CHAPTER - 2

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
In a broad historical and ethno-cultural sense, Central Asia has always demonstrated scholarly dynamism and cultural pluralism. Being part of the ancient Silk Route, Tajikistan has been a place where several religions like, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Nestorian Christianity, Judaism, Manichaeism, and Islam, not only congregated with each other but also many great empires like Aryans, Macedonians, Parthians, Kushana, Turks, Arabs, Samanids, Ghaznavids, Mongols, Timurids, and Russians flourished thus making the present day Tajikistan ethnically, one of the most pluralistic region of the mediaeval and modern world.

The use of national mythologies can play an important role in nation building and constructing contemporary political background. In the post civil-war period, Tajikistan needs to build national pride and to evolve from sub-national ethno-regional identities to supra-national common Tajik Persian identity. In this regard, revisiting of ethnic history is done by Tajikistan’s government for creating a common Tajik identity and for the nation building process. Valery Tishkov states that “Soviet and post-Soviet historiography, archeology, and ethnography often reduce the past to the present, and represent a look back into history viewed as ‘gradualness’ and ‘homogeneity’” (Tishkov 1997: 13).

The government of Tajikistan is using history as a useful and sturdy point of reference. Tajik government on its part has selected the events from its history like celebrating 1100th anniversary of Samanid Empire in 1999; the celebration of birth anniversary of Asho Zarthustra in 2001 for the 10th Anniversary of Tajikistan’s independence. In 2002, President of Tajikistan Imomali Rahmon asked the head of the United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Paris to declare 2003 as the year for celebration of 3000 years Revival of Zarathushtrian Culture and Civilization, which was accepted. Later on the year 2006 was declared the Year of Revival of Aryan Civilization. Thus, the government is using the primordial symbols for pride and cohesion of public and political forces not only within Tajikistan but also around the world.

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7 He changed his name from Imomali Rahmonov to Imomali Rahmon in March 2007.
8 President Rahmon in his book, *The Tajik in the Mirror of History*, claims that Zoroaster was a Tajik from Bactria/Balkh (currently in Afghanistan) (Rahmonov 2005)
In addition, language can be used as an instrument to merge boundaries. In this regard, Tajik President Imomali Rahmon has laid importance to the study of Tajik language, made Tajiki national language and has employed historians and intelligentsia to study Tajik history for reinstating and maintaining Tajik traditions. Unfortunately, these developments have been limited to paper work and a subject of academic discussion amongst the political and cultural elites. The local population remains immobilized and unaffected by the efforts towards nationalist orientations. as ethno-regional loyalties are stronger. Further, economic crisis makes the people concerned about the issue of employment and feeding their family than rediscovering their historical or linguistic identity.

**Ethnic History of Tajikistan**

The history of Tajikistan dates back to Neolithic period. A wide range of interesting research has been done on the ancestors of the Tajiks. At the same time, the study of ethnic history of Central Asia remains challenging due to “absence of written sources and also by the fact that the archaeological materials available cannot be interpreted in a simple way. Nevertheless information on settling of tribes on the territory of Central Asia and the neighboring countries, from the beginning of the historical period and comparative historico-linguistic data along with summing up of the ever increasing archaeological material, allows to draw several important and sufficiently definite conclusions in this direction” (Gafurov 2005: 35).

This section embarks on a primordial approach to the study of the subject and takes a brief look at history of Tajikistan in general and in chronological order that forms part of ethno-cultural tradition of today’s Tajikistan.

**The Aryans**- In the 2nd century BC the Indo-Aryans migrated into Bactria, Sogdiana and Arachosis. Aryans were divided into many smaller fractions and observed nomadic livelihood. They are said to have laid foundation for many nations, civilizations and language. In VII-VI centuries B.C. the territory of Central Asia was inhabited by Iranian tribes, the fact that is confirmed by the materials contained in the Avesta, Gathas - believed to be recited by Zoroaster himself,9 could be written around 1000 BC or a bit earlier or later than that. It is on the basis of Iranian national groups- the Bactrians, Khwarezmians,

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9 Zarathustrian claims that Zoroaster received spiritual revelations from the ‘Lord Wisdom’ (called Ahura Mazda) and the sacred scripture is known as the *Avesta*.
Sogdians, and Saka\textsuperscript{10} tribes, that the Tajik people were formed in the early and mediaeval period (Gafurov 2005: 50-51). “The Persian language known in three stages of its development: old Persian, middle Persian and new Persian), the Tajik, Kurds, Baluch, and other West Iranian languages; the Afghan (Pashto), Ossetian, Pamirian and several other east Iranian language and dialects- all of them belong to the Iranian group of languages. Iranian languages are closely related to the Indian languages or the Indo-Aryan group of language in which Vedic dialect and Sanskrit and Pali languages besides contemporary languages are included” (Gafurov 2005: 36).

Through various historical research and excavations it is known that the northern nomads including the Scythians practiced in their religion Shamanism that claim the ability to diagnose, cure and cause human suffering. Also practiced was the cult of supreme sun God-Mithra, which is associated with various forms of fire and horde sacrifice and Zoroastrianism. According to Gafurov “The most significant historical source on ancient history of Central Asia is Avesta- a collection of religious texts of Zoroastrians. At present, besides a certain number of Zoroastrians in Iran, there are more than one hundred thousand of them in India. They are called Parsis. They have preserved not only the old religion but also the old religious text” (Gafurov Vol. I. 2005: 64).

In Tajikistan with over 95% people confirm to the faith of Islam, but only a few practices the real Muslim practices like daily five prayers, eating according to halal (dietary restrictions) and attending congregational services at mosques. The more popular religious practice still involves Shamanism and mysticism. In 2007, President Rahmon has endorsed a bill in the lower house of parliament in Tajikistan banning all the practices of fortune-telling and witchcraft related to Shamanism.

President Imomali Rahmon declared 2006 the year of Aryan culture. He said that the aim was “to study and popularize Aryan contributions to the history of the world civilization, to lead a new generation (of Tajiks) with the spirit of national self-determination, and to develop deeper ties with other ethnicities and culture” (Gulnoz Saidazimova 2005).

\textsuperscript{10} Greeks referred to all the nomads in Eurasia as Scythians also known as “Sakha” or “Saka” in Persia, who used this acronym to distinguish them from the Massagetae of Eurasian region. Scythian believed to have evolved from Aryans\textsuperscript{10} and was part of Iranian stock that had segregated themselves from Median tribe and migrated southeastwards. According to J.Harmatt, “Scythians religious belief was a type of pre-Zoroastrian Iranian and differed from post-Zoroastrian Iranian thought” (Harmatt 1994: 182)
The geneological records state that the contemporary Tajiks are the descendants of Sogdians and the Bactrians, who, over a period of numerous invasion and transitional rules got mixed with western Iranian Persians and non-Iranian peoples, like Greeks, Turkic and Mongols. Sogdians and Bactrians trace their ethnic origin in the Scythian royal group, thus the Aryan, who were physically taller, massive and fair colored.

**Bactrians**: - Bactria was the name specified by Greeks to the area between north of Hindukush and Amu Darya, present day Badakshan. The people of this region are referred to as Bactrians. Although contested by many historians, Prophet Zoroaster was born in Bactria who propagated Zoroastrianism. Zoroaster's Gathas is linguistically very similar to the Veda. The Zoroastrian calendar starts from Zoroaster's date of birth (Boyce, 1984; Clark, 1998; Malandra, 1983; Moulton, 1917; Russell, 1987; Zaehner, 1961). There are certain facts that confirm that “Bactria stood in one line with such large states as Egypt and Babylon” (Gafurov 2005: 84).

**Sogdians** - (around 1st century BC) Sogdian states, although never politically united, lay north of Bactria between the Amu Darya (Oxus) and Syr Darya (Jaxartes), and the fertile valley of the Zarafshan (ancient Polytimetus also know as Transoxiana). Districts of Samarkand and Bukhara of today’s Uzbekistan and western and northern Tajikistan were their main area of dwelling. Sogdian state although never politically united remained practically independent as Turkish and later Chinese protectorate. Sogdiana merchants enjoyed key position along the ancient Silk Route. Their language, Persian written in Aramic script, became the lingua franca across Asia and their alphabets became the source of alphabets to the east. Numerous Sogdian words can be found in modern Persian and Uzbek.

The valley of Zarafshan about Samarkand retained even in the Middle Ages the name of the Soghd O Samarkand (Grenet & Guangda 1996: 175-186; Juliano & Lerner 1998: 72-78; Belenitsky 1968; Al'baum 1981). Historians and researcher Mayhew Bradley and MacLeod Calum writes that “visitors come for a Sogdians culture that predates political boundaries and lies at the ethnic of both the Tajik and Uzbek peoples” (Bradley and Calum 1999: 182).

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11 To Greeks it was known as River Oxus and to the Arabs and Persians it was called Jaihun, derived from words for ‘world’ or ‘river’ (Whitlock 2002: 2).

12 Vedas are oldest Indian scriptures written in Sanskrit that forms part of Hindu traditions.
Up till the 20th century, people in the region used two types of distinction to identify themselves: way of life—either nomadic (Uzbeks) or sedentary (Tajiks) and place of residence. For centuries the Tajik and Uzbek peoples, who lived in close proximity often used—and continue to use—each other’s languages. They did not perceive themselves as two distinct nationalities. The distinction between these two groups was established and consolidated under Soviet when 5 Soviet Republics were carved out in 1920’s that imposed counterfeit labels (Tarn 1951; Gafurov 2005: 69-75).

*Macedonians* (*329 BC-90 BC*) Alexander, known as Sikandar in Tajikistan, started as a crusader against Persians in order to free the Greeks. Under his campaign, he instituted a series of new cities, all called Alexandria, including modern Kandhar in Afghanistan, and Alexandria Eschate (The Furthest) present day Khujand in Tajikistan. On one hand, his expedition gave a serious blow to Persian culture. On the other hand, he is regarded as conqueror that followed the ‘policy of fusion’ of eastern Persian culture with western Greek cultures which was criticized by his own people. James Hutton writes that, Alexander instructed the Sogdians to maintain, and not to kill their parents; the Persian to respect and not to marry their mothers; the Sythians to bury, and not to eat their dead (Hutton 2005: 34).

Alexander needed the Persians to launch a campaign against the tribes of Arabia and then to turn westwards and attack Carthage and Italy, as he found Persians superior to Greeks both in beauty, size and ferocity (especially Bactrians and nomads of northern Afghanistan). Consequently, he was forced to accept Persians as his partners. There are some historians who believe that Alexander granted them equal status on the request of the Princes of Persia. After the death of Alexander and the collapse of the Macedonian Empire many Macedonian generals settled down in the Central Asian region and continued to rule. It is noted that “the Arabs who conquered Badakshan for the Caliph Omar, reported that Mir of Badakshan claimed to be a descendant of Alexander” (Tarn 1951: 303).

One of Alexander’s General Seleucus and his son Antiochus, established Macedo-Bactrian Kingdoms or Seleucid Empire, in 312 BC in Babylon. Their interest in Sogdiana and Bactria was for a number of reasons, “First, Seleucus’ honored queen, Apama, the ancestress of his dynasty, was a Bactrian/Sogdian. Second, Bactria was a bastion of the empire against the nomadic hordes that were perceived to be lurking ominously along the edges of ‘civilization’. Also, the oases in the Oxus and Polytimetus valley in Bactria and
Sogdiana represented an area of incredible agricultural bounty, and the region was of considerable economic importance. Finally, Bactria formed the nexus of trading route linking India and China to the West” (Tarn 1951: 303).

The Seleucids' adopted the policy of conversion, by choice or by force, of Central Asian region into Hellenized\(^\text{13}\) culture that was a synthesis of Greek philosophy, religion and politics with indigenous culture and religion. During Hellenistic period, Zoroastrianism was influenced by Greek philosophy and Babylonian astronomy. It was under Diodotus around 250 BC that an independent territory called Greco-Bactria was established comprising of Bactria, Sogdiana, Margiana and Aria. Early Greco-Bactrian kings issued much of the money circulated along the international and domestic trade on the Silk Route. Ferghana never became part of Greco-Bactria. During 90 BC to 30 BC, the Eastern Parthians destroyed the last Macedonian successor states (Grenet and Guangda 1996: 175-186; Steffen 1967; Sidky 1999: 238-239; Green 1991; Holt, 2005; Worthington 2003; McNeill 1979; Dale 1986).

“The region remained an extremely important not only as a frontier area but also as a producer of grain as it was well watered by extensive irrigation works, and had nexus of trade routes linking India and China to the west by the road from Bactira to Seleceia in Babylon” (Sidky 2000: 137).

“In Bactria there were Greek temples also as there lived sizable Greek population and the rulers of the Greeko-Bactian state were themselves Greeks. One evidence of this is the picture of Greek God stamped with reverse side of the coins......The Greek cult constructions, found during the excavation were on the Al-Khanum site” (Gafurov 2005: 172). “In the Greco-Bactiran times there were many urban settlements on the territory of Tajikistan like Kei-Kabad-Shan near Kabodian, Kala—i-Mir, Kukhna-Kala south of Kalkhozabad, and Kei-Kabad-Shah. Although Samarkand and Sogd suffered heavily from Macedonian invasion” (Gafurov 2005: 168-169).

In the basement of the museum of Khojand there is a big room where the depiction of Alexander's life from his childhood to death is engraved in unique art form using tiles. It suggests the importance of Alexander's aggression that is illustrated in a constructive way.

\(^{13}\) Hellenistic was the term established by the German historian Johnn Gustav Droysen to refer to the spreading of Greek culture over the non-Greek people that were conquered by the Greeks from the death of Alexander the Great (323 B.C.) to the death of Cleopatra in 30 B.C. (Droysen 1970: 139). “Hellenistic culture is the creation of genius of many people: Hellen, local population of the countries of the near and middle east and also of the peoples of Central Asia and India” (Gafurov 2005 184).
Parthians- (171-138 BC) the Parthians, who were the members of Parani nomadic tribe, rose to power under king Mithradates. During this period, Greeks lost their privileged position and formed the main opposition forces against Parthians. The main slogans of Parthians were ‘the return of the Archaemenid heritage’ and ‘the conquest of all Asia.’ Mitridat expanded his frontiers to western Iran and occupied Midia and Mesopotamia into Parthia. Besides the local cult of the former dynasty of Arshak, the Greek cults, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and later Christianity were spread here. Zoros occupied the leading place (Gafurov 2005: 177). Their rule came to an end with the rise of five Mongol Yüech-chin nomadic tribes. In Central Asia they were named Dayue-Chihs (the “great Yueh-Chih”). Their house was divided into five princely houses thus corresponding to clan tribal principal (Gafurov 2005: 189 & 195). With them began the ‘Dark Age’ in the region because the states that were formed by the nomadic tribes were not stable as they had no clear-cut state structure, their frontiers were constantly changing, and some states were emerging and others declining (Khoshelenko & Pilipko 1999:132-150; Barth 1967; Debevoise 1938; Sellwood 1980; Lozinski 1959; Curtis 2000). During this time the people of Ferghana were skillful traders and women had respectful position in the family (Gafurov 2005: 199)

Kushans (20 BC- 410 AD)\textsuperscript{14} is derived from the Chinese term Gaishang or Guishuan (more exactly Kiwei-Sian) (Pulleyblank 1962: 118), historically used to describe one of the five tribes of Yulzhi, a lose confederation of Indo-European people living in India and Pakistan. In the Kushana Empire, three important civilizations- the Chinese, Iranian and Indian- met. Sogdiana developed into a great commercial centre for Chinese trade with the West (Johson, 2006, 25). “It was during the rule of Kanishka that on coins there appear for the first time inscriptions in the Bactrian (not in Greek) language written in Kushana variety of Greek script. The importance of Bactrian language which perhaps became the official or one of the official languages.” (Gafuov 2005: 222)

Various excavation done during the Soviet period in twentieth century like, Zoroastrian temple gate\textsuperscript{15} excavated near Khojand 1957, reclining Buddha Statue that dated back to 5th

\textsuperscript{14} There is an absence of one or the other definite data to clearly demarcate the exact date of the establishment and or the influence of the empire in the region that forms the present day Tajikistan. (Gafurov 2005: 221).

\textsuperscript{15} According to Saidmurad, the Persian poet Firdausi used the detail on Zoroastrian temple gate to write his epic poem of Persian history the Shahnama. They became the founder of Mahayan Buddhism and took Buddhism to China (Falk 2001: 121–136; Litvinsky 1996).
century AD, was uncovered at Ajina Tepa around 1965 and 5th century statue, broken from the top, of Hindu god Shiva and his wife Parvati sitting on a bull was excavated and are kept in Dushanbe museum. The burial grounds related to Kushana were discovered by M.M.Diakonov in the Hissar Sepulchre Topkhana (Gafurov 2005: 253). All these excavations were done during the Soviet time yet they were not known to the world as according to Dr. Babamulloev Saidmurad, Director of Tajikistan’s Museum of National Antiquities, “The Soviets tried to tell the Tajiks that they had no history before 1917 Russian Revolution” (Rashid 2001). It can be refuted as most educated Tajiks know about their history. Even Gafurov wrote a book about Tajikistan. At the same time it can be stated that Soviet period wanted to create communist ideology where history and sub-ethnic identity had no scope to flourish.

The fall of Kushanas saw the disruption of the Silk Route trade that was revived after a century. Early Kushanas used Hellenistic language and culture of Bactria. The Kushana allowed Zoroastrian, Buddhist and later Hindu religion to flourish alongside. Another religion that flourished was Christianity. Bruni provides the information that one priest brought Christianity to Merv about two hundred years after the death of the founder of that religion. The Manichean teaching of Man (216-277), included and united in itself many important elements of Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Christianity. It reached Central Asia and its preaching was done among the nobility. One of the most outstanding preachers of Manicheanism was Mar Ammon. The burial ground of Kushana period is found in Gissar sepulcher Topkhana discovered by M.M.Diakonov (Gafurov Vol. I 2005: 252-253).

“The Buddhist tradition firmly links the name of Kanishka with Buddhism. According to this tradition Kanishka turned to Buddhism and became an ardent follower of this religion. He built a large number of Buddhist religious shrines, stupas, vihars, etc. The convocation of the Third Buddhist Council is also attributed to him...... On the coins of Kanishka there are depictions of Buddha and inscriptions ‘Buddha and Buddha Shakyamuni’... and other gods including the antique ones.....Among scholars there is no unanimity on questions whether this multiplicity of Gods reflects the real situation in the Kushana pantheon or the reason for it were political goals-the appeal to different strata of population of the vast Kushana empire” (Gafurov 2005: 222).
White Huns, (410-569 AD), White Huns are also known as Hunas to Indians and Hephthalite to Greeks, derived from a Greek word Haital meaning big or powerful known in the West as the Avars and to the Chinese, they were the Ye-ti-i-li-do or Yeda. White Huns are considered to have obscure origins. Possibly they originated from lands between modern day Siberia and Korea, and then migrated progressively westward. They were taught to read and write by Nestorian missionaries. It is also believed by some historians that since the Kushan rule was taken-over by Hephathalites, it is possible that they retained many aspects of Kushan culture, including the adoption of the Greek alphabet. Initially Hinayana school of Buddhism flourished. It was soon suppressed under the influence of non-Buddhist factions in the court of White Hun king Mihirakula. Hephthalites worshiped heaven and fire resembling Zoroastrian beliefs and buried their dead either by constructing a tomb or under the ground. Huns founded the capital, Pianjikent, in the Zaravshan valley. This city was later destroyed during the Arabs invasion. The Huns chose Badakshan as their summer residence. The White Huns got fully assimilated with the local population leaving no distinct trace behind (Enoki 1970: 37-45; Litvinsky and Samghabadi 1996: 135-162).

Turks (565 AD-658 AD): the Gök-turks, also called as Kök-turks (in Chinese means celestial or divine Turks), established their empire in Central Asia from 552 to 745 AD. The Gök-turks originated from the Ashina tribe. Chinese were the first to classify their ethnography as Turks (whose ancestor can be traced to Hun) and Uygurs. They were the first tribe to use the name “Turk” politically. Gök-turks leadership was formed by binding together the nomadic Turkic tribes into a confederation, and was the first to introduce decentralized Khans (lords) rule, which were previously under the Persian centralized law. Shamanism formed the basis of their religious practice. The earliest Turkish language came from the Gök-turks, which had Orkhon inscription that was founded in Mongolia near the Orkhon River (Kyzlasov 1996:

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16 The Persian (East Syrian) Church by the beginning of the fifth century had developed a national organization with the bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon as Catholicos and Primate of the church. When the Roman Empire started to persecute the Nestorians, many of them found refuge in Persia and the Nestorian teaching spread rapidly there. Indeed, at a synod held in 486, the Persian church officially accepted the Nestorian position. (Philip, 2005)

17 Ashina were the ruling dynasty of the ancient Turks who were related to the northern nomadic tribes from Xiongnu. Xiongnu were probably Hunnic/proto-Turkic people of Central Asia, generally based in present day Mongolia.

18 Word Khanate came from Khan who controlled Khanates and acted as subordinates to the sovereign.
Christianity was widespread among the Turkic people of Central Asia. It is known that in 644 Elijah, the Mesopotamian of Merv, converted a large number of them—the Turk Kaghan (King) with all his army beyond the river Oxus, that is in Tokharistan (Litvinsky & Desyatovskaya 1996: 443).

Arabs (eighth century) - in the late seventh century the Islamic Arabs, under the Ummayads\(^1\) caliphate, organized sporadic raiding and extending its rule up to Murannawarh, the Arab name for Transoxiana. It was in 704, under Caliph Abd al-Malik, Termez, close to present-day Uzbek-Tajik-Afghan border, was brought under Arab control. Qutayba ibn Muslim was made Arab Governor General of Khurasan who soon extended the control up to Transoxanian and Khwarazm (Jonson 2006: 26-27). The Arab rule started the conversion of local people into Islam by means of incentives, gradual acceptance, and by using force and making Arabic the new lingua franca, building up mosques and consequently replaced the existing Zoroastrian and Persian culture. In the mid 8\(^{th}\) century the Ummayads, who formed the loose confederation of the Arab tribes, were overthrow from power by the Abbasid\(^2\) family. Unlike their predecessors, the Abbasids organized a vast multi-ethnic centralized state, giving the near east and the Transoxiana an integrated rule that was absent since the epoch of Alexander the Great. This unified and centralized rule helped in the establishment of Sassanian government system. Consequently, within a century, Islam became the most prevalent religion in the entire region (Gibb 1923: IX-31).

Chach\(^2\), Ferghana and Soghd repeatedly formed military alliances to defend their territories against the Arab incursions, especially during the invasions of the forces of Qutalba Muslims from 711 to 714 and of Naser b Sayyar in 737-738 (Litvinsky & Desyatovskaya 1996: 277).

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\(^1\) The first line of Umayyads were the Sufyanids (descendants of Abu Sufyan) who ruled from 661-684. Under Muawiya (661-680) the capital of the Muslim empire was transferred to Damascus. He is credited with raising a highly-trained army of Syrian soldiers which was used to expand Muslim authority east into Khorasan and west into North Africa (Umayyds 2005)

\(^2\) The Abbasids came to power under the auspices of a Shiite Nizārī movement which, they claimed, had transferred its loyalty to Muhammad b. `Ali, the great-grandson of Muhammad's uncle `Abbas. Intensive propaganda began around 718 in Iraq and Khurasan. Muhammad was succeeded to his claims by his son Ibrahim, who decided to concentrate his efforts on Khurasan; in 745 he sent his Persian mawla, Abu Muslim, as his personal representative to Khurasan. (Abbasids 2005)

\(^2\) It was situated on the right bank of the middle reaches of Syr Darya, in the basin of its important tributaries, the Parak (Chirchik) and Ahangaran (Angren) and the neighboring mountains of the Western part of the T'ien Shan range.
By the time the Arabs conquered Transoxiana the region had disintegrated into small fiefdoms formed into larger conglomerates or lose principalities—Tukharistan (as the Arabs named Bactria), Sogdiana, Ustrushan (located north of Zrafshan, and including modern Tashkent), and Ferghana (the valley enclosed by Tianshan and Pamir mountains on the north, east and south) (Gafurov 2005: 189).

The eighth and ninth centuries are of special significance for the cultural history of the region because of Islamisation and the start of the predominance of Turkic language in the entire region. During this period, Buddhism had certain influence on early Sufism. Pre-Islamic concepts were merely partially hidden beneath a thin layer of an Islamized amalgamation. The situation was different in a small group of population directly involved in Muslim worship. Pre-Muslim and non-Muslim ideology formed the core of the people’s ideology in the Middle Ages. The pre-Islamic tradition continued to directly influenced literature, philosophy and science, and intellectual claimants through folklore and written tradition and reminiscences of the society. Indeed, many heresies and popular movements sprang from this ideological breeding ground (Litvinsky and Guang-da 1996: 474-489).

Samanids—(879-999) a Sunni Persian dynasty in Central Asia and eastern Iran, named after its founder Saman Khoda 22. His four grandsons were rewarded with the provinces in Central Asia and were made rulers of Samarkand, Ferghana, Shash and Ustrushan, and Herat (Johnson 2006: 29) for their faithful services to the Abbasid Caliph al-Mamun. Samanids claimed to be descendent of royal Mihran Clan, one of the ancient Seven Parthain clans who governed parts of Iran for centuries. According to Aekzoda, Samanid dynasty had political purpose since Somon-Khudo’s period. He was Zoroastrian by religion and his background posterity was from aristocrats of Samarkand. Samanids wanted to restore political power of their previous posterity (Bekzoda, 1999: 45). It was Somon-Khudo’s great-grandson, Ismail I, son of Ahmad, ruled Ferghana.

With them began the development of a modern Tajik national identity. They revived Persian culture and language that was washed away after the conquest of Arabs, at the same time they remained loyal to Arabs. Their capitals Bukhara, Samarkand and Herat became centres of learning Persian culture throughout the eastern part of the Persian-speaking world.

22 Saman Khoda refers to the ruler of a border region or a margrave (Kheirandish, 1999: 56).
The period of Nasr ibn Ahmad, with the support of his vazirs, is described as a golden age. In Great Khorasan that Persian culture and literature reached its zenith. Rudaki\textsuperscript{23} and Firdausi\textsuperscript{24}, the famous poets and Abu-Ali Ibn Sina,\textsuperscript{25} Al Razi, Abushakur Balkhi, Daqiqi, Tirmizi, Marvazi, Abdulmuayad Balkhi, and Ogaji created their masterpieces. Abu-Ali Sina, Zakariyo Razi, Hakim Maysary developed philosophy and medicine, Abduljiud Muhammad Ibn Lays, Abduali Khasan Ib Huseyn, Abduali Hasan, Ib Huseyn Narshakhi, Ibn Qutayba\textsuperscript{26}, Sa’olibi in physics and mathematics and others. Geography, theology and ethnography were also developed. The translation of scientific and literary works was achieved

It was under the rule of Nasr II and his vazirs, Shiite Ishmailis\textsuperscript{27} were appointed at higher ranks. It was during the Imamat of Mowlana Shah Qain that al-Hussayn al-Marwazi’s successor Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Nasafi al-Nakjshabe settled in Bukhara and spread the da’wa\textsuperscript{28} throughout Transoxania, also penetrating briefly in the Samanid court. Rudaki, the famous poet remained Ishmaili and wrote beautiful poetry glorifying Ishmaili Imams. Samanid administration had ethno-religious division: an Iranian chancery, staffed with recent Ismaili converts who coexisted with the predominantly Arab ulama, while the core of the army consisted of Turkic slaves. It is analyzed by various historians that Ismailism was one

\textsuperscript{23} He was one of the earliest exponents of modern literary Persian. He was from Samarkand (880-954) (Monica: 5)

\textsuperscript{24} He was born in Shahdab, a suburb of Tus, a city of Khorasan in 941 A.D. Firdausi’s real name was Hasan. He was named Firdausi after a garden of the Governor of Tus which his father looked after. He died in 1020 A.D (Bohra, 1911: V).

\textsuperscript{25} An author of Donishnoma (The Book of Knowledge) has worked towards creation of the language of philosophy. He is also regarded as the founder of the Tajik (Persian) philosophical terminology and is also regarded as the founder of the national movement of Tajik people in the Samanids epoch. (Sulaymonov, 1999: 62)

\textsuperscript{26} Originally named Ibn Muslim al Marvazi Dinavari (828-889). He wrote 10 volume book “Ain-ul-Akhibor” which dealt with the problems like ruling of the government, war, asceticism (E.Sheraliev, 1999: 89).

\textsuperscript{27} The Ismailis separated from the rest of the Imami Shi‘is on the death of the Imam Ja’far al-Sadiq in 148/n65. By the middle of the third/ninth century, the Ismailis had organised a secret, religio-political movement designated as al-da’wa (the mission) or, more precisely, al-da’wa al-hadiya (the rightly guiding mission). The over-all aim of this dynamic and centrally-directed movement of social protest was to uproot the Abbasids and install the ‘Alid Imam acknowledged by the Ismailis to the actual rule of the Islamic community (umma). The revolutionary message of the Ismaili da’wa was systematically propagated by a network of da’is or religio-political missionaries in different parts of the Muslim world, from Transoxania to Yemen and North Africa (Daftary 1990: 29-43).

\textsuperscript{28} da’wa means a "call" or "invitation," has been used to refer to a person being "called" to follow Islam or commonly associated with the spread of Islam.
of the cause that antagonized the Sunni religious leaders of the state and their military allies, the Turkish guards of the Samanid rulers. They conspired to depose Nasir II and under his successor Nuh I (943-954) the Ismailis of Khurasan and Transoxiana were severely persecuted. However, Ishmailism continued to exist clandestinely in Transoxiana where it maintained secret followers in the following years (Daftary 1993: 123-39; Stern 1960: 56-90). “During the Samanides period, after two centuries of ruling of Arabic, the alphabet, this was further developed by Persian-Tajik linguists. Further this language spread into other Central Asians and Near East countries and India. During the Samanids period, the great politicians, historians, poets and other created their work” (Jamshedov, 1999: 52-53).

Dari was introduced as a new Persian language replacing Sogdian and Khwarazmian language group used for statecraft (alongside Arabic) and literature (Barthold, 1928: 254). Although Arabic continued as the language of religion and the exact sciences, and the works of Central Asian scientists, philosophers and theologians spread all over the Islamic world (Kreikemeyer 2006: 29)

According to R. Frye, the process of Persian renaissance began in Central Asia rather than in Iran, it was due to the difference of the social groups in these two parts of Muslim world. The mercantile, trade society of Central Asia was much more suitable for the development of an egalitarian Islamic society than a hierarchical caste society of Iran. Therefore the Samanids, the real rulers of Transoxiana, could be seen as pioneers of Iranian renaissance. It is noteworthy that the changes which took place during this time, occupied every sphere of life: cultural, linguistic, social, art, economy, politics, and scientific (Frye 1951: 123-125). In the reign of the later Samanids, the Karakhandis invaded Transoxiana and the Samanid lands were divided up between the Karakhandis and the Ghaznavids (Negmatov 1999: 79). It is often written that “the formation of the Tajik nation was completed during the rule of the Samanids, and it was during this time that the word ‘Tajik’ as an ethnie came into prominence. The term Tāzik/g (Middle Persian) and Tāzī (New Persian) were originally cited in western Persia to denote the conquering” (Negmatov 1999: 77). “Samanids formed the north-east bastion of the Iranian world against the barbarian Central Asian. It was also a transition area connecting the Islamic Near East with the Eurasian steppes and the routes to the Far East, and it played an important part in conveying trans-Asiatic commerce” (Khan 1999: 31-32).
It is analyzed that the “Samanid period was the time of spiritual pluralism, designed of common ethnics what has allowed the people of Central Asia being so different according to their ethnical belonging, ways of economy managing and archetypes of conscience to format the richest coheritage. It is this heritage which has become the foundation on which we are creating at present our history” (Juraev 1999: 14). Another important Samanid political and military personality was Ismoily Somony. “He was the protector of national language and great patriot. His political philosophy followed his worthy goals. For the supporting of Tajik language he ordered Islamic learned to act as the 5 item of ‘Ibrohim’ chapter: ‘We sent all prophets with the language of their nations’.” (Bekzoda 1999: 46). He transferred the capital from Samarkand to Bukhara. It became one of the most important commercial centres of the Silk Route. It was until 999, i.e. till the end of the Samanids, that the city remained the capital of the Samanids (Hotamov 1999: 47).

The Samanid era is also regarded as “a great laboratory of the Islamic community, where the local artistic tradition and techniques of various pre-Islamic civilization was practiced. Under Muslim rule Central Asia came into contact with other countries and their cultures. Pre-Islamic Central Asian culture had its own artistic features that helped it to integrate into the inter-Islamic community; the lack of cult iconography, the predominance of written traditions, etc.” (Dodkhudoev 1999: 48).

“Legal sources which influenced on Samanid’s state were the book of ‘Avesto’, legal court of Sasanids laws of Bobuliston, legal court Eshobakhta and other memorable laws. They play an important role for establishment of social and legal institutes of culture of Samanid’s State.” (Safarov 1999: 50).

The essence of Bobojon Gafurov’s conception of Samanids consists of the following: the efforts of the Samanids dynasty in the struggle for independence from Arabic rules; for organization of independent government; for reviving their history, language, culture and national traditions and interest of people for political and spiritual independence from half a century of foreign oppression; and Samanids organized powerful and centralized government (Shripov 1999: 141). During the Samanids the national self-realization played an important role in the unification of the Persians nation.

The Samanid ancestry was recognized as the fact on 9th September 1999- the 8th anniversary of Tajikistan’s independence where President Rahmon opened an imposing
memorial complex in the centre of Dushanbe to commemorate the 1,100th anniversary of the Samanid State (Datoo 2006; Bashiri 2006).

**Ghaznavids (977-1186 CE)** – the weakness of Samanids empire caught the attention of Turks and soon became a battleground of Ghaznavid, Qarakhandis and then of Seljuk. Ghaznavids and Qarahanids were the first Turks to have established their empires in Central Asia. Ghaznavids, residents of Ghaznah in modern-day southern Afghanistan, served as soldiers and slaves in the Samanids kingdom, who earned their nominal freedom by converting to Sunni Islam. In spite of Turkic origin, Ghaznavids patronized Persian culture and were the pioneers of Urdu language. Ghaznavids held their allegiance to the Abbasid court. The great epic *Shah Namah* was completed by the poet Firdawsi in the court in Ghazni in 1010 and was dedicated to the ruler. Qarakhanids converted from Buddhism to Islam under the rule of Satuk Bughra Khan in the 10th century and preserved much of their Central Asian aristocratic and cultural heritage that was anti-Iranian Afrasiyab, and cultivated Turkic language by employing vertical Uighur script (also called Turkic script) that was non-Arabic script. Their legacy is perhaps most continuing cultural legacy among parallel ethnicities in Central Asia from 9th to 13th century. The Muslim, Persianized, sedentary elements of Qarakhanids culture that was adopted after their rule over Central Asian region was secured. It is preserved today among the Tajik, Uzbek, Afghan, Hui and Uyghur, two of which speak Chagatay Turkic languages established during the Mongol rule. The establishment of the Ghaznavid Sultanate represents the first major breakthrough of Turkish power in eastern Islam against the indigenous Iranian and other peoples. Ghaznavids

29 The Qarakhanid Dynasty established its capital in Kashgar, in the southern part of Xinjiang. In 960 Qarluks captured Kashgar and were a major force in the kingdom of the Qarakhanids. After adopting Islam as their religious belief they became a major force in the kingdom of the Qarakhnids. During the Soviet era the Qarluks were moved into the Faizabad region of the present-day Tajiksitan. The Qarluks-Uyghur dialect spoken by the nomadic hordes and Turkified sedentary populations under Kara-Khanid rule branched out into two major branches of the Turkic linguistic family, sedentary institutions spread east into former Kara-Khoja and Tangut territories, and west and south into the Subcontinent, Khurasan Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Northern Iran, Golden Horde territories, Tataristan and Turkey. The Mongol Chagatay, Timurid and Uzbek states and societies inherited the bulk of the cultures of the Kara-Khanids and the Khwarazmians without much interruption.

30 Originally a clan belonging to the Oghuz, a Turkmen tribe of Central Asia, they were converted to Islam in the 10th century and established themselves in the Iranian province of Khorasan in the early 11th century.

31 *Shah Namah* contains sixty thousand couplets. It is in fact a historical Poem though it is full of legends and fables. It commences with the reign of Kayoumars and ends with the time when Persia was conquered by the Arabs. The whole time covered is 3874 years. The book was compiled from *Bastan Namah* which was merely a collection of different events both striking and animating. (Bohra 1911: V, XII & XIII).
destroyed or weakened the local dynasties and the landed classes by imposing the central bureaucracy in Ghaznha. This did much to prepare the way for the coming of the Great Seljuqs, the Khwarazm Shahs of Atsiz’s line or Anushtegnids, and so on. The pattern of the despotic power-state introduced by the Ghaznavids became the norm for many of the subsequent pre-modern Islamic dynasties (Bosworth 1970: 14-18; Roxburgh 2005).

**Seljuks:** Seljuks come to power after defeating Ghaznavids in 1040. Qarakhanids became nominal vassal of the Seljuks. They patronized Iranian and not Turkic culture but retained their allegiance to the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad. In 1050, the Seljuk leader, Tughril Beg, was awarded the title of Sultan from the Abbasid caliph, and he became the first Muslim ruler to use that title. When the Seljuks integrated the Turks of Central Asia, they became a fearsome military power, first under the Seljuks themselves, and later under the Ottomans (Bosworth 1963; Bosworth 1977; Roxburgh 2005).

**Mongols:** (thirteenth and fourteenth century) Mongols are regarded of having largest contiguous empire in human history. With the coming of the Mongols, under Chinggis Khangan⁸² (originally named as Temujin), Central Asia once again was united under one banner. During their rule, Abbasid Khalifate of the Baghdad was destroyed. With the reopening of the Silk Route under the Mongols helped connect East with the West thus facilitating cultural exchange, trade and profoundly affected the demography and geography of Eurasia. The language Chagatai⁸³ was introduced and Shari’a laws were replaced by the Yasa, which was used to enforce anti-Muslim policies, thus intimidating the Central Asian elites from rebellion against them. During this time most of the Tajiks migrated to highlands and started living in isolation. The Mongol conquest also gave a serious blow to sedentary life and destroyed several important cities in the region. Presently Mongol empire is considered to have formed an important symbol of national identity rather than barbarous oppressors in Central Asia by the scholars of Central Asia (Howorth 1879; Heissig 1980).

**Timurid Dynasty:** (1370-1506 CE) was established by Amir Timor, who started his life as a bandit with a main goal of re-building Mongol heritage through marital pedigree as he considered himself a Mongol. “The socio-religious atmosphere on the eve of Timur’s

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⁸² Chinggis in Mongolian meant Oceanic Ruler or Firm, Resolute Ruler.

⁸³ (Nowadays called ‘old literary Uzbek’), widely spoken among a group of Turks, is named after a son of Chinggis Khangan.
Ascendancy is characterized by three main features, namely, the not so pronounced ideological conflicts between the Muslim divine supporting the *sharia* and the Mongols trying to uphold the law of Chinggis Khangan, the *yasa*; secondly, the much publicized struggle between the nomadic and settled elements trying to live upon each other and maintaining their respective way of life; and third point emerging from the first two is the resultant anarchy, maladministration due to apathy of the Mongols, and the discontent of the Central Asian population which in turn further strengthened the hold of religion and aggravated the conflict between the followers” (Haidar 2004: 166).

Under Timurids the cities of Samarkand and Herat (that was also established as Timurids capital), became focal points of artistic and intellectual activity. By bringing craftsmen from conquered lands to Samarkand, Timurid Dynasty became rich in monumental architecture. These art and architecture were not only used by Timur as a political and cultural propaganda they also provided inspiration to lands stretching from Anatolia to India. Even though Timurids had Mongol ancestry, religious institutions such as mosques, _madrasas, khanqahs_ (convents), and Sufi\(^{34}\) shrines were the main beneficiaries and Persian culture attained new heights in the entire Asian region. Timur adopted refined Persian court culture as his own to glorify his rule. Women had special position in Timurid dynasty as princes and other upper-class women who were the mothers, wives, sisters, or daughters of the ruling men enjoyed certain level of power, and political influence, enabling them to be patrons of art and architecture (Wei 1997; Burton 1997; Andrews 1999).

**Shaybanid Empire** that lasted up to the ends of sixteenth century made Bukhara the seat of the Khan for the first time under the Ubaid Allah Khan after displacing Timurids. “The Saybanids represented a period of economic and cultural development, but during the 16th century a fundamental transformation started which gradually led Central Asia into decline. The European opened up a sea route which bypassed the land route across Transoxiana and

\(^{34}\) According to A. Abdukhodirov initially Sufism was formed in Iraq and Syria in the VIII century and was brought to Mavrorannahr, which was ruled by the Samanids in the IX century. The humanitarian ideas of Sufism were advocated in Farsi-Tajik language, which reckoned the language of the mass. The poets Rudaki, Shahidi, Balkhi and Rabiya who lived and created during the ruling period of the Samanids made a wide use of the Sufi poetic images, topics, ideas and genres. Particularly the gazelle genres and rubai were the frequent literary trends connected with Sufism. From 10th century the above mentioned genres were widely used in the poetry of the Tajik poets. For example, owing to the Sufi trends the theme ‘love’ got external and internal content. The poets attempted to reflect the Earth love in figurative meaning as the divine or authentic love (Abdukhodirov 1999: 87)
Siniang (Xinjiang).” (Johnson and Archer 2006: 31). After Shaybanid there were small dynasties like Astraljanid or Janid from late sixteenth century to mid eighteenth century. Afsharid dynasty under Persian ruler Nadir Shah made Janid Khan Abd al Faiz, his vassal. Nadir Shah could not keep his hold on the region for long.

Manghit Dynasty (1756-1920) overthrew Nadir Shah’s rule. Manghit preferred the title of Amir over Khan as they were not having Chinggissid descent. Under them the administration of the country was more centralized (Gafurov 2005). Though they were Turkic in origin yet the Persian speakers played an important role in economic, administrative and cultural life. To an extent this region remained mélange under the control of the local rulers.

Tsarist Russian Rule: - (nineteenth and early twentieth century) when Russians advanced towards Central Asia, Amir Muzaffar al Din (1860-1885), of Manghit Dynasty, ruled the region around present day Tajikistan. In 1868 after signing the peace treaty, which was actually a trade agreement, between the Emir and the Governor General of Russian Turkistan, the Emirates of Bukhara became a Russian protectorate and ceded some of what is northern Tajikistan to the Russian Empire, but retained the central and southern regions. According to Helene Carrere d’Encausse, “it gave Russia everything that for almost three centuries Russia’s envoys had been unable to obtain.” (d’Encausse 1988, 38). “In 1873 a second treaty was signed between Russia and Bukhara, which confirmed the status of the emirate as a Russian protectorate de facto….In 1876 the Khanate was dissolved and its territory incorporated into Russian Empire after Russian troops had intervened in response to internal instability in the Khanate.....In 1884 the emirate was included within Russia’s customs frontier by an agreement, and Russian troops control of Bukhara’s borders with Afghanistan, which were guarded by Russian troops and customs officials. The Russian customs frontier was established along the Amudarya in 1885.” (Johnson 2006: 33). In fact, the Mangit dynasty established control over Shahr-e-Sabz, the mountainous region in the upper Zeravshan Valley with the Russian. During this time, the “Great Game” between the Russians and the British gradually changed the pattern of demographic, political, social, economic and administrative regulation in Central Asia. The ambitions of German interference in Persia under the guise of the Baghdad Railway scheme, made Russia and Britain anxious about their empires (Siegel 2002: 94). It led to the signing of an international agreement between the two in 1895 led to the division of Tajik-inhabited territories evenly
between Britain and Russia with southern half becoming permanent part of kingdom of Afghanistan and the northern region with the area from Chirchik River, around Tashkent, to the Panj River, came under the Russian control. Britain agreed to respect the treaty and the new arrangements and Russia agreed to carry its relations with Afghanistan through British. The treaty created an artificial division amongst the people sharing ethnic ties. From late 1920s, the movement across the river was strictly controlled thus the connection between the communities on either side of the river ceased. Russia initially endorsed expansion of cotton cultivation in the region, including the areas of the Ferghana Valley and the Bukhara Khanate that later became part of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan due to the civil war in America that impeded the supply of raw cotton to Russian cotton industries.

Initially, the last Amir, Sayyid Alim Khan adopted a neutral approach towards the Russian Revolution of 1917. However, some groups of Russian settlers along with the Jadidist, intellectual elite of Central Asia, also known as “Young Bukharans”, began to express their interest in deposing the Bukharan emirates through a “Communist” revolution. Their movement and failure turned the Amir against the Communists. By the end of August 1920, Sayyid Alim Khan was overthrown as a result of the invasion by Soviet troops, and on October 6, 1920 the Emirate was abolished and Bukharan People’s Soviet Republic was proclaimed. It led to signing of the military, political and economic agreement between Russian Soviet Federation Socialist Republic and Soviet People’s Republic of Bukhara. (Core Document 2004).

In May 1921, Russian Soviet Republic and Afghanistan signed a ‘Treaty of Friendship’. In 1940s, during the Second World War, both Russia and British government pressed Afghanistan to remove non-diplomatic German contingent from Afghan territory. This brought an end to the “Great Game” between the two (Khalid 1997; Becker 1968).

Under the Tsarist period, the present day Tajikistan saw a limited Russian cultural influence in its domain. The Qadis court and the native administration run by elders or headmen (Aksamals) continued. With the establishment of the Trans-Caspian railway and the functioning of the direct rail link that connected Orenburg in Russia to Tashkent led to the large scale migration of the Slavic settlers into the region leading to the discontentment amongst the local population guiding the revolt in Ferghana Valley in 1916.
Soviet Period: (twentieth century): The end of Czarist rule after the October Revolution of 1917 marked the beginning of the spread of communism. The period also led to the formation of nation-state in Europe and Asia. Subsequently, Autonomous Government of Turkistan in Tashkent was established in Central Asia on December 13, 1917. When Soviet Union took over the area of present day Tajikistan the region was still socially, economically and politically medieval and backward where assorted group of qadimis (conservative), jadidis (modernist), pan-Islamist and pan-Turkist were struggling to maintain their rule. According to Wladimir Ivanow, while mentioning about Ismailis stated that “No one imagined that the Great War, with all its misery and suffering, was just around the corner. Persia was still living in her ancestral mediaeval style, and her affairs were largely going on in their traditional ways, as they were going on for centuries.” (Iwanov 1977: 16-17). The ownership of the land was clearly defined under three categories i.e. land belonging to state, private ownership and land owned by religious institutions. The Soviet period, dominated by the Russians, did not try to convert the Muslims to Christians because it was based on atheism, but made the region an economic appendage.

“Until the 20th century Tajik tradition strongly endorsed separating the sexes in public and family life. It was widely accepted that girls should be taught to be housewives only and to be prepared exclusively to perform domestic duties. Many women remained uneducated, because there was a strong traditional perception that they did not need extensive schooling. Women could not take positions in government or public life and could not vote or participate in any discussion of development at the community level. Moreover, they were not allowed to go out of their homes alone. Even for shopping, especially without being properly veiled and dressed. Most houses were divided into separate sections for males and females, and the sexes could not mix in public even during weddings and other major family events. In later 1920s the Soviet authorities introduced and fiercely enforced a policy of liberalization of women.” (Abazov 2006: 75)

Soviet legacy has left its many-sided effects to Tajiks ethnic, political, administrative, educational and economic tradition, which is visible in almost all the aspects of present day Tajikistan.

Initially Tajikistan was made part of Uzbekistan Soviet Socialist Republic (1924-1928). An essential problem with the nationalist principle was the concept of a “Tajik” nation
was in itself a distinctly artificial creation. Although the label “Tajik” had existed for centuries, its meaning and usage had been regarded by Orientals as distinctly ambiguous. According to Barthold “Tajik was derived from the word ‘tazi’- a word that had originally meant simply ‘Arab’ or ‘Muslim’. By the time of the Bukharan khanate, it referred to urban Muslims, who were primarily Persian speakers. But although the Soviet regime deduced from this that all Persian speakers were therefore ‘Tajiks’, in practice it seems that only a small minority of Persian speakers actually accepted this label. Although urban Persian speakers had a greater awareness of their Persian cultural heritage, they too were apt to define themselves by their allegiances to a city, not language and many urban elites were in any case, bi-language in Turkic.” (Barthold 1977: 24)

The case for separate nation of Tajiks was discussed in 15th session of Communist Party of Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1927, based on the October 1919 Turkistan Commission Investigation also referred to as the ‘federal compromise’. The policy proposed by Lenin granted right to secession to each Soviet republic. The State Planning Committee (GOSPLAN) employed hundreds of experts, among them professional ethnographers, to search for the most appropriate and acceptable borders, not only from an ethno-cultural point of view, but also in terms of economics and geography (Zhdanko 1972: 13-29). Finally, in 1929 Tajikistan was detached from Uzbekistan and given full status as a Soviet socialist republic. At that time, the territory that is now northern Tajikistan was added to the new republic. Even with the additional territory, Tajikistan remained the smallest Central Asian republic. According to Olivier Roy “The events of Afghanistan when in 1928, the Afghan king Amanullah installed Bacha-i Saqqao, a Tajik, rose to power in Kabul for a brief period. This event was also considered to be responsible for Soviet to promote Tajikistan to the status of soviet republic” (Roy 2000:67).

The boundaries of Central Asia were redrawn under Nikita S. Khrushchev (in office 1953-64) and his successor, Leonid I. Brezhnev (in office 1964-82). During this time Tajikistan's borders were periodically redrawn as districts and provinces were recombined, abolished, and restored, while small amounts of territory were acquired from or ceded to neighboring republics (Global Security.org : 2006).

Under the national-administrative divisions, Bukhara and Samarkand that were the two main cultural centres of Tajiks became part of Uzbekistan denying Tajik intellectual elite
and professionals to resort to Tajik nation-building. Apart from these two main cities, other regions that became part of Uzbekistan were the area of Zarafshan River, and the trade centres of the Silk Route; Surkhan Darya and Qashqa Darya. Both the area around these river are having Tajik majority and are cotton producing centres, rich in oil, natural gas and coal. Thus the new national boundaries excluded a significant Tajik population and heart and soul of Persian culture and heritage. As compensation, Tajikistan was given an important portion of the fertile Ferghana Valley that originally belonged to Uzbekistan. The valley is shared with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. Some ethno-historians have argued that creating ethnic autonomies for major groups in the region helped prevent the outbreak of long-standing bloody feuds among these groups and to provide better conditions for ‘nation-building’ (Volkova & Lavrov 1997: 34-35). “The Soviet rational was that this reorganization fulfilled local inhabitant’s nationalist aspirations and would undercut support for the Basmachi\footnote{The Russian took the derogatory term ‘basmachi’, from the Turkic language, in which it means ‘robber’ or ‘bandit’ or brigand. Locally however, it was known as the movement of the ‘bek’, freeman peasants and tribal guerrilla force that started the movement in February 1918; later Basmachis themselves were not averse to using the term, as it came to be associated with nationalism and Islam as was the term ‘Mujahedeen’ used by the Afghan rebels fifty years later (Rashid 1994: 167). The “formal” beginning of the "Basmachi" movement is usually associated with the Tsarist Imperial Decree of 25 June 1916, which ordered the first non-voluntary recruitment of Central Asians into the army during the First World War. With its base in Ferghana valley, Basmachis aimed to protect the traditional way of life which was threatened by western civilization, to expel Russian rural and urban settlers, and to defend Islam against the godless new regime. It failed due to its inherent week and anarchic organizational structure and the divide within between the moderates and the conservative Islamist faction supported by the amir. They were supported by many urban intellectuals who had initially supported the Communists against the Russian empire along with some Jadadists and even young Bukharians. The movement continued until 1931 when Ibrahim beg was finally executed. During this time thousands of Basmachies were massacred by the Red Army and many Uzbeks and Tajiks from the south migrated to Afghanistan. This was the first of successive wave of mass migration which had a lasting effect that contributed to the conflict dynamics which emerged during the civil war in 1990s. “In 1923 and 1924 three major bases of Basmachi activity remained in eastern Bukhara: Matcha, Darvaz and Karategin. Sending emissaries who preached holy war against the infidel, the Basmachi conducted propaganda warfare throughout the country. Ibrahim bek was well informed about the Soviet moves because of his many sympathizers in the Soviet government apparatus. His money and arms came from Afghanistan from the Emir, and reportedly from the British (Briskin 1970: 26).} in concurrence to the anti-religious policy of the Soviets. With regard to the creation of five independent republics, some Western Central Asian scholars states the following reasons “One factor seems have been the regime’s desire to completely eliminate the old political structures, like the Bukharan emirate. A second factor, though, was the authorities fear that Central Asians might unite around Islam, or the common Turkic identity against the Soviet
regime. Although pan-Turkic\textsuperscript{36} or pan-Islamic awareness does not seem to have been very widespread in the region, the ideal of a ‘greater Turkestan’ had featured highly in the Jadidist programme of political reform.” (Tett 1996: 26-27). Pipes hold that the policy towards Central Asia was based around two, somewhat conflicting, lines of Marxist ideology. The first asserted that in perfect Communist state national identities would be irrelevant, since all the nations would have “come together” in a common Communist utopia. The other being that all nations should have a right to self determination in line with the ideals of egalitarianism (Pipes 1964).

At present ethnic Uzbeks form the majority of population in the Ferghana Valley. The territorial divisions are closely associated with recent outbursts of violence between ethnic Tajiks and Uzbeks, and between ethnic Kyrgyzs and Uzbeks (they have a history of ethnic discord between them).

The retention of significant number of minorities from the other titular nationalities of Central Asia within each state ensured that the Soviet authorities could rely on support against any individual state exhibiting ‘excessive’ nationalist tendencies. Finally, if for some reason the Soviet Union were by chance to lose control of the area, such minority issues would probably inject such degree of instability into the region that no significant coalition would arise from there to threaten it (Glenn 1999: 49). However, the new boundaries still left national groups fragmented, and extremist activities in Central Asia did not prove as threatening as depicted in communist propaganda.

These newly distinguished borders created much resentment amongst the Tajiks that was expressed in the failed demonstration in mid-1988 by Tajiks in Samarkand and Bukhara demanding attachment of these cities to Tajikistan, as these regions were not only cultural capitals of Tajikistan but also ethnically more close to Tajikistan. These demonstrations of 1988 led to the formation of Tajik Liberation Front in Samarkand (Procyk 1973). The Tajiks of Uzbekistan did make initial effort to organize a strong rebellion against the Uzbek

\textsuperscript{36} The Pan-Islamic movement, in which the Turks had a large share, gradually gave way to Pan-Turkism. The follower of this ideology was against all Soviet dicta, and considered Turkistan to be the “Land of the Turks”. They were unsympathetic towards Tajiks and against any promotion of Tajiki language or culture. In this respect they burned the libraries, placed Islamic scholars in concentration camps, and closed or destroyed the Tajik schools and mosques. Many Tajiks were forced to abandon their Tajik ethnicity and embrace the Turkish language and tribal culture of the Turks or migrate away from the traditional centres of culture: Samarkand Bukhara and Khujand.
government to integrate with Tajikistan but were severely persecuted and could not continue their movement. Moreover, they failed to receive strong support, both men and military, from their brethren from Tajikistan who were themselves facing the challenges of post disintegration of Soviet Union.

**DEMOGRAPHY**

The major ethnic group is of Tajik. There was a sizeable minority of Uzbeks, and a small population of Russians, Kyrgyzs, Germans and Jews etc., who had experienced phases of immigration. Pamiris of Badakhshan are considered to belong to larger group of Shiite Ismaili Tajiks, follower of Aga Khan. Although the Tajik and Uzbek are now classified as separate ethnic groups, on account of their languages and ethnicity, this is considered to be a relatively new phenomenon and came with the Russian Empire in the 19th century. During the Soviet era, Tajiks were given new passports where the Tajik as the national identity was mentioned. Uzbeks claimed that Tajiks and Uzbeks are one ethnic community and that Tajiks had acquired an independent identity under influence of the Persian literature and language. At the same time, it should be noted that the Tajik culture is different from Uzbek culture and it is relatively easy to distinguish between ethnic Tajiks and Uzbeks.

Initially, Soviets created two distinct administrative entities in Central Asia: the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic of Turkistan within the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of Bukhara. The Uzbeks, who had the support of the leadership and Soviet sympathy to the Turkish cause, gradually migrated into the cities and villages and displaced the Tajiks. The dispersal had also been attributed to the entrepreneurial talents of Uzbeks, which enabled them to settle wherever profitable opportunities arose (Sacks 1993: 10). Tajiks were forced to either renounce their Tajik ethnicity or identified themselves as Turks, or migrated from their traditional cultural centres i.e. Samarkand, Bukhara and Khujand to Afghanistan and Iran. Such aggressive acts made many Tajiks to adopt Uzbek identity to hold on to their lucrative jobs. Russians and Uzbeks, who migrated to the developed regions of Tajikistan, formed the skilled manpower of the region (Vaidyanath, 1967; Lubins 1984).

In 1928, Tajikistan was divided into nine *viloyat*, corresponding to ‘solidarity space’. These were Khojend, Ura-Teppa, Panjkent, Gissar, Dushanbe, Gharm, Kurgan-Teppa, Kulyab and Gorno-Badakshon. “Progressively they were all abolished as the faction from
Khojent (renamed Leninabad) proceeded to take power. In 1953, the only provinces of Dushanbe, Kulab and Gharm disappeared; in 1956, Leninabad-Khojent and Gorno-Badakshan were the only two administrative divisions. But Kulab was re-established as a province in 1973, followed by Kurgan-Teppe (1977) at that moment the alliance between Leninabadis and Kulabis emerged. After their victory the Kulabis annexed the province of Kurgan-Teppe in 1993 and created a new entity called Khatlan, which was old name of Kulyab. Two ‘provinces’, Kulab and Leninabad, vied for central power, while the regionalist groups within which the opposition recruited lost its entire administrative existence (with the exception of the Autonomous Region of Gorno-Badakshan)” (Roy 2000: 98).

Within Tajikistan, the Soviet authorities forced many ethno-regional Tajik communities to move within Tajikistan in order to supply agricultural and industrial labor, for instance, in 1925, the state organized the forced migration of mountain Tajiks of Pamir to the northern Leninobod (now Sughd) region to work in agriculture in the Ferghana Valley and to the Khatlon. Additionally, between 1933 and 1941, Tajiks were forcibly relocated to the Badakshan region near Afghanistan to populate the region. Conditions on the border were harsh and primitive with minimum resources to survive. According to a local resident when Russians came to Badakshan there were only seven houses. At present Khorog is one of the most populated cities of Badakshon. In addition, Russian and Ukrainian immigrants, including Tatars and Germans, were sent to Tajikistan. After Stalin's period of forced labor for these groups ended, many became white-collar professionals in Tajikistan’s towns.

Demographic composition of Russians can be understood in three distinct time periods: first, between 1926 to 1959, the period saw massive migration of Russians and Russian speaking Slavs into Tajikistan in response to the broad program of industrialization and collectivization undertaken by the Soviet government aimed at establishing Russian control over all aspects of the region's economy and society. Secondly during the period between 1959 to 1989, Russians and other Europeans started leaving Tajikistan long before the eruption of ethnic violence. As in late 1980s some movements had taken a xenophobic

37 There are many local people who say the same number. There can be certain truth in it as according to Tett “in Obi-Safed there were around 20 household before the arrival of the Soviets. Now there are around 160 households” (Tett 1996: 52). Where there is so little population, the theory of ‘imagined community’ does not exist. Instead, it forms the foundation for the strong clan based ties.
and nationalistic character made many skilled workers to flee and thus undermined the Tajik industrial, educational and health sector (Akiner & Barnes 2001).

The 1989 census reported ethnic Tajiks accounted for 62 percent of their country's population. The relatively high percentage of ethnic Uzbeks in Tajikistan - close to 24 percent - this was also because of the considerable movement back and forth between the two countries. Russians, at that time, represented less than ten percent of the population; in addition, there was a relatively substantial population of Germans, Ukrainians and European Jews (CD "Population Census 1989). Many among these four groups left the country. In late 1980s, Tajikistan being at the periphery of the Soviet Union was most effected by to economic crisis. Further, the adoption of language policy, making Tajiki the official language of TSSR, was interpreted as discriminatory against ethnic minority. Late 1980s and early 1990s created a fragile political, economic and social security condition for ethnic minorities where there were frequent incidences of persecution of ethnic minorities. These migrations led to an even demographic balance of population.

The demography of Badakshon developed as an independent identity due to differences in religion, language and topographic challenges. Moreover, the lack of easy means of transport and communication not only discouraged intermixing with the local population of other regions but also kept them isolated, economically weak and underdeveloped.

LANGUAGE

It is interesting to study the change in the script of Tajik language that corresponds to the stages in history. As a result of the influence of Islam in the region, Persian language spoken by Tajik was written in the Arabic script up to the 1920. According to Oliver Roy, "The Tajiks used literary Persian as their written language-and till today there is perfect comprehensibility between the literary languages current in Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Needless to say, in their daily lives the Persian-speakers of Central Asia use dialects which vary considerably: those of Ferghana are very Uzbekised, not only in their vocabulary which contains a higher proportion of Turkish words than one finds in Iran (such as tinj, 'peace'), but also as regards identifiable influence on grammar (postposition instead of preposition, as in shahr-be instead of be shahr, 'towards the city')... Russian linguists were required to formalize and fix differences and to invent a 'modern literary Tajik language' known as 'Tājik'. Instead of taking as their standard one of the existing Tajik dialects, an artificial
language was manufactured combining characteristics from different regions: they kept the phonological system of Old Persian, but adopted grammatical variations which heightened the difference with Iran. For example, Persian has a subjective prefix 'be-', which does not exist in some Tajik dialects, although it is considered the norm in literary language: this prefix disappears in 'modern literary Tajik'” (Roy 2000: 79).

The Soviets changed the script to a Latin based system in 1927 as part of an effort to increase literacy. The Decree on Romanisation made this law in April, 1928 (Dickens 1988). The Latin variant for Tajik was based on the work by Turcophone scholars who aimed to produce a unified Turkic alphabet (Perry 2005: 34). The Cyrillic script was introduced in Tajikistan in 1930s as part of the "Russification" of Central Asia.

The language policy towards the Pamiri Tajiks can be divided into two periods. From 1931 to 1937, an attempt was made at linguistically uniting these groups around the language of the Shugnis, the largest group of the region. This policy was abandon in 1937 and Tajiki replaced Shugni as the official language of the region. Though the local language was used for communication, Tajiki was introduced as a medium of instruction for teaching (Naby 1994: 34; Bennigsen 1999: 80-81). The reform of the alphabet was part of an anti-religious and “enlightenment” policy from Moscow. The anti-religious reforms were directed mainly against the prosperous religious elite. However, it was supported by part of the Tajik elite (mainly Jadidis who joined the Communist Party) (Jahangiri 1998: 14–41).

The change from Arabic to Cyrillic also created a linguistic barrier between Tajiks and other Persian speakers such as Iranians, as well as the Tajiks in Afghanistan with whom they even shared same Tajik identity. Over a period of time and due to the intermixing with other ethnic groups and language policy that promoted Russian, many Tajiks had forgotten their native Tajiki language. There is also a marginal population which does not prefer to speak in Tajiki in their daily interaction. Though, in villages Tajiki remained the spoken language yet the differences in dialects facilitated in maintaining ethno-regional identities. Oliver Roy writes, “While the broader ideological project of the USSR was indeed that of the fusion of peoples into a homo sovieticus (who, incidentally, would be exclusively Russian-speaking), the strategic aim at the time of the founding of the new empire was to break up the large linguistic and cultural blocs founded on language (Turkic) and religion (Islam). In order to do this Stalin advanced the concept of ‘nationality’ (nationalnost). Every national political entity
had to have its corresponding titular nationality, defined as an ethnic community which had preserved an identity founded on language throughout the whole process of its history. Such peoples were presented as living natural facts which developed independently of any political contract or conscious choice among their members” (Roy 2000: viii).

According to Michael Rywkin, Soviet linguistic policy had twofold objectives: the first was 'the transformation of tribal and community languages into developed national languages with a rich terminology and vocabulary and the second was the establishment of a certain degree of bilingualism to facilitate the use of Russian as the language of inter republic communication (Rywkin 1982: 144). Having one common language would have also facilitated the development of common working language and consequently helped establishing a common social, political, cultural and economic structure among various nationalities. According to Tishkov, language policy was considered as an important component in creating a single 'Soviet people. What was considered as Russification by the non-Russian intellectuals meant 'Sovietisation' for Russian nationalists (Tishkov 1997: 85, 87). In 1989, with the growth in Tajik nationalism, a law was enacted declaring Tajik the state language. In addition, the law officially equated Tajik with Persian. The law also called for a gradual reintroduction of the Arabic alphabet. However, the learning of Russian language continues to provide an opening to better and wider job opportunities.

EDUCATION

The intelligentsia in Emirate of Bukhara that controlled the social, judicial and educational office was divided on the adoption of new education system in Central Asia, which was based either on Russian curriculum, or to continue with the existing Islamic traditions. This split on education further divided the society based on ethnic lines as Turks and Tajiks and aggravated the situation by introducing dichotomy between Sunni and Shiite. Under the Soviet rule the native Tajik schools were shut down and they were replaced by Soviet education system and making the teaching of Russian language compulsory in non-Russian schools (Akiner 1986; Ryan 1990). Under the Soviet Union the Tajiks literacy ratio reached 98%. According to Christopher Williams, the curriculum of Soviet education was ‘national in form, socialist in content’ (Williams 1999: 30). Russian medium for education was more progressive and became popular amongst Tajiks as it ensured job and social
security for them. Unified language gave an opportunity to the people of Soviet to develop supranationalism rather than sub-national identity.

History of Tajikistan was altered in the fifties. Tajiks were presented as the earliest origins of Persian culture that had later spread to the Iran and contributed to the development of the Western Iranian culture (Gafurov 2005; Harmstone 1970: 235). It was also stated that “the Iranian Sammanids was attributed to the Uzbeks, while Iranian cultural heritage was attributed to the Tajiks without acknowledging that they were part of the family of the Iranian people” (Hunter 1996: 10). Any revolt that was anti-Russian was interpreted in a negative form and as an act of reactionaries. At the same time, the events like 1905 Tajik revolt in the mountains of Kulyab, Bol’dzhuam, and Kurgan-Tyube against the Emir of Bukhara were said to be revolutionaries and progressive, as they were not aimed against the Russians (Harmstone 1970: 237). The Soviet history books mentioned Central Asian becoming part of Russia rather than Russias colonization of Central Asia (Qasimova 2007).

ETHNIC SEPARATISM

Bert G. Fragner argues that the Soviet regime had created very favorable circumstances for the growth of nationalism itself. During Stalin period, sub-national identities were suppressed. The Soviet regime promoted its own brand of nationalism through the manipulation of history, language and culture as well as strengthening of territorial national identities (Fragner 2001: 3). “Although in general terms the Soviet nationalities policy was intended to represent, in institutional form, the various nationalities and ethnic groups within the federation, yet there were cases where the Soviet census served officially to eliminate differences within a state’s population by incorporating them under the imprecise and rather erroneous category of the titular nationality. Although the Pamiris or mountain Tajiks was initially defined separately, they were (eventually) categorized as Tajiks under 1954 census” (Glenn 1999: 77).

The taking of a census to determine the composition of the population in the region had already begun under the Tsarist Russia in 1897, as the census used the ‘native language’ of a person to determine their ethnicity. In comparison the second Soviet census asked ‘Of what ethnicity (natsional’ nost) are you?, and this was repeated in all later censuses apart from the
1926 census which asked ‘of what ethnic group (narodnost)\(^{38}\) are you’ (Kozlov 1988: 170). The significance of this use of terminology became apparent when one examines the taxonomic differences of the 1926 census with the censuses that later succeeded it. The 1926 census in fact included separate categories for some of the peoples such as the Ferghana Kipchaks, the Ferghana Turks and the Kuramas (Bennigsen & Quelquejay 1967: 133). However, the later census of the area did not include these categories and, in line with the usage of the term *natsional'nost*, these groups were included in the more general definition ‘Uzbek’. The census therefore not only served to categories the population in terms of nationality but smaller groups which we initially recognized as officially constituting separate ethnic groups distinguishable from the rest of the population were later defined as part of the titular nationality (Glenn 1999: 78). According to Rokowaska and Harmstone, “Although a ‘new Soviet Tadzhik’ (or Uzbek or a Kyrgyz) has begun to emerge within the new elites, he differ from the *Homo sovieticus* of Lenin’s dream. His loyalty to the All-Union goals is weakened by his sense of separate identity, which also makes him different from his ‘brother’ in the other parts of the USSR.” (Rokowaska and Harmstone 1970: 274)

There were no opportunities provided under the Soviet regime for the development of a notion of a 'statehood' promoted by Islam that can act as an all-inclusive cultural and, at times, politically unifying force.

**ECONOMIC POLICY**

The planners treated Tajikistan as a divided nation that was supported by Tajik geographic proximity and the exclusive presence of natural resources. Thus the north (Leninabad/ Sugdh) was targeted primarily for industrial development with main industries like brick, aluminum plant and automotive tools was developed. Tajikistan’s light industries were geared to limit processing of raw materials. The actual manufacture of goods was undertaken elsewhere in the Soviet Union, mostly in Russia and the East European Republics. Khruschevs overtly ambitious ‘Virginland project’ aimed to achieve “cotton independence” led to the implementation and collectivization of *daraznakh* cotton, also called ‘white gold’. For this purpose southern region was primarily promoted for agricultural production where large portion of land was brought under cultivation. Cotton cultivation led

\(^{38}\) According to Shirin Akiner, the term *natsional'nost* is most closely associated with the term 'nation' whereas *narodnost* is best defined as the equivalent British term ethnic group (Akiner 1986: 18). The terms *natsional'nost* and *nordnost* were used until 1959.
to salinity of the land, desertification, and shrinking of Aral Sea due to over-utilization of available water for irrigation and associated pollution or environmental devastation; made land unsuitable for traditional production of fruits and vegetables; resulted in violence against peasants; substantial expansion of the irrigation network; and forcible resettlement of mountain people and people from Uzbekistan in the lowlands. Many peasants in Tajikistan fought forced collectivization, reviving the Basmachi movement in Ferghana Valley between 1930 and 1936. According to John Glenn, “This collectivization also resulted in a general lack of industrialization of the area so that the economy is one based largely on the extraction of raw materials and the production of agricultural goods and livestock. Two other characteristics of the Central Asian economy are; the mode of agricultural production and overwhelming presence of the Slavic ethnic group in the Central Asian industrial sector. It also reflects low urbanization of the population and low labour force employed in industrial sector due to lack of industrialization” (Glenn 1999: 94-96).

The imbalance of regional economic development with northern region being more industrially developed than the south caused what Brain Job calls “insecurity dilemma” (Job 1992) among the rest of Tajikistan. In the Communist Party, government and industrial post, the party First Secretary at the national and regional level was usually indigenous whilst the Second Secretary was more often a Russian (Glenn 1999: 97-98). Russians were regarded as ‘elder brother’ and leading ethnic group of the Soviet Union. The local Tajiks never held a high designation in and outside Tajikistan. They were always employed at the lowest technical level, as drivers or interpreters but never as experts or policy makers. The only Tajik politician to become important outside his region was Bobojon Gafurov (Gafurov 1908-77). He became the first secretary of the Communist Party of Tajikistan in the late 1940s. At the same time it can not be denied that the policy of modernization and industrialization led to economic prosperity that transformed the region from medieval cities, rural towns, and qishlaqs into a republic. These developments changed the rural mindset to an urban mind-set. At the same time “Soviet economic policy led to a high degree of economic interdependence between all union republics, with the Russian Republic providing large subsidies to other republics, supplying cheap energy and raw materials” (Tishkov 1997: 42).
SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS ISLAM

Islam in Tajikistan can be divided into a Sunni majority and Shiite Ismaili minority. Sunnis can further be divided into Hanafi School, or practitioners of militant Wahabism (living in Qarategin) and mainstream Sovietised Muslims who pay lip service to Islam. The Shiite are either Ithna Asharis, who are either fundamentalist or mainstream Shiite, or Ishmailis who lived in Badakshon. In 1920s when the Soviet took over Pamir and followed atheistic policy, the Ismailis asked their Imam for the future guidance. Imam is said to have asked the Ismaili community to consider the Russian rule as blessing and must support them as they would provide the Ismailis the required security against the constant attacks of the Amir of Bukhara in the north and Afghan warlords in the south. At that time the degree of security of the Ismaili minority community was required more than the degree of freedom of practice of faith. Imam also predicted that communism will melt like the snow. In the meanwhile it will provide the necessary education, development and security to the Ismaili community (Hadi 2007).

Under the Communist regime, the intensity of Islam varied from region to region and the Soviet policies differed from time to time. Soviet regime under Lenin followed the policy that aimed at combating pan-Islamism and similar trends which strive to combine the liberation movement against European and American imperialism. In fact, there were attempts to strengthen the position of Khans, property owners, mullahs and the likes.

First unified Muslim movement against the communist rule began in the initial Soviet period when the government refused to allow the natives to participate in Muslim Congress in Tashkent. It led the Ulema and the Shuro-i-Islamie to convene the Fourth Extraordinary Muslim Congress in Kokand. It was decided to form a Muslim based government under the leadership of Mustafa Chokayev and named the ‘Provisional Government of Autonomous Turkistan’, as the ‘Kokand government’, named after the city which housed the new Muslim authority (Vaidyanath 1967: 76-80; Nelson 2006). Nasah Gazeta, the organ of Tashkent Soviet, wrote in its editorial of December 13, 1917 that the Bolsheviks were not opposed to “autonomy in principle”, but they were certainly opposed to the “endeavors of a small group of people to further exploit and enslave the backward Muslim masses in the

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39 Initially, the Kokand government was formed on Vladimir Lenin’s appeal ‘to the Muslims of Turkistan’ to rise against the Tsarist government and allow the Muslims ‘self-determination according to [Central Asia’s] model.'
same autonomy.” Despite Lenin’s plea for Muslim self-determination, the Kokand government, which acted independent of the Bolshevik leadership, was seen as a threat by the Tashkent Soviet. Subsequently, Joshep Stalin declared that the Kokand government ‘counter revolutionary’ and it passed a resolution declaring war on the Kokand government. On 20 February 1918, the city of Kokand and the government fell after only three months in power. The Soviet troops’ massacre led to spontaneous uprising throughout the Ferghana Valley. The Tashkent Soviet responded by plundering the Ferghana Valley and ordering the confiscation of cotton. By April of 1918, there was full blown revolt amongst the Muslims in the Ferghana Valley. These uprising in the Ferghana Valley marked the beginning of the active Basmachi movement (Khalfin 1970: 142) led by Mahammad Ibrahim Beg (1889-1932) from a place near Dushanbe. He had to migrate to Afghanistan in 1926. According to Monica Whitelock “One handy story that did the rounds for years was that Ibrahim Beg had conned peasants in believing the imported tractors to be greased with pig fat, and this was why Muslim farmers stuck to their ox-ploughs (the first tractors arrived with neither fuel nor spare parts)” (Whitelock 2002: 57).

During the first few decade of Soviet period, there were restrictions on the open preaching and practice of Islam in Central Asia. The official policy was against polygamy and wearing of the veil (purdah); changing the Tajik language script from Arabic to Cyrillic; abolishing the legal powers of the Islamic establishment; closure of the Sharia’ah court (Quranic law) and of Adat (customary law) in 1927; demolition of mosques or their conversion into ‘museums, places of entertainment or factories’. Restrictions were also put on the practice of Zakat, the obligatory alms-tax; the hadj, the pilgrimage to Mecca and the fast of Ramdan. As such, the daily religious rites were clandestinely performed; and economic support to the Muslim clergy and mosques was undermined. In addition, the clergy needed to be registered by the government officials. Ismaili population was prevented from contacting their spiritual leader Aga Khan; abolition of the religious schools (medressehs and mektebs); termination of the religious training of the Ulema (religious scholars)40 undermined the ideological authority of the Islamic religion; disseminated anti-Islamic propaganda of state-controlled anti-religious associations and media. The idea behind such changes was to

40 Some mullahs were sent for training by Moscow and there were only registered mullahs that could practice. These mullahs were more than often considered as the agents of the government.
transform the traditional conservative society to a Sovietised developed social structure as it was impossible to eradicate the traditional Islamic civil society with atheistic system. These could become a tool for social transformation, which established a secular social and cultural set up in the present day Tajikistan.

The anti-Islamic policies pursued by the atheistic Soviet regime received reaction in the public statement of Basmachi leader, Ibrahim Bek in 1931 where he said that “The Bolsheviks are responsible for the undermining of the honour of women in Russian Turkestan. It is their doing that women go unveiled and are thereby converted into prostitutes....this treacherous and horrid Government deprives its subjects of the right to be masters of their wives and property.” (Rakwska-Harmstone 1970: 296-298). The reaction to the Soviet policy by the local mullah was severe as they regarded the women’s Islamic Organizations that were responsible for women emancipation as the rivals to the zenodel and boycotted the state registry offices. The women who had participated in the unveiling campaign were attacked, raped and murdered (sometimes by their own families) (Kislyakov 1959: 246). It resulted in the resumption of veils by women by 1929 but could not continue due to strict Soviet monitoring.

Poilkov in his ‘historical-ethnographic’ study claimed that over a period of thirty years of expedition which had conducted it had found more than 200 functioning mosques just in northern Tajikistan and a further 200 in other parts of Central Asia. He stated that each kishlak had at least one mosque, and some of the larger ones boasted one for each mahalla. In his view there were no fewer mosques in Tajikistan in the 1980s than there had been prior to Soviet rule, and in some places, because of the growth of population, even more (Poliakov 1992: 96). Earlier the report by K.Hamidov of 1949 mentions that there were about 3,500 unregistered clergy in Tajikistan (Hamidov 1949: 90).

A.Barmenkov’s report mentioned that there were significant numbers of Sufi groups in Central Asia without having any indication of their existence in the archival material (Council for the Affairs of Religious Cults (CARC) 1970: 92). In 1950s there were said to be about 500 mazars in Tajikistan (Friliv 1955: 94-95). Some places of pilgrimage included tombs of certain leaders of the Qurbashi, or Basmachi, who fought the Soviet regime in the 1920s and 1930s became the mazar (Yaacov 2000: 374). And that “more popular mazars were attracting large number of pilgrimages. In addition, those religious activities were
centered around the mosques and mazars which operated without authorizations. It was also mentioned that the professional ‘unofficial clergy sought to ‘revive’ religious rites which the spiritual directorates rejected” (Yaacov 2000: 379).

CARC took note of the report of its upolnomochennyi for Tajikistan in 1961 that where mosques had been shut down by ‘administrative’ measures, had been used by ‘reactionary’ unregistered clerics to enhance their activity (CARC 1961:207). Earlier it was reported that “The attendance at festival prayers did not diminished at the closed mosques, but went up markedly. In one such region prior to the shutting down of the registered mosque, 6,000 worshippers had gathered there for festival prayers and 4-5,000 in services organized by unregistered mullas. In the years following closure, 22,000 worshiped in festival services conducted by the latter” (Ahmedov 1961: 207-208). In 1966, in Tajikistan the situation was complicated since officially, just 17 registered mosques existed, but CARC figure spoke of 34, apparently they were not recognizing the unlawful closures (Yaacov 2000: 215). Disdain for the legislation on religion and established procedures among local organs of government was not restricted to refusal to open mosques and register religious societies. Both in the late Stalin period, 1949-53, and in the years of Khruschev's anti-religious campaign they withdrew a number of mosques from registration without heeding the regular routine. In the former period the worst transgressors were probably the authorities in Ul'ianovsk Oblast', in the latter those of Leninabad Oblast' in Tajikistan (Yaacov, 2000: 656). In GBAO much of the population belonged to the Shiite Ismaili sect and after considerable deliberation it was decided to register one khalifa (the Ismaili equivalent of a cleric) for each sel'sovet (Yaacov 2000: 92).

A major document, which sought in the early 1970s to describe and analyses Muslim life in the Soviet Union led down that the registered urban mosques had perceptibly become centres of religious life for the surrounding settlements. Believers would often come from distance localities on the eve of festivals and spend the night on the grounds of the mosques (CPSU 1971: 266). There were also times and regions, especially in Central Asia, in which the registered mosques seemed to be extending a hand to unregistered groups, in the hope of overcoming the limitations imposed by the regime's endeavor to restrict their activity to the confines of their parish. CARC feared to point that this might be a concerted effort initiated by Spiritual Directorate of the Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (SADUM), whose
own attitude toward the unregistered communities seemed to be ambiguous and in a state of constant flux (Yaacov 2000: 266-267). In Tajikistan, the registered imams complained that their unregistered counterparts dubbed them and their mosques with the epithet ‘Soviet’ (Yaacov 2000: 285). Gorno Badakshan and Gharm had no registered mosques (Yaacov 2000: 310).

The Soviet regime’s atheistic propaganda laid great stress on those elements within Islam that had been incorporated from followers of paganistic practices. The intent was to demonstrate the superstitious component of popular Islam and to highlight the ignorance of the Muslim clergy who were unable to differentiate between the fundamentals of their faith and extraneous practices that had over time become part and parcel of Islamic tradition (Yaacov 2000: 364).

I.V.Polianskii mentioned in 1946 that “The Muslim religious revival of the Second World War years and the period immediately following the war was described by CARC as of a ‘high level’ and, especially in Central Asia, largely ‘spontaneous’” (Polianskii 1946: 432). Continuing to expand in the initial post war period, it probably reached its peak in 1946. At the end of 1945 Polianskii wrote to Molotov in 1945 that the religious mood among the Muslims was on the rise (Polianskii 1945: 432). A year later written by G.I.Vrachev and I.N.Uzkov, CARC officials, to I.V.Polianskii, 29 Nov. 1946, confirmed that Islamic life was not abating; it had ‘erupted’, and was continuing to ‘drift’, beyond the framework of the law (Vrachev & Uzkov 1946: 432).

However, one factor that led to flexible implementation of Soviet religious policy in Tajikistan may be Tajikistan’s distance from the Russian center. Partly opening up Central Asia to the external Islamic world proved to be a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it yielded considerable benefits for Soviet foreign policy: it demonstrated freedom of expression in the Muslim regions of the USSR and thereby served to strengthen Moscow’s position in the Islamic world. On the other hand, it forced authorities to take measures to support official Islam, and these inevitably served to erode, public consciousness, the perception that religion and religious practices were forbidden and anachronistic (Belokrenitsky 2005: 155).

In 1947 Soviet relaxed its policies towards the Muslims as they need assistance for rebuilding the Soviet economy in post-World War II. In this regard many maktabs were
opened, mosques rehabilitated and for the first time the Muslim delegation, including Ziauddin Babakhanov, the Mufti of Central Asia, took part in the Haj to Mecca in 1947. At the national level, four directorates for overseeing the affairs of Muslim were established in Ufa, Tashkent (the most influential one), Baku and Makhach Kala. In exchange the Muslim clergy allowed Muslim women to work in the cotton fields, Muslim men to undertake behind the front activities, and Muslim youth to participate in war in whatever capacity they were assigned. This religious relaxation would appear to have been more for an audience abroad than for domestic consideration, coinciding as it did with the emergence of the ‘Islamic card’ in Soviet foreign policy (Bennigsen & Wimbush 1989: 27, 29).

Soon in 1950’s and early 1960’s, under Khruschev, the policy of ‘back to Lenin’ led to closure of Mosques. Further Cold War, Iranian revolution in 1979, Soviet invasion in Afghanistan in the same year and the geopolitical considerations led to the return of harsh anti-Islamic approach. However, Muslim authorities from within the hierarchy of Stalinist-era “official Islam” continued to travel abroad, mostly to Muslim states, and as official envoys to international Muslim organizations. The Iranian revolution had a lesser effect on the secular Tajik population, but it awakened a new interest in the Tajiks long suppressed Islamic religion and dispense with Soviet culture (Minahan 2004: 203, 275).

Despite of Soviet atheistic policies and strong control to check the religious practice “Survey conducted in a few areas in the second half of the 1960s and 1970s showed that among Tajikistan’s rural, dehqan, population it was chiefly prisoners who prayed five times a day, but 30 percent of believers aged 40-60 prayed two or three times” (Yaacov 2000: 74). In Tajikistan it was assumed in the early 1980s (on the basis of ‘observation, conversations and questioning’) that 15 percent of the local nationalities’ urban, and 25-30 per cent of their rural, population observed the fast in its entirety (Yaacov 2000: 81).

The Soviet authorities took advantage of the social status of the akasal, the older men folk, to initiate councils of elders with specific disciplinary functions in the areas of marriage and family life, education and labor, although these councils had to be kept under strict surveillance so as to ensure that they imparted the requisite norms and precepts (Dunn & Dunn 2000: 442). As one CARC upolnomochennyi pointed out in the mid 1970s, the life of the family, even when some of its younger members were educated, was frequently directed by its older, illiterate, or barely literate members. Religious rites, widely perceived as popular
traditional customs, were observed ‘mechanically’ even by non-believers, who were unable to overcome their false ‘fear’ in face of the male violent opinion’ of their elders (Irgaliev 1974: 442-443). The older generation thus molded public opinion, especially in rural society, and filled the role of guardian of the community’s ‘morals’, censuring those who rejected the traditions of their forefathers (Bairamov 1966: 443).

Members of the intelligentsia, too, circumcised their sons, including teachers, who were supposed to set an example to others, especially those who upon concluding their studies returned to work in rural areas. In Tajikistan students at institutions of higher learning told people who conducted a sociological survey that they would be living in *kishlaks* among their fellow-villagers, relatives and acquaintances and so would circumcise their sons, although they agreed this was a backward and harmful practice (Yaacov 2000: 530). Although there were propaganda against it as it was ideologically harmful for the society as it not only damage the health of the boy, but also economically hurt to his family. It was also observed that party members and *apparatchiks* acted as the defenders of Islam. To the outside world, they publicly criticized the religion whilst inwardly remaining Muslim and protecting as best they could their fellow believers. Once they had retired they would demonstrate overtly their adherence to the Islamic faith (Malashenko 1994: 65).

It may be noted that presently, the Muslims of Tajikistan do not practice rituals of Islam, such as the *salat* (daily five prayers), eating according to *halal* (dietary restrictions) and attending congregational services at mosques. Valery Tishkov in an interview with Mama Yusupova noted that the “Very few people know and believe the teachings of our Prophet and practically nobody can read the Koran” (Tishkov 1997: 108).

The incidence of religious marriage, *nikoh*, seems to have been considerably lower than that of both rites and circumcision (Yaacov 2000: 531). The practice of *qalym*, bride money, paid by the groom and his family to the bride’s parents as remuneration and polygamy, was a general practice wherever Muslims lived, even in the towns (Yaacov 2000: 537).

According to the head of CARCs section for the Muslim, Jewish and Buddhist faiths, L.A.Prikhod’ko, mentioned in the late 1950s that “CARC in fact operated with the ultimate aim of gradually eliminating religious ideology, but since its staff were not workers of the Society for the Dissemination of Political and Scientific Knowledge or the Ministry of
Culture they could not condemn or attack it in public. The Council, he insisted, distinguished between clergy and ordinary believers. The latter were ‘regular Soviet workers’ who were ‘infected’ with an ideology foreign to Marxism-Leninism and were often, as a result of ‘customs and tradition’, under the thumb of the clergy. It was CARC’s task to help all existing organizations in a general effort to persuade believers to wean themselves away from the religious narcotic, but this had to be accomplished without offending their sensitivities. If, for instance, a mosque which had functioned for many years and maintained a normal existence as a religious society sought to register, its request had to be acceded to, for any alternative, such as pretending it did not exist, would be an act of self-deception on CARC’s part” (Prikhod’ko 1958: 566-567). Earlier the same official attributed major political significance to the measures taken to terminate the activity of mazar and other holy places in the wake of the Central Committee resolution of November 1958, arguing that they would in the long run help in the onslaught on the religious ideology that was so strong in some of the Muslim areas specifically Central Asia and Kazakhstan, Dagestan and Azerbaijan (Prikhod’ko 1959: 567).

In early 1947, CARC Deputy Chairman Sadovskii contended that the republic was a cause of constant concern, among other reasons because of signs that Pan-Islam, which had ‘always been of major significance’, was being revived (CARC 1947: 571). In mid-1964 it was pointed out that the Central Asian Republics’ criminal codes had special articles defining criminal responsibilities for fraudulent acts intended to evoke superstition among the masses and extract material benefits there from. Court proceedings for offences in the realm of religion were more common in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (CARC 1964: 579-580).

“In at least one union and one autonomous republic the Committee of State Security (KGB) seems to have been particularly aware of a possible threat to local security from Islam. In Tajikistan, as of the early 1960s, CARC upolnomochennye reported regularly to the KGB chief on trends and developments within the republic’s Muslim community, and not just to the republican first secretary and chairman of the council of ministers as was the custom. It is not clear whether the danger was thought to be internal, given the vitality of Islam in Tajikistan and the physical inaccessibility of so many of its strongholds, or to have emanated from neighboring Afghanistan, in view of the vulnerability of considerable sections of the border” (Yaacov 2000: 583). At the same time attempts were made to adopt the
traditional spring and autumn festivals of the indigenous nationalities to the criteria of the new Soviet “secular” rites, such as the Nawruz in Tajikistan (Yaacov 2000: 601).

Be that as it may, towards the end of the period under study, the increasingly defiant stance of a growing number of Muslim cleric and believers—especially, but not solely in Tajikistan, the Ferghana Valley oblast of Uzbekistan and the Chechen-Ingush ASSR—and the manifest bankruptcy of the Soviet system were bringing matters to a head (Yaacov 2000: 606).

In Tajikistan, local officials were constantly being charged with showing undue tolerance to Muslim religious activity. In the late 1960s two party officials were excluded from the party and two raiispolhom officials likewise punished for permissiveness towards religious officials (tserkovniki). In Kulyab the consumer service complex actually undertook the work of putting up an extra structure in the mosque courtyard, using materials which had been assigned for residential construction (Barmenkov 1969: 640).

Local officialdom was reportedly refraining from taking measures to prevent or curb the conduct of prayer-services in unregistered mosques or even in the open, which was specifically prohibited by law, although this took on serious dimensions. Sel’sovet and kolkhoz chairmen in the Uzbek SSR and other republics, according to information from the early-mid 1950s, were helping the clergy, providing them with prayer premises, and permitting the collection of money for the clergy among kolkhozniki. Support of Islam also led to several cases of veiled bribes by the financial organs (Prikhod’ko 1953: 641).

The Marxist progressive interpretation of history and nationalism was regarded as a more progressive movement when compared to pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism, which were viewed as much more reactionary. It was thought necessary to wage a struggle against the clergy and other influential reactionary and medieval elements (V.I.Lenin 1970). Such policies led to the development of division of faithful into two well-established ideologies i.e. of Wahhabi Muslims, of the Tavildarra, Gcharm and lower Vaksh and Qurganteppa, who wanted to establish ancient traditions of land management and Islamic way of life. To achieve these goals they instituted their own schools, hired their own teachers, and organized their society with the help of their aksakals and ishans, second was Sovietised Islam, which

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41 Nawruz is celebrated on a Sunday at the end of March rather than on the day of the equinox; it also reintroduced the traditional harvest festival.
was able to establish its dominance over Wahhabism by providing economic and social security and by providing higher and advanced education so that the local Tajiks could fill in the places that required skilled workers. Such places were until now occupied by European Soviets.

In schools, in addition to attending seminars and conferences, the teachers were forced to teach atheism and to emphasize the advantages of the new advances in astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and physiology. Similarly, Soviet doctors and interns were instructed to "enlighten" the masses with discussions about the marvels of new medicine, especially emphasizing the healing power of the new drugs as opposed to the efficacy of the remedies prescribed by the ishans. Those who refused to participate in this process or who continued to visit the ziyarats (tombs of saints) and mazars (graveyards) were dismissed. Journalists, radio and television broadcasters, publishers, and writers were asked to participate in the process by broadcasting, writing, and disseminating news that exposed the misdeeds of the ishans and the mullahs. The government itself published and widely distributed materials in Tajiki, refuting the claims of the ishans regarding barakah (special blessing) (Bashiri 1993).

"Communist influence left a great impact on the population of Central Asia in general and Tajikistan in particular although the daily practices were able to continue largely uninterrupted. The Imams were selected from within the village, collective farm or mahalla (city quarter), and prayers were more often than not held in the local chaikhana (teahouse) or social club......three trends are noticeable under the Soviet period; first, the increased influence of the 'unofficial Islam' of the Sufi Brotherhoods; secondly, the 'nationalization' of Islam; finally, the secularization of Russified urban areas" (Naby 1994: 50) Tajiks started putting Russian suffix in their Muslim names.

Later in the decade, when regime policy was relatively lenient, special lots were assigned for the conduct of prayers in the proximity of the cotton-fields in the rural parts of Tajikistan, where it was not considered feasible to prevent people from participating in collective prayer-services on the major festivals in years when these fell in periods of urgent seasonal work. Neither the organs of local government nor the kolkhoz administrations obstructed this arrangement, tending rather to recommend it, so that at one and the same time
there was neither violations of work-discipline more disgruntlement among the population (Polianskii 1950: 500).

According to K. Warikoo, “The Soviets used the cultural similarities among people living north and south of the Oxus, to bolster the pro-Soviet regimes in Afghanistan” (Warikoo 1994: 1). The war enabled the Tajiks to have military training and later utilized their skills in ethnic violence. Many on their return were psychologically damaged and socially disoriented (Tishkov 1997: 284). James Minahan observed that, “In 1985 dozens of Tajik soldiers were shot for refusing to fire on Afghan Muslims” (Minahan 2004: 275). “In Kulyab Oblast’ clergy came out with statements that ‘it is forbidden to bury Soviet soldiers killed in Afghanistan according to Muslim rites, as they fought against true Muslims” (Ahmedov 1962: 62-63).

Initially after the independence, F.J.F, Feldbrugge noted that the state flag, state coat of arms and a state anthem were designed along Soviet lines so that symbols such as hammer and sickle were prominent features and the proclamation ‘Proletarian of All Countries Unite’ was inscribed, in both Russian and the national language (Feldbrugge 1979). The Cultural Revolution in some parts of the Soviet Republics in late 1980s and the subsequent passage of language law whereby Tajiki was made national language, efforts to revive Tajik culture and the events after the disintegration could not affect the importance of Russia and Russian language.

During the Soviet era, not only cotton cultivation was introduced but Tajiks were also forced to produce potatoes. Initially potatoes were not accepted by the Tajiks as they were brought by Kafirs but later it was included as a staple diet. Being a Muslim nation, they were against drinking of alcohol as it is against Islam. The Russians brought with them the tradition of drinking. Though, in the villages the drinking is not appreciated openly, in cosmopolitan cities it is usual to find vodka liquor bottles on the dinner table. The Tajik weddings are also very interesting as they not only solemnize their marriage in traditional Tajik way wearing traditional dress but the bride and the groom also dress up like Christian couple during the registration ceremony.

According to Rokowaska Harmstone “After almost three decades of Soviet rule, the task of the political socialization of Tajikistan was far from completed its effectiveness,
though by no means negligible (especially in the case of the elite), was nevertheless limited, and lagged behind general political needs. (Harmstone 1970; 229).

To conclude its history, geographical location, topography and the resources distribution have formed the present day distinct sub-regional ethnic identity in Tajikistan. It will take time for the Tajiks to associate themselves with the common Tajik national identity because of the long history. At the same time the developments during the Soviet period that has established a political and social culture can be a starting point to the development of the Tajiks either towards the establishment of egalitarian, secular, progressive society or to move backwards to the traditional Islamic way of life with ethno-regional differences overriding the nationalist sentiments.