shorter duration, the Second Secretary position was often held by an individual, who had served in the Party Control Commission in the Uzbek SSR for several years before being promoted. As a consequence, the Second Secretary had insider knowledge about the Uzbek periphery.¹²⁴

Immediately following the Great Purges, the centre had filled the Bureau with non-natives, mitigating the number of Uzbek members to just four against seven non-natives. It was a brief interlude, though. By 1940 the native majority was restored and the centre never interfered to that extent again and, as we shall see later, the ethnic divide in the Bureau caused habitual conflict.¹²⁵ This did not always turn out in favour of the European members, which suggests that Uzbek members could draw on their connections to Moscow in everyday conflict resolution. Even so, the ethnic divide did give a clear sense of central supervision of the Uzbek political arena.

A third factor characterising the constitution of the Uzbek Bureau was the regional origin of the Uzbek members. Given the primacy of party over state, the *de facto* Premier was the First Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee although, *de jure*, these powers rested with the Chair of the Council of Ministers and the state tier of the Uzbek SSR.¹²⁶ As an institutional position, the First Secretary was of central significance to the definition and implementation of politics in the Soviet periphery and due to the specific patronage system in the Soviet Union, it was virtually impossible to be appointed First Secretary without backing from Moscow patrons. Friends and foes amongst the central leadership in Moscow were decisive to the fate of the local leadership in the Uzbek periphery and the First Secretaries in the late-Stalin and Khrushchev periods enjoyed both strong supporters and enemies in the central government. Endowed with Moscow support however, peripheral First Secretaries possessed ex-

¹²³ This was a characteristic of Soviet republics throughout the Soviet Union. See, for example: Rakowska-Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia*, 148. Kathleen Collins wrongly claims that the “real power” lay with the second Secretary and not with the indigenous First Secretary. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, the interplay between the two was far more complex: Collins, *Clan Politics*, 97.

¹²⁴ This was the case for N. A. Lomakin and R. E. Mel’nikov. See Appendix I.

¹²⁵ Carlisle, “The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83),” 119.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 122–129.

tensive powers. Appropriately capturing the essence of the local leaders position, Merle Fainsod coined the term “little Stalin’s” to describe self-celebration of local leaders, iron hand rule and “tales of lordly processions.”¹²⁷ Although Fainsod spoke of the local First Secretaries of the early 1920s and 1930s, the post-Great Purge generation of secretaries acquired equal powers. The Soviet composer A. F. Kozlovskii described the Uzbek First Secretary Usman Iusupov as the “master (*khoziain*) of the republic, [who] had unlimited power, the broadest privileges.”¹²⁸ Kozlovskii even recalled an article in *Pravda vostoka* under the title “All under the banner of Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Iusupov” placing him firmly within prominent company.¹²⁹

Given the wide-ranging powers vested in the First Secretary position, the he was able to decisively influence the constitution of the Uzbek Central Committee Bureau. As a consequence, Bureau membership reflected which political networks held sway in the Uzbek SSR. Such were the powers of the Uzbek First Secretary that once a client to Moscow had been promoted, he bluntly advanced members of his political network to the leading positions in the Uzbek institutional setting.¹³⁰

The members of the Bureau were subject to regular changes. Thereby, the First Secretary only possessed the power to exchange the native members. Moscow, by contrast, kept the authority to exchange both European and Uzbek top-level leaders providing a severe imbalance in the power relations between the centre and the periphery. In particular during the period 1945–1964, the Uzbek Bureau was subject to recurrent reshuffles, predominantly due to Moscow interference with Uzbek local politics. Nevertheless, there were First Secretaries who retained their positions with remarkable stability: Usman Iusupov headed the Uzbek party for thirteen years, before Sharaf Rashidov beat the record and held on to his position for nearly a quarter of a century during Leonid Brezhnev’s time in office.

In the institutional setting of the Uzbek SSR, the Bureau was flanked by the Secretariat of the Uzbek Central Committee that functioned as the administrative arm of the Central Committee and was concerned with day-to-day administration of the party. Institutionally, it was made up by the secretaries of the Central Committee and run by party officials. Apart from the First and Second Secretaries, several other secretaries –such as the Secretary for Agriculture and

¹²⁷ Merle Fainsod, *Smolensk Under Soviet Rule* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1958), 59–61.

¹²⁸ Konstantin Zalesskii, *Kto Est' Kto v Istorii SSSR, 1924-1953* (Moskva: Veche, 2009), 667.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Carlisle, “The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83),” 106–112.

the Secretary for Cadre Questions – were heavyweights in the Uzbek political hierarchy.¹³¹ Furthermore, the Secretariat was comprised of several departments that were the party counterparts of the state structure. The number thus varied considerably over time and largely went hand in hand with the number of ministries. Accordingly, there were ten Secretariat departments in 1949, only nine in 1961 and eighteen in 1981.¹³²

Overseeing the Central Committee administration, the Secretariat had considerable influence on policy making in the Uzbek SSR. Thereby, some departments were evidently more vital than others, and while the Secretary for Agriculture was often reserved a seat in the Bureau other, less important departments were not.¹³³ The ethnic divide visible in the Bureau, surfaced in the Secretariat departments too, but was marked by less continuity. Accordingly, non-natives led a majority of departments in the immediate aftermath of the Great Purges, but a creeping *korenizatsiia* occurred during the post-war period. While ten departments from 1949 were equally divided amongst natives and non-natives, the departments were firmly in Uzbek hands by 1966 when natives held nine of twelve chief positions.¹³⁴

Although of lesser importance in the everyday political life, the Central Committee deserves mentioning too. As in other republics, the Great Purges had an immense impact on Uzbek membership of the Central Committee bringing about a high level of non-native members, which only slowly declined. In 1937, only thirty-four of the sixty-five members were natives, i.e. slightly above 50 per cent. During the post-war period however, native membership slowly increased before stagnating at roughly 70 per cent in the early 1960s.¹³⁵

Although restricted access to archival material hamper a profound analysis of the Uzbek Central Committee's influence on policy and decision-making, it became more powerful under Nikita Khrushchev than it had been during the heyday of Stalinism. In fact, there is reason to believe that it was of vital importance during the post-Stalin period as a lever of power both for central and republican leadership. On the one hand, it more than once became stage of intense political disagreement, most outspoken when Sharaf Rashidov was elected in

¹³¹ Donald Carlisle omits the important Secretary for Agriculture: Ibid., 124–129.

¹³² In 1949 the Secretariat departments counted: Heavy industry; Light industry; Transportation; Propaganda and agitation; Work among women; party, trade union and komsomol organs; administrative organs; Agriculture; Planning, finance and trade; Machine construction. In 1961, the departments were: Agriculture; Propaganda and agitation; Industry and Transport; Construction and machine building; Education; Administrative organs; Planning consumer services; The party commission of the Central Committee of the Uzbek Communist party. See: “Plenum Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskoi partii Uzbekistana”, *Pravda vostoka* (PV), 05.03.1949, 1; “Informatsionnoe soobshchenie o plenume Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskoi partii Uzbekistana”, PV, 13.2.1960, 1. For the 1949 Secretariat, see also: Ibid., 126.

¹³³ Ibid., 122–124.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 124.

¹³⁵ See Appendix I.

1959.¹³⁶ On the other hand, the Central Committee was crucially enlarged during the de-Stalinisation period, suggesting that it a tool to promote a new power-base when the decisive central as well as government exchanges occurred.¹³⁷

Although power accumulated in the higher echelons of the party structure, the Council of Ministers need be mentioned due to its executive state powers. Elected by and responsible to the highest legislative body in the Uzbek SSR, the Supreme Soviet, the Council of Ministers was constitutionally the government of the Uzbek SSR. Membership varied substantially due to the frequent and often sizable reshuffling of the government ministries. Centred around the Chair and up to eight deputies, the council comprised all republican level ministries and the State Planning Committee.

A smaller entity, the Executive Bureau, made up an inner circle of the council, which primarily makes itself noticed through its absence from source material. This inner circle of the Council of Ministers was similar in size to the Bureau and contained the Chair and several deputies as well as a varying number of important ministries. Given the Executive Bureau's invisibility, it is difficult to pin-point membership patterns, but based upon comparisons to other regions and Soviet republics the Ministers of Cotton Production, State Control, Internal Affairs, State Security as well as the State Planning Committee are likely to have held a seat.¹³⁸ The invisibility of the Bureau clearly displays its political inferiority to the party Bureau in decision-making, although the First and Second Secretaries held membership of both bodies.

The development of the ministerial structure was confusing to best. While the early post-war period was defined by an increase of ministries, peaking in no less than twenty-seven in 1951, this number decreased to just fifteen in 1954. These were partly joint all-union republican ministries and partly republican ministries where the latter made up for the majority.¹³⁹ As a rule, it was only the ministers concerned with security of the state that were given access to the powerful party Bureau, but while the Minister of Internal Affairs lost momentum after Stalin's death the Minister of State Security kept its a seat. Other ministries were not represented.

The ethnic division in the Council of Ministers was less dominant than in the party structure.

¹³⁶ On the Rashidov election: S. R Rizaev, *Sharaf Rashidov: shtrikhi k portretu* (Tashkent: Ezuvchi : Nur, 1992), 31–45.

¹³⁷ B. M. Berezin and Gurevich, eds., *Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Uzbekistana V Rezoliutsiiaakh I Postanovleniiaakh S"ezdov*, 2. dop. izd (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1968), 491–524 and 716–721.

¹³⁸ Hough and Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union Is Governed*, 489–490.

¹³⁹ “Zakon o Gosudarstvennom biudzhete Uzbeksoi Sovetskoi Sotsialisticheskoi Respubliki na 1951 god”, PV, 20.05.1951, 1; “Rech' Predsedatelia Soveta Ministrov Uzbeksoi SSR tov. U. Iu. Iusupova”, PV, 03.06.1954, 2.

In the 1951, for example, only five of its thirty-one members were non-natives, two of whom were life-long residents and politicians in the Uzbek SSR. In times of tension, however, the central government never hesitated exchanging the Minister of Internal Affairs, who was usually an Uzbek, and installing a trusted individual from the ranks in Moscow. Lastly, within the structure of each Ministry, titular Europeans also held key positions as Deputy Ministers or heads of sub-departments.

Often somewhat overlooked, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet gained importance throughout the post-war decades. Officially elected from the members of the Supreme Soviet, there was an institutional pattern of representation of the First and Second Secretaries as well as the Commander of the Turkestan Military District who appear to have had reserved seats in the Presidium.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, the importance of the Presidium Chair became a stepping-stone for promotion to the First Secretary position. In the everyday political work, the Presidium carried little weight, but through representation in the Bureau, the Chairman was heavily involved day-to-day politics.

Although the political power centralised in the hands of the top-level leadership, the lower level party structure was vital to the outreach of the Tashkent leadership into the lower levels of state and society. It is commonly acknowledged that executive power on the sub-republican level was located in the party and not the state structure.¹⁴¹ Following the territorial sub-division, the obkom, gorkom and raikom were the extended arm of the central party headquarters in Tashkent on the lower levels of the Uzbek SSR. Due to their political, agricultural and industrial importance, the First Secretaries of the Andijan, Fergana, Samarkand and Tashkent oblasti were powerful players also on the republican level, although it was only the Tashkent Secretary who was occasionally granted a seat in the party Bureau.¹⁴² Despite varying importance, the party structure was identical in all oblasti. Accordingly, a regional party committee elected a bureau comprising a First Secretary and two to three additional secretaries as well as a local party apparatus. The same was the case for the Karakalpak ASSR in the north-west of the Uzbek SSR, although it had a Central Committee as an autonomous region.

The ethnic structure on the republican level was mirrored at the lower levels of the Uzbek institutional setting. During the period 1945–1964, First Secretaries were, by and large, na-

¹⁴⁰ See, for example: “Informatsionnoe soobshchenie o plenumе Tsentral’nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskoi partii Uzbekistana”, PV, 13.2.1960, 1.

¹⁴¹ Hough and Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union Is Governed*, 493.

¹⁴² See Appendix I.

tives, while non-natives were installed in (assisting) secretary positions.¹⁴³ Furthermore, the native members of the obkomy, raikomy and gorkomy held a clear majority of roughly two-thirds, and although the obkomy lagged behind during the 1940s, they too rose to 70 per cent by the early 1960s. Finally, the obkom and, to a lesser extent, the raikom and gorkom positions played an essential role for the top-level republican leadership in securing control and implementation in the regions of the Uzbek SSR, which explains their frequent substitution following a leadership change in Tashkent.

The lowest administrative units were made up by the mahallas in the cities and villages in the rural areas of the Uzbek SSR.¹⁴⁴ Traditionally these micro-communities were based largely on kinship ties although they extended to include people from the same village and friends and colleagues, which hampered the bureaucratic functioning of the new state in the 1920s and 1930s. However, one prominent observer has rightfully noted that these entities remained almost exclusively inhabited by natives throughout the Soviet period, resulting in the blossoming of patronage networks (real and fictive). And while even the most remote kolkhoz had a local party organisation, it operated according to the existing networks and not party line.¹⁴⁵ Furthermore, especially the rural regions remained under-administered despite central government policies to increase supervision through measures such as the kolkhoz consolidation. In 1947 only roughly 50 per cent of the kolkhozy were part of the primary party organisations web, a number that increased with government policies consolidating kolkhozy. Accordingly, only 2.000 of the 6.700 kolkhozy in 1945 remained in 1955.¹⁴⁶ These initiatives were arguably fruitful during from 1945 to 1964 when the transformational policies of the Soviet state were pursued rigorously, but state administration and party inspections nevertheless subsided in the rural areas. Following Nikita Khrushchev's downfall and the subsequent

¹⁴³ See Appendix II.

¹⁴⁴ The mahallas were self-governing units in the localities of the pre-Soviet period that settled disputes but also functioned as a social institution organising, in particular, religious rituals: Poliakov, *Everyday Islam: Religion and Tradition in Rural Central Asia*, 76–80. In Uzbekistan the mahallas have experienced a revival in the post-Soviet period and 2003 was proclaimed to be the year of the mahalla. See: Morgan Y. Liu, “A Central Asian Tale of Two Cities: Locating Lives and Aspirations in a Shifting Post-Soviet Cityspace,” in *Everyday Life in Central Asia. Past and Present*, ed. Jeff Sahadeo and Russell Zanca (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2007), 66–83.

¹⁴⁵ Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 89.

¹⁴⁶ Gosudarstvennyi komitet SSSR po statistike, ed., *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo SSSR V Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voine, 1941-1945 Gg. Statisticheskii Sbornik* (Moskva: Informatsionno-izdatel'skii tsentr, 1990), 139; Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie SSSR, ed., *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR: 1956. Statisticheskii sbornik* (Moskva: Gosstatizdat, 1956), 103. , By 1975, the number of kolkhozy stagnated at roughly 1.000: Tsentral'noe statisticheskoe upravlenie, ed., *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1975 g. : statisticheskii ezhegodnik* (Moscow: Statistika, 1976), 453.

relaxation of the offensive campaigns, the state and party presence retreated to a minimum.¹⁴⁷ In sum: The institutional setting of the Uzbek SSR was characterised by several factors. First, remaining true to the promotion of native elites in the republics, the central leadership never relinquished its direct presence in the Uzbek institutions and several positions were reserved for the centre to fill. Nevertheless, further down the institutional hierarchy, non-native representation subsided increasingly. Second, power over political decision-making lay in the party rather than in the state structure. As a consequence, it was the Bureau of the Central Committee that served as the government and the First Secretary as Premier. Lastly, the institutional outreach of the state and party especially in the rural areas was limited. This quantitative decrease of state institutions contradicted the Soviet leadership's claim to power from 1945 to 1964 and nurtured institutional limited statehood on the lowest levels of the Uzbek SSR.

The political Elite of the Uzbek SSR

Institutions do not rule states, but they are an important factor for our understanding of limited statehood in the Soviet Union and the setting through which the Uzbek political elite exercised power. Political elite is a nebulous term. I understand it along the lines of Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone's definition from her study of the Tajik SSR. She saw it as "the group of people who by virtue of their positions as representatives of state or party were given power not only to partake in decision-making, but also to implement it in the name of state or party toward the subjects that the state wished to rule."¹⁴⁸ Rakowska-Harmstone estimated that the elite of the Tajik SSR after World War II was comprised of approximately 150 people.¹⁴⁹ Given Uzbekistan's considerably larger population, the political elite comprised more members than in its neighbouring country. Nevertheless, it is difficult to provide exact numbers but counting the Central Committee, the republican Minister and Secretary positions, as well as the obkomy, raikomy and gorkomy, a tentative estimate would put the number in the

¹⁴⁷ Collins, *Clan Politics*, 96–97. Indeed, one clan elder of a local village was recorded saying "everyone here is related; we are family. We cooperated in deceiving the party officials whenever they came. It was quite easy, since they did not come often."

¹⁴⁸ Rakowska-Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia*, 146. In the early 1970s the Tajik SSR had roughly 3.4 mil inhabitants. See also: T. H. Rigby who includes in the political elite "persons whose primary identification is with some sphere other than the political when they manifest a secondary political involvement of sufficient importance, whereby political is understood as pertaining to authoritative and enforceable decisions for the society at large or some local division of it." Rigby, *Political Elites in the USSR: Central Leaders and Local Cadres from Lenin to Gorbachev*, 13.

¹⁴⁹ Rakowska-Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia*, 146.

range of 700 individuals.¹⁵⁰

Who were these people? There is no simple answer to the question and several aspects need be considered in order to get a sense of the composition of the individuals constituting the political elite in the Uzbek SSR. As already shown, the elite entailed Europeans as well as native Uzbek members. Especially this native Uzbek elite was characterised by several different and intertwined factors. The Soviet policy of indigenisation or affirmative action integrated large numbers of natives into the party and state apparatuses. Scholars have convincingly shown how the Uzbek SSR was ruled by certain regional political “clans” that were regionally rather than politically defined. This “regional factionalism” was not a reminiscent of the past but must be understood as a Soviet construction, intimately tied to the creation of nation-states in Central Asia.¹⁵¹ Thereby, two processes were particularly important. Firstly, the inclusion of traditional structures into the new bureaucratic machinery of the new state.¹⁵² In the Turkmen SSR, central leaders even compromised ideology to the extent that they promoted the very “backward clans” as a means of creating “tribal parity” in an effort speed up the development toward the realisation of communist society.¹⁵³ Secondly, the destruction of the traditional social and political networks and the lack of an urban-industrial proletariat as the base of Soviet power meant that Soviet authorities drew heavily on the rural population causing what Olivier Roy coined “the ruralisation of the party’s cadres.”¹⁵⁴ The networks of

¹⁵⁰ My count follows the administrative territorial level of the Uzbek SSR meaning: 84 Central Committee members, 42 obkom and 125 raikom and gorkom secretaries. Numbers here are from 1949 and collected in: Bezrukova, *Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Turkestana i Uzbekistana v Tsiffrakh, 1918-1967 Gg.*, 141–146. Added to the party committees is the state and all-union institutions, which blur out somewhat due to constant reshuffling of ministries. Nevertheless, the number of Uzbek ministries including security organs remained around 30 from the late 1940s to the 1960s. This information is derived from: *Pravda vostoka*, Bol’shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, “Uzbeckskaia Sovetskaia Sotsialisticheskaia Respublika,” *Slovari i Entsiklopedii Na Akademike*, October 22, 2012, <http://dic.academic.ru/dic.nsf/bse/142486/>; Statisticheskoe Upravlenie Uzbekskoi SSR, *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo Uzbekskoi SSR. Statisticheskie Sbornik* (Gos. statist. Izd., 1957), 13.

¹⁵¹ Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 103; Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 89–91; Carlisle, “The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83).”

¹⁵² Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 90 and 100–101.

¹⁵³ Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 183–186.

¹⁵⁴ Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 103. “Ruralisation” was a category initially used by Moshe Lewin to describe the conditions in the Soviet cities during the industrialisation drive of the 1920s and 1930s when millions of peasants from the rural regions in Russia migrated to the cities. As a consequence, Lewin saw a rising conservatism and reliance on traditional values of the Stalinist system, opposing the original goals of the revolution: Moshe Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet System: Essays in the Social History of Interwar Russia*, 1st ed (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 12–18, 218–221, 274. Lewin thus builds upon the traditional schemes of Leon Trotsky’s Thermidor and Nicholas Timasheff’s “Great Retreat” that saw Stalinism as a departure from socialism: Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed: What Is the Soviet Union and Where Is It Going?* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972); Nicholas S. Timasheff, *The Great Retreat: The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1946). Scholars have since opposed Trotsky’s and Timasheff’s theses and to various degrees argued that the Stalinist regime remained devoted to the revolutionary enterprise. See, for example, David Hoffmann, *Stalinist Values: The Cultural Norms of Soviet Modernity, 1917-1941* (Ithaca/N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003), 3–4; Amir Weiner, *Making Sense of War: the Second World War and the Fate*

these new elite members had been primarily formed in the rural localities or mahallas and were now fortified through the individuals' rise up the Soviet institutions.

When Stalin unleashed the attack on the Uzbek revolutionary vanguard with the Great Purges in 1937–1938, it were the new party cadres, the so-called *vydvizhentsy* who were promoted into the party and state apparatuses and highest echelons of the party and state structures.¹⁵⁵ The *vydvizhentsy* were a younger generation that had experienced the revolution and transformational upheavals of the early years of Soviet period; they were beneficiaries of the Soviet institutions from which they had received education, jobs and status in times that were otherwise defined by the hardship of post-revolutionary shortages and the violent campaigns to change society. Yet, important for the constitution of the Uzbek political elite, these were of humble backgrounds that were predominantly rooted in networks of their regional origin. These networks provided a home base of support, from which supporters were recruited into the party and state apparatuses, and they were nurtured through preferential treatment and “gifts” in times of scarce goods and resources.¹⁵⁶ As a result, during the period 1945–1964 Uzbek political incumbents on all levels of the Uzbek political hierarchy – from the highest ranks in Tashkent to the lowest levels in the kolkhozy – were time and again charged with nepotism, support of local interests and misappropriation of funds, because they functioned as dispensers of resources to their networks.

The persistence of these networks was facilitated by a particularity of Soviet Central Asian societies. While the rest of the Soviet population migrated from the countryside to the cities for education and jobs, the Central Asians defied this development. In 1959, the urbanisation rate in the Uzbek SSR lay at only 21 per cent, a percentage that rose to just 31 per cent by the end of the Soviet period.¹⁵⁷ When life in rural regions was exchanged for the city in pursuit of education and jobs, young people drew on the networks from their regional home base, which were already established in the cities and thus fortified and replicated them. As a consequence, strong ties to rural regions where family and friends resided remained intact. Within the Uzbek party, this particular configuration of the political elite resulted in the regional factions that dominated Uzbek political life and originated from the densely populated and economically important regions of the Fergana, Bukhara/Samarkand and Tashkent provinces, where the Uzbek Communist Party was strongest. In fact, these regions alone mustered al-

of the Bolshevik Revolution (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 15–21; Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 414–415.

¹⁵⁵ Fitzpatrick, “Stalin and the Making of a New Elite, 1928-1939.”

¹⁵⁶ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 89; Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 102–103.

¹⁵⁷ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 93.

most 80 per cent of all communists in the Uzbek SSR in 1949.¹⁵⁸

The idiosyncrasies of the new Uzbek political elite merged with central leaders' reliance on a patronage system, which in the republics concentrated political authority in the hands of the First Secretary in order to ensure implementation. The vast powers concentrated in the hands of the native leaders allowed these to draw perversely on their personal network and promote trusted friends and colleagues thus securing their hold to power.¹⁵⁹ From the highest echelons of Uzbek political life down through the state and party organs, individuals were supported, recruited and promoted according to their patronage network in their political clan. This specific configuration of the native political elite in the Uzbek SSR cultivated the development of limited statehood in different ways. First, the bureaucratic rule of state and party apparatuses suffered as individuals were recruited and promoted on the basis of friends and family connections and not according their professional abilities or ideological devotion. Secondly, the privileges tied to the positions in the political hierarchy allowed the incumbents of the system to function as dispensers of goods and resources, which secured not only their own positions but also often ruthlessly abused their power for personal gain.

The prevalence of these regionally based patronage networks should not lead to the belief that patronage relations were irrevocable. Indeed, disappointment of patron expectations or abuse of official positions could entail dire consequences and put an abrupt end to a political career. As we shall see later, even within the highest echelons of the native elite, members were occasionally ousted did they not suit the interests of Moscow or the Uzbek First Secretary, but frequency rose further down the political hierarchy. As a consequence, party and state structures on the oblast' and raion level were characterised by an extremely high turnover rate.¹⁶⁰

Scholars have argued that Moscow allowed and supported the faction building in Central Asia due to an underlying "divide and rule" strategy. According to this line of argument, Moscow not only kept Central Asians from cross-border cooperation that could endanger Soviet rule but also nurtured regional rivalries within the border of each Central Asian nation.¹⁶¹ The power-shift followed by the Great Purges when a

¹⁵⁸ See Appendix II.

¹⁵⁹ The promotion of a personal network was, indeed, not confined to the Uzbek SSR. Throughout Central Asia political leaders buttressed their positions through the creation of personalised elite networks: Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 109–114.

¹⁶⁰ See Appendix II. See also: Rakowska-Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia*, 148; Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 89–92.

¹⁶¹ Carlisle, "Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan," 269–270; Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938–83)," 95–96; Carrère d'Encausse, *De sovjetiske minoriteter (Orig. La Glorie des nations ou la fin de*

Fergana/Tashkent rather than a Tashkent/Bukhara axis rose to power in the Uzbek SSR have been understood as a sign of this “divide and rule” policy.¹⁶² Moscow’s continued devotion to ideological goals aiming to overcome backwardness give reason to doubt that central leaders were, in fact, directed by motives of clan strife in the Uzbek SSR. Instead, the change of support appears to have been spurred by *realpolitik* and dictatorial logic to *avoid* strife and in favour of control. During the 1930s, the Chair of the Council of People’s Commissars, Faizulla Khodzhaev who built upon a Bukhara network, had been opposing the denationalising tendencies of Stalinism, while Uzbek First Secretary, Akmal Ikramov had supported and pursued them rigorously.¹⁶³ With the fortification of the Stalinist dictatorship, the creating of a new elite, as well as the pursuit of an Uzbek nation, it was only logically to build upon the regions where policies generally met most support. Accumulating powers in few hands on the republican level enabled Moscow to avoid faction building, to better supervise local politics as well as to hold accountable the group it promoted to power in the Uzbek SSR. According to this dictatorial logic, a rigid vertical power structure, a patron-client relation and ruthless methods of repression enabled Stalin to acquire obedience and submission. Thereby, republican clients became increasingly dependent on the goodwill of the dictator who could decide their fates at will.¹⁶⁴ Stalin’s predecessors relied on a similar *realpolitik* rationale and patron-client relations, suggesting that Moscow continued to rely on inner stability as the best way to ensure Soviet rule.

The regional factions within Uzbek political life had significant influence on the constitution of the political elite. The vast powers of the First Secretary and his reliance on a regional patronage network resulted in a clear regional character of the political elite down through the political hierarchy of the Uzbek SSR. As a consequence, it was possible for a political clan to stay in power for an extended period of time despite an institutional pattern developing in the promotions for the position of First Secretary. Following the promotion of Usman Iusupov in 1938, all subsequent First Secretaries rose from the position of Chairman of the Presidium of

l’Empire soviétique, 1990), 210–211; Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 103–105. Several scholars opposed this view and demonstrated that Soviet policy makers instead invested vast resources and extensive research in the creation of nations: Hirsch, “Toward an Empire of Nations”; Edgar, *Tribal Nation; Conquest, The Great Terror*, 356–357.

¹⁶² Carlisle, “The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83),” 95–96; Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 103–105.

¹⁶³ Conquest, *The Great Terror*, 356–357.

¹⁶⁴ Rigby, *Political Elites in the USSR: Central Leaders and Local Cadres from Lenin to Gorbachev*, chap. 5; Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*, 265–266.

the Supreme Soviet or Chairman of the Council of Ministers in the Uzbek SSR.¹⁶⁵ Due to the blunt promotion of the regional political clan however, almost the entire Uzbek leadership was in the hands of one group, resulting in a high level of consistency. Between 1938 and 1959 the Tashkent/Fergana clans were dominating political life in Uzbekistan, before the promotion of Sharaf Rashidov who headed the Samarkand/Bukhara faction, subsequently put a forceful end to the Tashkent/Fergana rule.

Despite the prominence of regional origin as a characteristic of the native members of the Uzbek political elite, other factors too defined the political elite from 1945 to 1964. Apart from the regional belonging, statistical evidence suggest that a typical Uzbek elite member in the late 1940s was male (96,3 %), likely to have come from an urban setting and joined the party between 1937 and 1945 (57 %). Contrary to his counterpart promoted in the 1930s, he was not a farmer but had a white-collar or other professional background (71 %). He had a middle (56 %) or higher (36 %) education and there was a fair chance that he had obtained his qualifications at a middle or higher political educational institution (38 %).¹⁶⁶

The characteristics of the native members of the political elite in the late 1940s through the 1950s were reflected by the membership development in the Uzbek Communist Party. The general trend within the Soviet Union was replicated in the Uzbek SSR and during as well as after World War II, the party experienced a dramatic influx of new members.¹⁶⁷ While there were approximately 72.000 communists – members and candidates – in the Uzbek SSR before the war, this number increased to 82,505 in 1945, of which 52,733 were new members of the party.¹⁶⁸ The majority was between 25 and 45 years old although almost one-third was between 25 and 35 years of age, and almost half of the communists had acquired their party membership after the Great Purges. Most of the new members were predominantly to be found in workers' or administrative environments, suggesting that membership followed not

¹⁶⁵ A. I. Niiazov had served as Chair of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet 1947–1950; N. A. Mukhitdinov had been Chair of the Council of Ministers 1951–1953 and 1954–1955 before finally taking on the work of the First Secretary; Mukhitdinov was replaced by S. K. Kamalov who had been Chair of Council of Ministers 1956–1957; Sh. R. Rashidov rose after being Chair of Presidium of the Supreme Soviet 1950–1959; and I. B. Usmanhodzhaev too had been Chair of the Supreme Soviet Presidium 1978–1983, before assuming Rashidov's place as First Secretary.

¹⁶⁶ Bezrukova, *Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Turkestana i Uzbekistana v Tsifrakh, 1918-1967 Gg.*, 151–155.

¹⁶⁷ E. Iu. Zubkova, *Russia After the War: Hopes, Illusions, and Disappointments, 1945-1957* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), 79–80. The membership rise reflected the situation in Russia, where nine million new members entered the party during the war: Ibid., 79. Elena Zubkova counts to the most important motives for party membership in the post-war period access to privilege and scarce resources.

¹⁶⁸ Numbers here and in the following from: Bezrukova, *Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Turkestana i Uzbekistana v Tsifrakh, 1918-1967 Gg.*, 141–146. This process slowed down rapidly after 1949 and by 1953 the number of communists was 142.654. After Stalin's death, the growth rate rises substantially again. By 1958 this number had skyrocketed to a total of 330.810 members and candidates.

only educational level but also urban belonging.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, in the immediate post-war period the party was characterised by a second wave of ruralisation due to the major influx during World War II and, as will be to show in subsequent chapters, this had major influence on government policies and the efficacy of governance especially on the lower levels of the Uzbek SSR. In other words, the ruralisation of party cadres detected during the early Soviet period revived after the war and only retreated with the consolidation of the Soviet structures over time.¹⁷⁰

The native members of the Uzbek political elite had similar career patterns as members in other Soviet Central Asian republics. In general, a career began in the komsomol, including some sort of practical work, before further integration into party work at the local level of the party structure. This would normally include a tour through different regions of the respective republic, combined with a successive rise into the oblast' structure, although the native elites were usually not touring outside their republic unless it was for educational purposes in Moscow. Only a few party members did not serve in at least two different oblasti, which normally functioned as a stepping stone to party or state headquarters in Tashkent if the individuals were successful on the oblast' level.¹⁷¹ Contrary to their European peers in the Uzbek political elite, native elite members were seldom promoted to positions outside their republics on the educational tour, endowing Soviet cadre policy with a clear sense of a two-tiered system of differential treatment.¹⁷²

As noted above, the political elite of the Uzbek SSR comprised a large number of Europeans. During the consolidation of the Soviet system in the 1920s and 1930s, the promotion of Europeans had been particularly widespread in the early Soviet period due to what Terry Martin termed a "hole in the middle" pointing to the lack of educated white-collar workers.¹⁷³ According to Martin, the *korenizatsiia* policy promoted an indigenous political elite to rule the republics as a means to produce support for the Soviet development and diminish the feeling of foreign domination on the side of the native populations. The lack of an educated

¹⁶⁹ Even if the majority of the communists were poorly educated, a large group held secondary schooling and a respectable part of 6.000 had gone through higher educational facilities. Roughly one thousand members of the Uzbek Communist Party had graduated from either first and second course of party schools either in Tashkent or Moscow: Ibid., 145.

¹⁷⁰ In 1949, the members of the lower level committees comprised 843 were workers, 254 farmers and 1.356 white-collar workers, which confirmed the process that the Great Purges had sparked: Ibid., 153–156.

¹⁷¹ Rakowska-Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia*, 146–150.

¹⁷² Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 108–109.

¹⁷³ Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 179. Throughout the Soviet period especially Uzbek women remained in manual labour positions of agriculture, while hardly being represented in industrial work or managing positions. Nancy Lubin, "Women in Soviet Central Asia: Progress and Contradictions," *Soviet Studies* 33, no. 2 (April 1981): 182–203.

workforce of managing apparatchiks or technical and professional specialists meant that natives either occupied the top- or low-level positions in state and party, while Europeans were placed in the mid-level bureaucracy that managed state and party due to their traditional higher level of education.¹⁷⁴

The Europeans within the Uzbek political elite worked within most spheres of political life, but the number severely decreased on the lowest levels of the Uzbek political hierarchy. Indeed, scholars have convincingly shown that the local agricultural production levels were left almost exclusively to the Uzbeks.¹⁷⁵ Non-native representation rose higher up the hierarchy. In the highest echelons, certain positions were pre-defined for Europeans such as the Second Secretary and at least one deputy to the Chair of the Council of Ministers. This pattern was replicated down through the political hierarchy. Accordingly, in 1952 186 of the 568 secretaries in the obkom, gorkom and the raikom structures were European, though the First Secretary positions on these levels were rarely given to a non-native.¹⁷⁶

These non-native members of the political elite can be divided into three different groups. Firstly, the group that was sent on tour to the Central Asian periphery and served only a brief period before returning to Moscow for a position within the all-union administration.¹⁷⁷ They occupied secretary positions in the obkomy or held positions in the central party or state administration. Secondly, the political elite entailed Europeans who were sent to the Uzbek SSR and stayed for a long-term period. Most Second Secretaries belonged to this group, which also counted individuals of the leading security organs.¹⁷⁸ The third group, were titular European who grew up and/or lived in the Uzbek SSR long-term. Indeed, the Uzbek Communist Party comprised roughly 20.000 ethnic Russians in 1945 and the percentage oscillated between 20 and 25 throughout in the 1950s, whereby Russians only made up for 13,5 per cent of the population in the Uzbek SSR in 1960.¹⁷⁹

The Europeans who were sent to the Uzbek SSR as “parachuted alter egos from the centre”¹⁸⁰ and served only for a brief tenure, had little knowledge of the Uzbek. This hampered their

¹⁷⁴ Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 179; Rakowska-Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia*, 146–147.

¹⁷⁵ Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 89–90.

¹⁷⁶ See Appendix II.

¹⁷⁷ In the Tajik SSR, for example, Rakowska-Harmstone counts eight such Europeans at the oblast’ and city level in the 1945-1956 period: Rakowska-Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia*, 148.

¹⁷⁸ Second Secretary N. A. Lomakin, for example, resided in Uzbekistan for roughly ten years.

¹⁷⁹ Tsentral’noe statisticheskoe upravlenie, V. N Demina, and S. Ia. Genin, eds., *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1960 godu : statisticheskii ezhegodnik* (Moscow: Gos. statisticheskoe izd-vo, 1961), 18–20.

¹⁸⁰ Carlisle, “Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan,” 276. On successful non-native individual and Bureau member was V. A. Bylbas: “Bylbas, Vasiliĭ Andreevich,” Online Library Project, *Spravochnik Po Istorii Kommunisticheskoi Partii i Sovetskogo Soiuza 1898-1991*, 2012, <http://www.knowbysight.info/BBB/11672.asp>.

integration into the political sphere and especially the supervisory function that many undoubtedly held. Without knowledge of the language and only superficial knowledge of the political clans and politics, these European members of the elite were “cut off from the local society.”¹⁸¹ The European elite members working within the top-level Uzbek institutional setting typically resided in the Uzbek SSR for an extended period of time. As a consequence, conflicts especially between the Second Secretary and the Uzbek members of the Bureau frequently led to rebukes from Moscow of the Uzbek top-leadership. Nevertheless, Moscow did not by default castigate the Uzbek leaders in times of conflict but also replaced the Second Secretary. Indeed, a binary optic of emphasising repression from Moscow and resistance from Tashkent is a simplification of the relations between the European and native members of the Uzbek political elite.

The status, function and loyalties of locally born Europeans who operated within the Uzbek political elite are more complicated to decipher. There are several examples of locally born Europeans who had successful political careers in the Uzbek SSR, suggesting that not necessarily did a contradiction persist between ethnic Europeans and their integration into the Uzbek political elite. The fully integrated Europeans may have held a double function serving both Tashkent and Moscow, but there is little historical evidence to support such assumption, since this sort of communication was informal or went through the secret security channels, the sources of which remain locked away in Russian archives.

While the ethnic divide characterising the political elite in the Uzbek SSR persisted throughout the Soviet period, the post-war period was by a creeping indigenisation of the Uzbek institutions. This was not due to the nationality policy and indigenisation developing in a “chaotic manner”¹⁸². Rather it was a sign of Moscow’s continued devotion to the revolutionary principles that sought to integrate the previously repressed peoples into the orbit of a modern political state as well as the Uzbek leaders active promotion of the nationality policy following Stalin’s death. Although the official *Soviet* discourse changed in the wake of WWII to rely stronger on the inclusion of the Russian people and culture as the big brother within the concept of Friendship of the Peoples, the *republican* discourse and political policies remained grounded in the nationality policy.¹⁸³ Indeed, Stalin personally was reluctant to impose a rigid Russification and by the time Khrushchev attempted to curtail republican leaders’ intensified pursuit of the original principles of the nationality policy in the 1950s, he was met by resist-

¹⁸¹ Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 106.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, 108.

¹⁸³ Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 393.

ance from republican leadership.¹⁸⁴ As a consequence, the Uzbek leaders continued to pursue indigenisation although it remained a balance act and central leaders would habitually strike down on ‘national bourgeois tendencies’. Such central intervention could not stop the effective indigenisation of the Uzbek apparatus however, and native representation steadily rose in the Uzbek institutions: In 1932, 47 per cent of the obkomy secretaries were native, a percentage that rose to 60 per cent throughout the Stalin period, before jumping to 70 during under Khrushchev.¹⁸⁵

In sum, despite the creeping indigenisation of the Uzbek political through the 1940s and 1950s, the centre did not leave the political positions in the Uzbek SSR entirely in Uzbek hands. Key positions were held by Europeans at the highest levels and non-natives were continuously on tour through Uzbek institutions, while locally born ethnic Russians remained a prominent factor at the obkom, gorkom and raikom levels. Party and state apparatuses were quite effectively indigenised throughout the Soviet period but the central leadership kept non-natives in influential positions, where they could influence and supervise the political sphere of the Uzbek SSR. The indigenisation of the political sphere by simultaneous supervision and control was one of the core factors endowing the Soviet political institutions the character of an ambivalent empire.

Usman Iusupov and the Uzbek Ruling Circle, 1945–1954

The political elite in the Uzbek SSR was structured as a centralised hierarchy. At the top of the pyramid stood the First Secretary, whose position was largely unquestioned and who held vast powers that enabled him to surround himself with a small group of trusted individuals that constituted the ruling circle. Several scholars have persuasively adopted Merle Fainsod’s concept of “family circle” to describe this ‘Iusupovian’ ruling circle. Understood in a figurative rather than a literal sense, Fainsod developed it to describe the lower level institutions of the early Soviet period and demonstrated how official Soviet structures were undermined by the installation of friends and family in the Smolensk region.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Peter Blitstein, “Nation-Building or Russification? Obligatory Russian Instruction in the Soviet Non-Russian School, 1938-1953,” in *A State of Nations. Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2001), 266–267.

¹⁸⁵ Bezrukova, *Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Turkestana i Uzbekistana v Tsifrakh, 1918-1967 Gg.*, 119, 126 and 153–156.

¹⁸⁶ Fainsod, *Smolensk Under Soviet Rule*, 270–273. On Uzbekistan: Carlisle, “Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan,” 278–297; Carlisle, “The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83),” 102–104. See also Stalin’s

In the Uzbek SSR under the auspice of Usman Iusupov a similar pattern surfaced, although the circle was not challenging Soviet rule as Fainsod insinuated for the Smolensk region. Iusupov's family circle consisted of ten to twenty individuals, with whom he had risen through the Soviet hierarchy all of which were devoted to the communist course. The most powerful members of this group held a seat in the Bureau, while their official positions were divided between the party and state structures. Generally, the second man in the state hierarchy was heading the Council of Ministers, but the secretaries of the Central Committee and certain ministries were given to equally trusted individuals.¹⁸⁷ Based on new source material we are now better equipped to shed light on the constitution of this circle, how it functioned within the structures of the Uzbek SSR and in what ways it was a source of limited statehood. Usman Iusupov's humble past, his merits in the system as well as his friends in Moscow, made him an obvious *vydvizhentsy*-candidate, for he was indeed a product of the early Soviet period. He was born to a family of farmers in the Fergana Valley in 1900 where he spent his childhood years, before entering industrial work in a cotton-cleaning factory in 1918, just after the revolution.¹⁸⁸ At the age of twenty-six, Iusupov enrolled in the Communist party where he benefitted from the lack of broad native Uzbek supporters and the Soviet *korenizatsiia* policy. In 1926, he was appointed Chairman of the Tashkent district Construction Workers' Union and, in 1929, to a Secretary position in the Uzbek Central Committee.¹⁸⁹ Iusupov's steep rise continued upon his arrival in the Tashkent central administrations and he was appointed Chairman of the Central Asian Bureau for the all-union Central Council of Labour Unions, a position he stepped down from in 1934 in order to enroll for Marxist courses at the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Union in Moscow. According to several sources, Iusupov nurtured patron-client relations with Anastas Mikoyan, Lazar Kaganovich, Vladislav Molotov, Georgii Malenkov and Nikolai Patolichev during his stay in Moscow.¹⁹⁰ In fact, B. Reskov and G. Sedov hold that it was due to his friendship with A. Mikoyan, commissar for Food Industry of the Soviet Union, that Iusupov was promoted to

description of *semeinost'*: Joseph Stalin, *Mastering Bolshevism* (New York: Workers library publishers, 1937), 44–45.

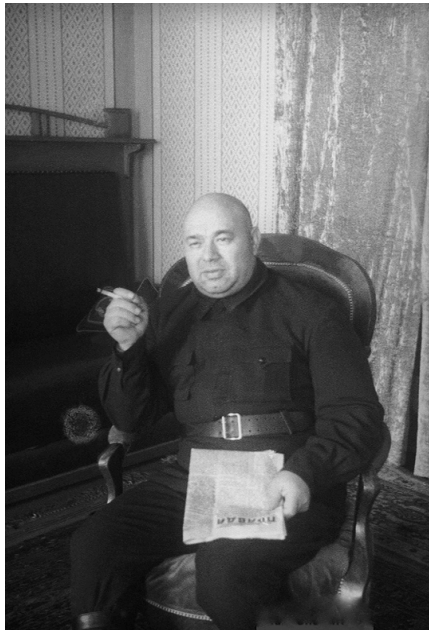
¹⁸⁷ Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83)," 99–104.

¹⁸⁸ Information on Iusupov's early life is rather scarce. Here I use documentation from: Boris Reskov and Genadii Sedov, *Usman Iusupov* (Moscow: Molodaia Gvardiia, 1976), 5–25; Zalesskii, *Kto Est' Kto v Istorii SSSR, 1924-1953*, 667; Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83)," 100–104.

¹⁸⁹ Reskov and Sedov, *Usman Iusupov*, 53 and 55.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 94.

head the Uzbek equivalent of Mikoyan's commissariat.¹⁹¹ With friends like Kaganovich and Mikoyan, as well as personal connections to Molotov, Malenkov and Patolichev, it is questionable if his regional origin was of outstanding importance when Iusupov was promoted to First Secretary. It might even have been the reverse order, whereby the tail was wagging the dog – Iusupov's Moscow friendships might have shed a positive light on the Fergana political clan.



First Secretary U. Iu. Iusupov in the 1950s.¹⁹²

The promotion of Usman Iusupov to the First Secretary position in the Uzbek SSR was, thus, a result of several intertwined factors and the direct backing from members of Stalin's ruling circle simultaneously allowed Iusupov to accumulate extensive powers in the Uzbek SSR, as long as he kept the centre's demands satisfied. According to the later First Secretary Nuritdin Mukhitdinov, Iusupov possessed the power to freely decide another person's fate.¹⁹³ Moreover, Iusupov's rule in the Uzbek SSR took patrimonial traits, though only to the extent it was approved by Moscow.¹⁹⁴ As we shall see later, the dictator did not hesitate in limiting Iusupov's powers or rebuking him when he was displeased with the Uzbek First Secretary.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. See also: Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 144. Furthermore, Reskov and Sedov claim that it was Nikolai Shvernik, the Chairman of the Central Soviet of the All-Union Labour Unions, who arranged U. Iusupov housing in Moscow. Reskov and Sedov, *Usman Iusupov*, 91.

¹⁹² www.maxpenson.com

¹⁹³ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 44.

¹⁹⁴ I understand patrimonial according to the traditional concept of the patrimonial state rested on the notion of patriarchal authority derived from Max Weber: Weber, "Wirtschaft Und Gesellschaft. Grundriss Der Verstehenden Soziologie." James Critchlow has used the patrimonial concept to describe Sharaf Rashidov's tenure: Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*, 18–22. On the late-Stalin period as a neo-patrimonial state where compe-

Given the power relation with Moscow, Iusupov was given considerable liberty to create a ruling circle once he was in the seat of the First Secretary, an entourage that was based upon patronage, friendship, merits as well as regional origin. Characteristic of Iusupov's "1938 generation"¹⁹⁵ was that he had met the members fairly early on in their lives and that they went through a similar training. To the core group comprised A. A. Abdurakhmanov, Iu. B. Babadzhanov, S. K. Kamalov, S. Khusainov, A. A. Mavlianov, M. Mirza-Akhmedov, A. Niiazov and S. Nurutdinov.¹⁹⁶

It is highly likely that it was during the late 1920s that the paths of A. Abdurakhmanov and A. Mavlianov crossed with Iusupov's as they were both active members of spheres within which Iusupov had been working. A. Abdurakhmanov had begun his career in construction work and A. Mavlianov within the labour union structure, both of which Iusupov had also passed through. Mirza-Akhmedov became an active member of the educational sector in Tashkent in the late 1920s, when Iusupov was already firmly settled in the nascent Uzbek political structure. Iu. Babadzhanov and Iusupov had been childhood friends and studied together in Moscow in the mid-1930s.¹⁹⁷ Iusupov and A. Niiazov met either during Niiazov's work in the secret police, the finance department of Fergana oblast', or when Niiazov assumed functions within the party structure in Tashkent in the mid-1930s. Lastly, S. Khusainov and Iusupov knew each other from their childhood in Fergana and deepened their

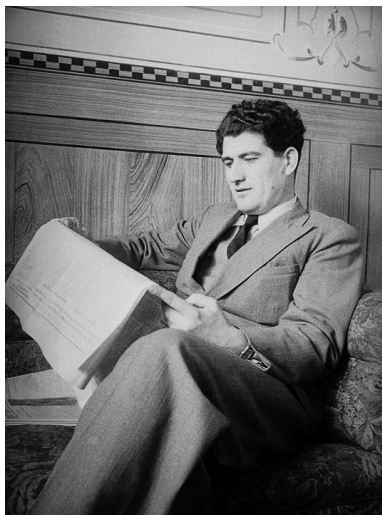
tences and borders between the private and personal spheres blur to the extent that political power is treated as a 'private' affair of the ruler: Yoram Gorlizki, "Ordinary Stalinism: The Council of Ministers and the Soviet Neopatrimonial State, 1946–1953," *The Journal of Modern History* 74, no. 4 (December 1, 2002): 699–703; Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*. The crucial difference between the republican leaders and Stalin was of course that the latter was not limited in his 'patriarchal' authority.

¹⁹⁵ Donald Carlisle's term: Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83)."

¹⁹⁶ Donald Carlisle only counts A. A. Abdurakhmanov, A. A. Mavlianov, M. Mirza-Akhmedov and A. Niiazov. Ibid., 102–104. The Chair of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Uzbek SSR from 1938 to 1943, A. A. Akhunbabaev, I have left out as he was not an active participant in the shaping of everyday politics, but rather a figure that carried symbolic representation and value for the Uzbek SSR. Iusupov and Akhunbabaev are said to have developed a close friendship during the late 1920s. Reskov and Sedov, *Usman Iusupov*, 79. Information on Akhunbabaev: Vakhid Kasymovich Valiev, *Narodnyi aksakal: strannitsy zhizni i deiatel'nosti Iuldasha Akhunbabaeva*. (Tashkent: Gos. izd-vo Uzbekskoi SSR, 1962).

¹⁹⁷ Reskov and Sedov, *Usman Iusupov*, 34 and 91. Other sources claim that Iu. Babadzhanov was in fact studying at the Uzbek Institute for Marxism-Leninism in Tashkent. Babadzhanov was involved with the Uzbek security agencies over a period of almost twenty years from 1939 to 1957, being the Commissar/Minister of Internal Affairs 1941, 1945-1953, 1954-1957. See: Vitalii Khliupin, "Tsentraziiia," Internet Database, *Tsentraziia - Baza Personalii "Kto Est' Kto v Tsentral'noi Azii,"* October 22, 2012, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>; Valentin Mzareulov, "NKVD - MVD Uzezkoi SSR," Online, *Istoriia Otechesvennykh Spetssluzhb i Pravookhranitel'nykh Organov*, 2012, http://shieldandword.mozohin.ru/VD3462/terr_org/respublik/uzbek.htm. Reskov and Sedov also claim that Iusupov shared a room with his old friend Satty Khusainov. Reskov and Sedov, *Usman Iusupov*, 55. Although belonging to the Iusupov entourage, S. Khusainov's career took a radically different turn than his mentor's. Most well-known for his work as editor of the major Uzbek newspaper *Kzyl-Uzbekistan*, Khusainov was arrested for "counter-revolutionary crimes" in 1941 and executed in 1942. Post mortem rehabilitation suggested in 1954. See: Andrei Artizov et al., eds., *Reabilitatsiia--kak eto bylo : dokumenty Prezidiuma TSK KPSS i drugie materialy* (Moscow: Mezhdunar. fond "Demokratiia," 2000), 180–181.

friendship during their studies in Moscow where they shared a room.¹⁹⁸ S. Kamalov and S. Nurutdinov were of a somewhat different breed than the rest of the ruling circle as they had risen through the komsomol and it was only in the late-Stalinist period that they became prominent members of Iusupov's close entourage.¹⁹⁹



Chair of the Council of Ministers A. A. Abdurakhmanov in the late-1940.²⁰⁰

Iusupov's family circle carried clear regional traits from the Fergana and Tashkent political clans. Abdurakhmanov, A. Mavlianov, Mirza-Akhmedov, Nurutdinov and Kamalov were all from the Tashkent region, while Iu. Babadzhanov, Niiazov and Khusainov were from Iusupov's home region Fergana. This was a consequence of strong regional identities, but no less of primary political education in the regions and of their 'upbringing' within the Soviet system – komsomol, the labour unions, factory work, education – where alliances were made and friendship, patronage and trust was generated.

The Uzbek First Secretary rarely demoted the members of his family circle, although he did not refrain from using repressive measures against them if Moscow demanded it. Iusupov's childhood friend S. Khusainov, for example, was arrested and imprisoned in the wake of World War II. Members of the family circle served different functions. First, they gave Iusupov support in the Bureau in cases of conflict with the non-native members. Second, they were often installed in the obkom structures as "trouble-shooters" if members of the extended elite on the obkom or raikom level abused their positions.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁸ Information on the biographies retained from: Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83)," 100–104; Zalesskii, *Kto Est' Kto v Istorii SSSR, 1924-1953*, 8, 252, 428; Reskov and Sedov, *Usman Iusupov*, 52–145. Iu. Babadzhanov was born in Gurlen in the Karakalpak ASSR, but grew up in the Fergana.

¹⁹⁹ Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83)," 101–102.

²⁰⁰ www.maxpenson.com

²⁰¹ Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83)," 103.

Uzbek Central Committee Bureau 1940²⁰²: Eleven full members, five candidates
Iusupov, U. Iu. (Uzbek, Fergana, First Secretary).
Kudriatsev, A. V. (Russian, Second Secretary)
Mun'ko, N. P. (no biographical information, presumably Russian)
Artykbaev, Ia. (no biographical information, presumably Uzbek)
Azimov, S. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Abdurakhmanov, A (Uzbek, Tashkent, Chair of the Council of Ministers)
Kabanov, P. A. (Russian, Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers)
Akhunbabaev, A. (Uzbek, Fergana, Chair of the Supreme Soviet)
Sadzhaia, A. N. (Georgian, Minister of Internal Affairs)
Turdyev, Kh. (Uzbek, Tashkent, First Secretary Tashkent obkom)
Apanasenko, I. R. (Russian, Commander of the Turkestan Military District, headquarters in Tashkent)
Candidate members:
Aleksandrovskii, A. T. (no biographical information, presumably Russian)
Fedotov, P. P. (no biographical information, presumably Russian)
Kulagin, I. K. (no biographical information, presumably Russian)
Kamalov, S. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Deputy Chair Council of Ministers)
Ismailov, N. (no biographical information, presumably Uzbek)

In spite of Iusupov's vast powers in the Uzbek SSR, his family circle did not equal the ruling circle. Several non-natives held key positions in the 1940 Bureau of the Uzbek Central Committee. Presumably due to the recent Great Purges, non-natives held more seats than at any other point during Iusupov's time in office. No less than eight, i.e. half of the Bureau members were non-natives who held key positions such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Although the representation of non-natives decreased in the post-war period, Stalin never trusted Iusupov enough to remove non-native Bureau members. As will be topic of subsequent chapters, especially in times of tension, Stalin tightened control by dispatching loyalists

²⁰² Information from: Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83)"; Carlisle, "Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan," 278–297. In parentheses: Ethnicity, political clan, position.

from Moscow.

The ruling circle was not hermetically closed to new members, but access did not come free. It required the First Secretary's trust and he implemented coarse measures to test and ensure it. Before the later First Secretary Nuritdin Mukhitdinov was allowed access to it, he experienced this in person. Having returned to Tashkent from the Battle of Stalingrad after World War II, he was appointed Secretary of Propaganda at the Namangan obkom in 1946.²⁰³ Just as he took up the position, however, Iusupov charged him of being a “son of alien elements, religious figures” and was ready to expel him from the party.²⁰⁴ While the Uzbek Ministry for State Security investigated the charges, Mukhitdinov was placed under house arrest in a Tashkent hotel.²⁰⁵ When his credentials were finally confirmed and he freed of accusations, he had lost all desire to be part of the high-level Uzbek political scene and wanted to resign. Iusupov would hear of no such nonsense, with the logic of a loyal Stalinist he countered “this all happened to your benefit. Everything has been examined extensively and everything confirms that you are not an enemy, but an honest man, from a decent family. Now, no one can sow doubt about your biography. Go. We reported to...Malenkov, he will obviously inform Stalin.”²⁰⁶ Adding to the absurdity of the situation was surely that the families of Abdurakhmanov, the Chair of the Council of Ministers, and Mukhitdinov were long-standing friends, which apparently did not convince the First Secretary of Mukhitdinov's innocence.²⁰⁷ The constitution of the Iusupov family and ruling circles were thus controlled and ruled in autocratically by the First Secretary. He was often described as a “suspicious” man, who governed single-handedly and disregarded the members of the Bureau.²⁰⁸ As long as Iusupov enjoyed the trust and backing from Moscow, such critique was of no effect and Iusupov could indeed rule as a ‘little Stalin’. This was part of the bargain between the central and the republican leadership that central leaders accepted in order to resolve the problem of limited statehood in the Uzbek SSR. It was a logic based on the belief that Uzbek loyalists who were tied to the centre through personal relations could be controlled and trusted to ensure Moscow interests. For the implementation of Moscow interests, the strong empowerment of Iusupov entailed pitfalls. First, despite Moscow–Tashkent patronage and European represen-

²⁰³ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 34–35.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁰⁵ According to Mukhitdinov, the Central Committee commission investigating the charges was a quintet consisting of the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Propaganda, the First Secretary of Tashkent obkom, and finally the First Secretary of the raikom of Mukhitdinov's parents. See: *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 426.

²⁰⁸ RGANI, 668, 6, 6, ll. 10–15.

tation in the ruling circle, the First Secretary and the Uzbek members of the ruling circle were able to nominally implement Moscow policies but factually follow Uzbek or personal interests given the language barriers and only partial integration of non-natives into the Uzbek state and party institutions. Second, the empowerment of natives was a *de facto* fortification of patronage networks in the Uzbek periphery, which hampered the ability of Moscow penetrate the Uzbek sphere. As a consequence, the Stalinist political system *sui generis* cemented limited statehood within the centre-periphery structure. When Khrushchev succeeded Stalin in the office of the Soviet First Secretary, he continued and deepened the patronage relations, though with a greater sense of trust in his republican clients. The result was a deepening of limited statehood between Tashkent and Moscow because the clients engaged in vigorous pursuit mechanisms that would protect them and their republics from an abusive centre as it had been under Stalin.

The promotion of a new elite and patronage relations between Moscow and Tashkent thus did not solve the problem of limited statehood in the Uzbek SSR. The combination of an Uzbek weak institutional presence on the lower levels, the limited levers influence on the lower levels of state and party structures as well as the integration of a native elite structured around regional patronage continuously produced limited statehood in various forms. In times of extreme duress and pressure on the economic, political and social structures, this became abundantly clear. The Second World War was such a time and, as the next chapter will show, under the circumstances of war Soviet control crumbled while limited statehood thrived.

2.2. WORLD WAR II

Compared to the war-torn western regions of the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan was much better off. As Paul Stronski recently put it, “Tashkent manufactured bombs but did not suffer from them.”²⁰⁹ Nonetheless, World War II severely influenced all levels of Uzbek society and left Uzbekistan in deep social and economic crisis. The all-out mobilisation that the government demanded was to be done under the conditions of shrinking material and human resources, which were contrasted by ever more virulent demands from the centre of power. As a consequence, the effects of war in very different ways would cast their shadow far into the post-war period. In terms of production, the industrial sector experienced an incredible rise; by contrast, the agricultural sector shrank to catastrophic low levels. Simultaneously, Uzbek society had to cope with thousands of evacuees and refugees from the western regions of the Soviet Union who were given temporary shelter in Uzbekistan.²¹⁰ The scarce resources and all-out mobilisation left the population in terrible hardship with decreasing living standards, lack of food and rigid labour laws. Meanwhile, the Moscow centre put the political elite in Uzbekistan under severe pressure to ensure mobilisation, which in turn extended this pressure toward the population. This was a process that intensified throughout the duration of the war as hardship continued to rise.

As a consequence, the Stalinist state of the Second World War did, more than at any other point, fit the term ‘mobilising dictatorship’ (*Mobilisierungsdiktatur*).²¹¹ Jörg Ganzenmüller recently defined mobilisational dictatorship to include agitational work, individual production commitment (*Produktionsverpflechtung*), campaigning, notice-boards and not least terror and violence, with a simultaneous greater reliance on the system of special agents in order to achieve results faster.²¹² The mobilising dictatorship, the relentless struggle to increase production, coupled with the circumstances of war led however, to a continuous aggravation of

²⁰⁹ Paul Stronski, *Tashkent Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966* (Univ of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 145.

²¹⁰ A micro study on the development of Tashkent during World War II: *Ibid.*, 72–144.

²¹¹ The term ‘Mobilisierungsdiktatur’ has a peculiar history. Ernst Nolte used it to describe the Soviet Union in 1974 but he eschewed a clear analytical delimitation of the term. Some years later Wilfried Loth incautiously adopted it again to denote the Soviet Union. In recent years it came en vogue and found use to describe the German Nazi state, before it was then reintroduced by Adeeb Khalid as an analytical term for the early Soviet Union in Central Asia. Ernst Nolte, *Deutschland und der kalte Krieg* (Munich: Piper, 1974), 456; Wilfried Loth, *Die Teilung der Welt: Geschichte des kalten Krieges 1941-1955* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch-Verlag, 1980), 121, 200 and 345; Manfred Hildermeier, *Geschichte Der Sowjetunion 1917-1991. Aufstieg Und Niedergang Des Ersten Sozialistischen Staates* (Munich: Beck, 1998), 367; Khalid, “Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization,” 232–233. On Germany: Adam Tooze, “Stramme Junge Männer in Braunen Uniformen,” *DIE ZEIT*, April 24, 2005, <http://www.zeit.de/2005/18/Aly?page=3>.

²¹² Jörg Ganzenmüller, “Mobilisierungsdiktatur Im Krieg. Stalinistische Herrschaft Im Belagerten Leningrad,” *OSTEUROPA* 8–9, no. 61 (2011): 121–123 and 133–134.

the living conditions that further hampered the political elite's very goal to overcome limited statehood and keep control over Uzbek society. The Stalinist answer to this condition took form of increasing repression in order to achieve wartime goals. It was a time when the otherwise characteristic ambivalence of Soviet policies gave way to a violent dictatorship.

War in Uzbekistan

The war remained a distant reality to Uzbekistan as late as autumn 1941. "In Tashkent, one hardly senses the war. Within the ranks of the republican organisations life is peaceful and remains unshakable."²¹³ The Party Control Commission plenipotentiary N. I. Lomakin had just arrived in Tashkent in September 1941, when he penned these first sentences to the Party Control Commission headquarters in Moscow.²¹⁴ The calm conditions and absence of war would not last long. The most immediate visible signs of the rising threat from the west were the thousands of Uzbek soldiers who began heading to the front. Already in the first months of the war, at least 32,000 volunteered while other several thousand were drafted.²¹⁵ In turn, thousands of evacuees began arriving in the cities of Uzbekistan from late autumn 1941. Already by the end of 1941, Tashkent had received 100,000 people, arriving from the western regions of the Soviet Union, catapulting its total population to approximately 585,000 inhabitants.²¹⁶ During the entire period of the war, the population of Tashkent nearly doubled to one million, while Uzbekistan became the interim home of roughly one million evacuees and refugees, including 200,000 thousand children.²¹⁷

²¹³ RGANI, 6, 6, 667, l. 51. Similar statements came from evacuees. See: Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 197.

²¹⁴ N. I. Lomakin was a representative of the Party Control Commission from summer 1941 till spring 1942. Before his appointment to Uzbekistan, he had served the party Control Committee in the Kazakh SSR, see: RGANI, 6, 6, 667, ll. 41–52; RGASPI, 17, 116, 99, l. 29. Following his tenure in the party Control Commission, Lomakin was appointed Second Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee: RGANI, 6, 6, 668, l. 15.

²¹⁵ N. T. Bezrukova et al., eds., *Usman Iusupov. Izbrannye Trudy v Trekh Tomakh (VI 1941—V 1945 Gg.)*, vol. II, III vols. (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1983). David Glantz counts 1.200.000 Uzbek soldiers serving in the Second World War, 117.900 of which perished. David M Glantz, *Colossus Reborn: the Red Army at War: 1941-1943* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2005), 604. The Uzbek SSR formed six cavalry divisions and nine regiments, brigades and battalions. *Ibid.*, 603.

²¹⁶ By 1942 another 120.000 people had arrived in Tashkent. Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 164. Paul Stronski maintains that Tashkent had 600.000 inhabitants already by 1939: Stronski, *Tashkent Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966*, 49.

²¹⁷ Paul Stronski counts one million: Stronski, *Tashkent Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966*, 145. The number of evacuated children was one, of which the Uzbek authorities were particularly proud. Nevertheless, as state facilities became packed, several thousand children were left on the streets of the cities. The political leaders began a campaign for adoption of orphans, in which First Secretary Usman Iusupov made an example by adopting a little girl from Leningrad. Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 225. At the height of their numbers, the evacuees constituted circa one sixth of the entire Uzbek population of 1940. Numbers diverge slightly between the *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopedia* and the *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo SSSR 1956*: According to the former the total population was 6.5 million; according to the latter it was 6.3 million. See: *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*,

While the Uzbek soldiers and the endless stream of train wagons filled with evacuees constituted the most immediate signs of war in Uzbekistan, they were not the only ones. Already during summer 1941, the State Defence Committee assigned the evacuation of factories and production units from the western regions to the safe Soviet interior to secure wartime production. The enormous endeavour included eighty small and large-scale factories and production units too.²¹⁸ John Barber and Mark Harrison have rightfully underlined the difficulty of the factory evacuation as many a region in the Soviet rear had little or no former industrial base, demanding not only the physical build-up of the factories, but also the creation of the entire industrial infrastructure (manpower, supply lines, specialists etc.).²¹⁹ Before the war, the Uzbek economy had been largely relying on its agrarian output. The adjustment to industrial wartime production required a complete restructuring of production output, especially since the evacuation of plants and factories went hand-in-hand with the wartime prioritisation on industry to meet the Red Army demands on military supply. Contradictory as it may appear, the war did by consequence constitute a seminal step in the industrialisation of Uzbekistan.

The Uzbek leadership, in particular, First Secretary Usman Iusupov, were quick in ascribing to the evacuated plants and people a historic, almost predestined importance by integrating them into the greater development of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic. The heavy reliance on agriculture in Uzbekistan carried little resemblance to the socialist ideal of an industrially developed society with a strong proletarian base. Moreover, in 1942 Usman Iusupov divided the stages of industrialisation in Uzbekistan into three main periods.²²⁰ The first period (1918–1927) saw the reconstruction and widening of petty manual industry that had been destroyed during the Revolution and Civil War. During the second period from 1927 till 1941, the state mainly invested in the generation of a textile industry, resulting in silk- and cotton winding factories in Tashkent and Fergana. Lastly, the third period from 1941 onwards was “characterised by the build-up of evacuated plants, creating new construction sites and new regional industries.”²²¹ Within the final developmental leap, the Uzbek leadership ascribed particular importance to the evacuees of the western regions. They brought valuable knowledge and experience, thus offering an important industrial labour base

“Uzbeckskaia Sovetskaia Sotsialisticheskaia Respublika”; Tsentral’noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie SSSR, *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR: 1956*, 18.

²¹⁸ Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1983, II:170.

²¹⁹ John Barber and Mark Harrison, *The Soviet Home Front, 1941-1945: A Social and Economic History of the USSR in World War II* (London: Longman, 1991), 127–132.

²²⁰ Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1983, II:170.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

that would provide great possibilities regarding the “training of tens of thousands of highly qualified industrial Uzbek workers.”²²²

Such positive rhetoric, emphasising the importance of the Uzbek people was in the first instance a rhetorical tool to mobilise the population. Stalin had endorsed it, by introducing similar emotional rhetoric on the all-union level, designed to mobilise the population from emotions of belonging as well as national and cultural heritage.²²³ The emotional rhetoric was translated into the cultural and national setting of the Uzbek SSR in the hope that it would spark the Uzbeks to mobilise not only for the greater purpose of Soviet survival, but for the sake of progress and development of their own nation.²²⁴

The importance of the Uzbek home front was not only reflected in the evacuation of human and industrial resources. The Moscow central government also approved major investments, aiming at widening as well as securing production. At the turn of 1943, central leadership allocated roughly 1 billion roubles for the construction of various industrial sites in Uzbekistan. This included 600 million for the creation of hydro electrical plants, another 90 million to the Begovatskii metallurgic plant, circa 60 million to the construction of the Tashkent–Stalin Coal factory and 24 million to the Aktashskii aluminium factory.²²⁵ With the billion rouble venture in Uzbekistan, the central leadership attempted to make up for the land lost in the west and to a large extent it was a successful investments. Across the board raw materials and industrial production rose at an astounding rate between 1940 and 1945: Steel production doubled; mining industry more than trebled; oil production nearly quadrupled while gas production grew to the tenfold.²²⁶ One of the most important goals and achievements, however, was the securing of electricity for the new factories and industrial production units. Here too the Uzbek leadership managed to bring about remarkable results. While Uzbekistan produced

²²² Ibid., II:287.

²²³ Stalin even explicated it to the US Ambassador to the Soviet Union, Avrel Harriman with the words: The population were fighting “for their homeland, not for us” meaning the Communist party. Quoted from: Barber and Harrison, *The Soviet Home Front, 1941-1945*, 70.

²²⁴ Loosening of the ideological constrains on the cultural sphere was not a carefully defined strategy. As a matter of fact, considerable discussion broke out over a 1943 *History of the Kazakh SSR* that was labeled anti-Russian, but the Moscow ideologues refrained from a public denunciation until after the war. Nevertheless, already through the early summer of 1944 a conference for the Soviet Union’s leading historians was announced where the question of whether or not the nation would not undermine the otherwise prevalent Marxist interpretation of history as a class struggle. Despite the obvious dangers looming behind such radical change of the official Soviet interpretative design, the authorities failed to settle the matter till after the war and the onset of the *Zhdanovshchina*. See: David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism*, Russian Research Center Studies ; 93 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 2002), 125–129. See also: Serhy Yekelchuk, *Stalin’s Empire of Memory: Russian-Ukrainian Relations in the Soviet Historical Imagination* (University of Toronto Press, 2004), 24–32.

²²⁵ Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1983, II:166.

²²⁶ Gosudarstvennyi komitet SSSR po statistike, *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo SSSR V Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voine*, 47, 54 and 56.

480 million kilowatt hours in 1940, production had almost tripled by 1944 to 1.25 billion kilowatt hours.²²⁷

Although the war became the direct cause for reinforced industrialisation of Uzbekistan, it had devastating consequences for society at large. In particular, the agricultural sector, the pre-war pride of the Uzbek economy, suffered severely from the conditions of war and the prioritization of industrial production. First of all, thousands of young men were drafted for the army, hampering efficient work in the kolkhozy. As First Secretary Usman Iusupov put it, draftees for the front were largely male farmers, often holding leading positions in the kolkhoz hierarchy.²²⁸ According to Iusupov, the loss of the most able kolkhozniki undermined the internal structures in the kolkhozy and resulted in chaotic organisation, causing a large downturn of agricultural yield.²²⁹ Secondly, the system of *trudoden* that valued work on the basis of the worked hours, the quality of the labour and the output, caused large waves of work-related migration by young men who moved to the cities due to the better pay of factory workers over farmers.²³⁰ In addition, work in the countryside was obstructed by the confiscation of machinery and productive livestock as well as the sharp food rationing that drove kolkhozniki to slaughter their animals and harbour foodstuffs or crops valuable on the black market.²³¹ The production of meat decreased from 26.673 tons in 1940 to a low of 15.348 tons in 1945.²³² Cotton production suffered even more. In 1943, Uzbekistan only produced 495.000 tons raw cotton, whereas it had reached a temporary high of 1.384.000 tons in 1940.²³³ Similar declines were reported in other areas of the agricultural sector. Due to the loss of the fertile black-earth regions in Ukraine and Russia, the Soviet leadership had ordered an expansion of cereal crops on the Soviet home front. The Uzbek leadership had, with limited success, accommodated the adjustments and succeeded in creating national sugar production and in temporarily expanding the production of cereal crops. Sugar production went from zero in 1940 to 14,877 tons in 1945, while the gross production level of cereal crops increased from 589,000 tons in 1940 to a peak of 880,000 tons in 1942, before decreas-

²²⁷ Ibid., 60.

²²⁸ RGASPI, 17, 116, 148, l. 3.

²²⁹ RGASPI, 17, 116, 148, l. 3.

²³⁰ RGASPI, 17, 116, 148, l. 2. In general on work-related migration, see: Bernd Bonwetsch, "Der »Grosse Vaterländische Krieg«: Vom Deutschen Einfall Bis Zum Sowjetischen Sieg (1941-1945)," in *Handbuch Der Geschichte Russlands. Band III : 1856-1945. Von Den Autokratischen Reformen Zum Sowjetstaat*, ed. Gottfried Schramm (A. Hiersemann, 1992), 910–1006; Hildermeier, *Geschichte Der Sowjetunion 1917-1991. Aufstieg Und Niedergang Des Ersten Sozialistischen Staates*, 654–658.

²³¹ RGASPI, 17, 116, 148, l. 5.

²³² Gosudarstvennyi komitet SSSR po statistike, *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo SSSR V Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voine*, 80.

²³³ RGASPI, 17, 116, 148, l. 2. See also: Ibid., 97.

ing to the pre-war level in 1945.²³⁴ In all other areas however, Uzbek production sunk to troublesome levels.²³⁵

The collapse of the agricultural sector had severe consequences for the food supply both in the city and in the countryside. In late January 1943, Georgy Efron, one of thousands of evacuees from the western Soviet regions residing Tashkent during the war, noted in his diary: “Hunger torments and torments me, I can think of nothing else.”²³⁶ The food shortages in the cities did not mean that no food was available. It was the state-controlled food supply in the cities that was running low, depriving it of the possibility to control the food prices. This was caused by the difficult circumstances under which state procurement had to be implemented. In fact, the cities were not lacking food, on the contrary, at the market place there was ample supply of fruits and vegetables. The problem was rather that it had become a scarce commodity of the state, so that the kolkhozniki could essentially control prices. In other words: The market had replaced the state as the primary supplier, as Rebecca Manley has correctly noted.²³⁷ The food rationing thus hit thousands of workers who suffered from malnutrition, as well as urban citizens, for whom the market prices were near to impossibly to meet with a normal pay.²³⁸ Not all kolkhozniki were lucky enough to have surplus production to sell on the city markets though. Although state procurement brigades suffered from a lack of both personnel and machinery in their efforts to access and obtain agricultural goods, their determined practice left some regions, for example the Fergana Valley, completely dependent on state supply.²³⁹ The situation developing in the Uzbek periphery belonged to the core properties of Soviet rule in Uzbekistan during World War II. Where the state was able to execute power it did so forcefully and, if needed, through increased repression. Where the state failed to execute power and secure compliance, the Uzbek population seized the moment to secure relief from the hardship of war.

²³⁴ Ibid., 96.

²³⁵ Ibid., 96–98.

²³⁶ Cited from: Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 166.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid., 164–167. See also: Report from the party Control Committee on 15.04.1945: RGASPI, 17, 122, 110, ll. 6-18.

²³⁹ V. A. Kozlov and S. V. Mironenko, eds., “*Osobaia Papka*” I. V. Stalina: *Iz Materialov Sekretariata NKVD-MVD SSSR 1944-1953. Katalog Dokumentov*, Katalogi (Moscow: Izd-vo “Blagovest,” 1994), 100.

Mobilisational Dictatorship

When a state does not possess the means to guarantee its population with a minimum of security of supply, state authority loses significance. This was a self-amplifying process in Uzbekistan during the war. The all-out mobilisation was to a large extent achieved by coercion, forcing the population to seek alternative strategies to improve their lives or simply survive. The consequence was a deepening of limited statehood that hampered fulfilment of production goals. Nevertheless, the lack of resources that resulted from war neither lowered the centre's demands nor altered the political practices used to meet its expectations. As so often before, the Stalinist system remained true to its reliance on the use of force and repression as a means to achieve its goals for mobilisation.²⁴⁰

To ensure mobilisation, Stalin and the ruling elite stripped the Soviet decision-making structures of possible obstacles and centralised power even more than during the pre-war period with the creation of the State Defence Committee on June 30 1941.²⁴¹ It was however, to a large extent an institutionalisation of the de facto existing structures following the Great Purges of the late 1930s, when decision-making became a matter of the ruling-circle of the Soviet Central Committee Politburo, ignoring the state and party organisations.

In Uzbekistan additional measures were used to secure the implementation of the wartime policies. Already, on July 31 1941, the State Defence Committee appointed Amaiak Zakharovich Kobulov as head of the Uzbek Commissariat of Internal Affairs. The brother of Bogdan Kobulov, the close ally of L. Beria and deputy of the Soviet Commissariat for Internal Affairs, known for his leading role in the political terror of the Great Purges, did not differ much from his older sibling.²⁴² Immediately following the appointment, A. Kobulov underlined his mission in the Uzbek SSR. In September 1941, he ordered the apprehension of several high-ranking members of the political and societal elite in Uzbekistan, charging them with alleged "counter-revolutionary crimes."²⁴³ Thus, the new Commissar for Internal Affairs clearly showed how the centre intended to act, were its wartime demands not accommodated. Even close affiliates of First Secretary Usman Iusupov were not safe. Amongst the arrested

²⁴⁰ Ganzenmüller, "Mobilisierungsdiktatur Im Krieg," 133–134.

²⁴¹ Sanford R. Lieberman, "The Evacuation of Industry in the Soviet Union During World War II," *Soviet Studies* 35, no. 1 (January 1983): 90–102 here 91–94.

²⁴² Amaiak Kobulov returned to the all-union Commissariat for Internal Affairs on his brother's orders in September 1945 and remained within the Internal Affairs apparatus till he was arrested alongside with his patron Lavrentiy Beria and his brother in June 1953 and both Kobulov brothers suffered the same fate as L. Beria: K. A. Zalesskii, *Imperiia Stalina: biograficheskii entsiklopedicheskii slovar'* (Moskva: Veche, 2000) Amaiak Kobulov.

²⁴³ Artizov et al., *Reabilitatsiia--kak eto bylo*, 180–181 here 180.

were Suleiman Azimov, Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee and Satty Khusainov, the deputy Chairman of the Uzbek Central Committee Propaganda Department and member of Iusupov's family circle.²⁴⁴ Furthermore, several other somewhat prominent employees of the Uzbek news sector were charged and substituted.²⁴⁵

The attack on the Uzbek elite was pre-emptive action and served a twofold goal: Firstly, Kobulov asserted himself amongst the ruling circle in the Uzbek SSR. Secondly, it demonstrated the strict centralisation of centre-periphery relations during the war, which limited the relative autonomy the Uzbek ruling circle held in peacetime. Accordingly, Kobulov returned to Moscow in September 1945 and Iusupov's childhood friend Iu. Babadzhanov was reinstated.

Throughout his time in Uzbekistan, Kobulov was in charge of all police operations ranging from house-to-house searches for illegal refugees in the cities to the closure of illegal markets.²⁴⁶ Furthermore, Kobulov was to ensure the implementation of the draconic labour laws, particularly for the industries producing military goods. In December 1941, the State Defence Committee declared all workers of the defence industry 'drafted', meaning they were tied to their work for the duration of the war. The working week comprised six-day and fifty-five hours and any unauthorised withdrawal from work could be punished with up to eight years in prison. Only half a year later, in July 1942, the law was tightened further by decreeing that workers were to be declared "deserters" for even the smallest dereliction of duty, such as a twenty-minute delay, and tried by military tribunal.²⁴⁷ By 1943, these laws had led to the conviction of ca 20,000 workers in Uzbekistan alone.²⁴⁸ Lastly, in 1941, A. Kobulov was in charge of organising the deportation of roughly 150,000 thousand Crimean Tartars and several thousand Greek special settlements in Uzbekistan. The Stalinist centre feared that both

²⁴⁴ Reskov and Sedov, *Usman Iusupov*, 55.

²⁴⁵ The other detainees counted: Tukhtasun Dzhahalov (editor at the Uzbek newspaper *Kyzl-Uzbekistan*), Iunus Latyfov (employee at *Kyzl-Uzbekistan*), Gafur Rasulev (employee at the journal *Mushtun*), Amil' Adylov (Secretary at the journal *Jash-kukh*), Abid Khashimov (Director of Education for the mid-level school). S. Khusainov and Iu. Latyfov were sentenced to death and shot, S. Azimov and T. Dzhahalov received a ten-year camp sentence, while the rest received varying prison sentences; G. Rasulev died in confinement. See: Artizov et al., *Reabilitatsiia--kak eto bylo*, 180. In 1956 all were rehabilitated.

²⁴⁶ On the police raids in cities searching for illegal refugees and evacuees: Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 150–152.

²⁴⁷ N. Vert, S. V. Mironenko, and V. P. Kozlov, eds., *Massovye Repressii v SSSR, Istoriia Stalinskogo Gulaga: Konez 1920-kh-pervaia Polovina 1950-kh Godov: Sobranie Dokumentov v Semi Tomakh* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004), 411–414; Barber and Harrison, *The Soviet Home Front, 1941-1945*, 62–63 and 163–169.

²⁴⁸ RGANI, 6, 6, 1522, ll. 15–18.

ethnic groups could potentially turn into a ‘fifth column’ and had them deported over night.²⁴⁹

A. Z. Kobulov’s presence on the Uzbek political scene often caused disagreement. The atmosphere amongst the Uzbek elite turned more and more tense, especially as production problems continued to grow. In several reports from the Party Control Commission, a comrade Kulefeev continuously informed the Moscow centre about the day-to-day political situation in Uzbekistan and it was not a particularly peaceful picture he delineated. In a closed discussion of the Uzbek Central Committee Bureau, for example, opinions between A. Z. Kobulov and First Secretary Usman Iusupov collided over the question of responsibility for the rise in ‘deserters’ in the Kashkadarya oblast’ in June 1943. Prior to the meeting, Iusupov had sharply rebuked Kobulov for having allowed a situation in which the state “did not have the mountains” under control, referring to the foothills of the Pamir located in Kashkadarya oblast’.²⁵⁰ As comrade Kulefeev reported, there was some “mutual argument and shouting” peaking in Kobulov threatening Iusupov that he “will go to Moscow and tell someone” and Iusupov snapping back “you cannot scare me with Moscow (*Vy menia Moskvu ne pugaite*).”²⁵¹ Following the heated meeting, the party Control plenipotentiary Kulefeev had a private talk with an agitated Iusupov. According to Kulefeev, Iusupov blurted out his regret at having promoted N. I. Lomakin to Second Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee because the critiques of Iusupov were “organised by Lomakin and Kobulov, who supposedly share great friendship.”²⁵²

It is not surprising that it was N. I. Lomakin and A. Z. Kobulov who Iusupov regarded as opponents. After all, these were two of the non-native members of the Uzbek Central Committee Bureau with close connections to Moscow, thus constituting the reliable unit of the all-union centre on the political scene in the Uzbek SSR. Their presence not only ensured constant surveillance of the top-level Uzbek leadership, but also formed a counterweight to Iusupov’s otherwise largely unquestioned position in Uzbekistan. With the worsening state of the Uzbek production, the deteriorating living circumstances and the loss of control over society, the work of the Uzbek elite became subject to increasing criticism, particularly from the Party Control Commission that issued several other harsh attacks on both the party elite.

²⁴⁹ See: D. A. Alimova et al., eds., *Tragediia Sredneaziatskogo Kishlaka: Kollektivizatsiia, Raskulachivanie, Ssylka, 1929-1955 Gg.: Dokumenty I Materialy*, vol. 3 (Tashkent: Shark, 2006), 374; J. Otto Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937-1949* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1999), 109–128.

²⁵⁰ RGANI, 668, 6, 6, ll. 10–15, here l. 13.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid., l. 15.

Hence, the party control inspections shed light onto the troublesome development within state and especially party work, which was described as “slandrous organisation” in the factories, and of the kolkhozy and the “lack of engagement” in the education of cadres as well as the spreading of “hostile attitudes.”²⁵³

By 1943 the Uzbek production was plummeting. The reaction of the centre was fierce. Already, in March 1943, Stalin ordered Usman Iusupov to have “fifty people shot by ‘extrajudicial means’ for the deterrence effect.”²⁵⁴ Although such measures are certain to have intimidated workers and kolkhozniki, it could neither prevent the Uzbek economy from entering into a severe economic depression, nor the Uzbek agricultural production from collapsing in 1943. Crumbling production, coupled with the quarrelling Uzbek elite, persuaded head of the Party Control Commission A. A. Andreev to summon Usman Iusupov to the Moscow Organisational Bureau to explain himself and the appalling situation in Uzbek SSR.²⁵⁵

In his account before the Orgbureau members, Iusupov underwent the classic pattern of *kritika i samokritika*, thereby relentlessly attacking both the republican and primary party organisations. Alongside state organs, they were ill-suited to control Uzbek society and curtail the emergence of “crime”, “desertion”, “corruption” and “laziness”.²⁵⁶ The Organisational Bureau released the Uzbek First Secretary to Tashkent with a strong reprimand. As the First Secretary he was essentially responsible for the failures and Iusupov will have been aware of the pressure resting on his shoulders.

The following decree of the Moscow Central Committee thus accused the Uzbek state and party elite of the insufficient implementation of central decrees and policies of mobilisation. According to the decree, the Uzbek leadership failed to execute control particularly in the countryside, where misappropriation and theft had risen at a rapid speed, the irrigation of fields did not occur in an efficient manner, and motorised vehicles were not repaired or used. The workforce in the kolkhozy was utilized inefficiently and their payment handled illegally. Lastly, the decree blamed state and party for the collapse of livestock breeding because it had carried out illegal procurement campaigns.²⁵⁷ The lack of resources or the circumstances of war were not mentioned with one single word.

²⁵³ See for example: RGANI, 6, 6, 667, ll. 5–26, 41–52 (1941–1942); RGANI, 6, 6, 668, ll. 1–15 (1942); RGANI, 6, 6, 670, ll. 2–20, 23–26 (1944); RGANI, 6, 6, 672, ll. 3–16 (1945).

²⁵⁴ Quoted in: Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*, 445.

²⁵⁵ RGANI, 670, 6, 6, 670, ll. 2–20 and ll. 23–26.

²⁵⁶ RGASPI, 17, 116, 148, ll. 1–7.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, l. 3.

When Usman Iusupov returned to Tashkent after the summoning to Moscow in March 1944, it was clear that he felt threatened by the reprimand. As a consequence, he seriously stepped up the struggle to regain control over production and society. As means to achieve his goal, Iusupov relied on an intensification of state action in forms of procurement, surveillance and repression. That was the logic extended from the centre of power.²⁵⁸ Instead of improving the working conditions of the workers within the industrial sector, the authorities now hardened their policy toward ‘deserters’ and stepped up the fight against the ‘lazy’ workers. By September 1944, Usman Iusupov informed the Federal Prosecutor of the USSR, the Uzbek authorities had convicted an additional 42.470 “deserters”.²⁵⁹

Following the rebuke in Moscow, Iusupov even began striking down on his clients in the Uzbek obkom structures throughout Uzbekistan. In Andijan, for example, the entire local party elite was laid off. According to the decree of the Uzbek Central Committee, the Andijan cell had not been capable of mobilising workers and had concealed this to Tashkent central leadership.²⁶⁰ In other regions, local party leaders were accused of having “sabotaged” work during procurement campaigns. By either not handing out pay to the kolkhozniki or by doing so incorrectly such that kolkhozniki were “not encouraged to generate higher yield”, they were accused of fostering disorganisation.²⁶¹ In the southern Surkhandarya oblast’, the situation was particularly problematic. The Uzbek Central Committee Bureau issued “hard measures” to overcome the situation and threatened to “take sinners from their position, exclude them from the party and put them to trial.”²⁶² The same fate fell upon the First Secretary of the Kashkadarya oblast’, N. Khodzhibekov, and parts of the political leadership of the Karakalpak ASSR that was accused of having too “liberal a relationship to workers” leading to lack of discipline.²⁶³ Finally, it was this spirit of reinforced action that guided the work of the party brigades that were sent into all regions of Uzbekistan in order to reinsert discipline in local party cells and kolkhozy, as well as collect the dues.²⁶⁴

The repressive practices had grave consequences for the Uzbek population. In a report from May 1945, V. Tatarintsev, plenipotentiary of the Party Control Commission, was ordered to investigate the implementation of the March 3 1944 Central Committee decree in the Uzbek

²⁵⁸ Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*, 403.

²⁵⁹ RGANI, 6, 6, 1522, ll. 15–18.

²⁶⁰ RGASPI, 17, 44, 1547, l. 191.

²⁶¹ RGASPI, 17, 45, 1877, l. 7.

²⁶² RGASPI, 17, 44, 1548, l. 59. See also: RGANI, 6, 6, 668, l. 11.

²⁶³ RGASPI, 17, 45, 1877, ll. 7–8 and l. 146.

²⁶⁴ RGASPI, 17, 122, 209, l. 225.

SSR. His report presented distressing results.²⁶⁵ In twelve all-union factories in Uzbekistan, there was “a large number of weak workers, suffering from avitaminosis, dystrophy and pellagra.”²⁶⁶ In the eight Tashkent factories that had been under inspection, two thousand workers had been diagnosed with one or more of the respected illnesses.²⁶⁷

According to V. Tatarintsev, the conditions stood in direct connection to the number of “deserters”. The twelve inspected factories comprised a total workforce of 20,000, amongst which there was an unusually high turnover due to illness and exhaustion. In the six months from October 1944 through April 1944, roughly 12,000 workers had had to be exchanged, out of which 5,365 had been marked as “deserters”. Meanwhile the factory leadership was fighting to find replacements for the workers who were prosecuted and saw a shortfall of roughly 4,000 on May 1 1945 when V. Tatarintsev penned his report.²⁶⁸

Relief to the poor food supply for urban citizens and workers was not in sight. In April 1944, the plan issued for the essential supply of potatoes and vegetables had only been fulfilled by 76 and 42 per cent respectively.²⁶⁹ As a consequence, crime, theft and black market dealing rose dramatically.²⁷⁰ Even in the distant Soviet capital, Uzbek groups of “speculators” from Tashkent popped up, carrying with them more than 4 million roubles.²⁷¹

The intensified action to secure the accommodation of the central leadership’s demands struck hard in the countryside. Where the state succeeded in penetrating the limited statehood and procure foodstuffs, farmers were starving. Early 1944, Lavrentii Beria, commissar of Internal Affairs, depicted the state of affairs in the Uzbek rural areas to Stalin. The situation was particularly troublesome in the Fergana Valley, the most fertile region of Uzbekistan, where a large part of the kolkhozy were completely dependent on relief supplies from the state, although these were merely sufficient. In the kolkhoz *Abdurakhmanov* in the Surkhandarya oblast’ twenty-five of two hundred members had already deceased by March 1944.²⁷² In the Namangan province, the situation was hardly better with livestock numbers having shrunk to merely 45 per cent of the pre-war level. In the Samarkand province, it was as low as 30 per cent.²⁷³ As a consequence, of the procurement campaigns, and the lack thereof, kol-

²⁶⁵ RGASPI, 17, 122, 110, ll. 6–18.

²⁶⁶ Ibid., I. 7.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

²⁶⁸ Ibid., I. 6.

²⁶⁹ RGASPI, 17, 45, 1875, I. 19.

²⁷⁰ Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 150–152.

²⁷¹ Kozlov and Mironenko, “*Osobaia Papka*” I. V. *Stalina: Iz Materialov Sekretariata NKVD-MVD SSSR 1944-1953. Katalog Dokumentov*, 17 and 68.

²⁷² Ibid., 252–253.

²⁷³ RGASPI, 17, 44, 1544, I. 128.

khozniki began using state property to produce for their own subsistence economy. The hardship and hunger even led some to sell human flesh in Samarkand.²⁷⁴

The dreadful living conditions made the fulfilment of the Tashkent and Moscow expectations almost impossible. Thereby, it was particularly the tasks requiring intense physical labour, such as the cleaning and reparation of the irrigation canals that supplied large parts of the Uzbek agricultural sector, with which the kolkhozniki struggled. An Uzbek Central Committee decree from February 1945 revealed just how bad the situation was. In all Uzbek oblasti the envisioned plan had been fulfilled at devastatingly low numbers, endangering sufficient water supply for the sowing period.²⁷⁵ In the worst Tashkent regions, only 15.5 per cent of the plan had been achieved, while the percentage fulfilled in Uzbekistan as a whole barely climbed above forty per cent.²⁷⁶ Accordingly, the Uzbek Central Committee ordered local party leadership to organise the mass mobilisation as a means to meet the plan. In Tashkent oblast' alone, the local party cell would find 27.000 able-bodied kolkhozniki, in Fergana the number was 22.000.²⁷⁷ When such measures did not suffice, the oblast' leadership often had to rely on help from urban citizens who were mobilised to the fields, as was the case during the 1944 harvest.²⁷⁸

The means implemented by the Uzbek leadership to achieve its goals during the war were based upon the logic of the system that Stalin had created. Usman Iusupov was loyal to the Soviet dictator and acted according to the instructions he received. This was not least due to the constant surveillance and pressure issued from the centre and personified in the Uzbek periphery by A. Z. Kobulov. During the Second World War, Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR became less ambivalent and more imperial. The Stalinist leadership in Moscow did not accept the causal relationship between the wartime lack of resources, human hardship and decreasing production. Accordingly, it was due to the summoning in March 1944 that Iusupov intensified repressions in order to fulfil the central leadership's demand. This was a symptomatic pattern for Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR during the Stalin period: The centre rebuked and the Uzbek elite reacted. There were different reasons for the development of this pattern.

²⁷⁴ Kozlov and Mironenko, "Osobaia Papka" I. V. Stalina: Iz Materialov Sekretariata NKVD-MVD SSSR 1944-1953. *Katalog Dokumentov*, 100.

²⁷⁵ RGASPI, 17, 45, 1872, ll. 246–250.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., l. 246.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., ll. 248–250.

²⁷⁸ RGASPI, 17, 45, 1542, l. 160. The mobilisation of city dwellers was not uncommon, but surely more crucial during the war. Even in today's Uzbekistan, the large-scale mobilisation also of children to the cotton harvest is not uncommon. Few organisations are engaged in fighting for the human rights of these child labourers: "Uzbek German Forum," October 22, 2012, <http://uzbekgermanforum.org/>.

First of all, it was an inherent mechanism of the central leadership to keep its Uzbek clients on its toes and ensure continued vigilance in the pursuit of economic and political goals. Secondly, the Uzbek leadership is likely to have been more reluctant than the ruling circle in Moscow concerning the implementation of repressive practices because of its continued dependency on the Uzbek population. In the worst case scenario, repressions and arrests could lead to widespread discontent with the Uzbek leadership and hamper production, thus upsetting relations with Moscow. There was, thirdly, an element of unpredictability to Stalin's rule, for too coarse measures of repression by republican leaders without Moscow's blessing for terror had been turned against the perpetrators at any time as it had in the case of Nikolai Ezhov in 1938.²⁷⁹ This element of uncertainty was a powerful lever of control over the republican elite and Stalin would use it against Iusupov in the post-war period. Lastly, Iusupov does not appear to have been cut entirely of the same cloth as Stalin and although he ruled the Uzbek SSR autocratically, he generally was less willing to engage in terroristic repressions. Iusupov's reluctance was of no avail. Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR turned into a mobilisational dictatorship during World War II. The course of action coupled with the conditions of war did, however, not ease the post-war situation for the Uzbek leadership. Instead of bridging the cleavage between state and society, the chasm between the two deepened as a cause of the extreme conditions and political practices. It was primarily the overcoming of this abyss of limited state that defined the political agenda during the post-war period.

²⁷⁹ On Ezhov's fall from grace: Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*, 356–362.

3. RECONSTRUCTION AND REPRESSION

Scholars long saw the last eight years of Stalin's life as the apogee of the totalitarian state. Stalin and the Soviet leadership, it was argued, stood atop a political hierarchy that directed society at will, while revolutionary goals and ideals were obscured by Stalinist stagnation. The post-war years "were gray, not Red", Martin Malia contended.²⁸⁰ Recent scholarship, by contrast, have convincingly questioned the regime's all-embracing powers and demonstrated the multi-faceted reality of post-war Soviet society.²⁸¹ What emerges is instead picture of a regime struggling to regain control over state, party and society following the devastation of total war.²⁸² Reconstruction was thus much more than the material rebuilding of the country and included the resurrection of state and party control.

The Central Asian heartlands had been spared the destruction of the frontlines but Soviet rule had suffered critically under the burden of the all-out mobilisation and the hardship of war. As we saw in the previous chapter, limited statehood was the result of increased state demands during the war and under the guidance of the Uzbek political leadership, the post-war period was first and foremost characterised by the search for an answer to the loss of essential control mechanisms in party and state structures.

Paradoxically, the Uzbek political elite, none more than First Secretary Usman Iusupov sought to achieve the renewed consolidation by continuing the all-out mobilisation pursued during the war. Despite the economic and social crisis the war left behind, the Uzbek SSR had been subject to a rapid industrialisation and monumental projects, the likes of the 1930s and the age of building socialism. The Uzbek leaders saw therein a leap in economic and industrial development and its chance to finally overcome Uzbekistan's social and economic "backwardness". In their reading of history, the war was spun into the tale of the revolution

²⁸⁰ Martin E. Malia, *The Soviet Tragedy: a History of Socialism in Russia, 1917-1991* (New York/Toronto: Free Press; Maxwell Macmillan Canada ; Maxwell Macmillan International, 1994), 292.

²⁸¹ Unsurpassed for the study of the post-war Soviet Union, though concentrating on the Russian regions: Zubkova, *Russia After the War*. See also the excellent edited volume from Juliane Fürst that covers different spheres of post-war Soviet society: Juliane Fürst, "Introduction. Late Stalinist Society: History, Policies and People," in *Late Stalinist Russia: Society Between Reconstruction and Reinvention*, ed. Juliane Fürst (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2006), 7. First tentative steps were made by Susan J. Linz with an edited volume, entailing an influential article from Sheila Fitzpatrick, in which she maintains that the Stalinist state never demobilised following the war suggesting that the regime faced considerable problems: Susan J. Linz, ed., *The impact of World War II on the Soviet Union* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld, 1985); Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Postwar Soviet Society: The 'Return to Normalcy', 1945-1953," in *The Impact of World War II on the Soviet Union*, ed. Susan J. Linz (Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Allanheld, 1985), 129-156.

²⁸² Zubkova, *Russia After the War*, 101-108.

and constituted a unique step that amplified the development toward communist society.²⁸³

The “Great Retreat” that Nicholas Timasheff found characteristic of the 1930s Stalinist dictatorship is ill-suited both for the pre- and post-war periods in the Uzbek SSR.²⁸⁴

Given the condition of limited statehood that surfaced in various ways in the post-war Uzbek SSR, the grand scheme of the Uzbek leadership found little echo on the lower levels of state and party, let alone amongst the population. Instead, the combination of prevalent limited statehood, the aggressive pursuit communist modernity and the different legacies of war led to a steadily increasing pressure on Uzbek leaders from the centre of power. For although the ageing dictator was retreating from everyday assignments, Stalin was continuously informed about the state of affairs in the Uzbek SSR and remained suspicious about the intentions of the Uzbek leadership. Reaching a preliminary peak in 1948, the centre-periphery relations worsened in the wake of the Leningrad and Gosplan Affairs as well as the campaign against “rootless cosmopolitans”, during which the Uzbek political and cultural elites were thoroughly purged.²⁸⁵ These were neither random purges grounding in a dictator’s rising paranoia nor were they the result of the Bolshevik purification drive. They were an answer to the situation of limited statehood in the Uzbek SSR.

In the first section of this chapter, we look at the ambitions of the Uzbek leadership to restore pre-war levels of production and the condition of limited statehood that hampered their efforts. In the second and third sections, the centre’s increasing pressure on and the responses from the Uzbek political elite stand at the heart of attention. Lastly, the attack on the cultural and political elites of the late-Stalin period serve as our subject of interest.

²⁸³ Amir Weiner discovers similar a function of the war in his study of Ukraine. In the industrially developed, yet ethnically diverse western regions of the Soviet Union however, “backwardness” was not at the attention of the authorities. Focusing on extensive purges and deportation in the post-war period, Weiner argues that the war functioned as an accelerator of the regime’s purification campaigns inherent to the Bolshevik revolution: Weiner, *Making Sense of War: the Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution*, 21. On the Bolshevik revolution as a carrier of a the ‘gardening state’ concept by Zygmunt Bauman: Peter Holquist, ““Information Is the Alpha and Omega of Our Work”: Bolshevik Surveillance in Its Pan-European Perspective.”, *The Journal of Modern History* 69, no. 3 (1997): 415–450. On the ‘gardening state’: Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), 13, 91–93.

²⁸⁴ Timasheff, *The Great Retreat: The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia*.

²⁸⁵ Stalin’s Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*, 79–97. On the Leningrad Affair: David Brandenberger, “Stalin, the Leningrad Affair, and the Limits of Postwar Russocentrism,” *Russian Review* 63, no. 2 (April 1, 2004): 241–255.

3.1. OVERCOMING WAR

When the war subsided from the Uzbek SSR it left a diverse legacy. On the one hand, the incredible industrial development became an important part of the Uzbek economy henceforth and a crucial basis for further economic growth. Light and heavy industry had been enlarged, machine production intensified and dam projects begun that should boost electric power supply substantially by their completion in the late 1940s. On the other hand, the agricultural sector had suffered tremendously. Production had plummeted, machinery seized and several hundred thousand young able-bodied men lost their lives. In 1995 *Pravda vostoka*, the former main Soviet news voice in the Uzbek SSR accounted: 1,433,230 Uzbeks equalling one-fourth of the total Uzbek population at the time and over 40 per cent of the republic's able-bodied population had participated actively in the war. While 263,005 Uzbek soldiers were killed, 132,670 went missing in action, 395,795 did not return home and 60,452 were disabled.²⁸⁶

In spite of the industrial growth, the Uzbek SSR was in the state of socio-economic crisis. As in other regions, an enormous reconstruction campaign was set in motion not only to restore, but to surpass the pre-war levels of production and output. What Juliane Fürst found in the Russian regions of the Soviet Union also applies to the Uzbek SSR: The regime attempt to restore the pre-war condition in the post-war period was obstructed by the experience of war leaving the authorities in an institutional overstretch.²⁸⁷ Moreover, the all-out mobilisation continued in the post-war period, yet the disorder the war left behind hampered the process.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ Listed in: Alimova and Golovanov, "Uzbekistan" here 232-233. These numbers are similar to current official Uzbek numbers derived from the Uzbek embassy to Russia that estimate roughly 420.000 Uzbeks lost their lives in battle, while 640.000 were injured: Posol'stvo Respubliki Uzbekistana v Rossiskoi Federatsii, "Vtoraia Mirovaia Voina i Uzbeki," accessed October 21, 2012, <http://www.uzembassy.ru/pr6.htm#>.

²⁸⁷ Juliane Fürst, "The Importance of Being Stylish: Youth, Culture and Identity in Late Stalinism," in *Late Stalinist Russia: Society Between Reconstruction and Reinvention*, ed. Juliane Fürst (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2006), 210.

²⁸⁸ Fürst, "Introduction. Late Stalinist Society: History, Policies and People," 7.

Making Plans

On July 14 1945, just before Stalin and Molotov were to discuss the future world map at the Potsdam Conference, the Moscow Central Committee and the Council of the People's Commissars issued a decree ordering the restoration of pre-war cotton production levels in Uzbekistan by 1947.²⁸⁹ The decree was not dictated by the central leadership but a result of the efforts of an industrious Uzbek First Secretary, Usman Iusupov. The arms of World War II had hardly been laid down, before the Uzbek leadership began evaluating the state of affairs in the Uzbek cotton sector. On June 26 1945 Iusupov penned a report addressed to Georgy Malenkov, Andrey Andreev and Stalin, delineating the conditions. His conclusion was clear: Uzbekistan was in dire need of all-union support in order to improve the production output.²⁹⁰ In principle, little had changed in the Uzbek countryside since Iusupov had been summoned to Moscow in March 1944: Serious shortages of equipment and supply obstructed the attempts to raise production. In particular, the number of motorised vehicles such as tractors and cars had decreased.²⁹¹ Nowhere was this more keenly felt than within the irrigation system that demanded constant care and repair. As a consequence, routine maintenance had become virtually non-existent in 1945. To rectify the situation, Iusupov proposed the establishment of a tractor factory in Samarkand with a production capacity of 5.000 tractors per year and passenger car factories in Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Fergana and Kokand with a total yearly production of 15.000 cars.²⁹²

It was particularly the agricultural production targets that worried the Uzbek First Secretary. The current production expectancy laid out in the Moscow Central Committee decree "On measures to further the progress of cotton production in Uzbekistan", he argued, could hardly be achieved without all-union support.²⁹³ The Iusupov was right. In fact, it was impossible to fulfil the growth expectations given the legacy of war. Paradoxically, the decree for the Uzbek cotton sector had been issued during peacetime in 1939, where production targets forecasted a growth in cotton production from 1.3 million tons in 1939 to almost 2 million in 1944.²⁹⁴ However, in 1945 the annual cotton output was only slowly beginning to recover

²⁸⁹ GARF, 5446, 47, 1625, ll. 225–269.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, ll. 125–108, here 109–108. Note that the page numbers of the file are in reverse order.

²⁹¹ Although the production of tractors did climb somewhat to 16.500 pieces in Uzbekistan in 1945, although the prewar level was 19.000. By contrast, the number of passenger cars had fallen from 18.500 in 1940 to just 5.700 in June 1945. GARF, 5446, 47, 1625, l. 124.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, l. 120 and l. 117.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, l. 121.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, l. 121.

from the disastrous harvest during the war. While output had hit an all-time low with 495.000 tons in 1943, it had risen to 824.000 by 1945.²⁹⁵ Even with the support that Iusupov demanded from the all-union funds, the expectations were unrealistic.

Before the centre had any chance to reply, let alone analyse the situation in Uzbekistan, Iusupov had already authored the next report. On June 27 1945, just one day after his first detailed account, the Uzbek First Secretary sent a similar report including draft decree proposals, to Stalin personally. Added to the cover letter was a note to Vyacheslav Molotov, asking him in person to “hand over the report to Stalin.”²⁹⁶ In addition, Iusupov had a longer phone conversation with Alexei Kosygin, the Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars of the RSFSR, requesting him to work on Georgy Malenkov, Deputy Chairman of the Council of People’s Commissars, in order to receive larger shipments of all-union support for the reconstruction in Uzbekistan.²⁹⁷ Amongst other things, Iusupov asked for immediate aid for the shipments of tractors, excavators and fertiliser to meet the most basic needs in the Uzbek countryside.²⁹⁸

The Uzbek leadership had good reasons for a proactive attitude toward the reconstruction. Two decisive factors caused this change of action. First of all, the leadership and particularly Usman Iusupov had come under severe pressure from Moscow when the Uzbek agricultural sector collapsed in 1943–1944. In the immediate post-war period, the Uzbek leadership was determined not to experience an equal reprimand and adopted a strategy best understood in terms of ‘attack is the best form of defence.’ Secondly, the Uzbek political elite was surely eager to receive as much help from the all-union funds as possible to overcome the post-war crisis. Aware of the state of affairs in other regions of the Soviet Union and the need to rebuild the front line regions in particular, the sooner the Uzbek leaders could issue demands, the more likely they were to receive aid from the Moscow centre. It was a balancing act, however. For while regional leaders needed to demonstrate their political activeness to Stalin, they always ran the risk of pushing it too far and falling victim to charges of excessively pursuing regional or national interests.²⁹⁹ As it turned out, Iusupov struck the balance for the moment but hardly received what he had aimed for.

²⁹⁵ Gosudarstvennyi komitet SSSR po statistike, *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo SSSR V Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voine*, 97.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, I. 221. Report to Stalin: *Ibid.*, II. 220–212.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, I. 224.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, I. 224.

²⁹⁹ George W. Breslauer, “Provincial Party Leaders’ Demand Articulation and the Nature of Center-Periphery Relations in the USSR,” *Slavic Review* 45, no. 4 (December 1, 1986): 654–655.

The July 14 1945 decree titled “On measures to recover and further develop the cotton sector in Uzbekistan” was the first outcome of the Uzbek leadership’s efforts to gain economic relief. Although the decree lowered expectations compared to the 1939 decree, it pushed the limits of the possible. The average cotton output had been 12,1 tsentner per hectare (1 tsentner equals approximately 100 kg) in 1944 and only crawled up to 13 tsentner in 1945. With the decree, the bar was seriously raised, anticipating a rise to 15,5 tsentner in 1946 and a further leap to 17,4 in 1947.³⁰⁰ In effect, this meant a total production forecast of 1.4 million tons cotton – almost double of the 1945 levels. Even during the pre-war peacetime this would have been a virtually unattainable quota. Given the conditions in the Uzbek SSR and the nature of the decree, the planned targets were utopian. Rather than accommodating Uzbek appeals for economic and material aid, the decree bore the character of a plan. Accordingly, it sketched out broad goals to fulfil the centre’s demands: The countryside needed better vehicles, local leadership should look into cotton production methods, more people should be educated to increase cotton output, work should be structured more efficiently, repair stations should step up their work, and specialists from other regions should be taken in for advice.³⁰¹ Actual support was absent.

Given the situation in post-war Uzbekistan, the decree put the Uzbek leaders under severe pressure, especially seen in the light of the war’s impact on Uzbek society on the whole, for the countryside was not the only sector in Uzbekistan that had suffered. The urban centres were also struggling to rise from the social and economic crisis that the war had left behind. Tashkent doubled in size during the war, swelling to a metropolitan size of approximately one million inhabitants.³⁰² Housing was poor and overcrowded. Any form of maintenance and all building projects had been stalled due to the all-out mobilisation and war production and the cities were surviving on their reserves.³⁰³ The rapid build-up of evacuated plants along with housing for the workers left the urban centres in appalling conditions. The workers who did not live in basements, hallways, bathrooms or along the city streets, were housed in barracks or dormitories that, according to a Tashkent Textile Kombinat Farbkom official, were “unfit for humans”.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁰ GARF, 5446, 47, 1625, ll. 230.

³⁰¹ *Ibid.*, ll. 229–230. The decree was presented at length at the twelfth plenum of the Uzbek Central Committee September 20, 1945. For details, see: N. T. Bezrukova et al., eds., *Usman Iusupov. Izbrannye Trudy v Trekh Tomakh (V 1945—1965 Gg.)*, vol. III (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1984), 11–33.

³⁰² Manley, *To the Tashkent Station*, 164; Stronski, *Tashkent Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966*, 145.

³⁰³ Stronski, *Tashkent Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966*, 145–147.

³⁰⁴ Quoted in: *Ibid.*, 177.

At a May 1946 meeting of the Tashkent Party Organisation, Usman Iusupov explained the situation in the following terms: “The housing situation has reached an extremely acute character, especially in Tashkent. The existing housing stock seriously eroded during the war and is not securing even the minimum needs.”³⁰⁵ New housing had to be built, not only to substitute the old, but also to accommodate the thousands of newcomers to the city. Furthermore, the Uzbek leadership was determined to seize the momentum and increase the industrial production that had already exploded during the war. Work still needed be done within the area of electrification, fossil fuels and chemical production.³⁰⁶ With the return of evacuated workers to their home regions, the leadership also needed a better educational structure to accommodate demand and create a basis for Uzbek specialists.³⁰⁷ In other words: The countryside was not the only sector in need of investment and without all-union support the leap out of crisis in Uzbek SSR would remain a distant hope.

The Uzbek leadership would have been aware of the problematic situation he was in and, not surprisingly, it took them only a few months to disclose their doubts to the centre. In a letter to V. Molotov from October 30 1945, Usman Iusupov unmistakably stated that the Uzbek leadership needed more equipment, especially machines from other parts of the Soviet Union if it was to succeed in fulfilling the July decree.³⁰⁸ Although the Uzbek First Secretary surely was truthful about his doubts concerning the feasibility of the July 14 decree, his appeal is unlikely to have been an innocent cry for help. At the end of 1945, the all-union government was in the midst of drafting the fourth five-year plan designed to get the country back on its feet following World War II. Making yourself heard in this gamble of wheeling and dealing was essential for the republican leaders in order to receive financial support.³⁰⁹ Well aware of the distribution process of all-union funds, Iusupov mobilised his efforts to that end.

To a large extent the Uzbek leadership achieved what it wanted. The fourth five-year plan earmarked 3.9 billion roubles to aid the Uzbek national economy over the period 1946–1950.³¹⁰ Money did not come for nothing however, and the financial investment entailed responsibility. New production goals were set within all spheres of Uzbek production and output, which were more optimistic than the July 1945 decree. Emphasis was put on cotton and the production goals from July 1945 were integrated into the new plan that now forecasted

³⁰⁵ Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1984, III:47.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, III:42.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁰⁸ GARF, 5446, 47, 1625, II. 278–279.

³⁰⁹ Breslauer, “Provincial Party Leaders’ Demand Articulation and the Nature of Center-Periphery Relations in the USSR,” 654–655.

³¹⁰ Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1984, III:50.

another production rise to 22.4 tsentner per hectare in 1950. In addition, new lands were to be put under cultivation both for cotton and food crops, so that the total acreage would jump to 3.5 million hectare, whereby the food crops acreage was to be diminished substantially.³¹¹ Within industry, chemical production was to be widened as, for example, production numbers for superphosphate and nitrogenous fertilizer, while the metallurgical and fossil fuel production were to be increased to a total doubling that of the pre-war industrial output.³¹² Simultaneously, the housing problems were to be solved and new apartment complexes built, while the overall infrastructure was made subject to improvement.³¹³ Although the financial aid was coming from all-union funds, the burden of the tasks entailed in the fourth five-year plan was enormous. The issuing of overly-optimistic plans was a way for the central government to keep the republican leadership in Uzbekistan “on its toes” and ensure its continued struggle to satisfy central leadership’s economic demands.³¹⁴

“Cotton – the essence of our work”, First Secretary Usman Iusupov stated at the Uzbek Central Committee plenum in September 1945.³¹⁵ “In nearest future”, Iusupov urged, “we have to dramatically boost the speed of cotton procurement in the raions and kolkhozy, that is the first task. Secondly, it is our task to fully consider and decisively correct the deficiencies and failures our work within the oblast’s of cotton-growing... Thirdly, we must without pause and to its full extent maximise our work on the development of cotton-growing according to the July 14 decree.”³¹⁶

Given the July 1945 plan, it was not surprising that Iusupov was reminding the Central Committee members of their task before the Uzbek SSR and the Moscow central government. Central Committee members and lower level functionaries of the Uzbek political elite had showed little enthusiasm with regard to the post-war plans that aimed to reconstruct and surpass the pre-war cotton production levels. “Bolsheviks”, Iusupov therefore urged the Uzbek Central Committee, “should not be imprisoned by abstract arguments and ‘calculations’” that forecasted the difficulty of fulfilling the July 1945 decree.³¹⁷ Instead, the Uzbek

³¹¹ Ibid., III:40–41. Today, the total acreage is 4.4 million hectare.

³¹² Ibid., III:42.

³¹³ Ibid., III:48.

³¹⁴ For a similar argument on pressures from the centre toward the periphery during the pre-war period, see: James R. Harris, “The Purging of Local Cliques in the Urals Region, 1936–7,” in *Stalinism: New Directions*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick, Re-writing Histories. (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 262–285. Harris argues that increasing plan quotas combined with low economic investment led peripheral elites to consciously deceive the centre in order to secure their functions. As a consequence, scape-goating became a prominent feature of the Great Purges as a means to save one’s own skin.

³¹⁵ Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1984, III:31.

³¹⁶ Ibid., III:12.

³¹⁷ Ibid., III:14.

First Secretary pointed to the tremendous industrial progress that had been achieved during World War II: “During the war, we built metalworking and machine industry factories. We had three factories for agricultural machinery with 4.000 workers that produced 28 million roubles [for our gross domestic product]. Now we have 18 metalworking and machine factories producing 368 million roubles and employing 30.000 workers.”³¹⁸ Iusupov thus used the war and the momentous achievements of the all-out mobilisation as a tool to convince the skeptic Central Committee. According to the First Secretary, it were only “hopeless hard-heads, who [did not] know and see the course life was taking around them.”³¹⁹ As a consequence, argued Iusupov, the Central Committee members should overcome their doubts and not draw false conclusions about the inability to “perform the enormous task” that stood ahead.³²⁰

The demands of the July 1945 decree divided the Central Committee members. They were the ones who should not only convince the lower levels of party and state of the forthcoming burden imposed on them by their government, they were also the ones to carry the blame when in case of plan failure. The Uzbek leaders therefore urged the members to “stand together as the backbone of all our organisations” and “gather all party organisations, all members and candidates around our assignments.”³²¹

Not surprisingly, it was the dependence of policy makers on the lowest that worried the Uzbek leaders. Against the background of low food provisioning, the kolkhozniki were not inclined to convert plantation and prioritise industrial over food crops. The pressure from the centre put the Uzbek leadership in a double-bind: They had little essential foodstuffs to offer the kolkhozy in return of the crops conversion, but were forced to deliver results to the centre in order to avoid reprimands that could entail severe consequences. As a result, the Uzbek First Secretary was willing to go a long way to ensure cotton production. Alongside strengthened control and empowerment of the kolkhoz revision commissions in the kolkhozy, the Uzbek leadership was considering material stimulation for the kolkhozniki that could be paid in goods rather than roubles.³²² Furthermore, the Uzbek First Secretary suggested that the kolkhozniki be reminded that the fight for a high cotton harvest would improve the over-all wealth of society and living conditions, i.e. in a long-term perspective the kolkhozniki would

³¹⁸ Ibid., III:19.

³¹⁹ Ibid., III:14.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid., III:15.

³²² Ibid., III:26.

themselves benefit from the crop conversion despite the short-term hardship of (even) lower food provisioning.³²³

If the July 1945 decree worried the Central Committee members and the lower level political elite, the situation was to turn even more dire following the ratification of the fourth five-year plan. For at the 14th plenum of Uzbek Central Committee in March 1947, the Iusupov administration made the nonsensical decision to fulfil the plan targets in just four years.³²⁴ This was a daunting move. Instead of providing relief to the over-ambitious plan targets, the leadership applied increased pressure in the hope to ensure proper implementation. With good reason then, the plan and decree were received by the lower level party and state officials with strong reservations.

Moreover, when Iusupov attended an inter-oblast' conference in April 1947, cautious demur occurred expressing doubt about the feasibility of the plan given the loss of man-power and material equipment during the war.³²⁵ Raikom members at the gathering argued that the Uzbek agricultural sector did not provide sufficient resources to fulfil the goals, although they in principle supported the reconstruction of the cotton sector. Iusupov remained persistent and dismissed any doubts. According to the First Secretary, the Uzbek functionaries should "speak less about the questions and answer them instead."³²⁶

Iusupov argued with a reverse logic and he did not accept doubt from the lower ranks. Hence, Iusupov was more frank when he was met with similar scepticism during his promotional tour of the railway line connecting Tashkent with Khiva where constructions were to begin in autumn 1947. At a party gathering in Khiva, the plans were criticised as a "hazardous" (*aventiura*) project.³²⁷ To such appraisal Iusupov conceitedly countered: "When we began construction of the [Great Fergana Kanal] there were also individuals who characterised it as hazardous. Nevertheless...we did not only "crack" those nuts, we crushed them."³²⁸

In Iusupov's words resounded the triumphalist phrases from the 1930s construction of socialism. In an odd mix of all-out mobilisation and self-assurance, Iusupov swept from the table any cautious critique or insecurity from the ranks below. Thereby, it was hardly surprising that the lower levels gave the Uzbek leadership's proposals a lukewarm welcome. The new target quotas and grand-scale projects put the entire production chain under enormous

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Ibid., III:90.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid.

³²⁷ Ibid., III:109.

³²⁸ Ibid.

pressure. In likely case of disappointments of planned goals, it was, first and foremost, the weakest links of the chain that were jeopardised and not the Uzbek leadership. As a consequence, Iusupov's post-war euphoria was met with far less excitement at the party gatherings around the Uzbek SSR.

Control and Party

A view toward the lower levels of the institutional hierarchy and prevalence of limited statehood explains the reservations, with which the production plans were received. The deepening problem of limited statehood during the war came to the fore in different ways in different state and societal areas during the post-war period. As already noted, the party grew by stunning numbers. During the war an estimated 53.000 new members had been admitted to the party ranks.³²⁹ Overall, this was a positive development for the regime, but it had significant consequences for constitution of the party organisations as well as the work of the obkomy and raikomy in the Uzbek SSR. Preoccupied with satisfying central government demands during the war, the Uzbek state and party apparatus had been forced to cut back on supervision and investigations normally conducted in peacetime. Instead of properly analysing and improving conditions in remote primary party cells, kolkhozy and suppliers, the state had to retreat to a position of mere acquisition, thus down-prioritising the actual functioning of institutions. Furthermore, the war provided personnel problems, since agitators and inspectors were either drafted to the front or needed elsewhere.

A Party Control Commission report from June 2 1945 displayed the problems in all clarity. Based on the example of kolkhozy in the southern regions of Uzbekistan close to the Afghan border, investigations revealed a worrying situation. In the kolkhozy there were hardly any newspapers and if they were delivered, they were not read. Agitators were not conducting work and the kolkhoz chairmen were not presenting reports or decrees, when official documents did, in fact, make their way to the remote areas.³³⁰ Some kolkhozy had even been cut off completely from state and party control. In the kolkhoz *Ianga-Turmish* just eighteen kilometres from the Afghan border, none “of the local party organisation had visited the kolkhoz for the past five months.”³³¹ Conditions in the kolkhoz *Toga-Khodjaev* were similar. Here, there were only eight newspapers for the one hundred thirty four kolkhozniki. “The

³²⁹ Bezrukova, *Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Turkestana i Uzbekistana v Tsifrakh, 1918-1967 Gg.*, 141–146.

³³⁰ RGANI, 6, 6, 672, ll. 178–191, here l. 179.

³³¹ *Ibid.*, l. 180.

cinema [had] not shown movies for two years and there [was] no radio. Since October 1944 there [had] been no lectures about the war and the international situation”³³², the report continued. Accordingly, the kolkhozniki were ill educated about the actual events and when asked who the allies of the Soviet Union were in World War II, many answered America and Japan.³³³

The report from the Party Control Commission revealed the problems that the Uzbek government faced in the post-war period. The lack of fundamental resources such as transportation, personnel and communication equipment left the remote rural regions of the Uzbek SSR completely out of reach for the state. Procurement was difficult to conduct without vehicles and with the kolkhozniki left on their own the Soviet authorities were not able to command their claim for power. Without the authorities on their doorstep, there was not even a power against which the kolkhozniki could resist and as the investigation showed they merely continued their every-day life without having to deal with state demands. Only when the war was over, were state and party authorities in a position where they could begin penetrating the most remote areas and reasserting control.³³⁴

The Party Control Commission report touched upon a second problem regarding limited statehood after the war: The party. The many thousand of male draftees to the Red Army during the war had, to a large extent, been holding key positions in the mid- and lower-level party structure. Their deployment to the front created a lack of ideologically minded and experienced party representatives throughout Uzbekistan.³³⁵ The influx thus had grave consequences for the work in different party structures. The general problem was well formulated at the Eleventh Congress of the Uzbek Communist Youth League in 1947. The large influx of cadres into the komsomol had resulted in a drop in the general level of party schooling among its members. As a consequence, several participants complained about the deficiencies of the Uzbek “youth’s ideological education and the organisational work in the komsomol.”³³⁶ The lack of proper supervision of member admittance, had allowed uneducated “backward” youngsters to enter the organisation, who did and could not perform the tasks and requirements demanded of a young komsomolets. Instead, many individuals who ac-

³³² Ibid.

³³³ Ibid., I. 179.

³³⁴ On July 9 1945, Uzbek Central Committee issued a decree, ordering the local party leaders to intensify party work in the remote kolkhozy: RGANI, 6, 6, 672, ll. 194–195.

³³⁵ See: Alimova and Golovanov, “Uzbekistan,” 232–233. On the Soviet Union in general: Zubkova, *Russia After the War*, 79.

³³⁶ Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1984, III:52.

quired membership during and immediately after the war were “performing religious ritual with mullahs”, whilst their wives were “wearing a paranja.”³³⁷

Furthermore, several members, amongst them the Uzbek Minister of Enlightenment A. Muratkhodzhaev, complained about the rising level of illiteracy in komsomol ranks. Apart from having little to no schooling in Soviet ideology, these members, it was argued, “quickly gave in to the influence of the old ideology and harmful habits.”³³⁸ As a consequence of the member influx during the war, the komsomol was threatened from within by a creeping traditionalisation and keynote speaker, Usman Iusupov, strongly encouraged the Uzbek komsomoltsy to “return to the fight against the terrible legacy of the past in order to put an end to the shame.”³³⁹

The influx of new members provided similar problems in the obkomy, raikomy and primary level organisations throughout the Uzbek SSR. On several occasions, Party Control Commission officials in Uzbekistan complained about the state of affairs in party ranks. While education and selection of party functionaries had been one of the main reasons for the Uzbek leadership’s summoning to Moscow March 1944, the education remained a problem henceforth. In January 1945, Party Control inspector V. Tatarintsev once again lamented the poor constitution of the party after an inspection of the party organisation’s work in the Bukhara, Samarkand and Kashkadarya obkomy and fifteen other raikomy.³⁴⁰ Tatarintsev found “major drawbacks” in the work of the party apparatus, the main reason lying in the frequent turnover of party functionaries resulting in inexperienced workers entered the ranks “who did not know procedures or the needed exactingness (*trebovatel’nost’*).”³⁴¹

The high turnover in all three obkomy led to slow implementation of decrees and more generally “in poor work with the apparatus and unsatisfactory leadership.”³⁴² The instructor of the Department of Organisation and Instruction of a Bukhara raikom, a comrade Linatov, who began work in the raikom in 1942, even explained that throughout his time in office “the apparatus had not met one single time. No one asks you for accounts of the implementation

³³⁷ Ibid.

³³⁸ Ibid., III:55.

³³⁹ Ibid. Similar complaints about the Uzbek komsomol was raised in *Pravda* in July 1945, where the komsomol and Uzbek political elite were criticised for insufficient work and education: “O nekotorykh nedostatkakh v rabote komsomola Uzbekistana”, *Pravda*, 09.07.1945, 3.

³⁴⁰ RGANI, 6, 6, 672, ll. 20–38. The report also reached the G. M. Malenkov in the Central Committee: RGASPI, 17, 122, 95, ll. 37–57. In addition to the reports on Uzbekistan, G. M. Malenkov received similarly critical reports from all Central Asian republics: RGASPI, 17, 122, 95, ll. 2–6 (Kirgizstan); ll. 57–62 (Azerbaijan); ll. 63–98 (Kazakhstan); ll. 111–120 (Turkmenistan).

³⁴¹ RGANI, 6, 6, 672, l. 23.

³⁴² Ibid., l. 28.

or gives orders. You only know one thing, which is that you have to consolidate work of the kolkhozy and that you carry the responsibility for your work.”³⁴³

Party work however, was of course only a problem where party organisations actually existed. On the primary organisations level, the institutional weakness of the party remained extraordinary high in the post-war period. In 1947, only 55,4 per cent of the kolkhozy (2223 of 3739 kolkhozy) were organised as primary party organisations, leaving a staggering 45 per cent to themselves without any institutional mode of organisation.³⁴⁴ The party thus had no means to influence and control work, institutional consolidation or ‘correct’ socialist functioning of the kolkhozy.

The massive influx of new members into the party structure in the Uzbek SSR during and immediately after the war had a similar effect on the efficacy of the party’s work. As such the wartime member influx resembled in its consequences the initial result of the Soviet nationality policy and indigenisation of cadres. The ruralisation of the party was to some extent repeated.³⁴⁵ This compromised the ideological commitment of party functionaries and created limited statehood within the party structure. And although Kathleen Carlisle has argued that Moscow “ignored corruption, nepotism and clans as long as they did not interfere with the fulfilment of economic goals”, insinuating that if anyone would fight nepotism and fraud it would be Moscow, the post-war period reveals quite a different picture.³⁴⁶ In September 1945, Usman Iusupov admitted to the Uzbek Central Committee that the leadership had “underestimated the importance of agricultural training of cadres, especially in the time of war.”³⁴⁷ “We can no longer tolerate a situation”, the First Secretary continued, “where a sizable number of the kolkhoz leadership remains illiterate, ill-versed in accounting issues and reporting and planning of kolkhoz production.”³⁴⁸ The Uzbek leadership was thus continuously engaged in cleansing the party and state bodies of unruly cadres. In Kokand the Uzbek leaders found that the obkom did not show the slightest interest in the work of the komsomol, thus hindering the proper education of the young cadres and effectively obstructing the goal to reinvigorate the party.³⁴⁹ Similar reports reached the centre from the Karakalpak party cell,

³⁴³ Ibid., I. 29.

³⁴⁴ RGASPI, 17, 122, 141, II. 80–81.

³⁴⁵ Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 103.

³⁴⁶ Carlisle, “Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan,” 276.

³⁴⁷ Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1984, III:29.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., III:30.

³⁴⁹ RGASPI, 17, 45, 1884, I. 81.

where the Party Control Commission blamed the local party elite for insufficient control and deficient work.³⁵⁰

It was not only reluctant party work that led to dismissals on the local levels of the party structures. There is, in fact, ample evidence of the Uzbek leadership actively fighting nepotism. In the Tashkent raikom, the First Secretary D. Akramov had misappropriated funds and “used his official position, ignoring the difficult wartime conditions and built himself a house in Tashkent.”³⁵¹ Thereby, he had not only used state funds but also materials earmarked for kolkhozy development as well as kolkhoz manpower. Furthermore, he did not “react as party leadership” when his brother, Kh. Akramov, Chairman of the kolkhoz *Brlik*, was caught constructing a “big house” in Tashkent during the war.³⁵² Lastly, the Chairman of the Tashkent raikom executive committee, A. Akhmedov, was also found guilty of using official funds for his own enrichment.³⁵³ The Akramov siblings were both laid off, while Akhmedov was allowed to keep his position following a strong reprimand.³⁵⁴

After the war had come to an end, the Uzbek leadership remained vigilant with regard to discipline within even the higher echelons of the political elite. The ruralisation of the party was however, most acutely evident on the lower levels of the party hierarchy and the cleansing process was even more rigorous. It is difficult to decipher an over-all pattern of party exclusions amongst the rank-and-file members, but several factors played a role. First, crime, corruption and misappropriation figured high on the list. Secondly, there was a tendency to deprive members of their party status due to their purported “backwardness”. Lastly, membership was denied from people who did not uphold party vigilance and diligence in their work, particularly regarding the education of younger generations and new members.³⁵⁵

Although statistics are deceptive, there is a suggestive change regarding the constitution of the party during the late-Stalin period. Relying on the principle to overcome “backwardness”, the rank-and-file purges combined with the post-war regulation of the membership resulted in an over-all heightening of the educational level of party members. Had 27 per cent of the party members had no primary schooling in 1946, the number dropped to 15 per cent in 1953 with a simultaneous rise of primary and secondary schooled members.³⁵⁶ There was, in other

³⁵⁰ RGASPI, 17, 45, 1888, ll. 3–14. Report from December 1945.

³⁵¹ RGASPI, 17, 45, 1884, l. 92.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., l. 93.

³⁵⁵ RGANI, 6, 6, 672, ll. 20–38.

³⁵⁶ N. T Bezrukova, ed., *Kommunisticheskaia Partija Uzbekistana v Tsifrakh: (sbornik Statist. Materialov 1924-1977 Gg.)* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1979), 132 and 178.

words, a clear devotion to rid the party of the “backward” cadres of the party and substitute them with better educated individuals. Contrary to findings from the war-torn western regions then, it was “backwardness” and undisciplined behaviour rather than (suspicious) wartime conduct in occupied territories that became the defining principles for exclusions.³⁵⁷ The Uzbek party leadership issued a decree on February 13 1945 that identified the problem in a nutshell: The decree was to be presented in all bureaus of all obkomy, each of which, in turn, were to formulate better control mechanisms.³⁵⁸ In order to ensure that the decree was discussed locally, members of the Bureau of the Uzbek Central Committee were dispatched to the obkomy to supervise discussion and make certain that proper, functioning control mechanisms were defined and implemented.³⁵⁹

Although numbers are incomplete, party membership statistics are revealing with regard to the extent of the rank-and-file purges of the party during the immediate post-war years. Of the roughly 53.000 new members, this number had been diminished by roughly 4.000 in 1947, while the number lay at just 47.619 when Stalin died in 1953.³⁶⁰ Indeed, the process of party purges increased with the rising tensions in the Soviet Union in the late 1940s, but the early cleansing of party ranks, clearly demonstrates the problems that the Uzbek leadership experienced with the lower ranks as well as its unaltered devotion to the ideals of the party member as a revolutionary vanguard.

The reports from the Party Control Commission clarifies how institutional limited statehood had grown during the war when the Uzbek leadership held little resources to continuously conduct inspections of the party officials on the lower levels. This allowed the extended elite in the Uzbek SSR to abuse their positions and the resources attached to them, revealing that in particular lower level incumbents but also raikom secretaries did not correspond to the ideals of a communist member. The overcoming of limited statehood within the party and the cleansing of the rank-and-file members was sparked by the combination of the influx of new party members and the consequential ruralisation of the party as well as the abuse of posi-

³⁵⁷ Weiner, *Making Sense of War : the Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution*, 82–126.

³⁵⁸ RGANI, 6, 6, 672, l. 40.

³⁵⁹ Ibid. The very same measures were taken in the Karakalpak ASSR: RGASPI, 17, 45, 1888, l. 14. The ill-education of cadres did turn out to be a lasting problem on the all-union level and to overcome the situation, the all-union Central Committee issued a decree early 1946, ordering the creation of more party schools both for new courses and retraining of new and old cadres. In autumn 1946 alone, 13.000 cadres were to start their (re-)training. See: P. N. Fedoseev and K. U. Chernenko, eds., *Kommunisticheskaia Partia Sovetskogo Soiuza v Rezoliutsiakh i Resheniakh S"ezdov, Konferentsii i Plenumov TSK. Tom Shestoi, 1941-1954*, vol. 8 (Moscow: Izd-vo polit. lit-ry, 1972), 162–172, here 168.

³⁶⁰ Bezrukova, *Kommunisticheskaia Partija Uzbekistana v Tsifrakh: (sbornik Statist. Materialov 1924-1977 Gg.)*, 141 and 177.

tions. These were very real problems for the functioning of the Soviet system in the Uzbek SSR and the purging process is thus merely superficially explained by a purification drive detected in other regions.³⁶¹

Limited Statehood and Crime

While limited statehood existed on the lower levels of the party structures of the Uzbek SSR, it surfaced within society at large too. Here it took form of exploitation of kolkhoz land, double-accounting or theft. Following Usman Iusupov's rebuke from Moscow central leadership in March 1944, the Uzbek First Secretary had called for increased state action against theft and misuse of agricultural lands. At the 10th plenum of the Uzbek Central Committee in April 1944, the Uzbek First Secretary demanded that the party officials strike down on the development that hindered the Uzbek leadership the fulfilment of central demands.³⁶² Intensified state action increased hardship however, and the development continued into the post-war period.³⁶³

According to Party Control Commission inspection in late 1945, conducted in the far north-western Karakalpak ASSR, 10.213 hectares had been cultivated with lucerne, whilst it was in fact just 8.743 hectares.³⁶⁴ The situation was worst in the Kipchakskii raion of the Karakalpak ASSR where it was even reported that there were 1670 hectare, while the real number was in fact only 455 hec. In the Fergana region, the authorities made the same discoveries.³⁶⁵ In the Andijan oblast', it was the reclaiming of kolkhoz soil that kept the party cell busy. As a result, First Secretary of the Fergana obkom, A. Mavlianov, could report to the Central Committee in Moscow that a total of 7,000 hectare illegally used kolkhoz soil was returned to the Andijan kolkhozy in 1946.³⁶⁶ In several successive oblast' and republican Central Committee plena such "deficiency" was discovered and discussed. However, low agricultural output, the poor living standards and supply conditions, as well as the difficulty in reaching and imple-

³⁶¹ Weiner, *Making Sense of War : the Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution*, 82–126.

³⁶² RGASPI, 17, 44, 1541, ll. 260–261. The report from the party Control Commission Representative in Uzbekistan, comrade Kulefeev, from February 1944, in which he orders the Public Attorney to engage in better investigation of corruption and theft: RGASPI, 17, 44, 1542, ll. 47.

³⁶³ This was not an Uzbek problem alone. Pravda asserted that some 5.6 million hectare had been misappropriated during the war. See: Hough and Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union Is Governed*, 181.

³⁶⁴ RGASPI, 17, 45, 1888, l. 4.

³⁶⁵ RGASPI, 17, 45, 1874, ll. 44–46.

³⁶⁶ From the Uzbek Central Committee plena from February 1947: RGASPI, 17, 122, 209, ll. 227–228.

menting government decrees in the post-war period, made it a lasting problem for the authorities.³⁶⁷

The Party Control Commission had little understand for such causalities. In a report from January 3 1947, a comrade Glukhov described the conditions in the Fergana Valley.³⁶⁸ Glukhov accused the entire chain of command officially responsible for the kolkhoz sector – the audit commissions in the kolkhozy, the raion organs concerned with agriculture as well as the raion party committee – of “GOVERNING badly”³⁶⁹ and ordered them to hold the culprits accountable for their actions.³⁷⁰ The critique and pressure from the Moscow administrative bodies prompted the Uzbek leadership to issue a follow-up decree as soon as the end of January 1947 in the hope of correcting the situation. The Uzbek Ministry of State Control and the Ministry of Farming was ordered to intensify the search for the violators, while the Judiciary and the Ministry of Justice were asked to find ways to speed up the process of investigation and the legal practice.³⁷¹

With time the misappropriation of kolkhoz land decreased in the Uzbek SSR, but it is unlikely that the intensified state action caused it. Rather the reasons are to be found in the satisfaction of basic foodstuff needs that was reached in the late 1940s. It is important however, to emphasise the origins of this sort of limited statehood. While the exploitation of kolkhoz property for personal needs was a way to for the Uzbek population to ease hardship and “get by”, limited statehood also surfaced as theft and double-accounting.³⁷²

Although theft and fraud was more common in the countryside, it was not limited to these areas. Throughout the first half of 1947 the Uzbek authorities kept uncovering cases revealing comparable problems in the urban areas. Investigations of the Khiva Procurement Trust showed similar results as both Tashkent and Bukhara inspections, where debts were not being paid due to fraud and corruption. In Bukhara, even the inspector of the State Control Commission had been found guilty of receiving a bribe of 21 tons of cotton for concealing the actual numbers of the Bukhara Procurement Trust, showing a deficit of 504 tons.³⁷³

³⁶⁷ Ibid., II. 224–234.

³⁶⁸ RGASPI, 17, 122, 223, II. 12–26.

³⁶⁹ Ibid., I. 20. Capital letters in original.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., I. 21.

³⁷¹ Ibid., II. 23–24.

³⁷² RGASPI, 17, 122, 223, I. 22–25.

³⁷³ On Khiva: GARF, 8300, 29, 142, II. 19–26, 34–37. On Tashkent and Bukhara: GARF, 8300, 29, 143, II. 65–68 and I. 85.

It is difficult to gain an exact overview of the amount of theft, double-accounting and black-marketeering during and following the war.³⁷⁴ It is clear, however, that it was nothing unusual in the post-war condition. In successive campaigns the all-union government struck down on bribery and theft of state property throughout the Soviet Union. With a decree from September 1946 “On measures to liquidate violations of agricultural and kolkhoz rules”, central leadership attempted to curb the ubiquitous web of theft, misappropriation of funds and corruption.³⁷⁵ On June 4 1947, the central government attacked theft of state and public property with a degree that issued severe punishments of violations, which were now to be sentenced with ten to twenty-five years by repeated violation.³⁷⁶

Despite draconic legislation that resulted in the arrests of hundred of thousands of arrests throughout the Soviet Union, misappropriation and fraud remained a problem in the Uzbek SSR.³⁷⁷ According to State Control Commission reports of late 1948 and early 1949 several textile factories in Uzbekistan remained haunted by theft and corruption. Director Damin-Zubov of Cotton Factory no. 1 in Andijan, for example, explained the mysterious disappearance of cotton in his factory as a consequence of poor education, a false relationship to Soviet laws and a mentality saying: “You do not touch me and I will not touch you.”³⁷⁸ Similar complaints were voiced by Director Z. V. Kvasnevskii of the Andijan Cotton Trust, who argued that “swindlers have penetrated our system. We cannot always expose their swindling.”³⁷⁹ The authorities were, however, determined to try and when swindling was discovered, as in the case of the unlucky comrade I. Bajnasarov who was found guilty of having

³⁷⁴ The Soviet Politburo met several times throughout 1945–1947 to discuss the conditions of fraud and theft in Uzbekistan: Kozlov and Mironenko, “*Osobaia Papka*” *I. V. Stalina: Iz Materialov Sekretariata NKVD-MVD SSSR 1944-1953. Katalog Dokumentov*, 144, 224, 233 and 247. On the all-union condition, but focusing on the Slavic regions: Jean Lévesque, “‘Into the Grey Zone’: Sham Peasants and the Limits of the Kolkhoz Order in the Post-war Russian Village, 1945-1953,” in *Late Stalinist Russia: Society Between Reconstruction and Reinvention*, ed. Juliane Fürst (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2006), 103–120; Jean Lévesque, *Exile and Discipline: The June 1948 Campaign Against Collective Farm Shirkers* (Pittsburgh: Center for Russian and East European Studies, 2006).

³⁷⁵ RGASPI, 17, 122, 223, ll. 22–25. See also: James Heinzen, “A ‘Campaign Spasm’: Graft and the Limits of the ‘Campaign’ Against Bribery After the Great Patriotic War,” in *Late Stalinist Russia: Society Between Reconstruction and Reinvention*, ed. Juliane Fürst (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2006), 123–141. James Heinzen has suggested that especially the all-union measures targeting bribery were of little effect in the Soviet republics. According to him, it was in Ukraine and the Russian regions that the prosecutors worked most vigilantly while other regions lacked behind: *Ibid.*, 141, footnote 52.

³⁷⁶ See: Peter H. Solomon, *Soviet Criminal Justice Under Stalin*, 1. publ, Cambridge Russian, Soviet and post-Soviet Studies ; 100 (Cambridge [o.a.]: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 410–426.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 410–412; Heinzen, “A ‘Campaign Spasm’: Graft and the Limits of the ‘Campaign’ Against Bribery After the Great Patriotic War,” 137.

³⁷⁸ GARF, 8300, 29, 140, ll. 24–27, here l. 26.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, ll. 30–31.

manipulated kolkhoz production, the regime hit hard and sentenced him to 10 years of prison.³⁸⁰

It was not only within state structures and kolkhozy that misappropriation, theft and fraud surfaced. Indeed, similar problems were recorded in the party. The situation was particularly dire amongst the political leadership in Fergana city, as the Uzbek Central Committee Bureau noted at a meeting in late summer 1945.³⁸¹ In the Fergana oblast' the state prosecutor was dismissed and excluded from the party because he did not bring to justice workers who were involved in fraud.³⁸² Similar reports reached the centre from the Karakalpak party cell, where V. Tatarintsev blamed the local party elite for having allowed "fraud and squandering" in the kolkhozy due to insufficient control and deficient work.³⁸³

This sort of limited statehood was often a consequence of the configuration of the political and production systems. Double-accounting in particular, was a means to officially meet the demands of the authorities that were based on unrealistic target goals and quotas. In the absence of a rational-legal functioning bureaucracy that secured the positions of incumbents, they were dependent on patronage and measured against the fulfilment of quotas. As shown however, the Soviet authorities had little understanding of such hardship and defined it in legal terms as crime.

The Uzbek agricultural production only reached pre-war levels at the turn to the 1950s and the low supply had grave influence on the food supply in the cities.³⁸⁴ In particular amongst those veterans who had returned from war and for whom the state had yet to provide jobs and housing. Uzbek veterans deployed in World War II were eastward-bound, arriving in Uzbekistan from 1945 onward in massive numbers. Of the 1.4 million Uzbek soldiers who had served in the war, circa 400,000 were injured.³⁸⁵ Returning to the cities, the authorities directed them into different Uzbek oblasti where they were to return to peacetime life. What counted for Russian returnees, also counted for the Uzbek veterans: The return to normal life was tiresome and difficult.³⁸⁶ Many found themselves without housing, food or jobs. The state frequently found Uzbek veterans to be guilty of "hooliganism", "drunkenness", "rape",

³⁸⁰ GARF, 8300, 29, 141, l. 22.

³⁸¹ RGASPI, 17, 45, 1884, l. 80.

³⁸² Ibid., ll. 77–78.

³⁸³ RGASPI, 17, 45, 1888, ll. 3–14. Report from December 1945.

³⁸⁴ The Uzbek cotton production, for example, reached the 1941 level in 1949. See: Statisticheskoe Upravlenie Uzbekskoi SSR, *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo Uzbekskoi SSR. Statisticheskie Sbornik*, 46. The low food supply was intensified by a meagre all-union harvest in 1946 which resulted in a famine in many areas of the Soviet Union: Zubkova, *Russia After the War*, 40–50.

³⁸⁵ Alimova and Golovanov, "Uzbekistan," 232.

³⁸⁶ Zubkova, *Russia After the War*, 9–57.

“robberies” and “fighting over food”, as the Ministry of Internal Affairs reported to Stalin on October 3, 1945.³⁸⁷

The low supply of food and resources also nourished limited statehood with regard to the state’s ability to control the planned market and supplies. Accordingly, the Uzbek Central Committee Bureau kept uncovering “illegal markets” as reports from Fergana, Samarkand, Bukhara and Tashkent show. The lack of procurement of supply from subsidiary farming (*podsobnoe khoziaistvo*) of the kolkhozniki led to a situation where they were selling their goods throughout the cities at non-authorised markets to “speculative prices” that were “completely unacceptable”.³⁸⁸

The state had little means to intervene with the price development at the illegal markets and although it fought to close them down, they would often reappear elsewhere.³⁸⁹ The efforts to combat the free market price development could have dire consequences though, if the kolkhozniki joined forces and fought policy making together. The party leadership in Kokand in the Fergana province learned this in summer 1945.

On July 28 1945 the First Secretary of the Fergana region, comrade Turdyev, summoned the Kokand gorkom Secretary, comrade Mukhsinov, and the director of the kolkhoz markets in Kokand, comrade Akhunbabaev, to his office due to the sky-rocketing food prices.³⁹⁰ First, he ordered Secretary Mukhsinov to ensure a price-drop on fruit and vegetables of five and three roubles respectively.³⁹¹ Turning to comrade Akhunbabaev, who organised supervision of the markets, he remarked that if “he did not lower the prices on vegetables and fruits by July 29 1945” – the next day that is – Akhunbabaev “would be held responsible on the order of Turdyev and be busted (*posazhen*).”³⁹²

Comrade Akhunbabaev did as he was told, but as Foucault once said exercise of power causes counter-power.³⁹³ When the kolkhozniki learned about the forced price reduction, they used their limited power at hand and simply went to the outskirts of the city to sell their

³⁸⁷ Kozlov and Mironenko, “*Osobaia Papka*” I. V. *Stalina: Iz Materialov Sekretariata NKVD-MVD SSSR 1944-1953. Katalog Dokumentov*, 144. Such problems had already started during the war. In December 1944 alone, 62,032 disabled veterans returned to Uzbekistan, of which 10,575 were still without a job in February 1945: RGASPI, 17, 122, 100, l. 157. See also the Central Committee Bureau protocols from April 1944, in which the similar problems are discussed, particularly the lack of housing and work for the veterans: RGASPI, 17, 44, 1543, l. 21.

³⁸⁸ RGASPI, 17, 45, 1874, l. 44 and l. 47.

³⁸⁹ RGASPI, 17, 122, 110, l. 53.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, ll. 52–56, here l. 52.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*

³⁹² *Ibid.*

³⁹³ Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume I: An Introduction*, vol. Vintage Books Edition, 1990 (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 95.

goods.³⁹⁴ As a result, foodstuffs virtually vanished from the city: “If there had been sold 18,000 kg of vegetables, fruits and watermelons at the markets July 27 and 28, only 4,830 kg were sold on July 30 and 31”, the report on the incident noted.³⁹⁵

The authorities found themselves in a deadlock: the cities would literally run out of food if the kolkhozniki did not sell their goods. V. Tatarintsev from the Party Control Commission saw no other option than to reverse comrade Turdyev’s decision and report the incident to Usman Iusupov, whom he urged to deal with the matter. The First Secretary extended a severe reproach to the comrades Turdyev and Mukhsinov, (both remained in office) and vegetables and fruits returned to the Kokand markets.³⁹⁶ Although a rare incident, the case of the Kokand demonstrates how kolkhozniki could not only oppose local policy-making but even gain the support of the Uzbek central leaders.

Limited statehood acquired different forms during the post-war period in the Uzbek SSR that were related to the condition of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR coupled with the legacy of war. The drafting of nearly 40 per cent of the able-bodied population had resulted in a renewed ruralisation of the party structure, which hampered implementation. As consequence, the post-war party purge of the rank-and-file members was directed not only against party members engaged in fraud and misappropriation, but also against the purported “backwardness” that the Uzbek political leadership found characterising many a party member. The Uzbek political agenda hence remained true to the objectives of the revolution and the party’s decisive role as the revolutionary vanguard.

Limited statehood was however, not merely a feature of the party structure. The hardship of war caused by extreme government demands made disobedience of state decrees increasingly attractive. Indeed, crime of this sort – petty or grand – permeated state and party structures as well as the society at large. While kolkhozniki used state property for subsidiary farming, party and state functionaries as well as city dwellers committed theft and fraud, which caved out the nature of Soviet institutions as executive organs of Soviet rule.

When the central leadership put the Uzbek authorities under increased pressure to achieve reconstruction, the Uzbek leadership raised the stakes and extended the pressure downward by decreeing the fulfilment of the fourth five-year plan in just four years. The entire production chain was thus under severe distress, which, in turn, nurtured the incentives for fraud.

³⁹⁴ RGASPI, 17, 122, 110, l. 53.

³⁹⁵ Ibid., l. 54.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., l. 56.

This was a system immanent fault line that encouraged double-accounting and other criminal activities to satisfy demands – limited statehood became intimately tied with the Soviet production system.

The problems of limited statehood surfacing in the Uzbek SSR haunted the leadership throughout the post-war years. Despite pressure on the lower levels to fulfil goals, party purges and campaigns against crime, the Uzbek authorities found no immediate measures that could ensure relief. When tensions rose in the domestic political climate, it seemed only a matter of time before the Soviet central government would strike down on the situation in the Uzbek SSR. The next section will show how the tide was closing in on the very Uzbek top-leadership when results remained absent.

3.2. DELO IUSUPOVA

Stalin never fully trusted the leadership in the republics of the Soviet Union. World War II had done little to change the dictator's mistrust – the continuous disappointment of plans coupled with information on the mechanisms directing Uzbek politics increased Stalin's distrust of the Uzbek leadership. As a consequence, throughout the late-Stalinist period, pressure on Uzbek leaders and involvement in local affairs rose steadily. This clearly challenges the common perception of the late-Stalin period as one of “episodic” intervention from Stalin.³⁹⁷ As we shall see, the Uzbek leadership and in particular First Secretary Usman Iusupov came under such frequent attacks from the centre of power that various sources speak of a “Iusupov Affair”.

Increasing Pressure

The leadership exchange allowed through the Great Purges had been Usman Iusupov's springboard to power. Due to his communist credentials and powerful friends in the Stalin ruling circle, he had been appointed as a means to ensure the centre's control in the Uzbek periphery. His appointment was based on the logic of a personalised form of rule that promoted trusted cadres to the leading positions in the Soviet periphery. The dictator himself, however, was not a man characterised by trust. Several scholars have demonstrated that it was fear and distrust that distinguished Stalin's rule of his ruling circle. By the end of World War II, Stalin had learned to use his vast dictatorial powers as a means to keep his inner circle in a constant state of distress and to uphold his position as the supreme ruler. This was not a “random paranoid” ruling style. In fact, Yoram Gorlizki and Oleg Khlevniuk have appropriately found that “as a pragmatic leader, Stalin accepted his companions only so long as he saw some value in their actions or in their symbolic existence.”³⁹⁸ This counted for the peripheral leaders as much as for Stalin's inner circle.

Stalin's distrust of his entourage stood in sharp contrast to the empowerment of the elites in the periphery. As already noted, First Secretary Usman Iusupov was able to acquire extensive powers and appear as the master of his republic as long as he enjoyed the backing of Moscow. As a consequence, the centre-periphery relations were marked by a contradiction between the value of peripheral leaders and their positions as supreme rulers of their republics

³⁹⁷ Gill, *The Origins of the Stalinist Political System*, 7–8.

³⁹⁸ Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*, 82.

during Stalinism. This contradiction was especially precarious due to Stalin's claim to act as the only supreme ruler in the Soviet Union. Indeed, the "idea that any leader other than Stalin could exercise patronage over a fiefdom...was entirely anathema to the dictator"³⁹⁹ and the eradication of local patronage circles had been one of the main targets during the Great Purges as a means to strengthen Stalin's power and overcome limited statehood between the centre and the periphery. Given the constitution of the elite in the Central Asian republics, it is unlikely that Stalin was unaware of the patronage networks and his increased pressure on the political leadership in the late 1940s may have been a sign of his suspicions. In other words, it was the contradiction between extensive powers of the First Secretary and Stalin's demand to solely dispense patronage as well as the condition of continued high-levels of limited statehood that came to haunt Usman Iusupov and the Uzbek leadership in the post-war period.

Given the circumstances in the Uzbek SSR during the war and the post-war period, the value of the Uzbek leadership to the dictator appeared more than questionable. When First Secretary Iusupov had received the reproach in March 1944 during World War II it was due to the collapse of the cotton industry and overall production output of the Uzbek economy. The total cotton output had dropped from 1.65 million tons in 1941 to merely 495.000 in 1943.⁴⁰⁰ The Uzbek leadership was aware of the thin line they were walking and Iusupov's star had faltered ever since the 1944 reprimand. His eager promotion of a swift post-war recovery must be understood as an attempt to prove his worth to the dictator. And although the post-war plans cast off results, they were considerably lower than forecasted. The 1947 harvest fulfilled only roughly 70 per cent of the planned targets. In fact, yield lay significantly lower than the 1946 harvest when Uzbek farmers had achieved an incredible rise of more than 200.000 tons cotton compared to 1945 despite the immediate post-war conditions.⁴⁰¹ Moreover, despite acreage increase compared to 1946 production had largely stagnated at 1.1 million tons far behind the planned 1.4 million.⁴⁰² Industrial production was lagging behind, plans for the widening of the irrigated arid areas of the Uzbek SSR not fulfilled, livestock industry and foodstuffs production over all poor.⁴⁰³ Furthermore, there was no supervision of

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 81.

⁴⁰⁰ Gosudarstvennyi komitet SSSR po statistike, *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo SSSR V Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voine*, 97.

⁴⁰¹ GARF, 5446, 50, 2062, l. 17.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ RGASPI, 17, 122, 141, ll. 18–19.

revenues, so that “misappropriation and theft took disastrous dimensions.”⁴⁰⁴ In the Bukhara region alone 17.9 million roubles poured out of state funds in 1946; in Tashkent 17 and in Samarkand 14.7 million.⁴⁰⁵

Despite the prevalence of limited statehood in the Uzbek SSR during the post-war period, it was when Stalin received news of local patronage networks that the dictator began tightening the reins and increasing pressure on the Uzbek leadership. Already in October 1946, the Uzbek Party Control Commission penned a report to the Moscow headquarters about the conditions in the Uzbek SSR. On the one hand, the Uzbek leadership was accused of having too lenient an attitude toward rising theft, misappropriation of kolkhoz land and double-accounting. On the other hand, Iusupov was tailed by the Party Control Commission and accused of “nepotism”, “protectionism” and violations of party discipline. Ostensibly, Iusupov protected the director of the Khanabadskii factory, comrade Iusup-khodzhaev, a relative of the First Secretary, who continuously remained in his position despite his poor abilities.⁴⁰⁶ Furthermore, the report accused Iusupov of demoting and promoting individuals at will if he met resistance to his policies, because he was extremely “suspicious” and believed everything was intended against him.⁴⁰⁷

The report from the Party Control Commission resulted in the dispatch of a five members all-union Central Committee commission for the analysis of the conditions on the ground in the Uzbek SSR. The commission’s results from April 11 1947 revealed several problems within the Uzbek political, economic and cultural sectors.⁴⁰⁸ Due to severe deficiencies on the lower levels of the party and state hierarchies, the Central Committee decisions and orders never saw the light of day. The soviets and party committees met “irregularly” and did not “discuss” the decrees neither from Tashkent nor Moscow. In fact, “the party aktivs of Fergana, Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva, the Karakalpak and the Tashkent obkomy had not convened oblast party conferences since 1940” and in the 162 (of 160) raikomy, gorkomy, gorraikomy as well as in 2.205 primary party organisations mistakes and violations were found in the report and election meetings.⁴⁰⁹ In particular in the primary party organisations, party gatherings were discussed primarily from hear-saying and no one cared to gather information. Even the

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., I. 19.

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid. Converted into today’s value one Million 1946 roubles amounts to 2.875.000 US Dollars. Information based upon the historical exchange rates issued by the Russian Central Bank and www.measuringworth.com, a project by economists at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

⁴⁰⁶ RGASPI, 17, 122, 141, ll. 16–22, here I. 22.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., I. 22.

⁴⁰⁸ RGASPI, 17, 122, 141, ll. 83–98.

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid., 83–98, here I. 89.

raikom secretaries who did actually go into the field to discuss matters with the kolkhozy rarely partook in the meetings of the primary organisations and rarely spoke on political matters.⁴¹⁰

It was not merely poor political communication and organisation that concerned the Central Committee commission. Several raikom secretaries had been laid off due to their involvement in criminal activities such as theft and misappropriation as was the case with in the Kirov and Akhunbabaevskii raikomy where the secretary and the chair of the district soviet were ousted.⁴¹¹ Such lay offs were not limited to the district level however, and the obkom secretaries from Khiva, Bukhara and Kashka-Dar'insk as well as the Chair of the republican Supreme Court and Minister of Industry suffered the same fate.⁴¹²

The report from the special Central Committee envoy added the pressure on the Uzbek elite. Throughout just one year, reports on nepotism, dysfunctional institutions, continuous high levels of theft and misappropriation as well as plan failures reached the Moscow headquarters. The Central Committee representatives thus confirmed what the sources from the Uzbek periphery lay open: State, party and society was penetrated by limited statehood that severely hampered the implementation and fulfilment of central government interests. Despite the delicate circumstances, the Central Committee envoy merely remarked that the Uzbek leadership should “mobilise the masses for the successful implementation of plans for the post-war progress of the national economy.”⁴¹³ Given the possibly explosiveness of the accusations and the clearly limited improvement of affairs in the Uzbek SSR, it was only a matter of time before the Uzbek leadership would be summoned to Moscow. In 1948 Moscow lost patience with First Secretary Usman Iusupov.

Attack and “Promotion”

By mid-1948, Soviet international relations grew increasingly tense. The Cold War began boiling for the first time in earnest, as plans to consolidate a West German state were under way. The Soviet response to the situation was a restriction of access to the divided city of Berlin, which subsequently resulted in a remarkable airlift during the Berlin blockade. Contrary to the expectations of Stalin and the Soviet leadership and the initial organisational problems, the combined efforts of the western powers did, in fact, by September accomplish

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., l. 85.

⁴¹² Ibid., l. 77.

⁴¹³ Ibid., l. 98.

the monumental task of supplying the Berlin population of the western zones with enough essential foodstuffs and supplies making the blockade a propaganda debacle for the Soviet Union.⁴¹⁴

The deteriorating relations with the West coincided with a continuous estrangement between the Yugoslavia leader J. B. Tito and Stalin. Instead of adhering to Moscow dictate, Tito began a path of socialism in one country that disregarded the Soviet role-model. The Soviet leader was incensed by the will for independent development but never managed to force Tito into line and dominate Yugoslav development as was the case in other East European states under Soviet influence. The separate path of the Yugoslav leader did, in fact, plague Stalin to the extent that he would later instigate several unsuccessful assassination attempts on Tito.⁴¹⁵

The Soviet fiasco on the international political venue coincided with the summon to Moscow Chairman of the Uzbek Council of Ministers A. Abdurakhmanov and First Secretary Iusupov in February 1948. Iusupov and Abdurakhmanov could hardly have been called to the Soviet capital at a worse point in time. The reports from the Uzbek periphery had revealed serious problems not only with regard to the fulfilment of plans but also concerning the Soviet system itself. The Uzbek leaders were thus to explain the “unsatisfactory results of the harvest” that a November 12 1947 Party Control Commission report had revealed.⁴¹⁶ Although the official summons focused on the failure to satisfy the cotton targets laid down in the July 1945 plan for the resurrection of the cotton sector, the critique extended far beyond the usual reprimand. In fact, the Uzbek explanations to the state of affairs in their republic, are said to have infuriated Stalin to the extent that he was about to lay off the Uzbek leaders and severely punish Iusupov, had it not been for strong support from his patrons around the dictator.⁴¹⁷ Accordingly, it was revealed that both had invested funds in expenditures other than what the plan foresaw, which in turn hampered the recovery of the cotton sector. As a consequence, the Uzbek leaders were admonished with fierce charges of neglecting “national interests in favour of local tasks.”⁴¹⁸ In other words, the central leadership now found that limited

⁴¹⁴ V. M Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*, The New Cold War History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 74–78; Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*, 69–70.

⁴¹⁵ Zubok, *A Failed Empire*, 74–76.

⁴¹⁶ GARF, 5446, 49, 2032, ll. 99–105, l. 99.

⁴¹⁷ V. L. Malkevich, “Letopisnoe Imia Epokhi” Newspaper, *Izvestiia*, September 23, 2008, <http://izvestia.ru/news/341010>.

⁴¹⁸ *Ibid.*, l. 21.

statehood was not only a problem of the lower levels of the Uzbek SSR, but had skulked into the very top-echelons of republican politics effectively suspending central control.

The incident has become known as the “Iusupov Affair” and various sources count, N. S. Patolichev, First Secretary of the Rostov obkom and later candidate member of the Moscow Central Committee Presidium, V. Molotov and G. Malenkov to the group protecting Iusupov from Stalin’s fury.⁴¹⁹ Had Iusupov’s Moscow patrons not mobilised their support, it is unlikely that the Uzbek leaders had gotten away with the relatively mild reprimand that ordered to “correct the specified failures” and to ensure that the Uzbek Council of Ministers would “routinely engage in the questions of cotton industry.”⁴²⁰ Charges of favouring national interests were often punished with far greater severity and would indeed become the leading accusations of the greater Uzbek elites when a wave of repressions stroke the Soviet Union in subsequent years.

Little is known about the “affair”, but Iusupov and Abdurakhmanov undoubtedly became victims of increased pressure over the following years. Scarce evidence prevents us from deciphering what exactly hid behind the accusation of “favouring local tasks.” Nevertheless, they suggest that republican and all-union interests differed on essential questions. While the central leadership viewed the Uzbek SSR largely in terms of a cotton-producing republic and defined investments accordingly, the republican leadership is likely to have sought enhanced investment in areas of infrastructure, education and industry in order to continue the diversification of the Uzbek economy. Leaning on the regional network perspective suggested by Donald Carlisle, investments in local tasks may also have served as a means for the top-level Uzbek leadership to smoothen political demands from regional political networks in the Uzbek SSR.⁴²¹ As the Samarkand/Bukhara regions had lost direct access to all-union funds through its under-representation in top-level positions, Iusupov may on the one hand, have directed investments to such regions as a means to satisfy regional demands and avoid political tension. On the other hand, the Uzbek top-level leadership is likely to have directed funds for investments in the regions of their origin, as such “gifts” was a means to ensure continued support.⁴²²

⁴¹⁹ V. L. Malkevich, “Letopisnoe Imia Epokhi” Newspaper, *Izvestiia*, September 23, 2008, <http://izvestia.ru/news/341010>.; Abrol Kakharov, “Velikii syn uzbekskogo naroda: Usman Iusupov,” Comment/article, *Tsentrazia*, August 5, 2012, <http://www.centrasia.ru/newsA.php?st=1336454520>.; www.ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Юсупов,_Усман_Юсупович.

⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴²¹ Carlisle, “The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83).”

⁴²² Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 90.

Regardless of local tasks' exact meaning, the central leadership saw in it an obstruction to all-union interests and demanded that Iusupov and Abdurakhmanov "correct the specified failures" and ensure that the Uzbek Council of Ministers would "routinely engage in the questions of cotton industry."⁴²³ The Uzbek leadership and Second Secretary N. I. Lomakin were released with a reproach that warned Lomakin "that if he does not correct his behaviour in the shortest time, he will be dismissed from his position...having betrayed the trust of the all-union Central Committee."⁴²⁴

The reproach of Lomakin will have suited Iusupov. Ever since Lomakin's appointment in 1941, tension had marked the relationship between the First and Second Secretaries of the Uzbek Central Committee. Without doubt Iusupov remembered the pressure A. Kobulov and Lomakin that put him under during the strenuous time of World War II and he was keen on rebuking him.⁴²⁵

The reproach from Moscow resulted in a heated session of *kritika i samokritika* in the Uzbek Central Committee, revealing some of the alliances and personal feuds that had developed under Iusupov's rule.⁴²⁶ The Uzbek Central Committee plenum followed just three weeks after the summons in the Moscow headquarters in early February 1948.⁴²⁷ In accordance with the critique issued in the Central Committee decree, Iusupov Lomakin and Abdurakhmanov mutually blamed each other of mistakes, while simultaneously admitting "personal mistakes". Moreover, while Iusupov blamed Abdurakhmanov and Lomakin of lacking enthusiasm and spark (*ogen'*) in their work, Lomakin in particular, passed Iusupov a powerful blow. According to the Second Secretary, Iusupov was forgetful of critique, someone who in general "suppressed critics and revived an atmosphere of complacency and boasting. At every objection or disagreement with his own opinion", Lomakin continued, "Iusupov reacts nervously, mistakenly believing that only he is able to formulate the correct ideas. Comrade Iusupov shows signs of conceit and leaderism (*vozhdizm*), taking all decisions personally...attributing the initiative of other party officials to himself."⁴²⁸ By contrast, Abdurakhmanov claimed that Lomakin was "responsible in all cases [of accusation], because he

⁴²³ GARF, 5446, 50, 2062, l. 21.

⁴²⁴ Ibid.

⁴²⁵ For the Iusupov, Kobulov, Lomakin fight: RGANI, 6, 6, 668, l. 15.

⁴²⁶ On the functions of self-critique as a political practice: Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices*, Studies on the History of Society and Culture (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1999), 123–163. See also: Kozlov, "Denunciation and Its Functions in Soviet Governance. From the Archive of the Soviet Ministry of Internal Affairs, 1944-1953."

⁴²⁷ Report from the Party Control Commission in the Uzbek SSR: RGASPI, 17, 122, 296, ll. 2–6. The Plenum convened on 26.–28. of February 1948.

⁴²⁸ Ibid.

was not working unprincipled, having a conciliatory attitude to deficiencies, in order not to upset his relations with Iusupov.”⁴²⁹

The mutual accusations of the Abdurakhmanov, Iusupov and Lomakin were to be expected in a *kritika i samokritika*. It was what the centre of power demanded and the republican leaders knew it.⁴³⁰ Nevertheless, the two Uzbek leaders were somewhat more critical of the native Russian Lomakin, suggesting cleavages between the native and non-native member in the Uzbek Bureau. This split was also reflected by the comments from the Central Committee plenum. As a matter of fact, some secretaries spoke out in defence of Iusupov or did not mention him at all as the Party Control Commission’s I. Pozdniak reported to Moscow having attended the plenum. Hence, the Secretary of the Kashkadarya obkom B. Nasyrov, “tried to defend Iusupov, explaining that Iusupov decided in economic questions, because in the Council of Ministers of the republic they were deciding badly.”⁴³¹ The long-time friend and family circle member A. Mavlianov did not mention Iusupov with “a single word”, while comrade Seitov, Secretary in the Karakalpak obkom spoke of water problems and manure instead.⁴³²

The only critique against Iusupov voiced from the plenum came from the Samarkand Secretary A. Makhmudov and the native Russian deputy Chairman of the Uzbek Council of Ministers, P. A. Kabanov. According to A. Makhmudov, the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers had diverted a great number of kolkhozniki away from cotton growing into other sectors and it was only empty promises when talking about “providing help to kolkhozy falling behind” as “nothing [was] ever done in practice in this regard.”⁴³³ Although his critique was mild, they are likely to have expressed the rivalry of regional political networks between the Samarkand/Bukhara and the Tashkent/Fergana, the former of which had lost influence after the Great Purges.

It was however, the remarks from Kabanov that sparked most tension and made the plenum “react vividly”. In similar veins as Lomakin and Abdurakhmanov, Kabanov noted that Iusupov accused the Bureau “members of opportunism and ordered the implementation of his instructions”, although these were often based on erroneous beliefs.⁴³⁴ As a consequence, Iusupov was to blame for the poor harvest results, because his leadership style left the mem-

⁴²⁹ Ibid., II. 5–6.

⁴³⁰ Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*, 266.

⁴³¹ RGASPI, 17, 122, 296, I. 5.

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Ibid., I. 4.

⁴³⁴ RGASPI, 17, 122, 296, I. 5.

bers “toothless, not asking essential questions...not speaking from the top of our voice, but whispering.”⁴³⁵ Kabanov’s fell out of line with the usual critique extending from the plenum when a reproach from the all-union Central Committee was discussed. The voicing of harsh criticism was limited to the first and second secretaries as well as the Chair of the Council of Ministers during the late-Stalin period in the Uzbek SSR and Kabanov’s remarks came unso- licited. Accordingly, the comments of Kabanov were given no further notice, except from the Minister of State Control, M. Iuldashev, recommending that the “plenum should discuss com- rade Kabanov’s conduct.”⁴³⁶

It is not entirely clear what sparked Kabanov’s breach of rules, but it is likely to have been the result of several circumstances. He had been caught in long quarrels with Iusupov over the establishment of the Ministry for Industrial Crops in 1946, where he fought for improving the traditional structure and the work of the Ministry of Agriculture instead of creating a new ministry was overruled by Iusupov.⁴³⁷ Furthermore, Kabanov belonged to the Russian faction of the Bureau that was already torn by the continuous feud between Iusupov and Lomakin and given Iusupov’s ruling style it is unlikely that there was any lost love between the two.

Despite the critique at the plenum however, the power constellation in the Uzbek SSR re- mained intact. Iusupov, Abdurakhmanov and Lomakin all remained in their positions. Know- ing that he needed prove his submissiveness to Stalin, Iusupov ended the plenum discussion assuring “comrades Stalin and Zhdanov that I dedicate my life and blood to my work.”⁴³⁸ Al- though Stalin and Zhdanov may have appreciated Iusupov’s devotion, it did not speak free the Uzbek leadership let alone the Uzbek party structure of further control. Just one year later, the Central Committee VKP(b) Plenipotentiary to the Uzbek SSR was created which henceforth began scrutinising affairs in the Uzbek SSR and purging various sectors of the state, party and society. Eventually this led to a larger reshuffle in the Uzbek Bureau, as Iusupov, Abdurakhmanov and Lomakin were in the spotlight once more, and all were re- moved from their positions. Iusupov and Abdurakhmanov were transferred to Moscow posi-

⁴³⁵ Ibid. I. Pozdniak, the Party Control Commissioner who penned the report from the Uzbek plenum, could not help noticing that Kabanov did not drop a single word about the Council of Ministers or its Chairman Abdu- rakhmanov: RGASPI, 17, 122, 296, l. 5.

⁴³⁶ RGASPI, 17, 122, 296, l. 5.

⁴³⁷ RGASPI, 17, 121, 411, ll. 12–63. The All-Union People’s Commissariat for Industrial Crops was founded on November 11 1945 and turned into the Ministry for Industrial Crops on March 15 1946 during the phase of “post-revolutionary consolidation” as Yoram Gorlizki has called the change from commissariats to ministries in 1946: Gorlizki, “Ordinary Stalinism,” 703.

⁴³⁸ Ibid.

tions: Iusupov was made Minister of Cotton Production, Abdurakhmanov was appointed Deputy Chairman in the Ministry of Sovkhozy.⁴³⁹

Scholars have tended to view the move as promotions the Uzbek leadership because both were given positions in all-union ministries.⁴⁴⁰ In light of the “Iusupov Affair” and the recurrent charges of support of local tasks however, the reasons for the transfer may have been less innocent. On the one hand, Iusupov became minister of an all-union ministry, which on the paper possessed more power than any republican institution. Iusupov was thus given the responsibility to kick-start the entire Soviet cotton production, which included awarding him powers in that sector over several Soviet republics. On the other hand, although Iusupov’s transfer could be justified as a promotion, since he was made head of a new ministry, both Lomakin and Abdurakhmanov experienced a demotion. Furthermore, shortly before their transfer S. D. Ignat’ev, head of the Central Committee VKP(b) Plenipotentiary to the Uzbek SSR, rebuked Abdurakhmanov and Iusupov in a report to Moscow stating that they failed “to control the Party discipline.”⁴⁴¹ N. Mukhitdinov recalled Moscow charging Iusupov with the repeated “diversion of forces and funds destined for cotton, in favour of temporary local tasks.”⁴⁴² Moreover, assigning Iusupov to the new ministry would allow the centre to better monitor his activities and signal to the new leaders in Uzbekistan the possible consequences would they not to fulfil their tasks to the satisfaction of the centre.⁴⁴³

The transfer of the Uzbek leaders led to a major reshuffle in the Uzbek Bureau. Thereby, it was of a different character than the last significant restructuring that took place during the Great Purges. Evidently, the centre did not aim for a regional change of power. Instead, the centre decided that long-time Iusupov devotees should pick up the pieces from the gap left behind after the transfer of the First Secretary and Chairman of the Council of Ministers. A. I. Niiazov was chosen to serve as the Uzbek First Secretary, while M. A. Mavlianov was appointed Chairman of the Uzbek Council of Ministers.⁴⁴⁴

The choice of A. Niiazov was not unjustified. In the midst of the Leningrad Affair and the anti-cosmopolitan campaign the main interest of the Stalin leadership would have been to

⁴³⁹ Just a small statement in *Pravda vostoka* informed about the transfer: PV, 07.04.1950, 1, and 25.04.1950, 1. In the latter notification it falsely states that A. Abdurakhmanov asked for a leave of absence to study at the Central Committee in Moscow.

⁴⁴⁰ Carlisle, “The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83),” 105.

⁴⁴¹ RGASPI, 574, 1, 1, l. 5. The Central Committee VKP(B) Plenipotentiary and the consequences of the Leningrad Affair in the Uzbek SSR will be dealt with in the next chapter.

⁴⁴² Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 187.

⁴⁴³ Many regional officials perceived a transfer to Moscow as the step sealing the end of their career: Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*, 358.

⁴⁴⁴ PV, 25.04.1950, 1.

keep the Soviet periphery under control and pursue what it regarded as dangerous groupings. Accordingly, priority would have been to hire a candidate within the Uzbek system who would follow central administration orders and hold political experience in difficult situations. A. Niiazov matched these priorities. He was born in 1903 in Ak-Tepe in the Fergana oblast', thus originating from the same region as Iusupov and held smaller positions within the Fergana komsomol as an adolescent. During his early adult years, from 1920 to 1930, he served as an employee in the Uzbek state security agency, the Cheka, which will undoubtedly have influenced the centre's decision to promote him in 1950. Furthermore, he was a learned and versatile man who had worked in the financial department of the Fergana obkom, studied at the Central Committee in Moscow and taken a degree from the Industry Academy, before taking leading positions in the Uzbek SSR from 1935 onward.⁴⁴⁵ It is unclear if Niiazov had patrons in Moscow, but due to his studies at the Central Committee, he cannot have been a blank sheet to central authorities and, as already noted, the Stalin leadership will have had an interest in appointing a candidate with inside-knowledge of the functioning of the security organisations to execute orders.

The rationale behind the decision to appoint A. Mavlianov to the Council of Ministers is less evident. He was a long-time friend and colleague of Usman Iusupov and had held different positions within the political sphere in the Uzbek SSR. He was born in a village in southern Kazakhstan in 1908 and was active in various institutions such as the komsomol and the Tashkent unions in the 1920s and early 1930s. Following the Great Purges he took on the position as the Secretary in the important Tashkent gorkom, which marked the beginning of his political career as a classic *vydvizhentsy*-apparatchik. At the beginning of World War II, he was Secretary for Agitation and Propaganda to the Uzbek Central committee, but took the Tashkent obkom First Secretary position in 1942 before moving on to Andijan oblast' in 1946. In 1949, he returned to Tashkent and a Secretary position to the Uzbek Central Committee, which he then left to become Chairman of the Council of Ministers in 1950.⁴⁴⁶ Whether it was his 'troubleshooter' abilities or his knowledge of Uzbek politics that secured Mavlianov the ticket for the Council of Ministers remains unclear. Nevertheless, it is likely that the centre voted for a candidate with his abilities for the same reasons as in the case of A. Niiazov.

⁴⁴⁵ Zalesskii, *Kto Est' Kto v Istorii SSSR, 1924-1953*, 428–429.

⁴⁴⁶ Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83)," 103.

If regional power relations did, in fact, play a role in the central leadership's considerations concerning the top-level political elite in the Uzbek SSR, the promotion of both Niiazov and Mavlianov reflects that it was not in the interest of the central government to exchange the current ruling group. Their origin and political careers were simply too intertwined with Iusupov to suggest such a conclusion. Nevertheless, the Uzbek Bureau did change substantially. Apart from Niiazov and Mavlianov, the Uzbek member exchange included Sabir Kamalov and Sharaf Rashidov as well as the first female Bureau member Kh. Mukhitdinova.⁴⁴⁷

Born in 1910 in Tashkent to a workers' family, Sabir Kamalov joined the komsomol in 1926 and became a komsomol apparatchik in 1930 when he was made head of the komsomol department of the Central Asian Kraikom. He was one of the main beneficiaries of the rapid upward mobility after the Great Purges, when his political career took a steep rise and he served in various positions at the obkom level in Fergana, before becoming deputy in the Council of Ministers by the age of 29. The entire duration of the war however, he spent as First Secretary in the Karakalpak ASSR and in 1950 he was made Secretary of Agriculture in the Uzbek Central Committee.⁴⁴⁸

Sharaf Rashidov had a completely different background. He was born into a farmer's family in Jizzakh (half way between Tashkent and Samarkand) in 1917 and studied at the Jizzakh Pedagogical Institute, from which he graduated in 1936 only to take a second education at Samarkand University in literature and pedagogy 1937–1941. Suffering serious injury in the Second World War, he returned to Uzbekistan in 1942 where he began work as editor of the Samarkand newspaper *Lenin Iuli* before entering the political sphere as Secretary of propaganda in the Samarkand party committee. In 1947, he turned his back on party work and became the editor of the republican newspaper *Kzyl Uzbekistan*, a position he kept till 1949 when he was elected Chair of the Uzbek Writers' Union following the *Zhdanovshchina*, which undoubtedly helped his election to Chair of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Uzbekistan just one year later in 1950.⁴⁴⁹

The promotion of Rashidov may have been sparked by a desire to satisfy, at least, symbolically the various political clan interests in the Uzbek SSR. Given the rather severe critique

⁴⁴⁷ Unfortunately, I have found no biographical information on Kh. Mukhitdinov apart from the fact that she was Secretary of Culture in the Uzbek Central Committee.

⁴⁴⁸ Biographical information in: "Kamalov, Sabir," Online Library Project, *Spravochnik Po Istorii Kommunisticheskoi Partii i Sovetskogo Soiuzia 1898-1991*, 2012, <http://www.knowbysight.info/KKK/02988.asp>; Zalesskii, *Kto Est' Kto v Istorii SSSR, 1924-1953*, 252.

⁴⁴⁹ Zalesskii, *Kto Est' Kto v Istorii SSSR, 1924-1953*, 493–494. Rashidov's promotion during the *Zhdanovshchina*: "Plenum Soiuzia sovetskikh pisatelei Uzbekistana", *Pravda*, 27.07.1949, 3.

extended by Samarkand oblast' First Secretary A. Makhmudov at the Central Committee session following the Iusupov affair, the Samarkand political faction may successfully have argued their case to all-union representatives. The official account of the plenum in the all-union news voice *Pravda* did indeed suggest that the centre valued the Samarkand critique, for although the incident was recounted only briefly, it was primarily A. Makhmudov's criticism of the Uzbek leaders that found its way to the Soviet reader.⁴⁵⁰ For the first time then, since the Great Purges the Samarkand/Bukhara political faction was awarded a major position in the Soviet structure of the Uzbek SSR, although the position as Chair of the Supreme Soviet Presidium was nominally merely a representative function.

V. A. Bylbas was, in fact, a titular Russian, but he stood in close connection to the Iusupov patronage network and was made Third Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee in 1949. Contrary to the rest of the non-native members he will have known the language and been connected to the Uzbek leadership. As a consequence, it is difficult to determine where his loyalties were located.

In spite of Rashidov's promotion to the Bureau, the regional focus on Tashkent/Fergana thus remained intact. Furthermore, most Uzbek members of the Bureau (Niiazov, Mavlianov and Kamalov) were close allies of Iusupov, but Rashidov no less owed his recent upward mobility in the Uzbek political hierarchy to Iusupov who had served as his patron. As a consequence, the character of the Bureau remained the same, despite the change of members.

Uzbek Central Committee Bureau 1950: Nine full members, zero candidates
Niiazov, A. I. (Uzbek, Fergana, First Secretary)
Mel'nikov, R. E. (Russian, Second Secretary)
Kamalov, S. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee)
Mavlianov, A. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Chair of the Council of Ministers)
Bylbas, V. A. (Russian, Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers)
Rashidov, Sh. (Uzbek, Jizzakh, Chair of the Presidium of Supreme Soviet)
Golidze, S. A. (Russian, Minister of State Security)
Radzievskogo, A. I. (Ukrainian, Commander of the Turkestan Military District, headquarters in Tashkent)
Mukhitdinova, Kh. (Uzbek, no biographical information)

The changes within the non-native representation in the Bureau entailed the promotion of R. E. Mel'nikov, S. A. Golidze as well as A. I. Radzievskogo. While Mel'nikov had a typical

⁴⁵⁰ "Plenum TsK KP(b) Uzbekistana, *Pravda*, 06.03.1948, 2.

career of a party apparatchik and had been serving in several positions in various Russian regions and the Moscow central apparatus before he was dispatched to Uzbekistan in 1949 where he remained Second Secretary for ten years. Of the two police and army representatives, Golidze and Radzievskogo, Golidze was undoubtedly the most important change. He had made a served within the Soviet security apparatus throughout his entire career and became such close ally of Lavrentyi Beria that he was executed alongside with him in 1953. His appointment to Minister of State Security in the Uzbek SSR in 1951 was undoubtedly connected to the increased pressure from Moscow.

The “Iusupov Affair” thus had several consequences for the Uzbek elite as a whole and was not limited to the man whose name coined the affair. The affair itself is however, only explained against the background of the multiple factors characterising Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR following the World War II. Stalin’s totalitarian and dictatorial claim to power, the multiple facets of limited statehood in the Uzbek SSR, the continuous production disappointments, Iusupov’s and Abdurakhmanov’s favouring of national interests as well as the tense international climate were all aspects leading up to the tightening of control from the centre of power. The mitigated Bureau counted seven members less than in 1940 and was a clear power division between the native and non-native members. With Golidze, the Minister of State Security, Lavrentyi Beria, had sent one of his most trusted lieutenants to the Uzbek SSR, who was to implement the increased repressions throughout the following years. On the republican level, power remained in the hands of the Tashkent/Fergana coalition, although Sh. Rashidov was promoted into Bureau. As a consequence, the substantial personnel exchange promoted members who had largely grown under the wings of the former master of the republic. The intervention into republican affairs did not remain limited to the political top-level elite. As we shall see in the next section, the final years of Stalin’s dictatorship were marked by increased purges amongst the political and cultural elites in the Uzbek SSR.

3.3. "MANY OF OUR PARTY OFFICIALS FORGET THE HARSH CRITIQUE FROM THE FEBRUARY–MARCH PLENUM 1937..."

The pressure extending from the Moscow did not only strike U. Iusupov, A. Abdurakhmanov and N. Lomakin. From 1948 onward, Stalin became increasingly irritated by the state of domestic affairs. When the Leningrad and Gosplan Affairs came to the fore, they sparked a wave of repression that coincided with the anti-Semitic campaign against “rootless cosmopolitans.” Throughout the Soviet Union, several thousand Soviet citizens fell victim of purges conducted and targeted at the political elite as well as the intelligentsia. The standard interpretation of the Leningrad Affair highlights the political power struggle that had been ongoing between Politburo members G. M. Malenkov, L. P. Beria and A. A. Zhdanov, while the attack on “rootless cosmopolitans” may have been rooted in an increasing anti-Semitic resentment of Stalin.⁴⁵¹

Recent scholarship has produced a more nuanced understanding of the Leningrad Affair and the anti-cosmopolitan campaign, but we still have little sense of the direction and scope it took in the Uzbek SSR. Translated into the Uzbek setting, the purges often needed quite some adaptation and concentrated on tendencies such as “backwardness”, nationalism and personal networks.⁴⁵² In other words, what began as a political purge in Leningrad spread out to the Uzbek periphery where it was tailored to combat the local legacy of war and the still prevalent levels of limited statehood that curtailed the state’s ability to direct and control developments. Stalin’s overall goal then was clearly to display his unaltered demand for loyalty and submission and this has prompted scholars to argue that “Stalin succeeded in strengthening his hold over three key strata in his administration: Those within his own entourage, heads of economic ministries, and regional leaders.”⁴⁵³

⁴⁵¹ In his still brilliant biography of Stalin, Isaac Deutscher argues that Stalin was merely instrumentalising widespread anti-Semitic sentiment. More recent accounts convincingly oppose this view, pointing to Stalin’s own rising anti-Semitic views grounded in the consolidation of the state of Israel: Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin: a Political Biography*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 760; Brandenberger, “Stalin, the Leningrad Affair, and the Limits of Postwar Russocentrism,” 244; Kiril Tomoff, “Uzbek Music’s Separate Path: Interpreting ‘Anti-cosmopolitanism’ in Stalinist Central Asia, 1949-52,” *Russian Review* 63, no. 2 (April 1, 2004): 214.

⁴⁵² Wolfgang Leonhard rightfully mentions the accusations of nationalism, but erroneously dates it to begin with the Doctors’ Plot in January 1953. Wolfgang Leonhard, *Kreml ohne Stalin* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1959), 77–79. See also: Tomoff, “Uzbek Music’s Separate Path.”

⁴⁵³ Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*, 93.

The Central Committee VKP(b) Plenipotentiary to the Uzbek SSR

The establishment of the Central Committee VKP(b) Plenipotentiary to the Uzbek SSR (henceforth: Plenipotentiary) was a crucial moment during the late-Stalinist period in the Uzbek SSR. It was evidently a reaction not only to the general domestic climate, but also a response to the specific context in the Uzbek SSR. On February 10 1949 the Politburo issued a decree that re-established the local Central Asian, the Far East and the Transcaucasian Bureaus, which had been closed down in the mid 1930s.⁴⁵⁴ The Central Asian Bureau of the early Soviet period was headed by the Russian I. Zelenskii and had functioned as the de facto Bureau of the Uzbek SSR. The obvious echo from the past Central Asian Bureau appear to have caused concern amongst the Moscow leadership, for the name was changed immediately into the more indefinite Central Committee VKP(b) Plenipotentiary to the Uzbek SSR on March 28 1949.⁴⁵⁵

The name change was an expression of Stalin's form of rule that accommodated certain "rational-legal forms of administration" at different levels of the Soviet bureaucracy.⁴⁵⁶ For it was indeed not the plan to establish an institution to replace the republican Uzbek government. Rather the Plenipotentiary was an institutional extension of the all-union apparatus with the official task to assist and direct the Uzbek leadership in 'governing'.⁴⁵⁷ This was a deliberately vague definition of its purpose, for the decree offered the possibility to intervene in virtually all spheres of interest, thus bypassing direct institutional or administrative obstacles posed by the Uzbek state and party apparatus. Moreover, the establishment of the Plenipotentiary created a direct line of implementation to Moscow over the heads of the Uzbek government.

Stalin's choice to head the Plenipotentiary with S. D. Ignat'ev was well considered. Born in 1904 in Ukraine, Ignat'ev's parents moved to Termez in southern Uzbekistan when he was a child and it was here that he lived much of his childhood. In 1914, he began work in a local cotton plant, before moving on to work on the Bukhara railway. Already, at the just 15 years,

⁴⁵⁴ V. V. Denisov, ed., *TsK VKP(b) i Regional'nye Partiinye Komitety, 1945-1953* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004), 37. The Far East Bureau never met. Yoram Gorlizki and Oleg Khlevniuk suggest that the establishment of the peripheral bureaus was a means to rid the centre of unwanted cadres. While this might have been the case with Central Committee Secretary, Aleksei Kuznetsov, who was ordered to lead the Far East Buro in the midst of the Leningrad Affair, although Kuznetsov was never deployed to the Far East, Ignat'ev was, however, never victim of any purges by Stalin. By contrast, he was admitted to the Politburo in 1951: Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*, 81.

⁴⁵⁵ Denisov, *TsK VKP(b) i Regional'nye Partiinye Komitety, 1945-1953*, 36.

⁴⁵⁶ Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*, 10.

⁴⁵⁷ Denisov, *TsK VKP(b) i Regional'nye Partiinye Komitety, 1945-1953*, 37.

Ignat'ev was leading a komsomol cell in Bukhara and became actively engaged in the revolution in Central Asia within the security organs of Bukhara. From 1923 onward, he was introduced to high-level politics, which brought him into the Central Asian Bureau of Trade Unions in both Uzbekistan and Kyrgystan. Within the structures of the trade unions, he would undoubtedly have become acquainted with Usman Iusupov, who was himself working there at the time. In 1935, he graduated from the National Academy for Industry and took on a position at the Department of Industry of the Central Committee in Moscow.



S. D. Ignat'ev.⁴⁵⁸

Having served at different party secretary positions throughout the Soviet Union, he returned to Moscow in 1946 where he was made First Deputy in the Directorate for the Checking of Party Organs headed by N. I. Patolichev. The stay was brief and already the following year he was sent to the Belarus SSR where he served initially as First then as Second Secretary of the Belarus Central Committee. It was after his stay in Belarus that he returned to the place where his political career had begun, the Uzbek SSR, although now in a very different position. Again, the Uzbek tenure paved the way for a leap up the Soviet institutional ladder and when Ignat'ev was ordered back to Moscow in summer 1951, he was made Minister of State Security as well as the head of the personal security of Stalin and other top party and state leadership. It was from these positions that he organised the 'Doctors' Plot' and personally supported the ruthless practices of the secret police in the Soviet Union. On Beria's urging he was expelled from the Central Committee shortly after Stalin's death, a position he managed to recapture following Beria's arrest, although he would never regain the momentum of pre-

⁴⁵⁸ <http://www.knowbysight.info/III/02846.asp>

vious times and ended his political career as the First Secretary in the Tatar obkom in 1960.⁴⁵⁹

In S. D. Ignat'ev the centre of power thus deployed someone who had the knowledge of the local circumstances as well as a reputation of troubleshooting as he had been in the post-war Belarus SSR. As Chief of the Plenipotentiary from 1949 to 1951, he loyally implemented Stalin's will in the Uzbek periphery in order to streamline the political and cultural elites.

Zhdanovshchina, Anticosmopolitanism and Nationalism

During the World War II, Stalin had feared that anti-Soviet nationalism could result in a “fifth column” in the Soviet Union and endanger the war effort.⁴⁶⁰ As we have seen, the dictator loosened constraints on the ideological sphere in order to foster an emotional response from the Soviet population. The Soviet nationalities were allowed to emphasise their cultural heritage and national feelings instead of the Russian categories used in the Slavic regions that enjoyed less popularity.⁴⁶¹ In the Uzbek SSR, this had resulted in a greater celebration of Uzbek national heroes, culture and national history in order to facilitate mobilisation and loyalty. Several times during the war, the Uzbek leadership had underlined the need to study Uzbek history and its masters.⁴⁶²

The wartime tolerance toward cultural issues had left a legacy Uzbek SSR that was not only heavily condemned during the *Zhdanovshchina*⁴⁶³, but also led to the repression of leading intellectuals in the late 1940s when the Plenipotentiary arrived. On several occasions during the post-war period, the Party Control Commission representatives in the Uzbek SSR had reported a rise in “bourgeois-nationalist ideology” and “strong expressions of religious feelings” in the Uzbek SSR following the end of World War II. According to a comrade Bor-motov reporting to the Soviet capital in 1946, Hamid Alimdzhan, the Uzbek poet and playwright influenced by M. Gorky and V. Mayakovsky, had the main protagonist of his histori-

⁴⁵⁹ Biographical material on S. D. Ignat'ev: Mikalai Aliksandravich Zen'kovich, *Samye Zakrytye Liudi: Entsiklopediia Biografii* (Moscow: OLMA-Press, 2002), 199–202; Zalesskii, *Kto Est' Kto v Istorii SSSR, 1924-1953*, 239.

⁴⁶⁰ David Brandenberger, “‘...It Is Imperative to Advance Russian Nationalism as the First Priority.’ Debates Within the Stalinist Ideological Establishment, 1941-1945,” in *A State of Nations. Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin (New York/Mass., 2001), 281.

⁴⁶¹ Bech Hansen, “»Wollen Sie Arme und Bevölkerung Wirklich Ohne Hosen Lassen?!« Die Mobilisierung Für Den Zweiten Weltkrieg in Der Usbekischen Sowjetrepublik.”

⁴⁶² Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1984, III:145–154.

⁴⁶³ Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism*, chap. 11; Maïke Lehmann, “The Local Reinvention of the Soviet Project. Nation and Socialism in the Republic of Armenia After 1945,” *Jahrbucher Fuer Geschichte Osteuropas* 59, no. 4 (2011): 493–504; Yekelchik, *Stalin's Empire of Memory*, 63–75; Werner G Hahn, *Postwar Soviet Politics: The Fall of Zhdanov and the Defeat of Moderation, 1946-53* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982).

cal play Mukana declaring, “everything is a symbol of Islam.”⁴⁶⁴ Furthermore, comrade Bormotov found that Maksud Shaikh-zade, the Azerbaijani-Uzbek writer, “proclaimed the slogan of Great Uzbekistan” in his drama *Dzhaladdin* from 1941 on the Mongol invasion in the 13th century.⁴⁶⁵

The echoes from the past were condemned as “feudal-bai vestiges” of the backward past and the authorities had become increasingly eerie about the consequences of the wartime policy. In fact, the Party Control Commission saw a direct link between the intellectual celebration of the pre-revolutionary period and society at large. For the lenient policy toward cultural issues had resulted in a rise of religious activity. In 1946, for example, the Committee for Party Control, registered the opening of “150 non-registered mosques and more than 30 illegal religious schools.”⁴⁶⁶

In various forms, the celebration of the pre-revolutionary period was conducted in all republics of the Soviet Union during the war and led to similar consequences. Yet despite a grand-scale conference on the question of whether or not the celebration of, in particularly pre-Russian national heroes and culture undermined the history of class struggle in summer 1944, the authorities found no clear answer to the question, leaving the republican leadership in a state of uncertainty without a clear ideological course. Indeed, the question referred to underlying difficulty of creating and sustaining nations based on a premise to overcome them. Without rigorous ideological constrains, this was an endeavour that could easily spill over into anti-Soviet nationalism.

It was not before Secretary of Propaganda to the Soviet Central Committee, Andrei Zhdanov attacked the Leningrad writers Anna Akhmatova and Mikhail Zoshchenko and the Leningrad journals *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* in August 1946 that the state finally defined a policy aiming to overcome any ideological confusion.⁴⁶⁷ In a speech before the Leningrad Writers’ Union, Zhdanov condemned the journals for publishing ideologically harmful apolitical works and for disparaging Soviet values.⁴⁶⁸

It is difficult to say just how severe repression of the intelligentsia was caused in the Uzbek SSR by the *Zhdanovshchina* already in 1946–1947. From spring 1947 however, there is a

⁴⁶⁴ RGASPI, 17, 122, 141, l. 6.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁶ RGASPI, 17, 122, 141, l. 5. See also: Yaacov Ro’i, *Islam in the Soviet Union* (New York, NY: Columbia Univ. Press, 2000), 287–324.

⁴⁶⁷ Yekelchik, *Stalin’s Empire of Memory*, 63; Lehmann, *Eine sowjetische Nation*, 126–129. Werner G. Hahn was the first to see events in the Ukrainian SSR as the test-field: Hahn, *Postwar Soviet Politics*, 48; Yekelchik, *Stalin’s Empire of Memory*, 63.

⁴⁶⁸ Yekelchik, *Stalin’s Empire of Memory*, 63.

clear tendency toward enhanced attention toward the intellectual elite. The findings of the Party Control Commission was confirmed by a Soviet Central Committee commission which had been dispatched to the Uzbek periphery due to the lasting struggles with limited statehood and failures to fulfil plan targets.⁴⁶⁹ The members of the commission found “serious deficiencies in the work of the Uzbek Central Committee as well as the local and oblast’ party organs with regard to literature and art.”⁴⁷⁰ In line with the guidelines laid out from the Moscow Central Committee, the commission argued, it was clear that poets and writers were producing works that were apolitical and lacking principles. Nevertheless, the commission also found that improvements had occurred since the “process of discussing the documents” of the Soviet Central Committee had begun. As a consequence, the repertoire of the theatres and the playwrights as well as the work of writers had revised and adapted to the spirit of the Soviet people.⁴⁷¹

In spite of the Central Committee commission’s rather positive judgment of the Uzbek cultural intelligentsia, First Secretary Usman Iusupov directed severe critique, especially at playwrights and the academic world. Of the 32 plays performed in Uzbekistan in 1947, Iusupov concluded, only 2 were concerned with contemporary Soviet topics. Furthermore, as had been the case in other republics, the Uzbek volume *History of the People of Uzbekistan* that had been written during the war in 1942–1943 now caught the attention of the authorities and was condemned for its “nationalist” content.⁴⁷²

It was not only in internal memoranda that Iusupov spoke the language of the centre. At a gathering of the Tashkent party organisation in July 1948, the First Secretary clarified the Uzbek leadership position. The “Bolsheviks of Uzbekistan”, the First Secretary called out to the Tashkent audience, “does not give nationalists and their henchmen (*prispeshnik*) any space” and work need be strengthened “especially amongst the intelligentsia.”⁴⁷³ Stalin and the central leadership however, remained untouched by the Uzbek political elite’s signs of loyalty and adherence to the central policies. In fact, Stalin appears to have had little trust in Iusupov’s promises. Why else would the central leadership have decreed the installation of the Plenipotentiary to the Uzbek SSR in February 1949 when it launched the campaign against “rootless cosmopolitans”?

⁴⁶⁹ RGASPI, 17, 122, 141, ll. 83–98.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., ll. 75–76.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid., l. 76.

⁴⁷² Ibid., ll. 92–93.

⁴⁷³ Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1984, III:120.

Although the *Zhdanovshchina* took a very similar form as in other republics of the Soviet Union, they did spark a development that would characterise the further development of the repressions that struck the Uzbek periphery. The “cosmopolitans”, whom the regime was chasing elsewhere in the Soviet Union remained strikingly absent.⁴⁷⁴ In their place stepped a whole array of different enemy categories such as “nationalist”, “feudal-bai culture”, Muslim “backwardness.” Already on January 11, 1949, a featured article in *Pravda* circumscribed the connection between rootless cosmopolitanism and the Uzbek SSR. In a book review of V. Zhirmunskii’s and Kh. Zarifov’s *The Heroic national Uzbek Epos*, the authors were accused of “bourgeois cosmopolitanism” and “formalism”.⁴⁷⁵ The authors were admonished for regarding Persian literature the “main source for the medieval romanticism for all literature of the Muslim East” and defining the Uzbek epos as a main influence on “Arab-Persian sources.”⁴⁷⁶ Defining the Uzbek SSR as a main source for the Arab-Persian was of course an attempt to locate the Uzbek cultural heritage and part of the active nation-building that sought to create a national identity of the former repressed peoples of the Soviet Union. In the context of creating a rigid ideological course for national histories, the V. Zhirmunskii and Kh. Zarifov were however, accused of undermining Marxist historical reading of the people’s class struggle. As a result, the book constituted a “deliberate search for ‘Muslim’ sources in the Uzbek epos” and the authors, the review argued, built upon several “feudal-clerics and bourgeois-nationalist theoreticians.”⁴⁷⁷

Looming behind the so-called “nationalism” expressed in Uzbek prose was the threat of “backwardness” which distinguished the Uzbek rhetoric from, for example, its Ukrainian counterpart. Once the Leningrad Affair and the anti-cosmopolitan campaign were set in motion, “nationalism” and “feudal-bai backwardness” thus came to figure more prominently in the Uzbek SSR. As Plenipotentiary S. D. Ignat’ev explained at a meeting summer 1950, the nurturing of “feudal-bai backwardness” had not been curtailed, let alone diminished which caused several problems for the future development of the Uzbek SSR.⁴⁷⁸ As a consequence, more women, even of Party representatives, had begun wearing veils and illegal religious schools were opening, while Soviet schools were poorly run and children absent from instruction in 1946.⁴⁷⁹ In other words, the proliferation of a soft-line cultural policy and the

⁴⁷⁴ Tomoff, “Uzbek Music’s Separate Path,” 240.

⁴⁷⁵ “Protiv Kosmopolitizma v literaturovedenii”, *Pravda*, 11.01.1949, 3.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁸ RGASPI, 574, 1, 22, ll. 73–88.

⁴⁷⁹ RGASPI, 17, 122, 141, l. 20.

inability of the Uzbek leaders to roll back the development had resulted in a deepening of limited statehood within society at large.

The attack on the Uzbek intelligentsia was also a topic at the sessions of the Uzbek Central Committee. At the February 1949 plenary session of the Central Committee, Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers, Guliamov, lamented the “serious mistakes of several writers and artists, regarding the work of the Uzbek people.”⁴⁸⁰ Compared to the discussions at the plenum of the Uzbek Soviet Writers’ Union in summer 1949, Guliamov’s critique appeared harmless. Gathering in July 1949, the plenum was an orchestrated attack on the development of the discourses amongst the Uzbek writers. It was Iusupov’s loyal friend M. G. Vakhabov, Secretary of Propaganda and Agitation, who directed what turned into denunciations of several prominent Uzbek writers.⁴⁸¹ Vakhabov issued two lines of attack: First, several Uzbek writers were not appropriately grounding their work in the life of the people and portraying contemporary topics. This was completely in line with Zhdanov’s critique of the Leningrad journals *Leningrad* and *Zvesda* in 1946 and a recurrent theme also in the critique of the Uzbek literary scene. Secondly, Vakhabov found “elements of nationalism, harmful idealism of the feudal past and a servile (*rabolepnyi*) worship of the old feudal culture.”⁴⁸² Thereby, Vakhabov singled out A. Kakhkhar, M. Shaik-zade and the Chair of the Uzbek Soviet Writers’ Union Musa Aybek, the latter of which was demoted and substituted with Sharaf Rashidov.⁴⁸³

The scope of the repressed playwrights and writers during the late-Stalin repressive campaigns is difficult to determine with certainty, but amongst them were M. Aybek, K. Atabaev, S. Abdullah, A. Babaianov, T. Tula Shukrullakh, M. Osim and M. Shaikh-zade were some of the more prominent members who were sentenced to 25 years’ imprisonment for “anti-Soviet activities”.⁴⁸⁴ In the Uzbek SSR, the *Zhdanovshchina*, the campaign against “rootless cosmopolitans” and “feudal-bai backwardness” all merged and, from February 1949, it was the Plenipotentiary S. D. Ignat’ev that led the struggle against the Soviet foes. Clearly, the Soviet leadership had little trust in the Uzbek leaders and entrusted a loyal Stalinist with the task. At a meeting of the Uzbek Bureau members in August 1950, Plenipotentiary Ignat’ev elucidated the situation to his Uzbek counterpart. According to him, it was evident that the

⁴⁸⁰ “X s’ezd KP(b) Uzbekistana, *Pravda*, 06.03.1949, 2.

⁴⁸¹ On Vakhabov and Iusupov: Reskov and Sedov, *Usman Iusupov*, 36.

⁴⁸² “Plenum Soiuza sovetsskikh pisatelei Uzbekistana”, *Pravda*, 27.07.1949, 3.

⁴⁸³ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁴ Alimova and Golovanov, “Uzbekistan,” 233–234. Furthermore, so-called unregistered “anti-Soviet clergy” was habitually imprisoned: Ro’i, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, 287–324. A profound discussion of religion in the Uzbek SSR will follow in chapter 6.

Uzbek periphery was haunted by “nationalist elements, lurking Trotskyist-Bukharin scoundrels, Mensheviks and Socialist Revolutionaries, people of abominable moral corruption as well as all sorts of other scum.”⁴⁸⁵ Meanwhile, in a featured article in *Pravda vostoka* Stalin himself praised the Soviet nationality policy, but reminded “the party and state officials in the East should not underestimate the fight against local nationalist conditions nor the fight against nationalism.”⁴⁸⁶

During the attack on the Uzbek intelligentsia, the Plenipotentiary singled out several institutions harbouring a large amount of “enemies“: The Uzbek State University, the Tashkent Medical Institute as well as the Central Asian State University, the Ministry of Enlightenment were all institutions where the Plenipotentiary discovered a large number of individuals conducting nationalist work.⁴⁸⁷ This group included none other than the Deputy Director of the Pedagogical Institute, comrade Kusankhodzhaev; the Scientific Editor of the Uzbek State Publisher and former Editorial Secretary of the Teachers’ Newspaper, comrade Aiupov; and former Director of the Institute for Language and Culture of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences, comrade Alimukhmaedov, the latter of whom was accused of being a “nationalist and morally corrupt person.”⁴⁸⁸ Similarly, in the Tashkent Institute for Railroad Engineering, Ignat’ev’s units had found that the head of the institute, “a certain Ponomarenko...had been excluded from the party in 1937 for connections with enemy populations. Now Ponomarenko was systematically drinking heavily with unstable teachers and students, being said to tell anti-Soviet anecdotes and promote a Trotskyist point of view in his lectures.”⁴⁸⁹

The Plenipotentiary proceeded with a fell accuracy. Everywhere he looked, he found what he was looking for and he fuelled an atmosphere of threat and fear that served as a justification for the active battle against intelligentsia. “You must not forget, comrades”, Igna’ev reminded the Uzbek Bureau members, “that there are many persons in Uzbekistan, who have previously been engaged in enemy activities (Trotskyist, bourgeois nationalists, Basmachi etc.). Here were sent kulaks, Crimean Tartars, Chechens. Here are Vlasovtsy⁴⁹⁰. And people were with the German fascists – in the Turkestan legion. Here are several reactionary clergy,

⁴⁸⁵ RGASPI, 574, 1, 23, l. 19.

⁴⁸⁶ “Vydaiushcheesia proizvedenie po natsional’nomu voprosu”, PV, 24.05.1950, 2.

⁴⁸⁷ RGASPI, 574, 1, 23, ll. 18–20 and 55–59.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., l. 19.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., ll. 19–20. In addition to the examples above, Ignat’ev counted to the list of arrested: Comrade Bazarbaev, Head of a Council of Minister’s group on higher education institutions and sciences, comrade Kaiumov, employee in the Ministry for Enlightenment, comrade Gulamov, teacher in the Tashkent Institute for Agriculture, comrade Mirzaev, employee in the newspaper *Kzyl Uzbekistan*.

⁴⁹⁰ *Vlasovtsy* refers to Andrey Vlasov, the former Red Army General who created the Russian Liberation Army and fought the Red Army.

the activities of whom are...growing in numbers and taking on dangerous forms. One can hardly doubt that several of these people will actively go against us or widen the circle, waiting for the right moment to harm us or our cause.”⁴⁹¹

The campaigns against the intelligentsia in the Uzbek SSR thus bore an element of preemptive action and a return of the frenzy atmosphere of the Great Purges. Not only did Ignat’ev use the enemy categories of the past, he also widened the spectrum to include World War II classifications. According to Mukhitdinov, “more than twenty outstanding and talented scientists, poets and writers had been found guilty of nationalism in 1948–1949. All were tried in the usual Stalinist way, without defence and in closed processes in which they were sentenced to prison for between fifteen and twenty five years.”⁴⁹² Apart from the above mentioned victims of the late-Stalinist campaigns, several more fell when the Plenipotentiary stepped up the battle from 1949 onward making it include scientists and academics including renowned members such as K. Abdullaev, K. Zarifov and I. Sultanov.⁴⁹³

The attack on the intelligentsia in the Uzbek SSR was motivated by a rationale that sought to put an end to the consequences of the lenient cultural policy implemented during World War II. There is no historical evidence pointing toward the development of an anti-Soviet Uzbek identity nor toward anti-Soviet propaganda by the Uzbek intelligentsia as a cause of the relaxation within the cultural sphere during the war. In fact, research on Ukrainian and Armenian SSRs has found that the cultural and political elites were neither mere servants of the all-union government nor simply agents promoting their national cause.⁴⁹⁴ Regardless of the Uzbek intelligentsia’s goal however, the Stalin leadership and in particularly Plenipotentiary Ignat’ev clearly defined their work as inimical to the Soviet project that revitalised “feudal-bai backwardness” amongst the population. The campaigns in the Uzbek SSR thus integrated longstanding central policies in Central Asia, predominantly the fight against “backwardness”.⁴⁹⁵ As a result, the campaign was motivated by a political and an ideological interest that sought to interrupt the development of a *potentially* anti-Soviet Uzbek identity that was based upon “backward” religious and cultural influences and instead promote a socialist Soviet-Uzbek identity. This made purges differ substantially from the campaigns that were

⁴⁹¹ RGASPI, 574, 1, 23, l. 20.

⁴⁹² Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 53–54.

⁴⁹³ Alimova and Golovanov, “Uzbekistan,” 233–234.

⁴⁹⁴ Yekelchik, *Stalin’s Empire of Memory*, 5–11; Lehmann, “The Local Reinvention of the Soviet Project. Nation and Socialism in the Republic of Armenia After 1945,” 483–484.

⁴⁹⁵ Tomoff, “Uzbek Music’s Separate Path,” 240.

haunted the Slavic regions of the Soviet Union where “backwardness” had no place.⁴⁹⁶

It is difficult to determine how the Uzbek leadership reacted to the enhanced purges. Some evidence points to a split between First Secretary A. Niiazov and Secretary for Ideological Questions N. Mukhitdinov, which surfaced at a summoning initiated by the Plenipotentiary. Remaining true to Stalin’s maxim that “cadres decide everything”⁴⁹⁷, Ignat’ev turned a discussion with the Bureau members in summer 1950 into a question of the proper selection and raising of cadres. These were areas that essentially fell under Mukhitdinov’s responsibility. Accordingly, Mukhitdinov could not deny the “serious deficiencies and failures within the development of musical art in Uzbekistan, the grave deficiencies in the Academy of Sciences, Central Asian State University as well as within the area of radio-transmission, in the institution of the Communist Party etc.”⁴⁹⁸ In fact, Mukhitdinov does not appear to have advocated an intensification of the purges, for he merely remarked that the Bureau had to “strengthen the Academy of Sciences, the Central Asian State University, the Council of Writers etc.”⁴⁹⁹ While the Secretary for Ideological Questions spoke in vague and moderate terms, First Secretary A. Niiazov was far more blunt and advocated a hard-line policy. According to him, “many people are not trustworthy. I believe that these people penetrated some segments of the Soviet apparatus due to our blindness. The question of nationalist elements we need to take very seriously and quickly demolish.”⁵⁰⁰ This was completely in line with Ignat’ev’s policy. Mukhitdinov even claims that Niiazov handed him a note with sixty further names who were “actively engaged in nationalist activities, going against the policy of the party and the interests of society” and targeted for repression.⁵⁰¹

Although a split appears to have marked the Uzbek political elite during the late-Stalinist purges of the intelligentsia, it was of little consequence with regard to the implementation of policy. The Plenipotentiary held a position that allowed Ignat’ev to bypass the Uzbeks and work directly together with another non-native, the Minister of State Security, S. A. Golidze. As a consequence, the Uzbek leadership was effectively stripped of executive powers and it was in particular, the lower ranks of the party came to feel the repressive power of this constellation.

⁴⁹⁶ Leonhard, *Kreml ohne Stalin*, 77–79; Tomoff, “Uzbek Music’s Separate Path”; Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*, 468–496; Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism*, chap. 12.

⁴⁹⁷ Quoted from: Fitzpatrick, “Stalin and the Making of a New Elite, 1928-1939,” 377.

⁴⁹⁸ RGASPI, 574, 1, 23, l. 55.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, l. 59.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, l. 78.

⁵⁰¹ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 55. Mukhitdinov further claims that he was able to save the group by consulting G. M. Malenkov: *Ibid.*, 57–58.

Purging the Party

A. A. Zhdanov, the former Leningrad First Secretary, had been riding on a wave of success since the end of the war, which brought him to a secretary position in the Moscow party hierarchy with considerable control over the central party apparatus. His rise coincided with the partial demise of both L. P. Beria and G. M. Malenkov, who Stalin had been sidelining his two former cronies and given Zhdanov the sort of leverage that allowed him to install his network from Leningrad in prominent positions throughout the apparatus and secure his upper hand. After Zhdanov's death in 1948 however, Beria and Malenkov slowly but surely demoted his allies 1949 and 1953 in order to reinstall their power.⁵⁰² The purges have won the name Leningrad and Gosplan Affairs and included not only the top-level leadership but went deep into the apparatuses of the Leningrad party structure and the Gosplan administration. Zhdanov's high-level network including M. I. Rodinov, Chair of the RSFSR Council of Ministers, P. S. Popkov, Leningrad First Secretary, N. A. Voznesenskii, Chair of Gosplan, were all convicted at a secret trial in Leningrad in September 1950 and executed on October 1.

As the Leningrad and Gosplan Affairs took speed, the Uzbek leadership was still busy fighting the "feudal-bai vestiges of the past" amongst the Uzbek cultural elites. With the installation of Plenipotentiary S. D. Ignat'ev and the events unfolding in Moscow and Leningrad, the purges in the Uzbek SSR began taking a new turn. Accordingly, the intelligentsia was not the only group within Uzbek society that came to suffer from the presence of the Plenipotentiary. In fact, it was the lower level party structures that were struck most forcefully by the purges that Ignat'ev conducted.

The continuous reports of misappropriation on the lower levels of the Uzbek SSR had caused considerable dismay in Moscow when Iusupov and Abdurakhmanov were reproached during the post-war period. Yet, despite the critique from above, the Uzbek leaders proved incapable of altering the condition. Limited statehood within party and state apparatuses remained high and sparked Ignat'ev to engage in a closer investigation of the government and party structures. The results he unearthed were chastening. Ignat'ev repeatedly discovered corrupt party officials, especially within the raikom ranks.

⁵⁰² Brandenberger, "Stalin, the Leningrad Affair, and the Limits of Postwar Russocentrism," 244; Tomoff, "Uzbek Music's Separate Path," 214; Hahn, *Postwar Soviet Politics*; Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*, 79–87. The classic account: A. I Mikoian, *Tak Bylo: Razmyshleniia O Minuvshem*, ed. S. A Mikoian, *Moi 20. Vek* (Moskva: Vagrius, 1999), 559–568.

At the Bureau meeting on August 10 1950, he reported that “the cadre work in Uzbek Party organisations [was] in a very poor condition”, despite central government decrees aiming for improvement.⁵⁰³ One of the greatest obstacles, Plenipotentiary Ignat’ev recorded, were the extensive patronage networks that ruled party life on the lower levels. These protected officials and hindered the proper functioning of the party structure. In 1947, for example, a comrade Khalilov was assigned to work in Dzhaliyal-Kudukskii raikom, Ignat’ev described.⁵⁰⁴ Here he “messed up work” (*provalivat*), but “friends found Khailov” in the Surkhandarya obkom and appointed him Secretary in 1950 in Sary-Assiiskii raikom instead. Now he was even proposed for the Central Committee and the party conference as a good, faithful worker.⁵⁰⁵ Another case concerned a comrade Iuldashaev, First Secretary of the Fergana raikom. Having three different *kharakteristiki* on Iuldashaev in his possession, Ignat’ev elucidated how the patronage networks functioned. The first *kharakteristika* explained that Iuldashaev lacked initiative and was uninspiring toward other Party workers. The second highlighted much the same, adding that he was lazy and had no understanding for his work, while the third even suggested that he be removed from his position. Despite the critique however, Iuldashaev was still in his position until just a few days earlier, when Ignat’ev had removed him.⁵⁰⁶ Lastly, Ignat’ev exemplified the state of affairs on the raikom level with a case concerning the Secretary of Isbaskentskii raikom, a comrade Kasymov, who was removed from his position because of fraud and sent to the Republican Party School in 1948. After 2-3 months he was already the Secretary of Dzhambaiskii raikom until he began also “ruining (*dokonat*) this raion, started drinking and demoralizing the Party aktiv” up until July 1950, when the authorities discovered his mismanagement.⁵⁰⁷ “As you know”, Ignat’ev reminded the Uzbek Bureau, “Kasymov is not alone. The same story goes for Karimov, Secretary in the Kara-Dar’inskii raikom, Khasanov, Secretary in the Stalin raikom, another Khasanov, Secretary in the Shakhriabzkii raikom etc. etc.”⁵⁰⁸

Ignat’ev’s descriptions of the lower level party structure in Uzbekistan in 1950 could have been taken from Stalin’s speech at the March 1937 plenum of the Central Committee in Moscow. Here the dictator attacked the *semeinost*’ (familyness) that characterised the party structure. Hence, in 1937 Stalin criticised that the “workers are not selected according to ob-

⁵⁰³ Ibid., I. 3.

⁵⁰⁴ RGASPI, 574, I, 23, I. 12.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., II. 12-13.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., I. 12.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid.

jective criteria, but according to accidental, subjective, narrow and provincial criteria. Most frequently, so-called acquaintances are chosen, personal friends, fellow townsmen, people who have shown personal devotion, masters of eulogies to their patrons, irrespective of whether they are suitable from a political and business-like standpoint.”⁵⁰⁹

During the 1949–1950 purge of the Uzbek party structure, the patronage networks that Stalin described resurfaced, but merged with the fight against nationalists and enemies amongst the intelligentsia. Patronage and violation of party discipline were thus not the only factors that Ignat’ev used to characterise the nature of the lower ranks of the party in the Uzbek SSR. Instead, the Ministry of State Security had unmasked the First Secretary of the prestigious Tashkent obkom, A. Toktobaev as member of a “group of bandits” with “personal connections to nationalist elements.”⁵¹⁰ Toktobaev was released from his duties, excluded from the party and was awaiting trial by autumn 1950.⁵¹¹ A similar case was found in the Muinakskii raikom, where the Secretary, a comrade Koblanov, had gathered an enemy group around him, “among which were kulaks, members of the Hitler Turkestan legion and young participants of religious cult and etc.”⁵¹²

While Stalin’s speech in 1937 had launched an assault on the party structure throughout the Soviet Union, Ignat’ev not only used the same wording to describe the party’s condition in 1950, he also implemented similar measures to overcome the situation. From 1949 to 1950 his brigades discharged 513 of the roughly 1.500 raikom and gorkom members for deficiencies and erroneous or compromising work.⁵¹³ Furthermore, 36 leading cadres from the obkom level or higher suffered the same fate, while some 1.500 kolkhoz chairmen were removed from their positions.⁵¹⁴

The Uzbek political leadership saw the danger looming in the distance. In light of the patronage relations between Iusupov and his clients in the Uzbek Bureau, the vast patronage networks that characterised the lower levels were no less a defining element of the top-level leadership. Accordingly, S. N. Nurutdinov, Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee, tried to prove the Uzbek ruling circle’s vigilance in fighting patronage (*shestvo*), but claimed that the problem within cadre policy was of such dimensions that it was undermining the possibilities of governance. “As a result”, he complained, “kolkhozy having ‘patronage’ from the

⁵⁰⁹ Stalin, *Mastering Bolshevism*, 44–45.

⁵¹⁰ RGASPI, 574, I, 24, l. 12 and l. 20.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., l. 20.

⁵¹² RGASPI, 574, I, 23, l. 16.

⁵¹³ RGASPI, 574, 24, ll. 109–122.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

ranks of oblast' or republican party officials remain out of control" for the state.⁵¹⁵ In industry too, the practice of patronage was omnipresent. For example, it was only when First Secretary Niazov ordered the elimination of patronage networks in the Tashkent Textile Kombinat that it became evident that millions of roubles had been mismanaged and distributed to cadres under the guidance of a comrade Alekseev.⁵¹⁶

Similar critique was voiced at the February Plenum of the Uzbek Central Committee in 1949. The Uzbek Central Committee and in particular the Bureau was accused of slacking their responsibilities toward the lower level ranks in several newspaper articles during 1949–1951. In February 1949, Second Secretary Lomakin admonished the Central Committee at the Tenth Congress of the Uzbek Communist Party for not paying attention to the lower level party-organisational work in particular in the primary party organisations.⁵¹⁷ At the October 1949 Central Committee, the sharp criticism was directed at the Central Committee Department of Agriculture that had "allowed a complete detachment from the party organisations, [leading] to poor supervision and implementation" of the party's decisions.⁵¹⁸ And at the January plenum of the Central Committee in 1950, the state of the primary organisations were again on the agenda. This time, it was criticised that the primary organisations were loosing their "avantgarde role in the kolkhozy and sovkhozy".⁵¹⁹ The leading cadres of the primary party organisations, the Central Committee urged, must fulfil their role selflessly and comply to the tasks and discipline of the party.⁵²⁰

The discussions in the Bureau of the Uzbek Central Committee and news sources of the Uzbek SSR underlined the limited statehood that existed on the lower levels of the Uzbek institutional hierarchy. The patronage networks obstructed the attempts to install institutional Soviet rule that could penetrate the lower levels. In 1947, only roughly 50 per cent of the kolkhozy were organised as primary party organisations, which left them out of reach for institutional consolidation and in all likelihood nurtured patronage networks.⁵²¹

The top-level leadership attempted to blame the lower levels, while appearing true to the Bolshevik spirit of orderly party discipline as a means to protect themselves from the purges directed by Ignat'ev. The extent of the patronage networks, the institutional weakness and poor communication however left this task almost impossible to fulfil. Apart from the "promotion"

⁵¹⁵ Ibid., II. 40–41.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid., I. 41.

⁵¹⁷ "X s'ezd KP(b) Uzbekistana, *Pravda*, 06.03.1949, 2.

⁵¹⁸ "Plenum TsK KP(b) Uzbekistana, *Pravda*, 05.10.1949, 2.

⁵¹⁹ "Boevye zadachi bol'shevikov Uzbekistana", PV, 12.01.1950, 1.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ RGASPI, 17, 122, 141, II. 80–81.

of Iusupov and Abdurakhmanov, none of the indigenous top-level leaders were repressed or demoted although the purges moved into the close proximity with the apprehension of A. Toktobaev from the Tashkent obkom. Cynthia Hooper has detected “protectionism” in the party and state apparatuses during the late-Stalin period that was undoubtedly widespread in the Uzbek SSR too.⁵²² In fact, this “darker Big Deal” is likely to have been amplified by the patronage networks in the Uzbek SSR. As a consequence, these networks could work as a safety buffer for many incumbents in the Uzbek Soviet hierarchy.

The patronage networks prevalent within in the Uzbek apparatuses are likely to have been reinforced by the massive influx of new cadres during the war and the consequential ruralisation of the party. With men flocking to the front during the war and an apparatus concerned primarily concerned with the fulfilment of central government demands, cadre placement was down-prioritised, allowing non-institutional measures such as friendship and kinship to become the basis for appointments.⁵²³ The consequence was not necessarily dysfunctional to the state. Indeed, patronage networks were a way of insuring plan fulfilment and cotton delivery, but undermined the ideological commitment of the party. In other words: Theoretically, patronage networks served the economic, but not the ideologically interest of the party. The severe hardship in the post-war period where food provisioning was scarce and state policies demanding, patronage networks however turned obstructive also to the economic interests as they provided a shield that could protect against misappropriation, ideological compromises and misconduct and fraud.

The purges of the party was the central leadership’s most ferocious attack on institutional limited statehood in the late-Stalinist period. Thereby, the central leadership was guided mainly by two motivations. First of all, the war had led to a condition of increased theft and double-accounting on the lower levels. The attack was targeted to halt this condition. The central government, secondly, sought a cadre exchange that would improve destruct the existing patronage networks and promote a new group that was loyal not only to the regime but more importantly to the all-union economic interests. Thereby the leadership continued to support the indigenisation of the Uzbek party structure. Most visible in the membership of the Uzbek Central Committee where the percentage of indigenous members, in fact, rose from 60

⁵²² Cynthia Hooper, “A Darker ‘Big Deal’: Concealing Party Crimes in the post-Second World War Era,” in *Late Stalinist Russia: Society Between Reconstruction and Reinvention*, ed. Juliane Fürst (Abingdon, Oxon [England]; New York: Routledge, 2006), 142–164.

⁵²³ Collins, *Clan Politics*, 96–97.

per cent in 1949 to 63 per cent in 1953, it was a trend mirrored on the lower levels too.⁵²⁴ Evidently, Stalin did not deem it necessary reverse the growth of indigenous participation or increase non-native membership of the Uzbek party elite.⁵²⁵ Stalin remained true to one of the core features of the *korenizatsiia* that sought to rely on indigenous elites in the republics, but it was based on a clear expectation of loyalty to the dictator. Plenipotentiary Ignat'ev expressed these interests in gloomy terms: "Many of our comrades forget and do not draw any conclusions from the strong criticism that Stalin issued already at the February-March plenum of the Central Committee VKP(b) in 1937 on those officials, who neglect political work, ideological raising of the masses...who lose their vigilance and as a result ruin the party assignment given to them, get themselves into trouble and, as the phrase goes, go on retirement."⁵²⁶ The Uzbek Bureau members attending the summon will have known that Ignat'ev referred to the plenum that unleashed the cataclysmic Great Purges. It did not take much imagination to interpret Ignat'ev's statement as a gruesome threat.

In the late-Stalinist period, the Plenipotentiary was a quasi-imperial instrument of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR. With the extra-governmental institution the central leadership essentially stripped the Uzbek leaders of any constitutional influence it held in the centre-periphery relations. Receiving direct order from the Central Committee in Moscow and working directly together with the Minister of State Security, S. A. Golidze, the Plenipotentiary functioned as an extension of the Moscow ruling circle. This enabled a more direct chain of command between decision-making and implementation, where the Stalin leadership was largely independent of the Uzbek authorities in the execution of the purges.

While the Plenipotentiary was thus an expression of quasi-imperial rule, the purges of the Uzbek party apparatus were a reaction to rising institutional limited statehood. The economic shortage combined with unrealistic production demands during the post-war period, the promotion of lesser-educated members given the loss of soldiers in the war as well as the widespread patronage networks were all factors that resulted in limited statehood. While kinship relations are likely to have played a greater role on the lower levels as Kathleen Collins rightfully argues, historical evidence does not suggest that kinship was a factor on the obkom

⁵²⁴ See Appendix II.

⁵²⁵ In 1937–1938 indigenous membership was merely 52 per cent. The numbers from years prior to 1937 are incomplete. Based on the numbers of all party cells in the Uzbek SSR from 1932, the percentage of Uzbeks in the 373 cells was 48 per cent and it is likely that the feature was mirrored in the Central Committee. See: Bezrukova, *Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Turkestana i Uzbekistana v Tsifrakh, 1918-1967 Gg.*, 119.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, I. 24.

level and above.⁵²⁷ On these levels, the networks rather formed as vast political patronage networks. Nevertheless, the consequence was the same: Even Iusupov and Abdurakhmanov were accused of favouring local interests, thus essentially constituting a source of limited statehood also at the highest of the Uzbek party.

Meanwhile, the purge of the intelligentsia was primarily directed at a source of influence on limited statehood amongst the Uzbek population at large where the religious and cultural was celebrated increasingly and could *potentially* develop an anti-Soviet Uzbek identity. It was guided by similar objectives as in other regions of the Soviet Union, but it only really took speed once the Plenipotentiary had been appointed. The legacy of war and the lenient approach to cultural issues was abolished and the rigorous ideological line of the *Zhdanovshchina* installed also in the Uzbek SSR. Thereby, the discourse differed from that of other regions. “Backwardness” became the prime concern in a campaign that nested the Uzbek history and culture back on track as a development of class struggle and the Soviet assistance. Instead of attacking larger groups of society however, the purge targeted only the intelligentsia. It is difficult to determine, why Stalin limited the purge to the cultural elite in the Uzbek SSR. The Stalin leadership may have thought that an all-in attack on Uzbek society could result in widespread anti-Soviet sentiments and destabilise Soviet rule. The anti-cosmopolitan campaign did however, have characteristics of a wider attack on a socio-ethnic group in regions with a high percentage of Jews because it released anti-Semitic sentiments amongst the population, suggesting that Stalin was not dismissive of large-scale attacks on society.⁵²⁸ As a consequence, it is likely that the dictator simply did not deem it necessary to engage in a more profound attack on the population. The Central Committee VKP(b) Plenipotentiary to the Uzbek SSR was closed down early in 1951 and without any particular explanation, it vanished as suddenly as it had appeared.⁵²⁹ S. D. Ignat’ev was pulled back to the centre of power. He was promoted into the very closest proximity of the aging dictator and made Head of the Secret Police and Stalin’s personal lifeguard.

The purges conducted within the political and cultural spheres of the Uzbek SSR are suggestive with regard to influential concepts introduced by other scholars, for the extent of the purges conducted in the post-war and late-Stalin period carry no sign of a Great Retreat or

⁵²⁷ Collins, *Clan Politics*, 88–96.

⁵²⁸ See, for example: Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*, 468–496.

⁵²⁹ N. Mukhitdinov claims that he was a main force in persuading G. Malenkov to close down the Bureau: Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 57–58.

even a Big Deal.⁵³⁰ Indeed, the purges of the intelligentsia in the Uzbek SSR remained true the revolutionary idiom that praised to overcome “backwardness” and generate the New Soviet-Uzbek man. Influences of the past were by definition of “feudal-bai” nature and constituted a backward identity that found no place in the Soviet-Uzbek nation.

The purges were however, not merely due to an ideological purification drive implemented by the authorities.⁵³¹ The post-war years in the Uzbek SSR constituted very real problems of control and production. The purges of the political apparatuses were rather the convergence of ideological goals of purifying the apparatus of “backwardness” with the interest of consolidating institutions and generating a functional production to increase central control and revenues. It was “backwardness” and the entire array of social configurations, modes of authoritative hierarchies and organisation that were targeted. It was an attack on the “darker Big Deal” that intensified the struggle against any possible perpetrator within the Uzbek system.⁵³² In many ways then, the purges in the post-war Uzbek SSR echoed the purges of the Great Purges, for they were orchestrated by Stalin himself as a means to eradicate any possible form of resistance or diversion – as morbid as these suspicions were – from the official economic and ideological goals pursued by the centre of power.⁵³³

The Soviet Union as an *Ambivalent Empire* was particularly evident in the post-war period. For despite the enhanced repression and intervention, the central government never halted its reliance on the indigenisation of the Uzbek political elite. Continuously throughout the late-Stalin period, the bad state of the *korenizatsiia* was criticised and it was urged to increase efforts.⁵³⁴ Thereby it was the very inclusion of indigenous cadres that time and again obstructed the centre’s goals on the lower levels. In other words, in the post-war era, the ideological goals of integrating native cadres into the orbit of politics stood in contrast to the interests of control. The paradox between inclusion of indigenous cadres and levels of control was not the only contradiction that marked Soviet rule in the late-Stalin period. Indeed, the pursuit of revolutionary goals in the Uzbek SSR was nowhere more obvious than in the leadership’s

⁵³⁰ Timasheff, *The Great Retreat: The Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia*. Analysing the Soviet novel in the late-Stalinist period, Vera Dunham repeated, but relativised the Great Retreat thesis by arguing that the Stalinist system struck a Big Deal with a class of beneficiaries of the new system and produced a system in its own right: Vera Sandomirsky Dunham, *In Stalin’s Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction* (Cambridge [Eng.]: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 3–5.

⁵³¹ Weiner, *Making Sense of War: the Second World War and the Fate of the Bolshevik Revolution*, 21–39; Amir Weiner, “Nature, Nurture, and Memory in a Socialist Utopia: Delineating the Soviet Socio-Ethnic Body in the Age of Socialism,” *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (October 1, 1999): 1114–1155, doi:10.2307/2649563.

⁵³² Hooper, “A Darker ‘Big Deal’: Concealing Party Crimes in the post-Second World War Era.”

⁵³³ Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*, 88–89.

⁵³⁴ RGASPI, 17, 122, 141, ll. 80–82.

head-on plan for the transformation of an Uzbek socialist agricultural production. As we shall see in the next chapter, this was a process that entailed its own contradiction between the centre of power in Moscow, the Uzbek political elite and the Uzbek kolkhozniki.

4. COTTON PRODUCTION IN LATE-STALINISM

It took years for the Uzbek cotton sector to recover from the Second World War. Only by 1949 did cotton yield reach pre-war levels, a goal that had been set for 1947 in July 1945.⁵³⁵ Simultaneously, the Soviet Union was able to severely expand cotton exports in the post-war period that made up for a staggering 11,7 per cent of the total Soviet exports by 1950.⁵³⁶ In other words, the late-Stalin years constituted a period, during which the importance of cotton grew tremendously and along with it Soviet economic interest in raising output. The growing significance of cotton for all-union exports fell together with a series of other economic interest concerning the agricultural sector of the late-Stalinist period. In large parts of the regions that had fallen under the occupation of Nazi Germany, the kolkhoz structure had been completely disintegrated, leaving Soviet authorities without access to essential foodstuffs.⁵³⁷ Although the disintegration of kolkhoz structures was less acute in the Uzbek SSR, the state suffered from the same problems of limited statehood as in the western regions leading to the high levels of theft and misappropriation characteristic of the post-war period.⁵³⁸ In the Uzbek SSR, Soviet authorities were in dire need of finding measures that would bring the kolkhozy back under state control, bridging limited statehood and more critically, secure cotton production.

The economic importance of Soviet Uzbekistan led to a merging of different policies to this end. First of all, the all-union policy aiming to consolidate the kolkhoz system was also implemented in the Uzbek periphery. Secondly, the consolidation fell together with another major project to accommodate the growing importance of cotton: The expansion of irrigated areas, by the simultaneous installation of a new irrigation system. Lastly, the state enhanced its efforts to mechanise the cotton cultivation that was still largely dependent on manual labour. The final years of Stalin's dictatorship thus constituted a period in which the countryside of the Uzbek SSR once again became target of enormous tasks and fundamental changes.

Although the cotton sector did fall under the central planning and republican leaders were kept responsible for the fulfilment of quotas, the everyday implementation and control was

⁵³⁵ Compare: Statisticheskoe Upravlenie Uzbekskoi SSR, *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo Uzbekskoi SSR. Statisticheskie Sbornik*, 46 and 62; Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie SSSR, *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR: 1956*, 84.

⁵³⁶ Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie SSSR, *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR: 1956*, 217.

⁵³⁷ Hough and Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union Is Governed*, 179–180.

⁵³⁸ Claus Bech Hansen, "Mobilisierung in Räumen Beschränkter Staatlichkeit Während Des Zweiten Weltkrieges," *Zeitschrift Für Geschichtswissenschaft* 57, no. 12 (2009): 1000–1012.

by and large a republican matter in the pre- and early post-war period. With growing all-union exports and a general dedication in the Moscow ruling circle toward “ordinary Stalinism”⁵³⁹, the cotton sector became subject to centralisation in 1950 when an all-union Ministry of Cotton Production was established. The bundling of power in Moscow installed a central institution that would be able to better direct and control cotton growing in the Soviet Union. The unification of power came at the expense of republican leaders as planning now became further centralised. Along with the centralisation, republican interests and needs were weighed against one another and policy implementation decided upon in Moscow, not in Tashkent, Baku or Dushanbe. Conflict was predetermined.

In the first section of this chapter, the reconfigurations of the Uzbek countryside during the late-Stalin period that included the introduction of a new irrigation system and the resettlement of more than one-hundred thousand farmers stand at the centre of attention. Secondly, we analyse the complex constitution of limited statehood on the lower levels of implementation in the Uzbek SSR on the example of central government demands of mechanisation. The last section analyses the consequences of an enhanced centralisation drive in the very last years of Stalin’s rule as well as the republican responses.

⁵³⁹ I understand the term “ordinary Stalinism” along the lines of Yoram Gorlizki as a drive toward a better functioning state apparatus of “centrally regimented decision making that...might assume more of a routine and everyday character.” See: Gorlizki, “Ordinary Stalinism,” 700.

4.1. NEW LAND, NEW STRUCTURES

“On the cost of cultivated non-irrigated areas...100-120 thousand kolkhoz farmsteads (*kolkhoznoe khoziaistvo*) are to be resettled to areas suited for irrigation (with potential for expansion). It is planned to move 18.000 farmsteads in 1949, 14.000 in 1950.”⁵⁴⁰ The resettlement of kolkhozniki was the consequence of what Usman Iusupov called the “correct use of man-power resources.”⁵⁴¹ To accommodate the central government’s raising demand for cotton, the Uzbek SSR alone was expected bump up yearly production to 4.000.000 ton cotton by 1957 or 1958.⁵⁴² As a consequence, Iusupov urged at the 10th Uzbek Party Congress early March 1949, the Uzbek authorities had to restructure the existing irrigated areas to cover 1.300.000 hectare, while simultaneously rise cotton yield to roughly 30 tsentner per hectare.⁵⁴³ The “correct use of man-power”, meaning the resettlement of many thousand kolkhozniki as well as the expansion of the irrigated areas were but some of the means used to satisfy the steadily increasing demand for cotton. For rising interest in cotton allowed the Uzbek leaders to push for several other goals that were part of the vague Soviet vision of a socialist Uzbek countryside: The establishment of a new, more efficient irrigation system, the electrification of the countryside and kolkhozy as well as the mechanisation of an agricultural sector still marked by manual labour. This ideological vision of the Uzbek leadership was however, continuously hampered by the condition of limited statehood in the rural regions of the Uzbek SSR.

The New Irrigation System

The celebrations for the 25th anniversary of the Uzbek SSR’s foundation went on for days in mid January 1950.⁵⁴⁴ Parades and decorations adorned the streets of Tashkent and festivities of various kinds hailed the socialist path of the Central Asian republic. Political talks and rallies were organised and it was no coincidence that irrigation featured notably in L. L. Kaganovich keynote speech before the Uzbek Central Committee on January 16. Stalin’s trusted lieutenant who had participated both in the revolutionary battles and the early years of Bol-

⁵⁴⁰ Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1984, III:139. From First Secretary of the Uzbek SSR, Usman Iusupov’s speech on the 10th Uzbek Party Congress early March 1949.

⁵⁴¹ Ibid.

⁵⁴² Ibid., III:137.

⁵⁴³ Ibid. Approximate numbers for the 1950 harvest put the gross harvest at 2.2 million ton from a cultivated area of 1.1 million hectare with a yield at 20 tsentner per hectare.

⁵⁴⁴ Celebrations recorded in *Pravda Vostoka*, 16.-20.01.1950.

shevik power in the Central Asian states, knew all too well the struggles fought over water in the nascent Soviet republic in the 1920s.⁵⁴⁵ “For centuries, the khanates used water to enslave the masses as khans, bais as well as Russian colonial landlords, kulaks [and] princes held a monopoly on the irrigation network”, Kaganovich reminded the Uzbek political elite. “Now”, he continued, “water and land belongs to the Soviet state.”⁵⁴⁶ Whether it was a slip of the tongue or a deliberate clarification of the Chairman of the Committee for State Supplies (Gossnab) remains unclear, but Kaganovich’s statement underlined that the Soviet authorities gave the state, not the people ownership over water.

Before the revolution, irrigation was indeed organised along the lines of social stratification, the structures of which the Bolsheviks had already begun uprooting after victory in the Civil War.⁵⁴⁷ The vast network of rivers, main irrigation canals and smaller ditches was overseen and controlled by several local authorities. The allocation of water in communities living along rivers and irrigation canals was directed either by a aryk-aksakal who supervised larger irrigation networks, or by the mirab, a local canal overseer, who was usually an experienced elder “who enforced local agreements on how water was used and the amount to which people were entitled.”⁵⁴⁸

The Bolshevik deracination of “backward” social and cultural structures in Central Asia and particularly the collectivisation process however, destroyed this traditional system of water allocation and instead endowed local party officials or kolkhoz Chairman with the power of supervision over the local irrigation system. Meanwhile, the highest authority was vested in the Commissariat/Ministry for Water Management in Tashkent that intervened at will as part of the bodies deciding over the fate of irrigated areas in the Uzbek SSR. Despite habitual ideological phrasing awarding the rights over water to the people, it were bureaucrats in Moscow and Tashkent that held the power to decide and implement where water should

⁵⁴⁵ On the land and water reform: Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 175–182; Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca. The Soviet Campaign Against Islam in Central Asia, 1917-1941*, 107–140. In the nomadic regions, similar processes of consolidating Soviet rule took form of violently repressive sedentary policies: Martha Brill Olcott, “The Collectivization Drive in Kazakhstan,” *Russian Review* 40, no. 2 (April 1981): 122–142; Robert Kindler, “Die Nomaden Und Der Hunger. Sesshaftmachung Und Herrschaftsdurchsetzung in Kasachstan, 1920-1945” (Doctoral Thesis, Humboldt University, Berlin, 2012), 99–174.

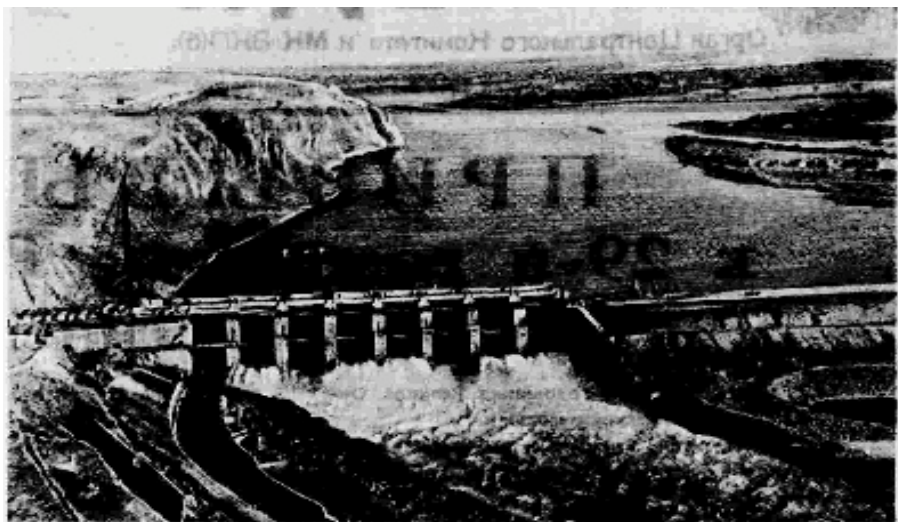
⁵⁴⁶ “Rech’ tovarishcha L. M. Kaganovicha na iubileinoi sessii Verkhovnogo Soveta Uzbekskoi SSR”, PV, 19.01.1950, 1.

⁵⁴⁷ Christian Teichmann, “Canals, Cotton, and the Limits of De-colonization in Soviet Uzbekistan, 1924-1941,” *Central Asian Survey* 26, no. 4 (December 2007): 502.

⁵⁴⁸ Often the aryk-aksakal was part of the Russian colonial administration: Ibid. See also: Julia Obertreis, “Infrastrukturen Im Sozialismus: Das Beispiel Der Bewässerungssysteme in Zentralasien,” *Saeculum: Jahrbuch Für Universalgeschichte* 58, no. 1 (2007): 158–160.

flow.⁵⁴⁹ The establishment of the new irrigation system and the vast expansion of the irrigated areas in the late-Stalin period was to prove Kaganovich right.

It was the opening of the Farkhad Dam on the Syrdarya River in eastern Uzbekistan at the border to the Tajik SSR that was the main cause of the new expansion of the irrigated areas in the Uzbek SSR. Commissioned in 1942 and operational from 1946 it created the enormous Farkhad reservoir of 48 square kilometres that could ensure the irrigation of the Hungry Steppe in the Uzbekistan.⁵⁵⁰ Accordingly, the all-union Council of Ministers issued a decree in August 1950 foreseeing an expansion of roughly 400.000 hectare as a consequence of the irrigation potential. Although the expansion was expected to be achieved within the next ten years, the plan also drew up the parameters for the new irrigation system, which was planned to begin operating within the next two to three years.⁵⁵¹ As such the new irrigation system was not designed to replace the old one. Instead, it was based on the rationale of optimising output. In areas with a traditional low yield, as well as those irrigated areas that were unfit for expansion, irrigation was to be closed in order to direct the water into areas promising higher yield after a new irrigation network was established. Irrigated areas supplying high yields were to remain but the canal network was to be improved.⁵⁵²



⁵⁴⁹ Teichmann, “Canals, Cotton, and the Limits of De-colonization in Soviet Uzbekistan, 1924-1941,” 502.

⁵⁵⁰ Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1984, III:241.

⁵⁵¹ The decree reprinted in: K. U Chernenko and M. S Smirtiukov, eds., *Resheniia partii i pravitel'stva po khoziaistvennym voprosam. Sbornik dokumentov.*, vol. 3 (Moscow: Izd-vo polit. lit-ry, 1968), 641–648. See also: Iu. I. Iskhakov, *Razvitie Khlopkovodstva v Uzbekistane* (Tashkent: Gosizdat UzSSR, 1960), 175–179. Just 18 months before the plan for the new irrigation system was decreed, on March 19, 1949, the all-union Council of Ministers and Central Committee VKP(b) had ordered the extension of the old irrigation system and shipped additional equipment to Uzbekistan to assist the endeavour. It is not unlikely that the establishment of the all-union Ministry of Cotton Production was instrumental in pushing for a funds to the periphery to improve the irrigation facilities, but evidence to support this is lacking. See: Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1984, III:136.

⁵⁵² Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1984, III:193–194.

The Farkhad Dam shortly upon initial operation.⁵⁵³

During the pre-war period of Soviet rule, the irrigated areas had been increased by nearly 500.000 hectare, mainly building upon the work done by Russian colonisers in the Hungry Steppe.⁵⁵⁴ It was, however, quantity rather than quality that had characterised the expansion the irrigation canals. While the socialist prestige projects such as the Fergana Canal were concreted to secure water flow and persistence, the many thousand kilometres of smaller irrigation canals were merely dug directly into the ground, thus being in constant need for cleaning and maintenance.⁵⁵⁵ Hence, many kolkhozy were constantly preoccupied by trying to remedy the situation by repairing the irrigation sites and eliminate damages to the system in order to maintain the required water-levels.⁵⁵⁶

The new irrigation system was meant rectify the situation. Generally, it aimed at being more effective by decreasing the consumption of single kolkhozy, while increasing the irrigated areas. On the local level, this translated into a changed, improved structured layout of the cotton fields in the vicinity of the larger irrigation canals (see picture below), which was to be supported by better and, especially, more equipment such as water pumps and sprinklers to bring the water onto the fields.⁵⁵⁷ In doing so, possible loss was limited in two ways: On the one hand, there were less dug-out pipes, promising less maintenance. Furthermore, the constant obstacle of cleaning the thousand of kilometres of canals was limited in scope by the use of more main water arteries and fewer branch canals leading onto the fields.

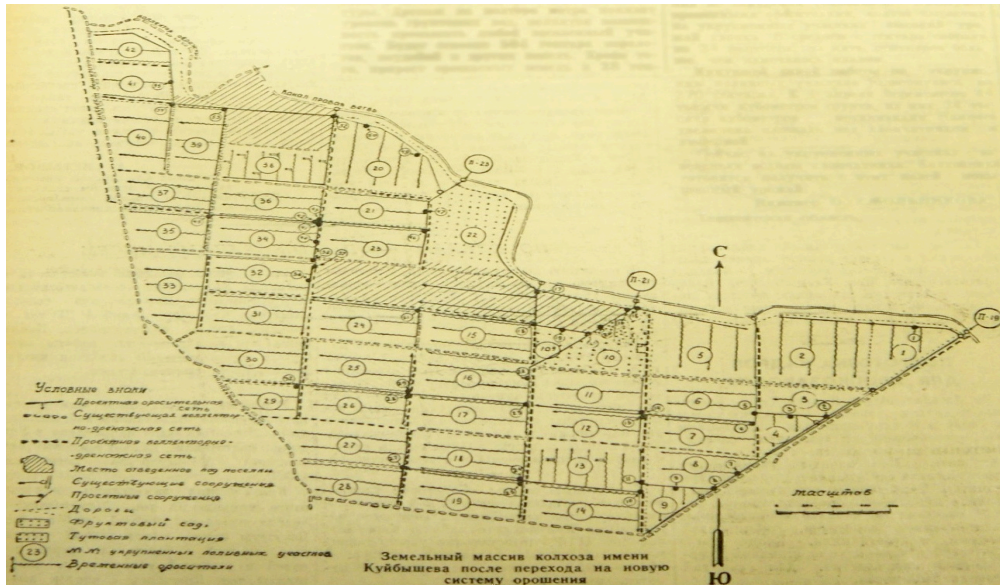
⁵⁵³ The opening was celebrated with a full-page feature in *Pravda*: “Sovetskii Uzbekistan – Sotsialisticheskii maiak na Vostoke”, *Pravda*, 02.11.1946, 2.

⁵⁵⁴ Obertreis, “Infrastrukturen Im Sozialismus,” 158–160.

⁵⁵⁵ Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1984, III:194–195. See also: Teichmann, “Canals, Cotton, and the Limits of De-colonization in Soviet Uzbekistan, 1924-1941,” 502–505; Obertreis, “Infrastrukturen Im Sozialismus,” 158–163. The of 230 kilometers long Fergana Canal was built in 1939 in just 90 days by more than 150.000 workers and kolkhozniki.

⁵⁵⁶ Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1984, III:195.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, III:195–199.



Depiction of a consolidated kolkhoz, following the introduction of the new irrigation system with the fields in the vicinity of the water supply. Note square outlay of the fields to shorten length of the canals. Source: *Sovetskoe khlopkovodstva*, May 14, 1952.

Scholars have continuously overlooked what the vast expansion of irrigation areas meant to the traditional social structures in the post-war period.⁵⁵⁸ The constant pushing of the steppe and desert frontier demanded settlement in the newly conquered regions. As already noted, in spring 1949 Usman Iusupov had estimated a resettlement of up to 120.000 kolkhoz farmsteads as a consequence of the post-war investment in the Uzbek cotton sector.⁵⁵⁹ The Soviet authorities thus stood before a mammoth task that required not only resettlement of kolkhozniki but also the construction of the entire infrastructure in the new farm-sites. The Uzbek leaders were quick however, in cunningly combining the creation of new kolkhozy with the late-Stalinism policy to create fewer but bigger kolkhozy in order to maximise output and control.

Kolkhoz Consolidation

As a consequence of the increasing levels of limited statehood during and following the Second World War, the reclamation of power and secure supply was a central feature of the kolkhoz policy of the late-Stalin period.⁵⁶⁰ The result was the consolidation of the kolkhozy be-

⁵⁵⁸ Most evident in: Obertreis, "Infrastrukturen Im Sozialismus."

⁵⁵⁹ Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1984, III:139.

⁵⁶⁰ Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 88.

gun in 1946 and successively reinforced over the following years.⁵⁶¹ In the Uzbek periphery, the all-union consolidation policy played into the Uzbek leadership's hands, for it merged with the establishment of the new irrigation system that already intended the resettlement of kolkhozniki.

From a purely economic perspective, the consolidation was based on the rationale that larger kolkhozy with more farmsteads would provide more hands per hectare. In May 1950 the Central Committee VKP(b) decreed "that there are serious obstacles present in the further development of agriculture and consolidation of kolkhozy in many districts, regions and republics and a notable number of small kolkhozy that cannot successfully develop the national economy through [their] size." Accordingly, the Central Committee called for a further unification of kolkhozy and obligated Soviet ministries "to secure the timely realisation of consolidating the kolkhozy...for the goal of correct use of all the agricultural lands."⁵⁶² In a much similar wording Usman Iusupov explained at a Bukhara party meeting in summer 1951 that as a consequence of the consolidation the Uzbek kolkhozniki would "achieve a larger harvest, produce more by *trudoden*' [the economic measurement to apprehend salaries based the worked hours, the quality of labour and output] and have the possibility to further develop all areas of agriculture faster."⁵⁶³

On the local level in Central Asia however, the Uzbek authorities knew of the policy's possibly implications. The total number of kolkhozy in 1945 lay at roughly 6.700, many of which were minor communities with less than one hundred farmsteads. Meanwhile the primary party organisations' penetration of the kolkhozy lay only at roughly 50 per cent in 1947.⁵⁶⁴ With the consolidation the influence of the party on the local level was expected to seriously increase. The campaign was thus implemented rigorously. By 1955 the constitution of the kolkhozy had been changed completely and almost three-quarters of the kolkhozy now had more than two hundred farmsteads.⁵⁶⁵ Whether or not it was the intention of the all-union and republican governments to destroy the local organisation that had been generated under the past twenty years of Soviet rule, the consolidation did seriously reshuffle the constitution of the kolkhozy. With the merging of kolkhozy, the new kolkhoz chairmen had to be elected, new brigade leaders and water instructors had to be chosen and new responsibilities distri-

⁵⁶¹ Fedoseev and Chernenko, *Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Sovetskogo Soiuz, Tom Shestoi, 1941-1954*, 8:304.

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, 8:306.

⁵⁶³ RGAE, 9451, 1, 39, l. 120.

⁵⁶⁴ RGASPI, 17, 122, 141, ll. 80–81.

⁵⁶⁵ Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie SSSR, *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR: 1956*, 131. The exact distribution was: Up to 100 farmsteads: 5,1%; 101-200: 23,0%; 201-300: 24,3%; 301-500: 27,3%; more than 500: 20,3%.

buted. Independent of the organisational principles defining the respective kolkhozy – clans, Soviet or other – these were challenged by the consolidation policy.⁵⁶⁶ While the primary goal of the consolidation policy was to overcome the high levels of limited statehood, the very policy also generated limited statehood and a loss of control over the process.



Preparation of new fields and irrigation canals in Tajikistan. Source: *Sovetskoe khlopkovodstvo*, February 27, 1953.

It is not surprising that the consolidation did not always run smoothly. In a letter from to the Plenipotentiary of the Central Committee VKP(b) to Uzbekistan in June 1949, Usman Iusupov reported that 1.500 kolkhoz chairmen had been substituted but that “the large exchange was often practiced against the will of the kolkhozniki.”⁵⁶⁷ Although the kolkhozniki do not appear to have resorted to violence in opposing state directives, evidence suggests that they used other methods to oppose the policy and at least partly achieve their goals.⁵⁶⁸ One widespread means was to vote down the kolkhoz Chairman candidates proposed by the raion party cell if the running candidate was not to the liking of the kolkhozy.⁵⁶⁹ Another was by “creating problems on the collective until the party committee put forth a new candidate whom the kolkhoz would accept.”⁵⁷⁰ This was a phenomenon that appears to have been

⁵⁶⁶ According to Kathleen Collins, clans was the main feature defining the kolkhozy: Collins, *Clan Politics*, 92.

⁵⁶⁷ RGASPI, 574, 1, 9, ll. 149–154, here l. 149.

⁵⁶⁸ Especially during the collectivisation violence had been a preferred response from the farmers to the state policy. See: Alimova et al., *Tragediia Sredneaziatskogo Kishlaka*, 2006; Rustambek Shamsutdinov, *Tragedy of Kishlak: Collectivization, Dispossession of Kulaks, Exile: Example of Central Asian Republics*. (Tashkent: Head Editorial Office of the Publishing House of Stock Company “Shark,” 2003). An excellent study on collectivisation and Soviet sedentary policies in the Kazakh SSR: Kindler, “Die Nomaden Und Der Hunger. Sesshaftmachung Und Herrschaftsdurchsetzung in Kasachstan, 1920-1945.”

⁵⁶⁹ Collins, *Clan Politics*, 92.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid. On peasant resistance's many faces, but mainly on the Russian regions: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants. Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village After Collectivization* (New York ; Oxford: Oxford Uni-

common throughout the Soviet Union to such an extent that the central government decided to act. With a decree from July 9 1950 was entitled “On the tasks of party and Soviet organisations on the further consolidation of the staff of chairmen and other leading workers in the kolkhozy” the central government attempted to curtail the consequences of the process it had set in motion.⁵⁷¹ The Central Committee and Council of Ministers accounted that “in all republics, territories, districts and regions there are a notable number of weak kolkhozy that are gathering a low harvest, slowly developing the livestock, achieving little yield.”⁵⁷² According to the premise that “weak are only those farms that are headed by unprepared, passive and weak chairmen and other leaders of the kolkhoz cadres”, central leadership ordered party and state organisations on all levels, “by no means to recommend to chairmen of the kolkhozy” persons who had formerly been working in leading position.⁵⁷³ Instead, party cadres should find for the organising positions in kolkhozy specialists with higher and middle education in agriculture or other specialists and adepts of agriculture, having experience with leading and organising work.⁵⁷⁴

Given the enormous rise in articles on the consolidation of the kolkhozy in the newspapers of the Uzbek SSR, it is clear that the work in Uzbek the kolkhozy was everything but satisfactory. From 1949 onward topics such as “strengthening the kolkhoz leadership”, “improvement of the organisational work in the kolkhozy” or the “fortification of kolkhoz party organisations” were weekly recurrent themes in the main Soviet newspaper *Pravda vostoka*.⁵⁷⁵ Such articles underlined the need to find skilful leadership, to choose a decent chair, brigade leaders and experienced work unit leaders that could ensure labour discipline and maximise competition.⁵⁷⁶ The articles also touched upon the kolkhoz leadership’s duty to agitate and organise the implementation of decrees, the crucial role of the primary party institutions in organisational and monitoring work of the kolkhozy.⁵⁷⁷

versity Press, 1994), 65–67; Lynne Viola, *Peasant Rebels Under Stalin: Collectivization and the Culture of Peasant Resistance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁵⁷¹ Fedoseev and Chernenko, *Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Sovetskogo Soiuza, Tom Shestoi, 1941-1954*, 8:324.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

⁵⁷³ Ibid., 8:326.

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵ See for example: “Uluchshit’ rukovodstvo kolkhoznymi partorganizatsiiami”, PV, 30.03.1950, 2; “O nekotorykh voprosakh dal’neishego organizatsionno-khoziaistvennogo ukrepleniia kolkhozov”, PV, 30.04.1950, 2; “Za ukрупnenie melkikh kolkhozov”, PV, 24.06.1950, 3; “Za ukрупnennye kolkhozy”, PV, 05.07.1950, 3; “Usilit’ rukovodstvo kolkhoznymi partiinymi organizatsiiami”, PV, 19.07.1950, 1; “Vospitatel’naia rabota kolkhoznoi partorganizatsii”, PV, 22.07.1950, 3.

⁵⁷⁶ “Za ukрупnennye kolkhozy”, PV, 05.07.1950, 3.

⁵⁷⁷ “Usilit’ rukovodstvo kolkhoznymi partiinymi organizatsiiami”, PV, 19.07.1950, 1.

In addition to the informational campaign in the Soviet newspapers, the high-level political leadership also occasionally performed linguistic acrobatics in order to persuade the locals of its projects. In early summer 1951, Usman Iusupov, who by then held the position of all-union Cotton Minister, embarked on a trip to the Uzbek periphery to make use of his personal authority in Uzbekistan to campaign for the consolidation of kolkhozy.⁵⁷⁸ Speaking before a Karakalpak audience on the necessity to merge kolkhozy, he noted “it is not decisive to which kishlak the kolkhoz is bound, because the development of the kolkhoz must come from the production basis. All the more so, your kishlaki thus have to be reconstructed fundamentally to reduce [their] dispersion to one single village - i.e.: the socialist kolkhoz-kishlak.”⁵⁷⁹ Kishlak was the term used by semi-nomadic peoples in Central Asia to describe a temporary resting place where the nomads would camp for the winter. Hardly comparable with a kolkhoz, the Soviet authorities relied on a language and a set of cultural constructions, to which the local population could relate, in the hope of gaining support for its policy.⁵⁸⁰ At the same times however, Iusupov did not mince his words in underlining that the Soviet authorities remained resistant to any local level disagreement with their policy. Fully aware of the kolkhozniki’s disapproval he commented: “Of course some grandfather (*dedushka*) may not like [the consolidation] but under the guidance of the party we want to do better and we will.”⁵⁸¹ The secrecy policy of Russian and Uzbek archives prevent a detailed account of the popular responses to the enormous projects of land irrigation, resettlement and kolkhoz consolidation in the late-Stalin period. Although the consolidation of kolkhozy disrupted local power networks, they did not destroy them. As shown in the previous chapter, patronage networks were a strong structuring principle in the rural regions of the Uzbek SSR. Scholars studying the later period have convincingly demonstrated how these networks continued to structure everyday life in the Uzbek countryside up until the collapse of the Soviet Union.⁵⁸² In the under-administered regions, these structures ensured a speedier problem-solving and conflict-resolution that provided a solidarity network that took the role of the absent state authorities and provided security in an economy of shortages.⁵⁸³ Although the new, consolidated kolkhozy gathered several former villages and kishlaki in one place, it appears that the state in

⁵⁷⁸ RGAE, 9451, 1, 39, ll. 173–175.

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., l. 109.

⁵⁸⁰ From time to time the term kishlak also appeared in *Pravda vostoka*. On June 24 1951 for example a major lead article under the title: “Sotsialisticheskomu kishlaku - vysokuii kul’turu!”, PV, 24.06.1951, 2.

⁵⁸¹ RGAE, 9451, 1, 39, l. 109

⁵⁸² Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 86–89.

⁵⁸³ Collins, *Clan Politics*, 62–100. In the year 2000, a local clan elder of a kolkhoz told Kathleen Collins that “everyone here is related; we are family.” Ibid., 96.

the long run did not manage to overcome the poorly consolidated Soviet institutions on the local levels in the rural areas of the Uzbek SSR. Despite resettlement and consolidation then, the old networks blossomed literally under a new roof.

The Uzbek kolkhozniki instead learned to achieve their goals while accommodating the policies of the Soviet authorities. Nevertheless, the material clearly shows that governmental policies did not spark euphoria amongst large parts of the Uzbek kolkhozniki. As demonstrated above, some kolkhozniki were openly opposed to the exchange of chairmen and resettlement, while others were bound to have used other more, covert measures to their benefit. Aware of the situation, the authorities used a well-known method by beginning a propaganda campaign and using a language that it thought would convince the kolkhozniki of the consolidation's positive sides. Not for a moment did the Uzbek leadership halt the consolidation though. It dutifully implemented the central government policy and left little room for discussion with the kolkhozniki. While the number of kolkhozy lay at roughly 6.700 in 1945, the number had been bisected by 1950 and by 1955 number stood at just 2.000.⁵⁸⁴

On paper at least the Uzbek authorities achieved their goal concerning the major tasks they envisioned. By 1955 the cultivated areas for cotton had surged to 1.3 million from 875.000 in 1947.⁵⁸⁵ This incredible urge for cotton not only had consequences for the kolkhozniki. As a matter of fact, the consolidation of kolkhozy coincided with a down-prioritisation of a diversified agricultural sector and a growing trend toward cotton monoculture in the Uzbek SSR.⁵⁸⁶ During the Soviet famine in the late 1940s, this appears to have become a growing problem for the food supply in Uzbekistan. Accordingly, in February 1947 Deputy Chairman of the Party Control Commission in Uzbekistan, A. Tikhomirov, informed his superior in Moscow, A. A. Andreev, that the provision of potatoes and vegetables had gone down dramatically particularly in Tashkent and only covered the needs of 50 per cent of the population.⁵⁸⁷ As a cause, Tikhomirov noted that the consolidation of kolkhozy in the suburban regions of Tashkent and the prioritisation of cotton industry had resulted in a “decrease of the number of kolkhozy specialising in vegetables.”⁵⁸⁸ While the cotton growing kolkhozy had increased substantially, the opposite was the case for the foodstuffs growing kolkhozy. As a

⁵⁸⁴ Gosudarstvennyi komitet SSSR po statistike, *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo SSSR V Velikoi Otechestvennoi Voine*, 139; Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie SSSR, *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR: 1956*, 103.

⁵⁸⁵ 1947 numbers in: GARF, 5446, 50, 2062, l. 17. 1955 statistics in: Statisticheskoe Upravlenie Uzbekskoi SSR, *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo Uzbekskoi SSR. Statisticheskie Sbornik*, 77.

⁵⁸⁶ On cotton monoculture: Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*, 61–76.

⁵⁸⁷ RGANI, 6, 6, 677, l. 49.

⁵⁸⁸ Ibid.

consequence, demand of fruits and potatoes were only covered by 44 per cent.⁵⁸⁹ Tikhomirov saw no other solution than to “decrease the tasks regarding industrial crops in the suburban (*prigorodnyi*) raions and increase the vegetable crops and the number of kolkhozy, specialised in vegetables.”⁵⁹⁰ In other words, the implementation of central government policies hampered food supply in the Uzbek SSR.

Such consequences of the kolkhoz consolidation were concealed to the public. Instead it was a somewhat proud Nuritdin Mukhitdinov, Chairman of the Uzbek Council of Ministers, who delineated the scope of work that was completed by August 1952 in the Uzbek SSR. 438.000 hectare of the new irrigated areas had already been created according to the guidelines of the new irrigation system. Mukhitdinov saw this as a “witness of the great help that the Soviet government showed the kolkhozy of Uzbekistan in the execution of the grandiose programme of transformation to the new irrigation system.”⁵⁹¹ While the major projects of conquering new land for irrigation and the consolidation of kolkhozy thus merged into a functional unity that saw its timely execution, it was another question to make the new system function according to the expectations of the Soviet authorities.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ RGANI, 6, 6, 677, l. 50. Despite such evidence, the Soviet famine of 1947/48 and its ramifications in Uzbekistan and Central Asia remains a terra incognita and further source material has yet to be declassified in Moscow and Tashkent.

⁵⁹¹ “Vernoie sredstvo dal’neishego pod’ema khlopkovodstva”, *Sovetskoe Khlopkovodstvo*, 16.08.1952, 1.

4.2. TRACTOR VS. KETMEN'

The new irrigation system and the consolidation of the kolkhozy were not the only policies implemented in the Uzbek countryside during the late-Stalin period. Indeed, the general developments of industrialisation during World War II sparked the Uzbek authorities to believe that they could achieve similar astonishing results with regard to the creation of a modern, socialist Uzbek cotton production. The late-Stalin period thus witnessed enhanced policies to mechanise and electrify the Uzbek countryside.

The pre-mechanised cultivation of cotton fields in Central Asia was extremely labour intensive. First of all, it entailed manually preparing and sowing the fields with farm animals. Second, harvesting was done, using the *ketmen*', a hybrid of a hoe and a mattock that the peasants used to knock off cotton pads into a sack or basket hanging from the neck of the peasant.⁵⁹² Third, the arid Central Asian climate demanded constant irrigation of the fields, not only for the nurture of the plants, but also for the cultivation of the land itself that would otherwise turn dry and hinder sowing and preparation.

A mechanised, industrial socialist agriculture was one of the central visions of Bolshevik ideology however, and imagined Uzbek cotton production to be mechanised in all links: First of all, heavy machinery was to substitute manual labour in the cultivation of fields. Second, great dams were to provide electricity for the new equipment in kolkhozy to make possible the deployment of industrial equipment. Third, electric pumps and sprinklers should provide water even to fields distant from main the irrigation canals. Despite the ideological goals of freeing man from strenuous manual work, it was the economic prospect of raising cotton output while lowering its costs that stood behind the Soviet authorities' by pushing for mechanisation in the Uzbek countryside which was an equation not easily achieved.

The Relation between Demand and Supply

Although the Uzbek SSR was situated thousands of kilometres from the battlefields of the Second World War, the war effort had demanded a large share of the Uzbek mechanised vehicles. A statement ordered by the all-union Central Committee Organisational Bureau in October 1945 revealed the disastrous state of affairs: On the whole, the stock of agricultural machinery in Uzbekistan had decreased by 50 %, seriously hampering any kind of mecha-

⁵⁹² Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev. Reformer 1945-1964*, ed. Sergei Khrushchev, trans. George Shriver, vol. 2 (Pennsylvania State University, 2006), 313.

nised farming.⁵⁹³ The resurrection and expansion of the machine base in the Uzbek periphery was therefore one of the key issues of Soviet agricultural policy in the late-Stalin period. Introducing new machinery in the Uzbek countryside was however, easier said than done, for the regime more often than not lacked both sufficient material equipment and manpower, in order to make the new, industrial work practices that it was bent on introducing function.

In the property-free agriculture of the Soviet Union, the Machine and Tractor Stations (MTS) constituted one of the pillars of the agricultural system since the 1920s. Engaged both in operation of machines in fieldwork as well as machine maintenance, MTS workers also became the heart of the mechanisation process of the late-Stalin period. The heavy investment from all-union funds did translate into a remarkable recovery of machinery from 1945 onward. By 1949 the number of MTS had risen from the pre-war 186 to 216 facilities, while 15 new repair factories, with 400 transportable repair units had been established.⁵⁹⁴ This improvement translated into the number of machines. On average, the number of sowing machines was raised from 5673 in 1947 to 12.830 in 1951.⁵⁹⁵ Similar numbers were recorded for cultivators and cotton stem up-rooters, where the numbers were raised respectively from 7.248 to almost 20.000 and 2363 to 9747. Lastly, the number of cotton harvesters and cotton extractors did rise too arriving at 3133 and 7880 respectively in 1951.⁵⁹⁶

Despite the notable increase in machinery, Soviet authorities discovered that mechanisation of the Uzbek agricultural production was not a straightforward process. Rather, it was marked by several problems. One of the main difficulties following the introduction of machinery was the repair work of tractors and other mechanised vehicles used in the Uzbek countryside. Throughout the early 1950s, *Pravda vostoka* featured numerous articles criticising the state of affairs in the MTS, for although machines were present in the Uzbek MTS, only a fraction

⁵⁹³ RGASPI, 17, 121, 411, l. 15 and l. 2.

⁵⁹⁴ Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1984, III:136–137.

⁵⁹⁵ RGAE, 9451, 1, 664, l. 76. In the Samarkand and Khiva regions numbers had sky-rocketed by approximately 200 per cent.

⁵⁹⁶ RGAE, 9451, 1, 664, l. 76. These numbers must of course be put into relation with the area sown in those years and the number of kolkhozniki. According to M. Musaev, the total acreage of both irrigated and non-irrigated areas for cotton growing in Uzbekistan amounted to 1.098.000 hectares in 1950, meaning that every sowing machine had to sow roughly 85.000 square metres every year (roughly 85 football normal sized pitches); or that every cotton harvester had to harvest 139.000 square metres. To exemplify: The Soviet cotton picking machines were basically a two-row device constructed to be put on a tractor. Such machines are still produced today and can pick 0,25 hec/hour during the first pick, while the second pick can be done at a velocity of 0,44 hec/hour. If one of today's machines had to pick an average field in Uzbekistan in 1951, with a work-day of 8 hours it would take roughly 100 days. M. S Gleizer, *Uzbejskaia SSR: Kratkii Istoriko-ekonomicheskii Oчерk*. (Moscow: Gos. izd-vo polit. lit-ry, 1959), 134.

were prepared for work in the fields.⁵⁹⁷ Such critique often centred around the deficient circumstances in the MTS, where workshops had “no heat, roof leaks, no shelves or work benches” as in the majority of MTS in the Karakalpak ASSR.⁵⁹⁸ The lack of equipment also featured high on the political agenda of the Uzbek Central Committee in its December Plenum 1950, where it was denounced that “still not enough time and money had been spent on the MTS”, leaving them in a particularly bad state in the Fergana, Bukhara, Kashkadarya and Khiva regions.⁵⁹⁹ Critics argued that as a consequence, the MTS were unprepared for repair work as they were not equipped with essential spare parts, materials, tools and generators.⁶⁰⁰ In addition, voices complained that the preparation of the tractors was slowed down because they were delivered with severe deficiencies directly from the machine factories such as the Tashkent Factory for Agricultural Machine.⁶⁰¹ According to this line of argument, the MTS workers had a hard time finishing up the machinery for the work in the field due to the difficult repair facilities.

The Uzbek MTS was however, also subject to critique that argued from another perspective. Thereby, it was less the lack of equipment, but the lack of qualified MTS workers that was the source of problems. In an article under the less cheerful title “The Fruits of Disorganisation”, the author G. Slavin found serious faults in the work of the MTS workers, arguing that although the MTS had the necessary tools such as “pullers, alignment tools, etc. None of them [were] applied, while the hammer stood high in the [workers’] esteem.”⁶⁰² As a result, MTS workers crushed the tractors rather than dismantling them, making it almost impossible to assemble them again because the workers were simply not acquainted with the technically demanding reparations. The lack of qualified workers also led to the erroneous preparation of the tractors because they were often equipped with harrows measuring larger or smaller than the rows needed for cotton planting, thus making them useless for implementation.⁶⁰³

Recurrent in this line of argument was the insufficient use of technological skills, bad organisation and poor discipline amongst the MTS workers. In February 1951, these were emphasised as the main reasons for the poor state of functioning tractors in the Namangan, Fergana and Bukhara regions, where only 10 per cent had been prepared for work by the end of Janu-

⁵⁹⁷ See, for example: “Povysit’ kul’turu ispol’zovaniia sel’skokhoziaistvennykh mashin”, PV, 08.07.1950, 1; “O khode remonta traktorov”, PV, 29.12.1950, 2; “Za vysokie tempy i kachestvo remonta traktorov”, PV, 05.01.1951, 1; “Nash opyt remonta traktorov”, PV, 06.07.1951, 2.

⁵⁹⁸ “Za vysokie tempy i kachestvo remonta traktorov”, PV, 05.01.1951, 1.

⁵⁹⁹ “O khode remonta traktorov”, PV, 29.12.1950, 2.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁰¹ “Plody neorganizovannosti”, PV, 18.01.1951, 2.

⁶⁰² Ibid.

⁶⁰³ “Nash opyt remonta traktorov”, PV, 06.07.1951, 2.

ary.⁶⁰⁴ Similar voices surfaced in the magazine specialised on cotton production, *Sovetskoe khlopkovodstvo*, where articles directed sharp critique of the mentality at the MTS throughout the Uzbek SSR. First of all, it was criticised that the majority of MTS were preparing the cultivators poorly, although work was particularly “sloppy” in the Bukhara region, where the MTS workers in 1. Bukharskii, Kaganskii, Kermininskii and the 1. Sverdlovskii MTS hung up “the cultivators wrongly, and not one MTS [was] using harrow-levellers.”⁶⁰⁵ Analogous the situation in the Khiva region, where the MTS was so slow that the kolkhozniki had to resort to horse operated cultivators to cultivate the fields. Secondly, the MTS was accused of lacking discipline: “any workers do not go to work and even if they did, their work was characterised “by a high degree of ‘sloppiness’ (*brakodel’stvo*)”.⁶⁰⁶

The lack of unqualified workers was nothing new within the Uzbek SSR. As a matter of fact, Terry Martin’s term “hole in the middle” was one of the characteristics for the pre-war Soviet republics.⁶⁰⁷ The pre-war education efforts had raised the number of educated specialists in the Uzbek MTS to roughly 14.100 in 1940, but the drafting for the Red Army during the Second World War reversed the process completely. With just 8.400 educated specialists in 1945, there were little more than one per kolkhoz and the pre-war level was only reached in 1950 with 14.900.⁶⁰⁸ The industrialisation of the agricultural production from the late 1940s onward thus made the lack of educated workers resurface with renewed force and despite the rise by 1950 the MTS experienced a severe shortage of important educated workers that was only slowly accommodated for by the mid-1950s when the number of educated MTS personnel had risen to 86.000 (1955). The ruralisation that characterised the party structures on the lower levels was thus similarly present within the production structures in particular, in the countryside of the Uzbek SSR, creating problems when it came to skilled labour.

If the lack of qualified MTS workers was one of the problems regarding the transformation of Uzbek countryside, the securing electricity as one of the most essential premises for steadily functioning industrialised farming was another. As a matter of fact, the Soviet authorities generated a self-contradictory situation, for closely tied with the mechanisation policy was the electrification of the countryside. Since the Second World War and the construction par-

⁶⁰⁴ “Za vysokie tempy i kachestvo remonta mashinno-traktornogo parka”, PV, 03.02.1951, 1.

⁶⁰⁵ “Bystree likvidirovat’ pochvennuiu korku”, *Sovetskoe khlopkovodstvo*, 24.05.1952, 2. See also: “Slovo khlopkorobov Uzbekistana”, *Sovetskoe khlopkovodstvo*, 27.02.1952, 1; “Vyshe kachestvo produktsii!”, *Sovetskoe khlopkovodstvo*, 19.11.1952, 1.

⁶⁰⁶ “Bystree likvidirovat’ pochvennuiu korku”, *Sovetskoe khlopkovodstvo*, 24.05.1952, 2.

⁶⁰⁷ Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 179.

⁶⁰⁸ Statisticheskoe Upravlenie Uzbekskoi SSR, *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo Uzbekskoi SSR. Statisticheskie Sbornik*, 139.

ticularly of the Farkhad hydroelectric plant (the third biggest in the USSR), commissioned in 1943 and operational from 1946, the Uzbek authorities were increasingly struggling to provide electrical circuits for an industrialised Uzbek agricultural production.⁶⁰⁹ By 1951 however, electrification of the Uzbek periphery was limited at best. Of the roughly 3.000 kolkhozy, only 764 were electrified in 1951 as recorded in a decree from the Council of Ministers on July 1 1951.⁶¹⁰ The conditions were no better in the MTS where only 79 of the more than 200 MTS were connected to the electrical circuit. Thereby, the repair units had become increasingly dependent on electricity with the transition from manual to mechanical labour. Yet with less than half of the MTS being supplied with electricity, their work was seriously obstructed.⁶¹¹ The dependency on electricity was mirrored in the kolkhozy. The kolhoz production was not only expected to implement machinery on the fields, but also cotton mills, cotton extractors, saws and shellers in their daily handling of cotton.⁶¹² Without the connection to the electric circuit, these mechanisation measures lost their purpose entirely. Thus, both in the MTS and in the kolkhozy, the dependency relation between electricity and mechanisation, bringing problems rather than relief. By making Uzbek agriculture dependent on electricity, yet being incapable of providing it, the Soviet authorities ended up in a dysfunctional situation. In the words of the Soviet Council of Ministers, in 1951: “The constructed hydroelectric stations is not profitable, [because] the electric power does not free the kolhozники of manual work.”⁶¹³

In addition to the problems met by the Soviet authorities within the spheres of mechanisation and electrification, the introduction of the new irrigation system also entailed challenges on the lower level of implementation. Apart from lacking machinery for the expansion of the irrigated areas, voices began criticising the kolhozники’s use of water.⁶¹⁴ Already during the 1920s when the Bolsheviks were uprooting the traditional social and hierarchical structures of the Uzbek society, they had been confronted with a curious “wasteful mentality” of the kolhozники with regard to irrigation.⁶¹⁵ Following the vast expansion of the irrigation network and the introduction of the new irrigation system in the late-Stalin period, the authori-

⁶⁰⁹ Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1983, II:166.

⁶¹⁰ RGAE, 9451, 1, 353, ll. 1–9ob, here l. 1.

⁶¹¹ “Bystree likvidirovat’ pochvennuiu korku”, *Sovetskoe khlopkovodstvo*, 24.05.1952, 2.

⁶¹² “Rasshariat’ elektrifikatsiiu kolhozного proizvodstva”, *Sovetskoe Khlopkovodstvo*, 05.01.1952, 2.

⁶¹³ RGAE, 9451, 1, 353, ll. 1-9ob, here l. 1. Electrification of the kolkhozy remained a lasting problem in the Uzbek Kolkhozy: “O kompleksnoi elektrifikatsii kolhozov Uzbekistana”, *Sovetskoe khlopkovodstvo*, 10.01.1953, 2.

⁶¹⁴ On the use of machinery in the cultivation of new lands, see for example: “Pravil’no ispol’zovat’ zemleroinye mekhanizmy”, *Sovetskoe khlopkovodstvo*, 23.04. 1952, 2.

⁶¹⁵ Teichmann, “Canals, Cotton, and the Limits of De-colonization in Soviet Uzbekistan, 1924-1941,” 509.

ties increasingly reported similar incidents. On April 30 1950, the newly founded Ministry of Cotton Production issued a decree on “the struggle for the correct and economic use of water” in the Uzbek SSR.⁶¹⁶ Particularly targeting the Karakalpak ASSR and Khiva regions, where the continuous functioning and maintenance of the irrigation system were flawed, the decree ordered a plan be developed for the irrigation of every district and every kolkhoz, introducing “double-shift work for the irrigators...[and] organising strong control of the implementation of the plan.”⁶¹⁷ The careful use of water was also a problem in the north-western regions of the Uzbek SSR. In fact, Usman Iusupov was well aware of the ubiquity of the problem and in a letter to the Council of Ministers’ Deputy Chairman responsible for the Agricultural Department, G. M. Malenkov in May 1950, he remarked that “the workers working with the water system must engage more actively, checking the levels of water intake of the canals; making sure to strengthen the societal discipline in regard to water use” in all areas of the Uzbek SSR.⁶¹⁸ The measures implemented proved of limited effect—at least according to the Uzbek irrigator, S. Baturin who found that many kolkhozy in 1952 were still poorly organising or controlling their water use.⁶¹⁹ “The Kolkhoz Kuibyshev, Kzyl-Tepinskii district of the Bukhara region”, Baturin described, “has been flowing small grooves”, so that the fields were completely flooded. And in the Shafrikanskii and Mirzanchul’skii districts, Baturin complained, similar wasteful practices were implemented with nightly irrigation.⁶²⁰ Such “wasteful” practices of the 1920s have been understood as measures to secure water supply for private plots and it is likely that the kolkhozniki used analogue tactics in the early 1950s to guarantee access to water.⁶²¹ At times the “waste” of water was also a consequence of poor administration as reported from areas in the southern regions of the Kazakh SSR. There was confusion in these regions as to who was in charge of irrigation canals, leading to some fields lacking water while others were over-flowing with water.⁶²² The “wasteful mentality” that the Soviet authorities and experts detected in the Uzbek kolkhozniki could also be the simply consequence of the continuous lack of essential commodities to establish and maintain a resourceful use of water. The kolkhozniki were struggling with shortages of irrigation pipes and cement to strengthen and maintain the irrigation canals.⁶²³ Without these ma-

⁶¹⁶ RGAE, 9451, 1, 40, l. 75.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid., l. 76.

⁶¹⁸ RGAE, 9451, 1, 2, l. 24.

⁶¹⁹ “Usilit’ tempy polivov v Uzbekistane”, *Sovetskoe khlopkovodstvo*, 24.06.1952, 2.

⁶²⁰ Ibid.

⁶²¹ Teichmann, “Canals, Cotton, and the Limits of De-colonization in Soviet Uzbekistan, 1924-1941,” 509.

⁶²² “Umelo reshat’ bol’shie zadachi”, *Sovetskoe khlopkovodstvo*, 30.08.1952, 1.

⁶²³ “Usilit’ tempy polivov v Uzbekistane”, *Sovetskoe khlopkovodstvo*, 24.06.1952, 2.

terials the ditches remained fragile to breaches and cracks that would naturally create small pools in some places, while halt irrigation to fields further down the irrigation network.

The drying up of fields was as great a problem as the flooding of them. The expansion of the cotton cultivation into the arid Uzbek regions, necessitated the use of sprinklers to ensure the irrigation of the fields. In 1951 however, the *kolkhozniki* in the Samarkand, Tashkent and Bukhara regions were in dire need of such simple items. The Uzbek Cotton Minister A. Ali-mov reported to Deputy Chairman of the Ministry of Cotton Production Ministry of Cotton Production N. E. Cesnovkov mid July 1951 that in Samarkand alone this had resulted in no less than 22.000 hectare cotton fields receiving no irrigation at all.⁶²⁴ Moreover, *kolkhozniki* had to be ordered to correct the situation and manually water the fields.

The Soviet planning institutions did become infamous for their constant overly optimistic goals. Regardless of the plans' character as a political tool to direct and control lower level functionaries, the Soviet state planning for the cotton sector in the late-Stalin period did result in counter-productive outcomes for the policy-makers themselves. The high demands on the Uzbek workers and *kolkhozniki* with regard to mechanisation and irrigation were opposed by the state's inability to provide the necessary means to achieve the its goals. Moreover, the forced mechanisation and simultaneous expansion of irrigated areas had serious repercussions for state interests.

The mechanisation of the countryside was meant to increase production, while at the same time assist and reduce manual labour in the agricultural sector. In August 1952 however, the Uzbek Minister for State Control, M. Iu. Iuldashev, concluded that the exact opposite had occurred. In a report penned for G. M. Malenkov, Iuldashev described how the level of *trudoden* had been on the rise in the Uzbek SSR since 1947.⁶²⁵ By 1951, "the expense of manual work for one hectare of cotton rose in all instances, despite the notable rise in mechanisation. Furthermore, the expense of one tsentner did not decrease in accordance with the level of yield, so that no reduction of the expense per tsentner cotton in the area of production was achieved either."⁶²⁶ For Uzbekistan on the whole, the *trudoden* lay in 1947 at 217 per tsentner cotton, while it had risen to 278 in 1951. The consequence was quite clear: There was a severe imbalance between revenues and expenditures.⁶²⁷ This led to the peculiar situation, "in which some *kolkhozy* achieved a smaller harvest, despite the increase in mechanical

⁶²⁴ RGAE, 9451, 1, 337, l. 4.

⁶²⁵ RGAE, 9451, 1, 664, ll. 75–94.

⁶²⁶ Ibid., l. 78.

⁶²⁷ Ibid., l. 75.

and manual labour, while still others achieved a higher yield, although they used less manpower and machines.”⁶²⁸ The Iuldashev report thus translated into numbers the consequence of merging several campaigns together without providing the necessary means for their satisfactory implementation. For the increased mechanisation, the kolkhoz consolidation and the vast expansion of irrigation network coupled with the lack of essential equipment did not only mean additional work within the agricultural sector of the Uzbek SSR, it also meant that the kolkhozniki were forced to rely on traditional work practices instead of mechanised vehicles, if they were to satisfy the centre’s thirst for “white gold” and fulfil the cotton plan goals. The late-Stalin government officials had little understanding for such causality.

Government Responses

The central as well as the republican political elites were knowledgeable about the progress of their transformation policies in the Uzbek agricultural sphere. Continuously, they were informed about situation in Uzbek MTS and kolkhozy. Their interpretation of the situation however, was less nuanced with regard to the many reasons resulting in the slow progress of mechanisation. While acknowledging the difficulties in the functioning of the MTS and the implementation of machinery on the cotton fields, the Soviet authorities regarded them as part of a greater problem related to a mentality of “anti-mechanisation”.

On October 30 1950, shortly before the cotton harvest was to begin, P. N. Goremykin, Minister of Agricultural Machine Construction notified Deputy Chairman of the all-union Council of Ministers, G. Malenkov, that the slow progress of mechanisation lies in “resistance to commission machines [to the fields] on the side of district, and sometimes regional leaders.”⁶²⁹ Instructors from the Special State Engineering Bureau for Transport Machine Construction drew the same conclusions after having been deployed to the Uzbek periphery. Stationed in Tashkent to inspect the progress of mechanisation, a comrade Efferom appear to have been particularly concerned about the state of affairs. In a letter to Malenkov from early November 1950, he explained that rural party and state representatives were neglecting, even obstructing the mechanisation efforts by allowing manual work.⁶³⁰ Comrade Efferom described how consequently, “in addition to the print media, I [wrote to] the state prosecutor and yesterday, on behalf of the Minister [of Agricultural Machine Construction], I wrote to

⁶²⁸ Ibid.

⁶²⁹ RGASPI, 17, 138, 177, ll. 106–110, here l. 109.

⁶³⁰ RGASPI, 17, 138, 177, ll. 114–123.

the Tashkent obkom requesting to suppress the anti-mechanisational (*antimekhanisatorskie*) action.⁶³¹

According to these state agencies, the low level of mechanisation of the Uzbek countryside was mainly due to a dubious alliance between local level party and state representatives and the kolkhozniki, all of whom were sceptical toward the implementation of machinery in the cotton sector and as a consequence did their best to hinder it. In other words, on the lower levels of the Uzbek SSR party functionaries and kolkhozniki produced a condition of institutional limited statehood that hampered cotton output.

The First Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee, Usman Iusupov, feared this development already some years earlier. At a gathering of Uzbek cotton growers in Tashkent in February 1947, he had tried to smoothen the transition from manual to mechanical equipment.⁶³²

Describing the major tasks ahead, Iusupov noted that mechanisation was the most important step in the “further development of cotton growing and of all sectors of agriculture in our republic.”⁶³³ While regarding mechanisation a necessity to progress in the agricultural sector, Iusupov ensured the Uzbek cotton growers that new mechanical equipment was only a means to assist the traditional practices. “Does [mechanisation] mean that we now have to stop applying the traditional agricultural tools, the ketmen’? No, it does not. The application of these tools will play a crucial role in kolkhoz production also in the future.”⁶³⁴ The quest for both Soviet authorities and the Uzbek cotton growers was thus to “introduce new, contemporary equipment in agricultural production more decisively”, while the old one would remain in use.⁶³⁵

With the slow progress of the mechanisation, the rising *trudodnei*’ as well as the reports of anti-mechanisational attitudes developing on the lower level of the Uzbek SSR, the Soviet authorities saw Iusupov’s early fears from 1947 come true. As the situation remained unaltered by 1951, Iusupov, now in the function of all-union Minister of Cotton Production,

⁶³¹ Ibid., I. 117. Similar “attitudes” had been discovered in other areas of the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s. Often this has been understood as a cultural clash between the Russian peasant culture and Soviet modernity: Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet System*, 185; Matt F. Oja, “Traktorizatsiia As Cultural Conflict, 1929-1933,” *Russian Review* 51, no. 3 (July 1, 1992): 343–362. Lynne Viola interpreted the breaking of machinery that occurred especially during collectivisation as a sign of resistance to an oppressive state: Viola, *Peasant Rebels Under Stalin*, 218. Resistance to technological innovation is indeed a characteristic of transformational societies of production sectors and have, for example, also been found amongst farmers in the United States of America in the inter-war period: Alan L. Olmstead and Paul W. Rhode, “The Agricultural Mechanization Controversy of the Interwar Years,” *Agricultural History* 68, no. 3 (July 1, 1994): 35–53.

⁶³² Bezrukova et al., *Izbrannye Trudy*, 1984, III:56–59.

⁶³³ Ibid., III:61.

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

⁶³⁵ Ibid.

turned to harder measures and relied on one of the very characteristics of the Stalin dictatorship to overcome the problem. In a letter to G. M. Malenkov from November 17, 1951 Iusupov was pondering the question of how to best deal with the signs of lower level resistance to mechanisation.⁶³⁶ For it was not only the cotton sector in Uzbekistan that was suffering from the low levels of mechanisation. In fact, all Central Asian republics showed a disturbingly low level of progress when it came to the implementation of mechanised equipment.⁶³⁷ According to the Cotton Minister, one way to stimulate the engagement of the *kolkhozniki*, was to increase pay.⁶³⁸ Raising salaries or cotton prices would however, cut deep into the Soviet budget and endanger the valuable revenues of foreign exports.⁶³⁹ As a consequence, Iusupov found it more viable to adopt a policy that the Uzbek leadership had already introduced in a time when it was in dire need of controlling the countryside.

During the horrors of the Second World War and faced with decreasing agricultural production as well as a central government breathing down his neck, Iusupov had resorted to the draconian laws from the collectivisation period, in order to “take all possible measures to prevent crop losses.”⁶⁴⁰ In the midst of war, the Uzbek leadership amended to the Uzbek criminal code a paragraph that read: “The damage of cotton fields or of cotton itself by cattle or other methods used for its harvest, storage, transportation...and any other actions, obstructing and frustrating state plans and quota for cotton, results in imprisonment from 3 to 10 years with the confiscation of all or part of the property and with the removal from the area, if these actions do not result in more severe punishment in accordance with the law from 7.8.1932 of the paragraph 63 of the Criminal Code of the Uzbek SSR.”⁶⁴¹ The vast scope of the law expanded the possibility for state intervention against any possible action that led to a disappointment of the state plans. With the growing demands to the Uzbek countryside during the post-war and late-Stalin period, the Uzbek leadership had seen no imperative reason to loosen its draconic legislation. As a result, the law remained in force in 1951, enabling

⁶³⁶ RGASPI, 17, 138, 277, II. 94–96.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*, I. 94.

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*, I. 95.

⁶³⁹ The authorities did begin a campaign to increase socialist competition, but it was limited to the state-run enterprises and excluded the *kolkhozy*. An increase in cotton price or salary remained absent, while instead the Ministry of Cotton Growing awarded orders to stimulate enhanced work efforts. See: *Sovetskoe khlopkovodstvo*, 16.2.1952, “Terms of the all-union socialist competitions for enterprises and organisations of the Ministry of Cotton Growing USSR.”

⁶⁴⁰ RGASPI, 17, 138, 277, I. 96.

⁶⁴¹ RGASPI, 17, 138, 277, I. 96. As Iusupov duly reminded, the draconic collectivisation law from 1932 had been outdated with the decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union from June 4 1947 that struck down on theft of state and public property, which were now to be sentenced with ten to twenty-five years by repeated violation. See: Solomon, *Soviet Criminal Justice Under Stalin*, 413.

state authorities to mechanise the Uzbek countryside by force. When reports began tumbling in about a growing anti-mechanisation attitude also in the other Central Asian republics, the all-union Cotton Minister considered “it appropriate for the Presidia of the Supreme Soviets of the Tajik, the Turkmen, the Kirgiz and the Kazakh SSR to adopt similar laws on changes in accordance to the paragraphs of the Criminal Code of those republics.”⁶⁴²

Official records of the Uzbek SSR judiciary are kept under tight wraps, so that it can only be surmised how many people were prosecuted by the law. Judging by previous evidence concerning the Uzbek authorities’ drastic measures to achieve their goals, there is no reason to believe that the late-Stalin period legislation was merely a perfunctory gesture. The many thousands of people penalised during the war, along with the victims of the anti-cosmopolitan campaign revealed in the preceding chapters, are tragic reminders of the authorities’ dictatorial practices.

In spite of the draconic laws applied as part of the mechanisation drive, the Soviet authorities only slowly managed to change the situation. On March 3 1953, the Uzbek Minister of Cotton Production R. F. Nasyrov had to admit that only 82 per cent of the mechanisation plan had been fulfilled in 1952 and in late 1953, deputy Chairman G. M. Malenkov received yet another report pointing to the persevering problem in Central Asia.⁶⁴³ A. S. Pavel’ev from the all-union Ministry of State Control, having collected information regarding the implementation of mechanical equipment in Central Asia during the harvest in 1953, found alarming results: In Uzbekistan as a whole, only 25,7 per cent of the plan for mechanisation had been implemented, while the conditions in other Central Asian republics were no better.⁶⁴⁴ In the Turkmen SSR the number lay at 10,3, in the Tajik SSR at 3,1, in the Kazakh SSR 42,4, in the Kirgiz SSR 14,4, in the Azerbaijani SSR 17,1 and finally in the Armenian SSR 32,3 per cent. Thereby, it was particularly in the Kirgiz and Kazakh SSR that Pavel’ev found traces of the anti-mechanisation attitude: “In the zone of the Chimkentskii MTS in Southern-Kazakhstan oblasti, the chairmen of the kolkhozy were not using machines and permitted manual harvesting on the fields designated for machine harvesting, all of which condoned by the raion leaders.”⁶⁴⁵ Analogous with the situation in the Kirgiz SSR, where “raion party officials refused to

⁶⁴² RGASPI, 17, 138, 277, l. 96.

⁶⁴³ R. F. Nasyrov’s remarks: “Ob itogakh 1952 goda i zadachakh na 1953 god po pod’emu khlopkovodstva v Uzbekistane”, PV, 03.02.1953, 2. The report to G. Malenkov: GARF, 8300, 24, 584, ll. 1–6.

⁶⁴⁴ GARF, 8300, 24, 584, l. 1. The report from the Uzbek Minister of State Control, M. Iuldashaev, on which A. Pavel’ev based his report 28.11.1953: GARF, 8300, 24, 584, ll. 19–26.

⁶⁴⁵ GARF, 8300, 24, 584, l. 3.

follow the decrees of agricultural specialist on the machine harvesting without any good reason.⁶⁴⁶

It stands to reason that parts of the lower level state and party incumbents as well as the kolkhozniki themselves will have been sceptic toward new machinery. After all cotton breeding had a long history in Central Asia and the introduction of a mechanised production did disrupt the familiar, established and well-functioning work practices of the cotton growers. Nevertheless, there were arguably other less conspiratorial explanations as to the Central Asian lower level authorities' and kolkhozniks' reluctance to embrace of the mechanisation process than A. S. Pavel'ev's anti-mechanisation argument – which borders on “orientalist” – suggests.⁶⁴⁷

As shown above, the Uzbek countryside became subject to different policies during the late-Stalin period that all merged into one integrated project of transformation. The consolidation of kolkhozy, the introduction of a new irrigation system with simultaneous expansion of irrigated areas as well as the mechanisation were all projects that served the purpose of increasing the Soviet Union's cotton production. The state however, experienced tremendous difficulties in supplying the Central Asian countryside with a functional basis for this transformation, generating a series of problems for the fulfilment of central demands. Alongside with the transformational efforts, the central and republican government increased quotas for the cotton harvest year after year.⁶⁴⁸ Caught between a rock and a hard place with regard to fulfilling cotton quota or transformational policies, it is no coincidence that the Uzbeks will have given priority to the satisfaction of the centre's cotton addiction.⁶⁴⁹ After all, it was not the implementation of tractors, but the deliveries of “white gold” that the state paid for. The satisfaction of cotton quotas gave rural state and party representatives political leverage toward their superiors so that they are more than likely to have accepted the implementation of traditional work practices of the kolkhozniki as a means to secure the harvest. Thus, they would also avoid upsetting those groups of kolkhozniki who were particularly sceptical toward the mechanisation of the countryside, while at the same time guaranteeing pay and political power. As a consequence, the rural leadership through their so-called “anti-mechanisation”

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁷ On “orientalism”: Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

⁶⁴⁸ The centre's thirst for cotton gained legendary status in the Soviet Union when the long-time Uzbek First Secretary Sharaf Rashidov promised more than five million tons cotton to L. Brezhnev during a visit to Tashkent. Allegedly, Brezhnev replied “Round it off to six million, Sharafchik!”, to which Rashidov replied, “yes, sir, Leonid Il'ich.” Quoted from: Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*, 63.

⁶⁴⁹ Other scholars have suggested that cotton farmers deliberately chose manual labour: Richard Pomfret, “State-Directed Diffusion of Technology: The Mechanization of Cotton Harvesting in Soviet Central Asia,” *The Journal of Economic History* 62, no. 1 (March 1, 2002): 172.

attitude killed two birds with one stone. Moreover, institutional limited statehood as it existed during the mechanisation campaign was characterised by a very functional element, for it secured cotton production, pay and stability. To the Uzbek leaders' ideological goal of a modern, socialist cotton production however, the resistance from local kolkhozniki was entirely dysfunctional, as it slowed down the process envisioned by the authorities.

The patronage relations that the Uzbek Central Committee Secretary S. Nurutdinov saw “undermining the possibilities of government” and that many kolkhozy enjoyed from “oblast’ and republican party officials”⁶⁵⁰ should be seen as a ‘social contract’ amongst Soviet authorities and kolkhozniki that secured the interest of both groups in the fight for the satisfaction of the cotton quotas. In the late-Stalin period such balancing act was a daring endeavour for as shown, Cotton Minister Usman Iusupov showed little understanding for compromises to the Soviet claim for an obedient population. Although it is difficult to say with certainty how many lower level state and party representatives fell victim of the tightened laws during the mechanisation drive, the purge of the Uzbek party apparatus in 1948–1950 suggests that the Uzbek top-leadership was relentless. In total, 549 (or approximately one third) raion and city level cadres were relieved from their duties due to deficiencies and erroneous work.⁶⁵¹ Meanwhile, the Uzbek authorities were no less thorough when it came to the kolkhoz chairmen. By 1950, 1.500 kolkhoz chairmen had been relieved of their positions for erroneous work.⁶⁵²

⁶⁵⁰ RGASPI, 574, 1, 23, ll. 40–41.

⁶⁵¹ RGASPI, 574, 24, ll. 109–122. For statistical evidence: Bezrukova, *Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Turkestana i Uzbekistana v Tsifrakh, 1918-1967 Gg.*, 155.

⁶⁵² RGASPI, 574, 24, ll. 109–122.

4.3. CENTRALISING DECISION-MAKING

The dedication of Stalin's main lieutenants to "ordinary Stalinism", a system of "centrally regimented decision making that, free of the emergency pressures of purge and war, might assume more of a routine and everyday character" had major consequences for the entire cotton sector in the Soviet Union.⁶⁵³ The drive toward a more rational handling of the Soviet economy concurred both with the increasing importance of cotton exports as well as pressure on local and republican leadership throughout the Soviet Union as a consequence of the late-Stalinist repressions. The result was a centralisation of powers, as a means to better direct the development of the cotton production in the Soviet Union, including the creation of the Ministry of Cotton Production in spring 1950. Centralising power over cotton production however, stripped leadership in the cotton producing republics of important levers of power and would eventually lead the central government to backpedal due to republican unrest.

The Ministry of Cotton Production

Just a little statement informed the reader of *Pravda vostoka* on April 7 1950 that Usman Iusupov had been appointed Minister of Cotton Production by a joint resolution of the Council of Ministers and the Central Committee in Moscow.⁶⁵⁴ "To secure the further development of cotton growing in the cotton producing raions and its promotion in new areas of cultivation faster, the union-republican Ministry of Cotton Production is created."⁶⁵⁵ The buzzword in the statement was of course faster and makes clear the central leadership's concern with the slow development of its cotton policies. Accordingly, the new ministry was "entrusted with the leadership of cotton production in kolkhozy and sovkhozy, with the leadership of procurements and primary processing of cotton as well as with the construction and operation of the irrigation system in all cotton producing raions."⁶⁵⁶

While the fundamental objective for the establishment of the new ministry is clear, it is less obvious why Usman Iusupov was chosen to oversee the task. As already discussed Iusupov's promotion was bittersweet. Given the situation in the Uzbek SSR and the recurrent accusa-

⁶⁵³ Gorlizki, "Ordinary Stalinism," 700.

⁶⁵⁴ The Uzbek Chairman of Council of Ministers A. Abdurakhmanov was also transferred to Moscow and made Deputy Chairman in the Ministry for Sovkhozy: "Plenum TsK KP(B) Uzbekistana", PV, 07.04.1950, 1; "Plenum TsK KP(B) Uzbekistana", PV, 25.04.1950, 1. In the latter notification it falsely states that A. Abdurakhmanov asked for a leave of absence to study at the Central Committee in Moscow.

⁶⁵⁵ "Plenum TsK KP(B) Uzbekistana", PV, 07.04.1950, 1.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid.

tions against Iusupov it is unlikely that he will have embraced the appointment with open arms. Nevertheless, he was cut out for the job and several considerations of the central leadership are likely to have come together in the choice for Iusupov. Firstly, Iusupov held obvious experience with regard to cotton growing and development through work in the Uzbek SSR and he knew the political elites not just in Uzbekistan but in all the cotton producing republics. He had also proven willing to execute even the fiercest central policies as for example during the war. Secondly, the transfer allowed central leaders to better monitor his doings, while also being in a better position to fight the patronage relations in the Uzbek SSR due to his absence.⁶⁵⁷ Thirdly, with the appointment of Iusupov the centre may have adhered to its worry of sparking anti-Soviet sentiments by appearing as an “imperial” state. Selecting a “native” for the all-union ministry would send a clear sign of integration rather than of imperial Soviet rule. Fourthly, Iusupov’s appointment is likely to have functioned as a signal of the possible consequences to republican leaders, if they did not fall in line, for a transfer to Moscow was regarded as a step that could entail unforeseeable consequences.⁶⁵⁸ All of the above are considerations that are likely to have played a role not only in creating the Ministry of Cotton Production to speed up cotton production, but also in appointing Usman Iusupov with this task challenging task.

The new Cotton Minister was faced with a highly delicate assignment. Although cotton quotas for the respective republics were defined by the State Planning Committee in Moscow, the republics were left in charge of the means implemented to satisfy them.⁶⁵⁹ With the centralisation this agreement changed completely. The centre of power assumed control over crucial areas of the cotton sector such as cotton growing techniques, fertilizer distribution and access to all-union funds, which were henceforth supervised and dispensed by the new ministry. At the same time the all-union ministry was held accountable for the (dys-)functioning and results of the cotton growing sector. Iusupov in other words, found himself in crossfire between republican chiefs and central government leaders when the regime began vexing its muscles from 1951 onward.

⁶⁵⁷ On local patronage networks, see for example: RGASPI, 574, 24, l. 12.

⁶⁵⁸ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 267.

⁶⁵⁹ Hough and Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union Is Governed*, 480–518.

Lowering Expectations

If the Uzbek political leadership had hoped that their former First Secretary's presence in Moscow would relieve them from pressure from the central government, their hopes were disappointed. From summer 1951 until Stalin's death in March 1953, the Soviet Council of Ministers intensified scrutiny of its ministries' work both on all-union and republican levels.⁶⁶⁰ Quite contrary from the liberalisation of policies that observers had seen following Stalin's retreat from everyday policies, there was no relaxation of policy or political pressure in Uzbek SSR.⁶⁶¹ Moreover, the political leadership became victim of renewed attack from the central government in April/May 1951, when the new Chairman of the Uzbek Council of Ministers, Abdurazak Mavlianov was unceremoniously demoted, having occupied the position just one year, following A. Abdurakhmanov's transfer to Moscow.

Mavlianov's ouster was part of a union-wide strike against the agricultural institutions. Clearly, central authorities had lost patience with the progress of their policies and resorted to attacks to rectify the situation. On April 21 1951 the central government communicated a "closed" letter to thirty thousand officials "inveighed against the Minister of Agricultural Machine Construction, P. N. Goremykin, for committing 'anti-state actions' concealing stocks of forty thousand tons of metal on ministry premises from the government."⁶⁶² Goremykin's ouster came roughly one year after his observation of "anti-mechanisation" attitudes in the Central Asian republics. The lasting problems within the sector will have added to the centre's considerations of having A. Mavlianov sacked, preparations for which ran high in the Uzbek SSR simultaneous to the shaking up of the Ministry of Agricultural Machine Construction.⁶⁶³

A. Mavlianov was one of Iusupov's closest companions, who had made his career as part of the *vydvizhentsy*-generation and Iusupov's patronage, for whom he is said to have functioned as a "trouble-shooter".⁶⁶⁴ Although we know little about the exact events leading to the cent-

⁶⁶⁰ Gorlizki, "Ordinary Stalinism," 731.

⁶⁶¹ Jerry Hough and Merle Fainsod suggested that "industrial managers in particular [were] often being given long tenure in their positions", thus cautiously arguing for a relaxation compared to the Great Purges. Similar argument in: Iurii Zhukov, "Bor'ba Za Vlast' v Rukovodstve SSSR v 1945–1952 Godakh," *Voprosy Istorii* no. 1 (1995): 36–38. On the dimension of repression in Stalin's final years: Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*, 468–496. On Stalin's retreat from everyday politics: Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*, 101–108.

⁶⁶² Gorlizki, "Ordinary Stalinism," 731.

⁶⁶³ Although there is no official evidence of a "Delo Mavlianova", N. Mukhitdinov remembers that following Mavlianov's removal, the case become known under as such. Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 65. It should be noted that A. Mavlianov did not become victim of imprisonment, but merely disappeared from the political sphere in Uzbekistan. A similar fate befell P. N. Goremykin, who was exiled to Kazan. On Goremykin: Gorlizki, "Ordinary Stalinism," 731.

⁶⁶⁴ Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83)," 100–104.

ral government's decision for Mavlianov's removal, his ouster made clear that the Moscow leadership was not satisfied with Mavlianov's trouble-shooter qualities. According to N. Mukhitdinov, Mavlianov had come under fire from First and Second Secretaries A. Niiazov and R. Mel'nikov as well as the Chairman of the Uzbek Supreme Soviet Sh. Rashidov who accused him of "nepotism and nationalism", having offered positions to friends and relatives in addition to replace Russians with Uzbeks in certain positions.⁶⁶⁵ Furthermore, Mavlianov was blamed of a lack of discipline, of ignoring his deputies and of being rude, but, as Mukhitdinov remembers, "it was evident that all the members of the [Uzbek] Bureau were previously acquainted with the note sent for approval to Moscow", thus tacitly remarking that the decision lay in Moscow, not Tashkent.⁶⁶⁶

The accusations against Mavlianov were similar in character to the ones made against Usman Iusupov during the "delo Iusupova" in the late 1940s. Again the centre attacked the "nationalist" tendencies and "patronage relations" that the Central Committee Plenipotentiary S. D. Ignat'ev "unveiled" amongst the Uzbek raion and kolkhoz level officials in 1949-1950. Hence, it was not surprising when First Secretary A. Niiazov spent a "great deal of his report" on the situation in the kolkhozy as *Pravda vostoka* reported on May 18, 1951.⁶⁶⁷ For as Niiazov explained "many leaders of party and state organisations, howling (*zavyvaia*) about the major production tasks...permitted a wrong, selfish (*potrebitel'skii*) approach" that allowed for a "diversion of assets" from agricultural funds designated for solving the basic problems within the agricultural sphere.⁶⁶⁸ In other words, no significant improvement with regard to the control over the lower level state and party apparatus appeared to have occurred since Iusupov and Abdurakhmanov had been transferred to Moscow in April 1950.

In the context of the Iusupov era in Uzbekistan, the choice to promote Nuritdin Mukhitdinov to head the Uzbek government following Mavlianov's ouster was somewhat surprising. Mukhitdinov had gathered obvious merits through the Soviet institutions, studied in Moscow and defended the Soviet Union in the Second World War. Nevertheless, he was not cut from the same cloth as Iusupov's ruling group and of a more modest character. However, in his position as Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee, which he had held before his appointment to the Tashkent obkom, Mukhitdinov had become personally acquainted with central leaders, in particular S. D. Ignat'ev and G. M. Malenkov. Mukhitdinov does in fact him-

⁶⁶⁵ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 65.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁷ "VIII Plenum TsK KP Uzbekistana.", PV, 18.05.1951, 2.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid.

self, suggest that it was after a meeting with G. M. Malenkov in April or May 1950 that he was suddenly promoted to First Secretary of the important Tashkent obkom, but he leaves the reader in a haze when it comes to his advancement to Chair the Uzbek Council of Ministers.⁶⁶⁹ Instead, he merely notes that he was presented with a *fait accompli* by First Secretary A. Niiazov and Second Secretary R. E. Mel'nikov, who allegedly had made all arrangements with Moscow.⁶⁷⁰

Whether or not Mukhitdinov was as innocent in the downfall of Mavlianov as he suggests is unclear. He did certainly not belong to the Iusupov's "family circle", which might have been the most important ticket to the Council of Ministers.⁶⁷¹ Following the recent reshuffles in the Uzbek political leadership, the centre might have wanted to opt for a younger, possibly more devoted candidate and used the traditional Stalinist way for a "changing of the guard."⁶⁷² Given the constant accusations of favouring "local tasks" this made sense as a way to break the patronage relations that had been established during Iusupov's years in power. However, being only thirty-three years of age in April 1951 and with his just four years experience in the higher echelons of Uzbek politics, Mukhitdinov was in a considerably weaker position than his counterpart, A. Niiazov, who presided over the party. As a consequence, the Uzbek power elite around Iusupov will have had little concerns with the promotion of Mukhitdinov, who was in no position to threaten their grasp of power. Nevertheless, the "Mavlianov affair" clearly signalled that even with Iusupov in the central government in Moscow, the Uzbek leaders could not rest on their laurels.

The Consequences of Centralisation

If Uzbek hopes for less Moscow intervention in republican affairs were disappointed after Iusupov's transfer, the central leadership's hopes for a faster development of cotton growing through a bundling of powers in the hands of the Ministry of Cotton Production were too. When the centre instigated the widespread attacks on ministries from winter 1951/1952 also took aim at the newly established Ministry of Cotton Production, which revealed disturbingly high levels of institutional limited statehood.⁶⁷³ Already in January 1952 the Moscow Central Committee became aware of a state of poor "selection, education and placing of cadres in the

⁶⁶⁹ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 62.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁶⁷¹ Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83)," 100-104.

⁶⁷² Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*, 78.

⁶⁷³ Generally on the harder line against ministries: Leonhard, *Kreml ohne Stalin*, 77-79; Gorlizki, "Ordinary Stalinism," 731-732.

Ministry of Cotton Production.”⁶⁷⁴ It had found that there was a severe lack of qualified functionaries in the main apparatus, resulting in the vacancy of several leading positions, sparking the Central Committee to issue a decree on January 21 1952, demanding a better handling of the cadre situation in the ministry.⁶⁷⁵

The Central Committee decree seems to have put earnest pressure on Cotton Minister Usman Iusupov, for just two months later he penned a letter to Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, G. M. Malenkov, in which he attempted to explain the condition by hinting that it was the merging of several ministerial departments to create the Ministry of Cotton Production, which had led to the integration “of poorly qualified workers from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Sovkhozy.”⁶⁷⁶ With limited possibilities at hand, Iusupov was left merely to promise Malenkov that the Ministry of Cotton Production would “carry out further and more frequent checks on these issues, strengthen the assistance from the cadre department of the ministry and regularly discuss accounts from the local cotton growing and water management organs” at the meetings of the ministerial board.⁶⁷⁷

By the time follow-up investigations had been conducted in May and December 1952, however, Iusupov’s promises had proven of little value. Despite the “sharp critique” that had urged the ministry to correct the situation the situation remained unaltered.⁶⁷⁸ The May 1952 report even recorded the vacancy of ten deputy minister positions in the Ministries of Cotton Growing and Water Management in the cotton producing republics, alongside several other crucial positions adding up to a total of more than sixty unoccupied leading positions.⁶⁷⁹ The 1952 December report, this time conducted by the Ministry of State Control, revealed similar serious problems in Usman Iusupov’s ranks, but with closer investigation of the level of misconduct. It was noted that the Head of the Cadre Department, a comrade Chilikin did not pay attention to the ranks of the ministry and several of his subordinates “lacked initiative”, “worked slowly, reacted wrongly to critique” or were “inefficient” functionaries.⁶⁸⁰ In short: “In the apparatus of the department are elements without discipline...and the leaders of the department do not take any measures to correct the deficiencies.”⁶⁸¹ Comrade Chilikin’s misdemeanours were however, of minor consequence compared to the accusations made against

⁶⁷⁴ RGASPI, 17, 138, 404, ll. 13–23, here l. 13.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid., l. 20.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid., l. 2.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid., l. 8.

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid., ll. 13–23.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid., l. 18.

⁶⁸⁰ RGAE, 9451, 1, 750, l. 3–4.

⁶⁸¹ Ibid., l. 1.

Deputy Minister of Cotton Production, A. A. Sarkisov. He had been laid off due to his brother's past as a "Trotskyist" and subsequent imprisonment in the 1930s. And while Iusupov "had all materials at his disposal" and thus knew of Sarkisov's family background, he had remained passive and let the case pass.⁶⁸²

The reports and revelations of the staff problems in the Ministry of Cotton Production intensified pressure on Cotton Minister Iusupov and it was more than inopportune when reports disclosed even greater problems in the ministerial departments on the republican level. For although the Ministry of Cotton Production had sent a group of leading officials to help with the selection of ministry officials on the republican level in several Central Asian republics as a consequence of the enhanced pressure from the Central Committee, work on the cadre question had been disregarded ever since. In the Uzbek SSR, for example, proper selection and placing of cadres had basically ceased to exist, for "not one inspection of cadre work has taken place in the course of 2,5 years and the materials till this day have not been discussed."⁶⁸³ As a consequence, the work of the Ministry for Cotton Growing and its subordinate institutions on both all-union and republican level were undermining the very basis, on which the ministry had been established namely to speed up development of the cotton production.

The disappointing results of the Ministry of Cotton Production's ranks and work sparked the central authorities to order more meticulous investigations of the republican ministries and institutions subordinated to the all-union Ministry of Cotton Production. Already on April 14 1952, Usman Iusupov had decreed that the ministry and its local institutions were to improve their work in cadre selection and education.⁶⁸⁴ As the results of an investigation of the Uzbek institutions began rolling in at the central headquarters in Moscow late December 1952 and early January 1953, it became clear that the state of affairs on the republican level proved in an even worse condition than in the central ministry.⁶⁸⁵

Generally, the control units found two main areas flawed. On the one hand, the cotton production institutions in the Uzbek SSR were conducting inadequate investigations of the cadres they were hiring. As a consequence, several individuals with a dubious past had gotten through to positions in the institutions. For example, the Head of the Planning and Finance

⁶⁸² RGASPI, 17, 138, 404, ll. 43–46, here l. 45. A. A. Sarkisov was rehabilitated and the accusations against him identified as incorrect "party behaviour" in April 1953: RGASPI, 17, 138, 404, l. 45.

⁶⁸³ RGAE, 9451, 1, 750, l. 5.

⁶⁸⁴ Ibid., l. 26, Decree no. 666 of the Ministry of Cotton Production "On the means to improve selection, placement and education of cadres in the Ministry of Cotton Production and its local organs."

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid., ll. 24–36 and ll. 68–72.

Department of the Tashkent regional Cotton Administration, a comrade Krikanov, had been imprisoned as an “enemy of the people” in 1938 and excluded from the Communist Party.⁶⁸⁶ An analogous case was found in the Namangan oblast’, where the lead economist of the planning and finance department, a comrade Pokrovskii, had been imprisoned for ten years in 1932 due to insufficient fulfilment of state quota.⁶⁸⁷ In other cases, former “counter revolutionaries” such as comrade a Fedorov, who had been convicted to a jail sentence in 1945, had been appointed a position in the Uzbek Department of Cotton Supply without further questioning.⁶⁸⁸

While the past of functionaries and workers became subject to increasing investigation, so did too their performance in current positions, often leading to almost tragicomic revelations. In Sredne-Chirchikskii MTS, for example, accountant Kim had mismanaged 17.000 roubles, where upon he fled. Accountant Kim’s position was taken over by comrade Popov, but he proved to be an alcoholic and was fired, whilst the current accountant had been imprisoned for ten years on the charges of fraud in another MTS.⁶⁸⁹ Problems of alcoholism did appear to be widespread, especially amongst the workers in the MTS, but the lack of communication between the MTS, made it possible to journey from one MTS to the other if one was fired. Iu. N. Iuldashaev, who had been working in the Markhamatskii MTS in the Andijan region, did exactly that. Having been relieved from his duties following incidents of drinking and brawling, he had gone on to the next best MTS where he was currently the main agronomist.⁶⁹⁰ The lack of attention of authorities had also smiled upon the main accountant of the 2nd Namangan MTS, comrade Spiridonov, “an alcoholic and morally corrupt person”, who had been charged with embezzlement and served a jail sentence of eight years, before his current position.⁶⁹¹

The Uzbek Ministry of Cotton Production did try to compensate for the problems within its lower level institutions by investing in educational facilities but experienced severe difficulties supplying enough young educated specialists to rectify the situation. “In the schools of the MTS the bad pedagogical condition must be improved. There are no tractors and other equipment, because they are used on the field,” a report aimed for Deputy Minister of Cotton

⁶⁸⁶ Ibid., I. 31.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibid., II. 31–32.

⁶⁸⁹ Ibid., I. 31.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid., I. 32.

⁶⁹¹ Ibid., I. 32.

Production M. M. Fonin in February 1953 disclosed.⁶⁹² Furthermore, it was found that teachers were not acquainted with the technology of the machines, there were too few people in the classes and registration was dysfunctional.⁶⁹³ In addition, the school directors were not working on plans or programs for the courses. The conclusion was less than reassuring: “All of this”, inspector N. Kalistratov noted, “testifies of a complete absence of control with regard to courses on the side of the oblast’ cotton administration and Ministry of Cotton Production of the republic.”⁶⁹⁴

The work of the Uzbek Ministry of Cotton Production was also subject to critique from other branches of the Uzbek party elite. Hence, in his speech at the 9th Congress of Uzbek Cotton Growers, First Secretary A. Niiazov directed tacit disapproval at the Uzbek Cotton Minister F. R. Nasyrov, when he stated that the all-union government demands of us “the decisive elimination of failures and deficiencies in our work to lead cotton growing and truly secure better efforts in the work of all party, state and agricultural organs.”⁶⁹⁵ Similarly, the work of the ministry was criticised from experts and cotton growers, voicing their discontent with the missing connection to kolkhozy, which left them without guidance in the implementation of their work. “Guilty of this”, an angry observer noted in *Sovetskoe khlopkovodstvo*, “is entirely the administration of agriculture and propaganda of the Uzbek Ministry of Cotton Production.”⁶⁹⁶

The centralisation of powers through the establishment of the Ministry of Cotton Production proved of little effect when it came to changing the problems on the lower level in the Uzbek SSR. It is hardly surprising as lower level state officials or MTS workers are likely to have been fairly indifferent as to where political power was located and decision-making taking place – whether in Moscow or Tashkent. The cadre question in the Ministry of Cotton Production instead casts light on two issues: Firstly, far from remaining an all-union issue, the “ordinary Stalinism” dedication went from the top down through all levels of all-union and republican ministries and arrived even in the Uzbek countryside, where the various state institutions belonging under the command of the Ministry of Cotton Production were equally screened. Secondly, the cases uncovered the severe difficulties the state still encountered with regard to finding adequate ways to implement its comprehensive claim to power. Especially on the ground in Uzbekistan, the state structures were still so rudimentary in the early 1950s

⁶⁹² Ibid., II. 68–77.

⁶⁹³ Ibid., II. 75–76.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid., I. 77.

⁶⁹⁵ “Rech’ sekretaria TsK KP Uzbekistana tov. A. I. Niiazova”, PV, 07.02.1953, 2.

⁶⁹⁶ “Usilit’ tempy polivov v Uzbekistane”, *Sovetskoe khlopkovodstvo*, 24.06.1952, 2.

that, for example, state officials and MTS workers were able to circumvent the institutional network, whose delinquencies only showed up on the state radar through centrally orchestrated campaigns. Lastly, attacks on the ministries from the 1951 onward have been seen as part the build-up of a purge by Stalin.⁶⁹⁷ The resurfacing interest in workers' and officials' past relations to traditional enemy categories such as "Trotskyist" and "bourgeois nationalist" are suggestive to that end, especially in the light of the campaigns against the political and cultural elites of the Uzbek SSR despite the lack of a documented policy.

Republican Unrest

The centralisation of the power through the Ministry of Cotton Production did not only cause difficulties with regard to the establishment of a functioning apparatus, it also caused serious conflict between central and republican demands. Part of the centralisation was the active policy-making through the new ministry, which had hitherto been left to the republican authorities, who were merely dictated the cotton quotas they had to fulfil. In addition to this fundamental change, the central government came to integrate and promote one specific cotton growing culture by appointing Usman Iusupov to head the Ministry of Cotton Production, i.e. the one Iusupov had learned and implemented over half a lifetime in his home country Uzbekistan. The sudden promotion of the Uzbek cotton growing in disguise of a Soviet particularly caught the Tajik First Secretary B. G. Gafurov on guard. What followed over the course of the next years was a long political tirade between the Tajik First Secretary and the Minister of Cotton Production.

It is unclear when exactly B. G. Gafurov first voiced his concern about the cotton policy, but he appears to have cast the first stone already shortly after the establishment of the new ministry. In autumn 1951 Gafurov denounced a decree on agricultural techniques in cotton cultivation and irrigation with the statement that it "borders on sabotage!"⁶⁹⁸ In a less vehement tone, Gafurov addressed a letter to G. M. Malenkov on February 1 1952, in which he explained pedantically the flaws of the current cotton growing policy advocated by Usman Iusupov.⁶⁹⁹ The main points of complaint were related to firstly the timing of certain cultiva-

⁶⁹⁷ Leonhard, *Kreml ohne Stalin*, 77–79. Gorlizki argues against the planning of a large-scale purge of ministries: Gorlizki, "Ordinary Stalinism," 731.

⁶⁹⁸ RGASPI, 17, 138, 406, ll. 28–29. The original document was not found amongst archival evidence. The quotation stems from a control committee of the Council of Ministers that investigated Gafurov's accusations. The committee found Gafurov's statements reflecting a non-objective, one-sided reading of the decree, resulting in farfetched (*nadumannyi*) and unfounded accusations. RGASPI, 17, 138, 406, l. 28.

⁶⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, ll. 9–11.

tion issues (foliage cutting, ploughing, sheeting), by which Gafurov argued that Tajik experience called for a different schedule than dictated by the ministry through various decrees. Secondly, Gafurov was accusing Iusupov of “directing the bodies [of the ministry] and often giving instructions to institutions and enterprises without accurate knowledge of the situation on the ground.”⁷⁰⁰ The issue that was to cause a particularly heated debate over the next following years, was thirdly related to the row-width on the cotton fields. Gafurov argued that, “experience of the adepts (*peredovik*) of cotton growing in the Tajik SSR have shown that limiting the row-width” results in a higher cotton yield.⁷⁰¹ According to Gafurov, Iusupov proved deaf to the idea and instead of supporting the change that the Tajiks had been implementing over the course of recent years, the Ministry of Cotton Production was “looking for sensible objective reasons to hinder the implementation of these measures.”⁷⁰² Moreover, Iusupov ostensibly saw a difficulty in achieving the transition to mechanised cultivation of cotton fields with a narrowed row-width, but “such unfounded statement denies the experience of kolkhozy and sovkhozy in Tajikistan, who implement mechanised processing of crops with the narrowed row-width.”⁷⁰³

The most immediate problem with regard to Gafurov–Iusupov debate, was their different experience with cotton growing. While the Tajiks had begun using the narrow row-width, which involved spacing the plant rows 45-50 centimetres apart, the Uzbeks were working with a row-width of 70-90 centimetres.⁷⁰⁴ As long as cotton cultivation had remained a republican matter, this difference was unimportant, for the republican leaders could—to a large extent—use which ever technique would fulfil the cotton quotas the central planning institutions ascribed to them. Although there is no archival evidence suggesting that the Ministry of Cotton Production ever drew up a plan for a harmonisation of row-width in the Soviet Union, Gafurov did obviously feel under pressure from the all-union ministry. This becomes all the more evident given the longevity of the issue and the progressive vehemence with which Gafurov attacked Iusupov. Having repeatedly emphasised the issue over the course of 1952, Gafurov wrote to the Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers G. M. Malenkov again in early January 1953.⁷⁰⁵ In an exceptionally harsh tone, Gafurov not only claimed that Iusupov remained ignorant to the cultivation conditions in Tajikistan, but also that the Minister of

⁷⁰⁰ Ibid., I. 10.

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

⁷⁰² Ibid.

⁷⁰³ Ibid., I. 10.

⁷⁰⁴ Gregory Gleason, “Between Moscow and Tashkent: The Politics of the Uzbek Cotton Production Complex” (PhD, University of California, 1984), 38.

⁷⁰⁵ RGANI, 5, 24, 545, ll. 36–40.

Cotton Production did not appreciate criticism and held dogmatic convictions.⁷⁰⁶ In conclusion, Garufov ranted, “with his incorrect acts, comrade Iusupov is interfering with the interest of experts on cotton cultivation, [thus] encouraging backwardness. All the acts of comrade Iusupov are objectively a defence of conservatism in the implementation of agro-techniques of cotton farming.”⁷⁰⁷ In a second letter from January 22 1953, this time aimed for P. K. Ponomarenko in the Moscow Central Committee, Gafurov amplified the attacks, accusing Iusupov of lying about the general output of kolkhozy and sovkhozy, using wrong numbers in his report and ignoring several attempts of the Tajik leadership to correct the conclusions.⁷⁰⁸ The comments of leading agronomists of Tajikistan such as the recommendation of square clustered farming were pushed aside, Gafurov angrily noted, while Iusupov simply used the numbers from Uzbekistan. “All this shows that Iusupov is distorting facts and, in practice, acting against progressive agronomy. Iusupov's report to the government of the USSR assures me once again about the fact that the Ministry of Cotton Production is engaging in discrediting the most progressive agronomy, successfully implemented by Tajik farmers.”⁷⁰⁹ Although appearing as a minor agricultural question, the conflict over the row-width does shed light on several issues at stake between the central government and the republican leaders. First of all, Jerry Hough and Merle Fainsod mention Tajik claims from December 1951 in passing in order to show that “in a limited way, bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic actors were sometimes even able to make policy proposals.”⁷¹⁰ As the debate shows, the republican leaders indeed went much further in claiming their rights and the Gafurov rhetoric shows with what zeal they could be pursued.⁷¹¹ Secondly, changing the row-width could have major consequences for the Tajik First Secretary and his worries with regard to the cotton cultivation methods were not entirely unfounded. A policy change in the Tajik SSR would necessitate a complete restructuring of the cotton field outlay, foist an enormous task onto the back of the Tajik kolkhozniki and thereby surely give Gafurov both public and political headwind in his home republic. Additionally, Gafurov would also be faced with the possible shortfall of industrial production as cotton machinery for the Tajik row-width was produced in Tajiki-

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid., I. 36.

⁷⁰⁷ Ibid., I. 40.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid., II. 92–101

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid., I. 96.

⁷¹⁰ Hough and Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union Is Governed*, 188.

⁷¹¹ Similar conclusions has been drawn by Maike Lehmann for Armenian claims within the cultural sphere: Lehmann, “The Local Reinvention of the Soviet Project. Nation and Socialism in the Republic of Armenia After 1945,” 483 and 504.

stan. As a consequence, Gafurov's position as a dispenser of "wealth", his patronage network as well as political power basis would be seriously threatened.

It is more difficult to decipher Iusupov's reasoning. Despite the lack of a harmonisation plan for cotton growing in the Soviet Union, it is not unlikely that Iusupov played with the idea, in order to quietly safeguard Uzbek interests. As Central Asia's largest producer of machinery for cotton cultivation, the Tashkent Agricultural Machinery Works, would critically increase important revenue through the harmonisation, supplying the Uzbek economy with a welcomed boost.⁷¹² Based on archival evidence however, it is difficult to sustain an argument of Iusupov taking on the function of an Uzbek envoy to Moscow, seeking to represent Uzbek interests, which is hardly surprising given the circumstances of his transfer. Nevertheless, it does catch the eye of the reader that the Uzbek leadership did not send any letters of complaints to the central government during Iusupov's tenure in Moscow.

Instead the recent Uzbek–Tajik history is likely to have added vehemence to the Iusupov–Gafurov struggle. Ever since the delimitation of the republics which included into the Uzbek SSR the traditionally Tajik regions around Samarkand and Bukhara, tensions existed between the two republics.⁷¹³ Although the "friendship of the peoples" forbade any open animosities on the political level, personal enmity between Iusupov and Gafurov could have been an issue. It is likely that Iusupov, in the position of Cotton Minister, was not particularly accommodating to Tajik policy requests. In February 1953, for example, Iusupov refused to dispense additional mineral fertilizer to the Tajik SSR, because, as Iusupov disinterestedly stated, the Tajiks had spent more than they claimed and Gafurov used falsified numbers.⁷¹⁴

The political conflict between Gafurov and Iusupov will probably have been caused by several of the above issues, but the real core of Gafurov's apprehension lay in the centralisation of powers. Despite never reaching the same level of intensity, severe criticism of the Ministry of Cotton Production from other republics also arrived at the central government in Moscow.

⁷¹² The first cotton harvester to roll off the lines of Tashsel'mash beginning 1949 was the SKhM-48, of which some 25,000 were produced by 1954. The machines were designed to accommodate 70 cm width rows, a distance which had been adopted primarily for the convenience of manual cotton pickers. See: Gleason, "Between Moscow and Tashkent," 38.

⁷¹³ Fedtke, "Wie Aus Bucharern Usbeken Und Tadschiken Wurden"; Carlisle, "Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan and Its Neighbours." Iusupov may also have had considerable influence on the Tajik politics through cross-border ties of the Khujandi political network in the Fergana Valley. However, since Gafurov belonged to the Khujandi political clan it appears unlikely that those ties stood at the centre of the dispute. In fact, based on a clan perspective one might argue that the opposite was the case: Being From Fergana, Iusupov might have sought to weaken the Khujandi network due to clan rivalries. There is, however, no historical evidence to support such claim. See: Collins, *Clan Politics*, 106–108.

⁷¹⁴ RGASPI, 17, 138, 406, ll. 164–165. In other letters to G. M. Malenkov from mid-January 1953, Gafurov is complaining about not having received the guaranteed equipment for the Tajik SSR to fulfil the irrigation plan. See: RGANI, 5, 24, 545, ll. 64–66.

In late 1951, for example, the Turkmen First Secretary Sh. Batyrov complained that due to disorganisation, the Ministry of Cotton Production and its local organs had failed in resolving “a number of essential issues concerning kolkhoz farms.”⁷¹⁵ Other complaints arrived from the Azerbaijani SSR in January 1953 that accused the Ministry of Cotton Production of jeopardising the harvest of 1953 by decreeing the change of cotton cultivars. Addressing G. M. Malenkov, Chairman of the Azerbaijani Council of Ministers T. I. Kuliev and First Secretary M. D. Bagirov argued that because “the Ministry of Cotton Production did not help us, it was partly at fault for us not fulfilling the plan of raw cotton.”⁷¹⁶ According to the Azerbaijani authors, the Ministry of Cotton Production decree on changing the cotton cultivar would further obstruct the fulfilment of 1953 quotas, so that it needed be cancelled and the cultivars reintroduced.⁷¹⁷

The Iusupov-Gafurov fight as well as the complaints from other republics clearly show just how dismayed republican leaders were with the new ministry and the centralisation of policy making it entailed. This republican unrest will surely have been one of the main reasons for central leadership to rewind and abolish the ministry immediately following Stalin’s death in March 1953. The death of the dictator caused serious anxiety amongst the ruling circle about the future of the Soviet Union and the last thing central leadership needed in a time of uncertainty were tensions among republican leaders. In fact, the republican animosities could result in a further deepening of limited statehood, if the centre lost further control over the debate. In the worst case scenario this could spill over and not merely concern institutional weakness but also destabilise centre-periphery relations. Unceremoniously, the ministry was closed alongside the major government reshuffle in late spring 1953 and the policy decisions given back to the republican leaders, who would guard them closely until the end of the Soviet Union.

Soviet rule brought considerable change to the Uzbek countryside during the last years of Stalin’s life. With the goal of optimising cotton output through control and transformation of Uzbek cotton production, the central government initiated major projects aimed at fundamentally changing Uzbek cotton growing. Both central and republican authorities pursued these goals with Stalinist determination, but time and again found that their comprehensive claim to power diluted the further down the Uzbek hierarchy. This condition of limited statehood

⁷¹⁵ RGASPI, 17, 138, 275, l. 32.

⁷¹⁶ RGANI, 5, 24, 545, l. 43.

⁷¹⁷ RGANI, 5, 24, 545, l. 43.

was generated by the complex intertwining of institutional overstretch, limited supplies to meet demands, republican and local interests as well as popular responses. Thereby, it is crucial to remember that centre's demands with regard to cotton production were in fact largely fulfilled from 1949 onward.

Limited statehood was not characterised by general anti-state action from various groups of society, although state and party authorities habitually thought so. In the Uzbek SSR it appears that many groups, especially on the lower level, made everyday compromises with a part of state policies, in order to fulfil the most crucial demands. This was a widespread phenomenon and a way to make state and society viable under Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR.⁷¹⁸ Hence, it is not without reason that it was the “diversion of funds”, “patronage networks” or shortfalls in mechanisation that sparked central intervention in the form of political demotion or issuing of draconic laws and not the inability to fulfil cotton quotas. In other words, it was the fulfilment of the centre's thirst for cotton that provided the Uzbek political leaders on all levels the space to satisfy local interests of various kinds and thus ensure their own power. This was the functionality of limited statehood, for it made the system function despite incredible pressures from the centre of power. The dysfunctionality of limited statehood was its role with regard to the ideological goals, for the state authorities not only acted according to their economic interests as Kathleen Carlisle suggested, but also to their ideological beliefs. The relationship between kolkhozniki and state authorities was defined by the constant vacillation between these two entities.

The most fundamental change with regard to agricultural politics, however, was the centralisation of power that without doubt was intimately tied to the growing importance of cotton and a trend toward “ordinary Stalinism”. That the bundling of powers in Moscow resulted in strong complaints from the cotton producing republics was not surprising, and it is likely that it was Stalin personally who favoured a limitation of republican power. At the very least, the closure of the ministry immediately following the dictator's death strongly suggests that the collective leadership saw little sense in the centralisation. In addition, the central leadership is likely to have sought for ways to limit tensions on the republican level in a time of uncertainty following Stalin's death.

⁷¹⁸ Johnston, *Being Soviet*, xi.

5. DE-STALINISATION OF THE UZBEK POLITICAL ELITE

“[W]orn out from decades of terror and violence” Stalin’s companions “no longer wanted kill and hurt.”⁷¹⁹ Despite this simple explanation of the forces behind the abolition of Stalin’s brutal dictatorship, it was completely unclear what exactly the unravelling of the dictatorship meant in March 1953. What was to be done? How was it to be done, and what would it entail? Who would become the new leader and which direction would Soviet politics take? These were questions as intimate to Soviet leaders as to outside observers.⁷²⁰

The answers were not long in waiting. The new collective leadership answered instantaneously with the undoing of the “Doctor’s Plot” and the first steps of amnesty for Gulag prisoners in March 1953. Yet, it constituted but the tip of the iceberg of changes in Soviet policy during the subsequent period. Lower retail prices for consumer goods were announced in spring, payments for agricultural products were increased in summer 1953, foreign policy toward the Eastern Bloc was softened and initiatives for a more moderate Cold War policy were taken.⁷²¹ In 1956, Khrushchev then dropped the bomb: The Secret Speech was undoubtedly the most momentous event of the process and marked the peak of a de-Stalinisation process that within just three years had taken decisive steps to create a foundation for the opening of a new, correct path for the creation of communism.

De-Stalinisation was, however, no clear-cut policy but rather an amalgam of different policies within different sectors of life in the Soviet Union. Best understood as a process, Polly Jones defined de-Stalinisation as including a “liberalisation of the authoritarian political culture of Stalinism, a greater emphasis on individual welfare and material well-being, ‘Thaw(s)’ of the Stalinist freeze on freedom of expression and modifications to the autarkic chauvinism especially characteristic of Cold War Stalinism.”⁷²² With regard to Soviet centre-periphery relations this entailed a possible lethal aspect. The very functioning of the Soviet Union political system in 1953 was deeply influenced by pillars carrying the Stalinist system: A political order of a single-party dictatorship, the economic order of a non-market and,

⁷¹⁹ Baberowski, *Verbrannte Erde*, 496.

⁷²⁰ Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev. Reformer 1945-1964*, 2:558; Leonhard, *Kreml ohne Stalin*; Bertram D. Wolfe, “The Durability of Despotism in the Soviet Union. I,” *Russian Review* 17, no. 2 (April 1958): 83–93; Also: William Taubman, *Khrushchev: the Man and His Era* (New York; London: Norton, 2003), 242–244.

⁷²¹ Hough and Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union Is Governed*, 206–207.

⁷²² Polly Jones, “Introduction: The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization,” in *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. Polly Jones, BASEES/Routledge Series on Russian and East European Studies 23 (London: Routledge, 2006), 3.

lastly, a system of mass state terror.⁷²³ Particularly the latter pillar, state terror, had allowed a strong centralisation of powers in the Stalinist system, by which the centre could decisively intervene with republican politics (by force). De-Stalinisation and the abolition of terror in effect meant a relaxation of centralisation and authoritarian rule, which gave republican leaders further authority to pursue the national interests of their republics. The result was a deepening of limited statehood in the Soviet Union.

In the Uzbek SSR, the altered conditions posed several difficulties to the central leadership's claim to power. Despite the change of political structures and practices, the post-Stalin Soviet leaders saw little sense in compromising all-union interests. In this chapter, agricultural reform in the post-Stalin period and cadre de-Stalinisation in the Uzbek SSR stand at the centre of interest. With Khrushchev at the head of the Soviet communist party, agricultural reform gained political expediency and the self-proclaimed expert attacked cotton production in the typical 'Khrushchevian' know-it-all manner. Not surprisingly, parts of the Uzbek republican leadership were not thrilled. In particular Usman Iusupov who returned to the Uzbek SSR to serve as Chair of the Council of Ministers set his face against Khrushchev ideas. If Khrushchev was not already convinced of the need to install his own protégés in the Uzbek SSR to buttress his own power and secure all-union interests, the Iusupov experience will have added to his conviction. What has traditionally been understood only superficially as de-Stalinisation of cadres due to the old elites' affiliation with Stalin, was, however, a much more complex process that deserves close scrutiny.⁷²⁴

In a first step, we look closer at the central government's reform policy and its reception by the Uzbek political elite. As we shall see, the ouster of the long-term Uzbek leaders U. Iusupov and A. Niiazov was not merely related to their role in the Stalinist dictatorship but also due to pressing economic policy issues and interests. Khrushchev oversaw and participated actively in the process and made sure that his own confidante N. Mukhitdinov was promoted to the leading position as First Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party. Once in charge of the top-level leadership, Mukhitdinov put together an Uzbek Bureau that was fundamentally different from that of the Iusupov era. Simultaneous with the changes of the top-level Uzbek leadership, the post-Iusupov leadership also oversaw a cadre exchange at the lower levels of the Uzbek state and party apparatus and we look into the principles that guided the process. Contrary to common belief, Khrushchev might in fact have been more

⁷²³ Weiner, "Robust Revolution to Retiring Revolution," 209.

⁷²⁴ Carlisle, "Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan," 278.

supportive of a Beria style nationality policy, although he severely denounced it at the time of Beria's ouster in summer 1953. As a result, we gain a better understanding of the de-Stalinisation of cadres in the Soviet republics.

5.1. THE END OF AN ERA

Before the de-Stalinisation of the Uzbek political elite, the opposite happened; there was a 're-Stalinisation'. In the first months after Stalin's death, the centre acted according to its security interest. Fearing a rise in limited statehood that could possibly endanger Soviet rule, central control over the Ministry of Internal Affairs was strengthened and Usman Iusupov returned to the Uzbek periphery. These cadre exchanges soon resulted in a severe conflict over political policies, when Khrushchev began promoting a major reform programme for the Uzbek agricultural sector. This ended with the first step of cadre de-Stalinisation in the Uzbek SSR.

Playing it safe

Recalling the time after Stalin's death, Khrushchev later admitted the feelings of the central leaders: "We were afraid to lose control of the country. We tried to restrain any rise in sentiments that were undesirable from the point of view of the leadership. We didn't want some tidal wave to come along that would sweep us away as we were proceeding along our path. There were fears that the leadership would not be able to cope with its functions and would not be able to direct the process of change down channels that would remain Soviet."⁷²⁵ Certain policy initiatives of the most immediate post-Stalin period did indeed bear the mark of the central government's fear of losing control and release a similar form of limited statehood that had existed during World War II and the post-war period where Soviet authorities struggled to regain authority over key areas of the Soviet populous.

With regard to the stability of centre-periphery relations in the Soviet Union, it was not Khrushchev but Minister of Internal Affairs Lavrentyi Beria who pulled the strings in Moscow in spring 1953. As a matter of fact, scholars have duly taken note of Beria's conduct in the Baltic states, Ukraine and Belarus.⁷²⁶ With three memoranda from May and June 1953, L.

⁷²⁵ Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev. Reformer 1945-1964*, 2:588. In the first edition of Khrushchev's memoirs, Khrushchev stated central leaders' feelings slightly more dramatically: "We were scared—really scared. We were afraid the thaw might unleash a flood, which we wouldn't be able to control and which would drown us." Nikita Khrushchev, *Khrushchev Remembers the Last Testament*, [1st ed.] (Boston: Little Brown, 1974), 79.

⁷²⁶ Elena I. Zubkova, *Pribaltika i Kreml', 1940-1953* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2008), 320–337; Weiner, "Robust Revolution to Retiring Revolution," 216–221; Smith, "Leadership and Nationalism in the Soviet Republics, 1951-1959," 82–86; A. I. Vdovin, "Politika Po Ukrepiliiu Novoi Istoricheskoi Obshchnosti v Gody 'Ottepeli'," Online library and journal, *Obrazovatel'nyi Portal Slovo*, October 2012, <http://www.portal-slovo.ru/history/41256.php>.

Beria suggested that a rigid *korenizatsiia* policy be enforced in the western regions, including the abolition of forced Russification of cadres and the promotion of indigenous cadres to leadership posts.⁷²⁷ With the memos, Beria aimed to kill two birds with one stone. Well aware of the anti-Soviet sentiment in the western regions, he sought to support national interests and win the support of local leaders, thus creating a patronage network that would answer to him. At the same time, the backing from loyal republican cadres would buttress his position in the collective leadership's succession struggle.

Although there was no official memorandum on the Uzbek SSR or, indeed, on either of the Central Asian republics, Beria also aimed to ensure an advantage at the southern rim of the Soviet Union. According to N. Mukhitdinov who was Chair of the Council of Ministers in spring 1953, the Bureau of the Uzbek Central Committee was summoned by First Secretary A. Niazov late April 1953 to discuss a "note of L. P. Beria" that suggested similar measures in the Uzbek SSR as in the western regions.⁷²⁸ The memo released a heated discussion, in which Mukhitdinov in particular argued that the proposal would spark ethnic tensions throughout the Soviet Union.⁷²⁹ Undoubtedly, the Uzbek leadership knew of the events of in the western regions where Beria's policy left a bitter legacy of limited statehood. In Lithuania the situation was particularly troublesome. Anti-Russian sentiment was growing and statements recorded proclaiming, "no Russians will remain in Lithuania and Lithuanians will fill all positions in organizations and institutions" or "Lithuania will secede from the Soviet Union and establish an independent state."⁷³⁰ Similar voices were recorded in Belarus, Transcarpathia and Ukraine, where workers chanted "down with the Eastern Occupiers."⁷³¹ Surely, the Uzbek leadership had little interest in an equally difficult position in the Uzbek SSR. News of Uzbek opposition apparently reached Moscow quickly because the following day an already agitated Beria called to demand the replacement of Mukhitdinov with the former First Secretary and Minister of Cotton Production, Usman Iusupov.⁷³² Despite some Bureau members objecting and "arguing that they knew Iusupov from their work in the past", the Uzbek leadership decided to adhere to the demands from the centre and agreed to install Iusupov as Chairman of the Council of Ministers. Mukhitdinov was demoted to the joint po-

⁷²⁷ Zubkova, *Pribaltika i Kreml', 1940-1953*, 320–324; Elena Iu. Zubkova, "The Rivalry with Malenkov," in *Nikita Khrushchev* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2000), 72–73.

⁷²⁸ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 109.

⁷²⁹ *Ibid.*, 110.

⁷³⁰ Weiner, "Robust Revolution to Retiring Revolution," 217.

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*, 219. See also: Vdovin, "Politika Po Ukrepniiu Novoi Istoricheskoi Obshchnosti v Gody 'Ottepeli'."

⁷³² Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 111.

sition of Iusupov's deputy and Uzbek Minister of Foreign Affairs.⁷³³

Given the circumstances it is not surprising that Iusupov was sent to Uzbekistan. At the time, Beria was first amongst equals in the collective leadership and held enough political leverage to successfully pursue his political interests. In addition to Beria's interests, it is likely that the remainder of the central leaders was easily persuaded as central security and control issues were of highest priority. The personal connection between Beria, Mikoyan and Usman Iusupov could serve to that end and better secure Soviet power in the Uzbek SSR.⁷³⁴ For the central leadership, the resistance from top-level republican leaders could have severe consequences. As already noted, Iusupov's power in the Uzbek SSR had been considerable before his transfer to Moscow and although his star was faltering in the Uzbek SSR, he still enjoyed vast powers in the republic. Furthermore, the wider political elite on the lower levels were intimately tied to Iusupov through patronage networks, endowing him with extensive powers to push through central policy and avoid the rise of limited statehood as was the case in the western regions of the Soviet Union.

It is telling, however, that Iusupov was not made First Secretary, a position that remained in the hands of the Iusupov confidante A. Niiazov. As already noted, Niiazov had a history within the Uzbek secret police and the centre saw no apparent reason to exchange him for Iusupov.⁷³⁵ Nevertheless, the Iusupov return was a delicate matter for the Uzbek elite. The objection from some Bureau members was not unfounded. The top-level leadership had changed and although the new members had acquired their political education under Iusupov, the return of the former First Secretary would inevitably result in a shift in the balance of power in the Bureau. The extension of the Central Committee Bureau upon Iusupov's return must be understood against that background. A. Alimov was a Mukhitdinov client since their time in the Namangan obkom when Mukhitdinov entered the party work after the war. Likewise, K. M. Murtazaev owed his rise to the Niiazov/Mukhitdinov leadership rather than Iusupov and it is likely that both Alimov and Murtazaev were promoted in order to counterbalance Iusupov upon his return to Uzbekistan. This would prove crucial in the disputes over

⁷³³ Ibid., 112. Just a little notification in *Pravda vostoka* revealed Iusupov's return to Uzbekistan: "Plenum Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KP Uzbekistana", PV, 30.05.1953, 2.

⁷³⁴ It is noteworthy that former Chairman of the Uzbek Council of Ministers, A. A. Abdurakhmanov who had been ordered to Moscow at the same time as Iusupov in 1950 remained in Moscow another years time before he returned and was made head of the Uzbek State Planning Committee in 1954. See: Zalesskii, *Kto Est' Kto v Istorii SSSR, 1924-1953*, 8.

⁷³⁵ Ibid., 413.

agricultural reform.⁷³⁶

Uzbek Central Committee Bureau 1954: Nine full members, three candidates
Niiazov, A. I. (Uzbek, Fergana, First Secretary)
Mel'nikov, R. E. (Russian, Second Secretary)
Kamalov, S. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Iusupov, U. Iu. (Uzbek, Fergana, Chair of the Council of Ministers)
Mukhitdinov, N. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs)
Bylbas, V. A. (Russian, Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers)
Rashidov, Sh. (Uzbek, Jizzakh, Chair of Supreme Soviet)
Luchinskii, A. A. (Ukrainian, Commander of the Turkestan Military District, headquarters in Tashkent)
Mukhitdinova, Kh. (Uzbek, no biographical information)
Candidate members:
Alimov, A. (Uzbek, Tashkent, First Secretary of the Tashkent obkom)
Byzov, A. P. (Russian, Minister of Internal Affairs)
Murtazaev, K. (Uzbek, Khujand, First Secretary of the Uzbek komsomol)

The exchange of top-level republican Ministers for Beria loyalists was not the only step that the Minister of Internal Affairs took with regard to centre-periphery relations. Already on March 16, Beria exchanged virtually all leaders of the republican Ministries of Internal Affairs.⁷³⁷ This move stood in clear opposition to the otherwise rigid *korenizatsiia* policy that Beria was promoting and a step to ensure not only Beria's control over the republican ministries but also strengthen the centre's positions in the republics. In the Uzbek SSR, Usman Iusupov's long-term friend, Iu. B. Babadzhanov, was demoted in favour of major general Aleksei Petrovich Byzov, a man who had devoted his entire career to the secret police that he joined at just seventeen years of age in 1923.⁷³⁸ Obviously, the centre of power considered it

⁷³⁶ K. M. Murtazaev was born in 1926 in Khujand and made a career through the komsomol, where he began working in 1948. From 1952, he was First Secretary of the *komsomol* Central Committee, before he became secretary of the all-union komsomol where he was supervising the communist youth league in the Soviet republics. In 1960, he returned to a Uzbekistan and was made First Secretary of the Bukhara obkom where he served till 1977. See: Vitalii Khliupin, "Murtazaev, Kaium Murtazaevich," Internet Database, *Tsentrasiia Baza Personalii "Kto Est' Kto v Tsentral'noi Azii,"* October 22, 2012, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>.

⁷³⁷ Valentin Mzareulov, "Territorial'nye Organy - Narkomat - Ministerstvo Gosudarsvennoi Bezopasnosti," Online, *Istoriia Otechesvennykh Spetssluzhb i Pravookhranitel'nykh Organov,* 2012, http://shieldandsword.mozohin.ru/VD3462/terr_org/respublik/uzbek.htm.

⁷³⁸ A. P. Byzov had served throughout the Soviet Union, amongst others in the RSFSR before he got engaged in the Tartar regions where he served in the Crimean ASSR and the Tartar ASSR. In January 1939 he was arrested as part of the strike against the secret police, but released in July 1939 and continued his career. He remained

necessary to install trusted central representatives in the periphery just as Stalin had thought during the Second World War when A. Z. Kobulov was sent to Uzbekistan to keep in check limited statehood in form of possible unwanted responses from the Uzbek elite or population. Although the course of events put an abrupt end to Beria's political career by summer 1953, the brief interlude did decisively influence Uzbek political affairs. With Byzov and Iusupov in the top-echelons in Uzbekistan, the elite was tied closer to the centre, which by consequence was better equipped to monitor the developments in the Uzbek SSR. In addition to the changes within the top-level Uzbek leadership, the Beria interregnum also did leave a mark on the relationship between party, state and population in the Uzbek SSR. The situation in Uzbekistan might have taken a similar turn as in the western regions, had the collective leadership not managed to arrest him in summer 1953. Despite limited access to crucial archive material of the Uzbek Bureau, the Beria nationality policy initiatives appear to have had some influence on the atmosphere in Uzbekistan too. In a speech on June 3, 1953, Usman Iusupov called the Uzbek authorities to boldly deploy "*kritika i samo-kritika* as a good tool to expose all kinds of careerists, slanderers, provocateurs and anonymous writers (*anonimshchik*) with their despicable actions, [with] their defamatory letters, trying to break the confidence in our cadres and discredit them in the eyes of the people. We are called upon to establish normal conditions for the constructive and productive to the benefit of our homeland, our cadres and our Soviet intelligentsia."⁷³⁹ Given the context of anti-Soviet sentiment in the western regions, it would be an oddity if the government responses were related to issues other than anti-state and anti-party sentiments from the population. The extent to which they were concerned with anti-Russian attitudes remains unknown, but Iusupov's remarks clearly showed that it was a problem also in Central Asia that Uzbek leadership was concerned with. Indeed, Iusupov's deputy N. Mukhitdinov repeated the "unwarranted accusations" roughly one month later on July 14 during the Uzbek Central Committee plenum where the entire Uzbek political elite joined the choir denouncing Lavrentye Beria following his arrest.⁷⁴⁰

Following Beria's arrest in late June 1953, the collective leadership settled on a more subtle nationality policy. As a consequence, scholars have argued that neither of the new contenders

Minister of Internal Affairs in the Uzbek SSR until April 17 1954 and made Chairman of Uzbek Committee for State Security on April 20 1954: "Byzov, Aleksei Petrovich," Online Library Project, *Spravochnik Po Istorii Kommunisticheskoi Partii i Sovetskogo Soiuz 1898-1991*, 2012, <http://www.knowbysight.info/BBB/01668.asp>; Valentin Mzareulov, "Byzov, Aleksei Petrovich," Online, *Istoriia Otechesvennykh Spetsssluzhb i Pravoohranitel'nykh Organov*, 2012, http://shieldandword.mozohin.ru/personnel/byzov_a_p.htm.

⁷³⁹ "Tret'ia sessia verkhovnogo soveta Uzbekskoi SSR. Rech' Predsedatelia Soveta Ministrov Uzbekskoi SSR tov. U. Iu. Iusupova", PV, 03.06.1953, 2.

⁷⁴⁰ "Kommunisty Uzbekistana edinodusheno odobiaiut postanovlenie plenuma TsK KPSS", PV, 14.07.1953, 2.

for power, Khrushchev nor Malenkov, had a clear nationality policy.⁷⁴¹ Khrushchev's reluctance to forcefully pursue a Beria style *korenizatsiia* does not equal the lack of a Soviet national policy, however. There were good reasons to roll back and implement a more relaxed policy toward the union republics as Beria's proposals would have led to the lay-off of thousands of non-indigenous cadres in the party and state apparatus throughout the union republics and nurture further the anti-Soviet sentiment.⁷⁴² This would potentially have destabilised the foundations of the Soviet Union in the time of uncertainty following Stalin's death. Instead, the Soviet leadership began to pursue other, more goal-oriented reform policies. In the Uzbek SSR, this led to a political scandal and again it was Usman Iusupov who took centre stage.

"You cannot make pilaf of maize"

The Stalin dictatorship had left the Soviet Union in a terrible food crisis. In July 1952, potatoes were such scarce a commodity in the Uzbek capital Tashkent that people were often forced to buy them on the black market at horrendous prices. The Uzbek worker K. A. Peters described in a letter to Stalin how ordinary people were forced to buy potatoes from "speculators, dealers (*perekupshchiki*), city kulaks and trade bourgeoisie" where the price could go as high as five Roubles per kilo.⁷⁴³ The scarcity of foodstuffs and the high food prices had devastating results. Calculations by the Central Statistical Administration from 1953 on average food consumption in the Soviet Union revealed that on a normal day, an average Soviet citizen would consume roughly the same as a camp prisoner of the Gulag.⁷⁴⁴ As a consequence, the two main combatants for power, G. M. Malenkov and N. S. Khrushchev, defined major reform proposals immediately after the arrest of L. Beria. It was Malenkov who took the lead

⁷⁴¹ Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism*, 242; Smith, "Leadership and Nationalism in the Soviet Republics, 1951-1959," 81.

⁷⁴² Smith, "Leadership and Nationalism in the Soviet Republics, 1951-1959," 80-83; Vdovin, "Politika Po Ukrepleniiu Novoi Istoricheskoi Obshchnosti v Gody 'Ottepeli'."

⁷⁴³ O. V. Khlevniuk et al., eds., *Politbiuro TsK VKP(b) i Sovet Ministrov SSSR, 1945-1953*, Dokumenty Sovetskoi Istorii (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002), 366-368.

⁷⁴⁴ The daily consumption entailed: 500 grams of flour, groats, and pasta, approximately the same amount again of potatoes, and about 400 grams of milk and dairy produce (mainly cow and goat's milk). The norms the camp prisoners were supposed to receive: 700 grams of bread, 120 grams of groats and pasta, and 400 grams of potatoes. See: Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*, 133-134. See also Khrushchev's report to the Central Committee presidium from January 1954: Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, *Stroitel'stvo kommunizma v SSSR i razvitie sel'skogo khoziaistva*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Gos. Izd-vo Polit. Lit-ry, 1962), 85-100. The food crisis was a often debated topic in the final Stalin years, but according to Yoram Gorlizki and Oleg Khlevniuk the leader's monopoly on political initiatives stalled any process of reform: Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*, 133-142 here 141.

and sketched out a major reform including tax reductions on farmers, an increase in procurement prices and a strengthening of private plot farming, which secured the most basic needs of the farmers in August 1953. When Khrushchev stole back the agricultural venue just one month later at the Moscow Central Committee plenum in September, it was with similar but extended proposals that raised the procurement prices, reduced taxes further and fortified the claim to individual plots.⁷⁴⁵

As such, these were proposals that cannot but have been well received by republican leaders. With his flair for detail and great respect for modern technology, however, Khrushchev's visions for agricultural production entailed plans that completely contradicted Iusupov's understanding of farming in Uzbekistan. The first issue that Khrushchev and Iusupov collided over appeared on the agenda already in summer 1954. It is well known that Khrushchev was passionate about maize due to its multiple use in both human foodstuffs and fodder, which even awarded him the nickname *kukuruzhnik*.⁷⁴⁶ His maize-mania foresaw the expansion of its cultivation throughout the Soviet Union, including Uzbekistan. Yet, maize was not a typical crop to the Uzbek SSR and with good reason. In the arid Central Asian regions, the heavy irrigation needed for successful harvest increased expenses. As a consequence, neither central nor Uzbek leadership had pushed for the plantation of maize in the region and in 1940 the total acreage for maize cultivation in Uzbekistan was merely 17.000 hectare.⁷⁴⁷ Khrushchev, however, saw great potential for a serious expansion with the recently irrigated areas and ostensibly managed to convince part of the Uzbek agricultural elite of his idea. As a consequence, it featured high on the political agenda at the Uzbek Central Committee Plenum on July 7 and 8 1954.⁷⁴⁸ Moreover, in his speech, the Uzbek Minister of Agriculture, Mirza-Ali Valievich Mukhamedzhanov, drew the plenum's attention to the possibilities of maize cultivation for the Uzbek agricultural sector. According to Mukhamedzhanov, maize would provide not only additional crop for foodstuffs, but also be important forage to solve the fodder problem that haunted the Uzbek republic and, as a result, improve the low meat and dairy production.⁷⁴⁹

⁷⁴⁵ Khrushchev, *Stroitel'stvo kommunizma v SSSR i razvitie sel'skogo khoziaistva*, 1962, 1:7–84; Taubman, *Khrushchev: the Man and His Era*, 260–263.

⁷⁴⁶ From *kukuruza* (maize): Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev. Reformer 1945-1964*, 2:394–408.

⁷⁴⁷ Tsentral'noe statisticheskoe upravlenie, Demina, and Genin, *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1960 godu*, 398.

⁷⁴⁸ RGANI, 5, 31, 12, ll. 165–169.

⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, l. 167.



Nikita Khrushchev presenting his maize program in the Uzbek SSR around 1960.⁷⁵⁰ From right to left: Sh. R. Rashidov, N. S. Khrushchev, Ia. S. Nasriddinova.

Listening to Mukhamedzhanov's plans for the Uzbek agricultural sector was also a comrade Gavrilov, instructor of the party department concerned with the work of trade unions and the communist youth league. His report to the Moscow central administration of the Party Control Committee from July 10 shed light on just how explosive maize cultivation had been in during the Uzbek Central Committee plenum.⁷⁵¹ M.-A. V. Mukhamedzhanov's account of Uzbek agriculture ended with an intense discussion amongst the Uzbek Presidium caused by "particularly many comments from U. Iusupov."⁷⁵² Interrupting Mukhamedzhanov's talk, Iusupov amongst others argued "it will not work to use maize in food [in Uzbekistan], because it was formerly considered farm labourers' [*batratskoe*] food."⁷⁵³ After several further interruptions, Iusupov extended his critique after Mukhamedzhanov's presentation: "For principal reasons, I cannot agree with the proposal of Mukhamedzhanova. In accordance with the natural conditions...Uzbekistan is primarily a cotton republic...you cannot make pilaf of maize, of maize you can make flatbread and I nevertheless prefer to eat flatbread made of wheat than of maize (laughter, applause)...Why did I mention farm labourers? Of course you remember during the war, when we had no foodstuffs". Iusupov continued, "dun-dun"⁷⁵⁴ was

⁷⁵⁰ Source: <http://www.allrussias.com/>, October 22, 2012.

⁷⁵¹ The Party Control Commission had been renamed to the Party Control Committee in 1952. In 1962 it was merged with the State Control Commission of the Council of Ministers and baptised Committee for Party-State Control of the Central Committee CPSS and Council of Ministers SSSR.

⁷⁵² RGANI, 5, 31, 12, l. 167.

⁷⁵³ Ibid. It is suggestive for Iusupov's understanding of communism that he uses farm labourer as a derogative term for the poorest segments of society.

⁷⁵⁴ I have not been able to identify exactly what dish meant with dun-dun, but it is clear that it was seen as a cheap, unworthy meal in the 1950s Uzbek SSR.

the meal of farm labourers, which was partly made of maize. This maize is baked in embers. I think, we should not recommend that to our people. We should recommend our people to eat pilaf, fruits, wheat bread, wheat cereals, rice...and dun-dun, woe betide it [*bud' on prok-liat*]—they enjoyed it in the past, but now we need to bury this product.”⁷⁵⁵

Iusupov's outburst prompted a wave of contributions to a heated debate on whether to be for or against the enhanced cultivation of maize. Second secretary R. E. Mel'nikov tried to calm events by mediating between the opposing opinions. He urged Mukhamedanov to invest more thought in the plans. At the same time, Mel'nikov reminded Iusupov that maize most definitely belonged within the realm of foodstuffs, reminding him that, “Khrushchev ascribed great importance to the role of maize, during his speech at the September [1953] and February-March plena of the Central Committee.”⁷⁵⁶ Iusupov remained resistant to any such relinquishing. In fact, he intensified his attack by reminding Mel'nikov that he should be monitoring, not exercising executive power: “I believe you are not allowed to administer, you do not have the right to implement it. I think more than you [Mel'nikov], which is why I say so. I believe we need corn as silage, as fodder for livestock, as forage and the rest—cotton. I stand by this view. If we have vacant land, it should not remain unused, but we should plant cotton.”⁷⁵⁷

Maize cultivation in the Uzbek SSR was, admittedly, a somewhat curious idea. Given the Soviet food crisis, it was, however, simply a priority shift that promised to severely increase the food supply in the Soviet Union. There can be no doubt that maize cultivation was implemented cheaper in other, less arid regions of the Soviet Union. But Khrushchev was convinced that similar output miracles as within the cotton sector, could also be achieved for a cereal such as maize. Needless to say, environmental issues played but an insignificant role in Soviet planning and maize cultivation posed no problems not already solved within the cotton sector. As a consequence, the Khrushchev proposals not only led to the substantial widening of maize cultivation for forage and for foodstuffs over the next five years but, in fact, provided the basis for maize becoming one of the main cereals in Uzbekistan today, next to wheat, barley and rice.⁷⁵⁸

The heated plenum was followed by an intense dispute in a Central Committee Bureau ses-

⁷⁵⁵ RGANI, 5, 31, 12, ll. 167–168.

⁷⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, I. 168.

⁷⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁸ The sown areas of maize for foodstuffs more than quadrupled from 25.800 to 112.000 hectare acreage while maize for forage rose from 121.000 to 241.000 hectare. Numbers from: Tsentral'noe statisticheskoe upravlenie, Demina, and Genin, *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1960 godu*, 398.

sion.⁷⁵⁹ In July 1954 the Uzbek Bureau was largely constituted by individuals who owed their rise to Iusupov. However, a shift in power away from Iusupov had occurred during his time in Moscow. Of the twelve members in the Bureau, four had entered the Uzbek political elite without Iusupov's personal approval (K. M. Murtazaev, Kh. Mukhitdinova, A. P. Byzov and A. A. Luchinskii). The rest owed their rise to the former First Secretary. Yet, despite their indebtedness to Iusupov, they were now instrumental in his downfall. The dispute in the Central Committee Bureau following the plenum ended with the agreement that Iusupov had broken the party ethics by not adhering to the collective leadership of the republic.⁷⁶⁰ As a consequence, the Bureau issued a decree three weeks later entitled "On the Incident of the third Plenum", which stated that Iusupov did not act correctly during the third plenum and his many comments did not contribute to the productive work of the Central Committee. Furthermore, the decree declared that Iusupov reacted ill-heartedly to critique and ordered him to pay special attention to "avoid similar behaviour in the future."⁷⁶¹

With its decree, the Uzbek Central Committee Bureau underlined two things: First, a shift had taken place away from Usman Iusupov in the power relations of the Uzbek political leadership. The former First Secretary will have felt this already prior to the July plenum, which is likely to have amplified the forcefulness of his attacks, making them an attempt to regain some of the lost power. Even if had he anticipated how the Uzbek Bureau and subsequently the centre of power would react to his opposition, Iusupov is unlikely to have pursued his interests the way he did, for instead of fortifying his position he misjudged the situation and actively dug his own grave. Given the future developments in the Uzbek party leadership, it is fair to assume that Iusupov will not have enjoyed particular support in the Bureau session. Only A. I. Niiazov, V. A. Bylbas and S. Kamalov were long-time Iusupov confidants and may have been more reluctant to go against their friend and patron. The rest of the Bureau was closer to the younger group growing around N. Mukhitdinov who was protected by Khrushchev. This conclusion is supported by their future career trajectories. In addition to the Uzbek members, the Russian representatives are likely to have acted and voted in the name of the centre of power, leaving Iusupov fairly alone with his opposition to the Khrushchev plans. Second, the Uzbek Bureau clearly signalled its allegiance to the centre of power. Its members secured their own position through the backing of Moscow. This was a necessity for them to remain in power because, more than anything, the Iusupov attacks revealed the

⁷⁵⁹ Ibid., I. 169.

⁷⁶⁰ RGANI, 5, 31, 12, I. 169.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid., II. 177–178.

tension between the centre and the old guard in Uzbek periphery that had increased since the death of Stalin.

The Iusupov incident also displayed in all clarity that central policies were not accepted pro forma in the Uzbek SSR political arena following Stalin's death. Iusupov, in fact, seriously questioned the Soviet power hierarchy with remarks he directed at Second Secretary R. E. Mel'nikov, and Iusupov's resistance to central policies made him a possible threat to all-union interests at the local level. There is good reason to believe that he enjoyed protection from Moscow as part of the succession struggle between Khrushchev and Malenkov, in which republican support was politically urgent as a means to gain an advantage over one another. Iusupov's objections were of the sort that could easily have been used to label him as a proponent of "national interests", which usually belonged to the political ammunition when republican leaders were removed. It is therefore surprising that the July plenum did not already seal his destiny. Indeed, "nationalist interests" had just caused Khrushchev to demote the Kazakh First Secretary Zh. Shaiakhmetov in February 1954 following his opposition to the Virgin Lands campaign. It might well have been the recentness of these events that kept central leaders from removing Iusupov, in order to avoid stirring up things further.⁷⁶² In addition, Malenkov is more than likely to have protected Iusupov. As the Chair of the Uzbek Council of Ministers, Iusupov was within the Malenkov power structure, limiting Khrushchev's ability to single-handedly remove him. For the moment then, Iusupov appears to have been protected by the Moscow succession struggle. With Iusupov in the way, Khrushchev thus faced implementation problems regarding agricultural policy as well as vital support for his Moscow power struggle. However, neither Malenkov nor Iusupov could halt Khrushchev's victory march when the Soviet First Secretary decided to handle the Iusupov incident personally.

The Fall of Usman Iusupov

Nikita Khrushchev did not like Usman Iusupov. From his retirement under house arrest, Khrushchev remembered him as "a very intelligent man, but his personality was such that he was not free of erroneous views. He had his own point of view regarding cotton cultivation...Many remnants from the past remained in Iusupov's personality. As a man of Muslim background, he regarded women as slaves [whose job it was to pick cotton] and he refused to

⁷⁶² Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev. Reformer 1945-1964*, 2:318–320.

acknowledge the existence of cotton-harvesting machinery.”⁷⁶³ Khrushchev’s crude characterisation did not do the work of Iusupov justice. As already shown, as both the Uzbek First Secretary and as the Minister of Cotton Production Iusupov had pushed hard for the implementation of machinery within the cotton sector. Why then did Khrushchev believe Iusupov was opposed to mechanised farming?

The traditional farming procedure in Uzbekistan saw a layout of the cotton field, where cotton plants were sowed in rows with a minimum row-width of seventy centimetres. The row-width provided enough space for the manual and later mechanised cotton picking during harvest season. In the early 1950s, the traditional field structure was challenged by a square-clustered layout of fields that was implemented amongst others for maize. Here, crops were planted in squares surrounded by horizontal and vertical rows, which allegedly offered better conditions for the crops and resulted in higher output.⁷⁶⁴ As a self-declared expert on agriculture, Khrushchev was particularly fond of the square-clustered farming procedure and aimed to implement it for cotton too. In the process, Khrushchev also wanted to narrow the row-width from seventy to forty-five centimetres, so as to create additional acreage.⁷⁶⁵ Although Iusupov was open to the square-clustered layout, he was against the narrowing of row-width. First of all, it would result in major obstacles for the entire Uzbek cotton industry, as all machinery would turn obsolete because it was designed for the wider row-width. Secondly, the narrow row-width did make cotton plants more susceptible to cotton wilt.⁷⁶⁶ Khrushchev never accepted these worries. Instead, he was left with the lasting impression of Iusupov fiercely opposing mechanisation. More immediately for Iusupov’s career, however, this became the cornerstone of Khrushchev’s commitment to remove Iusupov from any position of influence.

If we believe N. Mukhitdinov, Khrushchev was suspicious of Iusupov’s handling of cotton affairs already at the end of 1953. In a conversation with Mukhitdinov following a Soviet delegation’s visit to Finland, Khrushchev revealed his thoughts on the state of affairs in Uzbek cotton sector. According to the Soviet First Secretary, there was “great conservatism against progressive new measures of agricultural techniques and advanced experience”. “At the head of this resistance”, Khrushchev continued, “is Iusupov, who does not consider the

⁷⁶³ Ibid., 2:313.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid., 2:376–378.

⁷⁶⁵ Khrushchev, *Stroitel'stvo kommunizma v SSSR i razvitie sel'skogo khoziaistva*, 1962, 1:379.

⁷⁶⁶ Gleason, “Between Moscow and Tashkent,” 39.

necessary measures of mechanisation.”⁷⁶⁷ Earlier that year, Khrushchev had already been inspecting Uzbek agriculture in the countryside. As he communicated to Mukhitdinov, the Uzbek farmers were more than willing to implement both mechanisation and square-clustered farming.⁷⁶⁸ In other words, if there was little progress concerning these questions, Khrushchev was convinced that it was not due to any anti-mechanisation attitude on the side of the lower level in society but because the Uzbek leadership was opposing it. This was of course exactly the opposite of the “anti-mechanisation attitudes” that had been detected in 1951 when it was the lower level state and party representatives and, especially, the Uzbek farmer who had been accused of hindering mechanisation. In other words, it was not limited statehood on the lower levels of the Uzbek SSR that obstructed Khrushchev’s plans, but the resistance in the Uzbek Bureau that actively hampered any attempts to change the modes of production. Arguably, the resistance from the Uzbek leadership can too be regarded limited statehood, for it effectively halted reform attempts from the centre of power to be promoted further down the Uzbek hierarchy. In other words, limited statehood existed in the centre-periphery relations in as much as the republican leaders could effectively impede central government decrees from being executed on the ground in the Uzbek SSR.

Iusupov’s outburst at the July plenum of the Uzbek Central Committee will have done little to improve Khrushchev’s view of him. If Khrushchev was still uncertain as to whether or not Iusupov was a valuable asset to the central government in the periphery, a letter to Khrushchev from early August 1954 is likely to have removed the last drop of doubt.⁷⁶⁹ The letter denounced Iusupov from a group of devoted communists in Uzbekistan. It followed a classic Stalinist pattern, claiming that since the return of Iusupov “feudal-bai morals (*nrayy*) and nationalist attitudes”⁷⁷⁰ had been spreading. Making use of the politically explosive issues provided by Beria and his nationalist policy, the authors depicted Iusupov as a strong Beria supporter, who had been “ousting practically all Russian, Ukrainian and Belorussian workers from the leading positions” while installing loyal friends and kinship in others.⁷⁷¹ Furthermore, the group accused Iusupov of evasion of government funds and of having acquired for

⁷⁶⁷ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 134.

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁶⁹ The authors were: Ivanov, Pak, Murgadov, Sadykov, Safarov, Baidarov, Stepanov, Kim. Only mentioned by surname, it has not been possible to identify them though their names suggest that they were not of ethnic Uzbek but rather Slavic and East Asian origin, likely Korean, who had been deported to the Uzbek and Kazakh periphery during the Great Purges. In total circa 75.000 Koreans had arrived in Uzbekistan in 1938. See: Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937-1949*, 9–20.

⁷⁷⁰ RGANI, 5, 31, 12, ll. 147–148.

⁷⁷¹ Ibid., l. 147.

himself an immense residence with an “army of servants”.⁷⁷² These accusations should later built part of the justification for Iusupov’s ouster in December 1954 and as Paul Stronski rightfully commented, the critique Iusupov faced during the plenum of his demotion were similar to those that had laid the ground for the execution of the Uzbek elite during the Great Terror in 1938.⁷⁷³ As shown earlier, however, Iusupov had faced these charges already with the “Iusupov Affair” and later when he was transferred to Moscow. As such they were no novelty, but they were for the first time voiced in the Uzbek post-Stalin context, which should prove to be decisive.

It is instructive that the denunciation was penned just three weeks following the July 1954 plenum and the authors clearly made use of the anti-Iusupov momentum to bring the serious charges against him. Furthermore, they referred to the recent “strengthening of cadres in the Kazakh SSR” through the removal of First Secretary Zh. Shaiakhmetov and argued that there was an “analogous situation in the Uzbek SSR”, obviously hoping to hit the same nerve.⁷⁷⁴ Although it was policy issues that ultimately convinced Khrushchev of the necessity to replace Iusupov, the letter will have strengthened his conviction. Nevertheless, Khrushchev could not refrain himself from publicly humiliating Iusupov, before he gave him the final push into political oblivion.

On November 20 1954, the Soviet First Secretary paid Tashkent a visit as keynote speaker at the Congress of Cotton Growers in the republics of Central Asia, Caucasus and Kazakhstan. Khrushchev had big plans for his visit. Given the attention of representatives of cotton growers throughout the Soviet Union, he was bent on selling his plans for square-clustered cotton cultivation and he came well prepared. The Tajik SSR had begun square-clustered cotton cultivation as the first Soviet republic and had achieved remarkable results. From the rostrum, the Soviet First Secretary explained how the Tajiks had harvested an average of 26,8 tsentner in 1953, by far the highest in the Soviet Union. The Uzbeks were in second place, yet with the far lower yield of 21,1 and the Kazakhs were last with just 14,4 tsentner per hectare.⁷⁷⁵ These numbers that would serve as the building blocks for a speech by Khrushchev that turned into an outright ridicule of Usman Iusupov.

From the very beginning, Khrushchev made clear what he had come for: “We have not gathered here to tell each other “nice” things and for me, as the Secretary of the Central Commit-

⁷⁷² Ibid.

⁷⁷³ Stronski, *Tashkent Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966*, 217.

⁷⁷⁴ RGANI, 5, 31, 12, 1. 147.

⁷⁷⁵ Khrushchev, *Stroitel'stvo kommunizma v SSSR i razvitie sel'skogo khoziaistva*, 1962, 1:371.

tee, this is not at all pleasant. Who could [possibly] tell the “unpleasant” truth to the leaders of such large republic as the Uzbek SSR, to such an authority as comrade Iusupov? This duty I take upon me.”⁷⁷⁶ How could it be, Khrushchev wondered, that the Tajiks were achieving yields so much higher than the Uzbeks? It was not because “the sun shines less” in Uzbekistan.⁷⁷⁷ Instead, Khrushchev explained, it was due to the square-clustered layout farming principles because it allowed higher density of cotton plants, which, consequently, led to a higher yield.⁷⁷⁸ Obviously, he was well informed about the Iusupov-Gafurov dispute during Iusupov’s tenure as cotton Minister and he bluntly supported the Tajik side: “So, comrade Iusupov, the figures resolve any further dispute you have with the Tajiks...it has nothing to do with the sun, but with reasoning [*razum*], with organisational measures, which are carried out by the progressive cotton growers of Tajikistan and which you long resisted.”⁷⁷⁹

Khrushchev presented his case with a simplicity that Iusupov’s opposition did not deserve. Cotton wilt, in particular, posed a threat that could endanger the entire harvest and did, in fact, become a problem in the 1960s.⁷⁸⁰ Khrushchev remained ignorant to these objections and, in an almost teasing tone, added: “I think that more than anything else, comrade Iusupov will get carried away concerning the question of acreage expansion. He is hot-tempered and needs to be cooled down by a cold shower, but a good shower.”⁷⁸¹ What Khrushchev meant quickly became clear. It was not a field expansion in absolute terms but one caused by the lowering of row-width: By decreasing the row-width from seventy to forty-five centimetres, the Uzbek SSR would gain 765.000 hectares on its already existing fields.⁷⁸² “I respect comrade Iusupov and will [continue] to respect him on the condition that he readjusts [his opinion]. But inside, comrade Iusupov has not readjusted and continues with his stubbornness.”⁷⁸³

Khrushchev’s dressing down of Iusupov bordered on public humiliation. The once unquestioned leader of the Uzbek SSR was clearly in his final throes. When the Uzbek Central Committee convened three weeks later on December 10-13, the Uzbek political leadership dealt Iusupov the final blow. His ouster at the Central Committee plenum was based on the denunciation from late-July that same year, where Iusupov was accused of being a Beria sup-

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid., 1:373.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid., 1:379.

⁷⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁸⁰ Gleason, “Between Moscow and Tashkent,” 39.

⁷⁸¹ Khrushchev, *Stroitel'stvo kommunizma v SSSR i razvitie sel'skogo khoziaistva*, 1962, 1:378.

⁷⁸² Ibid., 1:379.

⁷⁸³ Ibid., 1:380.

porter, serving national interests, holding feudal-bai morals and evading funds.⁷⁸⁴ Iusupov made an immediate effort to rectify his reputation. On December 17, he wrote a letter to Niazov, frantically explaining that he had taken note of the critique from the centre, set in motion the implementation of the central decrees, and notified his personal apparatus of how he would correct his mistakes.⁷⁸⁵ On the other hand, he sharply disagreed with the accusations that claimed Iusupov was against mechanisation and implementing nationalism: “As a matter of fact”, Iusupov argued, “throughout many years I implemented a decisive fight against enemy, national elements in Uzbekistan, the remainder of which will be happily gloating, accepting my serious mistakes and deficiencies.”⁷⁸⁶ As we have seen, Iusupov had indeed dutifully struck down ‘nationalists’ in the past, but his defence was to no avail. The very same day, *Pravda vostoka* featured an article on the plenum, recounting that, despite criticism, “on the XII congress of the Uzbek Communist Party, in plena, in Bureau meetings and in the central newspapers, comrade Iusupov did not draw the necessary conclusions.”⁷⁸⁷ Iusupov, the article claimed, acted improperly toward party organs, violated the principle of collective leadership, made serious mistakes in his choice of cadres and was “intolerant of criticism, to which he reacted badly.”⁷⁸⁸ In addition, it was reported that Iusupov opposed the Central Committee Bureau in its attempts to discuss the topic and correct his behaviour.⁷⁸⁹

The Iusupov case is instructive for the understanding of de-Stalinisation of the republican cadres for various reasons. Of despotism, Bertram Wolfe once noted that, “there is a principle of selection in personal despotisms which surrounds the despot with courtiers, sycophants, executants, yes-men, and rules out original and challenging minds.”⁷⁹⁰ With regard to policy questions in the Soviet Union, Bertram Wolfe was right, the Stalinist dictatorship had promoted a political elite that did not dare questioning Stalin for fear of the repercussions it could have. With Stalin’s death this condition changed immediately. The republican elites became important players in different ways for the central leadership in the succession struggle and Iusupov used this political strength to forcefully voice his opinions.

⁷⁸⁴ Paul Stronski has adequately described how the December Plenum 1954 turned into an orchestrated attack on Iusupov. Stronski does however, fail to acknowledge the entire history of accusations against Iusupov made by the centre, leaving the reader with little sense of the actual reasons for his ouster: Stronski, *Tashkent Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966*, 215–219.

⁷⁸⁵ RGANI, 5, 31, 12, ll. 142–147 here l. 142.

⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, l. 144.

⁷⁸⁷ “Plenum Tsentral’nogo Komiteta Kompartii Uzbekistana”, PV, 17.12.1954, 2.

⁷⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹⁰ Wolfe, “The Durability of Despotism in the Soviet Union. I,” 92.

Many a scholar has argued that it was Iusupov's "affiliation to Stalin" that was the main reason for his removal.⁷⁹¹ However, this argument is not very convincing according to the material at hand. Although it is unclear what exactly is meant by "affiliation to Stalin" it appears to be related to concerns among central leaders that republican leaders would demand that they be brought to justice for their involvement in the Stalinist atrocities. But central and republican leaders were in a mutual dependent relationship in this regard, for it was the republican leaders who had executed central policies at the republican levels. Attacking the centre on this premise was likely to backfire and was obviously not in the interests of republican leaders. The absence of such claims suggests that this mutual dependency neutralised such 'retaliation' from the periphery as a viable political weapon for the former Stalinist elite. As the Iusupov case clearly shows, however, the shared history of central and republican leadership did not play a crucial role: It was Iusupov's resistance to the Khrushchev reform programme and his potential support of Malenkov that were the main causes of his ouster.

For understanding of de-Stalinisation of cadres, the Iusupov case shows that the de-Stalinisation of cadres was *not* a clearly defined policy. With the installation of Byuzov and Iusupov to the Uzbek SSR, the centre was 'playing it safe' in a period of uncertainty after Stalin's death. Even after Beria's arrest, they remained in their positions for an extended period, suggesting that the centre was not only 'playing it safe' but, in fact, offering Iusupov the chance to adapt to the new leadership. It was only when the latter strategy proved unsuccessful and Iusupov challenged central power regarding all-union agricultural interests in the Uzbek periphery that he was demoted.

With regard to the constitution of Uzbek affairs, the Iusupov case is no less interesting. It is difficult to judge the extent of truth surrounding the accusations directed against Iusupov at the December plenum in 1954. Given the nature of rule in Uzbekistan, the frequent diversion of funds and recurrent nepotism, the latter of which was hiding behind the vague accusation of "poor cadre selection", there is little reason to believe that Iusupov was innocent. On the other hand, it is instructive that the ouster of their former patron affected few of the remaining members of Iusupov's "family circle". On the top-level of Uzbek politics, it was, in fact, only the head of the Uzbek Planning Commission, S. K. Ziiadulaev who was demoted alongside Iusupov, possibly because he had been brought in connection with Iusupov and nepotism in July 1954.⁷⁹² Other individuals belonging to Iusupov's close entourage, such as A. Niia-

⁷⁹¹ Carlisle, "Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan," 278.

⁷⁹² RGANI, 5, 31, 12, ll. 147-148.

zov, Iu. Babadzhanov and M. Mirza-Akhmedov, remained in high-ranking positions in the Uzbek political sphere. The same was the case for a wide group of people that had held important positions during Iusupov's tenure. N. Mukhitdinov, M. Iuldashev, S. Kamalov and S. Nurutdinov all remained within important positions of Uzbek politics.

There were different reasons for keeping these individuals in place. If central leadership was determined to rid the Uzbek elite of former Iusupov loyalists, it will have been reluctant to precipitately do so in order to avoid anti-Soviet sentiments in the republics. This could increase limited statehood and undermine central control in the Uzbek periphery similar to the waves of destabilising events that occurred in the western regions. Instead, they appear to have opted for a gradual approach. In addition, a shift away from Iusupov had evidently taken place amongst the Uzbek elite and the new Uzbek leaders, though owing their political rise to Iusupov, displayed little interest in continuing to serve him and instead mobilised against him. This political opportunism was of course identical to developments in the centre of power, where Stalin's lieutenants had turned against him posthumously. Central leaders will have had no means to identify if the removal of Iusupov as a "little Stalin" will have been sufficient political action from the centre to uphold its claim for power in the Uzbek periphery.

Lastly, Iusupov's ouster also displayed a new feature to Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR. While Stalin forged and executed accusations safely behind the tall walls of the Kremlin in Moscow, the Khrushchev leadership began a completely new ruling style in the periphery, marked by active participation, visits and speeches. Compared to Stalin, Khrushchev went out of his way to get rid of Iusupov by critiquing Iusupov's cotton policy. Accordingly, the central leaders became more visible in the Uzbek periphery. There were several reasons for this: Firstly, the ruling style did certainly belong to Khrushchev who was fond of inspecting work "on the ground" himself in order to ensure implementation, learn about problems and secure political support. Thereby, the leadership sought, secondly, to overcome limited statehood and ensure its comprehensive claim to power. Thirdly, the visibility in Central Asia was also due to an overall rise in importance of the region to the central leadership as a gateway to the east when the Soviet leadership began promoting Central Asia as a role model for national independence struggles in Third World countries.⁷⁹³ All of these characteristics of the Khrushchev government changed the face of Soviet rule henceforth.

⁷⁹³ Stronski, *Tashkent Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966*, 234-256.

5.2. ANTI-MECHANISATION AND DE-STALINISATION

The removal of Iusupov did not eliminate the fundamental problem concerning Khrushchev's agricultural policy. Although square-clustered farming was promoted strongly, it encountered both political and practical difficulties due to the fundamental problem: The cotton machinery in the Uzbek SSR was built for the larger, seventy centimetre row-width, while the centre pushed for the narrower forty-five centimetres width. The result was collective resistance from the Uzbeks expressing itself as both institutional and popular limited statehood and reluctance to implement Khrushchev's plans, resulting in the ouster of First Secretary A. Niazov. This allowed Khrushchev to install his protégé N. Mukhitdinov as head of the Uzbek SSR. It was under his auspice that the de-Stalinisation of cadres was set in full motion, leading to a complete change in the political elite of Uzbekistan.

Mechanisation vs. narrow Row-Width

Immediately following the December plenum and Iusupov's ouster from Uzbek politics, the conversion to full-scale, square-clustered farming and the narrower row-width began throughout the Soviet Union. In the Uzbek SSR, Khrushchev's proposals foresaw a gradual change. Of the roughly 1.3 million hectares cultivated with cotton, the 1955 quota planned for circa 500.000 hectares to be cultivated with the narrowed row-width.⁷⁹⁴ The conversion posed an enormous task for the Uzbek leadership, as it meant changing thousands of tractors, ploughs as well as sowing and harvesting machines that had hitherto been built to accommodate the wider row-width. In spite of possible worries amongst the Uzbek leadership as to how realistic the conversion was, a plan was drawn up and by February 1955 the change had already been set in motion.⁷⁹⁵

The conversion put the Uzbek machine industry under severe pressure. Having already been given responsibility for manufacturing several thousands of tractors as part of the Virgin Lands campaign in other regions of the Soviet Union, the row-width change put the Uzbek industry under additional strain. Gregory Gleason has argued that it was the priority of tractors over cotton harvesters that led to the return of the anti-mechanisation charges of the Uzbek leadership in the course of 1955.⁷⁹⁶ There was indeed a substantial rise in machinery

⁷⁹⁴ GARF, 8300, 24, 757, l. 21.

⁷⁹⁵ The plan was finished already late January 1955: GARF, 8300, 24, 757, ll. 1–10.

⁷⁹⁶ Gleason, "Between Moscow and Tashkent," 35–44.

shipped to the Kazakh SSR with a simultaneous drop in cotton harvester production, but the reasons that led to A. I. Niiazov's ouster in December 1955 were concerned with the implementation of the new cotton policies and not with the number of tractors produced.⁷⁹⁷ Soon after the issuing of the conversion plan, the Soviet authorities were already experiencing problems at several levels of the production chain.

Considering the extent of the plan, it is hardly surprising that serious difficulties emerged with regard to the timely fulfilment. As a result it was hardly surprising when the Uzbek Minister of State Control M. Iuldashev penned a report to his all-union superior V. G. Zhavoronkov revealing problems already on March 4 1955.⁷⁹⁸ The report revealed that production was falling behind target. According to Iuldashev, the conversion of tractors stood at barely seventy-five per cent of the Uzbek average, but production was far lower in the Samarkand, Bukhara and Surkhandarya regions in particular.⁷⁹⁹ The main reason for the production drawback was, as Iuldashaev discovered, the "whitewashing of the operative accounts on the sowing results, low quality of repair of tractors and cotton machinery."⁸⁰⁰ The Narpaiskii MTS, for example, was reported to have rebuilt 74 tractors for work according to the new plan, but, in fact, "the conversion had not been finished on a single tractor."⁸⁰¹ The investigation implemented by the Ministry of State Control gathered similar results from all the inspected regions and concluded that this state of affairs would seriously obstruct the timely spring sowing.⁸⁰² M. Iuldashev's report called for the Uzbek authorities to be on their marks. Several reports followed over the course of the next few months.⁸⁰³ On July 4, it was found that in addition to the problems in the kolkhozy and MTS, the machine construction factories were far from fulfilling the expected quotas, leaving the kolkhozniki and MTS workers on the fields without the machines they were supposed to implement.⁸⁰⁴

The reports disturbed the all-union leadership and by mid July 1955, the Moscow Ministry of

⁷⁹⁷ Kazakhstan experienced a dramatic rise of tractors in absolute terms. In 1953 there was a total stock of 70.300 tractors, by 1955 the number was 172.000 and in 1958 it lay at an incredible 266.400 units. The large majority of new machinery was deployed in Virgin Lands campaign: Of the approximately 100.000 new units from 1953-1955, 75.000 were sent to the Virgin Lands region. Meanwhile, the cotton harvester production decreased from 3.000 in 1955 compared to almost 10.000 in 1951. By 1958 it had crumbled to 20 units. See: *Ibid.*, 40–44; Tsentral'noe statisticheskoe upravlenie, Demina, and Genin, *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1960 godu*, 486–487.

⁷⁹⁸ GARF, 8300, 24, 757, ll. 11–17.

⁷⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, l. 11.

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, ll. 12–15 and l. 17.

⁸⁰¹ *Ibid.*, l. 12.

⁸⁰² *Ibid.*, l. 17.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*, ll. 21–26 (April), ll. 27a–27z (May).

⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, ll. 28–32 and ll. 61–65 (August). The problem was not only limited to the Uzbek SSR, although it was here the state met most difficulties. In March it was reported that also the development in the Turkmen SSR was also behind schedule: *Ibid.*, ll. 18–20.

State Control was ordered to deploy a team of its own to inspect the situation on the ground. The situation was worse than expected. For not only did the investigation confirm the Uzbek reports, it also revealed further difficulties. Moreover, the final account found that the Uzbek local organs of “Ministry of Agriculture, the local agricultural organs and the machine and tractor stations” were “ignoring and extremely slowly introducing advanced methods of cotton cultivation such as its planting in the narrowed row-width of 45 centimetres.”⁸⁰⁵ The Uzbek Minister of Agriculture, Mirza-Ali Valievich Mukhamedzhanov, was reprimanded and ordered to rectify the situation but it was a hopeless attempt to ensure relief.⁸⁰⁶

The state authorities were caught in a dead-lock. Although it provided materials and financial support, its directives did not find fruitful grounds in the Uzbek periphery. As such, the situation was similar to the enhanced mechanisation drive a few years earlier. But with the narrowing of the row-width, the authorities did, in fact, shoot themselves in the foot. First of all, cotton farming had not been entirely dependent on machinery when the earlier mechanisation campaign had been launched in the early 1950s. By 1955, mechanisation had become essential for the cotton farming but by demanding the conversion of machinery the state endangered the fulfilment of cotton quotas that secured the livelihood of the entire population dependent on the white gold – from kolkhozniki to party and state representative. When kolkhozniki had to return to manual labour in the fields to secure plantation and harvest as was reported in August 1955, it was out of a spirit of desperation, not “anti-mechanisation”.⁸⁰⁷ In other words: When Khrushchev later spoke of anti-mechanisation in Uzbekistan, it was an attitude that the narrow-width campaign had itself created.

Khrushchev’s Uzbek campaign was a flop. Contrary to expectations of finally beating the three million tons yearly cotton production in 1955, the cotton harvest actually dropped for the first time since 1947. Accordingly, the harvest plummeted down to 1953 output and far below the 1954 harvest. This left the three million tons target a distant goal, despite the overall excellent harvest throughout the Soviet Union.⁸⁰⁸ As a consequence, the conversion had far higher costs than the Soviet leaders were ready to invest and Khrushchev quietly dropped the policy and returned to the traditional seventy centimetres row-width. This, at least, must be concluded from the production numbers for cotton machinery that, in the 1960s, was not

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid., I. 41.

⁸⁰⁶ Ibid., I. 50.

⁸⁰⁷ Ibid., I. 56.

⁸⁰⁸ Statisticheskoe Upravlenie Uzbekskoi SSR, *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo Uzbekskoi SSR. Statisticheskie Sbornik*, 62. The total output was roughly 2,5 million tons in 1955, while the 1954 harvest had almost reached 2,7 million tons.

producing machines accustomed to the narrow row-width but the wider seventy centimetres that the Uzbeks had traditionally used.⁸⁰⁹

In terms of limited statehood, one might speak of both an institutional and a popular level. While party and state incumbents on the lower levels saw little sense in the campaign and were reluctant to implement it, the Uzbek farmers were no less inclined to change the traditional work-ways. When Stalin and Iusupov had pursued the mechanisation of the Uzbek countryside a few years earlier, they had encountered similar responses from lower level officials as well as the Uzbek farmers. The crucial difference however, was that Iusupov re-introduced the criminal laws from the early 1930s to battle both popular and institutional limited statehood. Khrushchev's devotion to de-Stalinisation offered him no such means of political practice. It remains impossible to determine with certainty if the campaign could have been turned into success through repression but appear to have been a functional tool for the centre to break institutional and popular limited statehood and achieve the desired results concerning the mechanisation of the countryside in the late-1940s and early 1950s.

The disappointment of quotas and the resistance from the Uzbek lower-level production units and *kolkhozniki* to introduce the enlarged row-width had dire consequences for First Secretary A. Niiazov. When Khrushchev and Bulganin paid a visit to the Uzbek periphery in December 1955, it was Niiazov who came to bear the brunt of the burden. The prominent visit from Moscow was later remembered less for the actual political implications and rather for Khrushchev's memorable slip of the tongue. According to N. Mukhitdinov, he received the delegation on December 19 1955 on their return from a visit to Asia. According to Mukhitdinov, it had been "bumpy ride across the Hindu Kush" and the Soviet leaders had quite literally 'drowned' their sorrows.⁸¹⁰ Proceeding to give a public speech in Tashkent where a crowd had gathered to greet the prominent visitors, Khrushchev clearly voiced what was occupying his mind. From the rostrum he greeted the crowd saying: "You Tajiks are working very well and achieving a high cotton harvest. It is different with your Uzbek neighbours. There, they have 'anti-mechanisators' among their leaders."⁸¹¹ Bulganin seems to have been less affected by the flight and quickly reminded Khrushchev of his whereabouts. Returning to the microphone, he tried to correct the embarrassing mistake: "Dear inhabitants of Tashkent. I decided to make an experiment: I wanted to publicly criticise [you], in order to see what your reaction would be. And you, dear Tashkentians, understood my joke correctly,

⁸⁰⁹ See: Gleason, "Between Moscow and Tashkent," 40–41.

⁸¹⁰ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 217–218.

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*, 218.

[you are] attentively listening. Thank you for that!” Having spoken for a while, Khrushchev concluded his speech with the subtle warning: “As for the slow introduction of advanced farming techniques that in some places is manifested in ‘anti-mechanisation’ sentiment. I am sure that you will make the right conclusions of my criticisms and correct the situation.”⁸¹² The curious slip of tongue did, however, shed light on Khrushchev’s real intentions for the stop-over in Tashkent, which was to preside over a new change of leader in the Uzbek SSR.

Hardly anything is known about the Niiazov ouster in December 1955. The general tendency within scholarly accounts of the incidents is to connect it with the de-Stalinisation of cadres.⁸¹³ Surely, Niiazov’s past as a long-standing political ally of Iusupov, with whom he was connected, firstly, through their common regional origin in the Fergana Valley and, secondly, through their long-shared years in power, made him an obvious candidate for the demotions during the de-Stalinisation. Unlike Iusupov, however, Niiazov had supported Khrushchev’s campaign for changing cotton farming in the Uzbek periphery and had any quarrels with central leadership, at least not openly. On the contrary, he adhered to central demands during Iusupov’s ouster and implemented orders. Indeed, as shown above, he was not even targeted in the many control reports the centre received on the progress in cotton cultivation during 1955. The central leadership interpreted the situation differently and saw Niiazov as a hindrance to the implementation of the cotton policy.

If we follow N. Mukhitdinov, the decision to remove Niiazov was taken at a meeting of the Uzbek Central Committee Bureau while he himself was on leave due to illness.⁸¹⁴ As a consequence, he received the Khrushchev/Bulganin delegation only briefly on December 19 but was so ill that he needed frequent hospital visits and hardly partook of any official meetings with the delegation.⁸¹⁵ On December 21, he was suddenly summoned to the Central Committee. Expecting a final meeting with the delegation, Mukhitdinov was instead met by the members of the Uzbek Bureau.⁸¹⁶ Just as in the case of A. Mavlianov’s ouster in 1951, when Mukhitdinov was made Chair of the Council of Ministers, Mukhitdinov claims he was confronted with a *fait accompli*. Upon arrival to the Central Committee, R. E. Mel’nikov approached Mukhitdinov and instructed him that a session of the Bureau had taken place while

⁸¹² Ibid., 219.

⁸¹³ Carlisle, “The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83),” 101; Stronski, *Tashkent Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966*, 212.

⁸¹⁴ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 125–126.

⁸¹⁵ Ibid.

⁸¹⁶ Ibid., 126.

Mukhitdinov had been hospitalized. During the meeting “we discussed the situation of the [Uzbek] Bureau and Secretariat and came to know of its deficient work. We began speaking about the serious failures and deviations granted by Niiazov...During the compulsory discussion shortly after, Niiazov acknowledged that he could not manage qualified leadership of the large organization. He therefore asked to be released from his duties and transferred to a position better corresponding with his education and experience. Now we are asking you [Mukhitdinov] to take charge of the Central Committee of Uzbekistan.”⁸¹⁷

Two important aspects spring to the eye of the reader. First of all, the accusations were of a very different nature to those by which Iusupov had been removed. There is no reason to doubt Mukhitdinov, despite his superficial description of the event. Given its absence from historical accounts, the demotion was an unceremonious affair and although Niiazov will have been heavily criticised, it was not an outright political elimination as he was simply ‘parked’ in the less glamorous position as head of the Ministry of Public Services until his final disappearance from Uzbek politics in 1957.⁸¹⁸ Not even *Pravda vostoka*, which had reported fairly extensively on Iusupov’s ouster, mentioned anything about Niiazov’s demotion. Instead, it featured a full two-page reprint of N. Mukhitdinov’s speech on December 20, clearly signalling who was in charge of affairs in the Uzbek SSR.⁸¹⁹ That Mukhitdinov gave the general account at the plenum leads to the second aspect regarding Mukhitdinov’s recollection of events. As the Chairman of the Uzbek Council of Ministers, it is simply unimaginable that Mukhitdinov did not participate in exchanging Niiazov. While the initiative is likely to have been formulated in Moscow due to the poor progress of the Khrushchevian cotton policy, Mukhitdinov will most certainly have been in on the plan. Given the fact that he held the general account of the Uzbek Central Committee plenum on December 20, it is also unlikely that he was as severely ill as he claims during the days surrounding the incident. Regardless of Mukhitdinov’s exact role, it was a remarkable victory for Khrushchev. With the installation of N. Mukhitdinov as First Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party, Khrushchev had managed to promote his protégé. This ensured him of crucial support in his struggles with Malenkov and in directing of the reform policies in the Uzbek SSR.

⁸¹⁷ Ibid., 128.

⁸¹⁸ In his biographical description, Zaleskii has no mentioning of the ouster either: Zaleskii, *Kto Est' Kto v Istorii SSSR, 1924-1953*, 428.

⁸¹⁹ ”Igogi sel’skokhoziaistvennogo goda i zadachi po dal’neishemu razvitiuu khlopkovodstva i drugikh otraslei sel’skogo khoziaistva v Uzbekskoi SSR na 1956 god”, PV, 25.12.1955, 1–2.

De-Stalinisation of Cadres in the Uzbek SSR

The removal of first U. Iusupov and then N. Niiazov were the first steps of what N. Mukhitdinov has termed the “first stage of the rebuilding of cadres, for which Khrushchev was to thank.”⁸²⁰ Although the impetus for cadre exchange lay with Khrushchev, Mukhitdinov himself played a crucial role with regard to the installation of a new elite on the Uzbek level.

Scholars have suggested that Mukhitdinov’s clan ties played a role in Khrushchev’s selection of him for the most powerful position in the Uzbek SSR, although the theory cannot be supported by concrete evidence.⁸²¹ All the evidence, instead, points toward the personal and political relationship between Khrushchev and Mukhitdinov being the main motivation for Khrushchev’s support of Mukhitdinov. By the time of his appointment to First Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee in December 1955, Mukhitdinov had developed into a trustworthy protégé of Khrushchev and they supported one another in their attempt to solidify their power base in Uzbekistan.⁸²²



N. A. Mukhitdinov.⁸²³

Mukhitdinov’s young age as well as his political experience and education made him the perfect candidate for what could be termed Khrushchev’s *vydvyshehtsy*-generation. He personified a younger group of indigenous cadres willing to support the Soviet First Secretary’s leadership, implement all-union interests in the Uzbek periphery and follow Khrushchev’s directions away from the Stalinist past. Likewise, Khrushchev’s major ambitions and collo-

⁸²⁰ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 134.

⁸²¹ Collins, *Clan Politics*, 99.

⁸²² A similar pattern has been shown for other regions: Nikolai Mitrokhin, “The Rise of Political Clans in the Era of Nikita Khrushchev. The First Phase, 1939-1959,” in *Khrushchev in the Kremlin: Policy and Government in the Soviet Union, 1956-64*, ed. Jeremy Smith and Melanie Ilić (London: Routledge, 2011), 26–39.

⁸²³ “Mukhitdinov, Nuritdin Akramovich,” *Wikipedia*, April 14, 2013, http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Мухитдинов,_Нуритдин_Акрамович.

quial nature is likely to have inspired and convinced Mukhitdinov to follow his leadership. As a result, the two made ends meet and mutually supported each other in their struggle for power. Accordingly, by removing Niazov, Khrushchev could install Mukhitdinov, who experienced an unprecedented rise over the following years. Already in December 1956, Mukhitdinov acquired candidate membership of the all-union Central Committee Presidium. Just one year later, in December 1957, he was given full, voting member status and made Secretary of Propaganda to the all-union Central Committee in Moscow - the first and only Central Asian in the history of the Soviet Union.⁸²⁴ No doubt his promotion to the Khrushchev ruling circle was a sign of gratitude and of the political strategy of Khrushchev, who had relied on Mukhitdinov's help to mobilise the Central Asian elites during the attempted "anti-party group" coup against Khrushchev in summer 1957. In addition to Khrushchev's personal gratitude, promoting Mukhitdinov to the Khrushchev ruling circle was also a signal of inclusion of the peripheral republics that had supported him on his rise to the peak of the Soviet hierarchy, which essentially bolstered Khrushchev position as First Secretary of the Soviet Union. Mukhitdinov and Khrushchev thus successfully courted one another for their mutual benefit, which allowed Mukhitdinov to install his own ruling elite in the Uzbek SSR once he was made First Secretary of the Central Committee in Uzbekistan in 1955.

The protégé relations between Khrushchev and Mukhitdinov should mark a fundamental change in the centre-periphery relations following the death of Stalin. For contrary to his predecessor, Khrushchev built relations based on trust with republican leaders. Nevertheless, Khrushchev would also strengthen the institutional patterns power and avoid the large-scale purges of the apparatuses that Stalin had occasionally imposed on the republics of the Soviet Union. These were fundamental differences between Stalin and Khrushchev that should change the power relations between the Soviet centre of power and the republics henceforth.

In addition to the protégé relations between Mukhitdinov and Khrushchev, the promotion of Mukhitdinov followed the institutional pattern promoting either the Chair of the Council of Ministers or the Chair of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, which suggests that the elite promotion in the Uzbek SSR was not solely based upon clan considerations. This is not to say that regional origin and personal trust did not play a role, but it shows that Soviet institutional structures did gain increasing power over essential decisions. As we shall see later, this became especially evident when Rashidov was elected First Secretary in 1959, as it was essen-

⁸²⁴ In 1961, Mukhitdinov fell from grace due to several different issues, which are topic of the following chapter.

tially a Tashkent based Bureau that ensured him the promotion. The election to First Secretary was not solely dictated from Moscow, nor did clan interests or personal relations alone guide it. Rather, it was due to a set of different reasons regarding different policies and interests.

Although a new era began with Mukhitdinov as First Secretary in the Uzbek SSR, the de-Stalinisation of cadres had little influence on centre-periphery power relations at the top-level of Uzbek politics. The 1956 Bureau consisted of eleven full members, whereas the 1954 Bureau had had nine full members and three candidates. The Russian representation remained identical but now all three representatives of the centre acquired full member status. As a consequence, the number of voting Uzbeks rose from five to eight and the Russian/European votes from two to three. Judged by the functions of the Russian/Europeans, however, the centre kept control over vital areas of Soviet rule in Uzbekistan. A. A. Luchinskii was the commander of the Soviet military forces in Central Asia with headquarters in Tashkent. A. P. Byzov was the Chairman of the Committee of State Security, while R. E. Mel'nikov remained in the post of Second Secretary to the Uzbek Central Committee. Lastly, the Party Control Committee in the Uzbek SSR installed I. V. Babakov, by name clearly no ethnic Uzbek, as secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee in summer 1954 and as deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers in 1955.⁸²⁵ As a consequence, the centre held power over vital organs of the executive forces, whilst simultaneously keeping the Uzbek party and state elite under supervision through high-ranking positions. Yet, in spite of controlling these executive institutions, the representatives of the centre only had limited access to influence, let alone control over policy-making on an everyday basis. First of all, representatives from the centre usually served only brief tenures in the peripheral republics and had little chance of get a sense of actual political structures. This was particularly the case for the commander of the armed forces in Central Asia, who was sent to the region only as an for example A. A. Luchinskii, who served roughly four years in Tashkent. Secondly, the central representatives rarely spoke the local language and did little to integrate further with the prospect of leaving the Uzbekistan soon after. As a result, the republican native republican leadership had considerable political leverage with regard to decision-making and policy implementation in the republic.

⁸²⁵ RGANI, 5, 31, 12, ll. 162–163.

Uzbek Central Committee Bureau 1956: Eleven full members, zero candidates
Mukhitdinov, N. (Uzbek, Tashkent, First Secretary).
Mel'nikov, R. E. (Russian, Second Secretary)
Alimov, A. A. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Abdurazakov, M. A. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Tashkent oblast' Secretary of the Central Committee)
Rakhimbabaeva, Z. R. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Kamalov, S. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Chair of the Council of Ministers)
Mirza-Akhmedov, M. Z. (Uzbek, Syrdar'inskii oblast', first deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers)
Rashidov, Sh. (Uzbek, Jizzakh, Chair of the Supreme Soviet)
Luchinskii, A. A. (Ukranian, Commander of the Turkestan Military District, headquarters in Tashkent)
Byzov, A. P. (Russian, Minister of Internal Affairs)
Murtazaev, K. M. (Uzbek, Khujand, First Secretary of the Uzbek komsomol)

While the European/Russian group of the top-level Uzbek politics was not subject to personnel changes, the Uzbek group went through a fundamental reshuffle that seriously changed the character of the Bureau compared to the Bureaus under his predecessor Usman Iusupov. First of all, Iusupov had promoted a coalition of the Tashkent/Fergana political clans. Second, Iusupov promoted a number of childhood friends to leading positions, including Iu. B. Babadzhanov (Minister of Internal Affairs) and Satty Khusainov (editor of the Uzbek newspaper *Kzyl-Uzbekistan*). Thirdly, the security apparatus was a source of recruitment from which, for example, A. I. Niazov originated. Fourthly, Iusupov drew upon the trade unions as a source of cadre promotion, from which A. Mavlianov and N. Mukhitdinov benefitted. The fifth important recruitment bases were the komsomol and the Soviet higher learning facilities from which S. Nurutdinov, S. Kamalov and S. Ziadullaev were picked.

With the arrival of N. Mukhitdinov at the peak of Uzbek politics, the selection criterion for membership of the Uzbek Bureau changed considerably compared to the Iusupov era. This becomes clear from the basic biographical data of the Uzbek Bureau members. Next to the Mukhitdinov in the second most important position of Uzbek SSR, the Chair of the Council of Ministers, was Sabir Kamalov, who, as we have seen, had built his political career in the

aftermath of the Great Purges based upon his merits from the komsomol.⁸²⁶

Little is known about the relationship between Mukhitdinov and Kamalov. One scholar sees him as Mukhitdinov's protégé and it is true that Kamalov rose into the Uzbek Bureau under the Niiazov/Mukhitdinov coalition in 1952.⁸²⁷ Nevertheless, it is notable that in his memoirs Mukhitdinov himself has little to say about Kamalov, suggesting that they experienced a chill in their relationship, possibly due to the scandal that hit the Uzbek elite in 1959 when Kamalov and M. Z. Mirza-Akhmedov (Chair of Council of Ministers from 1957) were laid off. Either way, in 1956 Mukhitdinov and Kamalov constituted a strong coalition and both were supportive of the Khrushchev reform programme.

M. Z. Mirza-Akhmedov was another face that had been around in Uzbek politics for somewhat longer. He was born in 1909 in the Syrdar'inskii oblast' and had been an active member of the educational sector in Tashkent in the late 1920s. Working within the propaganda sector of the party and the film industry in the late 1930s, he returned to political work in 1940 when he took a secretary position in the Tashkent city party committee. In the following years, he held several positions in the Uzbek Central Committee and then assumed the position of Andijan obkom secretary before Mukhitdinov ordered him back to the Council of Ministers.⁸²⁸ The last two members who had been in holding important positions under the Iusupov administration were A. Alimov and Sh. Rashidov. A. Alimov, secretary to the Uzbek Central Committee in 1956, was a Tashkentian by origin where he was born in 1912. He graduated from the Central Asian Planning Institute in 1933 and worked in as an economist in different positions within the planning sector throughout the 1930s, before taking up his first obkom secretary position in 1942 in Kokand. This marked the starting point of a political career that brought him on a tour of the Uzbek SSR, before he ended up as Minister of Cotton Production of Uzbekistan and subsequently First Secretary of the Tashkent obkom from 1952 to 1956.⁸²⁹ Compared to A. Alimov, Sh. Rashidov had a completely different background within the humanities at the Samarkand University and later through his career as a journalist and a writer. He was elected Chair of the Uzbek Writers' Union in 1949, before surprisingly ending up being elected the Chair of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Uzbekistan just

⁸²⁶ Biographical information in: "Kamalov, Sabir"; Zalesskii, *Kto Est' Kto v Istorii SSSR, 1924-1953*, 252; Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83)," 101–104.

⁸²⁷ Vdovin, "Politika Po Ukrepleniiu Novoi Istoricheskoi Obshchnosti v Gody 'Ottepeli'."

⁸²⁸ Zalesskii, *Kto Est' Kto v Istorii SSSR, 1924-1953*, 352–353.

⁸²⁹ Vitalii Khliupin, "Alimov, Arif Alimovich," Internet Database, *Tsentrasiia Baza Personalii "Kto Est' Kto v Tsentral'noi Azii,"* October 22, 2012, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person2.php?&st=1013880346>.

one year later in 1950.⁸³⁰

The five older members of the Uzbek Bureau of 1956 were accompanied by three members of a younger group. K. M. Murtazaev born in 1926 in Khujand (formerly Leninabad at the mouth of the Fergana Valley in the Tajik SSR) and was just thirty years old when he was given full member status of the Uzbek Bureau in 1956. As a prosperous member of the Fergana political elite, he had been lifted under the wings of Iusupov and Niiazov and was already promoted to the Uzbek Bureau in 1954. Murtazaev was previously an active young communist in the Uzbek komsomol where he made a stunning career taking leading positions already at the age of twenty, holding the post of First Secretary of the Uzbek komsomol in 1956.⁸³¹ M. A. Abdurazakov had experienced a very similar trajectory to Murtazaev, who replaced him as First Secretary of the Uzbek komsomol in 1952 when he was promoted to secretary in the Tashkent city party committee at the age of thirty-three. Then, Niiazov and Mukhitdinov had been leading affairs in Uzbekistan after Iusupov's transfer to Moscow. Mukhitdinov had thereby forcefully supported Abdurazakov not only by helping his appointment to the Tashkent city committee position, but also by appointing him to give the main denunciation speech at the plenum of the Uzbek Central Committee when Iusupov was demoted in 1954.⁸³² The last new member was Zukhra R. Rakhimbabeva, who was the second woman to serve as a high-ranking political figure. Unfortunately, little information is available about comrade Rakhimbabeva but she served, at the latest, until the 17th Congress of the Uzbek Communist Party in 1966 as a Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee for Ideological Questions. She clearly belonged to the Tashkent group and disappeared with the creeping power shift initiated by Sh. Rashidov when he was appointed First Secretary in 1959.⁸³³

The biographical evidence allows several conclusions concerning the 1956 Uzbek Bureau. First of all, the 1956 Bureau members were almost exclusively from the Tashkent region. In 1954, the most powerful positions for state and party were held by Niiazov and Iusupov of the Fergana group. By comparison, the Tashkent group was made up by N. Mukhitdinov, S. Kamalov and A. Alimov, who were, however, holding far less powerful positions. When Mukhitdinov took over in December 1955, he departed from the Fergana/Tashkent coalition

⁸³⁰ Zalesskii, *Kto Est' Kto v Istorii SSSR, 1924-1953*, 493–494.

⁸³¹ Khliupin, "Murtazaev, Kaium Murtazaevich."

⁸³² Vitalii Khliupin, "Abdurazakov, Malik Abdurazakovich," Internet Database, *Tsentraziia Baza Personalii "Kto Est' Kto v Tsentral'noi Azii,"* October 22, 2012, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>.

⁸³³ Carlisle, 'Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan', 302; S. R. Rizaev, *Sharaf Rashidov: shtrikhi k portretu* (Toshkent: Ėzuvchi': 'Nur, 1992), 31.

and created a strong regional concentration on Tashkent. Of the eight Uzbek members serving in the 1956 Bureau, six originated from the Tashkent region. Only Sh. R. Rashidov and K. M. Murtazaev broke the pattern, but their positions were of little actual political power. Secondly, the promotion of long-time colleagues and childhood friends that had belonged to governing style of Iusupov disappeared under Mukhitdinov. To be sure, the Bureau of 1956 consisted of familiar faces from the Uzbek political scene, but Mukhitdinov never pulled the nepotism register for the constitution of the Uzbek top-level political leadership. The fact that he was never accused, even when he was demoted in 1961, suggests that he had not fallen victim of this otherwise widespread abuse of power in the Uzbek SSR. Indeed, Nikolai Mitrokhin has convincingly argued that Nikita Khrushchev successfully fought nepotism following kinship relations in other regions of the Soviet Union and there is no reason to doubt that Khrushchev proceeded any different in the Uzbek SSR.⁸³⁴ Thirdly, the recruitment base not only changed with regard to the geographical origin. The security apparatus that had played an important role under Iusupov completely lost its momentum. Instead, the komсомol and experience in the cultural or propaganda sector gained considerable importance. K. M. Murtazaev, M. A. Abdurazakov, S. Kamalov and S. Nurutdinov all stemmed from the komсомol; M. Z. Mirza-Akhmedov, Z. R. Rakhimbabaeva and Sh. R. Rashidov were prominent members of the cultural sphere and propaganda work. A. Alimov was the only member not in one way or the other affiliated to either of the spheres. By contrast, he had a background in economics and political work in Namangan, where Mukhitdinov had obtained his first political practice following the war. In addition to these fields of expertise, all members had, fourthly, attended some sort of higher learning, such as the Central Committee Party School (Mukhitdinov, Mirza-Akhmedov, Nurutdinov, Rashidov), the Institute for Marxism in Tashkent (Kamalov), the Uzbek pedagogical institutes (Abdurazakov, Murtazaev) or the Central Asian Planning Institute (Alimov). Lastly, the Uzbek members of the Bureau also turned slightly younger than the Iusupov Bureau as the average age dropped to roughly forty. Only six members had been born before the revolution and the oldest member, the commander of the Central Asian Soviet forces A. A. Luchinskii, was just 54, meaning that he was seventeen in the year of the October Revolution. By contrast, the youngest member, Murtazaev, was just thirty. In the last aspect, the 1956 Bureau did, in fact, carry some resemblance to the Iusupov Bureau of 1938, when Stalin had initiated the major cadre change through the Great Purges. Nevertheless, the 1956 Bureau differed to the Iusupov style Bureaus in sub-

⁸³⁴ Mitrokhin, "The Rise of Political Clans in the Era of Nikita Khrushchev. The First Phase, 1939-1959."

stantial ways. The result was a more soft line Bureau that put great emphasis on the cultural and educational policies and was far more influenced by the Soviet institutional structures than had previously been the case. Speaking of a “family circle” with regard to the Mukhitdinov ruling circle in 1956 would be misleading however, for it presupposes that the Bureau was consciously undermining Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR. Despite subsequent reports of nationalism and anti-Soviet behaviour when Khrushchev clamped down on the Uzbek political scene in 1959, the members of the Bureau were, in fact, fully supportive of Khrushchev’s policies. But they interpreted them in their own way did their best to protect and promote Uzbek interests, albeit with a tendency to ensure personal enrichment through their access to vast financial resources. With Khrushchev’s detestation of nationalism the mix proved lethal to the Uzbek political elite.

Can the changes of personnel in the Uzbek Bureau be understood in terms of de-Stalinisation? If de-Stalinisation is defined as the installation of people willing to execute a new form of Soviet rule, then the cadre exchange was indeed a de-Stalinisation. Defined as ridding the political elite of cadres involved in the Stalin atrocities, de-Stalinisation left much undone in the Uzbek SSR. The Bureau entailed fewer members from the 1954 Bureau and not a single member from the Bureau from 1949, i.e. before Iusupov’s transfer to Moscow. Nevertheless, several high-ranking people were still in place somewhere in the Uzbek party or state hierarchy, who in some cases had participated very actively in the murderous campaigns of the Stalin period. The most prominent example was Iu. B. Babadzhanov, who had been holding high-ranking positions within the Uzbek secret police since 1939 and had been Minister or deputy Minister of Internal Affairs in the Uzbek SSR since 1940. Having briefly been substituted for the Russian A. P. Byzov in 1953, Babadzhanov returned to his former position in 1954, where he remained until 1957.⁸³⁵ Many such cases remained within Uzbek politics, which underlines the fundamental feature of de-Stalinisation that persisted in the centre as well as in the periphery: De-Stalinisation was not a clean slate for the political elite but underlay a gradual change over several years. It was a consequence of internal reform and the legacy of Stalin’s dictatorship that the Uzbek leadership of 1956 to a large extent consisted of people who had navigated the purges and repression of late-Stalinism, alongside with First Secretary N. Mukhitdinov. Nevertheless, the most important Iusupov confidants were already politically sidelined in spring 1955, shortly after Iusupov’s own ousting. Former

⁸³⁵ Vitalii Khliupin, “Babadzhanov, Iuldash,” Internet Database, *Tsentraziia Baza Personalii “Kto Est’ Kto v Tsentral’noi Azii,”* October 22, 2012, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>.

Chair of the Uzbek State Planning S. K. Ziiadulaev and deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers V. A. Bylbas were both left hanging in less important positions as Minister of Urban and Rural Construction and Minister of Irrigation and Water Management respectively.⁸³⁶ The rest pursued careers outside the political realm.

The removal of Ziiadulaev did allow for a major surprise though, for his successor was none other than A. A. Abdurakhmanov, former Chair of the Council of Ministers under Iusupov, who had been ordered to Moscow to serve as deputy in the all-union Ministry of Sovkhozy.⁸³⁷ It is likely that it was Mukhitdinov who was behind Abdurakhmanov's return to republican politics, as their families nurtured friendship relations.⁸³⁸ It was a brief interlude though. In 1956, he was already appointed to the hardly glorious position as director of the Uzbek pavilion at the all-union Agricultural Exhibition.⁸³⁹ As reason for Abdurakhmanov's renewed demotion in 1956, K. Zaleski mentions a cotton scandal involving double-accounting. It is far more likely that it was related to the revelations about Stalinist crimes in February 1956 and Abdurakhmanov's role as the second most powerful person in the Uzbek SSR after U. Iusupov. Despite being in a politically and economically powerful position as head of Uzbek Planning Institute, Abdurakhmanov never returned to his former position as a member of the Uzbek Bureau. As a consequence, after the 1959 reshuffle of the Uzbek Bureau, Sh. R. Rashidov was the only figure in the Uzbek Bureau who had been a Bureau member at the same time as Iusupov and, at that, only following Stalin's death in 1954, when the structure of the Bureau had already changed.

Although key positions were still held by Iusupov confidantes, other measures were taken to promote de-Stalinisation within the extended elite. Already in February 1954, the Uzbek Central Committee had been subject to severe change. At the 12th Congress of the Uzbek Communist Party(b), it had been decreed to widen the Central Committee from its previous 94 full and 42 candidate members to no less than 134 full and 54 candidate members.⁸⁴⁰ Although a large portion of the former members were 'old friends' who had been re-elected

⁸³⁶ RGANI, 5, 31, 28, ll. 92–93. Ziiadulaev did make an impressive comeback to the political scene in 1957, when he was made Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers and regained his position as head of the Uzbek State Planning Commission where he remained till 1974: Vitalii Khliupin, "Ziiadullaev, Saidkarim," Internet Database, *Tsentraziia Baza Personalii "Kto Est' Kto v Tsentral'noi Azii,"* October 22, 2012, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person.php>. Bylbas held his Ministerial position till 1966. "Bylbas, Vasilii Andreevich."

⁸³⁷ Zaleskii, *Kto Est' Kto v Istorii SSSR, 1924-1953*, 8–9.

⁸³⁸ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 456.

⁸³⁹ In 1960, Abdurakhmanov worked as an economic advisor in Vietnam, but retired already in 1964: Zaleskii, *Kto Est' Kto v Istorii SSSR, 1924-1953*, 9.

⁸⁴⁰ Berezin and Gurevich, *Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Uzbekistana V Rezoliutsiakh I Postanovleniakh S"ezdov*, 491–524 and 716–721.

from the 1952 Central Committee, there was a turnover of 40 members in total. Compared to the numbers of the 1954 Central Committee, this meant that of the 188 members 96 were new members. Although most of these new members held candidate positions and the ruling elite was still formed by the core group around Niazov, Iusupov and Mukhitdinov in 1954, this was momentous change to the nature of the Uzbek Central Committee for it promoted a new elite to the central party organ that existed parallel to the incumbents who had held power during the Stalin period. When Mukhitdinov took office in 1956, he continued this trend and had an elite he could build on. At the 13th party congress in the Uzbek SSR, the number of Central Committee members were increased once more to 145 full and 55 candidate members. As a consequence, there were only 78 members left from the 1952 Central Committee when Mukhitdinov began more forcefully to promote de-Stalinisation of cadres and the promotion of a 'Khrushchevian' *vydvizhentsy*-generation.⁸⁴¹

It remains unclear where the initiative to enlarge the Central Committee came from. Nevertheless, a change of this magnitude needed endorsement from Moscow. Thereby, Uzbek and central leadership interests are likely to have coincided. On the one hand, the Uzbeks interests will have been guided by a further indigenisation of the party structure for native membership grew to almost 70 per cent. On the other hand, the central leadership is likely to have supported the initiative to promote a new elite to replace the party officials under Stalin and generate new clients in the Uzbek periphery. Moreover, while Khrushchev had been reluctant to support a rapid *korenizatsiia* in 1953 when Beria was pulling the strings in Moscow, it was under his tutelage that de-Stalinisation and indigenisation merged in Uzbekistan in 1956.

The changes in the Uzbek Bureau and the Central Committee were mirrored at the lower levels of the Uzbek SSR, which underwent a major cadre exchange over the next few years. Given scarce information about the majority of lower level functionaries, it is difficult to assess the characteristics of the obkom leaders that arose in the mid-1950s. The most pressing interest of the Tashkent (and Moscow) leadership was to create a group of functionaries that would be loyal to the new leadership and the reshuffle on the obkom level was undoubtedly serving this goal. Nevertheless, it is a diverse picture that emerges. Between 1954 and 1957 nine obkom first secretaries were exchanged in the Uzbek SSR alongside the first secretaries

⁸⁴¹ The new elite of the Central Committee bore many of the same credentials as the members of the 1956 Bureau. The majority was well educated, had a background in the administration or party work and had become members of the party just before or during World War II: Bezrukova, *Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Turkestana i Uzbekistana v Tsifrakh, 1918-1967 Gg.*, 164 and 181.

in the Karakalpak ASSR and the important Tashkent gorkom.⁸⁴² The obkoms in question were Andijan, Bukhara, Fergana, Kashkadarya, Namangan, Samarkand and Tashkent. Official reasons for the obkom reshuffle varied but several were removed to create space for trusted cadres. The Fergana obkom First Secretary was demoted due to “misconduct”, whilst the Secretaries of Bukhara, Samarkand and the Karakalpak ASSR were kindly shipped off to Moscow for studies at the Central Committee.⁸⁴³ Thus, the leadership created vacancies for clients and ensured their power in the provinces of Uzbekistan.

Contrary to other Central Asian states, however, the situation on the obkom level differed substantially. For example, among the twenty secretaries that served in the oblast’ and city party committees in the Tajik SSR in the 1945–1956 period, twelve were Asians and eight Europeans at the oblast’ and city level.⁸⁴⁴ During the period 1945–1964, only three ethnic Europeans served as First Secretaries at the oblast’ level in Uzbekistan and none appear to have been sent to the Uzbek periphery from the Central Committee apparatus in Moscow for an ‘educational tour’.⁸⁴⁵ By contrast, these were Europeans who appear to have grown up and lived their entire lives in Uzbekistan. R. Gulamov, for example, had held several lower level functionary positions in the Uzbek Central Committee apparatus after World War II, before he was appointed First Secretary of the Tashkent obkom in 1959. He would have belonged to the Tashkent political elite, for he experienced a political demise after Rashidov took over in 1959, leading to his disappearance from politics in 1961.⁸⁴⁶

The low percentage of Europeans in the First Secretary positions on the obkom level does not mean that Europeans were absent from the obkom apparatus. In 1954, the four secretary positions of the Bukhara party committee were divided equally between Uzbeks and Russians. T. Dzhurabaev was obkom First Secretary, whilst the Second Secretary was a Russian comrade Glukhov. The two remaining secretary positions were held by an Uzbek and a Belarusian.⁸⁴⁷ The non-Uzbek secretaries may have belonged to the group of aspiring young cadres, who were on tour through the regions of the Soviet Union and only held onto positions fairly briefly, eventually returning for appointments in the central state or party apparatus in Moscow. It is likely to have been the case for the Ukrainian K. N. Bondarenko and the Belarusian

⁸⁴² Khlevniuk, *Regional'naia Politika*, 619–624.

⁸⁴³ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁴ Rakowska-Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia*, 148.

⁸⁴⁵ See Appendix III.

⁸⁴⁶ Khlevniuk, *Regional'naia Politika*, 658. The two other cases of European obkom first secretaries were G. A. Gabriel’ianets who similarly to Gulamov held several, partly high-ranking positions in the Uzbek state and party apparatus, before he was chosen for the First Secretary post of the Fergana obkom in 1962.

⁸⁴⁷ RGANI, 5, 31, 12, l. 162. Unfortunately, biographical information that could shed light on career paths have not been discovered.

N. S. Stroichuk, who were given secretary positions in both Samarkand and Bukhara in summer 1954, only to leave again a short year later in 1955 when a major reshuffle campaign began from March to June 1955.⁸⁴⁸ It is significant, however, that their positions were not given to a new set of Europeans upon their departure but instead to the Uzbeks Ia. I. Ismailk-hodzhaev and N. Khodaiberdyev.⁸⁴⁹ Due to the timing, the installation of Uzbek cadres could also be the consequence of the Beria nationality policy that sought to strengthen the *koreni-zatsiia*. It is notable that no Europeans were among the eight secretaries that were promoted to a secretary position of the Uzbek obkom apparatus in the second quarter of 1955, while at least two were removed.⁸⁵⁰ Hence, there is basis for arguing that Khrushchev did, in fact, endorse at least parts of the Beria nationality policy, but at a much slower pace and without creating popular unrest against Europeans in the republic. Surely, there were also good reasons to lay low on the European cadre selection, for it was more than likely that the policy of promoting non-ethnic Uzbeks caused obstacles rather than solving them for policy implementation on the obkom level. As shown in previous chapters, Uzbek kolkhozniki had found ways to get around the installation of undesired chairmen and there is no reason to believe that similar measures did not find their implementation when unwelcome obkom secretaries were imposed on the local apparatus.⁸⁵¹ Furthermore, there is no evidence pointing in the direction of the early cadre exchanges being motivated by particular anti-Soviet sentiment on the side of the Uzbek leadership, so as to promote Uzbeks in order to undermine Soviet power. As a consequence, the obkom reshuffles are best understood as efforts of the new Uzbek leadership to install its own army of trustworthy cadres in the regions of Uzbekistan thus cementing their leadership in the republic. Indeed, the large-scale cadre exchange must be understood against this background. As seen in previous chapters, patronage networks and thus limited statehood in the Uzbek SSR permeated all levels of the institutional hierarchy, which impeded the implementation of central *as well as* Uzbek policies on the lower levels of the Uzbek SSR. Personnel exchange provided an opportunity to uproot pre-existing patronage structures and generate new that would answer to the new leaders. As a result, the new leaders strengthened their grasp on power and curtailed the possibility of limited statehood due to relations to the previous ruling circle under Usman Iusupov.

⁸⁴⁸ RGANI, 5, 31, 12, ll. 156–158 and l. 160.

⁸⁴⁹ RGANI, 5, 31, 28, ll. 108–109.

⁸⁵⁰ RGANI, 5, 31, 28, ll. 95–110.

⁸⁵¹ On kolkhoz Chairmen, see also: Collins, *Clan Politics*, 92.

De-Stalinisation of cadres in the Uzbek SSR was a bumpy ride. Starting with Usman Iusupov, the Khrushchev leadership slowly managed to install N. A. Mukhitdinov as First Secretary in late 1955. This marked the beginning of the real de-Stalinisation of cadres, the dynamics of which we now have a better understanding. The constitution of the Uzbek political leadership changed fundamentally. It was now made up by a group of soft-line communists, mainly from Tashkent, who believed in the Soviet project and the Khrushchev reforms. On the lower levels of the Uzbek political scene, the change that had occurred by late 1955 was no less impressive. In seven of the nine obkoms, as well as in the Tashkent gorkom and the Karakalpak ASSR, the First Secretaries and several secretaries were exchanged between 1954 and 1957. As a consequence, the lower levels of the Uzbek SSR had not only been given new faces, but also become more Uzbek. The major reshuffle of the political scene was first and foremost due to the Moscow and Tashkent leadership's ambition to secure their respective interests throughout the Uzbek periphery. Yet, in spite of Khrushchev's successful installation of his client Mukhitdinov and his support to the Uzbek First Secretary, the Soviet central government never fully trusted the Uzbek leadership to toe the line. Thus, the fundamental characteristic of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR that brought key areas under all-union control remained intact. The Uzbek Ministry of State Security and the Central Asian Soviet military forces were under all-union command, whilst Khrushchev loyalists were installed at crucial positions in both state and party in the Uzbek SSR. The abolition of the Stalinist dictatorship, the installation of trusted cadres and control over crucial institutions were, however, not enough to overcome the limited statehood that kept obstructing all-union interests in the Uzbek SSR. This became particularly outspoken following the Secret Speech in February 1956.

6. THE UZBEK SSR AND NATIONALITY POLICY

Nikita Khrushchev was generally more willing to decentralise power than his successor had been. Throughout the 1950s the policy of the centre toward the union republics was marked by a relaxation of Moscow's coercive powers within different policy areas. The result was an altered character of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR. The Secret Speech, the celebrated return to "Leninist principles" and reforms in the economic sector, and, above all, the *sovnarkhoz* reform, were all measures that allowed the Uzbek leadership more autonomy in implementing their understanding of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR. This was done increasingly under the banner of the Soviet nationality policy that the Uzbek leaders revived in response to the Secret Speech in 1956. As a consequence, Khrushchev's fondness of decentralisation quickly vanished, for he soon came to realise that this undermined the centre's claim to power.

The mid-1950s reforms and their impact have been given little consideration in traditional accounts on the development of Soviet rule in Uzbekistan. Most commonly, scholars have found interest in the anti-religious campaign that swept through the Soviet Union and hit Uzbekistan with full force in the late 1950s.⁸⁵² Others have characterised the period as part of the development of Uzbek nationalism.⁸⁵³ A third group has concentrated on the further strengthening of clans both in politics and society.⁸⁵⁴ These approaches share a twofold characteristic: First, they ascribe to Soviet policies the inability to achieve much change in society and politics in Uzbekistan and, secondly, convey the idea that Uzbek political and social developments stood in opposition to Soviet rule. In this chapter, I take a more cautious approach and look at how the central government reforms allowed Uzbek leaders to pursue a revitalisation of the nationality policy and actively construct Uzbek national conscience. Essentially, this meant a more moderate policy with regard to Uzbek national history, Uzbek cultural heritage and, not least, Islam. In a first step, I analyse the reactions of both public and political Uzbek leadership to the revelations of the Secret Speech and how it sparked the Uzbek leadership to actively enhance the construction of an Uzbek national identity by rehabilitating victims of Stalinism and creating a positive understanding of Uzbek cultural heritage. The moderate, post-Secret Speech policy ushered in a change of policy toward the socio-cultural sphere and in a second step we look closer at how Uzbek authorities ap-

⁸⁵² Exemplary: Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, 41–48, 205–215 and passim; John Anderson, *Religion, State, and Politics in the Soviet Union and Successor States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 7–67.

⁸⁵³ See for example: Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*, 17–18.

⁸⁵⁴ Carlisle, "Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan," 271–297.

proached religion and how Soviet rule in the 1950s entailed social conflict-potential. Lastly, I analyse what repercussions the enhanced pursuit for the Uzbek nation and its historical origins meant for the Uzbek political leadership.

6.1. THE SECRET SPEECH IN THE UZBEK SSR

De-Stalinisation in the Uzbek SSR meant a great deal of different things. While the Iusupov ouster, the subsequent cadre exchange and the agricultural policies had constituted the first signs of change, the Secret Speech provided the second major shock to Soviet rule in Uzbekistan. Nikita Khrushchev's violent appraisal of the past in February 1956 was momentous: Stalin, formerly celebrated as a celestial being in the genesis of the Soviet Union next to Marx, Engels and Lenin, was torn out of the scriptures and turned into a persona non grata of official Soviet policy. Although Khrushchev depicted the Secret Speech as a fairly spontaneous decision taken during the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist party, the First Secretary had, in fact, been carefully planning the revelations in advance by incorporating republican leaders in the process of investigating Stalinist crimes.⁸⁵⁵ While such practice surely secured Khrushchev's position, he was not in control of what republican leaders would do with the truths they discovered. The immediate post-Secret Speech period clearly put this on display, as republican demands became more outspoken throughout the Soviet Union. The Secret Speech thus sparked a new era of centre-periphery relations.

Preparing the Secret Speech

William Taubman characterised Khrushchev's Secret Speech as "the bravest and most reckless thing he ever did."⁸⁵⁶ Indeed, it was a political move that could potentially have grave consequences for the collective leadership and the members were deeply torn over the question: to tell or not tell? There were good reasons for both positions. On the one hand, revealing the truth could have dire consequences as political and popular demands could bring the leaders to justice for their involvement and destabilise the entire country. On the other hand, the truth was bound to come out eventually, one way or the other. Already, following the Beria trial, requests had poured in for reconsideration of the high-level purges.⁸⁵⁷ In addition, the personal stories of the many hundred thousand "enemies of the people" who returned from the Gulag camps increasingly worried the leadership.⁸⁵⁸ Refraining from thematising the Stalin crimes could lead to accusations that they were being concealed from the party, seriously endangering the leadership. A precarious dilemma clearly, but the leadership could

⁸⁵⁵ Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev. Reformer 1945-1964*, 2:208–211.

⁸⁵⁶ Taubman, *Khrushchev: the Man and His Era*, 274.

⁸⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 275.

⁸⁵⁸ Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev. Reformer 1945-1964*, 2:209.

seize important political momentum by revealing the crimes, which would leave them in control and create the impression of honest, regretful collective leadership, signalling a clear break with Stalin.

The question over whether to tell or not tell, was no less important with regard to the division of powers within the Presidium of the Central Committee. Although Khrushchev had built up a solid power-base in the republics and is considered to have been first amongst equals already prior to the twentieth party congress, he was still not politically untouchable.⁸⁵⁹ Unveiling the past would substantially buttress his position, for despite his intimate involvement in the Stalin crimes, V. M. Molotov, K. E. Voroshilov, L. M. Kaganovich, G. M. Malenkov and A. I. Mikoyan were considerably more exposed by a disclosure. Moreover, it was no coincidence that Molotov, Kaganovich and Voroshilov were opposing the idea when it was discussed in a Presidium session shortly before the twentieth congress in February 1956.⁸⁶⁰ Their position was in vain though, as they were outnumbered by a majority, in favour of giving an account on the Stalin crimes.⁸⁶¹

Khrushchev prepared himself well for the Secret Speech. First of all, the congress was stacked with supporters of the Uzbek First Secretary Nuritdin Mukhitdinov's kind. Secondly, Khrushchev had involved many of them in the work of the P. N. Pospelov, the former *Pravda* editor and from 1953 to 1960, Secretary of the Central Committee, who was leading the investigations on Stalin's atrocities. The Uzbek First Secretary N. Mukhitdinov recalled that Khrushchev told Mukhitdinov about the existence of the commission that was "neither official nor public" and "studying the materials of the mass repressions during those years [1937-1938]" following a Council of Ministers session in Moscow early 1954.⁸⁶² Subsequently, Khrushchev called upon P. Pospelov to meet and arrange for Mukhitdinov to be introduced to the documents that he studied during every visit to Moscow henceforth, thus becoming aware

⁸⁵⁹ Taubman, *Khrushchev: the Man and His Era*, 275.

⁸⁶⁰ See the protocol from the meeting: "Rabochaia Protokol'naia Zapis' Zasedaniia Prezidiuma TsK KPSS o Doklade Komissii TsK KPSS Po Ustanovleniiu Prichin Massovykh Repressii Protiv Chlenov i Kandidatov v Chleny TsK VKP(B), Izbrannykh Na XVII S'ezde Partii, 09.02.1956 (RGANI, 3, 8, 389, Ll. 58-62ob)" Online Archive, *Arkhiv Aleksandra N. Iakovleva*, 2012, <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/almanah/inside/almanah-doc/55753>. Khrushchev's account of the meeting is accurate, although he dates erroneously to have taken place at the end of the party congress: Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev. Reformer 1945-1964*, 2:209-212.

⁸⁶¹ In favour of revealing the Stalin crimes were: N. A. Bulganin, M. G. Pervukhin, M. A. Suslov, G. M. Malenkov, A. B. Aristov, N. M. Shvernik, M. Z. Saburov, D. T. Shepilov, A. I. Kirichenko, P. K. Ponomarenko and N. S. Khrushchev. These members were opposed by: V. M. Molotov, L. M. Kaganovich, K. E. Voroshilov and A. I. Mikoyan. See also: Nuritdin Mukhitdinov, "12 Let s Khrushchevym," *Argumenty i Fakty* 44 (October 1989): 6.

⁸⁶² Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 138.

of the extent of the Stalinist terror.⁸⁶³

Introducing republican leaders to the investigation of the Stalin crimes was a smart move by Khrushchev, who used the investigation to his own ends. On the one hand, Khrushchev helped the work of the Pospelov commission by engaging republican leadership in researching the Stalin crimes, for no one will have been better equipped to study terror on the local republican level than the republican leaders themselves. On the other hand, Khrushchev strengthened his political position, because he could count on trust, sympathy and political support from the republican leaders in the Central Committee. Accordingly, when Khrushchev was strongly promoting the revelation of Stalin crimes in the period before the twentieth party congress, it was because he was sure to be backed by the lion's share of the Central Committee and thus held a favourable position to pass an important strike to Molotov, Kaganovich, Voroshilov and Malenkov, who constituted the anti-Khrushchev faction of the Central Committee Presidium.

For Khrushchev, the speech was a complete success. He spellbound his audience, which listened to him in silence. Later he recalled, "the delegates were thunderstruck by this account of the atrocities that had been committed against worthy people, against Old Bolsheviks and Young Communists."⁸⁶⁴ Uzbek First Secretary N. Mukhitdinov remembered that Khrushchev's words moved the congress into the state of shock.⁸⁶⁵ Seated in the second row next to Minister of Defence G. K. Zhukov, N. Mukhitdinov noticed how Zhukov constantly leaned forward to V. M. Molotov and K. E. Voroshilov to discuss, in a whisper, every deviation from the text previously discussed in the Presidium.⁸⁶⁶ Meanwhile, Igor Chernoutsan remembered how Khrushchev snarled at Voroshilov: "Hey, you, Kim, cut out the lying. You should have done it long ago."⁸⁶⁷ Accordingly, Khrushchev succeeded not only in lifting the veil to the crimes of the past, but also fortified his own position as the leader of the state.

Despite Khrushchev's personal success, the speech left many questions open. The delegates of the congress did indeed listen to the Soviet First Secretary in silence, yet it was not only due to the revelations per se. Many delegates were already aware of the Stalin atrocities, although not in their full extent. Shock and silence also prevailed because the leadership chose to air the truth. Furthermore, what was to be done next remained completely unclear. The

⁸⁶³ Ibid., 137.

⁸⁶⁴ Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev. Reformer 1945-1964*, 2:212. For general reactions to the speech, see: Taubman, *Khrushchev: the Man and His Era*, 270–299.

⁸⁶⁵ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 155.

⁸⁶⁶ Ibid.; Mukhitdinov, "12 Let s Khrushchevym," 5–7.

⁸⁶⁷ Cited from: Taubman, *Khrushchev: the Man and His Era*, 273.

next morning, February 26, Mukhitdinov already had to inform foreign delegations about Khrushchev's speech as newly elected candidate member of the Presidium of the Central Committee. Flooded with questions from the Hungarian delegation, he could only surmise about the consequences of the revelations.⁸⁶⁸ The uncertainty left room for interpretation and the centre of power was soon confronted with an array of different responses to the Secret Speech and the subsequent Thaw.

Responses to the Secret Speech from the Uzbek SSR

The Secret Speech did not stay secret for very long. The central leadership remained true to its conviction to reveal the past in order to stay on top of events. The speech was circulated to party cells throughout the country for reading and discussions. It immediately became clear just how sensitive a legacy the Stalinist regime had left behind. From across the Soviet Union, rising limited statehood was reported. There were readings to party and komsomol committees where participants were claiming that Khrushchev was a coward for not accepting responsibility and spontaneously removing Stalin portraits.⁸⁶⁹ The strongest reactions to the Secret Speech came from the republics where it sparked different 'nationalist' responses. In Georgia demonstrations took hold of Tbilisi due to the injustice done to their national hero.⁸⁷⁰ In other republics the response was the opposite: In Lithuania a rector was preventing non-Lithuanians entering the university; in Latvia the Second Secretary enhanced his efforts for an exclusivist Latvian language policy; in Azerbaijan, the Supreme Soviet state, a law was passed on 21 August 1956 without consulting the centre that made Azerbaijani the sole state language in the republic.⁸⁷¹

In the Uzbek periphery, the state of affairs remained calmer. The roughly 150,000 thousand Uzbek communists attending party meetings during March and April 1956 were discussing the contents of the speech without any particular anti-Soviet incidents. Moreover, the party activists in Uzbekistan were focusing on Stalin's "cult of personality" and the question of what

⁸⁶⁸ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 156.

⁸⁶⁹ See: Susanne Schattenberg, "'Democracy' or 'Despotism'?" How the Secret Speech Was Translated into Everyday Life," in *The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization: Negotiating Cultural and Social Change in the Khrushchev Era*, ed. Polly Jones, vol. 23, BASEES/Routledge Series on Russian and East European Studies (London: Routledge, 2006), 65–66. For a more general picture on the reactions from across the Soviet Union: Karl Eimermacher and V. Iu. Afiani, *Doklad N. S. Khrushcheva o kul'te lichnosti Stalina na XX s"ezde KPSS: dokumenty* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2002), 403–606.

⁸⁷⁰ Eimermacher and Afiani, *Doklad N. S. Khrushcheva o kul'te lichnosti Stalina na XX s"ezde KPSS: dokumenty*, 257–264 and 369–376.

⁸⁷¹ Smith, "Leadership and Nationalism in the Soviet Republics, 1951-1959," 83–85.

to do with the information provided: Which fate awaited the many Stalin portraits; what were the merits of Stalin; did Stalin deserve to remain in the mausoleum; how should the information on the personality cult be used in propaganda; were teachers to receive new instruction according to the revelations.⁸⁷² Although practical issues were characterising the party aktiv discussions in Uzbekistan, more critical questions concerning the content of the Secret Speech and Soviet rule were also voiced. In the Bukhara oblast', for example, the party aktiv were wondering why the "members of the Politburo kept silent about Stalin's failures when he was alive and, on the contrary, always praised his leadership at the end of their speeches, speaking of him as the true follower of Lenin."⁸⁷³ Similar critique and distrust surfaced in the party gathering of school number 36 in the Tashkent Lenin raion, where the director, a comrade Vodolazova, noted that those working with Stalin created the personality cult: "I cannot forget the statement of comrade Molotov, who said: 'It is our fortune that Stalin was with us during the Great Patriotic War.' Did they really not know what was going on?"⁸⁷⁴ In other cases the revelation of the past led to severe disappointment in the Soviet system. Receiving his state pension of just ninety-nine roubles, the worker comrade Makarov asserted that he had been a member of the party for thirty years, but his "interest in the party had disappeared and [he] felt neither morally nor materially satisfied."⁸⁷⁵ Lastly, the party gatherings also became forums for more sarcastic ideas. A comrade Korol' from Tashkent stated that it was "necessary to build a pantheon, where Stalin's remains should be moved and buried next to his victims—the true children of the people Kosior, Chubaria, Postishev, Rudzutak."⁸⁷⁶

The questioning of the role of Stalin's ruling circle, the criticism of the Soviet system as well as the sarcasm was bordering on the acceptable for the centre, which was determined to hinder a development in which the party gatherings turned into a cradle of anti-Soviet sentiment. Fearing a rise of limited statehood that would result in lack of control and possibly destabilise the Soviet Union, several articles appeared in *Pravda* on the correct interpretation of the Secret Speech already in March 1956. As criticism and spontaneous demonstrations continued, central leadership saw no other way than to impede the rising limited statehood of popular protests by issuing a decree threatening to severely punish "exaggerated criticism" of the party, which could result in dismissal from jobs, exclusion from the party or even impris-

⁸⁷² Eimermacher and Afiani, *Doklad N. S. Khrushcheva o kul'te lichnosti Stalina na XX s"ezde KPSS: dokumenty*, 419.

⁸⁷³ *Ibid.*, 418.

⁸⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 482.

⁸⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 483.

onment.⁸⁷⁷

Stalin and the central leadership were not the only figures under attack from the Uzbek party gatherings, criticism of the Uzbek leadership also surfaced. In Tashkent this led to a particularly tense situation. Former Secretary in the Uzbek Central Committee, Suleiman Azimov, publically attacked none other than Usman Iusupov, who was also present at the meeting. Azimov had been apprehended for “counter-revolutionary crimes” in 1941 and sentenced to ten years imprisonment. But in March 1956, he was attending the Tashkent party gathering. At the meeting, Iusupov’s former ally, Azimov, snapped at Iusupov that he had “cultivated a personality cult and surrounded himself with sycophants and pleasers (*ugodniki*).”⁸⁷⁸ As Azimov had refused to carry out illegal demands in 1941, he had been imprisoned. The face-to-face confrontation left Iusupov little space for manoeuvring and he acknowledged that he had made serious errors, which had become ever more apparent following the twentieth party congress. In the case of Azimov’s arrest, however, Iusupov insisted that he was innocent: “It had been dictated ‘from above’ and fearing to be arrested” himself, he had executed orders. During this period, Iusupov continued, his “role as secretary of the Central Committee had been reduced to zero” and his office had been ‘bugged’ so that everything he said “was known by the centre.”⁸⁷⁹ Iusupov also came under attack in the Bukhara party activ. The editor of province newspaper, “Red Bukhara” comrade Bondarenko, accused him of having spread the cult of personality, which “resulted in gross violations of party leadership principles and created sycophancy and servility.”⁸⁸⁰ Apart from these attacks on Iusupov, the Uzbek leadership was not the target of aggravations. This suggests that the new leadership under Mukhitdinov appears to have been perceived as a clear break with the Iusupov leadership, although the party, as such, was a source of disappointment to some communists, as the pensioner Makarov cited above clearly expressed.

The Uzbek population was not presented with such detailed descriptions of the party gatherings. Instead, the major newspapers in Uzbekistan published general reports of the discussions at the party meetings. On March 9, for example, *Pravda vostoka* readers could for the first time confirm the rumours about the twentieth party congress. In a lengthy article on the Tashkent party gathering, the first public condemnation of the personality cult arrived in the Uzbek periphery. Although the official media propelled Stalin out of the political discourse

⁸⁷⁷ Schattenberg, “‘Democracy’ or ‘Despotism’?,” 65–66.

⁸⁷⁸ Eimermacher and Afiani, *Doklad N. S. Khrushcheva o kul'te lichnosti Stalina na XX s'ezde KPSS: dokumenty*, 418.

⁸⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

and into an artificial oblivion with thunderous silence, the subject of the critical discussions at the party gathering was clear to any reader: “Classic Marxist-Leninism always severely condemned all manifestations of personality cults. Not individuals - heroes, military leaders, kings, but the masses are at the head of the development of human society.”⁸⁸¹ Similar reports from Party gatherings throughout Uzbekistan found their way to the news in the following weeks alongside with special features on the personality cult and the return to Leninist governing principles.⁸⁸² Stalin was thus declared an outcast of the discourse and although his name was not mentioned in any of the articles, his sudden absence from the media and party discourse spoke for itself.

The changed atmosphere widened the circle of groups in the Uzbek SSR sharing their experiences under Stalin. Greek communists who had been deported to Uzbekistan and were now living in Tashkent demanded to be allowed to read and discuss Khrushchev’s speech first hand.⁸⁸³ Analogue voices came from the large group of Crimean Tatars who had also been victims of deportation. In a letter to the editors of *Pravda*, for example, a Crimean Tatar I. Memetov living in Iangi-Iul’ in the Uzbek SSR complained about the treatment of the Crimean Tatars in history books. According to him, several books were “defamatory against the whole nation of the Crimean Tatars” and did not hesitate to call tens of thousands of Crimean Tatars traitors who fought for the Soviet Union in World War II.⁸⁸⁴ Especially the Crimean Tatars managed to mobilise forces in the following many years and I. Memetov’s letter was but an early sign of demands for the revocation of the treason charges against them. Led by the Crimean Tatar National Movement, they formed a strong lobby group that tediously fought for their rights. Amongst other things, this resulted in a letter campaign, which amounted to approximately four million letters calling for their rehabilitation and right to re-

⁸⁸¹ The Tashkent Party gathering was featured with a full double page coverage: “Sobranie partiinogo aktiva Tashkenskoi oblast’i”, PV, 09.03.1956, 2–3.

⁸⁸² See: “Vse sily—na vypolnenie reshenii XX s"ezda KPSS”, PV, 15.03.1956, 3; “resheniia XX s"ezda KPSS—boevaia programma deistvii”, 16.03.1953, 2; “Shire propagandu reshenii XX s"ezda KPSS”, 20.03.1953, 1; “Pochemu kult’ lichnosti chuzhd dukhu marksizma-leninizma?”, 29.03.1956, 2.

⁸⁸³ Eimermacher and Afiani, *Doklad N. S. Khrushcheva o kul’te lichnosti Stalina na XX s"ezde KPSS: dokumenty*, 654. During the Great Terror roughly 20.000 Greeks from Crimea, Caucasus and the Black Sea coast had been deported to the Uzbek SSR. Another circa 11.000 refugees from the Greek Civil War who escaped to the Soviet Union in 1944 were also settled in Uzbekistan, many of which in labour camps. See: Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937-1949*, 119–128.

⁸⁸⁴ Eimermacher and Afiani, *Doklad N. S. Khrushcheva o kul’te lichnosti Stalina na XX s"ezde KPSS: dokumenty*, 566. eimermacher, 566. See: Liudmila Alekseeva, *Istoriiaa Inakomyслиia v SSSR*, Online edition (<http://memo.ru/history/diss/books/alexeewa/>, 2012), chap. 8; Pohl, *Ethnic Cleansing in the USSR, 1937-1949*, 109–118.

turn to the Crimea.⁸⁸⁵

The Secret Speech thus resulted in a series of immediate responses from the Uzbek SSR but the Uzbek top-level political leadership long remained strikingly quiet. The reaction of the Uzbek leadership did come but only in late autumn 1956 and at that disguised as a congress of the intelligentsia. Already, in summer 1956, the Uzbek leadership gathered in Tashkent to prepare a congress on the topic “The 20th Party Congress and the Tasks of the Republican Intelligentsia.”⁸⁸⁶ As the group convened, there were two aspects of the post-Secret Speech months that seem to have irritated the Uzbek leaders: Firstly, the Uzbek Bureau members were irritated by the retraction from the 20th Party Congress till early summer 1956, resulting in the June 30 decree on excessive criticism of Stalin. First secretary Mukhitdinov saw it as an unwelcome retreat that hampered the new direction of Soviet project following the Secret Speech.⁸⁸⁷ Secondly, the Bureau of the Uzbek Central Committee was particularly vexed by the limited extent of the speech’s circulation and commentaries on the Stalin cult in the press. What appeared in the press, Mukhitdinov remembered, differed markedly from Khrushchev’s original speech. There was hardly any mentioning of the victims of repression and the cult of personality was discussed only in very general terms. As a matter of fact, Mukhitdinov recalled, “on the rehabilitation of victims of repression the press wrote little, only sometimes appeared brief informational material.”⁸⁸⁸ As a consequence, the Uzbek leaders decided to make a stand against the reverse development and “as the first in the USSR to speak about [Stalin’s crimes] at the top of our voice during the Congress of the Intelligentsia”⁸⁸⁹, due to take place in October 1956.

The Congress of the Intelligentsia

The intelligentsia congress became pivotal for the Uzbek interpretation of the post-Secret Speech Soviet Union. It created a forum in the periphery where republican leaders and intellectuals discussed the legacy of Stalinism in order to define their vision of the Soviet future.

⁸⁸⁵ Greta Lynn Uehling, *Beyond Memory the Crimean Tatars’ Deportation and Return* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 138–167, <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10135598>. In 1967, the Crimean Tatars were relieved of the charges for treason, but it was not before the late 1980s and *glasnost* that they were allowed to return to their homeland.

⁸⁸⁶ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 184. Although the post-Stalin Uzbek leadership would have liked the congress to be the first, it was actually only the third. The two first ones took place in 1926–1927. Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present. A Cultural History*, 250.

⁸⁸⁷ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 184.

⁸⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁸⁹ Ibid.

The Uzbek leadership was well aware of the balancing act and possible repercussions it could have for the Moscow–Tashkent relations. Hence, it is not surprising that the Uzbek leaders were aiming to acquire support from central leadership for the endeavour.⁸⁹⁰ Mukhitdinov arranged a meeting with Khrushchev during a Moscow visit in June 1956, in which he presented the idea of a congress that would deal with questions of national histories and the intelligentsia’s role in society.⁸⁹¹

Despite all the positive patronage relations between the two First Secretaries, Mukhitdinov was uncertain about Khrushchev’s reaction. Prior to meeting with Khrushchev, Mukhitdinov had therefore agreed with R. A. Rudenko that he would help the Uzbek leaders “with the materials, naming the families and contemplating together, how to deal correctly with the issue.”⁸⁹² To back-up his proposal through, the support of General State Attorney Roman A. Rudenko was an astute move. Rudenko was a leading figure in the Khrushchev administration who had not only prosecuted L. Beria but also actively partaken in the uncovering of the Stalin crimes. Rudenko’s approval justified the project and displayed Mukhitdinov’s awareness of the periphery’s dependency on the goodwill of the centre.

Whether because of Mukhitdinov’s preparations or because of Khrushchev’s honest support for the initiative, persuading Khrushchev turned into a straightforward affair. Mukhitdinov emphasised that the Uzbek leadership wanted to “make the main question of the congress the rehabilitation of the victims of political repression in the 1930s and following years”⁸⁹³ and to engage in “the serious study of national history and its popularization.”⁸⁹⁴ To buttress his argument, Mukhitdinov rolled out heavy ideological artillery by arguing that the congress would support the international ideological struggle, for it “would be the answer to the activities of the sovietologues in the West who are claiming a Russification of the Muslim population in the USSR.”⁸⁹⁵ Mukhitdinov could have saved his justifications, because it was a clearly disinterested Khrushchev he met in the Kremlin, who had no objections to the plan, and the Uzbek leadership was left to pursue its plans.⁸⁹⁶

Whether Khrushchev was really as supportive as Mukhitdinov suggests remains uncertain, but Khrushchev had good reason to support the efforts of the Uzbek leaders. After all, a key

⁸⁹⁰ Unfortunately, material on the events leading up to the Congress and on the discussions are still largely inaccessible, whereas we are by and large dependent on Mukhitdinov’s memoirs and the written press.

⁸⁹¹ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 166.

⁸⁹² *Ibid.*, 165.

⁸⁹³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁸⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 165.

part of Soviet foreign policy interests was to set a firm example to adversaries in the West, as well as acquire further allies among liberation movements in the former colonies.⁸⁹⁷ Furthermore, Khrushchev secured republican leadership support for his own struggles in the Presidium, where he was still facing resistance from members surrounding G. M. Malenkov and V. M. Molotov. Despite Khrushchev's position, which was largely unquestioned in summer 1956, he was not foolish enough to rest on his laurels and supported republican interests when they seemed agreeable.

With approval from the centre, the Uzbek reformers began the more targeted preparation of the congress. First Secretary Mukhitdinov was advocating a hard line, especially with regard to the rehabilitation of Stalin's victims and wanted to, publically announce and rehabilitate prominent figures of the Uzbek SSR such as A. Ikramov and F. Khodzhaev in the keynote speech. Not surprisingly, it was the Russian Second Secretary R. E. Mel'nikov who was particularly opposed to the idea in order to avoid "stormy (*burnyi*) reactions and so complicate the political situation in the republic."⁸⁹⁸ Clearly, the centre of power was afraid of losing control of the situation and spark limited statehood through a rise in popular anti-Soviet movements.

As a consequence, he suggested a more cautious approach where the names of the people up for rehabilitation were to be left out until the situation had become more stable. Undoubtedly, his concern was sparked by the post-Secret Speech unrest, and as Second Secretary of the republican Central Committee he was representing the central leadership in the periphery.⁸⁹⁹ Neither Mel'nikov nor Mukhitdinov had their way. A compromise proposed by Sharaf Rashidov, the Chairman of the Uzbek Supreme Soviet, settled the dispute: Some leading political figures and a group of the intelligentsia were rehabilitated, while the two main political characters of Soviet Uzbekistan – A. Ikramov and F. Khodzhaev – had to wait for their full rehabilitation until 1957 and 1965 respectively.⁹⁰⁰

As already noted, the congress was a seminal event for the republican interpretation of the

⁸⁹⁷ Moritz Deutschmann, "Zentralasien, Die Nationalitätenpolitik Und Die Dekolonisation in Der Islamischen Welt, 1955-1964," Unpublished Master's Thesis (Humboldt-University Berlin, 2008).

⁸⁹⁸ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 185.

⁸⁹⁹ Throughout the entire Soviet period the Second Secretary in Uzbekistan was, except for a few months in 1934, a non-native, an 'outsider'. See: Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83)," 118.

⁹⁰⁰ Kathleen Carlisle has proposed that it was the eternal clan struggle between Tashkent and Bukhara/Samarkand that lay the ground for the belated rehabilitation of the A. Ikramov and F. Khodzhaev, since Mukhitdinov was the representative of the Tashkent clan. Following Mukhitdinov's account, this was not the case as we have seen above, but rather the sensitivity of the centre of power. Carlisle, "Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan," 294.

Khrushchev policy to return to Leninist principles. It is necessary to look closer at the proceedings in order to make clear the importance of the congress for the beginning of a new era of Soviet history. The congress convened on October 11 1956. It included 1200 writers, artists, poets, but also doctors, engineers and other specialists delegations from all several union republics, as well as foreign visitors from China, India, Korea and Egypt who travelled to participate in the historic event. During his several-hours long keynote speech, First Secretary Mukhitdinov did, in fact, go far beyond the boundaries of the congress' official theme on the intelligentsia's role in society. Evolving within the framework of Soviet nationality policy, the speech developed into a comment on the fundamental constitution of the Soviet Union, placing it in direct connection to the discussions of centre-periphery relations of the 1920s.

Having sung the usual hymns to the Soviet Union, Mukhitdinov quickly centred his speech on the question that really concerned him: The Soviet nationality policy. "The party's nationality policy...has won the hearts and deepest trust of the working people across the world. For them it is an eternal source of inspiration in the fight against imperial 'colonial enslavement', for their freedom and independence."⁹⁰¹ Nevertheless, the revelations of the twentieth party congress had, according to the Uzbek First Secretary, thwarted the possibility of the correct development of the Soviet republics: "The task is the following", Mukhitdinov urged, "we need to increase work on the problems of soviet history and include work on the historical experiences that lead to these events. Remember that history is the science of events of the mass, we must not only write the political history of the people, but show the social transformation of economics, *byt*, culture, and the psychology of people... These questions need to be a part of the teachings of all parts of the humanities: history, philosophy, ethnography, literature, philology, law etc."⁹⁰² Although the real message is hidden between the lines, Mukhitdinov was demanding nothing less than the complete revision of national histories in the union republics that had hitherto placed crucial emphasis particularly on Stalin's role as part of the positive forces standing behind the development of the Soviet Union. In Mukhitdinov's reading of history, Uzbekistan was a cradle of civilization that had produced masters such as Abu Rayhan Biruni, Ulugh Beg or Abu Abdallah al-Khwarizmi, who deserved their proper honouring and Mukhitdinov did not mince his words when he located the reason for the dis-

⁹⁰¹ Nuritdin Mukhitdinov, *Istoricheskie Resheniia XX S"ezda KPSS i Zadachi Intelligentsii Uzbekistana: Doklad Na S"ezde Intelligentsii Uzbekistana 11 Oktiabria 1956 G.* (Moskva: Gos. izd-vo polit. lit-ry, 1956), 6.

⁹⁰² *Ibid.*, 30.

tortion of historical understanding.⁹⁰³ It was the rule of Stalin that had disrupted the development of sciences, causing a deviation from socialist legality.⁹⁰⁴ What Mukhitdinov indirectly criticized through the emphasis on the humanities, was the arrogance with which the Soviet authorities had conducted the ‘cultural revolution’ of Central Asia during the 1920s and 1930s that aimed more at destruction of a perceived backwardness than at constructively building on the past.⁹⁰⁵ Mukhitdinov closely connected the abuse of history with the gross violation of the initial nationality policy that was to secure the union republics from a monolithic (imperial) centre of power, which belonged to the very foundational principles of the Soviet Union.⁹⁰⁶ Mukhitdinov thus offered a centre-periphery perspective on the Stalin dictatorship, which bore a connotation of unjust repression of the Soviet nationalities and gave it a different emphasis than Khrushchev’s Secret Speech that had broken rather with Stalin’s person than with Stalin’s politics.⁹⁰⁷

It was within this setting that Mukhitdinov addressed the question of rehabilitation. While refuting the accusations of nationalism that had stripped Uzbekistan of its political elite in the 1930s, he endorsed the view that nationalism was a feature and a problem in Uzbekistan and amongst the intelligentsia.⁹⁰⁸ “To be sure, everyone commits mistakes. In such cases the character of the mistake has to be carefully analysed, the root located and the offender pointed to it and not charged with various labels. The idea of such criticism cannot be the annihilation (*unichtozhenie*), but to show how to correct the mistake; the upbringing of our

⁹⁰³ Ibid., 27. Abu Rayhan Biruni and Ulugh Beg were a cause of heated dispute between the Uzbeks and Tajiks. Originating in the Samarkand/Bukhara region, Uzbeks as well as Tajiks saw them as part of their national heritage. Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 96. The active construction of an Uzbek identity through the adaptation of the Central Asian territory was also theme of the first history of the Uzbek SSR that was published in 1958 and used for school instruction. Shoshana Keller as powerfully demonstrated how the Uzbek historical commission editing the book read the history of the entire territory of the Uzbek SSR as a thousand year old Uzbek history, disregarding the highly diverse influences the region went through: Shoshana Keller, “Story, Time, and Dependent Nationhood in the Uzbek History Curriculum,” *Slavic Review* 66, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 257–277.

⁹⁰⁴ Mukhitdinov, *Istoricheskie Resheniia XX S"ezda KPSS i Zadachi Intelligentsii Uzbekistana: Doklad Na S"ezde Intelligentsii Uzbekistana 11 Oktiabria 1956 G.*, 30. On the development of the concept socialist legality, see: Miriam Dobson, *Khrushchev's Cold Summer: Gulag Returnees, Crime, and the Fate of Reform After Stalin* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 21–26.

⁹⁰⁵ The destructiveness of the cultural revolution has been aptly described by other scholars such as: Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia*; Jörg Baberowski, “Stalinistische Kulturrevolution Im Sowjetischen Orient,” in *Kultur in Der Geschichte Russlands*, ed. Bianka Pietrow-Ennker (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 278–293.

⁹⁰⁶ Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917-23*. The loosened atmosphere amongst others inspired a four-volume Uzbek history that claimed the Andijan uprisings from 1898 against the Russian colonial regime as a national liberation movement, which had hitherto been suppressed into a step on the road to socialist development. See: Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*, 120.

⁹⁰⁷ Wolfgang Leonhard rightly argues this because Khrushchev did not question collectivization or forced industrialization: Leonhard, *Kreml ohne Stalin*, 249.

⁹⁰⁸ Mukhitdinov, *Istoricheskie Resheniia XX S"ezda KPSS i Zadachi Intelligentsii Uzbekistana: Doklad Na S"ezde Intelligentsii Uzbekistana 11 Oktiabria 1956 G.*, 59.

cadres. (Applause)”⁹⁰⁹ In what Edward Allworth has called a “cautious trial effort”, Mukhitdinov went even further in testing the boundaries of de-Stalinisation. “Many did not believe that such a well-known Uzbek author as Abdulla Kadyri (Abdulla Qodiriy) was a criminal. His case must be carefully studied and if it turns out that he did not commit any crimes he needs to be rehabilitated and we need to release the work Abdulla Kadyri.”⁹¹⁰ As Allworth rightfully points out, Abdulla Kadyri was not an unimportant symbol for the Uzbek nation. In fact, he had been a Jadid before 1917, promoting the reformist, rather than the revolutionary path. Furthermore, he became the first Uzbek language novelist with his three-volume “Days gone by” published throughout the 1920s.⁹¹¹ It remains unclear if the centre of power will have understood what symbolic value A. Kadyri carried in Uzbekistan, but anyone familiar with his writings noticed the remarkable change in discourse. From being an outcast of Soviet discourse, A. Kadyri was to be celebrated as an important part of Uzbek cultural history. This was a momentous change and a strong signal to the Uzbek population and there were no attempts to keep silent about it. As a matter of fact, Uzbeks could read the full six-page reprint of Mukhitdinov’s speech in *Pravda vostoka* on October 13, thus introducing them openly to the change of atmosphere in the country.⁹¹²

A. Kadyri not only served as a cornerstone in the wave of rehabilitations in the years that followed, but also as part of a greater quest of the Uzbek political elite. The rehabilitation of the national symbol A. Kadyri did constitute more than a beginning in recognising the crimes of Stalinism. Mukhitdinov rehabilitated Uzbekistan as a whole and actively constructed an Uzbek national consciousness. Accordingly, Mukhitdinov urged: “We have to remember that we are Uzbek and we can be proud of that.”⁹¹³ These were words were not new. Nevertheless, in the context they were spoken, they were endowed with a different value of pride and self-understanding. To be sure, Mukhitdinov did weave them into the commonly known context of socialist brotherhood by reminding his audience that “we must remember that we would not have achieved the level of development if we had not received help from our brother nations: from Moscow, Leningrad in regard to machine construction; from Baku and Georgia with regard to oil industry; from Donbass and Kuzbass with regard to mining etc.

⁹⁰⁹ Ibid., 61.

⁹¹⁰ Ibid., 51. Abdulla Kadyri had been executed during the Great Purges.

⁹¹¹ Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present. A Cultural History*, 252; On the Jadid movement: Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform Jadidism in Central Asia*.

⁹¹² “Istoricheskie resheniia XX s"ezda Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza i zadachi intelligentsii Uzbekistana”, PV, 13.10.1956, 1–6. On the rehabilitation of the Uzbek cultural elite, see: Alimova and Golovanov, “Uzbekistan,” 233–239.

⁹¹³ Mukhitdinov, *Istoricheskie Resheniia XX S"ezda KPSS i Zadachi Intelligentsii Uzbekistana: Doklad Na S"ezde Intelligentsii Uzbekistana 11 Oktiabria 1956 G.*, 62.

etc.”⁹¹⁴ In much the same tone, Mukhitdinov made sure to emphasise that the rehabilitation of a few did not equal an acquittal of the Uzbek intelligentsia per se. As a result, he underlined the role of the intelligentsia, which had “hitherto been poorly executing their task to decisively fight the vestiges of the past in terms of *byt*,” Mukhitdinov grunted. But the fault lay not solely in the hands of the cultural elite. Not least to blame was the party and state organisations in Uzbekistan, the flaws of which had slowed down progress. As a consequence, there was a lack of well-educated workers, women were still carrying the burden of Muslim traditions and the komsomol were left to themselves.⁹¹⁵

Mukhitdinov’s speech was a prime example of the fundamental problem entailed in the Soviet nationality policy. Designed in the 1920s, the nationality policy was a measure to jump-start Soviet development. In the primordialist Bolshevik understanding, nation was defined by common origins, language, history custom and heritage and within the paradigm national in form, socialist in content, it was an attempt to move the new nations along another step on the developmental ladder. Mukhitdinov’s forceful reclamation of what he judged to be Uzbek national culture, however, was a major step toward standing the concept on its head and making the Uzbek culture socialist in form and national in content.⁹¹⁶ Thus cultural expressions, such as the woman’s veil and being Muslim, came to be emblems of the Uzbek national consciousness because the nationality policy subjugated “backward” cultural claims to the national ones.⁹¹⁷

For his speech, Mukhitdinov received “lasting stormy applause”. This was understandable. After all, he had just demanded a revival of the Soviet nationality policy carefully wrapped in an ideological mantel. Edward Allworth is quite right in claiming that the stenographic report of the congress reads as if it had but insignificant, routine importance.⁹¹⁸ There was more at stake, which is only revealed between the lines of the report, revealing that the Uzbek leadership instrumentalised the Congress of the Uzbek Intelligentsia in several ways. First of all, the Congress of the Intelligentsia provided the first forum in the post-Secret Speech period in which the republican elites jointly raised their voice on matters of the nationality policy. That the Leninist nationality policy was revered was nothing new of the Khrushchev period, during which the centre preached a return to the proper socialist idea of Lenin, but it is difficult

⁹¹⁴ Ibid.

⁹¹⁵ Ibid., 38, 46 and 60–61.

⁹¹⁶ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 95.

⁹¹⁷ Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia*, chap. 7.

⁹¹⁸ Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present. A Cultural History*, 252. The stenographic report was published shortly after the congress: Z. R. Rakhimbabaev, *Stenograficheskiĭ Otchet. S"ezd Intelligentsii Uzbekistana, 1956* (Tashkent: Gos. izd-vo Uzbekskoi, 1957).

to read the stenographic report as anything but a forceful demand from the republics, aiming to reclaim their role as states within a Union of equals with their own proud history and national consciousness.⁹¹⁹ Despite the tensions that such claims could cause for the centre-periphery relations, the congress was, secondly, a clear statement of important symbolic value. By endorsing the ideals of the 20th party congress, the Uzbek top-level leadership not only portrayed themselves as strong supporters of Khrushchev's de-Stalinisation. In doing so, the Uzbek leaders deepened the trust of central leadership and in that way secured their own positions. Thirdly, the entire Uzbek party and state system was full of former perpetrators. The Uzbek leadership knew it and, strengthened by the support of the centre of power, they could deepen their own power at the republican level. Lastly, the congress is likely to have carried at least a sense of a pre-emptive strike toward any critique arising from the population. The Uzbek government was clearly interested in signalling that it was actively engaged in condemning Stalin's rule and the crimes committed under his direction. Moreover, the Uzbek leadership attempted to eliminate the possibility of them being held accountable for not having taken action upon the revelations of the Stalinist atrocities.

Nevertheless, Mukhitdinov's speech was a balancing act and as the main initiator and speaker he did run an immense risk. As already noted, Mukhitdinov did secure Khrushchev's support, but there were many variables: Had the congress sparked strong reactions in society as Second Secretary Mel'nikov had feared, or had the centre of power disapproved of the content of the congress, Mukhitdinov would have had to bear the brunt. Such considerations are sure to have influenced the Uzbek First Secretary when he penned a follow-up report of the congress to the Moscow Central Committee on October 26, 1956. The short letter sent to the general section of the centre of power is a very brief, skimmed version of the event, which merely lists the number of participants and gives a very superficial overview of the event.⁹²⁰ Mukhitdinov focused on the official framework of the congress and reported that the "delegates warmly welcomed the historical decisions of the 20th party congress."⁹²¹ This version was very different from the one Mukhitdinov wrote forty years later. Here, freed from the fetters of Soviet discourse, he was less cautious about the goals of the Uzbek leadership. In his reading of the Soviet Union in 1956, "the rights of the [Soviet] republics had been nullified and everything was done in the interest of the union. This was an important problem that needed correction, if the union was to survive. Politics had to be a balance between the interests of

⁹¹⁹ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 188–189.

⁹²⁰ RGANI, 5, 30, 139, ll. 57–60.

⁹²¹ RGANI, 5, 30, 139, ll. 58.

both the republic and the union.”⁹²² The foundations according to which national consciousness should grow according to Lenin, Mukhitdinov argued, had been destroyed and it was important to decisively protest against the unfounded critique and instead acknowledge the positive achievements of the past. It was this endeavour that appeared both righteous and achievable as a consequence of the 20th Party Congress.⁹²³

If Mukhitdinov had been as openhearted about the Uzbek leadership’s opinion in 1956, it is unlikely that he would have experienced the quick rise through the Soviet hierarchy he did. Following the congress, he became the first Central Asian in the ruling circle in the centre of power in December 1957. Weighed on those terms, the Uzbek leadership could claim a remarkable success with their initiative to gather the Soviet republican intelligentsia in October 1956. The relaxation of centralisation had, on the other hand, severe consequences for Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR. For it led to a deepening of limited statehood and a blow to the central leadership’s claim for power. As we shall see in the following sections, this was a trend that became visible both within different segments of society as well as within the political sphere of the Uzbek SSR. The result was a return of the ambiguous policies of the *Ambivalent Empire*: Repression of segments of society increased and the Uzbek political leadership fell victim of a severe rebuke.

⁹²² Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 189.

⁹²³ *Ibid.*, 188–189.

6.2. THE UZBEK NATIONALITY POLICY IN THE 1950S

The revival of the nationality policy at the intelligentsia congress had severe implications for the face of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR. Under the auspice first of First Secretary Nuritdin Mukhitdinov and afterwards his successor Sabir Kamalov, the Uzbek leadership intensified the nationalisation of culture toward Uzbek society: The Muslim heritage was celebrated more openly as part of the Uzbek national culture and female liberation from the chains of “backwardness” returned to the political agenda. The more rigid adherence to the nationality policy resulted in a religious revival, while prolonged exposure to Soviet values and way of life bore conflict-potential concerning the “surrogate proletariat.”⁹²⁴ Limited statehood thus grew in different segments of Uzbek society for different reasons.

Nationality Policy and Islam in the 1950s

The role of Islam in the Muslim regions of the Soviet Union has been intensely debated. Most scholars have tended to view Islam as a source of self-identification that created a Muslimness in opposition to Soviet rule.⁹²⁵ By contrast, others have argued that the socio-economic changes wrought about by the Soviet period altered Muslim identity significantly.⁹²⁶ Both lines of interpretation carry a grain of truth. Soviet Islam was indeed a source of self-identification, but it was not a politically subversive force. On the contrary, being Muslim, Uzbek and Soviet was quite possible and, although it did not fit Soviet ideology, Soviet policy was the very source of the identity amalgam. First Secretary Nuritdin Mukhitdinov’s speech at the intelligentsia congress marked a crucial moment of intensification for this development, as it reinstalled the realm within which Islam could flourish as a cultural-national heritage while, at the same time, be contained as a religion.

The enhanced nationalisation of culture led to the curious situation that a number of inherently Islamic traditions and customs were integrated further into the Uzbek national identity, while Islam as a religion was severely repressed as an expression of a bygone “feudal-bai” oppressive past. Circumcision of boys, eating with one’s hands, seeing marriage as a contract between two families rather than two individuals, paying respect to elders, for example, were

⁹²⁴ In lack of a proletarian base in the agricultural regions of Muslim Central Asia, Gregory Massell termed Central Asian women the “surrogate proletariat” due to the Soviet authorities’ efforts to mobilise them as the “oppressed” group of society: Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919-1929*.

⁹²⁵ Bennigsen, “Several Nations or One People? Ethnic Consciousness Among Soviet Central Asians,” 64.

⁹²⁶ Privratsky, *Muslim Turkistan*, 34–35; Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 84–115.

traditions rooted in Islam but labeled as Uzbek or national as a consequence of the nationality policy.⁹²⁷

Meanwhile, Islam was viewed as a “relic of the past” and religious authorities brutally repressed in the 1920s. The deepening of Soviet structures had almost eradicated the basis for practicing religion by imprisoning the Muslim religious authorities and closing (and destroying) places of worship. In Bukhara, for example, 1373 mosques were functioning up until the October Revolution, while the number had plummeted to just three officially registered and legally functioning mosques in 1953.⁹²⁸ As a consequence, legal religious activity in the 1950s was conducted by just a few officially registered Muslim institutions in the Uzbek SSR that amounted to 78 mosques, 10 mazars, 9 synagogues, 6 Baptist prayer houses.⁹²⁹ Apart from these officially recognised institutions, religious activity was by and large criminalised but religious observance remained legal, not least because it was seen as part of the Uzbek national heritage and culture.

Islam was thus not completely banned but closely monitored and instrumentalised by the Soviet authorities. In the midst of war Stalin had granted an officially sponsored Islam, hoping that it would support the war effort. In 1943, petition of the Uzbek ulama was accorded, which sought to open a Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (SADUM) that henceforth functioned as a religious authority for Muslims in the Central Asia. As such, SADUM was a curious entity that came in handy for the regime as an institution it could utilise both at the international and domestic levels. Especially from the Khrushchev period onward, SADUM became an important link between the Muslims inside and outside the Soviet Union, when the Muslim countries became increasingly important as international partners in the Cold War. SADUM was allowed to arrange small groups of pilgrimage to Mecca every year but, most importantly for the regime, SADUM was forced to support the claim of religious freedom in the Soviet Union to the Muslim world as a means to gain international political support.⁹³⁰ On the domestic level, SADUM was no less an instrument of the Soviet authorities. Accordingly, it was forced to issue fatwas (legal opinions) supporting Soviet policies on issues such as avoiding drunkenness or declaring as non-compulsory the

⁹²⁷ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 99. As Adeb Khalid notes that nationalisation of Muslim culture even led to the adoption of the Iranian new-year holiday Navruz in the late 1980s as a national holiday of the peoples of Central Asia.

⁹²⁸ GARF, 6991, 3, 970, l. 52. On the early Soviet policy toward the Central Asian religious institutions is by: Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca. The Soviet Campaign Against Islam in Central Asia, 1917-1941*.

⁹²⁹ GARF, 6991, 3, 165, l. 25 and l. 78.

⁹³⁰ Eshon Babakhan, the first Chairman of SADUM became the face of Muslims in Central Asia, due to his many travels abroad. The pilgrimage to Mecca was only for a small carefully selected group every year. In 1955 a total of 16 Muslims were allowed to go to Mecca, 10 of which were Uzbek. GARF, 6991, 3, 972, l. 30.

sacrifice of livestock for the Feast of Sacrifice.⁹³¹ It was not trust, however, that marked the relationship between SADUM and the Soviet leadership, and the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults (CARC) was established to monitor Islamic religious activity next to the foundation of SADUM.⁹³²

Meanwhile it was the unofficial Islam, the one practiced on the grassroots level by the (illegal) unregistered groups (*nezaregistrirrovannye gruppy*) that troubled Soviet authorities. Foreign observers therein saw popular resistance and endowed a political meaning to the practicing of Islam, making the unregistered groups expressions of a political Islam.⁹³³ By contrast, the Uzbek leadership of the 1950s viewed these groups as expressions of a bygone, “backward” society, not as a political threat. To be sure: Soviet authorities always repressed the unregistered movements, but following Stalin’s compromise with SADUM in 1943, the repression did not reach the pre-level war levels although unregistered groups were a frequent phenomenon in the late-Stalin period. In 1946, for example, a report from the Committee for Party Control, registered the opening of “150 non-registered mosques and more than 30 illegal religious schools.”⁹³⁴ Such groups and schools were habitually shut down by the authorities but the regime eschewed from a comprehensive anti-religious policy to contain and diminish religious activity in the Uzbek SSR until Khrushchev launched the anti-religious campaign in 1958.

When Mukhitdinov reclaimed the nationality policy he, by consequence, ‘secured’ Islam as part of the national-cultural heritage of the Uzbek SSR. There is, however, no reason to believe that the Uzbek leadership was religious in any fashion, but due to intrinsic relationship between nation, culture and custom, any fortification of the nationality policy automatically fortified religion. Indeed, to most Muslims there was no contradiction between being Muslim and communist. As a consequence, it completely squared with Uzbek interests when the Chair of the Presidium of the Uzbek Supreme Soviet Sharaf Rashidov pushed for a more defined acceptance of Islam for propaganda purposes in 1956. Following his trip around East Asia with Nikita Khrushchev and Nikolai Bulganin in late 1955, Rashidov urged Mukhit-

⁹³¹ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 110–111. It remains unclear to what extent SADUM delivered information to the Soviet Ministry of Interior about unregistered religious activity, but it is likely that it was forced to in a matter of survival.

⁹³² CARC was part of the Council of Ministers structure. On its foundation: Anderson, *Religion, State, and Politics in the Soviet Union and Successor States*, 27.

⁹³³ Bennigsen, “Several Nations or One People? Ethnic Consciousness Among Soviet Central Asians,” 51–55.

⁹³⁴ RGASPI, 17, 122, 141, l. 5. See also: Ro’i, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, 287–324. Other religious groups were repressed in the late-Stalin period: In 1946, the Greek Catholic Church was outlawed and its churches taken over by the Russian Orthodox Church. Similarly, the number of Roman Catholic churches and Buddhist temples severely decreased: *Ibid.*, 64.

dinov that the Uzbek leadership needed to rectify the view of the Central Asian countries in the Third World and counter the anti-Soviet propaganda of “American-English provocations.”⁹³⁵ Thereby, he deemed it necessary to clarify “the nationality policy of the Communist Party and Soviet state, the constitutional rights of the citizens, especially the freedom of belief in the USSR” as well as the progress of the Central Asian people with regard to economic and cultural development. As a consequence, Rashidov suggested that foreign delegations visiting the Uzbek SSR should be shown that Uzbek Muslims enjoyed freedom of worship by better displaying “mosques, shrines, religious schools and monuments.”⁹³⁶ Even if these initiatives were primarily directed at correcting the foreign image, they display how the Uzbek leadership saw pride in their Muslim national heritage. Similarly, the official rehabilitation of victims of the Stalin repressions included former Jadids such as Abdurrauf Fitrat and Chol’pon (Abdulhamid Sulaymon o’g’li) in 1956 signalled a stronger acceptance of Uzbekistan’s religious heritage.

In addition to the Uzbek reclamation of the nationality policy, other Soviet institutions also supported religious institutions. In June 1958, the CARC chair A. A. Puzin wrote to Nuritdin Mukhitdinov, who by then had been promoted to the Moscow Central Committee Presidium, and asked for permission to strengthen the proposals that Sh. Rashidov had made just two years earlier. According to Puzin, there was ample unused potential within the Muslim religious organisations that could be utilised to strengthen Soviet foreign propaganda and enhance integration between the Muslim countries of the world and Central Asia.⁹³⁷ Hence, Puzin suggested that more people from the Muslim world should be invited to Soviet Central Asia; more and larger groups of up to 30 individuals should be allowed pilgrimage to Mecca; more literature should be published on religion in Central Asia; and Soviet Muslims should be allowed to write religious literature.⁹³⁸ Furthermore, even at the height of Khrushchev’s anti-religious campaign in February 1959, the local CARC representative in the Uzbek SSR was just about to finish a new edition of the Quran with a print run of 10,000 copies.⁹³⁹

The change of atmosphere following the Secret Speech and the intelligentsia congress resul-

⁹³⁵ Rizaev, *Sharaf Rashidov*, 24–28, here 24. Unfortunately, the document is only to be found in the Uzbek historian S. R. Rizaev’s book on Sharaf Rashidov, who published it without any formal references, casting doubt on its validity.

⁹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁹³⁷ GARF, 6991, 3, 166, ll. 2–18.

⁹³⁸ GARF, 6991, 3, 166, ll. 3–4.

⁹³⁹ GARF, 6991, 3, 982, l. 44.

ted in growth of religious activity in the Uzbek SSR.⁹⁴⁰ Firstly, (legal) religious increasing activity, such as participation in public prayers and religious festivals at holidays organised by the registered religious communities, was recorded. At the festivities of Eid and the end of the Ramadan, for example, participation rose by stunning numbers: In 1955, around 150.000 believers had participated in Uzbekistan but already two years later, the number more than doubled to approximately 315.000 in 1957.⁹⁴¹ The increase was also expressed in the donations made by citizens to the religious communities. While the religious authorities collected roughly 800.000 roubles from believers attending the Eid festivities in 1955, it had skyrocketed by 1958, when the spiritual authorities received more than 2.5 million.⁹⁴²

The legal religious gatherings were, secondly, flanked by a rising number of illegal unregistered religious groups that amounted to a minimum of at least 139 in the Uzbek SSR in 1958.⁹⁴³ These groups appear to have been ubiquitous throughout Central Asia and a very difficult entity to come to terms with. In his comprehensive study of Islam in the Soviet Union, Yaacov Ro'i argued that these tended to be small groups, the biggest of which counted seventy members for daily prayers.⁹⁴⁴ The unregistered groups were led by former mullahs or muezzins, although elders or aksakals were also observed leading prayer.⁹⁴⁵ In other instances, these groups were Sufi orders led by an *ishan* (teacher or leader), who had a group of *murids* (adept) around him.⁹⁴⁶ It was not unusual that they were conducting prayer in former mosques that had been closed down and left abandoned following the early anti-religious campaigns, but prayer could also take place in a private home or schools.⁹⁴⁷ Given their rather clandestine nature, it is difficult to assert if any of these groups were particularly

⁹⁴⁰ It was not only in Central Asia that religious attendance rose. In particular in the territories acquired after World War II, churches were operating and attracting a growing audience. At the dawn of the anti-religious campaign, roughly 14.000 churches were registered by the Soviet authorities. The study of the Russian Orthodox Church has a long history. Pioneer it was Dimitry Pospelovsky with his three volume *History of Soviet Atheism: Dimitry Pospelovsky, A History of Soviet Atheism in Theory and Practice and the Believer. Vol. 1-3* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984). On the coming into being of the Khrushchev's campaign: T. A. Chumachenko, *Church and State in Soviet Russia: Russian Orthodoxy from World War II to the Khrushchev Years*, *The New Russian History* (Armonk, N.Y: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), 165–188; Anderson, *Religion, State, and Politics in the Soviet Union and Successor States*, 7–23.

⁹⁴¹ GARF, 6991, 3, 165, l. 36.

⁹⁴² Ibid.

⁹⁴³ GARF, 6991, 3, 165, l. 46. At another place, the number of unregistered religious communities were recorded to be nearly 200. Khlevniuk, *Regional'naiia Politika*, 216.

⁹⁴⁴ Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, 288.

⁹⁴⁵ Ibid., 291. In addition, there is reason to believe that Gulag returnees may have taken up practicing upon return to society, but source material is inconclusive on this point. It was nevertheless a phenomenon that appeared in other parts of the Soviet Union: Anderson, *Religion, State, and Politics in the Soviet Union and Successor States*, 65.

⁹⁴⁶ Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, 385–405.

⁹⁴⁷ Ibid., 291–292.

anti-Soviet or Islamist. However, there is no historical evidence suggesting this was the case, although formerly persecuted Gulag returnees are sure to have been more hostile toward the regime. Apart from conducting (daily) and Friday prayer, these groups would gather for Muslim festivals and perform life-cycle rituals or marriages.⁹⁴⁸

Religion and religious activity was a thorn in the flesh of Khrushchev. The true believer in communism saw it as an obstruction, hindering the development of communism. It was, however, in Islam he saw “backwardness” and “relics of the past”. The former Uzbek First Secretary Usman Iusupov Khrushchev is described in derogative terms: “Many remnants from the past remained in Iusupov’s personality. As a man of Muslim background, he regarded women as slaves” whose job it was to pick cotton.⁹⁴⁹ This was a view deeply rooted in the Soviet discourse on Central Asia: “Backwardness” and “feudal-bai” mentality was what Khrushchev saw in the culturally different and Muslim influenced societies of Central Asia that did not correspond with his vision of socialist society. With this mindset, it is hardly surprising that Khrushchev enacted the anti-religious campaign in November 1958 as a means to curtail rising religious activity in the Soviet Union.

The anti-religious campaign was an attack on limited statehood expressed in the form of the reappearance of religious “backwardness” in the Uzbek SSR. In all clarity it proved that the Soviet policies to sculpt the Uzbek citizens according to a modernist ideal found little fertile ground. Despite rising numbers of children attending school, indigenisation and economic growth the Uzbek cultural roots in Islam were still prevalent especially on the grassroots levels. Given the intertwinement of national-cultural heritage and religious activity, the anti-religious campaign of the late 1950s was a complex affair. The chair of CARC A. Puzin tried to sensitise the CARC representatives to the problem in November 1958 before they were sent to the republics with the mission of closing down unregistered groups: “Our party has done a great job in the past years to resurrect legality in our country. This work has to be implemented by us – the workers of CARC. We cannot violate...the spirit of laws, directed at religion and churches...CARC cannot lead a policy different from the one written in the soviet legislation...we must insert all the measures of influence we have: explanation of laws, prevent the violations on the side of the churches...register malicious violators, hold them liable.”⁹⁵⁰

The number of unregistered religious groups and religious activity did severely diminish due

⁹⁴⁸ Ibid., 316–317.

⁹⁴⁹ Khrushchev, *Memoirs of Nikita Khrushchev. Reformer 1945-1964*, 2:313.

⁹⁵⁰ Ibid., 1. 15.

to the campaign.⁹⁵¹ Through the years 1958–1964, no new groups were officially registered in the Uzbek SSR. Furthermore, the authorities put a hold on the unregistered groups by either closing down their mosques, giving the functioning mullah a severe reprimand or even sentence them to imprisonment. Holy places were also shut down or access to them restricted. In addition to the repressive measures, Soviet authorities intensified propaganda campaigns that should underline the obsolescence of religion in socialism.⁹⁵² Enlightenment and “scientific-atheist” propaganda was intensified and public lectures and seminars on religion and state legislation in the cities, as well as in rural kolkhozy, stepped up.⁹⁵³ Furthermore, the authorities began enhanced publications of journals such as *Znanie* and *Nauka i religiia* that denounced religion by “scientific-atheist” propaganda. Lastly, the daily newspapers increasingly published articles on religion and atheism. Already in December 1958, *Pravda vostoka* published an article that targeted groups “spreading religious and past beliefs, above all from the church, sects, fortune-tellers (*gadalki*) and charlatans (*znakharki*).”⁹⁵⁴ Through these institutions and individuals, the “survival of religious vestiges” was secured, which weakened the “scientific-atheist propaganda”, while strengthening the “bourgeois ideology”.⁹⁵⁵ Similar voices were heard at the 14th Congress of the Uzbek Communist Party in January 1959. For example, F. Khodzhaev, First Secretary of the Tashkent gorkom, urged that “we must begin the fight against harmful and intolerable survivals of the past. They result in dangers such as drunkenness, lack of moral discipline, egoism that have no place among us. We must not remain indifferent to the religious survivals of the past and evil superstition.”⁹⁵⁶

The anti-religious campaign did not eradicate religious activity in the Uzbek SSR. This was not because of an Uzbek political resistance toward the central policies as some scholars infer.⁹⁵⁷ The Uzbek authorities did, in fact, do their job quite well, for the learned tradition of religion was effectively repressed in the public realm. There were many examples of imple-

⁹⁵¹ In a report to the chair of CARC, A. Puzin, the secretary of culture to the Uzbek Central Committee, Z. R. Rakhimbabaeva, and the deputy chair of the Uzbek Council of Ministers, A. Azimov, the head of CARC in Uzbekistan N. Inogamov noted that due to the enormous work of the local party and CARC representatives in strengthening scientific-atheist work, “almost all the illegal religious societies [had] been closed.” GARF, 6991, 3, 983, l. 33.

⁹⁵² Ro’i, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, 205–215.

⁹⁵³ See, for example, GARF, 6991, 3, 1033, ll. 2–12 and 17–23 for lectures given in Bukhara and Samarkand in the first half year 1959.

⁹⁵⁴ “Marksizm-Leninizm o religii”, PV, 09.12.1958, 3. “Sheiks and charlatans” came to embody the individuals leading unregistered religious groups. The idea behind was presumably to expose them as untrustworthy religious authorities as opposed to the officially registered mullahs and religious groups of SADUM.

⁹⁵⁵ “Marksizm-Leninizm o religii”, PV, 09.12.1958, 3.

⁹⁵⁶ “Rech’ tov. F. Khodzhaeva”, PV, 11.01.1959, 3.

⁹⁵⁷ Ryzkin, *Moscow’s Muslim Challenge*, 91; Ro’i, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, 625–626.

mentation problems at the lower levels of the state and party hierarchy. In December 1959, for example, the head of CARC in Uzbekistan, N. Inogamov, was fired because he had too liberal an attitude toward Soviet laws and illegal groups and withheld information from local party organs about religious groups.⁹⁵⁸ Other incidents reported of CARC representatives proceeding with such ferocity in the criminalisation of unregistered groups that it caused indignation on the side of the believers.⁹⁵⁹ It was not only CARC that experienced implementation problems. At times, Uzbek authorities were accused of being too lenient. In March 1959, it was found that some party organisations, chairmen of collective farms and state farms tolerated religious activity.⁹⁶⁰ The mazar *Zangi-Ata* in the Tashkent province, for example, had been closed in June 1959, main entrance had been closed and “sheiks and charlatans” driven away, but were now sitting collecting alms merely fifty metres down the street. Furthermore, just thirty metres further down the street was a local police post that, instead of ensuring the disappearance of the undesired elements, safeguarded them from being hit by bypassing cars.⁹⁶¹ These were examples of limited statehood within the Soviet institutional structures but it is difficult to put up a general pattern regarding the reasons and interests behind them. Understaffing of CARC might be one reason.⁹⁶² Patronage, kinship and social ties or other personal relations at the local level between state or party functionaries and believers is likely to also have played a role.⁹⁶³ Bribes might also have helped convincing authorities to turn a blind eye to specific groups.

Religious activity remained a factor in the Uzbek SSR. During the last years Khrushchev years, when religious groups were tailed and activity monitored the public observance retreated. It rose again when Leonid Brezhnev and Sharaf Rashidov were calling the shots and allowed a greater celebration of the Uzbek nation and along with it, the cultural heritage of Islam. The anti-religious campaign instead brought Islam further into the private life of the family and community. Tamara Dragadze has called this ‘domestication’ of religion in Soviet Georgia. She found that religious expression migrated to the private space of the household and came more under the control of ordinary people, particularly women, rather than domi-

⁹⁵⁸ GARF, 6991, 3, 984, l. 12.

⁹⁵⁹ Ro’i, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, 209–214.

⁹⁶⁰ Khlevniuk, *Regional’naia Politika*, 216.

⁹⁶¹ GARF, 6991, 3, 984, l. 6.

⁹⁶² With just twelve officials in 1959, the CARC staff was a select group with little possibility to cover all regions of the Uzbek SSR. Mainly Uzbek, it was nonetheless a mixed group counting two ethnic Russians, a Bashkir, a Tatar and one Kazakh. GARF, 6991, 3, 985, ll. 116–118.

⁹⁶³ Adeeb Khalid underlines the importance of the networks in the makhallas as a social realm that nurtured grassroots Islam. These were marked by dense kinship and social networks and Soviet institutions had a hard time gaining foothold: Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 100–101.

nated and regulated by expert practitioners.⁹⁶⁴ Within this realm, traditions and religious belief was nurtured and survived, but in quite a different manner than in countries where the tradition of learned Islam was not repressed. As a consequence, the face of Islam seriously altered due to the exposure to Soviet rule.

The Changes of Islam

Traditional practices evolve over time and receive new meanings, many of which are dependent on the socio-political, economic and cultural context. The Soviet Union was no exception. The nationalisation of Islam and religious observance in the Uzbek SSR should not lead to the belief that Islam survived seventy years of Soviet rule as a hermetically closed entity refractory to change.⁹⁶⁵ The almost complete eradication of the learned tradition of Islam, in fact, exerted a major influence on the practice of Islamic rites and customs. These changes were long subjugated to analyses that took Soviet sources at face value and depicted Islam as a political subversive force. Adeb Khalid has rightfully classified the premise of Soviet source material as a “genre of internal party correspondence, where it served as a form of self-criticism and offered proof that the party organisation was vigilant in its duty.”⁹⁶⁶ Reproducing this “genre” will draw a distorted picture of Uzbek religious practice in the 1950s as well as a biased view of Soviet Islam.

The “genre” that Khalid mentions worked on different levels. Firstly, with the constant emphasis on the groups that did actively practice Islam, the Soviet authorities had difficulties to develop adequate analytical tools to grasp religion. Terms “mosque attendance”, “Muslim” and “believers” used to describe religious activity in the Soviet Union, were not new to the Soviet discourse on religion, but they reveal little about the actual state of Islam and Muslims in the Soviet Union. First of all, belief, religion and Islam are complex concepts, the definition of which is highly individual. Hence, “mosque attendance” says little about the actual faith of people attending. Identity cannot, secondly, be understood in rigid terms, but should rather be seen in terms of fluid entities intertwined with one another. Paul Geiss detected traditional and modern, ethnic and national, Central Asian and Turkestani, tribal and clan re-

⁹⁶⁴ Tamara Dragadze, *Rural Families in Soviet Georgia: A Case Study in Ratcha Province* (Psychology Press, 1988), chap. 1.

⁹⁶⁵ Michael Rywkin suggests this: Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge*, 91.

⁹⁶⁶ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 105.

lated, Muslim and communist identities all present to a different extent in the Uzbek SSR.⁹⁶⁷ Which entity is more influential upon the beliefs and the actions of a person cannot be covered by the loose terms religion or belief.⁹⁶⁸

The emphasis on participation in religious observance often distracts the reader from the real change that did occur within the Uzbek SSR. An example from Yaacov Ro'i's *Islam in the Soviet Union* can serve as a case in point. Describing the religious behaviour of kolkhozniki in the Uzbek SSR in the 1950s, Ro'i looks at a kolkhoz counting 800 adult members (older than eighteen). Near to the kolkhoz was an unregistered mosque where ten to twelve kolkhoz members conducted daily prayers, some one hundred Friday prayer, while bigger crowds of up to two hundred gathered for religious holidays.⁹⁶⁹ Undoubtedly, there was religious activity in the Uzbek SSR and undoubtedly there were strong believers of Islam, but the crucial point in this regard is that *only* ten to twelve people gathered for daily prayer and *only* roughly one hundred gathered for Friday prayer, while the remaining seven hundred did not. In other words, the role of religion in Uzbek SSR was under serious change as a consequence of Soviet rule but one has to turn around the Soviet sources on religion to shed light on it.

The attentive reading of historical evidence reveals other insights about the changes that Islam underwent. With the beginning of the anti-religious campaign in November 1958, CARC authorities in Uzbekistan began enhanced scrutiny of women's role within the religious structures. Ever since the October Revolution, Soviet authorities ascribed Muslim women particular importance because, being in charge of upbringing in the male dominated Central Asian culture, they saw her as the mother who passed on traditions to her children. At the all-union conference in Moscow on November 25 1958, the Chair of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults, A. A. Puzin explained how religious groups in the Soviet Union compromised Islam in order to undermine the Soviet system.⁹⁷⁰ First of all, mullah's were

⁹⁶⁷ Geiss, *Nationenwerdung in Mittelasien*, 159. Adeeb Khalid has shown the multiple interests and the lack of a one common identity among the political revolutionary elite in Central Asia: Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform Jadidism in Central Asia*, 250.

⁹⁶⁸ This point is what has been continuously overlooked in the blunt reproduction of the Soviet discourse by Western scholars as Devin DeWeese has aptly shown: Devin DeWeese, "Islam and the Legacy of Sovietology: A Review Essay on Yaacov Ro'i's *Islam In the Soviet Union*," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 13, no. 3 (2002): 298–330.

⁹⁶⁹ Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, 305–306.

⁹⁷⁰ GARF, 6991, 3, 165, l. 3. Puzin's keynote speech was entitled "O nekotorykh voprosakh politiki sovetskogo gosudarstva po otnosheniiu k religii i tserkvi i zadachakh" and provided council commissioners and representatives throughout the Muslim republics guidelines with regard to the forthcoming campaign. The speech is kept in its entirety in: GARF, 6991, 3, 165, ll. 2–34. The Council for the Affairs of the Russian Orthodox Church also convened, but only in January 1959. See: Chumachenko, *Church and State in Soviet Russia*, 153. A. A. Puzin had belonged to the first *vydvizhentsy* generation that Stalin installed after the Great Purges. Having worked in the propaganda department of the all-union Central Committee till 1942, he proceeded to the Council of

giving the work amongst women greater attention by the late 1950s meaning that “many members of the Muslim clergy openly say ‘we need to spread to women religious spirits so that they raise the youth generation in a religious manner, because without them religion will go into decay.’”⁹⁷¹ As a consequence, Puzin continued, the Islamic authorities were even compromising the laws of Islam in order to develop new ways of integrating women into the religious life. “Earlier, before the October revolution women were not allowed into mosques...But now look, what is happening today? Many mosques are full of women. Muslim clergy listened quietly to their conscience and broke with a century long tradition of the Koran. Now they are actively promoting the participation of women in the mosques for the services.”⁹⁷² This was a trend throughout all of the Soviet Union. On Muslim holidays in Kazakhstan, for example, 40 per cent of the participants in the mosques were allegedly women. According to Puzin, however, the mullahs of Soviet Islam undermined religious laws by granting women access to prayer. Furthermore, he had noted another, even more compromising practice, which was the rising religious influence within women’s circles, where “group discussions [were] conducted in the homes of the female mullahs [*zhenshchiny-mully*] or wives of the clergy.”⁹⁷³ Such female mullahs arranged group trips, social evenings at their houses for believers or women followers of the cult. These groups could occasionally grow into mass gatherings, where women sometimes formed groups of more than one hundred women.⁹⁷⁴

The most conspicuous feature of A. A. Puzin’s report is the confused terminology used to describe Islam. First of all, Islam does not have a clergy structure as the sources of the CARC suggest. Mullahs are authorities of religion who have acquired their position through their engagement with the scriptures, thus deriving their legitimacy from their learning, piety, lineage and reputation among peers—not through a council as, for example, in Christianity.⁹⁷⁵ Furthermore, there are no “female Mullahs” in Islam. It was an invention of the Soviet authorities. There are, however, learned women of Islam called *otin*, who teach basic religious

Ministers where he took on various positions broadly concerned with the cultural sphere in the Soviet Union. In 1957, he was made chair of the Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults of the Council of Ministers: “Puzin, Aleksei Aleksandrovich,” Online Library Project, *Spravochnik Po Istorii Kommunisticheskoi Partii i Sovetskogo Soiuzo 1898-1991*, 2012, <http://www.knowbysight.info/PPP/05242.asp>.

⁹⁷¹ GARF, 6991, 3, 165, l. 20.

⁹⁷² Ibid., l. 20.

⁹⁷³ Ibid., l. 20.

⁹⁷⁴ Ibid., l. 20.

⁹⁷⁵ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 9.

knowledge to girls within the local neighbourhood - the mahalla or village.⁹⁷⁶ Inherent to Islam, this institution had been widely persecuted during the earlier anti-religious campaigns. Although it is difficult to assert exactly what Puzin meant by “female mullhas”, given the more moderate atmosphere after the Secret Speech, *otins* practiced tradition more openly than hitherto.⁹⁷⁷

The changes described by the Soviet authorities were crucial to the face of Islam in Central Asia, for it produced what Bruce Privratsky has termed “religious minimalism” or what Johan Rasanayagam calls “the morality of experience”.⁹⁷⁸ Both Privratsky and Rasanayagam argue that Islam in today’s Central Asian provides a framework of a community, within which Islam plays a lesser role than the community it constitutes. Social interaction is indeed based on customary Islam influencing community, custom and tradition, but the religious rules of Islam are less significant than the community itself. Privratsky, for example, shows that post-Soviet Kazakhs understand their religious life as Muslimness, whereby the level of knowledge of Islam is surprisingly low.⁹⁷⁹ From a similar perspective, Rasanayagam argues that Islam in post-Soviet Uzbekistan has become an “object within the development of a moral self” and “everyday sociality is a moral source that gives experience to the quality of transcendence and enables moral reasoning.”⁹⁸⁰ Hence, more often than not, pilgrimages to Muslim holy places turned into a question of participation in the social tradition of the community more than a celebration of the original meaning of a saint or his legacy.⁹⁸¹

The absence of learned Islamic authorities and the extended exposure to Soviet rule also influenced traditional rituals of Islam. Ewa A. Chylinski has showed that although circumcision carried a religious connotation, it had become a social tradition rather than a religious ritual by the late Soviet period.⁹⁸² Furthermore, Chylinski noticed that circumcision feasts, celebrat-

⁹⁷⁶ Ibid., 102; Rasanayagam, *Islam in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan the Morality of Experience*, 57; Ro’i, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, 342–345.

⁹⁷⁷ Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan. Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling Under Communism*, 76–93.

⁹⁷⁸ Privratsky, *Muslim Turkistan*, 54–57; Rasanayagam, *Islam in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan the Morality of Experience*, 34–35.

⁹⁷⁹ Privratsky, *Muslim Turkistan*, 55.

⁹⁸⁰ Rasanayagam, *Islam in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan the Morality of Experience*, 95.

⁹⁸¹ Indeed Privratsky shows that many a pilgrim to the Akhmet Yesevi shine in Kazakhstan even knew little about the saint and only few knew the ritual affirmation of faith in Arabic. Privratsky, *Muslim Turkistan*, 90–92.

⁹⁸² Chylinski, “Ritualism of Family Life in Soviet Central Asia: The Sunnat (circumcision).” The idea of tradition merging and substituting belief was not entirely alien to the Soviet authorities, but it was not the driving force of religious policy that went out from the centre of power. In late spring 1959, the Uzbek CARC representative N. Inogamov noted that “it must not be forgotten though that the group of young people participated in prayers not because of their religious belief or conviction, but in reality because of the tradition.” GARF, 6991, 3, 982, l. 80. Similar considerations were made in the Christian west of the Soviet Union, but it appears to have been much less of a variable in the “backward” Muslim regions. See: Anderson, *Religion, State, and Politics in the Soviet Union and Successor States*, 45–49.

ing the life-cycle event of the young boy, were accompanied with a healthy amount of vodka – an inconceivable ingredient of the feast in other Muslim countries.⁹⁸³ Similar changes have taken place with other life-cycle feasts such as the wedding party, where alcohol is no longer a rare ingredient and western style clothing has found its way to the bride and groom, replacing the richly decorated traditional Uzbek clothing.⁹⁸⁴

The twofold policy toward Islam in the 1950s thus had major impact with regard to what Islam came to represent and how it was practiced henceforth in the Soviet context. The Uzbek leadership's active integration of the Muslim heritage into the Uzbek national culture contradicted the anti-religious campaign that was pursued by Moscow. As a consequence, religious belief and Muslim traditions remained a defining feature of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR. Measured against the atheist goal of the Soviet leadership, Islam was thus a source of limited statehood that continued to spark illegal religious groups although these were not defined by anti-Soviet agitation and never developed into a (inimical) political entity. This sort of inefficacy of state institutions is best understood as a popular limited statehood, which encapsulates a state's inability to achieve policy goals concerning the populace it is ruling. Despite minor differences, the Soviet and Uzbek incumbents were sharing this goal. As a consequence, the persistence of religious observance is not fully explained through the prism of institutional limited statehood on the Uzbek lower level structures although surely some party and state functionaries were more reluctant toward eradicating religious belief. Instead it was the culture, the traditions and the beliefs of the people that generated a space that the Soviet policies only slowly and only partly penetrated.

The Surrogate Proletariat in the 1950s

The reclamation of the nationality policy did not mean that Soviet rule was rid of conflict potential within Uzbek society. Indeed, the 1950s was a period where prolonged exposure to Soviet rule began showing effects. Nowhere did this surface clearer than with regard to the role of the woman in Uzbek society.

Ever since the late 1940s, female self-immolation steadily rose year by year and began taking on a worrisome dimension by the mid-1950s. In the Namangan province, for example, the local party apparatus had recorded two incidents in 1949 and three successful cases and one attempt in 1950. By 1954, this number had risen to ten successful cases and thirteen at-

⁹⁸³ Chylinski, "Ritualism of Family Life in Soviet Central Asia: The Sunnat (circumcision)," 161–166.

⁹⁸⁴ Rasanayagam, *Islam in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan the Morality of Experience*, 44–46.

tempts.⁹⁸⁵ Despite varying scope of self-immolation incidents the trend was equal to other regions in Uzbekistan.⁹⁸⁶ By 1956, the authorities registered no less than 82 cases throughout the Uzbek SSR and recorded a similar rising tendency in the Turkmen and the Tajik SSRs, where respectively 39 and 4 cases were reported.⁹⁸⁷

James Critchlow has argued that self-immolation amongst Uzbek women was a sign of resistance toward the Soviet cotton policy and the strenuous working conditions.⁹⁸⁸ In some cases, working conditions may have been the cause, but in by far the majority of the cases it was, in fact, family disputes that made women resort to self-immolation. As a consequence, it is erroneous to view it as a political act against cotton policy or as an objection to Soviet rule. This becomes clear from Soviet investigations. October 20, 1954, for example, Namangan First Secretary S. Nurutdinov described women's motivations to the central government. According to him, the majority were largely illiterate or semi-literate women, who were excluded from public life. They had often been "insulted by their husbands or relatives and were not receiving the necessary protection and support."⁹⁸⁹ These women resorted to suicide because of their male relatives, mostly husbands, who were living according to "old habits, according to which women stood in an unequal relationship with men."⁹⁹⁰ As a consequence of these "outdated habits", women were married away at an early age, were not allowed to socialise or work and were kept tied to polygamous relationships.⁹⁹¹

The conclusions of S. Nurutdinov's analysis were confirmed by investigations of Moscow Central Committee representatives in 1957. They too found that the main reasons for self-immolation were not related to anti-Soviet attitudes but, in the main, were a result of polygamy, marriage of minors, exclusion of women from schools, the interference with lecturing girls in secondary and higher education, and the coercion of women to wear the *parandja* or *yashmak*.⁹⁹² Other reasons were also reported. For example, Abdulaeva Musihad, a mother of four from the collective farm Zhdanov in the Fergana Valley, was driven into desperation by the abuse of her husband and her parents-in-law and saw no other relief than to commit

⁹⁸⁵ RGANI, 5, 31, 12, l. 210.

⁹⁸⁶ There had been eighteen incidents in the Samarkand province. See: RGANI, 5, 31, 12, l. 197. For the situation in Bukhara: RGANI, 5, 31, 12, ll. 213–218.

⁹⁸⁷ During the first 8 months of 1957, there had been 51 cases in Uzbekistan, 23 in the Bukhara region, 16 in the Samarkand region, of which at least one was a *komsomol* member. RGANI, 5, 31, 84, l. 74.

⁹⁸⁸ Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*, 62.

⁹⁸⁹ RGANI, 5, 31, 12, l. 209.

⁹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, l. 210.

⁹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, l. 210.

⁹⁹² RGANI, 5, 31, 84, ll. 77–81.

suicide by self-immolation.⁹⁹³ The case was analogous in nature to Minkher Tashuradova who had to endure such violent abuse by her in-law relatives that she ended her own life.⁹⁹⁴

It remains difficult to determine why women to an increasing degree resorted to self-immolation. There was no parallel rise in criminal assaults against women. In 1956 and the first half year of 1957, 792 crimes were recorded as originating from “feudal-bai remnants”, while another 492 persons were prosecuted for sexual assaults against women.⁹⁹⁵ Although a Moscow Central Committee delegation concluded in autumn 1957 that these numbers were only the official statistics and the actual number of “feudal-bai” assaults on women was likely to be much higher, the numbers expressed the statistical average.⁹⁹⁶

The question then is why women increasingly responded with self-immolation. It is likely that there is more than one answer to the question. Based on the examples above, the Soviet authorities found inner-family disputes and abuse as reasons for the women’s fatal decisions. One interpretation would see self-immolation as a means of vengeance toward the perpetrators. Within the context of traditional Muslim milieus, suicide would be, as in most religions, regarded as a shameful act. As a consequence, self-immolation cast shame on the entire family of the perpetrators.

Another reason may be found in the prolonged exposure to Soviet rule along with the values and ways of life it represented. Thereby, the strongest influence surely came from Soviet education, where the number of women soared in the 1950s. The ‘woman question’ had, in fact, already returned to the Uzbek agenda soon after Stalin’s death. Inspired by hymns of change from the Soviet central government in August 1953, the Uzbek Central Committee plenum three weeks later was entirely devoted to the women of the Uzbek SSR. As First Secretary A. I. Niiazov recounted, there had been a setback in the progress.⁹⁹⁷ First, there was a lack of integration of women into party and state structures. In kolkhozy and the komsomol, the number of female secretaries was retrogressive. In the raikom komsomol of the Kashkadarya province, for example, not a single woman was in a functionary position.⁹⁹⁸ Similar revelations had been reported in *Pravda vostoka* only a few weeks earlier, when inspections

⁹⁹³ Ibid., I. 74. The report does not reveal what kind of abuse led to the tragic event.

⁹⁹⁴ Ibid., I. 74.

⁹⁹⁵ Ibid., I. 78.

⁹⁹⁶ Ibid., I. 81.

⁹⁹⁷ “Plenum Tsentral’nogo Komiteta KP Uzbekistana”, in PV, 20.08.1953, 2. The result of the plenum was a decree that aimed to strengthen work on the women’s question: Iuridicheskii otdel prezidiuma verkhovnogo soveta Uzbekskoi SSR, ed., *Sbornik Zakonov Uzbekskoi SSR i Ukazov Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta Uzbekskoi SSR* (Tashkent: Izdat. Uzbekistan, 1964), 59.

⁹⁹⁸ “Plenum Tsentral’nogo Komiteta KP Uzbekistana”, in PV, 20.08.1953, 2. The result of the plenum was a decree that aimed to strengthen work on the women’s question: Ibid.

of lower party membership in the Tashkent province had proven that of 25.000 agitators from the party *aktivs*, only 396 were women.⁹⁹⁹ The second problem area that the Uzbek Central Committee discussed was covered by the concept “feudal-bai” attitudes. In party and state bodies, as well as society more broadly, the Central Committee plenum concluded that the “feudal-bai” mentality obstructed a progressive policy toward the “woman question”. The education of Uzbek girls was particularly problematic concerning. In the Surkhandarya and Khiva provinces, as well as in the Karakalpak ASSR, the situation was unusually poor and “many Uzbek girls [did not] have primary or seven-year schooling, hindering their access to higher educational facilities. As a result, women were kept from proportional integration into state and party bodies and tied to unqualified labour.”¹⁰⁰⁰ The state of affairs was worst in the rural areas and the Uzbek Minister of Justice Murat Sheraliev promised an enhanced course of action against members of the judicial and state attorney institutions to punish criminal offences related to the “feudal-bai” attitude with fines.¹⁰⁰¹ Similarly, First Secretary Niazov urged that the party and komsomol should fight those who oppose literacy, ‘culturalisation’, and female education and who force women to work within the household.¹⁰⁰²

The grim picture that the Soviet sources paint of the change in Soviet rule is, to say the least, misleading. Clearly, the progress envisioned by the Soviet ideology was slow, particularly in the rural areas of the Uzbek SSR. But education, work and Soviet society did have enormous impact on the Uzbek society. Within the educational structure, for example, Uzbek girls had nearly been a non-existent group up until the early 1930s. In 1940, the number of girls in the Uzbek schooling system had increased dramatically. More than half a million girls were registered within the three-level schooling system (I–IV, V–VII and VIII–X grade). This number remained fairly consistent throughout the 1950s with an Uzbek population of 7.3 million. What was more important, though, was the rise in years of schooling throughout the 1950s. Of the roughly half a million girls enrolled in school in 1940, only 120.000 and 15.000 thousand were registered in the classes V–VII and VIII–X respectively.¹⁰⁰³ The intensified measures to ensure further schooling and integrate women that Uzbek Central Committee adopted at the August plenum in 1953 had a crucial impact on these numbers. Already by the school year 1956/57, the number of girls proceeding to the secondary levels of the schooling system,

⁹⁹⁹ “Usilit’ politicheskoe vospitanie zhenshchin”, PV, 04.08.1953, 2.

¹⁰⁰⁰ “Plenum Tsentral’nogo Komiteta KP Uzbekistana”, in PV, 20.08.1953, 2.

¹⁰⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁰⁰² *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁰⁰³ Statisticheskoe Upravlenie Uzbekskoi SSR, *Narodnoe Khoziaistvo Uzbekskoi SSR. Statisticheskie Sbornik*, 179. Girls in the Uzbek countryside would typically spend less years in school, but schooling did become universal in the Uzbek SSR during the Soviet era.

i.e. V–VII and VIII–X had risen substantially to 170.000 and 80.000.¹⁰⁰⁴ There were still regional differences and years of schooling were lower in the rural areas than in the cities in the 1950s. The important point is of course *not* that only a fraction of the Uzbek girls finished ten years of school, but that a major part received up to seven years instruction.¹⁰⁰⁵ In school, the girls were confronted with different values and educated in the Soviet understanding of society. With the educational initiatives that the Uzbek government took, this process was intensified and challenged the traditional role of women in Uzbek society.

The Uzbek authorities were in a difficult position to meaningfully influence the development. On the one hand, the leadership relied on the conventional Soviet strategy of enhancing “enlightenment” through propaganda and education via Soviet institutions that included *Zhenotdel* (women’s section of the party structure), komsomol and party activists and agitators, as well as the schooling system. A Moscow Central Committee decree from October 1957 demanded that the Uzbek leadership strengthen the fight against the “feudal-bai survivals of the past”, while the Uzbek party organisations in, for example, the Samarkand and Kashkadarya provinces issued similar decrees aimed at strengthening the educational system and the youth.¹⁰⁰⁶ The Samarkand resolution further ordered local party organisations to “take decisive measures to prevent the shameful incidents of self-immolation of women and suppress actions, degrading women”, by enforcing komsomol work and mass-agitation particularly in the kolkhozy.¹⁰⁰⁷ On the other hand, the Uzbek leadership protected schooling in the criminal code in March 1959: “The education of women was an integral part or the cultural development of the Uzbek people,” and “the person impeding the implementation of the general and compulsory eight-year education, especially girls of local nationalities receiving it, will be held judicially responsible and are subject to criminal penalties under the relevant articles of the Criminal Code of the Uzbek SSR.”¹⁰⁰⁸

It is difficult to measure the short-term success of these initiatives. Self-immolation incidents

¹⁰⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰⁵ In the Surkhandarya province of, for example, the percentage of girls finishing tenth grade was as low as 10 per cent, while some schools “not a single girl” was registered in the ninth or tenth grade. See: RGANI, 5, 31, 84, l. 75. On Uzbek average numbers, see: Tsentral’noe statisticheskoe upravlenie, Demina, and Genin, *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1960 godu*, 22–23.

¹⁰⁰⁶ RGANI, 5, 31, 84, ll. 67–69, 72, 92–93, 101–102.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Ibid., 69. During the first six months of 1957, 392 lectures had taken place throughout the Samarkand region, which the authorities wanted to seriously increase: Ibid., ll. 70–71.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Iuridicheskii otdel prezidiuma verkhovnogo soveta Uzbekskoi SSR, *Sbornik Zakonov Uzbekskoi SSR i Ukazov Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta Uzbekskoi SSR*, 226 and 232. See also: R.S., “New Policies in Uzbekistan,” *Soviet Studies* 11, no. 2 (October 1, 1959): 219. The strengthening of compulsory education in the Uzbek SSR was part of Khrushchev’s reforms of both the Soviet criminal justice and education. The December 1958 session of the Soviet Supreme Soviet, revised the court and criminal code, which established the Comrade Courts, new codes of criminal law and of criminal procedure.

did decline throughout the 1960s and 1970s, but this will be have been no less a consequence of the generational development. Slowly but surely, the older generations were superseded by a younger population that grew up under Soviet rule, which resulted in a value change away from the conservative Muslim milieu.¹⁰⁰⁹ Some behavioural patterns remained. Nancy Lubin found that Uzbek women constituted the majority of unskilled labour in the 1980s Uzbek SSR but that the majority of women actually preferred unskilled positions over more education. Moreover, even in the 1980s, there were strong traditional social and cultural values directing the self-understanding of women with regard to their position in society.¹⁰¹⁰ Again, these findings should not divert attention from the crucial point that women were being schooled and constituted half of the active workforce, which was a tendency that gained tremendous speed in the 1950s. Scholars have identified the violent assaults on women during the 1920s and 1930s as rooted in an inner-Uzbek struggle over identity and modernity and it is likely that self-immolation too was part of this process, which resulted in Uzbek women acquiring both a different self-perception and role in society that was not solely confined to the household or defined by the veil.¹⁰¹¹

Nationality Policy and Political Tensions

The pursuit of the nationality policy had a crucial influence on the political elite in the Uzbek SSR. While the Uzbek elite was left in peace in the years immediately following the Secret Speech, Khrushchev tightened the reins in 1959. Moreover, as the first and last Central Asian ever to acquire the trust to carry out such a prominent position, Nuritdin Mukhitdinov was promoted to full, voting membership of the Presidium of the Soviet Central Committee in December 1957.¹⁰¹² Meanwhile, his successor in the Uzbek SSR, Sabir Kamalov, suffered a devastating blow in March 1959 due to the legacy the loosening of the Secret Speech had left. The anti-religious campaign was an attack on limited statehood expressed through the religious observance in the Uzbek SSR. In the late 1950s Khrushchev however, saw it as part of a greater development, i.e as the consequence of deliberate political support from the highest

¹⁰⁰⁹ Lubin, "Women in Soviet Central Asia," 186 and 194.

¹⁰¹⁰ Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia*, 347–357.

¹⁰¹¹ Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan. Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling Under Communism*, 221.

¹⁰¹² Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 275. Gregory Gleason wrongly interprets Mukhitdinov's move to Moscow as a demotion: Gleason, "Between Moscow and Tashkent," 51. The other four who all were given candidate membership were three first secretaries: Ia. E. Kalnberzin of Latvia, K. T. Mazurov of Belorussia, V. P. Mzhavanadze of Georgia. Furthermore, the D. S. Korotchenko was Chairman of the Presidium of the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet.

levels of the Uzbek political elite. In other words, just as had been the case when Khrushchev attacked Iusupov, the Soviet First Secretary now the top-level Uzbek leadership guilty of supporting the religious rise in the Uzbek SSR and thwarting all-union ideological interests of creating the New Soviet Man.

Mukhitdinov's promotion mirrored an all-union trend. The mid-1950s was a time of enhanced inclusion of the republican leaders into the Khrushchev ruling circle. This development has been attributed to the Ukrainian First Secretary A. Kirichenko who became a full member of the Presidium in 1955 and rose to become the second most important person in the party next to Khrushchev.¹⁰¹³ According to Gerhard Simon, Kirichenko began reinforcing republican leadership into the all-union structures through his position as Secretary of Cadre Policy in the Central Committee.¹⁰¹⁴ In the Presidium counting fifteen members in 1958, there were no less than six members (four candidates and two voting members) from the republics. This was not entirely Kirichenko's work, though. Surely, it was also a sign of gratitude to the republican leaders who had helped Khrushchev in securing a majority during his struggle with the "anti-party group" affair. As a consequence, Mukhitdinov's elevation up the hierarchy was not entirely unpredictable. He had helped to ensure Khrushchev crucial assistance during the "anti-party group" affair, where he was put in charge of mustering the support of Central Asian leaders for the First Secretary.¹⁰¹⁵ It was not surprising that Mukhitdinov did everything in his powers in support of his patron. Given the protégé relations between him and Khrushchev, Mukhitdinov would have disappeared from Soviet politics if Khrushchev's opponents had won the struggle in June 1957.

There were other reasons for choosing Mukhitdinov for a Presidium seat, however. Mukhitdinov claims that Khrushchev wanted him close because of the rising importance of Central Asia. Accordingly, Mukhitdinov was to be the voice of Central Asia in the centre of power, one with insight and knowledge about the Soviet Muslim periphery among the otherwise heavily Russian/Slavic biased Presidium. On the other hand, he was a symbol of Soviet success with regard to the integration of the Muslim population in the Soviet Union and could buttress Soviet propaganda on the international political scene. Khrushchev was very candid about his intentions: "We are carrying out serious reforms, correcting the excess of Stalin in many areas of life, it is important also for the relationship with the republics, the nations and people...often we are talking about the necessity to reconsider our policies toward the foreign

¹⁰¹³ Zen'kovich, *Samye Zakrytye Liudi*, 246–247.

¹⁰¹⁴ Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union*, 254.

¹⁰¹⁵ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 242; Mukhitdinov, "12 Let s Khrushchevym," 6.

East, form new connections. But within the Central Committee we neither have any natives of the East nor anyone knowing enough about the issue. You - you are Uzbek, Asian, from Muslim surroundings, therefore knowing the problems. Who if not you, should be taken from the eastern politics?”¹⁰¹⁶

The promotion of Mukhitdinov meant a renewed reshuffle of the Uzbek top-level leadership. S. Kamalov, the chair of the Council of Ministers, was elected First Secretary of the Uzbek party, while his former Deputy in the Council of Ministers, M. Z. Mirza-Akhmedov was promoted to the Chairman seat. The promotions bore the characteristics of the top-level leadership in the 1950s. Both were from the Tashkent political clan and both experienced a rise under Mukhitdinov. Furthermore, the promotions followed the institutional pattern of promotions to the First Secretary position, the holder of which had usually been serving as the chair of the Uzbek Council of Ministers. Measured on the gravity of positions, the Uzbek leadership and the Tashkent political clan in particular had never been stronger. With Mukhitdinov in Moscow and the most important positions in Uzbekistan under Tashkent rule, it was a complete victory of the tashkentsy.

Bliss did not last long for the Tashkent political clan. The moderate atmosphere of the post-Secret Speech and the active pursuit of a resurrection of the Leninist nationality policy pushed the limits of acceptability too far for the Moscow leadership. The anti-religious campaign was the first sign of a central government drawing a line in the sand with regard to the Soviet peoples' reaction to Soviet rule. Furthermore, republican elites began making 'nationalist' demands in late 1958. This was expressed most clearly in the debates over Khrushchev's educational reform where it came to substantial disagreement. There was rising opposition in Latvia and Azerbaijan in particular concerning the study of Russian in republican schools.¹⁰¹⁷ The Latvian political leadership wanted to force Russians to learn Latvian, while the Azerbaijani leadership was accused of similar discriminatory practices toward both Russians and Armenians.¹⁰¹⁸ The Uzbeks leadership had never been daring enough to go strong on the language question. Instead, the religious policy and the Muslim heritage were singled

¹⁰¹⁶ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 265.

¹⁰¹⁷ Smith, "Leadership and Nationalism in the Soviet Republics, 1951-1959," 89. Moscow Central Committee approved an educational reform at its November plenum 1958 that emphasised the aimed to better prepare the Soviet youth for work in society. See: RGANI, 2, 1, 335, ll. 1-168. The delo includes Khrushchev's draft (ll. 3-58) and the revised version including amendments from regional leaders (ll. 63-115); Laurent Coumel, "The Scientist, the Pedagogue and the Party Official. Interst Groups, Public Opinoin and Decision-making in the 1958 Educational Reform," in *Soviet State and Society Under Nikita Khrushchev*, ed. Melanie Ilic and Jeremy Smith (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 67-69.

¹⁰¹⁸ Both the Latvian and the Azerbaijani leadership was purged in late 1959: Smith, "Leadership and Nationalism in the Soviet Republics, 1951-1959," 88-89.

out as having a particularly grave influence on Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR. First Secretary Sabir Kamalov and the chair of the Council of Ministers Mansur Mirza-Akhmedov were removed in March 1959. As a consequence of Kamalov's lack of ideological commitment, "dangerous movements" were arising as Secretary M. A. Abdurazakov pointed out.¹⁰¹⁹ In the cities and especially in the rural regions, the Central Committee had registered a rise of traditional clothing such as the paranja and the tiubeteika (traditional Uzbek hat for males): "Where do they obtain such clothing, if the state run industrial production units are not producing them?"¹⁰²⁰, Abdurazakov inquired, implying that concealed economic investment was taking place. Either way, Abdurazakov claimed that this was a clear sign that First Secretary Kamalov's lack of engagement in the larger struggle to rid Uzbekistan of "reminiscences of the past" had caused the rise in "the number of unregistered religious communities" of late in the Uzbek SSR.¹⁰²¹ According to Abdurazakov, this was identifiable in the rise of *ishans* and *murids*. As he recounted, the authorities had uncovered more than 2.000 *ishans* with an even greater crowd of *murids*.¹⁰²² These numbers appear to have been greatly exaggerated, as CARC sources only counted several *ishans* throughout the Uzbek SSR in the second half of the 1950s.¹⁰²³ For Abdurazakov however, it fit the purpose of putting an end to the careers of Kamalov and Mirza-Akhmedov.

In addition to the charges based on the religious revival, Kamalov in particular had to put up with accusations that he had lost sight of the importance of ideological questions. This, he had not been giving necessary attention to the "international raising of workers; the strengthening of the friendship of the peoples'; the fight against manifestations of localist tendencies and national mindedness, especially among the intelligentsia; the fight against remnants of the past in the minds of people; as well as the fight against feudal relations toward women."¹⁰²⁴

The reclamation of the nationality policy and the right to promote the Uzbek national consciousness through the recognition of Muslim cultural heritage, which Mukhitdinov had initiated in 1956, had obviously gone too far for Moscow. The prominence of cultural issues in

¹⁰¹⁹ M. A. Abdurazakov had also held the crucial denouncement speech of Usman Iusupov in 1954 and the ouster of Kamalov and Mirza-Akhmedov was styled in a similar manner. See: Khlevniuk, *Regional'naia Politika*, 211–222.

¹⁰²⁰ *Ibid.*, 216.

¹⁰²¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰²² *Ibid.*

¹⁰²³ Ro'i, *Islam in the Soviet Union*, 401.

¹⁰²⁴ Khlevniuk, *Regional'naia Politika*, 217. Already in February 1959, when the Uzbek Central Committee issued a decree that accused Kamalov and Mirza-Akhmedov for allowing "excess in the process of independent plays." See: RGANI, 5, 31, 122, l. 86.

the denunciation meant that it differed substantially from the denunciations of their successors as for example Usman Iusupov and Armin Niiazov, clearly expressing the concerns of the central leadership.¹⁰²⁵ Nevertheless, Kamalov did fall much further than Niiazov because, just like Iusupov, he was accused of gross self-enrichment on account of the state. Accordingly, Abdurazakov revealed that Kamalov had built a dacha for six million roubles, the funding of which Mirza-Akhmedov had approved and signed off on, thus directing funds from the state budget for its construction. This was a development that was mirrored at the local level, where provincial party secretaries were living in luxury and abundance at the cost of the state. In Khiva, for example, a Secretary Shvatskii had built a “10 room house, where the veranda alone [was] 180 sq/m., totalling a costs of at least 220.000 Roubles—where did he get that kind of money?”¹⁰²⁶ As if these accusations were not enough, Kamalov’s personality was also singled out as unfit for his post: Kamalov was accused of being “vulgar behaviour toward women”, as well as irritable, rough, rude and revengeful toward party colleagues.¹⁰²⁷

The charges against Kamalov and Mirza-Akhmedov were overwhelming. Both were demoted to less important positions and lost their seat in the Uzbek Bureau, marking a clear end to their participation in the inner-circle of Uzbek politics henceforth.¹⁰²⁸ Their ouster has been understood as a last offensive of de-Stalinisation orchestrated from Moscow by Nurrudin Mukhitdinov.¹⁰²⁹ The role of Mukhitdinov is difficult to assert but it is obvious that, in his position of Secretary of the Soviet Central Committee and member of the Presidium, he will have been implicated on some level. As already noted, Mukhitdinov himself has little to say about Kamalov. He does mention a talk with the chair of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, Kliment Voroshilov, however, in which Mukhitdinov was given a piece of advice characterising the Soviet system. In a conversation shortly after Mukhitdinov’s promotion to full member, Voroshilov told him: “Do not appoint your successor in Tashkent. You will have to carry the blame if he does a bad job. Furthermore, there are several people interested

¹⁰²⁵ Other main points of criticism in the denunciation of Kamalov and Mirza-Akhmedov were related to the agricultural and industrial low production and rising misappropriation of funds. These were issues that can be traced back to the *sovnarkhoz* reform which I will analyse in the following chapter.

¹⁰²⁶ Khlevniuk, *Regional'naia Politika*, 220.

¹⁰²⁷ *Ibid.*, 221.

¹⁰²⁸ S. Kamalov was placed at the head of the Fergana provincial executive committee, before returning to Tashkent in 1962 where he held various deputy Ministerial positions until his retirement in 1980. M. Z. Mirza-Akhmedov did not fall quite as deep as Kamalov and returned to a top-level post already in 1961 when he was made Minister of public services and in 1966 deputy chair of the Uzbek Council of Ministers, before his retirement in 1971.

¹⁰²⁹ Carlisle, “The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938-83),” 109; Vdovin, “Politika Po Ukrepeleniiu Novoi Istoricheskoi Obschnosti v Gody ‘Ottepeli’.”

in the position and when you choose one, the rest will remain resentful for the rest of their lives.”¹⁰³⁰ Whether or not Mukhitdinov appointed Kamalov as his successor, is difficult to say. Donald Carlisle’s suggestion that Kamalov’s and Mirza-Akhmedov’s ouster was part of the de-Stalinisation campaign led by Mukhitdinov appears implausible though. With his standing in the Uzbek SSR and the forceful backing from Khrushchev, he could easily have demoted them when he was First Secretary in the Uzbek SSR. If, on the other hand, Mukhitdinov endorsed their promotion and, as A. I. Vdovin suggests, Kamalov was Mukhitdinov’s protégé, it is surprising that he did not suffer any repercussions from the Soviet leadership upon their demotion. As a consequence, he might, in fact, have understood and acted according to Voroshilov’s advice, which put him in a safe position amongst the Presidium in Moscow.

Regardless of Mukhitdinov’s role in the ouster, it is clear that the situation in the Uzbek SSR was beyond the limits of acceptability of the central leadership. Following the relaxation of the early Khrushchev era, 1958 became the year when the Soviet First Secretary became wary about the results of delegating powers to the lower levels of the Soviet hierarchy. According to A. I. Vdovin, it was particularly Khrushchev’s chief ideologue, M. A. Suslov, who was pushing for a harder course of action toward the Uzbek republic due to the enhanced “nationalist” movement within the cultural scene. But there is no reason to believe Khrushchev will have been less stern on the issue.¹⁰³¹ He too was no friend of “nationalism” in the republics and coupled with the rising corruption and abuse of power, Khrushchev is likely to have been at the forefront of the criticism. Indeed, M. A. Suslov was not present at the crucial Presidium meeting on March 3rd 1959, when it was decided to commission L. I. Lubennikov, Head of the Department for Light Industry and Foodstuffs of the Central Committee, as well as P. F. Pigalev, First Deputy of the Central Committee Department for Republican Party Organs, to attend the Uzbek Central Committee plenum taking place two weeks later.¹⁰³² Contrary to the exchange of Niiazov, Khrushchev did not deem it necessary to oversee the leader exchange personally and instead sent confidants to ensure that the centre got its way.

The pattern in other republics was similar and the purges of the republican top-level leadership divides into two different, separate groups. The early purges of 1958 and 1959 were reactions to developments and demands within the national-cultural sphere of the republics.

¹⁰³⁰ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 267.

¹⁰³¹ Vdovin, “Politika Po Ukrepleniiu Novoi Istoricheskoi Obshchnosti v Gody ‘Ottepeli’.”

¹⁰³² A. A. Fursenko, ed., *Prezidium TsK KPSS: 1954-1964. Chernovye Protokol’nye Zapisi Zasedanii. Stenogrammy. Postanovleniia. Tom 1: Chernovye Protokol’nye Zapisi Zasedanii. Stenogrammy.*, vol. 1, Arkhiv Kremlia (Moskva: ROSSPEN, 2004), 348.

Language policy, religion and women were the main sources of accusations against the Turkmen, Uzbek, Azerbaijani and Latvian leaders that were removed 1958-1959.¹⁰³³ When the Moldovan, Kirgiz and Tajik First Secretaries were demoted, enhanced *korenizatsiia*, corruption and deceit were the focus of the centre's attacks. As one observer noticed, the development and the purges were similar to the 1920s, when the centre purged the republics for "nationalism", although the intelligentsia was not part of the purge in the 1950s.¹⁰³⁴ It was, however, not because "national feeling had deeper popular roots" that Khrushchev did not target the intelligentsia in the 1950s.¹⁰³⁵ As we have seen, the Uzbek intelligentsia fell victim of the *Zhdanovshchina* and the anti-cosmopolitan campaign of the early 1950s, when Stalin became increasingly worried about developments in the republics. The crucial difference was the man at head of the Soviet Union and his devotion to ending the mass repression that had characterised Stalin's rule.

The purges of 1959 ended the liberal period that followed the Secret Speech and entailed a more lenient policy toward the republics. Having reclaimed the nationality policy and the Uzbek cultural heritage in 1956, the Uzbek leaders were pursuing a more constructivist approach toward their national heritage. Contrary to Khrushchev, the Uzbek leaders saw no contradiction in being a proud Uzbek with a cultural legacy influenced by Islam as well as being a devoted communist. The consequence was a soft-line policy toward religious expression in the Uzbek SSR. To the Soviet centre of power however, the developments in the Uzbek SSR hampered the ideological goals of creating the New Soviet Man who was free of any "backward" religious beliefs. In other words, the increasing religious activity equalled popular limited statehood, because it expressed the inability of the state to sculpt its citizens according to an ideal image. It was Khrushchev's devotion to this ideology axiom that sparked the campaign and as such it resembled the earlier campaigns of the formative years of Stalinism.

¹⁰³³ Smith, "Leadership and Nationalism in the Soviet Republics, 1951-1959," 89.

¹⁰³⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁰³⁵ *Ibid.*

7. WORKING ON THE PARTY ELITE

The political purges in the republics in the late 1950s and early 1960s were an attack on enhanced nationalism and limited statehood in the Soviet republics. Apart from purges and repression, Khrushchev also made efforts to combat the development of Soviet rule in the republics on an ideological and institutional level. This was a tedious task because the republican leadership was not inclined to subjugate itself to renewed centralisation and give up powers that Khrushchev had distributed to the republics. As a consequence, the Soviet First Secretary met considerable resistance from republican leadership over the Soviet nationality policy in the new party programme. Similarly, the republican leaders bore strong resentment to Khrushchev's efforts to redo the decentralisation of the early Khrushchev period through "continuous reorganisation of all apparatuses."¹⁰³⁶

In the Uzbek SSR, Khrushchev's efforts to delimit republican power coincided with the election of Sharaf Rashidov to First Secretary. Hitherto scholars have produced a somewhat paradoxical picture of Rashidov during the early period of his twenty-five year rule. Some scholars saw the new Uzbek First Secretary as a "weakling"¹⁰³⁷ and "reliable tool of Moscow", who conducted extensive purges to satisfy the central government.¹⁰³⁸ Others argue that Rashidov was the prime motor behind the introduction of a "re-traditionalisation"¹⁰³⁹ of Uzbek politics, implying he was the opposite of a Moscow puppet.

This chapter will show that Rashidov was more the latter than the former. As a matter of fact, there is evidence suggesting that Rashidov 'outsmarted' the Moscow leadership and instrumentalised the Khrushchev reforms. Thus, toward the centre he appeared as a loyalist, who protected Uzbek interests within the realm of possibility. This gave Rashidov political leverage to consolidate his power on the republican level. Thereby, Rashidov used Khrushchev's reform initiatives to promote protégés from the Samarkand political clan to vital political positions in the Uzbek SSR. As a consequence, Rashidov put a new face to Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR that unified personal with Uzbek national interests and sparked a development of "re-traditionalisation" that deepened limited statehood within the political sphere of the Uzbek SSR.

In this chapter, I analyse how Sharaf Rashidov succeeded in being elected First Secretary by

¹⁰³⁶ Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union*, 258.

¹⁰³⁷ Kathleen Carlisle describes Rashidov as a "weakling": Carlisle, "Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan," 298.

¹⁰³⁸ Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union*, 252.

¹⁰³⁹ Collins, *Clan Politics*, 105; Vaisman, "Regionalism and Clan Loyalty in the Political Life of Uzbekistan," 105–110.

an Uzbek political leadership constituted predominantly by the Tashkent political clan and how he consolidated his power. In a second step, we look at the controversies over the Soviet nationality policy and the cadre rotation principle that emerged during the formulation of the new party programme. The final section analyses how Khrushchev attempted to revoke the decentralisation of the early Khrushchev period and how the Uzbek First Secretary Sharaf Rashidov manipulated them for his own political gain.

7.1. FROM TASHKENT TO SAMARKAND

Ever since 1929, the First Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party had belonged to the Tashkent political clan. Following Usman Iusupov's ouster in 1954, Nuritdin Mukhitdinov had strengthened the Tashkent clan's political power by excluding the Fergana clan fraction from the top-political posts in the Council of Ministers and replacing them with Tashkent clan members. When Sharaf Rashidov was appointed First Secretary in March 1959, it was primarily a Tashkent dominated Uzbek elite that elected him. Given that traditional accounts of politics in the Uzbek SSR emphasise the hostility between the regional political groupings, one question is particularly pressing: How could this happen?

The Rise of Sharaf Rashidov

There has been broad speculation as to why the choice fell upon Rashidov in the March 1959 election. One argument emphasises the centre deciding on Rashidov primarily by chance. The argument is based on an anecdote from former member of the Uzbek Central Committee Rasul Gulamov, who remembered that the Uzbek Bureau members could not reach an agreement. As a consequence, the delegation sent from Moscow to oversee the plenum phoned Khrushchev, who, upon hearing the names, replied: "Of them all, I know only Rashidov", which settled the matter.¹⁰⁴⁰ Another argument sees the Khrushchev leadership deciding to promote the Samarkand political clan for a smoother running of things in the Uzbek SSR.¹⁰⁴¹ Although historical evidence is scarce, there are indicators suggesting that these are only part of the story.

Following the ouster of Sabir Kamalov and Mansur Mirza-Akhmedov, there were two candidates for the position as First Secretary: A. Alimov from the Tashkent political clan and Sh. Rashidov who belonged to the Samarkand elite. According to the stenographic report, it was only after a two-day heated discussion that Rashidov was elected.¹⁰⁴² This is instructive, for it

¹⁰⁴⁰ Cited in: Demian Vaisman, "Regionalism and Clan Loyalty in the Political Life of Uzbekistan," in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, ed. Yaacov Ro'i, Cummings Center Series (London; Portland Or.: F. Cass, 1995), 111.

¹⁰⁴¹ Carlisle, "Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan," 298.

¹⁰⁴² The Uzbek historian S. Rizaev has published a transcript of the Central Committee session leading to the election, but the transcripts remain behind closed doors in Russian and Uzbek archives. Rizaev, *Sharaf Rashidov*, 31–45. Rizaev writes that the transcripts of the discussion on the question amounted to 453 pages in total. *Ibid.*, 30. Despite its popular history character that is more concerned with scandal than with a comprehensive analysis of the Uzbek SSR, F. Razzakov's book on the Rashidov era is informative: Fedor Razzakov, *Korruptsiia v Politbiuro: delo "krasnogo uzbeki"* (Moskva: EKSMO: Algoritm, 2009), chap. 9.

shows that the Tashkent clan was unable to mobilise the required majority to gain the upper hand in the struggle despite it holding the vital positions of the Uzbek party and state. The repeated demotion of Tashkent leaders and the recent scandal around Kamalov and Mirza-Akhmedov must have weakened the Tashkent clan and discredited the leadership in the eyes of the Central Committee members. As a consequence, the Central Committee members seized their constitutional right and (successfully) sought to influence the election. This was momentous. Despite the demotion of leaders, the Tashkent clan had never needed give up the First Secretary position due to Central Committee resistance.

Discord is likely to have gone along the lines of the three strong political clans Fergana, Tashkent and Samarkand/Bukhara.¹⁰⁴³ The compromise reached at the end of the Central Committee vote, supports this thesis for it was a triumvirate of all three clans that was installed at the top posts: Rashidov of the Samarkand/Bukhara clan was elected First Secretary; as a consolation prize for his defeat against Rashidov, Alimov from Tashkent was made chair of the Council of Ministers¹⁰⁴⁴; and Ia. S. Nasriddinova from the Fergana region was made chair of the Supreme Soviet Presidium.

It is almost certain that Moscow had a say in the election of Rashidov, as central leadership held decisive political discretion to effect republican leadership matters. Historical evidence does not support Donald Carlisle's argument of Khrushchev aiming for a clan exchange, though. First of all, it is unlikely that the Uzbek plenum would have been so heavily debated, if Khrushchev had been intent on empowering the Samarkand political elite. Secondly, the Soviet First Secretary would have known about the clan relations in the Uzbek SSR. As Presidium minutes show, however, Khrushchev had little sense of Rashidov's patronage relations in the Uzbek SSR. Only ten days after the Uzbek Central Committee plenum from 14 March 1950, Khrushchev asked Moscow Central Committee Secretary Nuritdin Mukhitdinov if he had any patronage to Rashidov, which rules out a planned attack from the centre on the Tashkent clan.¹⁰⁴⁵

Nevertheless, there is no reason to doubt Rasul Gulamov's recollection that Moscow was called upon to cast its opinion on the matter due to the difficulties in the Uzbek Central

¹⁰⁴³ Donald S. Carlisle, "Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan and Its Neighbours," in *Muslim Eurasia: Conflicting Legacies*, ed. Yaacov Ro'i, Cummings Center Series (London; Portland Or.: F. Cass, 1995), 72–79.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Carlisle wrongly claims that R. F. Kurbanov was already in 1959. See: Carlisle, "Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan," 300. On A. Alimov: Khliupin, "Alimov, Arif Alimovich."

¹⁰⁴⁵ Fursenko, *Prezidium CK KPSS*, 2004, 1:350. It was on March 24 that the Soviet Central Committee envoy L. I. Lubennikov and P. F. Pigalev who briefed the Presidium members on the events in Uzbekistan returned with a report to Moscow.

Committee. In fact, it is highly likely that Moscow did indeed decisively influence the election, although probably not in such careless manner as Gulamov suggested. Khrushchev had been greatly involved in previous leadership exchanges and there is no reason to believe he would treat it rashly in 1959. It was the fact that the intervention was sparked by increased nationalism that particularly troubled Khrushchev in several republics. Hence, the Soviet First Secretary surely had an interest in having a reliable figure at the head of the Uzbek party.



Sharaf Rashidovich Rashidov.¹⁰⁴⁶

Although he did not have a close patron-client relationship to Rashidov at the time, Khrushchev had other good reasons to support him rather than Alimov. Compared to Alimov, Rashidov held by far the strongest credentials as the Chair of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet. Alimov had entered the highest echelons of Uzbek leadership in 1954 with a candidate seat in the Uzbek Bureau, yet only gained full membership when Mukhitdinov reshuffled the Uzbek elite in 1956. By comparison, Rashidov had been chair of the Supreme Soviet since 1950 and acquired full membership of the Uzbek Bureau already in 1952. Furthermore, no secretary of the Central Committee had ever been promoted to the First Secretary position, which had hitherto been manned by individuals who had either been Chair of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet or chair of the Council of Ministers. Based on these measurements, Rashidov was the better-equipped man for the job.

In addition to his professional merits, Rashidov did have one or the other supporter in Moscow. First of all, the relationship between Rashidov and Leonid Brezhnev was already close in 1959, and then turned into an epitome of patron-client relations after Brezhnev had become

¹⁰⁴⁶ “Rashidov, Sharaf Rashidovich,” *Wikipedia*, April 14, 2012, http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/Рашидов,_Шараф_Рашидович.

Soviet First Secretary in 1964.¹⁰⁴⁷ Second, according to secretary to the Moscow Central Committee F. R. Kozlov, Rashidov had close relations A. I. Mikoyan.¹⁰⁴⁸ Mukhitdinov is likely to have preferred Alimov as a fellow Tashkent clan representative, with whom he was close since his time in the Namangan obkom in the post-war period, but there are no official records of Mukhitdinov supporting him. He might have chosen to keep a low profile in order to avoid endangering his own position if things should go wrong on the republican level. However, silence can be interpreted as support and Khrushchev would later accuse Mukhitdinov of having promoted Rashidov.¹⁰⁴⁹

As a result, there is little evidence supporting the claim that Rashidov was elected because of his clan affiliation or due to his mediatory powers in clan struggles, as one scholar suggests.¹⁰⁵⁰ By contrast, he won the election in 1959 because of several coinciding circumstances: The weakening of the Tashkent political clan, the successful opposition in the Uzbek Central Committee and Moscow's reliance on Soviet credentials as a means to judge the abilities of a candidate.

The Consolidation of the Samarkand Political Clan

The election of Rashidov to First Secretary was a watershed moment in the Uzbek party's history and it would change the Uzbek political elite henceforth. Apart from creating the geopolitical triumvirate between Rashidov, Alimov and Nasriddinova, the Uzbek Bureau underwent other changes that altered it substantially from the Bureau that Mukhitdinov had pieced together in 1956. In total, the new Bureau counted no less than seven new members. Firstly, the centre exchanged all three Russians who held a noteworthy position in Uzbekistan. In light of the recent scandals, it was hardly surprising that Second Secretary R. E. Mel'nikov, who should have been monitoring the work of the Uzbek Central Committee, was removed. He was replaced by F. E. Titov, who had begun his career in the cadre department of the Central Committee in Moscow before moving on to different party positions in the Soviet republics including Latvia.¹⁰⁵¹ Furthermore, G. F. Naimushin and I. I. Fediuninskii were

¹⁰⁴⁷ Andreas Oberender, "Die Partei Der Patrone Und Klienten. Formen Personaler Herrschaft Unter Leonid Brežnev," in *Vernetzte Improvisationen : Gesellschaftliche Subsysteme in Ostmitteleuropa Und in Der DDR*, ed. Annette Schuhmann (Köln: Böhlau, 2008), 71–73.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Fursenko, *Prezidium CK KPSS*, 2004, 1:697.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 503–504.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Collins, *Clan Politics*, 98–99.

¹⁰⁵¹ "Titov, Fedor Egorovich," Online Library Project, *Spravochnik Po Istorii Kommunisticheskoi Partii i Sovetskogo Soiuzna 1898-1991*, 2012, <http://www.knowbysight.info/TTT/06026.asp>.

made heads of the State Security and the Turkestan Soviet forces respectively.

Uzbek Central Committee Bureau 1959: Eleven full members, two candidates
Rashidov, Sh. R. (Uzbek, Jizzakh, First Secretary)
Titov, F. E. (Russian, Second Secretary)
Rakhimbabaeva, Z. R. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Gabriel'iants, G. A. (Russian, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Abdurazakov, M. A. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Alimov, A. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Chairman of the Council of Ministers)
Rudin, A. N. (Uzbek, First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers)
Nasriddinova, Ia. S. (Uzbek, Fergana, Chair of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet)
Gulamov, R. G. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Tashkent obkom First Secretary)
Naimushin, G. F. (Russian, Ministry of State Security)
Fediuninskii, I. I. (Russian, Commander of the Turkestan Military District, headquarters in Tashkent)
Candidate members:
Murtazaev, K. M. (Uzbek, Khujand, First Secretary of the Uzbek komsomol)
Burmistrov, I. P. (no information available)

Important exchanges were made amongst the Uzbek members too. The most prominent novelty in the Bureau was Ia. S. Nasriddinova, chair of the Supreme Soviet Presidium who became the second woman in the Uzbek Bureau after Z. R. Rakhimbabaeva. From Fergana, Nasriddinova rose through the komsomol and had served as Rashidov's deputy in the Supreme Soviet 1955–1959. From various sources she was remembered as a woman of two faces: mild and polite on the surface, she was a determined politician, who ruthlessly pursued her goals.¹⁰⁵² There are no grounds to support Kathleen Carlisle's thesis that Nasriddinova "detested and disdained Rashidov" because he broke Tashkent power in 1959.¹⁰⁵³ First of all, Nasriddinova had supported Rashidov's election to First Secretary.¹⁰⁵⁴ Secondly, she had

¹⁰⁵² The Soviet dissident author Mikhail Voslensky remembered her enjoying the power to decide over people's destiny. See: M. S. Voslenskii, *Nomenklatura : Gospodstvuiushchii Klass Sovetskogo Soiuz* (Mosco: Zakharov, 2005), 403; Kathleen Carlisle cites material that accuses Nasriddinova of charging 100.000 roubles for an official pardon of an individual convicted for a serious felony: Carlisle, "Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan," 305. It is noteworthy that Nasriddinova and Mukhitdinov were close political allies. When Mukhitdinov was ousted from the Soviet Central Committee Presidium in 1961, Nasriddinova was amongst the first to confide to him how Khrushchev contacted her, before Mukhitdinov had been notified. See: Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 527.

¹⁰⁵³ Carlisle, "Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan," 288.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Rizaev, *Sharaf Rashidov*, 31–45.

functioned as Rashidov's deputy in the Supreme Soviet and remained in the Uzbek Bureau until 1971.

In addition to the promotion Nasriddinova, the long-time politicians R. G. Gulamov and G. A. Gabriel'iants also rose to Bureau membership in March 1959. Both had passed through the Uzbek Central Committee apparatus, holding various positions on provincial as well as central levels, and were included into the ruling circle when Mukhitdinov was First Secretary. Gulamov was first made First Secretary of the Tashkent city party committee in 1956 and then First Deputy of the Council of Ministers in 1957.¹⁰⁵⁵ Gabriel'iants experienced a similar rise through the ranks and was made Head of the Agricultural Department of the Uzbek Central Committee in 1954, before being appointed Secretary to the Central Committee in 1957.¹⁰⁵⁶ As a consequence, the Tashkent clan was still disproportionately represented in 1959. From 1961 onward, however, Rashidov began to more actively replace the Tashkent members with individuals from Samarkand. This had already given the Samarkand clan a majority by 1966 and just one Tashkent representative was left in the Bureau by 1971.¹⁰⁵⁷

From the education and experience of the its members, the Rashidov Bureau of 1959 bore similarities to the new elite that Mukhitdinov had nurtured in 1956. All of them had been educated by Soviet higher learning institutions, at either the all-union (Abdurazakov and Gulamov) or republican (Alimov, Gabriel'iants, Murtazaev and Nasriddinova) level. Several members had an active past in the komsomol structures (Abdurazakov, Gabriel'iants, Murtazaev and Nasriddinova), while others had made their way through the party or state apparatus in Tashkent (Alimov and Gulamov). None of the members were recruited from the security apparatus or the trade unions, which had been strong bases under Usman Iusupov. This was a lasting difference with the Stalin past and would henceforth define the Uzbek Bureau under Rashidov, although the shift toward Samarkand as the main geographical recruitment base took place.

It was not only within the top-level leadership that Rashidov consolidated his power. The demotion of Rashidov's predecessor had been caused by charges of nationalism and with corruption scandals in other republics and regions in 1960, Rashidov used these incidents to in-

¹⁰⁵⁵ Gulamov disappeared from the political scene when he retired in 1961: "Gulamov, Rasul G.," Online Library Project, *Spravochnik Po Istorii Kommunisticheskoi Partii i Sovetskogo Soiuz 1898-1991*, 2012, <http://www.knowbysight.info/GGG/04571.asp>.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Gabriel'iants remained in the political scene but was relegated to the lower level ranks as a First Secretary in the Fergana province in 1962, before returning to the highest levels in 1965 as the deputy chair in the Uzbek Council of Ministers: "Gabriel'iants, Gaik Avetisovich," Online Library Project, *Spravochnik Po Istorii Kommunisticheskoi Partii i Sovetskogo Soiuz 1898-1991*, 2012, <http://www.knowbysight.info/GGG/11691.asp>.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Carlisle, "Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan," 302.

tensify control in the Uzbek SSR.¹⁰⁵⁸ Forthwith he began unearthing all sorts of anti-Soviet incidents throughout the Uzbek republic. Already in 1957, 34 million roubles disappeared from state funds. In 1958, the number had increased to 38 million. Furthermore, 44 people had been convicted of bribery in 1957, a figure that had almost doubled in 1958.¹⁰⁵⁹

It was secretaries such as S. Turemuratov from the Amudarya raion who were abusing state funds. Found guilty of a whole array of criminal activities, S. Turemuratov had been deceiving both state and party for years by falsifying cotton output.¹⁰⁶⁰ By forging accounts, he had concealed the disappointment of quotas and enriched himself. In 1958 alone, Turemuratov was accused of having stolen almost three thousand tons of cotton and sold it elsewhere.¹⁰⁶¹ Having acquired a minor fortune, Turemuratov had constructed a house with no less than twenty rooms at the riverside of the Amudarya.¹⁰⁶² As investigations by the Uzbek procurator in 1960 confirmed, Turemuratov had an entire web of affiliates in the Uzbek Central Committee, which made him feel like “the prince (*kniiaz* ’) of the Amudarya region”, as one of the denunciation letters formulated.¹⁰⁶³

Turemuratov was not a singular incident in the Uzbek party and state apparatuses. The Party Control Commission and the Uzbek Central Committee recorded similar cases of abuses of power and fraud in the Fergana region, and in Namangan the party elite was dealing with the government cars.¹⁰⁶⁴ But it was not only within the Uzbek party elite that authorities discovered fraud. The newly empowered Uzbek State Planning agency (Gosplan) also had a very lenient interpretation of its function. In May 1962, the Gosplan Chairman S. K. Ziidullaev was accused of indirectly allowing fraud in factories and production units in Tashkent. The director of a sewing plant had thus deceived the state of no less than 600.000 roubles, leading to the conclusion that Ziidullaev “was poorly implementing his stewardship over procure-

¹⁰⁵⁸ In particular, the “Riazan Affair” where a meat-miracle turned into a meat-nightmare due to falsified accounts became the kick-off for intensified control. The Riazan secretary made dazzling promises of 180.000 tons meat in 1960, but only delivered 30.000 tons: Oleg Khlevniuk, “The Economy of Illusions,” in *Khrushchev in the Kremlin: Policy and Government in the Soviet Union, 1956-64*, ed. Jeremy Smith and Melanie Ilić (London: Routledge, 2011), 179–189; Roy A. Medvedev and Zhores A. Medvedev, *Khrushchev, the Years in Power* (New York: Columbia Univ. Pr, 1976), 94–101; Documents on the affair in: Khlevniuk, *Regional'naia Politika*, 261–310.

¹⁰⁵⁹ It remains very difficult to verify these numbers, but regardless of their veracity they were used as a means of justifying the ouster before the Uzbek Central Committee. According to Abdurazakov, there were 11.112 registered felonies in 1957. By 1958, the number had increased by 2520 or 20%. Khlevniuk, *Regional'naia Politika*, 217.

¹⁰⁶⁰ RGANI, 5, 31, 146, ll. 39–43. Several letters were sent to the Moscow Central Committee administration. The one cited here was signed by three inhabitants of Mangit Iuldashev, K., Rauzhapov, R. and Saparbaev, M.

¹⁰⁶¹ *Ibid.*, l. 46 and 47.

¹⁰⁶² *Ibid.*, l. 38.

¹⁰⁶³ *Ibid.*, l. 42.

¹⁰⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, ll. 87–92 and ll. 56–64.

ment in the supply system.”¹⁰⁶⁵

Rashidov understood the situation perfectly well and used it for his own gain. On the one hand, he began a public campaign against nationalists. On February 4, 1961 he thanked the Moscow leadership “for eliminating nationalist elements on time and saving the Uzbek people from imperialist attempts to subjugate it once more.”¹⁰⁶⁶ Clearly speaking the language of the central administration, Rashidov portrayed himself as a loyal executioner of all-union interests in the Uzbek SSR. On the other hand, it was under the banner of all-union interests that he promoted his own entourage into the apparatus throughout the Uzbek SSR.

Rashidov learned from the past and enlarged the Central Committee once more with an additional 30 seats. At the 16th Congress of the Uzbek Communist Party(b) in 1961, the Uzbek Central Committee now had 230 members. Only ten years earlier, the Central Committee comprised 136 members. Crucial to the 1961 election was, however, the high turnover. For of the 230 members the Rashidov administration rushed in 88 new members.¹⁰⁶⁷ Although it is not possible to determine the patronage relations, the exchange follows the same pattern as the 1954 and 1956 Central Committee enlargements and exchanges. While the two earlier steps had been taken in the light of de-Stalinisation, Rashidov now used it to consolidate his power by generating an influx of new members. Thereby, the enlargement did not support a Russification as scholars have suggested but pushed the indigenous membership level at an all-time high of 71 per cent.¹⁰⁶⁸

Rashidov was also more direct in replacing personnel and substituted dozens of Ministers and ninety-nine of 564 directors of large industrial facilities.¹⁰⁶⁹ Furthermore, many provincial leaders were substituted during 1962–1965 and a large share of the primary party committees in the raiony, cities and regions lost their position.¹⁰⁷⁰ Many secondary positions were filled with former prominent Bureau members who were gently excluded from the high-level political sphere. In many cases, Rashidov placed former members away from their geopolitical clan bases as a measure to avoid opposition building. Gabriel’iants, from Tashkent was made head of the Fergana obkom; Murtazaev from Fergana, was given the same treatment and

¹⁰⁶⁵ RGANI, 5, 31, 196, ll. 75–92, here l. 76.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Cited from: Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union*, 252; See also: Hasan Ali Karasar, “Elites in Central Asia: Tribes, Clans and Other Identities” (presented at the International Conference at Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS), Seoul: Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS), 2010), 1–3.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Berezin and Gurevich, *Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Uzbekistana V Rezoliutsiakh I Postanovleniakh S"ezdov*, 491–524 and 716–721. See also: Appendix II.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Simon, *Nationalism and Policy Toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union*, 252.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Ibid.

landed at the head of the Bukhara obkom; and Abdurazakov from Namangan was placed at the head of the Tashkent obkom.¹⁰⁷¹ Other vacant positions were filled with individuals of the Samarkand political clan and political allies. The influential Kashkadarya obkom First Secretary Ruzmet Gaipov, for example, was a long-time friend of Rashidov, who held his post for nearly twenty years from 1964 onward. Similarly, Rashidov ‘secured’ the Ministry of Internal Affairs in 1964 when Kaidar Iakhiaev was appointed Minister.¹⁰⁷² It is suggestive that Iakhiaev was never integrated into the Bureau structure and it is likely to have been a precaution for Rashidov to avoid the apparatus of the Ministry of Internal Affairs gaining too much power, which could weaken Rashidov’s own position.¹⁰⁷³

Even if Rashidov’s purges of the apparatus removed “nationalists”, he hardly did the central authorities a favour. Having been termed a “re-traditionalisation” of the political elite by several scholars, the Rashidov period saw an increase in nepotism and family connections as prominent factors in elite promotion and preservation, which were measures that were frowned upon under both Stalin and Khrushchev.¹⁰⁷⁴ Rashidov married his four daughters away to families that subsequently gained fame and security in the Uzbek SSR. One daughter was married to the First Secretary of the Karakalpak ASSR Kalibek Kamalov who remained in his position for twenty-one years. Similar ties were made with the family of Ibrahim Muminov, who had lectured Rashidov at the Samarkand State University and who was vice president of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences for almost twenty years. Muminov’s son married Rashidov’s daughter and became the vice-president of the Institute of Nuclear Physics in the Uzbek SSR.¹⁰⁷⁵ Furthermore, Sahib Rashidov, the First Secretary’s brother was made head of the People’s Inspectorate, while S. Azimov and N. Khudaiberdyev, both relatives of Rashidov, were made Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers and Secretary of the Central Committee, respectively.¹⁰⁷⁶ It remains impossible to determine the amount of relatives that Rashidov placed in the apparatus. An attendee at Rashidov’s funeral was recorded as saying, “I never thought that so many leaders were his relatives!”¹⁰⁷⁷ The exact number, however,

¹⁰⁷¹ Khlevniuk, *Regional'naia Politika*, 620 and 624.

¹⁰⁷² Vaisman, “Regionalism and Clan Loyalty in the Political Life of Uzbekistan,” 113–114; “Gaipov, Ruzmet Gaipovich,” Internet Database, *Tsentraziia Baza Personalii “Kto Est’ Kto v Tsentral’noi Azii,”* 2012, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person2.php?&st=1159716414>; “Iakhiaev, Khaidar Khalikovich,” Online Library Project, *Spravochnik Po Istorii Kommunisticheskoi Partii i Sovetskogo Soiuzia 1898-1991*, 2012, <http://www.knowbysight.info/YaYY/11713.asp>.

¹⁰⁷³ Carlisle, “Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan,” 302–303.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Collins, *Clan Politics*, 105; Roy, *The New Central Asia*.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Vaisman, “Regionalism and Clan Loyalty in the Political Life of Uzbekistan,” 112.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Cited from: Ibid., 114.

Rashidov took with him to the grave.

The genealogist Maksim Olenev has argued that Rashidov used marriage unions as a tool to satisfy clan interests in the Uzbek SSR, since a Rashidov daughter was married to the influential politician Mirzamakhmud Musakhanov of the Fergana political clan.¹⁰⁷⁸ Given the small number of incidents, this is a difficult argument to sustain. Rather, evidence suggests that Rashidov was suppressing demands from other clans, as, from 1959 onward, non-Samarkand elites were already effectively excluded from positions that would have given them any power over essential funds or executive forces. The last surviving member, Ia. Nasriddinova, was removed in 1970 and later recalled that Rashidov's leadership style took on "autocratic features" as he began perceiving any remarks or objections as outright personal attacks.¹⁰⁷⁹

By 1970, however, Rashidov had long been engaged in the "re-traditionalisation" of Uzbek politics, which resulted in a deepening of the very limited statehood that Khrushchev was aiming to overcome. With Rashidov's protégés in power, family and clan interests returned more prominently to the Uzbek political realm. The long-term consequence was immense levels of institutional limited statehood. Incumbents in state and party ruthlessly abused their positions to corrupt the system, divert funds into private or network pockets undermining the entire institutional system in the Uzbek SSR. Soviet rule in the Uzbek periphery relinquished revolutionary axioms, while forging cotton deliveries to satisfy all-union demands. This development would have been frowned upon by both Stalin and Khrushchev, but for different reasons. While Stalin was incensed by news of patronage networks developing behind his back because of his dictatorial claim to power, Khrushchev actively fought the establishment of political clans based on kinship.¹⁰⁸⁰ In the early 1960s however, it was too soon to say what would develop of the Rashidov regime. Furthermore, the new Uzbek First Secretary po-

¹⁰⁷⁸ Olenev, "Rody i Klany Srednei Azii: 'Karimovy, Rakhmonovy, Niiazovy'"; Kathleen Carlisle firmly positions Musakhanov within the Samarkand political clan and not in Fergana: Carlisle, "Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan," 300–303.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Vaisman, "Regionalism and Clan Loyalty in the Political Life of Uzbekistan," 116. The demotion of Nasriddinova was sparked by a football scandal in Tashkent in 1969, when crowds were demonstrating against Russians. The result was a struggle between Nasriddinova and Rahmankul Kurbanov, chair of the Council of Ministers from Samarkand, on the one side and Rashidov on the other. Damien Vaisman maintains that it was, in fact, Nasriddinova and Kurbanov attempting a coup against Rashidov, although evidence lacks to support his interpretation. Rashidov decided the battle in his favour, not least due to his backing from Brezhnev, and Nasriddinova was transferred to Moscow, while Kurbanov was imprisoned. The severe punishment of Kurbanov explained as a result of a betrayal of his own Samarkand clan: Vaisman, "Regionalism and Clan Loyalty in the Political Life of Uzbekistan"; Carlisle, "Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan," 304–305. On the demonstrations following the football match: Karasar, "Elites in Central Asia: Tribes, Clans and Other Identities," 2–4.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*, 81; Mitrokhin, "The Rise of Political Clans in the Era of Nikita Khrushchev. The First Phase, 1939-1959."

sitioned himself as a loyal client to the Khrushchev leadership. As we shall see in the following sections, the policies of the last Khrushchev years assisted Rashidov further in strengthening his position in the Uzbek SSR. Rashidov cunningly instrumentalised Khrushchev's attempt to effectivise the Soviet system to deepen his hold of power in the Uzbek SSR.

7.2. THE NATION AND CADRE ROTATION

Although Khrushchev had held enough political discretion to demote leaders in cases of nationalism or corruption, he met severe resistance when he tried to introduce ideological limitations to the territorial sovereignty and election of republican leaders. This became abundantly clear during the formulation of the new party programme due to be adopted in autumn 1961. While Khrushchev did not envision nations as part of the communist future, the republican leadership was not certain and protested against Khrushchev's attempt to rigidly define the obliteration of the nation in the programme. Similar objections met Khrushchev when he attacked structures that could nurture limited statehood head on. By installing a rotation of cadres principle for office holders, he aimed to limit power abuse and "accumulation of power in single hands". For the republican leadership was not willing to let Moscow infringe their rights to lead their republics. More than anyone else, Sharaf Rashidov succeeded in benefiting from the tedious struggle for the republican rights that was led by Nuritdin Mukhitdinov.

Communism and the "Drawing together of Nations"

When Khrushchev declared that the "full and final construction of socialism" was achieved at the twenty-first party congress in 1959, the old party programme from 1919 was overhauled.¹⁰⁸¹ A new programme for the final development toward communism gained political and ideological urgency. As it turned out, one of the most difficult questions for the drafting commission was to define the future development and constitution of the Soviet nations. While the communist goal dictated the vanishing of nations, republican elites that had acquired their nations only a quarter of a century ago were keen to hold on to their nations in the future too.¹⁰⁸²

In the position deputy chair of the Ideological Committee, N. A. Mukhitdinov was one of the main forces in the formulation of the new programme.¹⁰⁸³ On several occasions, he had severe disagreements over the nationality policy question in the new programme with Khrushchev's conservative chief ideologue and the Central Committee's "grey cardinal" Mikhail

¹⁰⁸¹ Cited from: Taubman, *Khrushchev: the Man and His Era*, 509; See also: Alexander Titov, "The 1961 Party Programme and the Fate of Khrushchev's Reforms," in *Soviet State and Society Under Nikita Khrushchev*, ed. Melanie Ilić and Jeremy Smith (Florence, KY, USA: Routledge, 2009), 9–10.

¹⁰⁸² Titov, "The 1961 Party Programme and the Fate of Khrushchev's Reforms," 14.

¹⁰⁸³ Zen'kovich, *Samye Zakrytye Liudi*, 396.

Suslov.¹⁰⁸⁴ According to Mukhitdinov, “Suslov misinterpreted the main principles of the nationality, for example, the merging (*sliianie*) process of nations, their languages, the formation of a single Soviet people, the understanding of the sovereignty of the republics.”¹⁰⁸⁵

Having led the Uzbek campaign for the reinstatement of the nationality policy and the acknowledgement of Uzbek national culture during the Thaw, Mukhitdinov was unwilling to compromise his achievements in the new programme. Furthermore, Mukhitdinov regarded it outright untrue when Khrushchev stated that, “the party has solved the difficult problem...of interrelations between nations.”¹⁰⁸⁶ During the “heated debate” in the Presidium, Mukhitdinov strongly objected, arguing “how can we speak of this in the party programme, if we have not fixed full sovereignty for the republics in the constitution?”¹⁰⁸⁷ For Mukhitdinov who had been struggling for the rights of the republics, this was a capricious blow, but he could not prevent the Presidium from adopting the phrase in Khrushchev’s keynote speech at the Central Committee plenum in October 1961.¹⁰⁸⁸

Mukhitdinov was not entirely unsuccessful though. In several key passages he managed to secure amendments that embraced the Soviet nations and protected them from being obliterated once the Soviet leadership decided that the Soviet Union had reached communism. Firstly, with minor changes, Khrushchev accepted the addition: “The obliteration of national differences, particularly linguistic differences is a much longer process than the obliteration of class distinctions.” Thus, the programme divided class from nationality so that nations could essentially flourish after the victory of communism in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, this amendment will have enjoyed broad support from the republican leadership in the western republics of the Soviet Union, where it was language issues that had sparked controversy following the educational reform in 1958.¹⁰⁸⁹ Secondly, Mukhitdinov claims to have been the author of the sentence “the party neither ignores nor over-accentuates national characteristics” in a paragraph confirming the Leninist national policy as the basis of national relationships. Lastly, Mukhitdinov got his way when it was accepted to amend “to make full use and

¹⁰⁸⁴ M. A. Suslov was chair of the Ideological Committee: *Ibid.*, 551.

¹⁰⁸⁵ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 507.

¹⁰⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 510.

¹⁰⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸⁸ *Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuz, 22-i S"ezd KPSS (17 - 31 Oktiabria 1961 Goda): Stenograficheskii Otchet.*, vol. 1 (Moskva: Gospolitizdat, 1962), 153.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Smith, “Leadership and Nationalism in the Soviet Republics, 1951-1959,” 92–93. Judging from the responses from the western regions of the Soviet Union, the dispute over the language reform had not been forgotten. Several Ukrainian communists, for example, demanded that the Ukrainian language should be the sole language in institutions of higher education as well as state institutions and work places: RGASPI, 586, 1, 239, ll. 185–186.

develop the forms of national societies in the Soviet Union”, in the section describing the task of the party when the Soviet nations were drawing closer together.¹⁰⁹⁰

Nuritdin Mukhitdinov was not the only member of the group working on the new party programme who favoured a more cautious approach to the nationality question. In early June 1961, Otto Kuusinen, by nationality a Finn and one of the liberal forces in the drafting committee, advised Khrushchev against being too radical with regard to mentioning the obliteration of nations in the new programme. Without any attribute, Khrushchev had endorsed the sentence: “By the further advance of the USSR toward communism national distinctions will obliterate [istirat’sia] among all nationalities of the USSR.”¹⁰⁹¹ For Kuusinen this formula was far too radical to include in the programme. Contrary to Mukhitdinov, however, Kuusinen was less concerned about the Soviet nations and based his objection on the signals it would send to the Third World. “If we replace the idea of merging (*sliianie*) and instead emphasise the importance of fraternal drawing together (*sblizhenie*), our party programme will have greater influence amongst the millions of people in Asia, Africa and Latin America, who are fighting for their national cause.”¹⁰⁹² As a consequence, he suggested that the phrasing be changed to: “Under communism, the drawing together (*sblizhenie*) of nations and nationalities on a fraternal basis leads to a gradual obliteration (*stiranje*) of the boundaries between them.”¹⁰⁹³ Although Kuusinen’s proposal was not adopted verbatim, the final version corresponded with his idea.¹⁰⁹⁴

This was also the case for the suggestions of the Ukrainian born Mark Mitin, who went even further and proposed to include that “one universal communist culture neither abolishes nor eliminates the cultural wealth (*bogatstvo*) or characteristics of individual nations: in all their

¹⁰⁹⁰ In the final version, the passages read: “Full-scale communist construction constitutes a new stage in the development of national relations in the Soviet Union, in which the nations will draw still closer together until complete unity is achieved”; “With the victory of communism in the Soviet Union, the nations will draw still closer together, their economic and ideological unity will increase and the communist traits common to their spiritual make-up will develop. However, the obliteration of national distinctions, and especially of language distinctions, is a considerably longer process than the obliteration of class distinctions.”; “The Party neither ignores nor over-accentuates national characteristics.” See: *Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuz, Programma KPSS. Priniata XXII S'ezdom KPSS v 1962g.* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1961), 113–114. For all three quotes, see: Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 507; On Nuritdin Mukhitdinov’s role in other questions concerning the new programme, see: A. A. Fursenko, ed., *Prezidium CK KPSS: 1954-1964. Chernovye Protokol’nye Zapisi Zasedanii. Stenogrammy. Postanovleniia. Tom 3: Postanovleniia, 1959-1964*, vol. 3, Arkhivy Kremliia (Moscow: POSSPEN, 2008), 514.

¹⁰⁹¹ RGASPI, 586, 1, 214, ll. 4–5. Underlined in original.

¹⁰⁹² *Ibid.*,

¹⁰⁹³ *Ibid.*, l. 5

¹⁰⁹⁴ The Soviet authorities put great efforts in ensuring that the nationality question was not misunderstood. In the journal *Kommunist*, V. Ponomarev published a featured article ensuring that “communists were always for national independence” and “protecting the interests of the nation”: V. Ponomarev, “O Gosudarstve Natsional’noi Demokratii,” *Kommunist* no. 8 (May 1961): 45.

wonderful diversity, they will join one culture of communist society.”¹⁰⁹⁵ Mitin could have entitled his suggestion *e pluribus unum* and it clearly missed the essential point that Khrushchev wanted to include, namely that national cultures would eventually form one universal, communist culture.

The Soviet First Secretary was, however, not willing to go as far as other members of the drafting commission. Z. I. Muratov, for example, proposed to add that socialist construction had eliminated “national strife and established unshakable friendship among all nations, creating a unity around the great Russian people as an elder brother in the great family of the socialist nations and nationalities.”¹⁰⁹⁶ Muratov’s suggestion could have been from the heyday of Stalinism when Russia rose to be first amongst equals that supported the development of its “backward” brother republics throughout the Soviet Union. However, in the new party programme, the phrasing found no place. In drastically refined form, the Russian people was mentioned, but tied into a phrasing of “reciprocal fraternal assistance, primarily from the great Russian people” the Soviet non-Russian republics had developed modern industries and trained a national working class and intelligentsia.¹⁰⁹⁷

Although the nationality question in the programme was clearly solved by a compromise between the different camps, Mukhitdinov was far from satisfied with the result. According to him, the final version of the programme, as well as Khrushchev’s keynote address for the twenty-first party congress, entailed several “far-fetched, non-realistic statements” such as: “There is an ongoing process in the USSR, building one nation with one general culture” or “new historical community—the Soviet people (*narod*)” and with the perspective of a “Soviet nation.”¹⁰⁹⁸

It remains difficult to determine the role of the republican leaders in the drafting process of the programme. The drafting commission was largely kept excluded from external disturbances and there is no evidence pointing toward an inclusion of republican leaders on the nationality question in the programme.¹⁰⁹⁹ Fedor Burlatskii held that republican leaders had considerable influence on other themes of the programme and there is no reason to believe

¹⁰⁹⁵ RGASPI, 586, 1, 206, l. 16.

¹⁰⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, l. 2

¹⁰⁹⁷ Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza, *Programma KPSS. Priniata XXII S"ezdom KPSS v 1962g.*, 16.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 510.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Even during the Central Committee sessions in Moscow taking place before the publication of the draft programme in August 1961, the programme finds no mentioning in the speeches of the republican leaders. See, for example, the January 12, 1961, speeches by the republican first secretaries Sh. Rashidov, V. I. Mzhavanadze (Georgian SSR), V. Iu. Akhundov (Azerbaijani SSR) and A. Iu. Snechkus (Latvian SSR) in: RGANI, 2, 1, 515, ll. 1–164.

that they were kept in the dark with regard to the drawing together of nations.¹¹⁰⁰ In fact, the Central Asian leaders are likely to have discussed their opinions, especially with Nuritdin Mukhitdinov in the corridors of Moscow, although they left him to fight their cause in the sessions of the drafting commission or Ideological Committee. The backing from republican leaders would explain why the liberal forces, Mukhitdinov and Kuusinen, succeeded in convincing Khrushchev of a more moderate position on the national question.

Furthermore, the limited response from Uzbek SSR to the paragraphs regarding the drawing together of nations once the draft programme was completed and published for discussion in all major newspapers on July 30, 1961, suggests that the republican leaders had had their demands satisfied. Instead, Uzbek communists were mainly concerned with the overcoming of cultural “backwardness”, while fortifying a progressive Uzbek (socialist) national culture.¹¹⁰¹

Workers at a Samarkand party gathering suggested the need to bolster, on the one hand, “the formulations on the necessity to strengthen and develop progressive national traditions that promote the unity of the people.”¹¹⁰² On the other hand, they emphasised the statements on “the decisive fight against inimical reactionary national traditions supported and revived by the spirituality.”¹¹⁰³ In Tashkent, the secretary of the party bureau at the Tashkent Textile Institute, a comrade Pulatov, believed that the programme should formulate “more sharply the fight against religious cults and urge the party organisations to unconditionally ensure the implementation of Soviet legislation on this issue.”¹¹⁰⁴

In other regions of the Uzbek SSR, the questions of a “backward” culture also characterised the party discussions. In Fergana, a comrade Shapovalova urged the inclusion of the following sentence: The party will “fight against all survivals of capitalism in relation to women, promote her social elevation and be unappeasable toward efforts aiming to diminish the dignity of women and their role as active builders of communism.”¹¹⁰⁵ The kolkhoznik Karazilova from the Bukhara oblast hoped that the party would “adopt all necessary measures to rapidly eliminate the differences between city and village with regard to the cultural living conditions of women.”¹¹⁰⁶

¹¹⁰⁰ Fedor Burlatskii, “Posle Stalina. Zametki o Politicheskoi Otpepli,” *Novyi Mir* 10 (1988): 193.

¹¹⁰¹ Throughout Uzbekistan, a staggering four million communists and politically active individuals participated in the discussions on the party programme as First Secretary reported in late August 1961: RGANI, 1, 4, 39, l. 75.

¹¹⁰² RGANI, 1, 4, 39, l. 64

¹¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, l. 64.

¹¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, l. 64.

¹¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, l. 64. See also: RGANI, 1, 4, 39, ll. 79–83.

¹¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, l. 77. There were also more exotic proposals with regard to women. In Tashkent, for example, workers suggested that women in families with more than two children should be granted a four-day work week:

The reactions to the draft programme at the party and public readings in the Uzbek SSR therefore largely reproduced the issues that had characterised political discussions since the ouster of Sabir Kamalov and Mansur Mirza-Akhmedov in March 1959, when the fight against “backward survivals of the past” was given first priority. This did not mean a wholesale attack on Uzbek culture, let alone the Uzbek nationalism. Instead, Uzbek communists lamented parts of the Uzbek cultural-national heritage that contrasted a “progressive” nationality. As a consequence, Uzbek national conscience was still to prosper, but in the right way, i.e. with less religion and with a new role for Uzbek women. Moreover, the reactions from the Uzbek SSR reveal that Uzbek communists saw their nation as being still in the making and they thus saw it as more urgent to overcome the “feudal-bai survivals of the past” that were obstructing the proper development of the socialist Uzbek nation. Evidently, this notion did, in fact, display the very core of the Soviet nationality policy in the Uzbek SSR: It promoted a “progressive” Soviet-Uzbek nationality, but criminalised other aspects as “feudal-bai survivals of the past”. Thanks to the efforts of soft line camp of Mukhitdinov, Kuusinen and Mitin, this notion remained intact in the 1961 programme.

Cadre Rotation

While the question of the drawing together of nations generated considerable distress for Mukhitdinov in the Presidium, Khrushchev’s proposal to introduce cadre rotation caused no less concern for party and state functionaries throughout the Soviet Union. Designed to be an “extension of the critique on the cult of the personality”, the principle sought to limit the tenure of elected functionaries in order to avoid the “accumulation of powers in single hands.”¹¹⁰⁷ In the party programme, it was Khrushchev’s most blunt attack on limited statehood that arose, when functionaries abused the power vested in them through their positions. Fedor Burlatskii maintained that the proposal was an attempt to finally rid the Soviet apparatus of the many Stalinists that were still in their positions.¹¹⁰⁸ The evolution of the proposal suggests, however, that it was no less a reaction to nationalism and corruption scandals in the 1950s and 1960s. In the early drafts from late December 1959, a change of the party electoral structure only found vague mentioning in the section on “inner-Party democracy”. As a mat-

RGANI, 1, 4, 39, l. 55. Other speakers were complaining about the low Soviet pension, while some demanded more holidays for kolkhozniki: RGANI, 1, 4, 39, ll. 77–78.

¹¹⁰⁷ Fedor Burlatskii, *Khrushchev and the First Russian Spring: The Era of Khrushchev Through the Eyes of His Advisor*, 1. print. (New York: Scribner a.o., 1991), 129.

¹¹⁰⁸ Ibid. See also: Titov, “The 1961 Party Programme and the Fate of Khrushchev’s Reforms,” 17.

ter of fact, the December draft only spoke of the need to observe and secure the principle of election and accountability within the Party organisations from top to bottom.¹¹⁰⁹ The draft did, however, include the prescription of competitive elections, which was a blow to the nomenclature appointments that had been in place since the 1920s and been a way for party functionaries to secure power through appointments.¹¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, it was not until spring 1961 that the formulations on cadre selection found their way into the programme, i.e. after the demotion of party elites in several republics as well as “Riazan Affair”, which had increased the urgency of the matter.

In a heavily revised version from March 1961, the draft included the notion: “Party committee secretaries on all levels as well as secretaries of primary party organisation cannot be elected for more than two-three consecutive terms.”¹¹¹¹ Furthermore, the draft demanded the exchange of no less than one-third of the republican Central Committee and Presidium members at each election. Burlatskii remembered that the proposal caused considerable controversy from party functionaries throughout the Soviet Union who suddenly saw their career paths endangered.¹¹¹² As a consequence, the formulation was weakened in May 1961 and the sentence in question now read: “Secretaries of the primary party organisations can be elected for no more than two consecutive terms. Certain leaders of the party may be elected for a longer term to the governing bodies, as a cause of their recognized authority, high political, organizational and other qualities.”¹¹¹³

Khrushchev did not like the dilution of the draft. In a Presidium meeting on June 17, 1961, he demanded a return to two terms for all leaders below the all-union level. According to the Khrushchev, the “leaders on oblast, regional and republican level generally do not hold out for three terms”, he thus saw no reason to provide the lower level functionaries the possibility to accumulate power by clinging on to their positions.¹¹¹⁴ For the all-union level, however, Khrushchev deemed it appropriate to allow a re-election of three consecutive terms, for, as he stated: “All-union is all-union.”¹¹¹⁵ Khrushchev thus bluntly gave all-union level precedence over the lower levels of the Soviet hierarchy.

Although there is no recorded evidence of the objections to Khrushchev’s proposal from June

¹¹⁰⁹ RGASPI, 586, 1, 193, l. 7.

¹¹¹⁰ Ibid. Also: Titov, “The 1961 Party Programme and the Fate of Khrushchev’s Reforms,” 17.

¹¹¹¹ RGASPI, 586, 1, 193, l. 59.

¹¹¹² Burlatskii, “Posle Stalina. Zametki o Politicheskoi Ottepele,” 193.

¹¹¹³ RGASPI, 586, 1, 193, l. 106.

¹¹¹⁴ Fursenko, *Prezidium CK KPSS*, 2004, 1:510.

¹¹¹⁵ Ibid.

17, they must have been substantial.¹¹¹⁶ In a period, when the republican leaders were bent on their rights as equals in the Soviet Union, Khrushchev's view was controversial at the very least and the draft was changed once again, before its publication on July 30, 1961. In addition to republican leaders, Fedor Burlatskii recalled that the draft provoked "stormy protests from younger leaders, who felt it was highly unjust that members of the older generation who had managed to hang on to their posts for so long were now trying to restrict the chances and the active participation of their successors."¹¹¹⁷ As a consequence, the final draft version spoke of "the principle that leading officials of all-union, republican and local bodies should be elected to their offices, as a rule, for no more than three consecutive terms. In certain cases when personal talents of an official are generally believed to make his further activity within a leading body useful and necessary, his re-election may be allowed."¹¹¹⁸

Despite the tedious drafting process, the rotation principle was not well received in the Uzbek SSR. Mid August 1961, F. E. Titov, Second Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee, reported to Moscow that "at many party meetings in the Surkhandarya region the suggestion was made to insert a sentence, raising the time in office of the primary party organisations with two years."¹¹¹⁹ The same objections were heard in the Namangan and Tashkent provinces, where comrades also proposed that the rotation principle should be raised from the two-year term envisioned by the leadership.¹¹²⁰ While Khrushchev had argued that the limitation was a means against excessive accumulation of power in single hands, the voices from lower party ranks argued that the rotation principle would hamper the work of party functionaries by disrupting any form of personal continuity.¹¹²¹

Similar objections rolled in from other Central Asian republics. In party gatherings in Dushanbe (Stalinabad), Tajik communists openly criticised the rotation principle and duration of terms. The comrades Karimov and Kadyrov, for example, held that the limitation for party leaders in the draft proposal was "insufficient to gain a comprehensive understanding of the tasks and take the required steps to improve work."¹¹²² Other Tajik communists reversed the proposal and argued for a minimum period of years in office. The secretaries of the primary party organisations should be elected for at least three years, it was argued, while city

¹¹¹⁶ Fedor Burlatskii remembered the drafting of ten different versions before all sides were satisfied: Burlatskii, "Posle Stalina. Zametki o Politicheskoi Ottepli," 193.

¹¹¹⁷ Burlatskii, *Khrushchev and the First Russian Spring*, 129.

¹¹¹⁸ "Programma Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza", PV, 30.7.1961, 1–10.

¹¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, l. 56

¹¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹²¹ *Ibid.*, l. 12 and l. 14

¹¹²² RGANI, 1, 4, 39, l. 12.

and raion secretaries should hold their positions at least five years, without any upper limit for their tenures.¹¹²³

The proposals from the lower levels in Uzbek and Tajik SSRs are likely to have been expressions from a society based on patronage relations. On the local levels, office holders were dispensers of resources and thus held crucial positions for the functioning of the society. Although networks were tied together through kinship and friendship, power extended from the state and party institutions due to the privileges attached to them. As a consequence, it was pivotal to secure them for as long as possible. If they were subject to frequent turnover the entire functioning of the local networks were jeopardised and the calls for longer tenures should be understood against this background.

Some of the suggestions were almost cynical. On September 9 1961, Tajik Central Committee secretary, D. Rasulov, reported to Moscow that local communists had suggested to limit the duration of *all-union* functionaries to “no more than two terms and the leaders of the local [republican] organs to no more than three terms.”¹¹²⁴ Such voices were based on a logic that had little trust in the central administration and clearly portrayed that the peripheral communists were committed to preserve their positions by opposing the rotation principle Khrushchev so stubbornly tried to introduce.

Explaining why the cadre rotation principle was such a failure is then not as hard Fedor Burlatskii claims.¹¹²⁵ Khrushchev’s proposal met resistance from the younger generations as well as from the republican communists at large. Given the republican leaders’ perseverance avoiding becoming subjugated to a dominant centre of power, the communists did not view the rotation principle as a means to avoid excessive accumulation of power in single hands. Instead, the voices from party gatherings in the Uzbek and Tajik SSRs show that the Central Asian communists viewed the rotation principle as a centre trying to limit the rights of the republics to independently choose their representatives.

The final version was far from Khrushchev’s initial goals. The section on the rotation of cadres remained, but it was the least obtrusive version, which added to the principle of rotation that “exceptional leaders” could be re-elected beyond the three terms if they received more than three-quarters of votes in their favour.¹¹²⁶ It was only in rare cases that the republican elite could not agree on a candidate, as in the case of the Rashidov in March 1959. The

¹¹²³ Ibid., I. 23.

¹¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹¹²⁵ Burlatskii, *Khrushchev and the First Russian Spring*, 130.

¹¹²⁶ *Kommunisticheskaia partiia Sovetskogo Soiuza, Programma KPSS. Priniata XXII S"ezdom KPSS v 1962g.*, 103.

First Secretary elections in the republics were usually a formality and the candidate elected unanimously by the Central Committee members. As a consequence, the idea of cadre rotation acquired but symbolic value. Even so, the Brezhnev administration saw it necessary to repeal it from the party programme in 1966.¹¹²⁷

With the limitations to the programme in the sections on nationality policy and cadre rotation, the republican leaders achieved a remarkable compromise. On the ideological level, the nations had been inscribed into the programme for an indeterminable period. In the sphere of practical politics, the functionaries down through the entire party hierarchy secured their positions by hollowing out the idea of cadre rotation. As a consequence, it was without any scruple that the Uzbek First Secretary Sharaf Rashidov, could proclaim that one of the greatest merits of the party was “the right solution for our country’s national question—the most difficult problem of human society”, in his speech at the 22nd Party Congress on October 19, 1961.¹¹²⁸ “The implementation of Lenin’s noble ideas of equality and friendship amongst all nations and nationalities”, Rashidov continued, “is an example for any state, for any party.”¹¹²⁹

Part of the irony of the story is that just two days prior to his speech, Rashidov had been one of the main conspirers in the ouster from the Central Committee Presidium of Nuritdin Mukhitdinov, who had zealously fought to secure the principles from which Rashidov would later benefit. Throughout 1961, Mukhitdinov’s star in the Moscow Presidium had been faltering. Khrushchev had rebuked him for protecting the Uzbek leadership when the Mukhitdinov advised Khrushchev from removing the Uzbek leadership due to the delay of the Southern Hungry Steppe Canal.¹¹³⁰ Furthermore, the habitual disagreements over the party programme with M. A. Suslov had given Mukhitdinov enemies in the Presidium. When he objected to the reburial of Stalin during a Presidium meeting, his popularity reached a new low. Fearing that the removal of Stalin’s body from the Lenin Mausoleum would provoke strong reactions from Soviet Muslims, he argued that it was “seen as a great sin to disturb the remains of the deceased.”¹¹³¹ Stalin’s body was nonetheless removed, and the ice beneath Mukhitdinov cracking.

On October 17, 1961, Rashidov exploited Mukhitdinov’s weakness to his own advantage. Mikhail Suslov, Frol Kozlov and Rashidov suggested the demotion of Mukhitdinov to

¹¹²⁷ Titov, “The 1961 Party Programme and the Fate of Khrushchev’s Reforms,” 17.

¹¹²⁸ Sh. R. Rashidov, *Rech’ Na XXII S’ezde KPSS* (Moscow: Gos. izd-vo polit. lit-ry, 1961), 4.

¹¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹¹³⁰ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 503.

¹¹³¹ Ibid., 521–522.

Khrushchev “for gross violations of the inner-party discipline, the party Charter, causing a loss of trust of communists who elected the delegates of the congress, as well as other mistakes.”¹¹³² Subsequently, Mukhitdinov was ousted from the Presidium and demoted to secondary positions in the state apparatus.

Clearly, Rashidov had it in for the former Uzbek First Secretary. This is not all that surprising. Through his position in the Presidium and his proximity to Khrushchev, Mukhitdinov enjoyed considerable political power to influence events in Uzbekistan. This limited Rashidov’s space for manoeuvring and his consolidation of power in the Uzbek SSR. Furthermore, by supporting Suslov and Kozlov, Rashidov acquired powerful patrons in Moscow, which offered political protection. Moreover, the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party turned into a full-blown success for Rashidov. For after Mukhitdinov’s ouster, Rashidov intensified the purges of Tashkent clan affiliates in the Uzbek apparatus, reducing the number of Tashkent Bureau members to just four. With similar dedication, Rashidov soon after began purging the Uzbek obkomy. By 1965, all obkom leaders had been exchanged and the regional apparatus purged.¹¹³³ As we shall see in the next section, however, Khrushchev’s bifurcation of the party structure in 1962 facilitated this process and Rashidov cunningly accepted the invitation.

¹¹³² Ibid., 525–526; Zen’kovich, *Samye Zakrytye Liudi*, 396.

¹¹³³ Carlisle, “Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan,” 301. Only one stone was left untouched: The First Secretary of the Karakalpak ASSR who was married to Rashidov’s daughter.

7.3. THE UZBEK SSR AND INSTITUTIONAL RESTRUCTURING

Nikita Khrushchev's constant reorganisations of the production and party apparatuses have often been cited as one of the main reasons for his demotion in 1964. The early Khrushchev had been devoted to a certain degree of decentralisation. The peak was the creation of territorial councils of the national economy (*sovnarkhozy*) in 1957 that distributed power over production to the republics. Already from 1958 onward, Khrushchev attempted to restrict the limited autonomy he had conceded to the republics in the mid-1950s. During his last two years in power, Nikita Khrushchev embarked on a campaign to divide the entire party apparatus below the republican level. Compared to the *sovnarkhoz* reform that was celebrated by the Uzbek leaders as part of the Soviet nationality policy, the party bifurcation was received with strong reservations. Officially aiming to make party work more effective, there is wide agreement that the party reform had other goals too. Some scholars argue that Khrushchev was attempting a creeping purge of the party apparatus¹¹³⁴, while others view the reform as an attempt to bolster Khrushchev's personal power¹¹³⁵ or re-centralise power that had been distributed to the lower levels with the *sovnarkhoz* reform in 1957.¹¹³⁶ These arguments are not mutually exclusive and are all likely to have been part of Khrushchev's objective. Indeed both served the same goal to thwart institutional limited statehood as a means to optimise production. What had not succeeded during debates over the new party programme, Khrushchev now sought to sneak in the backdoor through the reform of the party. It was thus not surprising that the party reform generated resentment amongst many party functionaries who saw their careers endangered.¹¹³⁷ For Sharaf Rashidov, however, the bifurcation was a powerful tool to further consolidate his power on the all-union as well as on the republican Uzbek level.

¹¹³⁴ William J. Tompson, "Industrial Management and Economic Reform Under Khrushchev," in *Nikita Khrushchev*, ed. William Taubman, Sergei Khrushchev, and Abbott Gleason (New Haven ; London: Yale University Press, 2000), 151; Grey Hodnett, "The Obkom First Secretaries," *Slavic Review* 24, no. 4 (December 1, 1965): 636; John A. Armstrong, "Party Bifurcation and Elite Interests," *Soviet Studies* 17, no. 4 (April 1, 1966): 422.

¹¹³⁵ Barbara Ann Chotiner, *Khrushchev's Party Reform: Coalition Building and Institutional Innovation*, Contributions in Political Science no. 106 (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1984), 89.

¹¹³⁶ George Breslauer, *Khrushchev and Brezhnev as Leaders: Building Authority in Soviet Politics* (London : Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1982), 126.

¹¹³⁷ Chotiner, *Khrushchev's Party Reform*, 112.

Empowering the Republics

When Khrushchev had proposed to abolish central ministries and replace them with territorial councils of the national economy (*sovnarkhozy*) in May 1957, it was an attempt to decisively deal his foes in the Soviet Presidium a final blow. By limiting the influence of the ministries, Khrushchev attacked the powerbase of G. M. Malenkov who still enjoyed considerable influence over the ministerial apparatus although he had resigned as chair of the Council of Ministers in 1955.¹¹³⁸ The abolition of ministries and the simultaneous strengthening of the territorial party apparatus effectively bolstered Khrushchev's position.¹¹³⁹ Despite the rather obvious goal of attacking Malenkov, Khrushchev ostensibly aimed to do away with "interdepartmental barriers", "departmentalism" and bureaucratic red tape.¹¹⁴⁰

Khrushchev was thanked for the empowerment of the territorial apparatus, when the "anti-party group" led by Malenkov alongside other political heavyweights such as V. M. Molotov and L. M. Kaganovich attempted a coup in summer 1957. Khrushchev only just pulled off a complete victory by activating the territorial apparatus of the Central Committee.¹¹⁴¹ The prevention of the coup was thus a return in kind from the republican leaders for Khrushchev's nurturing of a republican Central Committee network, his support of republican rehabilitation and the decentralisation of powers.

In the Uzbek SSR, the *sovnarkhoz* reform had completely restructured the existing administrative-territorial divisions. The nine oblasts and the Karakalpak ASSR were divided into four regional administrations: Tashkent (Tashkent city and Tashkent oblast), Fergana (Andijan, Namangan and Fergana oblasts), Samarkand (Samarkand, Bukhara, Kashkadarya and

¹¹³⁸ Tompson, "Industrial Management and Economic Reform Under Khrushchev," 142. Malenkov had lost his position of chair of the Council of Ministers in February 1955, but remained member of the Presidium. On the Khrushchev-Malenkov feud: Zubkova, "The Rivalry with Malenkov"; Elena Iu. Barsukov, Nikolai, "The Rise with Power," in *Nikita Khrushchev*, ed. William Taubman, Sergei Khrushchev, and Abbott Gleason (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2000), 44–66.

¹¹³⁹ Tompson, "Industrial Management and Economic Reform Under Khrushchev," 140–141; Breslauer, *Khrushchev and Brezhnev as Leaders*, 75.

¹¹⁴⁰ Tompson, "Industrial Management and Economic Reform Under Khrushchev," 141.

¹¹⁴¹ In the crucial Presidium meeting where the Malenkov fraction won the vote to replace Khrushchev with the chair of the Council of Ministers, N. Bulganin, Khrushchev managed to convince the Presidium members that only a Central Committee vote could replace the First Secretary and an extraordinary session was scheduled by late June 1957. Once Khrushchev organised the Central Committee session, his victory was predictable given the support he enjoyed. He safely won the vote. G. Malenkov, V. Molotov, L. Kaganovich and D. Shepilov were all demoted to unimportant posts in the periphery of the Soviet Union. See: Taubman, *Khrushchev: the Man and His Era*, 317–320. The sessions of the Central Committee plenum that served as a venue of the attempted coup have been published in: N. A. Barsukov et al., *Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich, 1957: stenogramma i iun'skogo plenuma TSK KPSS i drugie dokumenty* (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnyi Fond "Demokratiia," 1998).

Surkhandarya oblasts) and Karakalpak (Khiva and the Karakalpak ASSR).¹¹⁴² The 410 industrial factories and production units of the Uzbek SSR were divided into these four new institutional structures that enjoyed greater autonomy than under the all-union ministries that had hitherto directed overall production. The provincial, city and regional party representatives were more directly in charge of decision-making and industrial management, which should improve cooperation at the inter-oblast level in the Uzbek SSR.¹¹⁴³ Furthermore, the republican planning agencies were to become increasingly influential concerning production targets, although the reform never really weakened the all-union equivalent.¹¹⁴⁴

It is hardly surprising that the *sovnarkhoz* reform enjoyed a joyous welcome from the Uzbek leadership. The heavy ideological phrasing was pulled out, which safely integrated the reform into the return to “Leninist principles” of economic management. On the one hand, First Secretary N. Mukhitdinov celebrated the initiative as a bureaucratic and economic necessity. In his view, the barrier laden ministerial structure had outlived its purpose for the Soviet state and it was now time to direct power and “responsibility to the regions and republics.”¹¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, Mukhitdinov was decisively advocating and pursuing greater authority for the republics in matters of decision-making: “The new territorial production principle in economic administrative regions is the new form of organisational economic government that answers to the contemporary stage” of development in the Soviet Union.¹¹⁴⁶ Corroborating his argument, Mukhitdinov firmly positioned the *sovnarkhozy* reform in the tradition of Leninism, which regarded the state as a temporary measure in the development of communism. The Uzbek First Secretary thus tied the *sovnarkhoz* reform together with Uzbek ambitions that aimed to redefine the centre-periphery relations and abolish the rigid centralisation of Stalinism that deprived the republics of autonomy and prioritised all-union interests.¹¹⁴⁷

If there was discontent with reform in the Uzbek SSR, it was not voiced or printed. The Chair of the Uzbek Planning Institute M. M. Musakhanov anticipated implementation difficulties, but celebrated the initiative as a welcome change.¹¹⁴⁸ Musakhanov did, however, not miss the chance to cautiously warn the empowered party functionaries by reminding that party and state structures must enhance work in oblasts such as Andijan, Khiva and the Karakalpak

¹¹⁴² “O dal’neishem sovershenstvovanii organizatsii upravleniia promyshlennost’iu i stroitel’stvom v Uzbekskoi SSR”, PV, 26.05.1957, 2.

¹¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴⁴ Tompson, “Industrial Management and Economic Reform Under Khrushchev,” 143.

¹¹⁴⁵ “O dal’neishem sovershenstvovanii organizatsii upravleniia promyshlennost’iu i stroitel’stvom v Uzbekskoi SSR”, PV, 26.05.1957, 1.

¹¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁴⁷ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 187.

¹¹⁴⁸ “Rech’ M. M. Musakhanova”, PV, 30.05.1957, 3.

ASSR where the target goals were continuously disappointed.¹¹⁴⁹

Representatives from the provinces also widely celebrated the reform as a progressive step to improve production by minimising institutional red tape and bureaucratic “departmentalism”. S. Nurutdinov, the First Secretary of the Tashkent provincial party soviet, fully supported the move away from the ministerial structure, because the “party, state and economic bodies had not managed to decisively change their work following the 20th congress of the Communist Party.”¹¹⁵⁰ By including the twentieth party congress, Uzbek leaders essentially incorporated the *sovnarkhoz* reform into the de-Stalinisation process, and Nurutdinov thus understood the reform as part of the process of redefining centre-periphery relations according to the original nationality policy.

Voices from local delegations participating in the sessions of the Supreme Soviet, equally incorporated the *sovnarkhoz* reform into the nationality policy. Comrade A. D. Lebedkov, for example, from the Tel'manskii electoral district, regarded the ministerial organisation as an obstruction to the implementation and fulfilment of quotas. He argued that the *sovnarkhozy* would tear down the departmental barriers and let the Uzbek SSR embark onto a new level of development.¹¹⁵¹ M. Rakhmanov from the Khivinskii city electoral district saw even greater potential for the further education of “highly qualified specialists and skilled organisers”, essentially hinting at the deepening of *korenizatsiia* and the creation of a native elite.¹¹⁵²

In sum, the Uzbek political scene embraced the *sovnarkhoz* reform as an important and necessary part of the nationality policy that granted the republics their constitutional rights of autonomy in decision-making. As a consequence, it can hardly be a surprise that the fear of “localism” that had been part of the political debate in the centre of power was nowhere to be heard when the Uzbeks discussed the latest policy invention of Khrushchev.¹¹⁵³

¹¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁵⁰ “Rech’ S. N. Nurutdinova”, PV, 28.05.1957, 2.

¹¹⁵¹ “Rech’ A. D. Lebedkova”, PV, 31.05.1957, 3.

¹¹⁵² “Rech’ M. Rakhmanova”, PV, 31.05.1957, 3.

¹¹⁵³ Tompson, “Industrial Management and Economic Reform Under Khrushchev,” 143; Similar responses came from other republics: Nataliya Kibita, “Moscow–Kiev Relations and the Sovnarkhoz Reform,” in *Khrushchev in the Kremlin: Policy and Government in the Soviet Union, 1956–64*, ed. Jeremy Smith and Melanie Ilic (London: Routledge, 2008), 95–100.

The Bifurcation of the Party

Already, from 1958 onward, Khrushchev began eroding the decentralisation he had conceded to the republics with the *sovnarkhoz* reform. The all-union *Gosplan* was strengthened and all-union committees were established for key sectors, an all-union Sovnarkhoz, an all-union Supreme Sovnarkhoz and so on.¹¹⁵⁴ The First Secretary was clearly displeased about the strengthening of the local party apparatuses and sought to limit their autonomy by re-centralising powers. The cases of nationalism and corruption that swept through the Soviet oblasts and republics from 1959-1961 strengthened Khrushchev's conviction that a local apparatus that was not suited to handle increased responsibilities in the functioning of production work. The Soviet First Secretary did not lose confidence in the party, though, but in its representatives at the local level. The party bifurcation was the "ill-advised scheme" that sought to solve this problem.¹¹⁵⁵

On September 10 1962, Khrushchev proposed the reorganisation of the party structure, the outstanding feature of which was the division of the party apparatus into two parallel hierarchies on the oblast level.¹¹⁵⁶ The members of one chain of command were to be primarily responsible for agricultural activities and the second hierarchy for industry and construction. The division was, however, limited to those obkomy that were declared agricultural and industrial, while the rest of the obkomy remained either so-called agricultural or industrial obkomy. As a consequence, all the unified obkomy that had previously been controlled by just one secretary would now be run by two parallel party hierarchies. The former sole First Secretary thus lost his preeminent function of integrating policies and activities of all spheres in an obkom.¹¹⁵⁷ The reform thereby created a unified double secretary structure of obkomy and kraikomy throughout the Soviet Union. Not all obkomy were unified and some remained with just one secretary but, by and large, the reform made local party organs chiefly concerned with the operational aspect of either industrial or agricultural production.¹¹⁵⁸

The all-union and republican level party apparatus were left out of the bifurcation, though a Central Committee Bureau for Chemical and Light Industries and a powerful Party-State Control Committee was established. The latter in particular allowed the party apparatus to further intervene in the state economic sector, which was where Khrushchev located the rea-

¹¹⁵⁴ Tompson, "Industrial Management and Economic Reform Under Khrushchev," 144.

¹¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 150.

¹¹⁵⁶ Chotiner, *Khrushchev's Party Reform*, 6.

¹¹⁵⁷ Hodnett, "The Obkom First Secretaries," 636-638.

¹¹⁵⁸ Chotiner, *Khrushchev's Party Reform*, 6.

sons for constant production deficiencies.¹¹⁵⁹ Khrushchev's hope was evidently to overcome production difficulties by increasing the party's role in monitoring and guidance of production work.¹¹⁶⁰

In the Uzbek SSR, the reform resulted in considerable structural change. In 1957, the *sovnarkhoz* reform had subsumed the nine obkomy and one autonomous region in the Uzbek SSR under four economic regions in the Uzbek SSR (Tashkent, Samarkand, Tashkent and the Karakalpak ASSR). The unified obkomy now interfered with the *sovnarkhozy* without eliminating them. Accordingly, the unified obkomy were created in the Andijan, Fergana, Samarkand and Tashkent obkomy, three of which were also functioning as *sovnarkhoz* centres.¹¹⁶¹ In the unified obkomy, two independent workers' soviets were established in each of the unified obkomy to accommodate the unified structure. Lastly, industrial supervision in predominantly agricultural regions was to be organised through the establishment of industrial tiers in the party organisations in the gorkomy where the industrial units were located such as in Ianggiul and Kattakurgan.¹¹⁶² The remainder of the obkomy and the Karakalpak ASSR kept their single party structure but were categorised as agricultural obkomy.¹¹⁶³

The administrative structure on the lower level was changed too. In March 1962, the Moscow Central Committee had adopted a production-oriented change of the agricultural sector (territorial production kolkhoz-sovkhoz administrations) that was given full responsibility of the farming activities.¹¹⁶⁴ With the November reform, the Uzbek leadership decided to apply the March 1962 decisions to all regions of the Uzbek SSR. As a consequence, the former 117 raiony were reduced to 61 territorial production kolkhoz-sovkhoz administrations.¹¹⁶⁵ This caused worries that the raikomy would lose executive powers but as an article in *Pravda vostoka* made clear: "The ones who think that the previous rai-centres will fall into decay" are erroneous in their belief.¹¹⁶⁶ The reason was to find a rise of delegates within local Soviets so that popular representation from the abolished raikom bureaus would, in fact, increase,

¹¹⁵⁹ Tompson, "Industrial Management and Economic Reform Under Khrushchev," 150.

¹¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹¹⁶¹ "Nov' na karte respubliki", PV, 25.01.1963, 1. The *sovnarkhoz* structure in the Uzbek SSR: Tashkent (Tashkent city and Tashkent oblast), Fergana (Andijan, Namangan and Fergana oblasts), Samarkand (Samarkand, Bukhara, Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya oblasts) and Karakalpak (Khiva and the Karakalpak ASSR).

¹¹⁶² Itogo Noiaber'skogo plenuma TsK KPSS i zadachi respublikanskoi partiinnoi organizatsii po ulusheniiu partiinogo rukovodstva narodnym khoziaistva Uzbeksoi SSR", PV, 21.12.1962, 1

¹¹⁶³ The Namangan and Kashkadarya oblasti were eliminated in 1960 and integrated into the Andijan and Surkhandarya oblasti respectively: Khlevniuk, *Regional'naiia Politika*, 621–623.

¹¹⁶⁴ Chotiner, *Khrushchev's Party Reform*, 58–63.

¹¹⁶⁵ "Itogo Noiaber'skogo plenuma TsK KPSS i zadachi respublikanskoi partiinnoi organizatsii po ulusheniiu partiinogo rukovodstva narodnym khoziaistva Uzbeksoi SSR", PV, 21.12.1962, 1.

¹¹⁶⁶ "Nov' na karte respubliki", PV, 25.01.1963, 1.

despite reduction in executive bureaus. Accordingly, it was ensured that the masses would “participate to a higher degree in the general affairs of the departments.”¹¹⁶⁷

Several eyewitnesses have drawn a vivid picture of party functionaries’ resentment to Khrushchev’s bifurcation. Attending the October 1962 Central Committee plenum as a guest, Nikolai Barsukov was spending most of his time in the corridors, where he enjoyed ample opportunity to speak with the delegates and get a sense of the atmosphere. On the eve of the adoption, he “did not hear one good word about this new reorganisation” in the non-official sphere, “only bewilderment and outright rejection.”¹¹⁶⁸ Indeed, the Belorussian First Secretary K. Mazirov got into such heated argument with Khrushchev over the issues that the Soviet First Secretary left Belorussia immediately and considered ridding Mazirov from office.¹¹⁶⁹

The disgruntlement was neither unexpected nor unjustified. Although the reform was a de facto empowerment of Khrushchev’s traditional party powerbase, the bifurcation severely disrupted the existing patterns on the lower party levels. The reform resulted in the liquidation of thousands of jobs as well as a major influx of new party cadres into positions generated by the double structure.¹¹⁷⁰ As a result, the Uzbek obkom structure swelled from 1.014 members to 1.790 over night.¹¹⁷¹ These new obkom members were generally younger and better educated, thus fitting the “specialist” category that Khrushchev had long been trying to promote within party and state structure. Of the 776 new cadres, 553 had finished a higher education, while only roughly 500 of the old secretaries held similar educational credentials.¹¹⁷²

The influx of new, better educated cadres has been seen as the preparation for a purge of the apparatus. John Armstrong has argued that by integrating younger cadres, Khrushchev was strategically establishing a new elite that should replace old lesser-educated secretaries without having to actively purge them.¹¹⁷³ In the foregoing section, we saw how Khrushchev stubbornly attempted to create a rotation principle in the party programme but failed. The reform appears to have been a second attempt to challenge the power of local officials by side-

¹¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁶⁸ Barsukov, Nikolai, “The Rise to Power,” in *Nikita Khrushchev*, ed. William Taubman, Sergeï Khrushchev, and Abbott Gleason (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2000), 62.

¹¹⁶⁹ Cited from: Taubman, *Khrushchev: the Man and His Era*, 587.

¹¹⁷⁰ Hodnett, “The Obkom First Secretaries,” 636.

¹¹⁷¹ Bezrukova, *Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Turkestana i Uzbekistana v Tsifrakh, 1918-1967 Gg.*, 182 and 188.

¹¹⁷² Ibid.

¹¹⁷³ Armstrong, “Party Bifurcation and Elite Interests,” 422. If this was indeed Khrushchev’s plan, it misfired for it was by and large the newcomers that were demoted when the reform was revoked soon after Khrushchev’s ouster in 1964. See: Hodnett, “The Obkom First Secretaries,” 651–652.

lining them in certain areas.

For Rashidov in the Uzbek SSR, the party bifurcation offered an excellent opportunity to strengthen his power. After the long rule of the Tashkentsy, the party and state apparatuses were stacked with individuals from the Tashkent political clan's entourage. With increased focus on party efficiency and the party, Rashidov used the reform to his own ends and began an exchange of obkom leaders unprecedented since the Great Purges.¹¹⁷⁴ No less than six of the eight obkom First Secretaries were exchanged, immediately after the reform had been adopted in 1963. Within a week in late March 1963, the Karakalpak, the Surkhandarya, Andijan and Khiva first secretaries were substituted. One month later, the Syrdarya Secretary followed suit.¹¹⁷⁵

Most of the new obkom secretaries were new faces to the higher level elite in the Uzbek SSR and went on to develop their careers during Rashidov's years in power. K. Kamalov who was appointed to the Karakalpak ASSR, for example, kept his post for nearly twenty years. Nevertheless, there were also familiar faces. The new secretary of the Syrdarya obkom, Nasyr Makhmudov, had already begun his political activity in the 1940s under Usman Iusupov. His five-year tenure as First Secretary in Samarkand 1943–1948 was the period, during which he got acquainted with Rashidov who promoted him to chair of the Uzbek Commission for People's Control in 1969.¹¹⁷⁶

The First Secretaries of the obkomy were just the tip of the iceberg, however. On average, three to four secondary secretaries were purged in each obkom.¹¹⁷⁷ Of the almost 800 new cadres that were integrated into the obkom structure in 1962, Rashidov appears to have kept a fair share after the reform was repealed shortly following Khrushchev's ouster in 1964.¹¹⁷⁸ As a consequence, the obkom structure in the Uzbek SSR rose in numbers and educational level through the 1962 party reform, suggesting that Rashidov purged several hundreds of the obkom apparatus.¹¹⁷⁹

Rashidov also installed his protégés at the highest levels in the Uzbek Central Committee. The industrial tier Bureau counted seven members and was headed by the Russian N. V. Martynov, former head of Uzbek Soviet of National Economy, while the remainder of the

¹¹⁷⁴ See, for example, Kathleen Carlisle who has no mentioning of a possible connection between the party reform and purges in the Uzbek SSR: Carlisle, "Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan," 301.

¹¹⁷⁵ Khlevniuk, *Regional'naiia Politika*, 620–624.

¹¹⁷⁶ Vitalii Khliupin, "Makhmudov, Nasyr," Internet Database, *Tsentraziia Baza Personalii "Kto Est' Kto v Tsentral'noi Azii*," October 22, 2012, <http://www.centrasia.ru/person2.php?&st=1110724439>.

¹¹⁷⁷ Carlisle, "Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan and Its Neighbours," 301.

¹¹⁷⁸ Bezrukova, *Kommunisticheskaia Partiiia Turkestana i Uzbekistana v Tsifrakh, 1918-1967 Gg.*, 197.

¹¹⁷⁹ The rise in absolute numbers was partly due to the recreation of the Kashkadarya province in 1964.

members were all part of the Rashidov elite.¹¹⁸⁰ The agricultural tier Bureau was headed by N. D. Khdaiberdyev, who was from Rashidov's home region around Jizzakh and would later rise to become chair of the Uzbek Council of Ministers 1970–1984. In the agricultural Bureau, all but M. Abdurazakov were new faces of the Rashidov elite.¹¹⁸¹

Moreover, Rashidov successfully installed a large number of protégés at the top as well as local level of the Uzbek SSR. This was a direct consequence of the Khrushchev reform, which allowed Rashidov to fill new positions with his clique and consolidate his power. The tragic irony of the party reform was, of course, that it had aimed to create a more efficient party apparatus, but instead became a stepping-stone for Rashidov's rule that began the “re-traditionalisation” of Uzbek politics effectively bolstering limited statehood within the Uzbek party and state apparatuses.¹¹⁸²

The Central Asian Bureau of 1962

Barbara Chotiner has suggested that Khrushchev was forced to accept compromises in order to secure support for his reform proposals.¹¹⁸³ While the party bifurcation allowed Rashidov to strengthen his position at the Uzbek level, there is reason to believe that he struck a deal with Khrushchev that benefitted the Uzbek SSR with regard to centre-periphery relations in exchange for his support of the reform.¹¹⁸⁴ Khrushchev's conviction to install a monitoring body for the Central Asian region gave the Central Asian leaders additional political leverage to bargain with Khrushchev.

As a means to better control and direct production in Central Asia, Khrushchev deemed it necessary to establish a Central Asian *sovnarkhoz* that would include all Central Asian republics and be controlled by a Central Asian Bureau of the Central Committee.¹¹⁸⁵ This was a daring proposal. Several times in the past, the Soviet central government had considered it

¹¹⁸⁰ Deputy chair was S. I. Ibragimov and the other members counted I. P. Burmistrov, P. V. Kaimakov, I. V. Martsiniuk, S. Nurutdinov, M. R. Ramazanov. See: “Itogo Noiaber'skogo plenuma TsK KPSS i zadachi respublikanskoi partiinoi organizatsii po ulusheniiu partiinogo rukovodstva narodnym khoziaistva Uzbeksoi SSR”, PV, 21.12.1962, 1.

¹¹⁸¹ The remaining five members of the agricultural Bureau were: Deputy chair was T. G. Zinin and the other members A. I. Akhundzhanov, Kh. Irgashev, M. M. Rakhmankulov and K. Tairov. See: “Itogo Noiaber'skogo plenuma TsK KPSS i zadachi respublikanskoi partiinoi organizatsii po ulusheniiu partiinogo rukovodstva narodnym khoziaistva Uzbeksoi SSR”, PV, 21.12.1962, 1.

¹¹⁸² Collins, *Clan Politics*, 105.

¹¹⁸³ Chotiner, *Khrushchev's Party Reform*, 111–155.

¹¹⁸⁴ By contrast James Critchlow argued that the Bureau was under central control: Critchlow, *Nationalism in Uzbekistan*, 28.

¹¹⁸⁵ Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev, *Stroitel'stvo kommunizma v SSSR i razvitie sel'skogo khoziaistva*, vol. 7 (Moscow: Gos. Izd-vo Polit. Lit-ry, 1963), 197–206.

necessary to install a central body to supervise and direct the development in the Central Asian republics. During the establishment of the Soviet regime in the 1920s, a Central Asian Bureau had functioned as the de facto government of the republics. Secondly, Stalin had tried to gather the Central Asian cotton production under one roof with the Ministry of Cotton Production in 1951. All of the institutions had caused considerable discontent in the individual republics, particularly the latter, provoked heated arguments between republican leaders, who saw their territorial sovereignty violated.

It is hardly surprising that Khrushchev's proposal was met with resistance from the Central Asian leaders, who continued to "talk about centralised planning."¹¹⁸⁶ At a party gathering in Tashkent on October 3, 1962, Khrushchev gave assurances that no one was going "to violate the sovereign rights of the republics", and continued, "cotton production remains territorialised but guidance will be centralised."¹¹⁸⁷ Despite his promises, Khrushchev had to "persuade the Turkmens and the Tajiks" and was confident that the Kazakhs and Uzbeks would eventually "support us too", although they might be "upset".¹¹⁸⁸ Moreover, Khrushchev was under serious pressure not only to gather support for the bifurcation of the party but, even more so, for the creation of the Central Asian *sovnarkhoz* and the Central Asian Bureau.¹¹⁸⁹

Khrushchev's dependence on the Central Asian leaders for the approval of the bifurcation and the Central Asian *sovnarkhoz* gave them considerable leverage to gain concessions from the First Secretary.¹¹⁹⁰ First of all, the republican leaders are likely to have influenced institutional structure of the Central Asian Bureau. Instead of becoming a central body, the *sovnarkhoz* did not "relieve the republics of their responsibilities" and became an inter-republican body with the Central Asian Bureau located in Tashkent.¹¹⁹¹ Markedly different from its predecessors, the Central Asian Bureau of 1962 was, secondly, staffed with Central Asians and not Moscow personnel. All the First Secretaries of the Central Asian republics were members, while the Russian chairman V. G. Lomonosov, was a young and inexperienced individual, which suggests that he was never appointed for the position to keep republican interests in check. He simply did not carry the necessary political authority. Rather he

¹¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 7:229. See also: Chotiner, *Khrushchev's Party Reform*, 114.

¹¹⁸⁷ Khrushchev, *Stroitel'stvo kommunizma v SSSR i razvitie sel'skogo khoziaistva*, 1963, 7:225–226.

¹¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 7:228.

¹¹⁸⁹ Within the week tour, Khrushchev held six major speeches in the Central Asian republics: Ibid., 7:178–248 passim.

¹¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 7:229.

¹¹⁹¹ Ibid., 7:232.

was installed to observe and report back to Moscow.¹¹⁹²

In addition to influencing the institutional structure of the Central Asian Bureau, there is reason to believe that Khrushchev made other compromises to ensure Central Asian support. An argument in the Soviet Central Committee Presidium in January 1963 reveals that F. R. Kozlov certainly thought so. When Khrushchev presented the Central Asian *sovnarkhoz* plan to the Presidium members, Kozlov burst out that it was positively discriminating the republics thanks to Rashidov.¹¹⁹³ According to Kozlov, the *sovnarkhoz* and the elimination of the all-union Ministry of Water Resources gave the republics power over all-union spheres.¹¹⁹⁴ Khrushchev had to defend the idea of the *sovnarkhoz* and the Central Asian Bureau by ensuring the Presidium that “the question is only organisational. It is not true that we are limiting the [all-union] rights of anyone.”¹¹⁹⁵

Compromises between Khrushchev and the republican leaders belonged to the realm of personal interchanges, but the Presidium members were clearly under the impression that Rashidov had managed to gain considerable concessions from the Soviet First Secretary. This would also explain Rashidov’s celebration of the reform at the Moscow Central Committee plenum in 1962. Contrary to other republican leaders, Rashidov was sure that the bifurcation would “undoubtedly ensure more concrete guidance of industrial and agricultural production” in Uzbekistan.¹¹⁹⁶ The party guidance of production would, according to Rashidov, lead to improved work and output in all spheres of Uzbekistan’s economy.¹¹⁹⁷ Thereby, the increased structures of supervision through Central Asian Bureau would create the basis for communism and also “tighten the interrelations and the mutual assistance of the Soviet repub-

¹¹⁹² With his young 34 years of age, Lomonosov belonged to the group of young aspiring communists who experienced a rapid rise during the Khrushchev de-Stalinisation waves. In 1957, at the age of 29, he was made Second Secretary of the Kalininskii raion in Moscow, before he was sent to Tashkent for the post in the Sredazbiuro in 1962. After the Central Asian Bureau’s abolition in 1964, he was made Second Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party, a post he held for ten years, before he returned to Moscow and was made Chairman of the State Committee on Work and Socialist Questions. Fursenko, *Prezidium CK KPSS*, 2004, 1:1256. See also the decree establishing the Bureau in: Khlevniuk, *Regional'naia Politika*, 484–487. The decree saw the creation of several departments under the Central Asian *sovnarkhoz*: The Department for Construction (Sredazstroia), for Cotton Production (Sredaziatskii Upravlenie khlopkovodstva) as well as the Main Department for Irrigation (Glavnoe Upravlenie po irrigatsii i stroitel'stvu sovkhoza).

¹¹⁹³ Fursenko, *Prezidium CK KPSS*, 2004, 1:697.

¹¹⁹⁴ Ibid. Natalya Kibita traced similar developments in Ukraine: Kibita, “Moscow–Kiev Relations and the Sovnarkhoz Reform.”

¹¹⁹⁵ Fursenko, *Prezidium CK KPSS*, 2004, 1:697. In mid-1964 Khrushchev did, in fact, criticise the several parallel structures of organisation and played with the idea of further centralisation: Andrei Artizov, *Nikita Khrushchev, 1964. stenogrammy plenuma TSK KPSS i drugie dokumenty* (Moscow: Mezhdunar. fond “Demokratiia”: Materik, 2007), 44–49.

¹¹⁹⁶ RGANI, 2, 1, 608, l. 21. Rashidov’s speech was a far more positive than the lukewarm embrace of the reform by, for example, the Georgian First Secretary V. P. Mzhavanadze, who called for a better explanation from Khrushchev as to the functioning of the bifurcation. See: RGANI, 2, 1, 608, l. 50.

¹¹⁹⁷ Ibid., l. 27.

lics.”¹¹⁹⁸

Uzbek Responses to the Party Reform

Sharaf Rashidov’s zeal at the Central Committee plenum from November 1962 was not repeated from the lower levels in Uzbekistan. Despite Rashidov installing protégés in the obkomy, it is more adequate to speak of a reserved acknowledgement. G. A. Gabriel’iants, Secretary of the Fergana agricultural tier ensured the Uzbek Central Committee that the Fergana party elite, “fully endorse the proposal of the Central Committee of Uzbekistan’s Communist Party to reorganise the party leadership.”¹¹⁹⁹ Several obkom secretaries repeated such lukewarm embrace during the December 1962 and February 1963 sessions of the Uzbek Central Committee. The First Secretary of the Tashkent agricultural obkom, M. Abdurazakov, noted that “communists and all workers in the Tashkent oblast unanimously approved the decision of the November plenum”, while A. Khaidarov of the Andijan obkom merely noted that Khrushchev’s note had been widely discussed given “our responsibility to secure cotton” to the Soviet Union.¹²⁰⁰ Compared to the celebration of the *sovnarkhoz* reform in 1957, where the Uzbeks praised the reform as an important part of the Soviet nationality policy, the obkom secretaries received the party bifurcation with far less enthusiasm.

There were several reasons for the obkom secretaries’ reservations. Gabriel’iants and Abdurazakov had just been demoted from the Bureau and were now serving on the provincial level, which explained their half-heartedness. Meanwhile there was also good reason for A. Khaidarov, who belonged to the Rashidov elite, to be concerned. First, the power loss of individual secretaries was one source of discontent with the party bifurcation. Second, several obkomy lay behind the production goals that had been set down in the seven-year plan 1959.¹²⁰¹ As the bifurcation integrated obkom leaders into production, they carried responsibility for the operational outcomes. As a consequence, obkom staff in the Uzbek SSR was directly endangered by the reform. Third, the bifurcation entailed an aspect that had long been troubling the Uzbek leadership. Ever since the foundation of the Uzbek SSR, the state had suffered from a lack of well-educated workforce to build up an industrial base and promote to managerial positions.¹²⁰² With the planned influx of “specialists” into the Uzbek

¹¹⁹⁸ Ibid., I. 21.

¹¹⁹⁹ “Plenum TsK Kompartii Uzbekistana”, PV, 22.12.1962, 2.

¹²⁰⁰ “Plenum TsK Kompartii Uzbekistana”, PV, 13.2.1963, 2.

¹²⁰¹ Ibid.

¹²⁰² Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 179.

party apparatus, the lack of highly educated apparatchiks, especially for the industrial tier of the party, would invariably emerge with renewed force and the responsibility fall back on the obkom secretaries.

The issues were already voiced at the early stage of reform. In February 1963, A. Khaidarov of the Andijan obkom, argued that the “party organisation was doing its best to strengthen governing of the cadres of the kolkhoz-sovkhoz production, using the experience of specialists”, but had to confess that its work was tainted by deficiencies.¹²⁰³ Similar concerns were voiced by S. N. Nurutdinov, the Chairman of the Uzbek Labour Unions, who noted “that despite improvements, qualified personnel within the mechanical sector” are still hard to find, making work progress very slow.¹²⁰⁴

When the central leadership decided to make chemistry and chemical industry its new recipe for success in late 1963, it put the Uzbek apparatus under further pressure. There was, however, little that could be done, since the education of specialist could not keep up and the obkomy were now accused of faltering production output. An inspection of the newly created Party-State Control Commission in the Uzbek SSR from June 1963 revealed worrying results. V. Khor'kov, the head of the inspection commission, concluded that it was particularly in the industrial sphere that Uzbekistan was far behind production goals set up in the seven-year plan.¹²⁰⁵ The capital investment supplied by the all-union funds was not applied correctly, which led to low production numbers of phosphate, acid and ammoniac.¹²⁰⁶

The Uzbek authorities tried to follow up on the demands from the commission by issuing a decree in late July 1963 that aimed to improve work and increase the number of qualified cadres in the industrial sphere.¹²⁰⁷ The measures had little effect. In his main account at the December 1963 Uzbek Central Committee plenum, Sharaf Rashidov lamented: “It cannot be that there is not one specialist in chemistry amongst the workers of the industrial obkomy of Fergana and Andijan.”¹²⁰⁸

The cadre problem in the industrial tier of the party in the Uzbek SSR remained a problem until Khrushchev's ouster in October 1964. As late as September 1, 1964, six weeks before Khrushchev's forced resignation, Sharaf Rashidov again critiqued the lower level party func-

¹²⁰³ “Plenum TsK kompartii Uzbekistana”, 13.2.1963, 2.

¹²⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁰⁵ GARF, 9527, 1, 24, l. 194.

¹²⁰⁶ Ibid., l. 195. See also an additional report from Samarkand: Ibid., ll. 196–199.

¹²⁰⁷ The decree from the Uzbek Central Committee and Council of Ministers: Ibid., ll. 207–215. Similar reports from the State Control Commission on the state of Uzbek industrial production with similar conclusions, see: GARF, 9527, 1, 283, ll. 1–20; GARF, 9527, 1, 337, ll. 95–158.

¹²⁰⁸ According to Rashidov, similar problems were amounting in Samarkand. Reprint of his account in: “Khimiiia - moguchii uskroitel' razvitiia narodnogo khoziaistva”, PV, 27.12.1963, 1–4.

tionaries of the industrial tier. The source of the rebuke was low production output. Some thirteen per cent of the Uzbek industrial factories suffered from underproduction. Given the party functionaries' responsibility for supervising production, Rashidov had to conclude: "Some of us do not understand or do not want to understand that the fate of the plan is decided by people, cadres."¹²⁰⁹ According to the Uzbek First Secretary, the obkom leadership neither invested enough energy in selection and education of cadres nor in their actual work in the factories. In Bukhara, for example, the city party committee had not even begun work in the local factories, leaving the factory work completely deprived of any organisational advice.¹²¹⁰

Whether underproduction in the Uzbek industrial sector was due to missing party guidance or due to overly optimistic plans is difficult to determine. Given the reform's repeal in 1964, however, a production rise clearly did not outweigh the resentment it caused. In the Uzbek SSR, the lower level dissatisfaction with the reform was not least caused by the impossible position it put them in. They were effectively made responsible for problems they could hardly solve, i.e. the lack of adequately educated cadres. Moreover, instead of proposing a solution to a socio-economic problem of education, the party bifurcation intensified it by demanding an expertise that was in short supply in the Uzbek SSR.

While Rashidov had been a strong defender of party reform in September 1964, he turned into a strong critic of it six weeks later. During the Central Committee plenum on October 14, when Khrushchev's resignation was sealed, Rashidov directed a strong attack at Khrushchev's party bifurcation. In his speech before the plenum, he condemned the "endless reorganisations that literally wore out our party officials, from top to bottom, disorganised the local party organisations and planted seeds of uncertainty amongst them."¹²¹¹ As the tide had turned, he now criticised the plan that he had greeted with much fanfare in 1962 and vigorously supported till the end.

It was not the first time that Rashidov emerged as a political opportunist but it would become one of the most crucial. By 1964, Rashidov had cunningly exploited the party programme and the party bifurcation to strengthen his own power by installing his protégés in the Uzbek apparatus. Joining the choir demanding an end to the Khrushchev campaigns, he was part of the group that caused a change to the centre-periphery relations in the Soviet Union. Under Leonid Brezhnev, it was the concept of "cadre stability" and a hands-off approach that de-

¹²⁰⁹ "Sovershenstvovat' rukovodstvo razvitiem ekonomiki i narodnogo obrazovaniia", PV, 01.09.1964, 1.

¹²¹⁰ "Sovershenstvovat' rukovodstvo razvitiem ekonomiki i narodnogo obrazovaniia", PV, 01.09.1964, 1.

¹²¹¹ Artizov, *Nikita Khrushchev, 1964. stenogrammy plenuma TSK KPSS i drugie dokumenty*, 245.

fined the centre's policy toward the republics.¹²¹² Ironically, this system was based on the balance “between republican and all-union interests” that Nuritdinov Mukhitdinov had forcefully pursued, and it allowed Rashidov to further pursue the “re-traditionalisation” of the Uzbek political sphere.¹²¹³ The consequence was a deepening of limited statehood. The constitution of the Uzbek political elite came to be characterised by nepotism and patronage. In the Soviet “economy of distribution”¹²¹⁴, these elite members were dispensers of scarce resources, and in a society of shortages they ruthlessly abused their power resulting in a party and state system that was permeated by corruption of double-dealing.

¹²¹² On cadre stability: T. H. Rigby, “The Soviet Regional Leadership: The Brezhnev Generation,” *Slavic Review* 37, no. 1 (March 1, 1978): 6–7; Linda J. Cook, “Brezhnev’s ‘Social Contract’ and Gorbachev’s Reforms,” *Soviet Studies* 44, no. 1 (January 1, 1992): 37–56.

¹²¹³ Mukhitdinov, *Reka Vremeni*, 189.

¹²¹⁴ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 87.

8. CONCLUSION

“None of us should be beyond control...we just got rid of people in the party, [entire] territories that for years remained beyond control, beyond criticism.”¹²¹⁵ By the sound of it, M. S. Gorbachev’s statement from January 13 1988 could easily have been spoken in the late-Stalin or the Khrushchev periods. It was however, not only Gorbachev’s words that echoed the past. The reasons that caused them were strikingly similar to the battles the Soviet central leadership fought in the late 1940s and 1950s. One day prior to Gorbachev’s speech before the Moscow Central Committee, Uzbek First Secretary I. B. Usmankhodzhaev had been removed as the latest victim of the “Cotton Affair” that shook the Soviet Union in the mid- to late-1980s. It was the largest corruption scandal ever recorded by Soviet authorities.¹²¹⁶ Investigations revealed that in particular the Uzbek party and state incumbents had established an entire system of cotton quota whitewashing and double-accounting, draining all-union funds for cotton that never existed. In the course of the affair, an estimated total of 58.000 individuals throughout Central Asia were removed from office, including two-thirds of the Uzbek Central Committee members and at least half of the Uzbek party nomenclature.¹²¹⁷ Clearly, at the end of its days, the Soviet Union suffered from the same problems of limited statehood as it had under Stalin and Khrushchev. Why?

At the centre of this study stood the assumption that limited statehood in the Soviet Union was, in fact, one of forces that kept the state together rather than driving it apart. Thereby, I have argued that limited statehood should be understood as a condition that, in its broadest scope, captures a state’s inability to enforce rules that enjoy automatic obedience.¹²¹⁸ Understood as such, limited statehood in the Uzbek SSR was not a static condition, but existed in various forms and to varying degrees in the political system and society at large, which conflicted with central leaders’ comprehensive claim to power. Yet, despite the dysfunctionality of limited statehood to the integrative goals of the Soviet central leadership, it was often functional on the Uzbek level as a means to mobilise resources, satisfy central government and accommodate popular demands. It was the strength of this functionality that contributed to the longevity of the Soviet Union.

¹²¹⁵ “Demokratizatsiia - sut’ perestroiki, sut’ sotsializma”, *Pravda*, 13.01.1988, 2.

¹²¹⁶ On the “Cotton Affair”: James Crichtlow, “‘Corruption’, Nationalism, and the Native Elites in Soviet Central Asia,” *Journal of Communist Studies* 4, no. 2 (1988): 142–161; Gleason, “Fealty and Loyalty.”

¹²¹⁷ Gleason, “Fealty and Loyalty,” 616.

¹²¹⁸ Sonderforschungsbereich 700, *Working Paper* 8, 9.

In this study I focused on several different areas, within which limited statehood persisted in the Uzbek SSR. First, the political relations between Moscow and Tashkent were, to a certain extent, marked by limited statehood and republican leaders were habitually unmasked pursuing “local or national interests” rather than safeguarding the all-union interests of Moscow. Second, the Uzbek institutional system itself was permeated by limited statehood. The further down the political hierarchy, the less the republican leaders were able to control and direct policy implementation. Lastly, the Soviet policies often met what we have termed popular limited statehood, i.e. the inability of the state to sculpt the Uzbek into the New Soviet Man. As we have seen, limited statehood neither originated in an outright rejection of Soviet rule by the Uzbeks nor in the complete inability to change political and social hierarchies and stratifications in the Uzbek SSR. Rather we must understand limited statehood as the product of multiple sources related to the constitution of the political system, in which the Uzbek SSR was embedded, as well as the immense demands the Soviet project placed upon its citizens. These included: The policies of cultural, economic and political transformation, the political system based on patron-client relations, the political practices, the shortage economy and the cultural setting in the Uzbek SSR. It was the complex interplay between these different forces that generated limited statehood.

The centre-periphery structure between Moscow and Tashkent from 1945–1964 was characterised by two fundamentally opposing forces: On the one hand, the Soviet central leadership demanded a prerogative right on cardinal decisions and, on the other hand, the centre continued investment in the national structures along with the elements that belonged to the nationality policy. It was the prevalence of these two opposing forces that bestowed the Soviet Union the character of an *Ambivalent Empire*. At the heart of this ambivalence stood the relationship between ideology and political power.

Based on a fundamentally anti-imperialist ideology, Bolshevik ideologues sought to free the formerly suppressed peoples of the Russian Empire and integrate them into the Soviet Union, in which they would blossom and be part of a movement aiming to create communist modernity. The Bolshevik ideologues foresaw the total transformation of the pre-revolutionary “backward” Uzbek society in their quest for the future and pursued the fundamental revolutionary axioms with tremendous zeal and determination during the consolidation of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR. This was a process of integration thoroughly destructive to pre-revolutionary society: An Uzbek nation saw the light of day, reforms turned ownership relations upside down, new elites were generated and cultural traditions outlawed to name just a few of the transformational policies imposed on Uzbek society. The goal was to construct an

Uzbek nation and a national consciousness, argued Bolshevik theory, that would assist the Uzbek populous' rise from darkness into light, free it from the "backward" cultural heritage and 'push' it into a higher historical stage thus speeding up the developmental process.¹²¹⁹

Meanwhile, the central leadership insisted on being the conductor of these anti-imperial processes. Already at the birth of the Soviet nationality policy, Lenin anticipated the possible lethal influence nations could have on the project of Soviet integration. As a consequence, the consolidation of Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR was a process that neither Stalin nor Khrushchev felt comfortable leaving to the new Uzbek elites that the regime had created. Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR from 1945 to 1964 was therefore characterised by the centre of power giving primacy to political control over Soviet ideology and a demand for submissiveness to a centrally defined ideology and a comprehensive claim to power.

The result was not a retreat from the ideological goals. Indeed, Stalin as well as Khrushchev both maintained a devotion to ideology but neither trusted the Uzbek leaders to independently administer the progressive development of Uzbek society toward communism. The result was a habitual down-prioritisation of ideological aspirations, but they never subsided from Soviet policy. Even during the most repressive periods of the Stalinist dictatorship, they were consistently promoted as seen in the integration of indigenous cadres in the enormous investments in the Uzbek production basis, education and the welfare systems.

Despite the devotion to a profound anti-imperial premise, one of the peculiarities of the Soviet Union was that it nevertheless struggled with problems of governance very similar to those of empires. The territorialisation and investment in national entities based on the Soviet nationality policy generated very real national interests in the Uzbek SSR. Borrowing a term from empire theory, the Soviet nationality policy, in fact, "unintentionally created subversive possibilities" through their integrative policies.¹²²⁰ For contrary to the expectations and goals of the 1920s Soviet nationality policy, the Soviet nations did not 'wither away' as the Soviet Union integrated further. Moreover, instead of producing a gradual merging of national and all-union interests through growing integration of the Soviet Union, the Soviet nationality policy produced nationalities that persisted on their right to co-exist with a universalist communist commitment. Leaning on Edward Shils one could say that the Soviet policies institu-

¹²¹⁹ Igal Halfin has used the expression from darkness into light to describe the narration needed for a successful application for communist party membership in the 1920s: Igal Halfin, "From Darkness to Light: Student Communist Autobiographies of the 1920s," *Jahrbucher Für Geschichte Osteuropas* 45, no. 2 (1997): 210–236.

¹²²⁰ Burbank and Cooper, *Empires in World History*, 14. My italics.

tionalised the fundamental problem of centre-periphery relations, i.e. that the periphery can never be integrated to the extent desired by the centre.¹²²¹

Given this centre-periphery constellation, it is all the more astonishing that neither Stalin nor Khrushchev diverted from the revolutionary dictums of the nationality policy. In the political realm, efforts of indigenisation continued throughout the years 1945–1964, most visible in the membership percentage of the Uzbek Central Committee where the indigenous cadre share grew from circa 50 per cent in 1937/38 to 71 per cent in 1961. In the cultural-national realm, the nationality policy developed national histories, promoted a national intelligentsia and actively supported national languages. Accordingly, *Ambivalent Empire* captures the situation where central leaders, on the one hand, prioritised political control and intervened in Uzbek affairs to that end, while, on the other hand, continued to invest in nations and promote Uzbek national interests, which undermined that very goal.

What does the *Ambivalent Empire* have to do with limited statehood? Obviously, a great deal, for the comprehensive claim to power and the tremendous demands imposed on the Uzbek population by Soviet policies continuously produced limited statehood within different spheres of the Uzbek SSR that conflicted with central goals and interests. As a consequence, the period 1945–1964 was characterised by central government attempts to overcome limited statehood and ensure implementation of all-union policies.

At the very heart of limited statehood in the Uzbek SSR stood the configuration of the political system. In fact, limited statehood was facilitated and reinforced by the very structures of the political system in the Soviet Union because Stalin and Khrushchev both relied on a political system based on patron-client relations. Originally formed to overcome institutional weakness, the patronage relations in the Soviet Union never subsided. Thereby, the patron-client relations were defined by a mutual dependency: The Soviet leaders were relying on the republican leaders executing their will in the periphery, while the republican leaders were dependent on the Soviet leaders' goodwill to secure their positions in the periphery. This had enormous implications for the constitution of the political elite in the Uzbek SSR. First of all, the First Secretary, who had strong patrons in Moscow, was given vast powers on the republican level. He established networks within the apparatus consisting of trusted friends and colleagues that were defined regionally due to the ruralisation of the party in the early Soviet period, the continuous low levels of urbanisation, historical-regional identities and ethnic di-

¹²²¹ Shils, *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology*, xi.

visions.¹²²² The ruling circle in the Uzbek SSR was therefore comprised of people, with whom the leaders had risen up through the Soviet institutional hierarchy and who were installed in virtually every crucial political and party position. Second, the patron-client relations were replicated on all levels of the Uzbek political and state apparatuses and flanked by a system lacking rational-legal rules to protect officials. Every link in hierarchy of the apparatuses was dependent on the goodwill of its superior to retain its position. Third, the constant raising of production targets combined with the dependency on the superiors put not only the top-level political elite but also the entire party and state apparatus under enormous pressure. Representatives from the top onto the very lowest level of implementation found themselves in a dilemma: The disappointment of quotas would, on the one hand, not only reduce income levels and diminish political leverage, it would also endanger their positions as dispensers of political power and economic wealth. On the other hand, corrupting accounts could have the same or worse consequences, for the republican leaders were unforgiving toward the lower levels when it came to the satisfaction cotton quotas. This dilemma penetrated all levels of the production chain – from the top-level republican leaders who were dependent on superiors in Moscow down to kolkhoz chairmen, MTS directors as well as to party and state representatives in the localities. Confronted with the choice between a rock and a hard place, double-accounting, corruption and bending of rules, became viable solutions to secure one's position. In other words, the Soviet system ingrained these aspects of institutional limited statehood as a consequence of the patron-client relations, non-binding rational-legal bureaucratic rules and securities, unrealistic target planning as well as the scarcity of commodities and resources.

On the lowest levels of the Uzbek SSR in the rural regions limited statehood intensified due to under-administration. Here kinship ties and friends played a crucial role in the functioning of society.¹²²³ Rising limited statehood in rural regions was however, not limited to Soviet Central Asia, but a characteristic of the Soviet Union in general. It was part of the functioning of a system, in which family, friends and connections became crucial factors in almost every sphere of everyday life – concerning foodstuffs, education, political favours and upward social mobility.¹²²⁴

¹²²² Fedtke, "Wie Aus Bucharern Usbeken Und Tadschiken Wurden"; Carlisle, "Geopolitics and Ethnic Problems of Uzbekistan and Its Neighbours."

¹²²³ Collins, *Clan Politics*, 102.

¹²²⁴ Indeed, family, friends and connections played a critical role concerning social mobility, educational advancement or job-placement in all former socialist Eastern European countries. See: Roth, "Trust, Networks and

Despite scholars' downplaying of central leaders' vigilance in fighting these networks, Stalin as well as Khrushchev did, in fact, not eschew from continuously clamping down patronage in the Uzbek SSR.¹²²⁵ The most ferocious attack in the period 1945–1964 followed the installation of the Plenipotentiary in the Uzbek SSR in 1949, when S. D. Ignat'ev released a purge that targeted the entire political and institutional setting in the Uzbek SSR with the goal of uprooting the patronage networks hampering central leadership control. The state's loss of control, the economic hardship during and following World War II as well as the ruralisation of party and state structures had provided fertile grounds for increasing reliance of networks in the Uzbek SSR. To Stalin, such networks could possibly create circles of power he could neither control nor penetrate, and the dictator reacted enraged to their existence.¹²²⁶ The Leningrad and Gosplan Affairs thus had grave consequences for the Uzbek SSR that became victim of renewed purges especially upon Ignat'ev's arrival in 1949.

Stalin's methods of brutally attacking the party and state apparatuses and imprisoning or discharging unruly incumbents on the basis of patronage networks, appear to have been more effective than Khrushchev's. To be sure, Stalin's purges did not rid the Uzbek political system of patronage networks, but the dictator was able to cut through levels of the political system that Khrushchev could not when he relinquished the possibility of large-scale terror. By contrast, Stalin's reliance of violence as a political practice enabled him to attain his goals and ensure submissiveness to his rule. Indeed, Stalin had far less trust in his Uzbek clients than the patron-client relations should suggest. Ever since World War II, the dictator had been closely monitoring and personally intervening in the republican affairs of the Uzbek SSR. Far from relying on his Uzbek lieutenants, he preferred a ruling style that sought to turn arbitrariness into its strength. Hence, he kept the republican leadership in constant tension and insecurity in order to ensure their obedience and overcome limited statehood within the highest echelons of the Uzbek SSR. Knowing the Stalinist system, republican leaders neither knew when charges from the centre of power would occur nor what consequences they would have, but they did know what consequences charges from the centre *could* have.¹²²⁷

The tragic irony of Stalin's rule was that the habitual purges did not rid the Uzbek political system of patronage, political networks and limited statehood. Under the Stalinist dictator-

Social Capital in the Transformation Countries. Ethnological Perspectives." On Russia: Popkov, "Werden soziale Netzwerke transformiert? Informelle Beziehungen im sozialistischen und postsozialistischen Russland."

¹²²⁵ Carlisle, "Clan and Politics in Uzbekistan," 273–278.

¹²²⁶ Gorlizki and Khlevniuk, *Cold Peace*, 81.

¹²²⁷ This is indeed the logic of the study of Paul Gregory, who convincingly argued that Stalin's terror operated according to a *possible* number of enemies. From the republican leaders' perspective, this relation was turned around to the probability of accusations from the dictator. See: Gregory, *Terror by Quota*, 251–280.

ship, the networks instead appear to have held a function of protection on the republican level against an abusive centre of power. Thereby, protection was relative and rarely extended far beyond the most immediate circle of friends and colleagues. When Stalin installed the Plenipotentiary, the top-level Uzbek leaders did not hesitate blaming the lower levels and, by consequence, clear themselves of any responsibility. In more peaceful times however, the top-level Uzbek leaders were less confrontational with the lower levels, which made writs run and secured the demands of the centre.

While the repressions of the Stalinist dictatorship in certain ways strengthened institutional limited statehood by generating protectionism, the relative empowerment of the republics in the Khrushchev period did too. It was, in fact, the loosening of the oppressive structures that allowed this scenario. Though Khrushchev changed fundamental parts of the Soviet political system following his ascent to power, he kept others. First of all, Khrushchev never fundamentally changed the prerogative of the centre to determine cardinal decisions at the republican level. Accordingly, Khrushchev saw it as no violation of inner-party democracy to single-handedly exchange top-level republican leaders if they did not step in the line with the centre or proved inconsequential with regard to policy-implementation. Usman Iusupov, Armin Niazov and Sabir Kamalov all learned this bitter lesson. Furthermore, Khrushchev relied on similar structures of patron-client relations as had been prevalent during the Stalin era, most clearly expressed with his client N. A. Mukhitdinov's incredible rise in the Uzbek and Soviet hierarchies. Contrary to Stalin however, Khrushchev refrained from implementing violence to overcome institutional limited statehood in the Uzbek SSR and had far greater trust in his republican clients. Furthermore, Khrushchev appear to have had greater faith in the institutions than Stalin had. As a consequence, Khrushchev believed in the possibility of changing the system from within when he attacked limited statehood with the party bifurcation in 1962. This was a fundamentally different strategy from Stalin's cleansing of the party and state apparatuses – be it of the rank and file members in the early post-war period or the purges of 1949–1951. Under Khrushchev we therefore also saw that cadre-turnover become increasingly dependent on policy issues, which installed a sense of accountability and security. This change was momentous and had severe implications for institutional limited statehood in the Uzbek SSR as well as for the relations between Moscow and Tashkent. The relaxation of the political realm combined with the promotion of a second *vydvyshtsy*-generation to de-Stalinise Soviet rule, a decentralisation and empowerment of the republican leaders during the early Khrushchev years resulted in Uzbek leaders intensifying their pursuit of an equilibrium between all-union and republican interests. Once Khrushchev realised that decentralisa-

tion was, in fact, not the solution to production problems, economic growth and institutional limited statehood, the empowerment of the republican leaders hampered his subsequent attempts to re-centralise power in order to secure that all-union interests were prioritised over national and/or local interests.

Despite the possibility of limited statehood ingrained in the political system of patronage of the Uzbek SSR, it was also a system with clear advantages. Certainly, the system proved effective with regard to mobilisation of resources. Red tape could be bypassed and incumbents held directly responsible for failures. As such a system based on patronage relations possesses enormous capabilities. Nevertheless, it is also a system that is dependent on the mutual trust and/or benefit between two people or groups. Therein lies the both the strength and the weakness of the relation, for even though trust can be an indispensable asset, it can also easily be broken. As a consequence, patronage relations are in constant need of nurture in order to be sustained, they are vulnerable to external events (e.g. death) and carry an element of insecurity. By comparison, systems basing trust in institutions are likely to experience a longer durability and less serious disruptions than systems based on patronage.

The possibilities of making writs run was not only a property of patronage relations in the Uzbek SSR. Indeed, it should not be overlooked that limited statehood too entailed very functional aspects. By neglecting decrees or bending rules, incumbents in the Uzbek SSR – whether kolkhoz chairman or Secretary to the Uzbek Central Committee – could too mobilise resources or make the system function, especially on the lower levels of implementation. This was particularly evident during the mechanisation campaign when local party and state incumbents hesitated introducing new equipment and allowed manual labour in favour of a gradual transfer. As we have seen, cotton production remained below the planned targets, but steadily rose parallel to the growth of implemented mechanised equipment. Thus, it would be mistaken to view institutional limited statehood solely as an obstacle to the successful implementation of Soviet policies in the Uzbek SSR. This was a typical consequence of limited statehood in the Uzbek SSR: It facilitated the fulfilment of central economic or political demands, but often hampered ideological goals. Confronted with the demands of daily life, Uzbek incumbents appear often to have decided in favour of economic demands over ideology. It was this tension however, that Moscow leaders constantly perceived as the inefficacy or rejection of Soviet rule.

Patronage relations was not the only feature of Soviet rule that generated limited statehood in the Uzbek SSR. As we have seen, the partly excessive demands imposed on the Uzbek population resulted in disregard of or quiet disobedience to Soviet policies. When, for example,

Khrushchev sought to reconfigure the entire Uzbek cotton production system by introducing square-clustered, the response from Uzbek farmers was a notable neglect that led to the policy retraction. This was possible under the Khrushchev leadership, because he largely refrained from implementing policies with the backing of intensified criminal punishment as Stalin had done.

Limited statehood also existed in various forms in spheres the authorities held no authority over. In the rural regions this was often caused by under-administration. During the World War II, large parts of the apparatus had indeed entirely ceased to exist. Limited statehood in form of rising crime and misappropriation of state property were the immediate results. It was however, not only during the post-war period that the party and state apparatuses were being exploited to serve non-state interests. The entire political elite in the Uzbek SSR – from the kolkhoz chairman to the First Secretary – was frequently rebuked for pursuing local and national interests when all-union funds destined, for example, for cotton were tapped on the way and used for other “local interests.” Although key positions in the Uzbek state and party apparatuses remained under all-union control, the support of indigenisation buttressed the centre’s limited access to the republican political realm, which obstructed the centre’s ability to ensure that the republican leadership awarded all-union policies primacy over Uzbek interests. As ‘outsiders’ to the political system, rarely speaking the language and knowing little of the deeper functioning of the political sphere, non-native representation in the Uzbek Bureau had only limited influence on the everyday running of the Uzbek SSR and could not hinder that diversion of all-union funds in the Uzbek periphery. As a consequence, the centre had limited influence on the Uzbek political sphere, despite their presence in Uzbek institutions. Historical evidence rarely specifies what exactly “national” or “local” interests meant. We are thus left in a haze with regard to identifying whether for example national, regional or personal interests were served. Nevertheless, it was often revealed that republican leaders, obkom and raikom secretaries were living in luxurious houses with ample staff and goods suggesting that surely amounts of all-union or republican funds were diverted into private accounts of the political elite. Scholars have also suggested that a wheeling and dealing took place between the leading political factions of the Uzbek SSR. Given the informal communication that lay at heart of this process, it remains impossible how these shares were divided.¹²²⁸

World War II also influenced the party and state structures through other factors causing ris-

¹²²⁸ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 88–91.

ing central leadership concern. Due to the many thousand perished party members who perished in battle with Nazi Germany and the simultaneous many thousands new party members, the party changed character. Many new members came from the immediate rural environment, which resulted in a renewed ruralisation of the party that, in turn, hampered the goal of defeating cultural “backwardness”. Members had little ideological vigilance, were ill-educated and compromised party line over the satisfaction of essential needs. The rank and file post-war purges of the party apparatus were thus characterised by the, for Central Asia typical, scrutiny of “backwardness” and “feudal-bai relics of the past” in party membership.

Limited statehood as a cause of negligent supervision of the authorities was not necessarily a result of severe hardship as it had been the case during the war. In fact, the Uzbek political leadership endorsed a lenient cultural policy in the aftermath of the Secret Speech, which resulted in the rise of religious activity. To the central party leadership under Khrushchev this was a palpable reminder of the regimes’ continued difficulty to impose its authority regarding certain policies. This was not least due to the comprehensive claim of the transformational projects that aimed to forge new socialist Uzbeks. Stalin too however, remained suspicious toward “cultural backwardness”. Indeed, the curtailment of too excessive celebration of the pre-revolutionary past and Muslim culture was one of the main motives of the *Zhdanovshchina* of the late 1940s. The lenient cultural policy during World War II had released a wave of publications and theatre plays that challenged the rigid ideological constraints on Soviet discourse. The campaigns instigated by the ageing dictator to reverse the development – *Zhdanovshchina* and the campaign against rootless cosmopolitans – merged in the Uzbek SSR, where they became a centred around “backwardness” and “feudal-bai relics of the past”. During the liberal atmosphere of the Thaw, religious observance experienced a renewed rise. Vaster in scope and with a different target, the anti-religious campaign set in motion by Khrushchev in the late 1950s was guided by the same goal of eradicating what the central leadership regarded “backward” traditions and spotted in the increase of religious activity.

The Uzbek authorities were less hostile toward this development, because they viewed it largely as an apolitical entity that belonged to the national-cultural Uzbek heritage, but they could not hinder Khrushchev’s forceful attack. Although unregistered mosques were shut down and religious communities criminalised, the state possessed no means to eradicate religious observance with a clean slate. As with earlier campaigns against religion, Khrushchev’s efforts were of minor effect with regard to immediate change. Religion was instead driven into the private sphere, but the long-term effect of the ban on religious institutions was tre-

mendous. The lack of religious education and few officially conducted rituals, religious traditions obscured, which reinforced the merging of Soviet and Muslim traditions to create a new form of Muslimness quite distinct from what is known from other Muslim regions of the world and is visible in Central Asia even today.¹²²⁹

The persistence of “backwardness” did, in fact, become ingrained in the Soviet nationality policy. From its conceptualisation, the nationality policy supported nations but eradicated the “backward” cultural traditions of the Central Asian region. In the course of creating nations with a history, with traditions and cultural markers, Muslim culture became nationalised because of the millennium long influence of Muslim culture on the traditions and culture of the Central Asian region. The frowned upon “feudal-bai backwardness” was thus in parts officially integrated into the cultural heritage of the Uzbek nation and inscribed into the Uzbek national identity.¹²³⁰

This was a paradox that neither Stalin nor Khrushchev managed to solve. In fact, the Khrushchev years gained crucial importance in retaining it. The loosening of the repressive political atmosphere of the Stalin years allowed renewed emphasis on the nationality policy and the enhanced the Uzbek leadership’s pursuit of what it meant to be Uzbek. The Congress of the Intelligentsia in 1956 played an enormous role in combining these two elements. For in the atmosphere of the Thaw, the Uzbek leaders effectively cemented the position of the Muslim cultural heritage within the Uzbek national epos. The vigour with which both Stalin and Khrushchev approached the question of “backwardness” however, clearly displays their continued devotion to the consolidation of Soviet rule that challenges Niholas Timasheff’s concept of a Great Retreat. Instead of relying on tradition and conservatism, the regime continuously pursued the transformational processes that should pave the way for communist society.

The Soviet central leadership was not alone in this endeavour. Indeed, the Uzbek leaders were actively participating in this process. Far from mere puppets or suppressed by totalitarian Soviet dictators, the Uzbek leadership was in fact quite active in the policy-making between the centre and the periphery. Arguably, Stalin kept them on a much shorter leash than Khrushchev, but even during Stalinism republican leaders could enter into fierce policy struggles as the republican unrest caused by the centralisation of the cotton industry demonstrated. Under Khrushchev, republican integration and participation increased markedly. As a

¹²²⁹ Privratsky, *Muslim Turkistan*; Rasanayagam, *Islam in Post-Soviet Uzbekistan the Morality of Experience*.

¹²³⁰ Northrop, “Nationalizing Backwardness. Gender, Empire, and Uzbek Identity”; Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 99–115.

matter of fact, Khrushchev experienced such republican resistance during the formulation of the new party programme in 1962 that he had to back-pedal from his plan to restrict republican leaders' terms in office.

This brings us to one of the problems of using the concept limited statehood in such wide a sense as it has been done in this study. For while limited statehood neutralises the rigid borders of terms such as resistance, opposition or nationalism, it entails analytical problems too. How far can, for example, original policy intend be bent before it constitutes limited statehood? Is it limited statehood when the centre of power with its comprehensive claim to power is unable to uphold its power when confronted with republican resistance? Polly Jones asked a similar question concerning de-Stalinisation when she contemplated how much change is needed before policies can be termed de-Stalinising and vice versa.¹²³¹ The problem of less rigid concepts is that they can lose their analytical edge and become carved out of methodological meaning. In other words, while limited statehood offers certain interpretative possibilities we might run danger of over-emphasising certain phenomenon. It is thus difficult to clearly delimitate the borders of limited statehood and perhaps we cannot find conclusive definitions, but need to weigh out the historical material on a case-to-case basis.

In addition, the study of limited statehood in the Khrushchev period is considerably hindered due to the restricted archival access provided in the archives in Russia and Uzbekistan. As a consequence, it is difficult to arrive at the very lowest levels of society and gain a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms that sparked popular and institutional limited statehood. Evidence provides us with a direction that can be measured on the behavioural patterns of the institutional incumbents, but much research remains to be done to gain a better understanding of the processes that took place on the grassroots level.

What we can determine however, is that limited statehood remained a prominent companion to Soviet rule in the Uzbek SSR. This did not mean that Uzbek society and its traditions were resistant to seventy years of Soviet rule. In fact, generational change and time were crucial to the alteration within the broader cultural context of the Uzbek SSR. The wholesale uprooting of the traditional Central Asian cultural norms did indeed bring about enormous modifications to the traditional Muslim culture. Universal Soviet education, socialist work structures, male conscription to the army were all part of a socialisation programme in the name of socialism that quite effectively established new structures as well as altering cultural patterns and values in Uzbek society.

¹²³¹ Jones, "The Dilemmas of De-Stalinization," 3.

Although it was still at an early stage during the Stalin and Khrushchev periods, the continued investment in the Uzbek periphery, the right to write national history, the support of language and culture generated an Uzbek identity that did not stand in simple opposition to Soviet rule. In fact, the Soviet history of the Uzbek SSR was one that celebrated the pre-Soviet Uzbek past *as well as* the enormous progress that the Soviet period brought to Central Asia, both of which were seen as positive achievements that did not stand in opposition to one another.¹²³² As a consequence, the creation of an Uzbek nation did not result in the simple dichotomy of Uzbek versus Soviet identity. On the contrary, Soviet patriotism did, in fact, become a quite authentic feeling for many Central Asians.¹²³³ Instead of two opposing identities then, the Uzbek and Soviet merged into a coexisting, non-conflictual relationship, although scholars long claimed it impossible.¹²³⁴

A similar process can be recorded concerning Islam. The criminalisation of religion that banned religious schools apart from a select few, so that religious observance was largely driven into the private sphere where it altered a great deal. Without popular access to religious authorities, knowledge of scriptures diminished and rituals were practiced by memory or oral tradition, making it vulnerable fundamental changes. Similar to the Uzbek and Soviet identity, the new Soviet practices, holidays and values merged with traditional Muslim and Uzbek culture. Moreover, traditional Muslim celebrations were often accompanied with vodka toasts, the number of veiled women severely decreased, especially in urban settings and positions within the Soviet social hierarchy were ascribed equally high value as traditional religious positions.

This was a development that outlived both Stalin and Khrushchev and it is questionable if they would have accepted it as their successor Leonid Brezhnev did. Under Brezhnev's "social contract" and "cadre stability", the republican leaders were by and large left in peace for as long as they remained politically compliant and fulfilled the economic demands of the Moscow centre, i.e. delivered ever-higher cotton quotas. The result was a remarkably stable political system. The flipside was an unprecedented level of institutional limited statehood. Fraud and corruption began penetrating the entire political system. Furthermore, the twenty-

¹²³² Keller, "Story, Time, and Dependent Nationhood in the Uzbek History Curriculum."

¹²³³ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 90–95. Indeed, anyone traversing today's Uzbekistan will meet a certain nostalgia regarding the Soviet period coupled with a proud Uzbek nationalism. Uzbekistan is not an isolated case, similar voices have been recorded for other republics: Lehmann, *Eine sowjetische Nation*, 9–26. On the complex meaning of nostalgia not as a longing for a life under the repressive communist regimes of Eastern Europe, but as a memory of the togetherness and solidarities of everyday life: Mariia Nikolaeva Todorova and Zsuzsa Gille, *Post-communist Nostalgia* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

¹²³⁴ See, for example: Bennigsen, "Several Nations or One People? Ethnic Consciousness Among Soviet Central Asians."

odd year rule of the late Uzbek leader Sharaf Rashidov resulted in a “re-traditionalisation” of the Uzbek political system that became characterised by high levels of nepotism. Moreover, the Uzbek leadership created a political system, which lived off institutional limited statehood that permeated the entire institutional structure in the Uzbek SSR. Political networks flourished and used their positions to retrieve and dispense vast funds and resources in the shortage economy. In similar ways, the Brezhnev leadership refrained from interfering with popular limited statehood, which allowed the Uzbek people to develop a distinct national identity. Hence, limited statehood in its various forms became an important means to keep the Moscow leadership satisfied, which in turn granted the Uzbek SSR the relative autonomy to exploit to the fullest its position as a republic of the Soviet Union.

The “backward” Uzbek SSR in particular was the profiteer from the Brezhnev period, for the central government continued to send all-union funds toward Tashkent to sustain the social services of the socialist state including free education, free health care, free water, cheap housing and transport. In 1990, the social expenditures lay at 12 per cent of the Uzbek gross domestic product and were largely covered by transfers from Moscow.¹²³⁵ It was then no surprise that the Uzbek (alongside with the rest of the Central Asian) leaders remained strikingly quiet, when Gorbachev began rocking the boat and the calls for independence grew stronger. For them and their republics, the Soviet Union under Brezhnev was indeed a profitable political, social and economic structure and they had little desire to change it.

The *Ambivalent Empire* was not dead, it was merely kept in hibernation. When the vast patronage system of the Soviet began to crumble following its chief’s death, a new elite emerged. As M. S. Gorbachev began uprooting the legacy of the Brezhnev system and attack limited statehood however, it was however a short but intense last struggle of the *Ambivalent Empire*.

¹²³⁵ Khalid, *Islam After Communism*, 89.

APPENDIX I: MEMBERSHIP OF THE UZBEK CENTRAL COMMITTEE BUREAU

1940: Eleven full members, five candidates	1949: Nine full members, three candidates
Iusupov, U. Iu. (Uzbek, Fergana, First Secretary).	Iusupov, U. Iu. (Uzbek, Fergana, First Secretary).
Kudriatsev, A. V. (Russian, Second Secretary)	Lomakin, N. A. (Russian, Second Secretary)
Mun'ko, N. P. (no biographical information, presumably Russian)	Bylbas, V. A. (Russian, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Artykbaev, Ia. (no biographical information, presumably Uzbek)	Nurutdinov, S. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Azimov, S. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)	Vakhabov, M. G. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Abdurakhmanov, A (Uzbek, Tashkent, Chair of the Council of Ministers)	Abdurakhmanov, A (Uzbek, Tashkent, Chair of the Council of Ministers)
Kabanov, P. A. (Russian, Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers)	Kabanov, P. A. (Russian, Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers)
Akhunbabaev, A. (Uzbek, Fergana, Chair of the Supreme Soviet)	Niiazov, A. I. (Uzbek, Fergana, Chair of the Supreme Soviet)
Sadzhaia, A. N. (Georgian, Minister of Internal Affairs)	Petrov, I. E. (Russian, Commander of the Turkestan Military District, headquarters in Tashkent)
Turdyev, Kh. (Uzbek, Tashkent, First Secretary Tashkent obkom)	Candidate members:
Apanasenko, I. R. (Russian, Commander of the Turkestan Military District, headquarters in Tashkent)	Badazhanov, Iu. (Uzbek, Gurlen, Minister of Internal Affairs)
Candidate members:	Baskakov, M. I. (Russian, Minister of State Security)
Aleksandrovskii, A. T. (no biographical information)	Rakhimov, K. R. (Uzbek, unknown, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Fedotov, P. P. (no biographical information)	
Kulagin, I. K. (no biographical information)	
Kamalov, S. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Deputy Chair Council of Ministers)	
Ismailov, N. (no biographical information, presumably Uzbek)	

1952: Nine full members, zero candidates	1954: Nine full members, three candidates
Niiazov, A. I. (Uzbek, Fergana, First Secretary)	Niiazov, A. I. (Uzbek, Fergana, First Secretary)
Mel'nikov, R. E. (Russian, Second Secretary)	Mel'nikov, R. E. (Russian, Second Secretary)
Kamalov, S. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Uzbek Central Committee)	Kamalov, S. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Mukhitdinov, N. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Chair of the Council of Ministers)	Iusupov, U. Iu. (Uzbek, Fergana, Chair of the Council of Ministers)
Bylbas, V. A. (Russian, Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers)	Mukhitdinov, N. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers and Minister of Foreign Affairs)
Rashidov, Sh. (Uzbek, Jizzakh, Chair of Supreme Soviet)	Bylbas, V. A. (Russian, Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers)
Golidze, S. A. (Russian, Minister of State Security)	Rashidov, Sh. (Uzbek, Jizzakh, Chair of Supreme Soviet)
Radzievskogo, A. I. (Ukrainian, Commander of the Turkestan Military District, headquarters in Tashkent)	Luchinskii, A. A. (Ukrainian, Commander of the Turkestan Military District, headquarters in Tashkent)
Mukhitdinova, Kh. (Uzbek, no biographical information)	Mukhitdinova, Kh. (Uzbek, no biographical information)
	Candidate members:
	Alimov, A. (Uzbek, Tashkent, First Secretary of the Tashkent obkom)
	Byzov, A. P. (Russian, Minister of Internal Affairs)
	Murtazaev, K. (Uzbek, Khujand, First Secretary of the Uzbek komsomol)

1956: Eleven full members, zero candidates	1959: Eleven full members, two candidates
Mukhitdinov, N. (Uzbek, Tashkent, First Secretary).	Rashidov, Sh. R. (Uzbek, Jizzakh, First Secretary)
Mel'nikov, R. E. (Russian, Second Secretary)	Titov, F. E. (Russian, Second Secretary)
Alimov, A. A. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)	Rakhimbabaeva, Z. R. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Abdurazakov, M. A. (Uzbek, Tashkent, First Secretary of the Tashkent obkom and Secretary of the Central Committee)	Gabriel'iants, G. A. (Russian, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Rakhimbabaeva, Z. R. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)	Abdurazakov, M. A. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Kamalov, S. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Chair of the Council of Ministers)	Alimov, A. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Chair of the Council of Ministers)
Mirza-Akhmedov, M. Z. (Uzbek, Syrdarya oblast, first Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers)	Rudin, A. N. (Uzbek, First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers)
Rashidov, Sh. (Uzbek, Jizzakh, Chair of the Supreme Soviet)	Nasriddinova, Ia. S. (Uzbek, Fergana, Chair of the Supreme Soviet)
Luchinskii, A. A. (Ukrainian, Commander of the Turkestan Military District, headquarters in Tashkent)	Gulamov, R. G. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Tashkent oblast Secretary)
Byzov, A. P. (Russian, Minister of Internal Affairs)	Naimushin, G. F. (Russian, head of the Uzbek Committee for State Security)
Murtazaev, K. M. (Uzbek, Khujand, First Secretary of the Uzbek komsomol)	Fediuninskii, I. I. (Russian, Commander of the Turkestan Military District, headquarters in Tashkent)
	Candidate members:
	Murtazaev, K. M. (Uzbek, Khujand, First Secretary of the Uzbek komsomol)
	Burmistrov, I. P. (Russian, head of Secretariat department on Party Organs)

1961: Eleven full members, two candidates
Rashidov, Sh. R. (Uzbek, Jizzakh, First Secretary)
Karlov, V. A. (Russian, Second Secretary)
Rakhimbabaeva, Z. R. (Uzbek, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Musakhanov, M. M. (Uzbek, Fergana, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Gabriel'iants, G. A. (Russian, Tashkent, Secretary of the Central Committee)
Abdurazakov, M. A. (Uzbek, Tashkent, First Secretary of the Tashkent obkom)
Kurbanov, R. K. (Uzbek, Bukhara, Chair of the Council of Ministers)
Khairov, A. (Uzbek, first Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers)
Nasriddinova, Ia. S. (Uzbek, Fergana, Chair of the Supreme Soviet)
Naimushin, G. F. (Russian, head of the Uzbek Committee for State Security)
Fediuninskii, I. I. (Russian, Commander of the Turkestan Military District, headquarters in Tashkent)
Candidate members:
Murtazaev, K. M. (Uzbek, Khujand, First Secretary of the Uzbek <i>komsomol</i>)
Burmistrov, I. P. (Russian, head of Secretariat department on Party Organs)
Martynov, N. V. (Russian, Chair of the Uzbek <i>sovnarkhoz</i>)

APPENDIX II: PARTY MEMBERSHIP AND INSTITUTIONAL BELONGING

Party membership in the Uzbek SSR:

Year	1941	1945	1949	1953	1958	1961	1965	1967
Total	72.062	85.505	132.918	142.654	173.104	223.937	314.279	353.969
Members	40.402	52.733	102.906	118.340	157.706	199.982	288.358	335.969
Candidates	31.666	29.772	30.012	24.314	15.398	23.955	25.921	17.872

Party membership by territorial belonging:

Year	1941	1945	1949	1953	1958	1961	1965	1967
Andijan	-	7.846	11.204	12.499	16.237	30.478	46.718	52.644
Bukhara	8.624	4.589	7.904	9.360	12.460	17.452	25.320	29.687
Samarkand	10.585	11.054	18.017	19.089	22.192	28.573	34.292	38.256
Tashkent	25.799	28.190	46.792	49.731	59.848	74.617	96.282	106.518
Fergana	18.171	11.178	17.590	17.854	20.337	30.876	36.954	41.033
Khiva	4.277	3.954	5.829	6.284	6.527	9.407	13.744	16.018

Party membership Uzbek – Russian:

Year	1941	1945	1949	1953	1958	1961	1965	1967
Uzbeks	35.194 (48%)	35.205 (42%)	58.035 (43%)	66.246 (46%)	83.844 (48%)	114.680 (51%)	163.982 (52%)	188.571 (53%)
Russians	17.733 (24%)	19.088 (23%)	36.094 (27%)	36.287 (25%)	41.918 (24%)	50.702 (22%)	70.248 (22%)	76.214 (21%)

Central Committee members in the Uzbek SSR:

Year	1937/1938	1940	1949	1953	1961	1966
Members	65	73	84	91	157 (53 first time members)	165
Native members	34 (52%)	36	51 (60%)	58 (63%)	113 (71%)	-
Candidates	25	29	37	43	73 (35 first time)	73
Native candidates	5	0	22	26	54	-
Members Bureau	11/11	11	9	9	14	12
Native members Bureau	8/4	6	5	6	9	9

Oblast' committee members in the Uzbek SSR:

Year	1937	1940	1949	1952	1958	1961	1963
Members	133	364	636	738	1.054	1.014	1.252
Native members	76	192	398 (62%)	454 (62%)	723 (69%)	708 (70%)	-
Candidates	35	-	141	142	299	271	340
Native candidates	0	-	88	85	162	190	-
Members Bureaus	27	52	88	84	-	-	-
Native members Bureaus	13	25	47	52	-	-	-
Secretaries	-	-	42	30	-	-	-
Native secretaries	-	-	26	19	-	-	-

Raion and City committee members in the Uzbek SSR:

Year	1937	1940	1949	1952	1958 ¹²³⁶	1961	1965
Members	1960	2941	1528	7.383	10.931	11.150	9.294
Native members	1125	1518	1.024	4.878	7.405	7.856	-
Candidates	428	-	170	1.209	947	1.010	1.019
Native candidates	0	-	106	778	561	616	-
Members Bureaus	458	1021	330	1349	-	-	-
Native members Bureaus	260	532	215	890	-	-	-
Secretaries	-	-	125	538	-	-	-
Native secretaries	-	-	84	363	-	-	-

¹²³⁶ Counted from 18 gorkom, 6 gorraikom, 148 sel'raikom.

APPENDIX III: OBKOM LEADERS IN THE UZBEK SSR 1945-1964

	Tashkent	Samarkand	Bukhara	Fergana	Khiva
1945	A. Mavlianov	N. Makhmudov	K. Mukumbaev	K. Turdyev	M. Iakubdzhanov
1946	A. Mavlianov	N. Makhmudov	K. Mukumbaev	K. Turdyev	M. Iakubdzhanov
1947	A. Mavlianov	N. Makhmudov	K. Mukumbaev	A. Koldaev	M. Iakubdzhanov
1948	S. Nurutdinov	A. Alimov	Mangutov	A. Koldaev	M. Iakubdzhanov
1949	A. Tokhtabaev	A. Alimov	Mangutov	S. Kamalov	M. Iakubdzhanov
1950	N. Mukhitdinov	T. Kambarov	Mangutov	N. Makhmudov	M. R. Rakhmanov
1951	N. Makhmudov	T. Kambarov	A. Alimov	N. Makhmudov	M. R. Rakhmanov
1952	N. Makhmudov	T. Kambarov	A. Alimov	K. Akramov	M. R. Rakhmanov
1953	A. Alimov	T. Kambarov	A. Tairov	K. Akramov	M. R. Rakhmanov
1954	A. Alimov	N. Iakubov	M. N. Dzhurabaev	T. Kambarov	M. R. Rakhmanov
1955	A. Alimov	N. Iakubov	M. N. Dzhurabaev	T. Kambarov	M. R. Rakhmanov
1956	S. Nurutdinov	N. Iakubov	A. Risaev	T. Kambarov	M. R. Rakhmanov
1957	S. Nurutdinov	A. Alimov	A. Risaev	T. Kambarov	M. R. Rakhmanov
1958	S. Nurutdinov	A. Alimov	A. Risaev	T. Kambarov	M. R. Rakhmanov
1959	R. Gulamov	A. Makhmudov	A. Risaev	T. Kambarov	M. R. Rakhmanov
1960	R. Gulamov	A. Makhmudov	A. Risaev	T. Kambarov	F. Sh. Shamsudinov
1961	M. Abdurazakov	A. Makhmudov	A. Risaev	T. Kambarov	F. Sh. Shamsudinov
1962	M. Abdurazakov	A. Makhmudov	N. M. Matchanov	G. A. Gabriel'iants	F. Sh. Shamsudinov
1963	Agricultural tier: M. Abdurazakov Industrial tier: P. V. Kaimakov	Agricultural tier: A. Makhmudov Industrial tier: A. A. Khodzhaev	N. M. Matchanov	Agricultural tier: S. R. Rasulov Industrial tier: G. A. Gabriel'iants	B. K. Rakhimov
1964	M. Abdurazakov	S. N. Usmanov	N. M. Matchanov	G. A. Gabriel'iants	B. K. Rakhimov

	Karakalpak ASSR	Namangan	Andijan	Kashkadarya	Surkhandarya
1945	S. Kamalov	T. Kambarov	A. Alimov	B. Nasyrov.	M. N. Dzhurabaev
1946	P. Seitov	A. Alimov	A. Mavlianov	A. Makhmudov	M. N. Dzhurabaev
1947	P. Seitov	A. Alimov	A. Mavlianov	A. Makhmudov	M. N. Dzhurabaev
1948	P. Seitov	N. Mukhitdinov	A. Mavlianov	A. Makhmudov	M. N. Dzhurabaev
1949	T. Kambarov	N. Mukhitdinov	M. Mirza-Akhmedov	A. Makhmudov	M. N. Dzhurabaev
1950	P. Seitov	Kh. Dzhuraev	M. Mirza-Akhmedov	A. Makhmudov	M. N. Dzhurabaev
1951	P. Seitov	Kh. Dzhuraev	M. Mirza-Akhmedov	A. Makhmudov	M. N. Dzhurabaev
1952	A. Makhmudov	Kh. Dzhuraev	M. Mirza-Akhmedov	R. K. Kurbanov	M. N. Dzhurabaev
1953	A. Makhmudov uz	Kh. Dzhuraev	M. Mirza-Akhmedov	R. K. Kurbanov	A. Khakimov
1954	A. Makhmudov	S. Nurutdinov	M. Mirza-Akhmedov	R. K. Kurbanov	A. Khakimov
1955	A. Makhmudov	A. Tairov	M. Mirza-Akhmedov	R. K. Kurbanov	A. Khakimov
1956	A. Makhmudov	A. Tairov	R. K. Kurbanov	M. Guliamov	A. Khakimov
1957	N. Makhmudov	A. Tairov	R. K. Kurbanov	M. Guliamov	A. Khakimov
1958	N. Makhmudov	A. Tairov	R. K. Kurbanov	M. Guliamov	A. Khakimov
1959	N. Makhmudov	A. Tairov	R. K. Kurbanov	M. Guliamov	A. Khakimov
1960	N. Makhmudov	A. Tairov	R. K. Kurbanov	M. Guliamov	A. Khakimov
1961	N. Makhmudov	A. Tairov	I. Ashurov	M. Guliamov	N. D. Khudaiberd- yev
1962	N. Makhmudov	A. Tairov	I. Ashurov	M. Guliamov	N. D. Khudaiberd- yev
1963	K. Kamalov	A. Tairov	Agricultural tier: A. Khaidarov Industrial tier: A. R. Khodzhaev	M. Guliamov	N. D. Khudaiberd- yev F. Sh. Shamsudinov
1964	K. Kamalov	A. Tairov	Agricultural tier: A. Khaidarov Industrial tier: A. R. Khodzhaev	M. Guliamov S. Asamov	F. Sh. Shamsudinov N. M. Muradov

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