CHAPTER – I

Central Asia’s Historical Relations with West Asia
With the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991, Central Asia became independent. Central Asia comprises five independent republics – Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It covers a territory of approximately 4 million sq. km, with mixed population of around 53 million. It borders Iran and Afghanistan to the South, China to the East, Russia to the North and Caspian Sea to the West.

The entire region has extremely varied climatic and natural conditions. In the West and North there are extensive plains; in the East and South a considerable part of the territory is mountainous. A great mountain chain, from Kopet Dagh in the South-West to the Pamirs and Tien Shan in the east, divides Central Asia from the rest of the continent. A wide corridor between the great deserts of Iran to the South-West and the deserts of Turkmenistan links the region with the West Asia. The main East-West route, the Silk Road intersected the northern and southern routes linking China with West Asia and India.¹

There are numbers of islands, seas and lakes, the largest being the Caspian Sea in the West, the Aral Sea in the centre and Lake Balkhash in the east. The climate is sharply continental, with temperature ranging from \(-5^\circ\) in winter to nearly \(40^\circ\text{C}\) in summer, and significant variations between South and North: in the southern deserts summer temperature of

50°C are not uncommon, where as in the northern steppes 28°C is usually the upper limit.²

Since the ancient times Central Asia has been a melting pot of nations and cultures. Trade, religions and other Cultural Currents followed certain routes and these regions were important stages in the migrations of the nomads. Scythians, Kushans, Huns, various Turkic tribes, Mongols and many other races travelled this way.³ Central Asia was moreover, the focal point of influence from Greece, Persia, India and China.

The region has two major river systems, the Amudarya (Oxus to the Greeks, Jayhun to the Arabs), and the Syrdarya (Jaxartes, Sayhun), both of which until very recently emptied into the Aral Sea. The Oxus river of ancient mythology, originates in the Hindu Kush range, runs along the southern-border of Central Asia skirting Afghanistan and Iran, and reaches the Aral Sea after a journey of 2,500 kilometers. The Jaxartes river originates in the Tien Shan (also called Naryn river), passes through Ferghana valley and journeys north of the Kyzlikum desert to reach the Aral Sea after travelling 2,200 kms., thousands of smaller rivers flow down from the mountains but their waters disappear.

into the sands of the great deserts. Today these rivers provide 90% of the surface water available to the region that was formerly part of the Soviet Union. The topography of Amudarya and Syrdarya basins has confined exploitation of the river water only to limited area, both the rivers are melted water from glaciers.

There are three Oases across the region, the khivan Oasis near the mouth of Amudarya, the Zarafshan (also known in the past as the Sogd or Kuhak river) valley linking Bukhara and Samarqand and finally the Ferghana valley north of the Pamirs. The Kashka Darya waters Qarshi (Nasaf, Nakhsh Ab) and its environs. These smaller rivers carry the remaining 10% of the surface water available in the former Soviet Central Asia. The valley of Zarafshan was always the most heavily populated area of the whole region. Samarqand and Bukhara, capitals in different period of history, both lie on the lower Zarafshan. The upper part of the valley constituted the Pre-Arab principality of Ushrusana, with the important city of Pendzhikent. These regions supported by mountain and the Steppe, though marginal for agriculture, but providing good pasture for nomadic populations. In 1900 the total irrigated land in Central Asia was at estimated 46,000 sq. kms. Of which 12,500 sq. kms. lay in the Oases of Bukhara, 9000 sq. kms. in the Ferghana valley and 300 sq. kms. in and around Khiva. In Central Asia, Ferghana valley is

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only one extensive agricultural plain around 425 kms. long and 170 kms.
wide surrounded by mountains.

In the Centre of the region lie two of the largest deserts in the world. In the South, Covering much of present day Turkmenistan, is the Karakum (Black Sands), which covers 350,000 sq. kms. of some of the most arid terrain on earth, where rain is such a rare event to be recounted decades later by the local nomads. To its north in present day Uzbekistan is the Kyzylkum (Red Sands), which covers 300,000 sq. kms. Despite the scarcity of water, both these deserts have distinctive fauna and flora. The ancient irrigation carrying water through the Kareez from the rivers was very much familiar in Central Asia. 5

During Stalin era in 1930s Ferghana valley was divided between Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The Soviet regime changed the natural geography of Oasis settlement by irrigating vast areas of the steppe for cotton and grain cultivation. The project was initially highly successful, but the lack of planning and foresight later created massive problems, which the Soviet regime refused to acknowledge, and which are only coming to the surface today. Acute water shortages, pollution, the drying-up of lakes and seas, desertification and environmental catastrophes brought only by nuclear waste are only some of the problems that these newly independent republics now face.

5 The Kareez system, which is still practiced in part of Central Asia, Pakistan and Afghanistan, depends on the digging of inclined underground canals that channel well water to the fields.
THE HISTORICAL LEGACY:-

Central Asia has been exposed to numerous invasions throughout the history. Central Asia is one of the oldest centres of civilization. During the Neolithic age between 4000 and 2000 B.C., Central Asia saw the development of mixed farming in which tribes hunted herded and grew some crops. Based around Caspian Sea these tribes developed pottery and stone tools as they steadily moved eastward into Central Asia. Recent excavations at Altyn-tepe and Hapuz-tepe near present day Ashkhabad revealed Neolithic settlement where people traded with Persia and Mesopotamia in the West Asian region.

The first Urban settlements in Central Asia appeared around 1500 B.C. probably founded by peoples of Iranian Origin. During the Achamenids era, urban planning and architecture were strongly influenced by West Asian styles. Hellenism had an even greater impact on town planning in Central Asia after the establishment of Greek Cities in the area. Between the fourth and second centuries B.C. Chorasmia (Khwarizm) had a series of walled cities with strong mounds, complex fortifications and gateway barbicans.

6 V. M. Masson and V. I. Sariandi Tr & ed. Ruth Tringham, Central Asia: Turkmenia before the Achaemenids, Great Britain : Thomas and Hudson, 1972, P. 49
10 Ibid, P. 447.
The Saka (Scythian) tribes settled around the Caspian Sea and Aral Sea, were the first mounted nomads to establish a dynasty in the region. The Scythians ruled an area that included present-day Iran, Western Turkey and Central Asia. The Scythians were known to the Chinese as the Yiieh-Chih.\textsuperscript{11}

The supreme leader of the great Yiieh-Chih had his residence in the north of Oxus river. Squeezed by growing Persian Power, the Sakas later retreated into the Pamirs and the Tien Shan mountain, the Tarim basin and the upper waters of yellow River, today known as Kyrgyzstan. They remained here until 200 B.C., when they were finally conquered by the Persians.\textsuperscript{12}

From sixth to fourth centuries B.C. this region was under the control of the Persian Achameanian empire. Politically this was of little more than nominal significance, but the cultural impact was strong, as is evidenced by the fact that Zoroastrianism was widely practiced. The Achaemenids also extended their supremacy over Asia Minor, the Greek lands of the eastern coast of the Mediterranean. This was a very important event because it was the first time for Central Asia to come into contact with Greek Mediterranean cultures.\textsuperscript{13}

The early Persian kings were the first to demarcate Central Asia, now inhabited by the off shoots of Saka tribes. They divided the region

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid, P. 179.
\textsuperscript{12} Ahmed Rashid, \textit{op. cit.}, P.10.
\textsuperscript{13} Janos Harmatta, \textit{op. cit.}, P. 487.
between the Amudarya and Syrdarya, stretching from the Caspian Sea to the Pamir mountains, into three distinct regions. From West to East these were Chorasmia, Bactria and Soghdiana. The latter included modern day Tajikistan, eastern Uzbekistan and northern Afghanistan, while Bactria included much of present day Uzbekistan. The Persian empire founded by *Cyrus the Great* in 550 B.C. was to rule Central Asia for the next two hundred years, until the arrival of the Greeks. It was in Bactria that Zoroaster, who was born in modern Azerbaijan, first appeared with a new religion of fire worship. Zoroastrianism spread rapidly through Bactria and Soghdiana and was later adopted by the Persians.\(^{14}\)

After the collapse of Achaemenid empire in 329 B.C., the Macedonian and Greek troops of Alexander arrived at the Syrdarya.\(^{15}\) Alexander conquered Bactria and Soghdiana between 329 and 327 B.C., initially he occupied *Marcanda* (Samarqand), the royal summer residence of Soghdiana. Alexander and his successors introduced a new element, that of Hellenism, to southern Central Asia. The Greek brought a well developed urban culture, with a great tradition of handicrafts and arts, a rich literature. They had a new art of warfare, and efficient system of land ownership for city – states, a developed commodity production, and they were interested in long-distance trade.

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\(^{15}\) Edger Knobloch, *op.cit.* , P. 19.
All these elements of Greek Culture made a strong impact on the Iranians living inside the former Persian empire. In 1286 B.C. Hittites conquered Anatolia, they used mounted warriors and chariots for the first time in battle field.

The Greeks ruled over Central Asia for some seventy years. One of his successors, General Selucucos, founded the Selucid dynasty which ruled Bactria and large parts of Soghdiana. In 239 B.C. another Graeco-Bactrian kingdom was established which ruled from the Afghan City of Balkh. The Bactrians were to be finally overthrown by nomadic invaders from the east in around 140 B.C. The Graeco-Bactrian kings led military expeditions to the Phryni and Seres to secure trading contacts with China, and for the first time developed an exchange of material goods and culture between east and west across Central Asia. However, the entire region was linked by the 'Great Silk Route', the trans-continental trade routes that for almost two millennia serviced an economic network encompassing Central Asia, China, India, the West Asia and the Black Sea region.

The Silk Route began at Ch’ang-an, the capital of China at that time, and ran west-ward along the edge of Gobi Desert, Passing through Lan-chou to Tun-huang. At Tun-huang it divided into two, one branch going south and other north. The northern route followed a straight line

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16 Janos Harmatta, , op. cit.
from Tun-huang to Turpan and from Turpan Silk Route went through Ch'iu-Tzu into Aksu, then from Kashgar to Ferghana via Samarqand and on to Antioch in Margiana (Merv). The Southern route from Tun-huang went via Khotan and Yark and the Capital of Bactria and then to Zariaspa and Antioch in Margiana, where the two roads joined.\textsuperscript{19} The basic means of transport in this international caravan trade was camel.

The Kushan era was one of the important phases for the cultural and economic expansion of Central Asia. The prosperity of the Kushan empire was based upon its highly developed agriculture. The Kushan Kings made great efforts to secure a good water supply, to improve and extend irrigation systems and to enlarge cultivated territory. The extent of irrigated field was even greater than today and agricultural techniques were improved. It was the period when the wooden plough with an iron ploughshare first appeared in Central Asia.\textsuperscript{20} In the Kushan cities architecture, sculpture and painting, textile art and manufacture of harness and arms and hydraulic engineering became highly developed. The Kushan empire also played an important role in the spread of Buddhism in Tarim basin. Buddhist religious teaching had already appeared in Bactria as early as the third century B.C.

In the third Century A.D., Iran then ruled by the Sassanids under King Ardashir, a descendent of Sasan, re-established its hegemony over

\textsuperscript{19} Janos Harmatta, \textit{op. cit.} P.287.
\textsuperscript{20} \textit{Ibid.}, P. 491.
southern Central Asia. It was to remain the major political, cultural and economic force in the region for many Centuries.\textsuperscript{21}

Arab Scholar Tabari describes about Arashir's conquest in the east:

"He then left Swad for Islakhr, thence went first to Sistan and then to Gurgan, Abarshar, Merv, Balkh and Khwarizm, right up to the very borders of the country of Khorasan, whence he returned to Merv. After he had killed many people and send their heads to the Anahid Temple of Fire, he returned to pars (Fars) from Merv and settled there again. The ambassadors of the kings of Kushan and of Turan and Mukran came there and paid homage to him."\textsuperscript{22}

In the 4\textsuperscript{th} Century A.D, the Mongol tribe called the Ephthalites (Arabic Haytal, Chinese Ye-Tha) or white Huns, who came out of the Gobi Desert to occupy Kashgar in Xinjiang around 200 B.C, crossed Central Asia and reached the Volga river in Russia. The first Mongol empire stretched from Korea to the Ural mountains in Russia.

\textsuperscript{22} Al -Tabari, \textit{Tarikh-e-Tabari}, vol. 15, Leiden, 1879, PP. 17-18 (in Arabic).
descriptions of the Huns fit the Modern Kazakh, who retain the same physique. The Ephthalites conquered eastern Europe and parts of India. But the white Huns did not rule for long, and in the 5th century A.D. Huns settled on the Danube rallied around their Chief Attila and marched on Rome.

The Central Asian empire of the Turks (Tu-Kueh) under their great Khan, Mokan rose in 552 A.D. The Turkic tribes originally inhabited the Altai mountains in eastern Central Asia. The word Tur or Turkic was given by the Chinese to signify all those nomadic tribes who occupied the region from Mongolia to the Black Sea and who posed a threat to the Chinese empire. Raids by the early Turkic tribes forced Chinese to build the Great Wall of China. Around A.D. 200 these tribes turned around from attacking the Chinese in the east to the Oasis towns in Central Asia to the West. Some Turkic tribes settled in Ferghana valley. By A.D.500, these Turkic nomads were to defeat both the Persian Sassanids and Huns in the Western part of Central Asia. Meanwhile eastern Central Asia was in the hands of Uighur Turkic tribes, who set up a nomadic empire that straddled the border between present day former Soviet Central Asia and Xinjiang.

After the collapse of Sassanian empire (642-51), Arabs came in Central Asia during the Umayyad dynasty based in Damascus. Crossing Persia, the Arabs first defeated Zubil, the Turkic king of Kabul, and

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then, crossing the Oxus for the first time, defeated the Sassanids at Merv in A.D.651. The Arabs brought new belief system, a new social order and a new epistemology.\textsuperscript{24} Some 50,000 Arabs families arrived to settle in Merv. The second wave of Arab conquests began in 705 under Qutayba ibn Muslim, and conquered Bukhara and Samarqand. By 713 the Arabs ruled over the Ferghana valley. The Arabs used Khorasan (northern Iran) as a spring board for their conquest of Khwarizm and Transoxiana. The Arab capital was at Merv, near the present day Turkmen City of Mary.

The Arabs were not interested in the destruction of conquered lands and in killing their peoples.\textsuperscript{25} They preserved the captured towns in Central Asia and continued the existing trade contacts between towns and villages. Apart from Bukhara, Samarqand and the other cities of Maveranahr, the penetration of Islam into the steppes of Central Asia was rather different. Here, Islam penetrated in a more pacifist fashion through Muslim merchant caravans. Tenth century sources report that a large number of towns in the steppes had mosques. These merchant and Urban people brought the material achievement of prosperous Islamic lands to the nomads of Central Asia. The lure of Islam as a civilization was very strong and the major impetus for nomadic tribes embracing

\textsuperscript{24} Peter Ferdinand, \textit{op. cit.}, P. 7.

Islam. By the ninth Century Arabic language had become the language of international scholarship and was developing a distinctive and well-elaborated literature of its own. The Arabs, always regarded Balkh, the old religious capital of the Kushan empire and site of the famous Buddhist shrine of Naw bahar, as the capital of the "Turk".

The first independent Muslim state in Central Asia, that of the Samanids, was founded in 875 A.D. by an Iranian dynasty from Khorasan, and made their capital at Bukhara. The founder of Samanid dynasty was Ismail Ibn Ahmad, who ruled from 875 to 999 A.D. During Samanid period Central Asia became a recognised entity with a well organised army and bureaucracy, the Samanid built up extensive trade links with Europe and China, thus regulating the Silk route. The Samanid state (Mavarenahr, Khwarizm, Syrdarya region, Iran and Afghanistan) played a great role in the ethnic and cultural history of the area. The Samanid court left an indelible mark on the development of the Persian language and culture that was not to be eroded in Central Asia until the advent of communism. The Arabic language, however, continued to be the language of Science.

The Turkish dynasty of the Karakhanids established itself in the town of Uzgen (Uzkend), east of Ferghana, on the territory of Karluks. The whole area was divided between two Turkish dynasties: Ghaznavid and Seljuks. The Ghaznavid dynasty under Mehmood (998-1030), which was to rule over a region that included parts of Central Asia and
India. It was under Mehmood that the famous Court Academy of the Khorezm Shahs was disbanded and some of the scholars were taken to Ghazni in Afghanistan. 26

However, in the eleventh Century another Turkic tribe brought the Seljuk Turks to centre stage. The Seljuks first settled near Bukhara before they moved south. They captured Merv and then defeated the Ghaznavids in 1041, establishing an empire that spread as far as Turkey. 27 Around 200 years the Seljuks ruled over from the Pamirs to Iraq, then uniting for the first time under Turkic hegemony Central Asia with Persia and the Arab World. During (1072-92) king Malik Shah ruled from Kashgar to Jerusalem and protected the booming trade along the Silk Route between Syria, Central Asia and China. The Seljuks were challenged and finally defeated by the Mongols under Genghis Khan. The sedentarized Turks in the cities of Transoxiana were heavily influenced by Iranian Culture, and in Bukhara, Samarqand and other regions, Farsi continued to be the main language for administration, literature and trade, despite of Turkic being literary

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26 Edger Knobloch, op.cit., P. 29.
language (eg. Karakhanid and later Chaghatai). The Seljuks established an ethnic link between Central Asia and Turkey.

When the Seljuks and other Turkic tribes had moved westward they left behind in Gobi Desert their kinsmen, the Mongols, who gradually came to inhabit the region south of Lake Baikal. Genghis Khan born in 1155, succeeded in uniting the local tribes and in 1206 he was elected the Great Khan (Kha-Khan) at a tribal meeting which adopted the name Mongol for a new tribal confederacy. Later called the Golden Horde, this confederacy included all the tribes that today make up the major ethnic groups in Central Asia. The exceptions are the Tajiks who derive their ancestry directly from the ancient Sogdians. The ancient Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and Turkmen were the warriors, whilst the Uighur formed the bulk of Genghis Khan’s bureaucracy because under Chinese influence they had developed a written script and a code of laws, which Genghis Khan was to adopt to Mongol needs.

The northern steppes were dominated by the nomadic Kazakhs, who had united into three Hordes (known in Kazakh as Zhus). Each had its own territory and a hierarchical structure of command under the rule of a hereditary leader (the Khan). The lands of the little Horde lay to the north of the Caspian Sea of the Middle Horde in the Centre

28 The educated elite of Transoxiana were bilingual: writers such as Ali Sher Navoi (1441-1501) and Babur (1448-1530) used both languages with equal mastery, a tradition that was maintained into the 20th century, example Sadriddin Aini (1878-1954) who made a major contribution to the development of Soviet - Uzbek as well as Soviet - Tajik literature.
(between the Tobol and Irtysh river) and the Great Horde in the southeast, extending into Xinjiang. The Hordes were united for brief periods, but, as with the Khanates in the south, they were frequently engaged in internecine hostilities. 29

The last major nomad invasion of Central Asia was that of the Mongols in the early 13th Century. Their first appearance in the region was accompanied by havoc and destruction; later, however, they mixed with the local population and adopted their language and culture. Taimur or Tamer Lane (1336-1405) became ruler of Samarqand and the whole Mawaranahar in 1370. He was born in 1336 in the small town of Kesh in Kashka Darya, south of Samarqand. His father was a minor Chief of the Turkicised Mongol Clan, the Barlas, who came to Transoxiana with the Chagatayids. In 1393 he captured Baghdad. Tamerlane established the Timurid dynasty, and his grandson Ulugh Beg continued his artistic and intellectual tradition, turning Samarqand and Bukhara into the seat of learning in the decorative arts, architecture, Poetry and Philosophy, Painting and Astronomy. 30

The original Chagatay Ulus was by then split between Semirechiye, or the region of the Talas, and the Ili – to be known as Moghulistan – which was in the hands of the descendents of Chagatay. The rulers of Semirechiye considered themselves legitimate heirs of

29 Peter Ferdinand, op. cit., P. 9.
Chaghtay and repeatedly invaded Transoxiana in an attempt to re-unite the Ulus.

After the death of Taimur, Central Asia gradually disintegrated into ever smaller units, ruled over by local warlords. By the 16th Century, two centres had emerged as the Chief regional powers, Khanate of Bukhara and Khiva. The Khanates of Bukhara occupied a territory that coincided approximately with that of modern Uzbekistan but also included parts of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan. The Khanate of Khiva, somewhat smaller in size, was situated to the south of the Aral Sea and occupied areas of Turkmen, Kazakh and Karakalpak lands. In the early 18th Century a third power base emerged, that of the Khanate of Kokand, whose territory lay to the north east and encompassed parts of modern Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan (including Tashkent). These states were always disturbed with their smaller dependencies in territorial disputes.31

The Timurid dynasty was to be replaced by a new tribal grouping, the Sheybani Uzbeks. The Uzbeks were of mixed Turkish and Mongol blood and part of the golden Horde of Genghis Khan, but they had remained nomads, untouched by the influences of urban life. Under their dynamic Chief Muhammad Shaybani, who was born in 1451, the Uzbeks united other tribes and then defeated the Timurid heir Babur in

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the decisive battle of Serpul, near Samarqand. The Uzbeks defeated the Turkmen and Persian, thus extending their empire to much of Central Asia and northern Persia.

The Iranian Safavid dynasty ended the long period of disunity or foreign domination in Iran. The Safavid ruled from 1501 to 1722 and they changed the state religion from Sunni to Shiaism. During the early years of this dynasty, Iran restored its control over the territories to the east of the Amudarya river, which became the border between Iran and the rising Uzbek Shaybani state. Safavid’s main challenge was to contain Ottoman power in Turkey and Uzbek power in the north. The Uzbek Chief Mohammed Shaybani was killed in 1510 in battle against the Safavids. With the exception of a short period of time under Nadir Shah (Afsharieyh dynasty 1736-50), who restored Iranian control over Turkmen tribes, the Khanate of Khwarezm, and part of Khanate of Bukhara, Iran never regained control over its entire former territory in Central Asia. After the death of Nadir Shah in 1748, the rise of Qajar dynasty in the late 18th Century only enabled Iran to control a small part of Turkmenistan until the late 19th Century, when Russia completed its annexation of Central Asia. The Iranian – Soviet Treaty of 26th Feb.

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1921 finalised the separation of Central Asia from Iran as it recognized the current border between Iran and Turkmenistan.

THE RUSSIAN ERA

The decline of Mongol control over Russia and the rise of Muscovite state in the 16th Century opened the way for future relations between Central Asia and Russia. The collapse of Mongol empire and the weakness of Iran created a political vacuum, giving the Central Asian Khanates the opportunity to become independent. In 1552, Ivan the terrible captured Kazan from the Tartar and massacred the entire population. In the 15th Century the Kazan Khanate was stronger and richer than the Muscovite state, but it was weakened due to internal squabbles and mutual rivalries. 36 Ivan built Saint Basil’s cathedral in Moscow’s Red Square to commemorate the victory and topped its domes with onion shapes to symbolize the severed heads of the turbaned Tatars. Ivan the Terrible swept on in 1556, taking Astrakhan the strategically important city where the Volga empties into the Caspian Sea. 37 Military expeditions were then mounted beyond the Ural mountains and into Siberia. Within a century, by 1650, the Russians had reached the Pacific, Subduing the Siberian Khanate along the way.

37 Edger Knobloch, op.cit., P. 44.
The entire Volga river was now in Russian hands and the gates to Asia were opened for Russian expansion. At the same time the Russians won the river Terek and Ivan the Terrible married a Kabardenian Princess, marking symbolically the beginning of Russian ties with the northern Caucasus.38

In 1717, Peter the Great dispatched troops to Central Asia in order to establish a Russian military presence in the region.39 Despite the failure of his mission, a Russian envoy remained in Bukhara until Peter’s death in 1725. In the second half of the 18th Century, Russia began its penetration into the Kazakh steppe and subjugated the remnants of the Mongol small and Inner Hordes in the Kazakh lands neighbouring Siberia. Its penetration into Central Asia remained limited to this Kazakh land until early in the 19th Century.

The Russians had steadily extended their line of control southward from Siberia, building first in Omsk in 1716, Semipalatinsk in 1718 and Orsk in 1735. From the Caspian Sea in the West the Russian steadily penetrated deep into Western Kazakhstan. The Kazakh Khans, trapped between the Qirots and the Russians, finally acceded to Russian suzerainty and asked for Russian protection. The Little Horde signed a treaty with Moscow in 1731, the Middle Horde in 1740 and the Great Horde in 1742. During the next fifty years the deterioration of their

nomadic life style caused by the devastation of wars led to a series of revolts by Kazakh nomads against their own Khans, the most far-reaching being the revolt of Batyr Srym in 1792. These revolts encouraged the Russians to abolish the Khanates, and between 1822 and 1848 the entire Kazakh territory was incorporated into the Tsarist empire.

Russians moved into conqueror the rich agricultural heart land of Central Asia that comprises modern Uzbekistan. Military campaigns were mounted to capture Tashkent in 1865 and Samarkand in 1868. Bukhara became a Russian protectorate. Meanwhile campaigns against the Turkmen in south resulted in the capture of Khiva in 1873. Finally Kokand in the east, fell in 1876. 40

Russia also legitimized the border of Central Asia with its new neighbours. In 1860 a Sino-Russian treaty established the border with Sinkiang. This was to divide permanently the ethnic groups that spanned that border: the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz and others. Russia neutralized the Persians by Signing a Peace Treaty with Tehran in 1881, after the Russian army had defeated the Turkmen. In 1887 Russia began a long series of demarcations of the Afghan border with British, to ensure that Afghanistan remained a buffer zone between the two imperial powers. The rivalry between the two intensified after Moscow

began laying tracks for the first railway lines in Central Asia, which in twenty years were to traverse the whole region. In 1888, around 1,400 kms. Railway line was completed from the Caspian Sea to Samarqand.

Russian rule had a very different impact on each of these two regions. The nomad areas to the north contained land potentially useful for agriculture, which the Kazakh and Kyrgyz tribes owned in common and used as pasture. This was highly attractive to Russian colonists. Russian settlement began to develop in the Ili region in the 1840s. As the century advanced, colonization both legal and illegal, increased throughout the steppe until by 1911, 40% of the population in the steppe oblasts was Russian, and 17% in Semirichiye. This influx of settlers brought a major change in the life style and economy of the Kazakhs, who could not profitably continue as nomads with sharply reduced lands. By 1900, much of Kazakh population was at least partially settled.

The Tsarist administration had less impact on social structures. The colonization remained minimal, since most land useful for agriculture was already exploited, and in private hands. Where possible the Russians administration reduced through local personnel and maintained previous structures of administration, education and justice at the lower levels. Although many Russian administrators distrusted

\[\text{\textsuperscript{41}}\text{Ahmed Rashid, op. cit., P.19.}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{42}}\text{Beatrice F. Manz, (ed.), Central Asia, op.cit., P.13.}\]
Islam, they were in general wary of interfering with religious leaders and institutions. While land reforms and the introduction of cotton as a major cash crop brought forth a new class of middlemen and land owners, Russian policies did not transform agricultural and urban populations as they had the nomads of the steppe. In education also, Russian influence was greater in the north, where at least a small Kazakh intelligentsia received its training. In Central Asia the few Russian schools opened had little impact on the Central Asian population.\textsuperscript{43}

**THE SOVIET ERA:**

With the collapse of Romanov dynasty and the success of the Bolshevik revolution in 1917, and the gradual assimilation of Central Asia into the revolutionary transformation under the monopoly of Communist Party’s power began. The Soviet rule was established in Central Asia between 1918 and 1922. It was intended in the initial stages under Lenin’s guidance to liberate the different nations exploited by Czarist empire destroying what Lenin had characterized as the ‘Prison house of nation’ under Czarist rule and construct a multinational state.

This was the period of fundamental transformation. The first step in this direction was the creation, within the framework of the Soviet

\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
Union, the proto-nation states. This territorial division, known as the National Delimitation of Central Asia, was based on the assumption that ethnic and linguistic applications coincided, and that together they formed the markers of 'national identity. The new territorial divisions, which cut across the boundaries of the Khanates and the tribal groupings, were an attempt to obliterate previous forms of self-definition by providing an alternative focus for regional, sub-state identities. Within its own terms the Delimitation was successful. Some 85-95 per cent of the total population of the main ethnic groups were encompassed within the borders of this own titular republics. The Tajiks had suffered severe territorial loss, they were the largest persian-speaking group of the region, they had lived for centuries as one people with the sedentarized Uzbeks. The Uzbeks were more powerful, secured the largest share of disputed lands including Bukhara and Samarqand.44

Central Asia was reorganized into separate republics. In 1921 the Turkestan Soviet Socialist Republics (SSR) was created, and a Commission was set up the following year to draft a new Constitutions for the federation, on which Stalin was responsible for the nationalities policy. On 30th December, 1922 the Third Congress of Soviets adopted the Treaty of Union which formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and in which the republics would enjoy autonomous,

but not sovereign status. A Constitution for the Union was adopted in 1936 and was not changed until 1978, during the Brezhnev era. In 1990 President Gorbachev negotiated a new treaty in which the republics were to be given their sovereignty and much more, but the signing was forestalled by the August 1991 Coup attempt in Moscow.

THE CULTURAL LINK BETWEEN CENTRAL ASIA AND WEST ASIA:

After the invasion of Arabs in Amudarya and Syrdarya region with the new model of faith and way of life, a new type of society evolved in Central Asia. The Central Asians embraced their philosophies, and also accepted their languages and culture. The area flourished and became famous for Islamic culture and Islamic teachings. The main towns were Samarqand, Bukhara, Shah Termez, Khwarezm, Merv, Khojent, Urghent and Nisa, which became famous for the Islamic thoughts. These cities maintained trade, intellectual and religious contacts with the West Asian countries. Some of the intellectual personalities of the region were Imam Mohammed Ibn-Ismail at Al-Bukhari, the great Muhadith, Hafiz Abu Issa ibn Issa al-Termeci, Imam al-Hafiz Abu-bakr Muhammed ibn Ali al-Qaffalash-Shashi, Abu-Ishaque Ibrahim al-Marwazi, Imam Ahmed ibn Mohammed al-Khorezmi, the great Islamic thinker Abu al-Nasar

Tarhan al-Hakim al-Farabi, the eminent encyclopaedist Abu Rehan Mohammed ibn Ahmed al-Beruni and famous scientist Abu Ali Ibn Sina.\textsuperscript{46} Ibn-Sina wrote several books on medicine and philosophy. Among his medical works is the famous canon of medical science which had been translated into Latin in the 12\textsuperscript{th} Century and used by physicians in the East and West, even though his maximum works were written in Arabic.\textsuperscript{47}

Muhammed Ibn Musa al-Khwarezmi is considered the founder of Arab mathematics and from the title of his work \textit{al-Djabr} the term algebra is derived. He was not only a mathematician but also an astronomer, geographer and historian. His works represent a synthesis of Indian algebra and Greek geometry which forms the basis of modern mathematical science. Al-Khwarezmi made use of centuries old Khwarezmian traditions of mathematics, mostly influenced by Indian and Greek cultures, which had arisen on the basis of such practical needs as irrigation, travel, trade and construction. It is through his works that the Arabs learnt the science of mathematics.\textsuperscript{48}

In the period of Tamerlane, who brought architects and builders from Persia, India and Arabian Peninsula to adorn his city, the Timurid style of architecture was born, which in turn, influenced the entire Muslim World.

\textsuperscript{47} Beatrice F. Manz, (ed.), \textit{Central Asia, op.cit.}, P. 12.
The Arabic language was used as a main language in Central Asia except in Tajikistan: the Tajiks are the only major Central Asian nationality, who do not speak an Arabic and Turkic based language.\(^{49}\) The area was once part of the Persian empire and the various dialects of Tajik originate from Taj or Taz used by the early Arab invaders to refer to those Central Asians who only spoke Persian.

In the middle ages one of the non-Arab West-Asian countries i.e. Turkey, rapidly gained control of a vast territory, including the “Silk route”. The Turk tribes were concentrated at the time in Semirechye along the Syrdarya, bordering on the Chach Region. The most powerful of them was Karluk tribe, which occupied the vast area from the valley of Talas river to the Tarim river in the Eastern Turkistan. They were a cultural people living in towns and villages and engaged in Cattle-breeding, farming and hunting. The big Turk tribe called Chegil had its settlement in Taraz, mainly to the North-East of lake Issyk-Kul.\(^{50}\) Another Turk tribe called Iagma which lived predominantly on hunting and cattle breeding occupied the territory south of lake Issyk-Kul in eastern Turkistan (Present day Xin Xiang in China). The Tirgish tribes, consisting of Tukhsi and Argy, whose state emerged in the 8th century A.D., were conquered by the Karluks. These tribes had close cultural

\(^{49}\) Rasheed Akhtar, *op. cit.*, P. 37.
links with the people of Mavrarnahr, especially in the Bukhara and Samarqand region and they were heavily influenced by Iranian culture

Tarjuman (The Interpreter) and began to have a large circulation among the indigenous peoples of Central Asia. The newspaper played an

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important role in stimulating the cultural awakening among the people of Central Asia. He is often identified with the development of "Jadidism", the movement to create new (Jadid) schools and institutions in Muslim society to provide a synthesis of modern, Islamic and Turkish elements as a way of reviewing Turkish Muslim society. He received a modern style education and travelled in Russia, Western Europe and Turkey. He established his first new style school in his home town, Baghchesaray in Crimea in 1882.

Russian Muslim modernists sometimes faced suppression and traveled to find places where they could advocate their ideas and methods in education, journalism and culture. In political terms, the Muslims from Russian-controlled lands were important in the articulation and development of new concepts of political identity like Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islam. Central Asian Muslims played an important role in shaping and articulating both Pan-Turkism nationalist ideas and Pan-Islamic sentiments.

The emirate's intelligentsia had been reading and commending on Gasprinski's newspapers Tarjuman. In 1905, the other organs published by the Tatars in Russia: Ulfat (Reconciliation) from St. Petersburg, Yulduz (The Star) from Kazan, and Irshad (The Guide) from Baku. In 1906, the Taraqqi (Progress)\(^{52}\) was founded at Tashkent by a

\(^{52}\text{Ibid.}\)
Tatar-Socialist Revolutionary, Ismail Abidi, who with the aid of the Russian Orientalists Vyatkin and Nalvikin, produced a paper that was highly critical of the Tsarist administration, demanding reforms and defending the idea of the national unity of Turkistan. A Jadid organ, but also close to the ideas of the socialist revolutionaries, Taraqqi disappeared after seventeen issues. Three newspapers such as Khurshid, Shuhrat and Tujjar were published by Uzbek Jadids.

An active movement of Islamic modernism developed in Central Asia. At the same time, this development was also influenced by the Islamic modernism of West Asia. The development of Islamic modernism is most commonly identified with the life and work of Muhammed Abduh (1849-1905), an Egyptian intellectual who defined the modernist goal as being the “Presentation of the basic tenets of Islam in terms that would be acceptable to a modern mind and would allow further reformation of it on the one hand and allow the pursuit of modern knowledge on the other.”

53 Abduh’s work was primarily in the areas of cultural and intellectual reform.

During the early period of the 20th century, the Islamic University Al-Azhar had approved Abduh’s views, by the middle of the century Al-Azhar had become a modernist bastion. As Muslim Scholars throughout the world dealt with the issue of modernization, they found

the modernist positions to be the most effective basis for their positions. As formal Muslim institutions were established in the Soviet Union, the leaders reflected these same tendencies.\textsuperscript{54} Talat Tajuddin who became a Mufti in the official Soviet Muslim establishment, had a chance to study in Al-Azhar in the post-Stalin era. After the death of Stalin, Central Asians were able to go on pilgrimage and they were allowed to go to study in West Asia.

In the 70's and 80's of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, a group of intellectual had emerged from among the people of the Central Asian colonies of Tsarism, which propagated the Russian language and culture and initiated the movement for secular schools and reform the educational system. The main aim of this group of intellectuals was to further enlighten the people. Among them were writers, scholars and educationalists like Zakirjan, Khalmuhammed, Furkat, Mohammad A. Kh. Mirza Khoja Mukimi, Abdul Rauf Fitrat, Abdullah Salikh Zavki, Khoja Muhitidin Muhtyi, Hamza Hakim Zade Niazi, Saeed Ahmed Adzhizi, Ahmed Danish Tashkodhza Asiri, Sadruddin Aini, Chokan Vali Khanov, Ibrahim Altyn Sarin and Abai Kununbaev and others.\textsuperscript{55} They not only advocated a new advance culture but also exposed bourgeois mentality as well as social order.

\textsuperscript{54} Beatrice F. Manz, (ed.), \textit{Central Asia, op.cit.}, P. 70.
\textsuperscript{55} Serge A. Zenkovsky, \textit{op. cit.}, P. 79.
The Jadidist movement, however, did not remain for long confined to mere educational and cultural activities. These, no doubts, constituted its basic work in the initial stages and continued to remain important items in its programme. But under the impact of political developments which were taking place in Russia and in other Muslim countries, Jadidism gradually began to transform itself into a political movement. The Russo-Japanese war and the following Russian revolution of 1905 were events of utmost importance in stimulating the political awakening among the innumerable nationalities which were herded together in the multi-national Russian empire. The slogans of liberty and self-determination which the revolutionaries carried throughout the length and breadth of the empire reached even the distant Central Asian region.56

In the organizational sphere, the Jadidist movement remained very low and ineffective. Before 1917, the Jadidist were not able to develop an unified and integrated political organization in Central Asia. They functioned as independent groups scattered over many cities of the region; these groups had little or no contact with one another.57

During the political ferment in 1917, the national elite was extremely small in number and deeply divided. Land owners, rich merchants, the scions of princely families, mullahs, the leaders of Sufi orders and a

57 Ibid, P. 61.
few urban intellectuals and teachers remained the sum total of the traditional leadership. The failure of any other independent political movement in Central Asia to succeed was partly due to absence of a coherent leadership from within its ranks or to broaden its support base amongst the masses.

Once the communist won the Civil War much of the traditional elite was co-opted into the Communist System and thus made the political transition from Tsarism to nationalism and then to socialism. Those who refused to go through this process invariably were killed by Stalin. Stalin’s repression in Central Asia was only a continuation of the early refusal of the Bolsheviks to acknowledge any of the existing political trends there. The Bolsheviks were prepared to impose communism on a society that was least prepared for it. The theoretical problem they identified in Central Asia was not related to the actual contradiction on the ground or the need to carry society with them as they made the revolution but was how to tackle the ‘national question’ in Asia within the framework of the Marxist model. The national question was the least understood and certainly one of the poorly formulated doctrines within the core of Marxism.

58 Ahmed Rashid, op. cit., P.23.