CHAPTER II

THE REVOLUTION AND IDEOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE ECONOMIC RECONSTRUCTION

Tajik society remained static for a long period. Its basic structure experienced only minor changes under the Tsarist regime. The eastern and southern parts of modern Tajikistan particularly remained almost untouched. However, after the revolution, the Soviet rule brought far reading changes in Tajikistan in a relatively short period. It transformed the backward feudal-patriarchal set up into a modern socialist society. Tajikistan became part of the general dynamics of Soviet political and economic transformation. The Soviet nationality policy brought about not only important political changes but also initiated a series of economic reforms which led to the total transformation of the basic structure of the former colonies of the Russian empire.

All post-revolution reform policies in the Soviet Union were inseparably linked with the Marxist Leninist ideology. Thus, in order to understand and analyse the socio-economic and political changes in the republic, it is essential to relate the process to the broader theoretical framework of Marxist-Leninist ideology. It can be shown that within the given political system of the new Soviet state, it was required to modernise not only its European parts but
the former colonies as well. The changes were well planned and well thought of. The basic policies formulated were mainly two in the context of Central Asian transformation.

i) The Bolshevik nationality policy and the
ii) socialist agrarian programme.

The essential emphasis of the nationality policy was on the principle of self-determination and equality among nations. For establishing real equality among various nations, the economic dimensions of the nationality policy were emphasised more than its political parameters in the Central Asia. Therefore, the agrarian reforms in the Soviet Central Asia under the nationality policy of the Soviet Union had become a historical necessity. Through these reforms, former periphery-core colonial relations were altered and the previously backward regions were geared towards equal opportunities for economic growth.

The Revolution in Tajikistan:

The political scene in Central Asia continued to be chaotic for quite some time after the incoming of the Bolsheviks in November 1917. On the eve of the revolution, the idea of nation or nationality, as stated before meant
little to the people of Central Asia in general and to the Tajiks in particular. Therefore, at this stage any question of sizable native involvement in the Bolshevik socialist revolution led by the working class, did not arise. More so, due to the lack of any considerable proletariat class of industrial workers in Tajikistan. The people in general were not ready for a socialist revolution. Whatever nationalist feelings prevailed at that stage were mainly linked either to the economic difficulties of the oppressed people of the colonies or emerged from their religious and cultural affinity. Due to the prevalence of mass illiteracy, these were largely devoid of any political comprehension.

On the eve of the revolution, the native muslim organised themselves into two semi-political and religious organisations - the Ulema and the Shura-i-Islamiyeh. The former was patronised mainly by the traditionalists whereas the latter represented the reformist religio-political elite of the Central Asian society. Both these organisations,

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1. Although Tajiks had clear cultural distinctions but political particularism had not emerged among them.
2. About 90 per cent of them were illiterate and a class of native intelligentsia hardly existed among Tajiks.
however, had little popularity among the illiterate masses. After the February revolution, both met in Tashkent in April 1917 to formulate native attitude towards the future of Turkestan. At initial stages, they did not seek any secession or political independence for Central Asia and their position with regard to Russia was vague. They only desired active involvement of local inhabitants in deciding the future of Turkestan and not of the Russians alone. Their more assertive and clear position was regarding their demand for cultural autonomy and putting an end to the economic exploitation of the natives by the colonizers. 3

It was mainly the immigrants who became more active on the political scene of Central Asia immediately after the fall of the Tsarist regime. Although they accounted only for about nine per cent of the total population of Turkestan and merely two per cent of that of Bukhara yet played a key role in the then political situation of the region. 4 It was mainly due to the fact that they were


economically better placed and politically-culturally more aware.

The Bolshevik's position, however, was very weak in Central Asia before the revolution. Among the very few Communists present in the region, distinction between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks was hardly noticeable. The first Congress of the Bolsheviks in Turkestan was held in June 1918 with around forty delegates. The 'Turkestan Committee' was formed immediately after the February revolution by the officials and the supporters of the provisional govt. Later, 'Soviet of the workers' and of 'soldiers' deputies backed by the Bolsheviks took over authority in Tashkent and both these bodies consisted exclusively of immigrants. The interests of the Russian settlers in Central Asia were highly at stake; in no case they wanted political power to go into the hands of those whom they had been exploiting. On the contrary, for the natives, the significance of the revolution could only mean break down of the system of economic exploitation perpetuated by the Tsarist officials and the immigrants. However, at that time they were not in a position to achieve

this with their own efforts. They lacked, not only a basic theoretical framework in which their secular aspirations could be fitted, but also any meaningful infrastructure to launch a political opposition against their exploiters.

The first important step in this direction was taken in March 1917 with the formation of National Committee by the Tashkent Muslim Congress. The National Committee of the Muslims tried to seize power during October Revolution and formed the Kokand Muslim government of Turkestan rejecting the authority of the Tashkent Soviet. The Kokand government proclaimed only territorial autonomy of Turkestan and there was no declaration of independence from Russia. This clearly shows the weakness of the separatist movement at that time. But even this limited effort of self-government failed. The government had neither sufficient cadre to administer nor troops to defend itself. It soon fell and was taken over by the Russian Soviet troops who handed over the authority to the Tashkent Soviet.

6. In its formation the liberal Muslim leaders had joined hands with the conservatives represented by Ulema.

Kokand government could not get support even from the native ruler - the Emir of Bukhara. The Emir was hostile to this government because of the dominance of liberals in it. Moreover, due to his own reasons the Emir decided to remain neutral in the civil war. The failure of Kokand government clearly shows that the few modern liberal leaders could not motivate the illiterate tradition-bound masses to act for their own good. The Tajiks, as a separate national group, were not involved in the formation of Kokand government. As late as the beginning of 1920s there was little, if any, sense of distinct political identity even among the educated Tajiks which could have separated them from their fellow Uzbeks or other Central Asians in terms of political identity.

Although, the Tashkent Soviet supported and represented the interests of the Central Asian proletariat against its bourgeoisie, but it did not take up specific problems of the natives separately. On the contrary, as the region was a colony of the Russians the revolution spontaneously united

8. Ibid., pp. 174-76.
all social stratas of the immigrants against the natives. The colonial socio-economic conditions of the area were such that one of the leaders of the Tashkent Soviet did not even hesitate to say, "since the revolution has been made by Russians, it is they and they alone who should benefit from it." Among the Central Asian proletariat the number of the natives and especially of Tajiks was negligible. At the initial stage, even the few native workers did not join the Russian proletariats to form one socio-economic category. There was a complete dicotomy between the two. The Russian proletariats, consisting of skilled and well paid workers, were completely different from the native workers who were unskilled or semi-skilled and were ill paid because of the seasonal nature of their employment. Many industrial workers among the native workforce were seasonal and non-hereditary workers who took up seasonal work in the upcoming industries in the neighbouring


11. The ethnic composition of the working class of Turkestan was, as estimated by Lyashchenko 22.8 per cent Russians, 60.7 per cent Uzbek and 16.5 per cent from other Central Asian ethnic groups. Lyashchenko, History of the National Economy of Russia (New York, 1970), p. 617.

cities or railway construction sites to enhance their earnings from agriculture. These seasonal unskilled workers could hardly compete with the highly skilled and urban industrial class of the Russians. More to it, Central Asian towns were full of native artisans whom Russian competition had deprived of their livelihood and many of them were forced by economic compulsions to work as semi-skilled or unskilled workers under the Russians. On the whole, Russian proletariat in Central Asia constituted a privileged class for the native workers.13

Within a few weeks of Tashkent Soviet's take over, communication between European parts of the empire and Central Asia was severed off. It remained so for about two years because of the civil war. The Bolsheviks from the Central Russia could not provide guidance or help to the Tashkent Soviet during this period. It was at this time that the antagonism between the Russian immigrants and the natives increased as the officials of the Tashkent Soviet indulged in many excesses and Russian Chauvinism. The leaders of the region deviated to great extent from the

the Lenin's nationality policy and as a consequence the unrepresentative government of the Tashkent Soviet had to face strong native opposition in the form of Kokand government and Basmachi movement. In Bukhara, the Jadidists organised themselves into 'young Bukhoran' movement during this time. It was a secret organisation based on the lines of 'young Turks' and its chief aim was the removal of the Emir. Late in 1917, they contacted the Tashkent Soviet government and with its assistance attempted the removal of the Emir in March 1918. However, the attempt could not succeed, largely because of the aid extended to the Emir by its clergy who roused the people against the 'unholy' act of the non-believers. The Russians as well as young Bukharans were brutally massacred except those who managed to escape to Soviet Turkestan. Discouraged by this failure, Tashkent


15. The members of the party of 'Young Bukharans' were mainly drawn from the petty bourgeois and urban middle class intellectuals. The party had no following among the farmers - the landless or even landed agriculturists who constituted the bulk of the population of the Khanate. See P. Khodzher, K. Istorii Revolutsii V Bukhar (Tashkent, 1926), pp. 125-8.
government recognised the independence of the Khanate for the time being. Once again, at the end of 1919 when the isolation of the region was broken after the Red army's decisive victory over the white armies, the overthrow of the Emir was attempted. The left factions of the young Bukharans were again used to build campaign against the Emir. Finally, on 2nd September 1920, Said Alim Khan, the last ruler of the Khanate fled to eastern Bukhara (present Tajikistan) after a five day battle with the Russian troops in the city of Bukhara. A people's republic of Bukhara named as - Bukharskaia Narodnaia Sovetskaia Respublica (BNSR) was established. The Khanate at that time was not directly incorporated into the Soviet state because it was felt that the country was not ready for a Communist government. Though nominally independent, but actually the BNSR was militarily and politically dependent on the Soviet authorities of Turkestan. The government of the republic was made up of Jadidists and left faction of the young Bukharans. This nationalist government of the Bukharans


17. By now the Young Bukharans had split into two organisations - 'The Young Bukharn Revolutionaries' and the 'Young Bukharian Communists'. Later, after the downfall of the Emir the former dissolved itself and its members joined the Bukharian Communist Party enmass. Faiuzat Khodzhev, K. Istorii Revolutsi V Bukhore (Tashkent, 1926), pp. 32-39.
also did not last long. A mere fall of the Emir failed to solve the basic economic problems of the state. By now, agrarian unrest deepened in Bukhara because nearly 85 per cent of the agricultural land was concentrated in the hands of the Emir and a small group of land owners. The leaders of the new government were not radical enough to propose large-scale agrarian reforms and thereby gain the support of the discontented peasantry. The land and water reforms of early 1920, introduced in other parts of Central Asia, could not be implemented in this area. Through the very first acts, the All-Bukharan Revolutionary Committee which came into power after the downfall of the Emir, nationalised all lands, water and mineral resources and decreed the confiscation of the properties of Emir's officials and beys, but these acts and decrees never came into force. The traditional socio-religious strata of the society which opposed these reforms, was strong and the government feared opposition. The policies of the government were being criticised by Stalin: the People's Commissar for National Affairs. He openly declared that the policies pursued by the government of

Bukhara were neither socialist nor popular. By 1922, the Communist Party of Bukhara had affiliated itself to the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks). After Stalin's criticism in June 1923, the Bolsheviks in Bukhara tried to bring the policies of the government upto his expectations. The representatives of the old bureaucracy, merchants and usurers were purged and those of the trade unions were increased in the government. The President of the Bukhara Republic, Usman Khoja, himself was found guilty of national chauvinism. Lastly, in September 1924, Bukhara was proclaimed a socialist Republic.

Though Bolsheviks did not encounter any strong and organised military resistance against their take over in Central Asia but they had to face opposition in the form of Basmachi movement. The movement was led by the conservative leaders of the society seeking restoration of the status quo. The uneducated people followed them in their anxiety to preserve their religion and traditional culture. Many Jadidists, Young Bukharans and members of

the sacked Kokand government joined the Basmachies. The Emir himself supported its cause first from Eastern Bukhara and later from Afghanistan. Many Tajiks were also actively involved in the movement. In fact, the Basmachi movement survived for a long time in the Eastern and Southern parts of Tajikistan. It took more than a decade to neutralise it. The Tajiks had neither initial hostility towards the Russians nor special love for the Emir or the Uzbek ruling class. In fact, they would have been too glad to see the Uzbek rulers expelled. However, the early policies of the complete disregard towards local participation in the government and high-handedness of the Red Army, fostered dislike and hatred for the new government among the local population. This was largely responsible for the temporary effectiveness of the Basmachi movement. The Bolshevik's attack on religion and traditional mode of life was another contributing factor in the resistance. Ibrahim Beg, the chief of Basmachis, particularly emphasised the threat from the Russians to the traditional Muslim culture of Central Asia. After 1919, with the restoration of communication


lines between Central Russia and Central Asia; proper
guidance was provided to the Bolsheviks of this region and
consequently many wrongs of the previous years were amended.
The socio-economic measures of 1922-23, under the New
Economic Policy, helped in softening the native attitudes
towards the new regime. During this period private trade
was restored, the Islamic clergy received some of their
former powers, wakf land was restored to the religious boards
and Muslim schools and Shariat Courts were allowed to be
reopened. These economic and religious concessions consider­
ably weakened the resistance against the regime and reduced
Basmachi following. Along with these popular measures, the
force of Red army and internal differences of the Basmachis
finally caused the decline of the movement by late 1920s,
though some isolated groups continued their minor operations
in the high Pamirs until 1936. 24 Despite the great prestige
of the tribal leader Ibrahim Beg, the Tajiks on the whole,
after some initial hesitation, preferred to side with the
Soviet government. 25

24. Some of them were operating from the neighbouring
regions of Afghanistan, Istoriia Tadzhitskogo Naroda,
(Moscow, 1964), pp. 72-103; Briskin, Strana Tadzhikov.

P. 27. The author was a contemporary Afghan and had
fought for the Basmachis in 1920s.
The Bolshevik Nationality Policy - A Basic Input in the Political Process:

The process of integration of Central Asian people with the whole of the Soviet Union, in fact, involved greater policy formulations. The temporary economic and religious concessions to the old bourgeoisie and the use of force need to be viewed in the larger perspective of the Bolshevik Nationality Policy which was the essential basic input of the political process.

The nationality question became an important issue in Russian politics in the beginning of the present century. The Tsarist empire which covered almost one-sixth of the total land surface of the earth, had nearly hundred different nationalities belonging to different races, ethnic, linguistic and religious groups. The Tsarist government gave privileged and special position only to the Russians; specially so in its colonial regions. That is why the Russia of those days was called a 'prison of nations' rather than a multi-national Commonwealth. The oppression of national minorities led to

26. The term 'nation' and 'nationality' in the context of the Soviet Union are interchangeable and have been used in its historical sense.

27. As per first all Russian Census of 1897. Also see Frank Lorimev, The Population of Soviet Union: History and Prospects (Geneva, 1946), pp. 50-65.
growth of national movements all over the empire. Dissatisfaction of the major non-Russian nationalities was one of the main factors which contributed to the success of revolution in 1917. However, immediately after the revolution, the centrifugal tendencies emerged strongly among the national minorities which created a difficult task for the Bolsheviks of keeping together the diverse parts of the empire. The Bolsheviks on their part were well prepared to deal with this problem and had already devoted enough attention to it. The question relating to the nationalities of the Tsarist empire was widely discussed and debated among the Bolsheviks. The main thinkers on this issue included Lenin and Stalin. As per Marxist theory, nationalism and nation states are characteristics of capitalism which at its later stage are bound to yield to class rivalries and to the international unity of the proletariat. 28 Marxism, in principle, is irreconcilable with nationalism of any kind, even when it is in its 'fairest' and 'purest' form. 29 Marxism advocated internationalism and unity of the prole-


fariat of all nations in place of nationalistic assertions of various kinds. However, despite this basic Marxist hostility of Rosa Luxemburg school who was the chief exponent of the orthodox Marxist views on the nationality question, the London Congress of the Second International declared the People's right to self-determination. Lenin strongly recognising the historical legitimacy of the nationality question in the Russian context espoused this declaration and Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party (RSDWP) inserted it into its programme of 1903. Under this principle of self-determination, the Bolsheviks not only gave an important and equal status to various non-Russian nationalities of the Tsarist empire but also gave them the right to secede and form independent states.

This theoretical confusion between the orthodox Marxist viewpoint and the more liberal Marxist-Leninist theoretical formulations on the question of nations and nationalities arises mainly due to different socio-economic context in which each viewed 'nations'. The orthodox Marxism traced the formation of nations, specially in Europe, linked with the rise and growth of capitalism. Therefore, the rise of national links was in effect a process of the creation of bourgeois links, and the national state was the bourgeois state. The formation of
nations in the USSR took place in different historical circumstances. The socio-ethnic and tribal identities under the exploitative rule of the Tsar were unable to grow into nations of the European capitalist-national states kind. These small nationalities of the Tsarist empire due to their different socio-economic circumstances needed special attention. 30

The Russian regime, under various Tsars, had oppressed these nationalities and had denied them their legitimate claims. Lenin declared that the only way of showing disapproval to the Tsarist policy of national oppression was by recognising the right of the oppressed people to complete self-determination. 31 In its absence, it was not possible to breakaway from the ill-reputed history of the Tsarist period in the nationality sphere. Lenin felt that it was only by ensuring complete equality to all nationalities and by recognising their right to self-determination, the new regime could win the much needed faith of the non-Russian


nationalities in order to keep the country together. It was after Lenin's reply to Rosa Luxemburg's arguments that the Marxists in general started realising the importance of national claims in certain areas, and it was highlighted in this context that Marx himself had favoured all those national struggles which were objective carriers of progress and opposed those movements which carried objective reaction. The nationalist movements promoting democratic development and thereby providing the conditions for the growth of an independent and socially revolutionary working class were regarded progressive. Marx and Engles, however, did not include the non-European colonies in the category of the oppressed nations. Only the oppressed nationalities of Europe were put under this category. They in no way found the national and colonial problem identical. The colonies formed purely an economic and not a political category for them. Lenin eliminated this distinction between the European nationalities and the colonies in this regard. Especially in the context of the eastern colonies, he stated,
"the east had definitely taken the western path, that hundreds of millions of people will now on share in the struggle for ideas which the west has already worked out for itself." 35 He emphasised that everywhere i.e. both in Europe as well as in colonies, the nationalist movements break the feudal order and bring bourgeois democratic system that provides suitable atmosphere for the growth of proletarian socialism. 36 But Lenin unambiguously differentiated between the national claims of the oppressed nations and of the oppressing nations and demanded the right of self determination only for the former. 37

Lenin's theory of self-determination clearly supported the right of the oppressed nationalities to complete political independence which could even mean their right to secede. It would be wrong to conclude that Lenin wanted or encouraged disintegration of the empire. He made his position quite clear by saying, "we demand freedom of secession for the oppressed nations, not because we dream of economic disintegration or because we cherish the idea of small states, but

on the contrary we are in favour of large states and the closer unity and even fusion of nations but on a truly democratic, truly international basis which is inconceivable without the freedom of secession." He formulated this doctrine mainly to draw support for the revolutionary struggle against the Tsarist regime from the East European states and from the Tsarist colonial regions. Therefore, he stressed the validity and need of self-determination during the initial stages of the socialist revolution. Whereas, he firmly believed that during the later stages, socialism would not only abolish the present division of mankind into small national states through its policies of equal economic opportunities but a strong proletarian class having common economic interests would ultimately merge them into one. He, infact, had firm hope that after socialist state's approximation of complete freedom of secession the actual secession would be weak and rare. But happenings in Russia and in its colonies were contrary to his expectations.

38. Ibid.

Soon after the revolution the process of disintegration started, various nations previously under the Tsarist regime started demanding the right to secede under the doctrine of self-determination. In Central Asia as well as in Tajikistan strong resistance to the Soviet take-over, along with many other nationalities of the Russian empire, was evident. Lenin's hopes for the weakness of separatists tendencies in the Russian context, however, were not completely devoid of fears. In fact, he clearly expected such setbacks at the initial stages of socialism. He wrote, "to imagine that a social revolution is conceivable without revolts by the small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without the revolutionary outbursts of a section of the petty bourgeoisie with all its prejudices, without the movement of non class-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against the oppression of the landlords, the Church, the monarchy, the foreign nations etc.; to imagine (all) this means repudiating social revolution." Here Stalin, the Commissar for national affairs came to

40. For details see E.H. Carr, "Dispersal and Reunion", The Bolshevik Revolution - 1917-1923, Part III.

the assistance of Lenin. In order to rebuff these separatist tendencies, primarily voiced by the bourgeoisie of these nations, he emphasised the conditional acceptance of the right to self determination. Earlier, Lenin himself had asserted that the right to self determination cannot be 'unconditional'.\(^{42}\) The condition put up was that, whenever the interests of nationality and that of the proletariat clashed the former had to yield to the latter. Bolsheviks, after the revolution, did proclaim the primacy of socialism over nationalism wherein, the right of self-determination has to be subordinated to the right of the working class to achieve socialist order.

More to this, Stalin stressed the need to view nationalism essentially in its economic perspective. Pressed by the chaotic conditions of the civil war, he stated that since the right of self-determination is not unqualified and unconditional, so in specific circumstances it could also be refused.\(^{43}\) But this did not lead to the repudiation of the right of self-determination altogether. In view of the fresh controversies that arose

\(^{42}\) V.I. Lenin, The Right of Nations to Self Determination (Moscow, 1979), p. 20.

\(^{43}\) J. Stalin, Marxism and National Colonial Question, p. 64.
on the question after 1917, the eighth congress of the Russian Communist Party held in March 1919, reasserted the validity of the right of self-determination but after adding some more conditions and qualifications to it.\(^4\) In deciding the feasibility or otherwise of the exercise of the right in any given case "the class historical viewpoint" was to be the sole deciding factor, which took into account the stage of historical development of the given nation i.e. whether it is evolving from medievalism to bourgeois democracy or from bourgeois democracy to Soviet or proletariat democracy etc.\(^5\) The introduction of this somewhat vague qualification for the exercise of the right, however, made its actual exercise quite difficult. Nevertheless, Stalin played a new theoretical role in this direction by questioning the bonafide of the people who demanded the right. He believed that if this right was granted to the bourgeoisie of a particular nation then there was every possibility of its being used against the interests of the proletariat. To check such counter revolutionary possibilities it was decided to accord

\(^4\) KPSS, n. 16, p. 417; Stalin, n. 19, pp. 131-154.

the right only if demanded by the proletariat of a nation. He further added that since the economic interests of the proletariat were linked with the socialist state, therefore, there was no reason that under the socialist state the proletariat would demand such a right of secession from the state.46

Under these theoretical formulations, it was essential to prove to the masses of the non-Russian, nationalities that "central proletariat Russia is defending their interests and their interests alone." It was felt that this must be proved not only by resorting to repressive measures against the colonisers and the bourgeois nationalists alone but primarily by a consistent and well conceived economic policy.47 The emphasis on real equality, particularly in economic terms among the nations, henceforth, became the essence of the party's policy regarding the nationality question. Therefore, the main objective of the policy, after the consolidation of the Soviet power, became the liquidation of existing economic inequalities among the nations. It was firmly believed that the elimination of economic inequalities

46. Stalin, n. 19, pp. 131-140.
47. Ibid., p. 82.
would make all bourgeois nationalist and separatist tendencies disappear. In short, the Soviet nationality policy in practice meant:

i) the initial theoretical renunciation of all claims and rights over non-Russian nationalities of the Tsarist empire.

ii) Immediately after the revolution, statutory recognition of the right of these nationalities to exist and to decide as independent states.

iii) Armed assistance to the working class of these nations against the bourgeois aspirations of using the political and state power against the interests of the working class and finally,

iv) to achieve economic equality among the nationalities without which national or political equality was meaningless.

The Economic Dimension of the Nationality Policy:

In the context of Central Asia the right of self-determination did not actually mean the right to secede. The political opposition or efforts in the direction of independent native rule were suppressed with the help of

48. Ibid.
Red army. More so, since the demand for self-rule was mainly raised by the native bourgeoisie, the Bolsheviks were not obliged to accept it. The policy aspects in this direction were guided by the practical necessity as well. Stalin had frankly admitted that "the revolution in Central Russia is doomed without the assistance of the border regions which abound in raw-materials, fuel and food stuffs". Likewise, "the border regions of Russia (Central Asia) in their turn are inevitably doomed to imperialist bondage without the political, military and organisational support of the more developed Central Russia." In fact, self-determination and the principle of free and equal nations of the Bolsheviks applied more in economic sense rather than political in the Central Asian context. Since the native proletariats whose 'claims' or 'demands' could have been binding on the Bolsheviks were almost non-existant, hence, there was no question of their expressing any desire for political independence. The self-determination thus,

49. J. Stalin, n. 18, p. 78.
50. Ibid.
could only mean the abolition of all national inequalities and the economic privileges of the Russian immigrants over the natives. It is clear from the developments of early years of the Soviet take over that the natives resented the economic privileges of the Russians more than their political powers.

After establishing their control, the main objective of the Bolsheviks in Central Asia was to remove the mistrust of the natives against the Russians through the policy of equal economic opportunities. When the central government appointed a Commission to clear-up situation in Central Asia in October 1919; in no uncertain terms it was reminded that "the abolition of all national inequality and all privileges of one national group over another constituted the foundation of all the policy of the Soviet government and serve as a guiding principle in all works of its organs ... it is only through such work that the mistrust of the native toiling masses of Turkestan for the workers and peasants of Russia, bred by many years' domination (economic domination) of Russian Tsarism can be finally overcome".51 It was decided to

provide extra economic help and aid to the backward nationalities so that these could catch up with the more developed parts of the country. Another reason for the greater emphasis on economic equality also sprang from one of the essential characteristics of the Soviet regime i.e. democratic centralism, whereby, leaders from the centre provided leadership at all levels. The regional political interests were subordinated to that of all union interests. The aim was to promote the non-regional, non-national and all-union loyalties among the people. It was decided to fulfil regional aspirations through economic efforts. Thus, political integration was conceived through economic measures.

In the economic sphere also, the question of regional autonomy versus central planning assumed great significance in the early years of the Soviet power. The question of the relationship between the two was highly debated during the early years of 1920s. The 9th Congress of the party in 1920 voted for a single comprehensive economic plan encompassing the entire economy of the country. It was decided that this country-wide plan would exercise direct control over the local economy, including the moving of labour and raw materials as may be required
by the circumstances. This was adversely reacted to by the nationalities. The supporters of regional autonomy in economic sphere advocated that the development in the regions and their economic linkages with other regions were to be planned by those living in the regions. Their conception of the role of the institutions and forums of central planning was limited to ensure the helpful conditions for the coming up of these independent economic zones and help resolve conflicts between them as they arose. The other view, which ultimately prevailed, viewed regional development in the context of overall economic development of the country as a whole. Whereby, regional planning was regarded a kind of administrative and implementing arm of the central plan. The purpose was to create a "coherent national economic complex" rather than the creation of different economic zones. The requirements and specific economic conditions of a region were to be combined with the needs of the 'national economic complex' coherently under central planning. This kind of centralised planning could also ensure internal economic

integration along with political integration within Soviet Union. From the 1930s onward the regional economic development was planned on the basis of a central planning. However, within this framework regional development is based on those local endowments that are beneficial to not only the region but also the union as a whole.

Another important element of the regional planning in the Soviet Union is the concept of harmonious regional development. In the 10th party Congress in 1921, it was resolved that "the proletarian revolution has ... for its task in the eastern border regions ... the consequental liquidation of all the vestiges of national inequality in all areas of social and economic life." The insistence on the idea of social equality has been the mainstay of Soviet society which extends also to the areas of regional planning and development.

The Formation of Soviet Tajikistan:

The heterogenous composition of the population of Central Asia raised number of problems for the implementation of the developmental policies and plans for the new administrators. Not only that the various national groups which inhabited

53. Ibid., p. 367.
Central Asia did not possess the same language and culture but also differed in the level of economic and political development. In view of this, the Soviet authorities could not adopt one uniform programme for the economic and cultural upliftment of the people. Therefore, it was felt that the region should be reorganised on the basis of nationally homogenous political units. Similar views were also expressed by the native leaders. Faizullah Khodzhev, the Chairman of the Council of Nazirs of the Republic of Bukhara had stressed that it was extremely difficult to promote the development of all national groups in an equal measure unless the multi-national structure of the republic is channelled into nationally-homogenous political units. The Turkestan Commission, therefore, was also given a clear instruction by Lenin to prepare

54. Some western scholars hold the view that the main aim of territorial reorganisation and division of Central Asia into national republics was to destroy the unity of the region and thus to eradicate nationalist and separatist tendencies which had built up during the years of civil war and revolution. Gavin Homby, n. 25, p. 231ff. Hugh Seton-Watson, The New Imperialism (London, 1964), p. 58.

55. Quoted by R. Vaidyanath, n. 20, p. 165. District wise distribution of various national groups in Turkestan, Bukhara and Khiva clearly shows the complexity of the ethnic composition of the region, see Vaidyanath, n. 20, Appendix B.
ethnographic maps of Turkestan on July 13, 1920. Though the process of dividing Turkestan into national units began as early as 1920 but the important delimitation programme was implemented in October 1924. Tajikistan as an independent national unit emerged for the first time under this programme. However, it was not given the status of an independent union republic in 1924. It was formed as an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic attached to Uzbek Union Soviet Socialist Republic. The AZSR of Tajikistan included parts of Samarkand and Fargana oblasts, the whole of eastern Bukhara and the Pamir region as Gorno-Badakshan Autonomous oblast. Later the republic was elevated to the position of a full fledged union republic in December, 1929. Some charges were made in its territories at this time. Samarkand and Bukhara districts were taken out of Tajikistan and were handed over to Uzbekistan, and in its place, Leninabad or Khodzent oblast was taken away from Uzbekistan and was incorporated into Tajikistan. Why were Tajiks


57. The political and territorial set up established in December, 1929 has remained unaltered, though, within the republic there had been changes in the territorial sub-divisions.
demonstrative importance of their republic. "Greetings to Tajikistan, the new Soviet working people's republic at the Gates of Hindustan. I ardently wish all the working people of Tajikistan success in converting their republic into a model republic of the eastern countries ... workers of Tajikistan! Advance the culture of your land, develop its economy, assist the toilers of the city and the villages, rally round the best sons of the fatherland. Show the whole east that it is you, rigorously holding in your hands the banner of liberation, who are the most worthy heirs of your ancestors." 59 The same view has been expressed by Tajik scholars in their important textbook on Tajik history, "The establishment of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic at the border of the colonial east was of great international importance. It became a model of how the Soviet government has resolved the national problem, and a proof of the triumph of Leninist nationality policy. It demonstrated the great care which the Communist Party and the Soviet government have taken in the creation and development of national statehood of the previously oppressed backward colonial people." 60


Regarding the question of economic preparedness, it is true that while the other republics and autonomous oblasts of Central Asia were able to switch over to the constructive activities soon after their establishment, the Tajik republic remained pre-occupied for a long time with the task of clearing the land of Basmachis. Normal conditions came to prevail within Tajikistan only from 1926 onwards. However, during a short period of three years between 1926-29, considerable headway was made in rehabilitating the shattered economy. In 1925, the total sown area of the republic was 72 per cent lower than that in pre-war days. But the losses were recovered greatly by the end of this period; particularly the rapid extension of industrial crops was important in the direction of economic recovery. The growing of cotton, which had almost ceased before 1925, developed to tremendous proportions by 1930. The sown area under cotton was 35 thousand hectares in 1914, it fell to mere 4 thousand in 1925; but again shot up to one hundred and thirty-two thousand hectares in 1930. This remarkable increase in cotton crop cultivation certainly enhanced the economic potential of the republic. Moreover, for further economic development it was being considered that

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the republic should have more funds and better access to its resources. Many Communists of Tajikistan had begun to express the feeling that Tajikistan was not getting a fair deal at the hands of the Uzbek government of the Uzbek SSR. Many tajiks started resenting Uzbek supremacy and aspired for national autonomy and national government. The genuine aspirations of the Tajiks were soon heeded and they were granted a separate status of a fullfledged union Republic. In fact, Tajik nation has been called 'a child of October Revolution'. Without Soviet rule it would have been difficult for the Tajiks to find a separate republic for themselves. Centuries old Turkic-Islamic dominance was too formidable for them to raise demands and build a mass movement for a separate Tajik nation.

National and linguistic distinctions of the people of Central Asia, however, were promoted and encouraged only within the overall socialist set-up. The regional political interests were not given a free play. These were definitely subordinated to that of all union interest. Inspite of the defeat of the Basmachis, which represented an open

resentment to the socialist regime, internal disturbance continued for long. Many members of local intelligencia who first emerged as Muslim reformers and later joined Communist Party enmass, though, out-worldly became Communists but from inside remained Muslim nationalists. They aimed at creating a Muslim National Communism and a vast independent Turkish state, embracing all Muslim dominated regions under Soviet Russia. They resisted from inside all those measures which aimed at integrating the Central Asians into the Soviet system.

A purge of such nationalist elements was undertaken immediately after the elevation of the Tajiks into a full union republic. They were called nationalist deviationists who with their conciliatory attitude towards the bays and other anti-Soviet elements obstructed the effective implementation of the national policy of the party. Many of them occupied important positions in the party and government.63 The group included two top leaders of the Tajik republic; Nasrullah Maksum, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee and President of the Republic, and his important Minister Abdurakhim Khodzhibaev (Chairman of the People's Commissars). They were charged with sabotaging the economic policies by

63. *Istoriia Tadzhikskogo Naroda*, n. 59, p. 280.
their nationalist - chauvinistic and anti-Russian deviations. A great many local administrators and party members were removed with them between 1933-35. The remaining survivors of the nationalist chauvinists were purged in 1939. This time again, the new President of the republic Shotemar and his Chief Minister Rahmbaev along with many others were eliminated. 64

The Need and Concept of Agrarian Reforms:

It was, however, realised that the aim to achieve non-regional and all union loyalties of the people of the Republic could not be fulfilled just through negative measures. The aim was fulfilled mainly through economic efforts. A clear-cut policy in this direction was formulated in the 10th Party Congress which laid greater emphasis on rendering help to the national minorities by eradicating their economic backwardness. Consequently, a well conceived economic policy for Central Asia was formulated to achieve political and economic integration of the region with central parts of Russia.

The continuously disturbed political situation and civil war conditions had brought a complete economic break

down to an already backward economy of Tajikistan. By 1925, cultivated land decreased to less than half of the pre 1920 level, and about 26 per cent of the population of Eastern Bukhara migrated to Afghanistan.\footnote{Istoria Tadzhikskogo Naroda, \textit{h. 42, p. 159.}}

In the early years of the Soviet power, Lenin had pointed out that economic reconstruction was impossible without a solid agricultural base.\footnote{Lenin, \textit{Collected Works, Vol. 31, pp. 505-06.}} Improvement in this sector was crucial for overall economic development especially in a region where majority of the population depends on agriculture as its basic source of livelihood. The desired action in this direction could be the transformation of agriculture from its traditional, static, subsistence level to progressive, economically more profitable, advanced and 'modern' level. Farming not only depends on physical environment but also on social and technological set up such as land-ownership and tenancy, size of farms, pressures of population and farm workers densities, irrigation agricultural implements and literacy status of farmers etc. Hence, agriculture is a relatively complex phenomenon. Its development depends on simultaneous
operation and interaction of many complimentary factors such as environmental, institutional, infrastructural, technological and administrative. These factors are, however, vitally influenced by the social and political milieu within which they operate. So much intimate is the relationship between agriculture and type of socio-political and cultural institutions that it becomes virtually impossible to decide which is the cause and which is the effect.

The rural socio-economic structure exhibited great disparities in income, wealth and power within the structure. The inequality and monopoly control over land not only inhibited the chances of self-improvement for the peasants but prevented the adoption of agrarian reforms to check and reduce such inequalities and to improve general agrarian infrastructure in order to enhance production. During the colonial era, although the monopolies over land were challenged but government was reluctant to interfere in the life and customs of indigenous people. Though they did not hesitate to do so when their interest demanded it but, in general, frontal attack on the socio-cultural institutions, that were built into the traditional agrarian structure, was not attempted. The deterrent factors were considerations of expediency and expense and the general colonial policy of
Immediately after the break-down of the colonial era, the need for agrarian reforms was strongly felt all over the world. The most important argument in favour of land reforms, as it was then visualised, was that these would abolish or at least bring under control the social and economic inequalities. This basic purpose of any agrarian reform programme is more specifically emphasised in the socialist programme which aims at the abolition of exploitation of man by man: where no one works for the benefit of any other individual but only for himself and for the community at large.

The term 'agrarian reforms' here means all those measures which are introduced to alter agrarian structure for the improvement of agricultural production and the relationship of the people to the land. The term may not be confused with 'land reforms' as sometimes used as its synonym. The term 'land reform' has a narrower meaning, it refers only to land tenure reforms i.e. changes in the form of land ownership and tenancy rules. Whereas, 'agrarian reforms' a wider term, encompasses all land reforms together with those related to other institutional structures of agrarian economy. 68


It is difficult to formulate a general theory of agrarian reforms because each of these needs to be related to the prevalent socio-economic, cultural, political and historical situation. Similarly, the purpose of a specific reform may vary due to different political, social, economic and historical reasons. It may, however, be pointed out that these dimensions of reality are not exclusive and these do overlap. Nevertheless, an agrarian reform at a higher level is primarily a political issue. The political purposes of agrarian reforms are generally most decisive and vital. These, of course, are related to the socio-economic realities. The lot of the peasants is improved and social equality is demanded with a view to win over their political support. Thus, the economic performance becomes the litmus test of their political legitimacy. It is, therefore, of vital significance to emphasis that "fundamental to any analysis of the problem of the land reform is the fact that it is not so much an administrative or even economic, as it is an essentially a political process." 69

Historically, the issue of the ownership of land always has maintained a close inter-dependent relationship

with politics. The particular type of land tenure system constituted a significant determinant of the pattern of political power on the one hand and was supported and perpetuated by a specific power structure on the other. In other words, the agrarian reforms are meant to modify the economic basis of politics. The inter-dependence of agrarian reforms and of politics is deeper in developing regions where agrarian economy has a significant role to play.

A basic and broad alteration in the agrarian structure cannot be brought about under private auspices. In order to be effective, the agrarian reforms require not only governmental sponsorship but need to be made obligatory as well. Moreover, the changes envisaged through the reforms have to be "drastic and rapid, otherwise they are bound to be perfunctory and ineffective." 70

Socialist Agrarian Reforms in Central Asia: Political and Ideological Background

The agrarian economy of Central Asia had important role to play in the overall politico-economic set up of the Soviet Union after the revolution. Therefore, the inter

dependence of the agrarian reforms and the new political regime came under sharper focus immediately after the revolution. The agrarian structure and general conditions of the peasants of Tajikistan, along with other Central Asians, underwent radical change after the establishment of the Soviet regime. As a part of wider agrarian programme, a series of agrarian reforms were introduced in Central Asia. These led to the total transformation of the economic situation in the region. Of course, the main instrument of the formulation and implementation of the transformed basis of the rural socio-economic structure was the socialist statehood. It was the socialist state which built socialist economic relations in the region.

The agrarian problem was not a question posed within Marx's writings. But when the Social Democrats of Russia tried to test and implement Marx's theory in their situation, a number of political problems faced by them raised agrarian question in the Marxist circles.

In the concrete historical reality of Russia where an overwhelming majority of the people were agriculturist, Lenin clearly envisaged the importance of agrarian question particularly in the Russian context. In his works he explained all major aspects of agrarian relations and outlined a socialist agrarian programme. In 1906, he wrote, "by agrarian programme we mean a definition of the guiding
principles of social democratic policy on the agrarian question i.e. policy in relation to agriculture and the various classes, groups and sections of people. Thus, Lenin viewed the agrarian question not only in relation to land and other productive forces but also with class relations in the countryside and with the economic system as a whole. He outlined the ways for the socialist transformation of agrarian relations, maintaining that in the early years of Soviet power, economic reconstruction would be impossible without a sound agricultural base.

Lenin's agrarian programme was based on the idea of forging an alliance between the working class and the working peasantry. It was deemed necessary not only for achieving a complete victory of the socialist revolution over the bourgeois democratic revolution but also for future economic reconstruction under a socialist state. In his 'April thesis' he emphasised the need for agrarian reorganisation. The confiscation of all lands belonging

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to the Tsarist state, church or landlords was the first thing to be done, as this being the only mean of doing away with the medieval system of land ownership. The second suggestion was to nationalise all land in order to put a stop to inequalities and to take the society towards socialist gains. His third major suggestion was the need to organise farming on a large scale basis and the importance of machinery and technical progress for higher labour productivity. He deemed it necessary for the future development of agriculture on socialist lines. At the initial stage, the principle of co-operative farming was stressed in order to achieve the above goal. He showed how through the various forms of co-operatives, the peasants could gradually assimilate the idea of socialism. He was aware of the fact that co-operation as such was not intrinsically socialist and co-operatives in themselves are no doubt collective capitalist institutions. But he believed that when the state power passes from the hands of the bourgeoisie to those of the proletariat after the revolution; the co-operatives are bound to produce different results. Moreover, Lenin felt this was the most accessible, advantageous and understandable way of going over from small scale


individual farming based on private property and primitive methods to a large scale collective farming based on social property and advanced techniques of production. 76

Lenin's doctrine and analysis of the agrarian question was based mainly upon Central Russian rural conditions. No attempt was made to study the rural conditions of the periphery region of Central Asia separately. However, his analysis and guidance for the agrarian question as a whole provided a specific broad framework for the reconstruction of agrarian structure on socialist lines in the region. Moreover, Lenin's keenness to eradicate all traces economic imperialism in the Soviet Union also provided guidance in this direction. He directed the Communists of Turkestan, "to wipe out all traces of great Russian imperialism and wage an implacable struggle against world imperialism." He further added, "in one way or another, by one's attitude or by concessions, it is necessary to compensate the non-Russians for the lack of trust for suspicion and the insults to which the government of the 'dominant' nation subjected them to in the past."77

Apart from equalising the economic rights of the immigrants with the native people the basic emphasis of the party's economic policy was to eliminate the tribal-patriarchal and feudal relations of production and to encourage non-capitalist socio-economic development in the region, which naturally meant by-passing the capitalist stage of development as till the revolution the region could experience only the rudimentary capitalist development. Lenin cautioned to be more vigilant and careful in the case of Central Asia. He said that building of socialism in Soviet East involves 'greater risk' so comparatively a 'slower' but more systematic process should be adopted. 78 This was the basic theoretical framework formulated by the tenth party congress held in March 1920, outlining the 'current tasks of the party in the National Question'.

Under Central Asian conditions any meaningful transformation and the non-capitalist development of its economy needed active material technical and personnel support from the other more advanced parts of the union. This assistance was agreed to be provided in principle. Through various resolutions it was made clear that the more

78. Cited in Istoria Tadzhikskogo Naroda, n. 59, p. 159.
advanced parts of the union would provide all such assistance to their less developed brothers. Thus, the guidance, assistance and initial initiative for economic transformation necessarily came from the Communist Party and the Soviet Socialist government of USSR. Therefore, in the early stages there was primacy of the political structure over economic forces without which it would have been difficult to carry out the necessary reforms in the basic structure of the Central Asian Society.

Industrialisation of the country as a whole was the chief objective of the Soviet state soon after the revolution as it was considered the main instrument in eliminating economic backwardness in the country. The role of the peasantry after land reforms in the context of economic development was profoundly discussed during 'the great debate' of 1920s. At the end of this debate, it was decided to extract large surplus from the agricultural sector by imposing on it unfavourable terms of trade and compulsory delivery quotas. The main justification of the strategy was the lack of an alternative source of capital accumulation in a pre-capitalist socialist country. The application of the policy, however, varied depending upon the different stages of socialist construction keeping in view conditions prevailing in different parts of the country. At present, one of
the leading strategic trends in the developmental process is the system of inter-branch and inter-sectoral connections covering a broad sphere of productive activities. The economic mechanism ensuring a synthesis of agriculture and industry has been sought within the framework of socialist agro-industrial complex.