



UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

Settling the past: Soviet oriental projects in Leningrad and Alma-Ata

Bustanov, A.K.

Publication date
2013

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Bustanov, A. K. (2013). *Settling the past: Soviet oriental projects in Leningrad and Alma-Ata*.

General rights

It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations

If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: <https://uba.uva.nl/en/contact>, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

Chapter II: Nationalism and Regionalism: Dividing and Integrating Soviet Central Asia in Meta-Histories

“There are no Oriental studies in our republics, there are only well established histories of individual republics. This [should be] the future of our scholarship.”²⁶³

Boris Zakhoder (1898-1960)²⁶⁴

2.1. Regional and National Perspectives in History Writing

The main point of this chapter is to argue that there were two main trends in Kazakh history writing, characterized by national and regional approaches. These trends were common for republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Both tendencies had been in motion during the whole Soviet era, being sponsored by the government in various forms.

I define Soviet Oriental studies in Kazakhstan as an interdisciplinary research with the main goal to study written sources in ‘Oriental’ languages, mainly in Turkic, Arabic and Persian. Above all, these sources are related to the medieval history of the Kazakh republic. From this perspective I analyze general historical accounts on Kazakh history produced during the Soviet era, with an eye on how individual scholars and collectives of authors studied medieval Kazakh history as a crucial period for explaining Kazakh ethnogenesis, statehood, culture, and socioeconomic relations. What kind of general histories of

²⁶³ AV IVR RAN, F. 123, Op. 1, *Moskovskii kongress vostokovedov 1960*, D. 3, # 412.2, *Protokoly zasedanii*, f. 18. Many thanks to Michael Kemper for sharing this reference with me.

²⁶⁴ Scholar of Iranian studies Boris Nikolaevich Zakhoder (1898-1960) graduated from the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies. He taught at the same institution between 1930 and 1934, then at historical faculty of Moscow State University until his death. Between 1935 and 1939 Zakhoder worked at GAIMK and led the Sector of Iran at the Institute of Oriental Studies since 1944 to 1960. Thus Zakhoder represented the Moscow school of Oriental Studies and was among the founders of so-called ‘Moscow group’ of Orientalists. See: S.D. Miliband, *Vostokovedy Rossiii*, vol. 1, 522-523. On the ‘Moscow group’, see: N.A. Kuznetsova, L.M. Kulagina, *Iz istorii sovetskogo vostokovedeniia, 1917-1967* (Moscow, 1970), 113-125.

the Kazakh republic were written during the Soviet time? How did national and regional approaches interact with each other?

Historical and ethnographical studies of the Kazakhs (*Kirgiz-Kaisaks* in the pre-revolutionary Russian terminology) initially began in a large regional context. Since the historical outlines produced by Aleksei I. Levshin (1798-1879) and Vladimir V. Vel'iaminov-Zernov (1830-1904), the history of the Kazakh steppes was regarded as part of an enormous Eurasian nomadic world, and in particular of the Dasht-i Qipchāq. In medieval Islamic sources, the Dasht-i Qipchāq or Great Steppe was a historical region from the Danube up to the Syr Darya River and Lake Balkhash. This land was inhabited predominantly by Turks of the Kipchak linguistic group. Traditionally, the Dasht-i Qipchāq is divided in Eastern and Western parts, with the Volga and the Yaik (modern-day Ural) Rivers as the border between the two halves.²⁶⁵

Aleksei I. Levshin (1798-1879) is regarded as the ‘Herodotus of the Kazakh people’; in his famous 3-volume work on the Kazakh history and ethnography he drew a romantic picture of the nomadic peoples of the Dasht-i Qipchāq. This picture is of interest because it clearly reveals Orientalist perceptions. The Kazakhs, in Levshin’s analysis, were a freedom-loving people characterized by both moral purity and savage behavior:

“The way of life of the Kirgiz [i.e. the Kazakh – A.B.] people is a living picture of ancient times. One can say that this is a nomadic people which are living exclusively for their stock; their settlements suddenly disappear and emerge again in other places; their simplicity and closeness to nature are very attractive in the eyes of a novelist or a poet. Seeing a Kirgiz-Kazak, someone with an ardent imagination might envision light-hearted (*bespechnye*) shepherds of happy Arcadia or peaceful contemporaries of Abraham; someone might dream of the imaginary bliss of a people that is free from the vices of big cities; someone might search for eclogue and idyll there. However, a cool-blooded traveler will only see semi-barbarian people and compare them with the Scythes of Herodotus, the Mongols of Chingiz Khan, present-day Bedouins, Kurds, inhabitants of the banks of the Yenisei River, Hottentots, and other barbarian peoples of Asia and Africa.”²⁶⁶

²⁶⁵ J.A. Boyle, “Dasht-i Qipchaq,” in: *EP², Supplement*, fasc. 3-4 (Leiden, 1981), 203.

²⁶⁶ A.I. Levshin, *Opisanie kirgiz-kazatskikh ili kirgiz-kaisatskikh ord i stepi* (Alma-Ata, 1996; first edition: St. Petersburg, 1832), 294-295.

This polar view is very symptomatic. Even though every traveler paid respect to the Kazakhs' passion for freedom, all that the nomads lacked turned them into a people of backwardness without history (according to the widespread concept of non-historical peoples), and full of barbarism. As a result of the slow Russian encroachment into Central Asia during the 18th and 19th centuries, the region inhabited by the Kazakh tribes was known in the Russian context as the Steppe Territory (*Stepnoi krai*), and contrasted to the southern oases of settled civilization in Transoxiana and Khwarezm.

My hypothesis is that it was Vasilii V. Bartol'd who moved away from this sharp dichotomy and, instead, created the regional concept of Central Asia (*Sredniaia Azia*) which presupposed close historical ties in the development of two syncretic worlds: sedentary civilization in the south and nomadic civilization in the north. Bartol'd's two-volume dissertation *Turkestan in the Epoch of the Mongol Invasion* (vol. 1, 1898; vol. 2, 1900) was a clear manifestation of his regional approach, though the word *Turkestan* in the title, associated at that time with agricultural regions of Central Asia, still suggested that the settled civilization was at the centre of his study. Of course, there were previous projects of studying Turkestan,²⁶⁷ but, as Bartol'd put it himself, the epoch of Governor-general Konstantin Petrovich von Kaufman (1818-1882; in office between 1867 and 1882) was fruitful for the geographical exploration of Turkestan but not for Oriental studies ("except for the growing number of Oriental manuscripts in central libraries").²⁶⁸ During the whole Soviet era this view of history survived because it is difficult to neglect the close interaction between the two cultural areas. The Bolsheviks moved away from the encompassing concept of Turkestan because they feared the creation of a united Muslim state with a solid population number and economical potential. The project of national demarcation, which comprised the creation of several republics, on Union level or as autonomies within Union republics, was accomplished between 1924 and 1936. The cultural aspects of this demarcation, however, continued through the whole 20th century with the goal of establishing independent national identities. As we have seen, Leningrad Orientalists contributed significantly to this

²⁶⁷ S. Gorshenina, "Krupneishie proekty kolonial'nykh arkhivov Rossii: utopichnost' total'noi turkestaniki general-gubernatora Konstantina Petrovicha fon Kaufmana," in: *Ab Imperio*, 3 (2007), 1-64.

²⁶⁸ V.V. Bartol'd, "Zadachi russkogo vostokovedeniia v Turkestane [1914]," in: V.V. Bartol'd, *Sochineniia*, vol. 9, *Raboty po istorii vostokovedeniia* (Moscow, 1977), 525. Therefore Bartol'd must be regarded as the founder of Russian Turkestan studies (*turkestanovedenie*); see: T.I. Sultanov, *Chingiz-khan i Chingizidy. Sud'ba i vlast'* (Moscow, 2006), 134.

process by producing the histories of the respective republics, especially through the translation and edition of sources and through grandiose outlines of the republican pasts since time immemorial.

The use of terms ‘national’ and ‘republican’ history should be clarified here. As Yuri Bregel mentioned, the titles of such historical books “showed that they were dealing not so much with the history of their ‘titular’ nationalities (Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Turkmens, etc.), but with the history of the republics, which was traced back to prehistoric times. There were, however, some difficulties and discrepancies,”²⁶⁹ namely that the authors of these narratives often made excursions into the histories of neighboring republics. I will treat ‘national’ and ‘republican’ as synonymous, because republics were created according to national principles, and each historical outline produced in these republics is “something like a history of Central Asia from the standpoint of, say, Uzbeks, or Tajiks,”²⁷⁰ i.e. of the titular nations of respective republics.

Curiously, in the 1920s Bartol’d was obliged to participate himself in this work when he was ordered to write the histories of several Central Asian peoples – not republics, but their titular nations. While at that time Bartol’d did not express his own opinion in public, in a special note on the “Solution of the National Question” in Central Asia he assessed the Soviet style of nation-building very negatively: “The national principle of the 1924 state delimitation of Central Asia was formulated according to [concepts drawn from] Western European history in the 19th century, and is completely alien to native historical traditions.”²⁷¹ The struggle between these two methodological views during the 1920s-80s is the main subject of this chapter. It is against this dichotomy that I will investigate the view on Kazakh history in its Islamic period as part of classical Orientology.

2.2. The Early Soviet Discourse on the Nomads

The early Soviet discourse on Central Asian nomads (especially Kazakhs, Kirgiz, and Turkmens) was embodied as follows:

²⁶⁹ Yu. Bregel, *Notes on the Study of Central Asia*, 12.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁷¹ “V.V. Bartol’d o natsional’nom razmezhevanii v Srednei Azii” (ed. by M. Olimov) in: *Vostok*, 5 (1991), 165. This short report was prepared soon after the delimitation and was not published in this form in Soviet times.

1. Nomads have a tribal social division; their political unions have always been quite unstable.

2. They are ‘superficial Muslims’. ‘Folk beliefs’ and Shamanism are at the core of their religious life. Islam did not play any substantial role in the history of nomadic peoples.

3. Nomads obviously do not have cities and written literature. Knowledge is transmitted in oral form as folklore.

4. They are dangerous for neighbors; their forays on sedentary civilizations lead to catastrophic devastations. This position was applied not only to the Kazakhs, but above all to external invasions of the Arabs and the Mongols which destroyed highly developed settled civilizations.

The view of nomads as described in those four points appeared already in the Tsarist time²⁷² and still dominated in the early Soviet period. The general attitude towards nomads was heavily affected by the long tradition of studies on the Golden Horde civilization; Russian historians repeatedly underlined the important role that the Golden Horde had played in Russian history. The Golden Horde had been viewed as a union of barbarian bands, chimera, with rulers that despotically suppressed settled peoples such as the medieval Christian Russians and the Muslim Volga Bulgars.²⁷³ This approach began to change only since the late 1950s due to archeological and textual studies, both of the Golden Horde civilization and of the Kazakh nomads, whose history is closely connected to the history of the Mongol and post-Mongol states of the 13th to 18th centuries. In 1959 Moscow archeologists Aleksei P. Smirnov (1899-1974) and German A. Fedorov-Davydov (1931-2000) organized regular archeological excavations of the numerous Golden Horde cities along the Volga river. In the late 1960s and early 1970s St. Petersburg Orientalist Arkadii P. Grigor’ev (1931-2010) and Kazan Turkologist Mirkasym A. Usmanov (1934-2010) started their works on the written heritage of the Mongol and post-Mongol states, which revealed

²⁷² When the Turkestan archeological circle was set up in 1895, its goal was defined as the investigation of ancient Arian culture “destroyed by barbaric Turks.” V.V. Bartol’d, “Zadachi russkogo vostokovedeniia v Turkestane [1914],” in: V.V. Bartol’d, *Sochineniia*, vol. 9, *Raboty po istorii vostokovedeniia* (Moscow, 1977), 529. German historian Beate Eschment has studied the 19th-century Russian perceptions of the Kazakh people, but her work unfortunately still remains unpublished.

²⁷³ I.L. Izmailov, R. Gibadullina, “Ne dano marksistskoi otsenki Zolotoi Orde...,” in: *Ekho Vekov: Gasyrlar Avyzy*, 1996 (3/4), 96-114; M.A. Usmanov, “The Struggle for the Re-establishment of Oriental Studies in Twentieth-Century Kazan,” in *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies*, ed. by M. Kemper and S. Conermann (London, New York, 2011), 174-176.

hundreds of new sources and cast serious doubts on the alleged ‘barbarism’ of medieval nomadic civilizations.²⁷⁴ The impact of their work is studied in the fourth chapter of the present dissertation.

2.3. The Impact of National Delimitation and Sedentarization

At the moment of the 1917 Revolution the Kazakh tribes were constituted in three large tribal organizations, known as the Great, Middle, and Little Hordes, and in a number of groups which were standing outside of this structure and were bearing the name of *aq süyök*, i.e. ‘white bone’ or aristocracy. The majority of the population was nomadic or semi-nomadic. In fact, the nomadic lifestyle, common tribal genealogy and Turkic language were the main attributes of Kazakh identity, which before the Soviet time was obviously not defined in ethnic terms. In the pre-Soviet period it was regional, confessional, cultural, and tribal distinctions which constructed the core of people’s identities in Central Asia. As Ingeborg Baldauf put it with respect to the Uzbeks, there were “several not clearly shaped indigenous concepts of nation (as being the whole of persons united by either religious belief, attribution to a professional group, citizenship or tribal links).”²⁷⁵ Due to the various linguistic and cultural dualisms in Central Asia (Turkic-Iranian, nomadic-sedentary), it was rather problematic to discern separate ‘nationalities’, not to speak of pre-Tsarist/pre-Soviet ‘nation states’. These binary oppositions are also a product of Russian and Soviet Oriental studies. Even though it is impossible to deny such cultural phenomena as Central Asian nomadism and settled civilization, reality, as a rule, is much more complicated: various economics, customs, political models coexisted with each other for centuries and developed in a symbiotic way. Therefore in the late Soviet epoch scholars claimed that there were no ‘pure’ nomads or farmers.²⁷⁶ For the Tsarist administration and

²⁷⁴ The main literature: A.P. Grigor’ev, *Mongol’skaia diplomatika XIII-XV vekov: Chingizidskie zhalovannye gramoty* (Leningrad, 1978); M.A. Usmanov, *Zhalovannye akty Ulusa Dzhuchieva XIV-XVI vekov* (Kazan’, 1979); G.A. Fedorov-Davydov, *The Culture of the Golden Horde Cities* (Oxford, 1984).

²⁷⁵ I. Baldauf, “Some Thoughts on the Making of the Uzbek Nation,” *Cahiers de Monde russe et soviétique*, XXXII (1), janvier-mars 1991, 80.

²⁷⁶ B.A. Litvinskii, “The Ecology of the Ancient Nomads and Soviet Central Asia and Kazakhstan,” in *Ecology and Empire: Nomads in the Cultural Evolution of the Old World*, ed. by G. Seaman (Los Angeles, 1989), 71-72; M.E. Subtelny, “The Symbiosis of Turk and Tajik,” in *Central Asia in Historical Perspective*, ed. by B.F. Manz (San Francisco – Oxford, 1994), 45-61; interview with Oleg G. Bol’shakov by the author, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, 20 September 2009.

Orientalism there was one huge Turkestan, with political distinctions between Chinese (or Eastern) Turkestan, Afghan Turkestan and Russian (or Western) Turkestan, closely interconnected by historical fates.

Western Sovietological works had a slightly different vision of the ethnic situation in Central Asia before the completion of the Russian conquest. According to A. Bennigsen and A. Wimbush, the nineteenth-century Kazakhs already had three levels of self-consciousness: 1) “sub-national identity,” i.e. identification with a particular Zhuz and tribe (or elite group); 2) “national awareness,” based on “superiority over the sedentaries,” a long tradition of statehood, and an authentic Kazakh culture; 3) “supra-national awareness” of belonging to a greater Turkestan.²⁷⁷ Whatever Bennigsen had to say about this problem was certainly derivative, because of his obvious lack of access to first-hand materials. Research done after the fall of the Soviet Union by Edward Schatz implies that in prerevolutionary period there were five layers of identity in the Kazakh Steppe, namely “local clan divisions, a limited class stratification, umbrella clans, ethnic difference, and a nomad-sedentary divide.”²⁷⁸ According to historian Allen J. Frank, whose opinion is based on the study of indigenous sources from Kazakh society, such as Mashhur-Zhusip Kopeev’s (1858-1931) writings and the local poetry and *naṣīḥat* (advice) literature, the Kazakh people did have a common identity prior to the delimitation. But what that meant is another question. It is largely accepted that Kazakh identity was based on the nomadic way of life.²⁷⁹ However, this notion is perhaps not enough to distinguish the Kazakhs from other nomads. According to Frank,

“for example people like Bennigsen and Kazakh historians, both Soviet and post-Soviet, have assumed that the Kazakh “national” identity was dominant over other “tribal” identities. But from what one might observe in Kopeev it was not necessarily the case. Indeed, there was also a lot of ambiguity in the way they used terms like “el [people],” “ru [genus],” “tap [tribe],” etc. According to Soviet documents in the 1960s there were fist-fights in the Pavlodar mosque between the representatives of

²⁷⁷ A. Bennigsen, S.E. Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire: A Guide* (London, 1986), 72.

²⁷⁸ E. Schatz, *Modern Clan Politics. The Power of “Blood” in Kazakhstan and Beyond* (Seattle and London, University of Washington Press, 2004), 27-32.

²⁷⁹ Y. Malikov, “The Kenesary Kasymov Rebellion (1837-1847): A National-Liberation Movement or ‘a Protest of Restoration’?,” in: *Nationalities Papers* 33:4, 576-578; M.B. Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, 2d ed. (Stanford, California, 1995), 18; Z.V. Togan, “The Origins of the Kazakhs and the Özbeks,” in: *Central Asia Reader: The Rediscovery of History*, ed. H.B. Paksoy (Armonk, New York and London, 1994), 32-36.

tribal divisions of Naymans and Arghins,²⁸⁰ which means that tribal divisions were very stable and may even in the second half of the 20th century have dominated over the national identity. At least we can assume that the identity that existed among the Kazakhs before 1924 differed from what the Bolsheviks tried to put into practice. One can also suggest that a Westernized part of Kazakh society started to realize its Kazakhness already since the late 19th century.”

Two radical political measures of the early Soviet period completely changed the discourse on the nomadic population of Central Asia. First of all, the process of national delimitation resulted in the creation of five Central Asian Soviet republics. The delimitation began with the first administrative change in 1920, when the former governorate of the Steppes of Tsarist Russia was turned into the Kirgiz (i.e. Kazakh) Autonomous Socialist Republic (ASSR) as a part of the Russian Federative Socialistic Republic (RSFSR). Importantly, at that time two important regions in the south were not included into the Kirgiz ASSR, namely Semirech’e (with Vernyi/Alma-Ata) and the Sir Darya region, which in Tsarist times were attached to the Turkestan general-governorate and then to the Turkestan Autonomous Republic (within the RSFSR). Only in 1924 both regions were included into the Kirgiz ASSR, while Orenburg, the former centre of the Steppe region, was moved to Russia. In February 1925 the southern part of the Aral region was turned into the Karakalpak Autonomous Oblast which from time to time was attached to the RSFSR or the Kyrgyz ASSR. In April 1925 the whole Kirgiz ASSR was renamed Kazakh ASSR, and the Kara-Kirgiz Oblast was turned into a Kirgiz Oblast which soon also received the status of an autonomous republic within the RSFSR, thus establishing the national borders and names of these two nations as we know them today. Finally, in 1936 the Kazakh ASSR and the Kirgiz ASSR were upgraded to the status of Soviet Socialist republics; and Karakalpakia moved to the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic with the status of an autonomous republic.²⁸¹

²⁸⁰ A private letter to the author by Allen J. Frank (Takoma Park, USA), 06.04.2011.

²⁸¹ Similar developments occurred in the Caucasus: “The Soviet Republic of Transcaucasia was divided into three Soviet republics: Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. So now all the Muslim republics had achieved a defined status.” O. Roy, *The New Central Asia* (London – New York, 2000), 51-61.

There are three main trends for explaining the national demarcation process in Central Asia.²⁸² The first one is represented by Soviet historiography, which regarded the appearance of national republics as a logical end of the natural development of Central Asian peoples: it was their will to organize themselves in such a way.²⁸³ The second trend is represented by Russian non-Bolshevik writers, by the Turkic emigration from the former Russian Empire, and by Western Sovietologists. The adherents of this view claimed that Soviet politics were social engineering: an allegedly united Turkestan was split up for the ends of the Soviet Empire. This concept is sometimes called ‘*divide et impera*’ due to its colonialist, imperialist connotation.²⁸⁴ The post-Soviet generation of scholars in the West attacked this view for its lack of foundation in archival research. Before 1991, most political documents were classified; therefore scholars were forced to speculate on the basis of secondary literature produced in the Soviet Union. New research has put the question into the larger context of the Soviet concept of modernization, which presupposed the existence of nationhood as an important stage on the way to the Communist future²⁸⁵. A medial position is taken by Arne Haugen. On the basis of large-scale archival work, Haugen argues²⁸⁶ that national delimitation was a complex, double-sided process: indeed, the Soviet government

²⁸² For a more detailed study of various approaches in studying Central Asian nations over the last twenty years see: R. Ch. Weller, *Rethinking Kazakh and Central Asian Nationhood. A Challenge to Prevailing Western Views* (Los Angeles: Asia Research Associates, 2006), 71-156.

²⁸³ For example: *O marksistsko-leninskom osveshchenii istorii i kul'tury narodov Uzbekistana. Stenograficheskii otchet rasshirennogo zasedaniia otdeleniia gumanitarnykh nauk AN Uz. SSR, 21-27 apreliia 1949* [a published protocol] (Tashkent, 1951); Kh.T. Tursunov, *Obrazovanie Uzbekskoi SSR* (Tashkent, 1957). Among works produced by Kazakh scholars on this topic see: A. Nusupbekov, Kh. Bisenov, *Fal'sifikatsiia istorii i istoricheskaiia pravda* (Alma-Ata, 1964).

²⁸⁴ E. Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present. A Cultural History* (California, 1990); H. Carrère d'Encausse, *The Great Challenge: Nationalities and the Bolshevik State, 1917-1930* (New York and London, 1992), 177-78; W. Connor, *The National Question in Marxist-Leninist Theory and Strategy* (Princeton, 1984), chapter 9; B. Hayit, *Sowjetrussische Orientalpolitik am Beispiel Turkestans* (Köln, Berlin, 1962); B. Hayit, *Sowjetrussischer Kolonialismus und Imperialismus in Turkestan als Beispiel des Kolonialismus neueren Stils gegenüber einem islamischen Volk Asiens* (Oosterhout, 1965); B. Hayit, *Turkestan zwischen Russland und China: eine ethnographische, kulturelle und politische Darstellung zur Geschichte der nationalen Staaten und des nationalen Kampfes Turkestans im Zeitalter der Russischen und Chinesischen Expansionen vom 18. bis ins 20. Jahrhundert* (Amsterdam, 1971); O. Roy, *The New Central Asia* (London – New York, 2000).

²⁸⁵ A.L. Edgar, *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton and Oxford, 2004); T. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca, 2001); Y. Slezkine, “The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism,” in *Slavic Review* 53 (Summer 1994), 414-52; J. Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917-1923* (New York, 1999), chapters 3-4.

²⁸⁶ A. Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics in Soviet Central Asia* (New York, 2003).

sought to avoid the possible union of all Central Asian Muslims, and tried to build a system of ‘checks and balances’ by setting up several nation states. However, Moscow authorities did consult the opinion of the local elites and of specialists²⁸⁷. Many problems connected to state boundaries were discussed in conversations or were administratively solved by Party decision. Yet overall Haugen agrees that the result of the national delimitation was that since then “[t]he frontiers of the various countries of Central Asia have no rationality, whether geographic, economic or ethnic.”²⁸⁸ The complexity of the national demarcation in Central Asia caused not only political, economical, military, and cultural problems. It also caused historiographical issues; it gave birth to the national demarcation of histories, of common and divided pasts. The main issue for the Kazakh national history was the question of Tashkent and the Mid-Sir Darya Valley, because Tashkent was assigned to Soviet Uzbekistan.

The Tashkent question was studied in detail by Haugen.²⁸⁹ Obviously, the question of national ‘possession’ of numerous cities along the Mid-Sir Darya valley was at the heart of Kazakh-Uzbek competition. The complexity of the case was evident from the ‘ethnic’ character of the population of this area. Cities as Tashkent and Chimkent were almost totally inhabited by those who were claimed to be Uzbeks, because the Uzbeks were defined as sedentary Turks. To be precise, originally “the Uzbeks were the semi-nomadic population that preserved tribal traditions and spoke a pure Uzbek idiom. (...) The strict sense of the word *Uzbek*, i.e. “descendants of the invaders from the Dashti Kipchak,” had traditionally been dominant; besides that, however, the term had come to be used as an equivalent of “Turkic-speakers of Turkestan” (excluding, of course, the Kazakh, Kirgiz and Turkmen) by the Russians as well as by some natives.”²⁹⁰ The areas surrounding Tashkent were however populated by a nomadic population, i.e. by Kazakhs. In fact, this situation was rather typical for Central Asia. To conduct a reasonable delimitation was nearly impossible. Both competing republics struggled for the entire Tashkent region, not just for the city or its outskirts. The Kazakh representatives in these debates claimed that the city was valued as

²⁸⁷ F. Hirsch, *Empire of Nations. Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 160-186.

²⁸⁸ O. Roy, *The New Central Asia* (London – New York, 2000), 68.

²⁸⁹ A. Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics*, 194-199.

²⁹⁰ I. Baldauf, “Some Thoughts on the Making of the Uzbek Nation,” 86-87.

significant cultural capital: “Tashkent had enormous cultural significance for the Kazakh people; it was a ‘Kazakh Samarkand’.”²⁹¹ The final decision was made by the central authorities in Moscow, and disappointed both Uzbeks and Kazakhs: Chimkent with its large Uzbek population was given to the Kazakh Republic, while Tashkent, the symbol of Kazakh military glory, remained in the Uzbek SSR. It is very important for understanding the ensuing historiographical research trends in Soviet Central Asian Orientology that “the decision to give Tashkent to the Uzbek republic without any kind of discussion (...) caused great dissatisfaction among the Kazakhs.”²⁹² Similar cases are Samarkand in Uzbekistan with its Tajik (Persian speaking) population and Osh in Kyrgyzstan with its Uzbek population. However, in these cases the pretensions of Tajiks and Uzbeks were based on the considerable ethnic presence of Tajiks inside Samarkand, and of Uzbeks inside Osh,²⁹³ not around the city as was the Kazakh case in Tashkent.

In the Tashkent case, the dissatisfaction led to numerous petitions by the Kazakhs who found themselves in the ‘wrong republic.’ Petitioners emphasized “close economic and cultural ties” with Kazakhstan and complained about ethnic discrimination: usually such groups of people were subject to forced assimilation by the titular nation (in this case, the Uzbeks).²⁹⁴ Officials did not reply to such claims; the Tashkent case was solved administratively.

Here is one of the typical reports to the Commission dated from 1924 dealing with the establishment of new republics. This document was signed by members of a territorial commission from the Kazakh side: Mendeshev, Khodzhanov, Eskaraev, Alibekov, and Sergaziev. This account represents the Kazakh view of the Tashkent issue and expresses concerns in Uzbek ‘domination’ in the region:

“There is an absolutely wrong and unacceptable tendency to include only the nomadic population into the Kirgiz people [i.e. Kazakh – A.B.], while the settled and farmer Kirgiz are regarded as Uzbeks when it comes to delimitation. This was the case with

²⁹¹ A. Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics*, 195. Haugen does not mention who is quoted here, referring just to the Kazakh side in the debates.

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 198.

²⁹³ T. Rakowska-Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia: the Case of Tadzhikistan* (Baltimore, London, 1970), 232-254; O. Roy, *The New Central Asia*, 61.

²⁹⁴ F. Hirsch, “Toward an Empire of Nations: Border-Making and the Formation of Soviet National Identities,” in: *The Russian Review* 59 (April 2000), 215.

the Qurama tribe, who are a settled Kirgiz people (lit. *osartevshie*²⁹⁵ [Sartified] *i osedlye kirgizy*), which was however attributed to the Uzbek Republic. A similar situation occurred with the purely Kirgiz territories of the Chirchik region in the Uzbek Republic. (...) This decision violated the principle of the national delimitation fundamentally, because as a result the most culturally developed and economically stable part of the Kirgiz people was artificially separated from the rest of the (Kirgiz, i.e. Kazakh) population of the Tashkent district. The Kirgiz people are still in the stage of national formation and its economy is unstable. For them, the loss of the major culturally developed and settled part [of their territory] is a serious challenge that makes a further development and the creation of a more or less strong statehood on the cultural territory impossible. (...) It is wrong to ignore the national interest of the Kirgiz people of the region only because Uzbekistan needs their treasures.”²⁹⁶

This report reflects the challenge to the early perceptions and emergence of a new discourse, which did not regard Kazakhs as only nomads. The economical and political significance of cities was clearly understood by those who petitioned against the administrative decisions. Interestingly, among those who signed the document was the author of the first Kazakh national history, Sandzhar Asfendiiarov²⁹⁷ who was himself born in Tashkent. This discourse was clearly based on the Kazakh intelligentsia, who struggled for a higher status of their people in the general discourse of Soviet Central Asia, and used cultural arguments as well.

There can be no doubt that the Mid-Sir Darya valley with its numerous ancient cities was of great significance for the Kazakhs. Already in the 16th century the Kazakh sultans claimed sovereignty over the important settlements of the region, such as Otrar, Turkestan, Sauran, Sayrām, and Tashkent. This struggle is traceable back to the time of Urus Khan (d. 1377), one of the latest rulers of the so-called Aq (White) Horde, the eastern part of the Ulus of Juchi, i.e. of the Golden Horde. It was Urus Khan who fought against Amir Tīmūr

²⁹⁵ The notion of *osartevshie* should probably be understood as a definition of those who changed their way of life from nomadic or semi-nomadic and settled in the city or village, thus turned into another state of social life.

²⁹⁶ *Osoboe mnenie k punktu 2 protokola territorial'noi komissii sredneaziatskogo biuro*, in: TsGA RK, F. 625, Op. 1, D. 3, Sv. 1, *Dokladnaia zapiska i tezisy k dokladu "Vopros ob'edineniia Kirgizskoi territorii Turkestana k KSSR i problema gosudarstvennogo razmezhevaniia Srednei Azii po natsional'nomu priznaku. Doklad s prilozheniiami svedenii o sostave naseleniia i prochee*, 1924 god, ff. 69-70.

²⁹⁷ On Asfendiiarov see the subchapter below.

(1336-1405) for this area. The Aq Horde's capital was located in the city of Syghnāq (in the modern Qyzyl Orda oblast of the Kazakhstan Republic), near the holy shrines of the city of Turkestan. The struggle between northern nomads (future 'Kazakhs') and southern town-dwellers (future 'Uzbeks') continued up to the 17th century.²⁹⁸ Historically, the process of the conquest of the region by nomadic tribes made the Kazakh nomadic elite build up links, and also associate itself, with the local sacred geography, mainly with the saint Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī and his enormous mausoleum in the city of Turkestan (Yasī). Aḥmad Yasawī became famous (or rather was interpreted) as a legendary Islamic preacher among the nomads; therefore he enjoyed high respect among those who visited his tomb. Turkestan was transformed into the spiritual and political heart of Kazakh identity.²⁹⁹ Similarly, Tashkent had always been the center of the middle Sir Darya region, even after the latter was transformed by the Soviets into the southern province of Kazakhstan. In 1917-1924 Tashkent continued to be the center of the Russian administration for the whole Turkestan region.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ See more details in special accounts on this topic: K.A. Pishchulina, "Prisyrdar'inskie goroda i ikh znachenie v istorii kazakhskikh khanstv v XV-XVIII vekakh," in: *Kazakhstan v XV-XVIII vekakh (voprosy sotsial'no-politicheskoi istorii)*, ed. by B.S. Suleimenov (Alma-Ata, 1969), 12, footnote 54; K.A. Pishchulina, "Kazakhskoe khanstvo vo vzaimootnosheniakh s Mogulistanom i Shaibanidami v poslednei treti XV veka," in: *Kazakhstan v epokhu feodalizma (problemy etnopoliticheskoi istorii)* (Alma-Ata, 1981), 96-123; K.A. Pishchulina, "Pis'mennye vostochnye istochniki o prisyardar'inskikh gorodakh Kazakhstana XIV-XVII vekov," in: *Srednevekovaia gorodskaiia kul'tura Kazakhstana i Srednei Azii: Materialy vsesoiuznogo soveshchaniia 13-15 maia 1981 g.* (Alma-Ata, 1983), 165-177; A.A. Semenov, "K voprosu o proiskhozhdenii i sostave uzbekov Sheibani-khana," in *Materialy po istorii tadzhikov i uzbekov Srednei Azii*, vol. 1, *Trudy instituta istorii, arkhologii i etnografii AN TadzhSSR*, vol. 12 (Stalinabad, 1954), 3-37. On Pishchulina and her outstanding contribution in the field see the third chapter of the present dissertation.

²⁹⁹ A significant role in this process was played by groups of sacred origin, so-called Khwājas, who claimed their descent from the first caliphs. On them see: *Akhmad Iassavii azhdodlari shaharasi, Akhmad Iassavii va Amir Temur*, ed. by A. Muminov (Toshkent, 1996); D. DeWeese, "Sacred Places and 'Public' Narratives: The Shrine of Ahmad Yasavī in Hagiographical Traditions of the Yasavī Sūfī Order, 16th-17th Centuries," in *The Muslim World* 90 (Fall 2000), 353-376; D. DeWeese, "The Politics of Sacred Lineages in 19th century Central Asia: Descent Groups Linked to Khwāja Aḥmad Yasavī in Shrine Documents and Genealogical Charters," in *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 31 (1999), 507-530; A. Muminov, "Islam in the Syr Daria Region from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Century," in: G.L. Bonora, N. Pianciola, and P. Sartori (eds.) *Kazakhstan: Religions and Society in the History of Central Eurasia* (Turin, London, Venice, New York, 2009), 113-124; A. Muminov, "Die Qoʻzas: Arabische Genealogien in Kazachstan," in: *Muslim Culture in Russia and Central Asia from the 18th to the Early 20th Centuries*, vol. 2: *Inter-Regional and Inter-Ethnic Relations*, ed. A. von Kuegelgen, M. Kemper, and A. Frank (Berlin, 1998), 193-209; B. Privratsky, *Muslim Turkestan – Kazak Religion and Collective Memory* (Richmond, Surrey, 2001); B. Privratsky, "'Turkestan Belongs to the Qoʻjas': Local Knowledge of a Muslim Tradition," in: S. A. Dudoignon (ed.), *Devout Societies vs. Impious States? Transmitting Islamic Learning in Russia, Central Asia and China, through the Twentieth Century* (Berlin, 2001), 161-212, etc.

³⁰⁰ T.K. Beisembiev, *Kokandskaia istoriografiia: Issledovanie po istochnikovedeniiu Srednei Azii XVIII-XIX vekov* (Almaty, 2009), 164-169.

Here we come to the second significant political action of the Soviet government – the sedentarization of the nomadic population. Even though before the Revolution the Russians viewed the Kazakhs only as cattle-breeders, the real state of affairs was much more complex. For example, Semipalatinsk “had one of the largest concentrations of sedentary Kazakhs in the Russian Empire.”³⁰¹ The Kazakhs comprised more than 36 percent of the city population and kept a strong identity. Moreover, Allen J. Frank and Mirkasym A. Usmanov underlined that these Kazakhs actively participated in the life of the local Islamic community: in the 1830s the half of the students in the mosques were Kazakhs and in the 1880s they were already in the majority.³⁰² These data challenge both the perception of the Kazakhs as ‘bad Muslims’ and the strict connection between Kazakh identity and the nomadic way of life.

Kazakh pastoralism became a matter of serious concern for the Russian government in the 1880s, when Tsar Alexander III approved the colonization of Kazakh Steppes by the Russian peasantry. It was necessary to organize the settlement of Russian farmers in a systematic way, therefore a decade later, between 1896 and 1903, a scientific expedition under the leadership of statistician F.A. Shcherbina was sent to Semipalatinsk, Akmolinsk and Turgai provinces.³⁰³ The result of the expedition’s work was ambiguous: on the one hand the specialists suggested that the sedentarization of the steppe was an inevitable process; on the other hand they claimed that mobile pastoralism had its advantages and was sometimes the only adequate way of using land.³⁰⁴ In the 1920s statistician V.G. Sokolovskii revealed that it is useless for economical research to refer to the Kazakhs as an exclusively nomadic people, because of the lack of clarity of the very notion of ‘nomad’. Sokolovskii also pointed out the uselessness of such classifications as semi-nomadic, settled, or semi-settled: 23% of the whole ethnic Kazakh population was sedentary, i.e. moved from their

³⁰¹ A.J. Frank, M.A. Usmanov, *Materials for the Islamic History of Semipalatinsk: Two Manuscripts by Aḥmad-Walī al-Qazānī and Qurbān ‘alī Khālidī* (Berlin, 2001), 6-7.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ I.W. Campbell, “Settlement Promoted, Settlement Contested: the Shcherbina Expedition of 1896-1903,” in: *Central Asian Survey* 30: 3-4 (2011), 423-436.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 428, 433.

villages not further than 0,5 verst, but if we use the Russian farmers' criteria of complete sedentarization all the Kazakhs would appear to be nomads.³⁰⁵

According to Soviet statistics, during the 1920s there was a clear tendency of sedentarization among the Kazakhs, which is obvious from the following table:

Table 1. Dynamics of sedentarization among the Kazakhs³⁰⁶

	1924-1925	1925-1926	1926-1927
Settled population	9,7%	14,8%	26,0%
Nomads	72,4%	60,5%	52,1%

This gradual character of sedentarization was due to general difficulties of the First World War, famine, Civil War, and the 1916 revolt, which led to reducing of cattle in number and necessity to search for other sources of living.³⁰⁷

From ideological, economic and political points of view the Bolsheviks saw the nomads as a backward population (creating difficulties for taxation and any kind of state control). Therefore the project of sedentarization of nomads was at the core of Soviet modernization in Kazakhstan. According to Nicolló Pianciola, a specialist in this field, “in theory, the sedentarization project had four different aims: freeing land for grain cultivation; incorporating the nomads into the collective farm system; making a work force available for agriculture and industry; ending friction between herdsmen and peasants, which had had a negative effect on the region’s agricultural production.”³⁰⁸ Olaf Caroe had theorized that “[a]ll dictators, or course, dislike nomads, so hard to reach and tax, or in any way to discipline or organize. It was so with Reza Shah of Persia, also a dictator, whose main and unfulfilled ambition was to settle all the nomadic tribes of Persia. And inevitably it has been so with the Soviets.”³⁰⁹

³⁰⁵ V.G. Sokolovskii, *Kazakhskii aul. K voprosu o metodakh ego izucheniia gosudarstvennoi statistikai na osnove reshenii 5i Vsekazakhskoi Partkonferentsii i 2go Plenuma Kazraikoma VKP(b)* (Tashkent, 1926).

³⁰⁶ N. Pianciola, *Stalinismo di frontiera: Colonizzazione agricola, sterminio dei nomadi e costruzione statale in Asia centrale (1905-1936)* (Roma, 2009), 199.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 203.

³⁰⁸ Nicolló Pianciola, “Famine in the Steppe: The Collectivization of Agriculture and the Kazak Herdsmen 1928-1934,” in *Cahiers du Monde russe*, 45/ 1-2, janvier-juin 2004, 155.

³⁰⁹ O. Caroe, *Soviet Empire: The Turks of Central Asia and Stalinism* (London, 1953), 185-186.

As Isabelle Ohayon puts it, sedentarization was not just the fixation of the population on a certain territory but a process of constructing Kazakh socialist society.³¹⁰ Yet the enforced collectivization of 1930 to 1933 — that is, the establishment of collective farms — and the sedentarization of the Kazakhs led to a huge disaster. The Kazakhs were forced to hand over their cattle to the collective farms, without compensation; in the kolkhozes the cattle perished from starvation and lack of care. Already in the run-up of collectivization most Kazakhs had killed and eaten their cattle, or they emigrated wholesale from the Soviet Union to China, Western Turkestan (Xinjiang), Mongolia, Afghanistan, or Turkey. As according to the 1926 census 3.628.000 the ethnic Kazakhs lived in the Kazakh republic, the census of the year 1939 clearly demonstrated disastrous losses: 1.750.000 people or 42% percent of the whole ethnic Kazakh population died in the Kazakh Steppe as a result of the Great Starvation (in Kazakh: *dzhut*).³¹¹ While in the mid-1920s the Kazakhs as a national unit formed the majority population on their lands (for example, about 57.4 % in Semipalatinsk and approximately the same percentage over the whole of the Kazakh Autonomy³¹²), after 1934 they found themselves in a minority in their own Republic. In the republic's official magazine *Bolshevik Kazakhstana* L.I. Mirzoian, the first Secretary of the Kazakhstan Kraikom, explained the 'faults' during the sedentarization of the Kazakhs by "disregard of such characteristics as *cultural and national backwardness* (of the Kazakhs – A.B.), the presence of *backward forms of economy*, the nomadic life-style, the presence of a patriarchal system, and the absence of cadres faithful to the Soviet power."³¹³

In the late 1920s only 23% of the Kazakhs were entirely sedentary, "i.e. they did not move further than half of a verst from their villages."³¹⁴ Other sources provide similar data.

³¹⁰ I. Ohayon, *La Sédentarisation des Kazakhs dans l'URSS de Staline, Collectivisation et Changement Social (1928-1945)* (Paris, 2006), 13. See also: M. Payne, "The Forge of the Kazakh proletariat? The Turksib, Nativization, and Industrialization during Stalin's First Five-Year Plan," in: T. Martin, R.G. Suny (eds.), *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Building in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford, 2001), 223-252.

³¹¹ [Zh.B. Abylkhozhin], "Massovi golod naseleniia i ego demograficheskie posledstviia," in: *Istoriia Kazakhstana s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei v piati tomakh* (Almaty: Atamiura, 2010), 284-285. Nicolló Pianciola suggested similar percentages, arguing that between 35% and 38% of the Kazakhs died. See: N. Pianciola, "Famine in the Steppe", 137.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 149.

³¹³ L.I. Mirzoian, "Ocherednye zadachi kazakstanskoi partiinoi organizatsii v aule i v derevne (rech' na VI plenum Kazkraikoma VKP (b)," in: *Bolshevik Kazakhstana* 8-9 (32-33), August-September, 1933), 1.

³¹⁴ N. Pianciola, "Famine in the Steppe," 140. The author cites data from the Kazak Bureau of Statistics (GARF, F. A-374, Op.16, D. 88).

Saulesh Esenova demonstrated a line of rapid sedentarization of the Kazakhs during the 20th century: while in 1897 less than 2% of the Kazakhs lived in cities, in 1939 this number reached 16%, and in the 1970s already 25% of total urban population in Kazakhstan,³¹⁵ though generally the Kazakhs remained a rural people.³¹⁶ Before the 1930s the existing cities in the Kazakh republic were inhabited mainly by other peoples, such as Russians, Tatars, and Uzbeks. The ‘titular nation’ led a nomadic way of life in the countryside. Oriental projects portraying the Kazakhs as city-dwellers were started to support the actual sedentarization and urbanization and to include the Kazakhs into the orbit of ‘historical peoples.’

By 1930, 56.6 percent of the population of Kazakhstan was part of kolkhozes and by 1933 almost the whole rural population had been collectivized.³¹⁷ Isabelle Ohayon suggests that the whole Kazakh population was estimated around 800 000 households and that 30% of them were settled already before 1930.³¹⁸ Martha Brill Olcott concluded that “[t]he collectivization drive ended Kazakh pastoral nomadism by settling nearly 400 000 Kazakhs between 1930 and 1937. By late 1936 there were only 150 000 Kazakh nomadic households left in the republic, most in the deserts of central Kazakhstan.”³¹⁹

Historically, nomads in Central Asia and Siberia were at time moving between Russian territories and other countries, making their taxation and control impossible. According to Anatolii M. Khazanov, “nomads did not always manifest loyalty to a dynasty, even if this dynasty had itself emerged from amongst them. Even more difficult was it for a state to rely on nomads, quite apart from its sedentary inhabitants whose way of life, culture and frequently even ethnicity were different from those of nomads.”³²⁰ The Soviet rationale

³¹⁵ S. Esenova, “Soviet Nationality, Identity, and Ethnicity in Central Asia: Historic Narratives and Kazakh Ethnic Identity,” in: *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 22, no. 1 (2002), 20. The total population of the cities, including other nationalities, reached 8,3% in 1926. *Istoriia Kazakhstana: narody i kul'tury* (Almaty, 2001), 374.

³¹⁶ *Itogi vsesoiuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1970 goda*, vol. 4 (Moscow, 1972), 223-225.

³¹⁷ M.B. Olcott, “The Collectivization Drive in Kazakhstan,” in: *Russian Review*, vol. 40, No.2 (April, 1981), 129, 137.

³¹⁸ I. Ohayon, *La Sédentarisation des Kazakhs dans l'URSS de Staline, Collectivisation et Changement Social (1928-1945)* (Paris, 2006), 174-175.

³¹⁹ M.B. Olcott, *The Kazakhs*, 2nd ed. (Stanford, Calif., 1995), 187.

³²⁰ A.M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World*, transl. by J. Crookenden (London, New York, New Rochelle, 1983), 212-213.

was to ease the process of collectivization, to control the nomads of Central Asia and also to fight against the rich cattle owners. Soviet writers claimed that “the experience of the peoples of the Soviet Orient shows that among the nomads it is much more difficult to conduct collectivization than among the sedentary population with its highly developed economical life.”³²¹

The decision to sedentarize the contemporary nomads gradually led to the ‘sedentarization of the past.’ This means that at a certain point science was forced to support the concept that the Kazakh Republic and the Kazakh people have an own history which was not exclusively the history of nomads, but that an important part of Kazakh society lived also in the cities, which played a crucial role in the history of this ethnos. The new view on history was mainly articulated in archeological studies (which will be discussed in the fourth chapter of the present work), again mainly on the materials from the Mid-Sir Darya region and Semirech’e. During the whole Soviet era ‘the sedentarization of the past’ had nothing to do with real historical processes. Scholars were obliged to acknowledge the necessity of making nomads settle down in cities or kolkhozes. They formulated the idea that the nomadic lifestyle is not viable and necessarily leads to gradual settlement, but it was the other way around: impoverishment lead to settlement. The Soviets enforced this sedentarization process not only in practice, but also in historical perspective. Since the 1930s Soviet historians did their best to demonstrate that the image of Kazakhs as eternal nomads was nothing but ‘a historical myth.’

In the following paragraphs I would like to analyze how the elements of the Soviet discourse on nomads were represented in the Kazakh national history since the emergence of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic (KazSSR) in 1936 and then how this approach developed and changed after WWII.

2.4. Sandzhar Asfendiiarov: The Nomadic Concept of Kazakh History (1920s-30s)

In the context of Soviet state- and nation-building in Central Asia the Kazakhs needed to be (re-) classified and (re-) defined. The Kazakhs were subsumed under the category of the

³²¹ M. S. Dzhunusov, *Mezhdunarodnoe znachenie opyta stroitel'stva sotsializma v respublikah Sovetskogo Vostoka* (Frunze, 1958), 18.

peoples of the Soviet Orient (narody Sovetskogo Vostoka). An important issue for early Soviet historiography was to identify the place of nomadic peoples in the range of the Marxist system of socioeconomic formations. Did the nomads belong to the feudal or to the patriarchal system? Or is there a special way of nomadic development?

The answer to these questions had been given in the first Soviet versions of the Kazakh national history. In her study of early Soviet historiography on the Kazakhs Zifa-Alua Auezova analyzed the breaks and continuities with prerevolutionary traditions of writing about nomads.³²² Auezova singles out three major authors who shaped the discipline: Aleksandr Chuloshnikov (1894-1941), Muhammedzhan Tynyshpaev (1879-1937), and Sandzhar Asfendiiarov (1889-1938).³²³ All of these authors agreed on the fact that the Golden Horde and its successor states had played a huge role in the formation of the Kazakh nationhood and of the first Kazakh state. However, Zifa-Alua Auezova demonstrates that these three authors represented three different trends in history writing: Chuloshnikov viewing Kazakh history “from a predominantly Russian perspective”, Tynyshpaev constructing a nationalist narrative, and Asfendiiarov with his “ideologically motivated debunking of a whole corpus of (mainly Russian) studies on the Kazakhs.”³²⁴ While Chuloshnikov continued the prerevolutionary tradition of history writing about the Kazakhs and reproduced the abovementioned stereotypes, Tynyshpaev was well versed in the Kazakh genealogical tradition and represented an inner view on the tribal history of his own people. Tynyshpaev attached the main importance to tribal and clan identities which united the Kazakhs with other Turkic peoples of the former Russian Empire.³²⁵

³²² Z. Auezova, “Conceiving a People’s History: the 1920-1936 Discourse on the Kazakh Past,” in Kemper & Conermann (eds.), *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies*, 241-261. The Uzbek, Turkmen, Kirgiz, and Tajik cases of writing historical metanarratives are well-studied: E.E. Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present. A Cultural History* (California, 1990), 225-244; A. Khalid, “Nation into History: The Origins of National Historiography in Central Asia,” in Dudoignon (ed.), *Devout Societies vs. Impious States?*, 127-145; Rakowska-Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia*, 233-241; L. Tillett, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, 1969), 238-249.

³²³ S.D. Asfendiiarov, P.A. Kunte (eds.), *Proshloe Kazakhstana v istochnikakh i materialakh*, part 1 (Moscow, 1935); part 2 (Moscow, 1936); M. Tynyshpaev, *Materialy k istorii Kirgiz-kazakskogo naroda (chitany v Turkestanskoy Otdel’noy Russkoy Geograficheskoy Obshchestva v 1924 i 1925 gg.)* (Tashkent, 1925); A.P. Chuloshnikov, *Ocherki po istorii Kazak-Kirgizskogo naroda v svyazi s obshchimi istoricheskimi sud’bami drugikh tiurkskikh plemen*, vol. 1: *Drevnee vremia i srednie veka* (Orenburg, 1924).

³²⁴ Z. Auezova, “Conceiving a People’s History,” 257.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 251.

Asfendiiarov's position differed significantly from both of them, because in the changing political contexts of the mid-1920s and 1930s Asfendiiarov had to use a new terminology and methodological framework. Significantly, both Asfendiiarov and Tynyshpaev were state officials. Before they were repressed, they accumulated much power in their hands.

The native Kazakh historians operated in an environment of a number of specific discussions and debates that overwhelmed the Soviet historical science during the late 1920s and 1930s. The main topic of these debates was the discussion on the character of socio-economic relations in prerevolutionary Oriental societies, particularly those on the territory of the modern Kazakh republic. Karl Marx perceived human history as a sequence of three socio-economic formations, namely classless formation, 'economic' formation (based on private ownership and trade) and finally communism. By 1933 this idea was further elaborated by Soviet Orientalist Vasilii V. Struve (1899-1965), who suggested a framework of five socio-economic formations: from classless societies to slaveholding formation which was then replaced by feudalism and then by capitalism, and eventually socialism as a final goal of human history. It was not clear which place in this scheme was occupied by Orientals, because Marx himself had at one point mentioned that there was a special Asiatic Mode of Production (*aziatskii sposob proizvodstva*, AMP), but did not elaborate this concept further. This circumstance gave birth to large debates, where Sandzhar Asfendiiarov participated as a historian of the Kazakhs.

Asfendiiarov was born in Tashkent in 1889. His way to scholarship was very tangled but he quickly rose to high positions in the period after the revolution. He was educated at the Academy of Military Medicine in St. Petersburg and then sent for military service to the city of Termez (present-day southern Uzbekistan). Resulting from his active political engagement in the early Soviet time, Asfendiiarov obtained executive positions in Central Asian councils (*sovets*) and governments. He represented Turkestan at meetings in Moscow and his practical knowledge of the Orient was useful for the young Soviet government. In 1927 he was appointed director of the N. Narimanov All-Union Institute of Oriental Studies (*Vsesoiuznyi institut vostokovedeniia imeni N. Narimanova*) in Moscow.³²⁶ In 1928 Asfendiiarov came to Alma-Ata. From 1928 to 1937 he was the Director of the Kazakh State University in Alma-Ata which gave him the possibility to conduct work on Ka-

³²⁶ The Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies (not to be confused with the academic Institute of Oriental Studies which was set up in Leningrad in 1930 and moved to Moscow in 1950) existed in 1921-1954.

zakh history. Asfendiiarov made several sketches (*ocherki*) on the general Kazakh history (actually, this was the first attempt in the Kazakh national historiography) in his monographs. Besides he produced several articles on the problem of the origin of Islam and the role of nomads in that process, as well as on the national liberation movement in the Orient.³²⁷ His biographer Ramazan Suleimenov mentions that Asfendiiarov had no special education in philology and in the textual studies of Oriental languages, but that he possessed a good philological grounding in Persian, Arabic and Western European languages.³²⁸ This is doubtful, since Asfendiiarov did not display any of these philological skills in his published works.

The main problem that Asfendiiarov focused on in his oeuvre is how to define medieval Kazakh society in the framework of socio-economic formations. In the 1920s-30s a large discussion developed in the Soviet Union about the sequence of pre-capitalistic formations. Until 1929 there were three major theories about how to conceptualize the past of the Orient, developed mostly on the basis of Chinese sources: 1) a feudal conception claimed that the pre-capitalistic formation of the Orient was simply feudal, thus based on private land ownership; 2) the so-called Asiatic Mode of Production theory claimed that there was a special formation of Oriental development characterized by Oriental despotism, absence of private property, huge state-organized irrigation systems, a caste of priests, economic autonomy of small communities, and under-developed trade; 3) the theory of trade capitalism presupposed an early form of capitalism in Asiatic societies.³²⁹ Michael Kemper wrote an article about the different views on this problem with regard to Soviet *anti-Islamic* Islamology and examined Asfendiiarov's approach to the study of Arab nomads in his early works.³³⁰

Investigating nomadism, Asfendiiarov studied two variants of medieval Oriental society: the Arab and Central Asian nomads with particular attention to the Mongols. Why

³²⁷ S.D. Asfendiiarov, *Istoriia natsional'no-revoliutsionnykh dvizhenii na Vostoke* (Kazan', 1932).

³²⁸ R. B. Suleimanov, "Vidnyi deiatel' sotsialisticheskogo stroitel'stva v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane, uchenyi-vostokoved," in: *Sandzhar Dzhafarovich Asfendiiarov* (Alma-Ata, 1990), 10.

³²⁹ V. N. Nikiforov, *Vostok i vseмирnaia istoriia* (Moscow, 1977), 179. On the AMP see: B. O'Leary, *The Asiatic Mode of Production: Oriental Despotism, Historical Materialism and Indian History* (Oxford, 1989).

³³⁰ S. D. Asfendiiarov, "Islam i kochevoe khoziaistvo" in: *Ateist*, No. 58 (November, 1930) 3-17; S. D. Asfendiiarov, *Materialy k izucheniiu istorii Vostoka, chast' I, Prichiny vozniknoveniia islama* (Samarkand, 1928); M. Kemper, "The Soviet Discourse," 1-48.

were these two ethnic groups so important for the discussion of Kazakh national history? First of all, as far as the Kazakhs were regarded as nomads, the Arabs and Mongols were of interest in a comparative perspective. Secondly, the Arabs and the Mongols brought fundamental socio-economic and religious changes to the peoples whom they conquered in the 7th-8th and the 13th centuries, respectively. A proper evaluation of the general role of nomadic invasions was very important; if one wanted to include the nomads into a general history of 'progressive peoples' one would have to demonstrate the complex and mutual character of relations between nomads and city-dwellers. The Arabs brought Islam to Central Asia, whereas the Mongol conquests fundamentally changed regional political structures and established new traditions of statehood, ideology and political legitimation, though following the patterns that had already been established in the Turkic Kaganates.³³¹ Both cultural and political phenomena affected the history of the Kazakh steppes. Finally, the period of Mongol suzerainty had always been important in the Russian historiography and also reflected the Russian experience of interaction with nomads.³³² Therefore the issue of the Arabs and Mongols, as we will see below, played a major role in the Soviet academic discourse on nomads, on the Kazakhs in particular.

Asfendiiarov in his early works regarded Islam not as a religion, but as an "economic movement of the tribes."³³³ The fact that the Arab people were nomads and that they kept tribal divisions was crucial for Asfendiiarov. Asfendiiarov wrote that "nomadic centres in Asia were the centres from which the big waves of migration started and spread. These movements were an influential factor in historical development."³³⁴ It should be mentioned that Asfendiiarov did not describe the Arab and Kazakh cases in the same way. According to the author, Arabs did not have feudal property; rather, property was tribal.³³⁵ At the same time, what Arab and Kazakh societies had in common was the nomadic, cattle-breeding character of economy. Asfendiiarov stressed the importance of tribal organisation

³³¹ V.V. Trepavlov, *Gosudarstvennyi stroi Mongol'skoi imperii XIII veka: problema istoricheskoi preemstvennosti* (Moscow, 1993).

³³² Ch.J. Halperin, "Soviet Historography on Russia and the Mongols," in: *Russian Review* 41, no. 3 (Jul., 1982), 306-322. An account with a focus on research of Persian historical works is represented in: A.A. Arslanova, *Ostalis' knigi ot vremen bylykh...* (Kazan', 2002).

³³³ M. Kemper, "The Soviet Discourse," 18, 20-21; Asfendiiarov, "Materialy k izucheniiu," 28, 48.

³³⁴ S. D. Asfendiiarov, *Materialy k izucheniiu*, 7.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

as a functional element of economy. Michael Kemper formulated Asfendiiarov's opinion in the following way: "The Orient was characterized not by a historical sequence of primitive-patriarchal, feudal, and capitalistic society, as in the West, but by one tribal formation that combined elements from all three formations."³³⁶ In other words, in the 1920s Asfendiiarov neglected feudal and trade capital conceptions and belonged to the adherents of a special way of Oriental development, which however also differed from the AMP. Asfendiiarov himself did not call this directly 'tribal formation,' but he stated that "nomadic economy was the main economic formation (*formatsiia*) in Central Asia."³³⁷

With these views Asfendiiarov entered the first round of discussions around the AMP which took place in the Soviet Union in 1925-1931. The adherents of the AMP claimed that Oriental societies had their own way of development, unlike the European way, and it was characterized by despotism, absence of private property, and natural economy. This theory was criticized by those historians who accepted the Marxist linear understanding of history, in which all societies went through the same socio-economic formations. In order to support their views the latter group of historians linked the adherents of the AMP with repressed Trotskyites and also referred to Stalin's statement which characterized Chinese society as feudal. The AMP debate was muted in 1931, and the relatively free discussion was forcibly closed. A significant role in the ending of the debates around Oriental socio-economical formations was played by Vasilii Struve.

A leading specialist of ancient Oriental history, Vasilii Vasil'evich Struve (1899-1965) worked his whole life on old Egyptian texts and on philological questions. At the same time he elaborated the Soviet historical methodology with the famous five phases in the course of human history (*piatichlenka*). In connection, Struve tried to prove, from Marxist positions, that ancient Asiatic societies were based on a slaveholding system, not on a feudal one.³³⁸ Since 1931 he argued that societies of the Ancient Orient (especially in Egypt) were to be classified by the socioeconomic formation of slaveholding system as well as by the transition from that stage to feudal relations. Obviously on governmental

³³⁶ Kemper, "The Soviet Discourse," 18; Asfendiiarov, *Materialy k izucheniiu*, 51.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, 30.

³³⁸ V.V. Struve, "Marksovo opredelenie ranneklassovogo obshchestva," in: *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, 3 (1940), 5-22; V.V. Struve, "Problema krizisa rabovladel'cheskogo stroia i genezis feodalizma," in: *Voprosy istorii*, 9 (1956), 186-191.

request, over the next few years several Russian scholars produced basic works on feudalism in Russia and in nomadic societies: Aleksandr Iu. Iakubovskii, *Oriental Feudalism: The Capital of the Golden Horde – Sarai Berke* (1932), Boris D. Grekov, *Slavery and Feudalism in Ancient Rus'* (1934), and Boris Ia. Vladimirtsov, *The Social System of Mongols* (1934).³³⁹ After Stalin's *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: Short Course* (1939) the concept of five socio-economic stages became a dogma, without 'special cases' and 'national peculiarities'. The reason for this change was clearly connected to current Soviet politics of modernization. In Kemper's view, "[t]he integration of Muslim socio-economic history into the fold of the Eurocentric *piatichlenka* legitimized the violent transformation of Muslim society according to the Bolshevik model."³⁴⁰

Taking this political environment into consideration, Asfendiiarov changed his opinion in the debate and moved to the camp of feudalists. As he had done before, he regarded the Kazakh history as a history of a nomadic people, which along with other nomads had played a crucial role in the past of Orient.³⁴¹ In this context he did not raise the question of Kazakh cities, but he mentioned the influence of the cities of Transoxania on the Islamization of the Steppe. Contrary to his previous article on the origin of Islam, Asfendiiarov not only acknowledged that Islam was deeply rooted among the Kazakh nomads, but also took it as a proof for the existence of feudalism in the Kazakh lands prior to the Tsarist conquest.³⁴²

Also in contradiction to his previous view on tribal Arab society, in his historical outline of the Kazakh past Asfendiiarov concluded that "nomadic peoples of Central Asia had a social class structure. [...] The nomads did not have a tribal system."³⁴³ He now claimed that their class structure was feudal with some specifics. I consider this claim as a direct

³³⁹ B. Ia. Vladimirtsov, *Obshchestvennyi stroi mongolov: Mongol'skii kochevoi feodalizm* (Leningrad, 1934); B. D. Grekov, "Rabstvo i feodalizm v Drevnei Rusi", in *Izvestiia gosudarstvennoi akademii istorii material'noi kul'tury*, 86 (1934), 5-66; A. Iu. Iakubovskii, *Feodalizm na Vostoke. Stolitsa Zolotoi Ordyy – Sarai Berke* (Leningrad, 1932).

³⁴⁰ M. Kemper, "The Soviet Discourse," 47.

³⁴¹ S. D. Asfendiiarov, *Istoriia Kazakhstana (s drevneishikh vremen)*, vol. 1 (Alma-Ata, 1935), 13; S.D. Asfendiiarov, "O nekotorykh osnovnykh voprosakh istorii kazakov," in: *Bol'shevik Kazakhstana* 10 (34) 1933, 34.

³⁴² *Ibid.*

³⁴³ S. D. Asfendiiarov, *Istoriia Kazakhstana (s drevneishikh vremen)*, 45.

influence of the works by Boris Ia. Vladimirtsov (1884-1931),³⁴⁴ Leningrad historian of the Mongol empire who defined in his posthumously published book (1934) the Mongol society of the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries as a society of advanced feudal relations. In his conclusions Boris Ia. Vladimirtsov, as an Orientalist philologist, relied on written sources, produced within the Mongol tradition of court historiography of the 13th century (the Yuan dynasty). Sandzhar Asfendiiarov claimed in 1935 that the Kazakhs had had the similar high level of development. In this regard, he pointed out the contribution of Vladimirtsov, who was the first to study medieval Asiatic feudalism. Later other authors developed more opinions on nomadic feudalism.³⁴⁵ As Vladimirtsov had done in his book *The Social System of the Mongols*, Asfendiiarov drew a direct parallel between the development of feudalism in the West and in the Orient. In his mind, nomadic feudalism was characterized by a combination of tribal elements and feudal relations. Asfendiiarov solved this contradiction very skilfully: after the Mongol conquest, Central Asian nomads had preserved the tribal structure of their society which was “in reality feudal in character.”³⁴⁶

Asfendiiarov does not mention any Kazakh city, and the Kazakhs in his works of the mid-1930s appear only as a nomadic people. He links the process of Islamization with the development of feudal relations and the cultural influence of settled peoples on nomads. In 1930 Asfendiiarov argued against the opinion that the Kazakhs were bad or “superficial” Muslims, a view that he called a result of Russian chauvinistic ideology and local nationalism.³⁴⁷ He assumed that Kazakh Islam was ‘different’ from that of their neighbors. For him, Muslim preachers adapted their religion to Kazakh traditions. Remarkable for a scholar working under conditions of official atheism, Asfendiiarov even ascribed a crucial

³⁴⁴ Boris Iakovlevich Vladimirtsov had obtained his education at the faculty of Oriental languages of St. Petersburg University. He worked on Mongol philology and medieval history. At the end of his life he formulated the conception of nomadic feudalism in the Mongol society. Cf. I. Ia. Zlatkin, “Boris Iakovlevich Vladimirtsov – istorik”, in: B. Ia. Vladimirtsov, *Raboty po istorii i etnografii mongol'skikh narodov* (Moscow, 2002), 13-48.

³⁴⁵ S. D. Asfendiiarov, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 58; S. P. Tolstov, “Genezis feodalizma v kochevykh skotovodcheskikh obshchestvakh,” in: *Problemy genezisa i razvitiia feodalizma. Izvestiia Gosudarstvennoi Akademii material'noi kul'tury* 103 (Moscow-Leningrad, 1934), 165-190; A. Iu. Iakubovskii, “Kniga B.Ia. Vladimirtsova “Obshchestvennyi stroi mongolov” i perspektivy dal'neishego izucheniia Zolotoi Ordy,” in: *Istoricheskii sbornik* 5 (Moscow, Leningrad, 1936), 293-313.

³⁴⁶ S. D. Asfendiiarov, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 52.

³⁴⁷ S.D. Asfendiiarov, “O nekotorykh osnovnykh voprosakh istorii kazakov,” *Bol'shevik Kazakhstana* 10 (34) 1933, 34.

role in the religious life of the Kazakhs to the *Khawājas* (representatives of sacred families which claimed to be descendants from the Prophet Muhammad), and dated the beginning of the spread of Islam in present-day Kazakhstan already with the tenth and eleventh centuries.³⁴⁸

In 1935 the origin of the Kazakhs was understood by Asfendiiarov in the following terms. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there was a coalition of Kazakh, Noghay and Uzbek nomadic peoples of the Western Dasht-i Qipchāq. Later on, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, this union disintegrated into three respective parts. Asfendiiarov established a strong connection between the modern territory of Kazakhstan and medieval Kazakhs. He argued that the nomadic peoples (*narody*) living on the territory of present-day Kazakhstan had subsequently become one ethnic group.³⁴⁹ According to him, Kazakh feudal society was formed already by the sixteenth century in the framework of the Kazakh Hordes. He regarded them as an early form of a feudal state, the Kazakh Khanate.³⁵⁰

However, even Asfendiiarov's moving to the camp of feudalists did not save his life. Already in 1933 he was publicly blamed for "a serious inversion of Marxist teaching on the socio-economic formations" and for "deviation from the Leninist national politics."³⁵¹ Sandzhar Asfendiiarov was executed in 1938 and his writings were banned.

2.5. Mikhail Viatkin on Kazakh Ethnogenesis

After the prohibition of Asfendiiarov's books it became necessary to write a new variant of Kazakh history from a Marxist position. In 1941 Mikhail P. Viatkin (1895-1967) published a monograph on the history of the Kazakh people from ancient times up to 1870.³⁵² Viatkin had graduated from Tomsk University in 1921 and was a senior researcher at the historical department of the Leningrad Pedagogical Institute. From 1957 to his death Viatkin served as Head of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of History of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Since 1935 his main field of academic interest was the past of nomadic peoples,

³⁴⁸ S. D. Asfendiiarov, *Istoriia Kazakhstana*, 90-92.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 78.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 82.

³⁵¹ A. Larin, "Tri antitezisa (predvaritel'naia formulirovka osnovnykh vozrazhenii tov. Asfendiiarovu)," in: *Bol'shevik Kazakhstana* 10 (34) 1933, 38.

³⁵² M. Viatkin, *Ocherki po istorii Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 1, *S drevneishikh vremen po 1870 g.* (Moscow, 1941).

mainly the Kazakhs and the Kirgiz.³⁵³ He was personally acquainted with Sandzhar Asfendiiarov and Anna Pankratova; with the latter he had a common project on Kazakh history (see below), in the 1950s he participated in the writing of the Kirgiz meta-history. Viatkin's doctoral thesis (*doktorskaia*) was devoted to the 1783-1797 uprising of the Kazakhs against Russian rule. The name of its leader, Srym Datov (1712-1802), provided the title for Viatkin's monograph.³⁵⁴

Before WWII, Viatkin regularly visited Alma-Ata and the Kazakh Base of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, which had been established in 1932 under Kanysh Imantaevich Satpaev (1899-1964).³⁵⁵ In his 1940 scientific report on one of the visits to the Historical Sector of the Kazakh Base, Mikhail Viatkin analyzed the present state and development of scientific life in Alma-Ata.³⁵⁶ According to him, the research made in the Historical Sector by local scholars had become much more active than before (he compared it with 1939). If previously a considerable part of the work was mainly done by Leningrad specialists (he did not specify to whom he referred precisely, but we can guess here Aleksandr Bernshtam and obviously Viatkin himself were meant), in 1940 Viatkin identified several finished historical works and dissertations written by Kazakhstani scholars. The time spent in the Kazakh Base allowed him to establish close relations with Kazakh historians, including Alkei Margulan (on him see the fourth chapter). The Historical Sector had three employees at that time, namely V.F. Shakhmatov, Kh. Iusurov (who, according to some, was "the only historian among the Dungan people"³⁵⁷), and A.Kh. Margulan. Viatkin read all materials that the Kazakh colleagues had prepared for publication and acknowledged that the Historical Sector was becoming more and more independent from Leningrad support. Viatkin's report is of special importance because it shows the close ties between the two

³⁵³ M.P. Viatkin, *Stranitsy zhizni i raboty: k 110-letiiu so dnia rozhdeniia* (Moscow, 2006). In 1954 Viatkin was elected a Member Correspondent of the Kirgiz Academy of Sciences.

³⁵⁴ M.P. Viatkin, *Batyr Srym* (Moscow, Leningrad, 1947) (the dissertation had been defended in 1944).

³⁵⁵ The geologist Satpaev, since 1946 full member of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences, was an important organizer of academic life in the young Kazakh republic. On 3 June 1946 Satpaev was elected as the first President of the newly established Kazakh Academy of Sciences.

³⁵⁶ TsGA RK, F. 2057, Op. 3, D. 791, ff. 1-4; G.O. Batyrbekov, "Otchet M.P. Viatkina o rabote sektora istorii Kazakhskogo filiala Akademii Nauk SSSR v 1940 godu," in: *Qazaqstannyng tarikh ghylymy: Sh.Sh. Valikhanov atyndaghy Tarikh zhene etnologiia institutynyng 60-zhyldyghyna arnalady* (Almaty, 2005), 546-553.

³⁵⁷ Since the very beginning the administration of the Kazakh Base paid attention to Uighur studies, which was to become of special priority in the future Alma-Ata Institute of History, Archeology, and Ethnography.

centers of scholarship even at this point. What we see here is that Kazakh historical science, and Oriental Studies as its organic part, emerged de facto as a branch of the Leningrad school of classical Orientology. Since the late 1930s the opinion of the Leningrad colleagues and their examination of preliminary results of studies largely influenced the perceptions and scholarly strategies of Kazakhstani science.

As a result of his travels and in-depth studies, Viatkin published a monograph on the history of the Kazakh Socialist Republic.³⁵⁸ He was the first to combine the analysis of archival, archeological and written sources on Kazakh history. The concept of autochthony — the eternal dwelling of the respective nations on the territory which belonged to them in the Soviet period — was brought here to its logic end: Viatkin's sketches of Kazakh history began with the early Stone Age (Upper Paleolithic). For this purpose Viatkin used materials from the 1939-1940 archeological expeditions in Southern and South-Eastern Kazakhstan led by Leningrad archeologist Aleksandr N. Bernshtam. And even though Viatkin claimed to have consulted manuscripts in Oriental languages (so-called 'Oriental sources'³⁵⁹), in fact, he relied only on prerevolutionary research and on the translations made by Leningrad Orientalists in the 1930s (sources on the history of the Turkmens and Kara-Kalpaks) that we have discussed in detail in a previous chapter. Still, Viatkin mentioned six, from his perspective, most important 'Oriental sources' on Kazakh history, namely *Ta'rikh-i Rashidi* by Muḥammad Ḥaydar, *Mihmān-nāma-yi Bukhārā* by Rūzbihān, the anonymous *Shaybānī-nāma*, *'Abdullāh-nāma* by Ḥāfiz-i Tanīsh Bukhārī, *Shajara-yi tūrki* by Abū'l-Ghāzī, and *Firdaus al-Iqbāl* by Munīs and Agāhī. Work on these texts was conducted by the Institute of Oriental Studies in the framework of the source publication projects in the 1930s. These references are important, because up to that time there was no clear information about which manuscripts reveal information on the history of this or that nationality of Central Asia. Moreover, as we shall see, some of these sources were preserved in the Alma-Ata archives, but Viatkin did not say whether he had seen them there.

Underlining the importance of the question of ethnogenesis, Viatkin was confronted with the contradiction that the first historically reliable reference to the Kazakhs goes back to as early as the middle of the 15th century, while the Kazakh nationality (*narodnost'*)

³⁵⁸ M. Viatkin, *Ocherki po istorii Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 1.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 3.

was, according to Soviet scholarship, formed much later. In the footsteps of Iakubosvkii,³⁶⁰ Viatkin made a distinction between the point in time when a nationality appeared and the time when its name first occurred, but the other way around: the Kazakh nationality appeared later than the ethnic name, because he maintained that originally, in the 14th-15th centuries, the term ‘Qazaq’ just meant ‘a free man.’³⁶¹ However, Viatkin had no final opinion as to when the Kazakh nationality finally appeared. He paid special attention to the presumably long period when a kind of dual term, ‘Uzbek-Qazaq,’ was in circulation, as well as to the point in history when the ‘Old-Uzbek’, i.e. the common Chaghatay language was accepted for history writing in Central Asia.³⁶² The author stated that the Kazakh nationality was formed only in the late 15th and in the 16th century, i.e. later than the sources that indicate the term ‘Qazaq’ for the first time, and before the first Kazakh political union of Janibek Khan and Giray Khan. Again, the main distinction of the Kazakhs from the Uzbeks was their way of life: since the 16th century the Uzbeks had migrated to Central Asian urban regions and became settled, while the Kazakhs had remained (!) nomads³⁶³. Though Viatkin must have known from Aleksandr Bernshtam about the excavations of the ancient cities of Southern Kazakhstan, it is significant that Viatkin did not connect any of these urban centers to Kazakh culture. In his mind, even though there were some elements of urban life in Kazakh-dominated areas, these had to be ascribed to other populations, and there was no Kazakh urban civilization.

Thus the Uzbek people became the ‘other’ that sharpened the definition of the Kazakhs, though this opposition existed previously not in national terms, but in terms of settled and nomadic societies. Viatkin found data in Rūzbihān’s chronicle for proving that Shaybānī Khan, the Uzbeks’ ruler in 1451-1510, tried to isolate the Kazakhs from important local trading centers. This was taken as the starting point for a centuries-long sequence of wars between Uzbeks and Kazakhs over such centers which were mainly located in the middle Sir Darya region (today Southern Kazakhstan).

³⁶⁰ A. Iu. Iakubovskii, *K voprosu ob etnogeneze uzbekskogo naroda* (Tashkent, 1941).

³⁶¹ M. Viatkin, *Ocherki po istorii Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 1, 77-78.

³⁶² On the role of Chaghatay language in Central Asian cultural life see: T.K. Beisembiev, “Sredneaziatskii (chagataiskii) tiurki i ego rol’ v kul’turnoi istorii Evrazii (vzgliad istorika),” in: S.G. Kliashorny, T.I. Sultanov, V.V. Trepavlov (eds.), *Tiurkologicheskii sbornik 2006* (Moscow, 2007), 77-94.

³⁶³ M. Viatkin, *Ocherki po istorii Kazakhskoi SSR*, 86.

In his theoretical analysis of Kazakh history Viatkin operated with such terms as backwardness and progress. As many other scholars, he acknowledged that the historical socioeconomic development of peoples living on the territory of the Kazakh SSR had not been even: the southern territories, i.e. those with settled populations, were more highly developed in the ancient and medieval times due to Iranian, Chinese, and Arab civilizational influences; while northern territories, almost totally inhabited by nomads, were regarded by Viatkin as backward due to ‘primitive’ social relations and the absence of feudalism.³⁶⁴ The terminological opposition of “nomadic vs. settled” became equivalent to the binary opposition of “backwardness vs. progress”. In fact, this distinction had roots in pre-revolutionary literature, but as the borders of the Kazakh SSR included territories with settled population, Viatkin accorded the republic a right to have a written history. Thereby the focus of attention was moved from the Steppe region (Dasht-i Qipchāq) to the southern territories which had always been touched by the histories of great empires and which were known from many narrative sources. The Soghdian colonization of Southern Kazakhstan (3th-5th c.) gave rise to another cultural opposition, according to Viatkin: the opposition of Iranian and Turkic populations. Soghdians in this respect were regarded as bearers of urban culture.³⁶⁵ This was obviously against Marr’s concept of autochthonism (see below) and in favor of the theory of migrations elaborated by German scholars.

Viatkin consistently described the cultural relations with foreign elements, such as Soghdians, Arabs, and Mongols, as a mutual influence with the Turkic population of the Kazakh Steppe. Viatkin did not evaluate foreign invasions only in negative terms; each of them, according to Viatkin, brought society to a certain level of feudalization and was therefore ultimately progressive in character, especially for the nomadic population which received a more complex social organization after the Mongol invasion.³⁶⁶ In contrast, the spread of Islam was characterized in terms of superficiality: it was popular only among the elite; the majority of the population remained shamanistic.³⁶⁷ Viatkin produced several

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 21.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 43. Maria Subtelny seems to follow these oppositions: M.E. Subtelny, “The Symbiosis of Turk and Tajik,” in: B.F. Manz (ed.), *Central Asia in Historical Perspective* (Boulder/San Francisco – Oxford, 1994), 45-61.

³⁶⁶ M. Viatkin, *Ocherki po istorii Kazakhskoi SSR*, 62.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 54.

general outlines of Kazakh history which appeared in the 1930s-40s. He analyzed the succession of cultures since ancient times and maintained his postulate of the backwardness of nomads. Still, his work had one main peculiarity: it tied the crystallization of the Kazakh nationality not to the first appearance of the ethnic name in sources, but to the movement of the Uzbek tribes in southern direction.

Viatkin was the last Soviet scholar who wrote a Kazakh history on his own. His and Asfendiiarov's experiences were based on a narrow scope of sources and on the personal networks of the authors with colleagues all over the Union. The next stage in the development of national history writing was characteristic to Soviet style scholarship: it was a switch to more centralized and collective monographs, carried out by state research institutions and by large academic networks with broad discussions before and after the book's release.

2.6. Aleksandr Iakubovskii and the Soviet Concept of Ethnogenesis in Central Asia

Aleksandr Iu. Iakubovskii (1886-1953), the main successor of Vasilii V. Bartol'd, was a pioneer in the formation of national histories for Central Asian republics. As Iakubovskii wrote in his autobiography compiled for the Institute of History of Material Culture, he was born in a St. Petersburg family of a bank employee.³⁶⁸ In his early childhood the family moved to Samarkand, and then to Tashkent, where his father worked in the State Bank. No doubt, already at that time young Iakubovskii felt affection for the mysterious Central Asian Orient with its magnificent madrasas in Samarkand and narrow streets in Tashkent. Not surprising is therefore his permanent interest in the medieval epoch of the region, especially in the age of the Timūrids. He never wrote about his childhood, but it was certainly a decisive period for the future scholar. After graduating from the Tashkent gymnasium, Iakubovskii in 1906 entered the faculty of natural sciences at Geneva University, but was forced to return in fall 1907 because his father was not able to send him money anymore. Hence, in 1908 Iakubovskii became a student of the historic-philological faculty of St. Petersburg University, where he did not receive any deep education in Oriental Studies since

³⁶⁸ RA NA IIMK, F. 35, Op. 5, №355, *Lichnoe delo Iakubovskogo A.Iu.*, 1945-1953, ff. 56-59. Cf.: S. Abashin, "Ethnogenesis and Historiography: Historical Narratives for Central Asia, 1940s-1950s" (forthcoming).

these subjects were taught at another faculty. In 1913, after his graduation, Iakubovskii went to work as a teacher of history in one of the Leningrad gymnasiums, which was later turned into a Soviet school. There Iakubovskii worked until 1924, when his pedagogical experience in a high school came to an end. It was only in 1920 that the young historian started to study Oriental Studies disciplines at the same St. Petersburg University, namely the history of medieval Orient (especially Central Asia) with Vasilii Bartol'd, Arabic language with Ignatii Krachkovskii, and Persian language with Aleksandr Romaskevich.³⁶⁹ According to my interviewees “it is well known” that Iakubovskii was an archeologist and did not know Oriental languages. Yet I believe he had sufficient knowledge to read texts in Arabic and Persian, but of course he was not a philologist and did not spend much time with manuscripts, working instead mainly with published material. No doubt yet that Iakubovskii was among those who combined archeological and textual studies, though not in the first period of his career.

Iakubovskii became famous for his basic theses on the process of ethnogenesis in Central Asia³⁷⁰ which were later largely accepted by historians and politicians alike.³⁷¹ The main idea was to differentiate between the historical conditions of national formation and the appearance of the ethnic name. This division enabled specialists to postulate autochthonous origins for the titular nation of republics in distant epochs when these peoples still did not have the current name, and thus to extend their ethnogenesis into antiquity.³⁷² In his 1941 booklet on the Uzbek case, Iakubovskii concluded that the nomadic element that brought the name ‘Uzbek’ to the population of Transoxania in the 15th-16th centuries was only the final step in a long process of ethnic development. In other words, the Uzbek ethnos existed long before the arrival of ‘Uzbeks’ with this name.³⁷³ Iakubovskii’s brochure reveals a strong anti-Iranian inclination, when saying that nomadic Uzbeks, when they arrived from the north, were confronted in Transoxiana with a predominantly Turkic-

³⁶⁹ Ibid., ff. 56-57.

³⁷⁰ A. Iu. Iakubovskii, *K voprosu ob etnogeneze uzbekskogo naroda* (Tashkent, 1941).

³⁷¹ A. Turson, “Ogon’ i pepel: Istoriia mezhdru molotom i nakoval’nei provintsial’noi nauki,” *Iran-name*, 2008/2 [6], 180.

³⁷² On the Soviet concept of ethnogenesis in Central Asia: M. Laruelle, “The Concept of Ethnogenesis in Central Asia: Political Context and Institutional Mediators (1940-50),” in: *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, 9, 1 (Winter 2008), 169-88.

³⁷³ A. Iu. Iakubovskii, *K voprosu ob etnogeneze uzbekskogo naroda*, 3, 12.

speaking population and thus not primarily with Iranians. Iakubovskii attributed the victory of Turkic language to the epoch of the Qarakhanids (840-1212), even though city-dwellers continued to speak Persian.³⁷⁴ In Iakubovskii's construction, the sedentarization of nomads is an inevitable, teleological process, which eventually led to the appearance of cities populated by Turkic speakers, as for instance in Urgench and Andijan, and therefore to the active participation of Turks in the cultural life of the cities. In the same way Iakubovskii proposed that 'it is impossible to explain the appearance of 'Alī-Shīr Nawāyī only by the Iranian cultural heritage. The origin of his works goes back to the development of the Turkic language and literature before the 15th century.'³⁷⁵

Being aware of archeological realities, in other writings Iakubovskii rejected "the wrong opinion on the character and role of the Mongol invasion, which was previously represented as a barbaric irruption that resulted in the total liquidation of the conquered population."³⁷⁶ For the first time a Soviet scholar paid attention to the quick recovery of the 'destroyed' cities.

U.S. scholar Edward Allworth³⁷⁷ spared no effort to demonstrate that Iakubovskii was a true Stalinist creature. He called Iakubovskii an ideologist and juxtaposed him to Aleksandr Semenov who had not yielded "completely to ideological pressure." Allworth's view is quite important in understanding the role of Iakubovskii in the creation of the Soviet national histories. Studying Iakubovskii's account on the Uzbek ethnogenesis, Allworth argues that Iakubovskii's perspective was inspired by 'Stalin's prose', and drew the following conclusions:

"These nineteen pages . . . carried no reference footnotes or bibliography, which revealed them to be less a scholar's investigation than an ideologist's directive. (. . .) Every circumstance connected with Prof. Iakubovskii's tract — its substance, its issuance, and its form — suggests that this constituted an official policy statement, and that it exerted an impact commensurate with its authority. In retrospect, the new intellectuals of Central Asia would regard the contribution by Prof. Iakubovskii, who died about two weeks after Stalin, not only as a vocal Stalinist propagation of fictive dan-

³⁷⁴ Ibid., 9.

³⁷⁵ Ibid., 18-19.

³⁷⁶ A.Iu. Iakubovskii, "Feodalizm na Vostoke", 10, 12.

³⁷⁷ Edward A. Allworth (b. 1920) is a historian of modern Central Asia based at Columbia University.

gers but as a polemic that endangered the educated populace. In clearing the way for Soviet-style unanimity around Marxist-Leninist internationalism, such efforts exerted strong pressure on writers, teachers, and students — the core of Central Asian intellectual strength.”³⁷⁸

Even though the political significance of Iakubovskii’s work has been expressed by Allworth very clearly, it should be also kept in the mind that Iakubovskii contributed much to the legitimation of the centuries-long history of the Uzbek people,³⁷⁹ and therefore his brochure might not have been regarded as an attack but as a support for the Uzbek national intelligentsia. Anyway, Iakubovskii’s brochure, which partly rejected his own earlier writings on the archeological sites in Transoxiana, set the tone of research in Soviet Central Asian studies. It was natural to use the same concept also for other peoples of Central Asia, the Kazakhs (and even the Tajiks) being no exception.

Yuri E. Bregel and Sergei N. Abashin mentioned that the concept of autochthonism in Iakubovskii’s brochure is influenced by the theories of linguist Nikolai Ia. Marr (1864-1934), whose impact on Soviet ethnology, archeology, history, and linguistics in the 1930s and 1940s was enormous.³⁸⁰ Marr rejected the migration theory, which envisaged cultural influence during movements of peoples, and instead developed his ‘new theory of language’ according to which autochthonous cultures pass through a certain range of socio-economic stages. However, as Uyama Tomohiko mentioned, the key term ‘autochthonism’ was not introduced by Marr himself and also the concept of ethnogenesis was not formulated by him. One should distinguish between the ideas of Marr and the form of Marrism that developed after the death of its eponym on the basis of Marr’s controversial heritage.³⁸¹ As far as Nikolai Ia. Marr, Bartol’d’s relative and friend, was a founder and director of the State Academy of the History of Material Culture in Leningrad (1919-1934), where

³⁷⁸ E. Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks*, 239-241.

³⁷⁹ Y. Bregel, *Notes on the Study of Central Asia*, 13-14.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 13; S. Abashin, “Ethnogenesis and Historiography: Historical Narratives for Central Asia, 1940s-1950s” (forthcoming). On Marr see: V.M. Alpatov, *Istoriia odnogo mifa. Marr i marrizm* (Moscow, 1991); Yu. Slezkine, “N.Ia. Marr and the National Origins of Soviet Ethnogenetics,” in: *Slavic Review* 55, no. 4 (Winter 1996), 826-862; L.L. Thomas, *The Linguistic Theories of N.Ya. Marr* (Berkeley, 1957); V. Tolz, “Russia’s Own Orient,” 15-16; V. Tolz, *Russian Academicians and the Revolution. Combining Professionalism and Politics* (London, 1997), 89-107.

³⁸¹ U. Tomohiko, “From ‘Bulgharism’ through ‘Marrism’ to Nationalist Myths: Discourses on the Tatar, the Chuvash and the Bashkir Ethnogenesis,” in: *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 19 (2002), 170-174.

Iakubovskii was also employed, Marr's ideas were widespread among archeologists, including Sergei Tolstov,³⁸² whose positions were close to those formulated in Iakubovskii's pamphlet on Uzbek history.³⁸³ Different in Iakubovskii's approach was that, according to Bregel, he did not understand Marr's theories and used this officially approved concept only to express his political loyalty. In 1943, the scholars who found themselves evacuated in Tashkent agreed with the theses of Iakubovskii and Tolstov, and the autochthonous concept of ethnogenesis in Central Asia was taken as the basis for republican histories. This concept continued even when Marrism was denounced by Stalin in 1950.³⁸⁴

2.7. Anna Pankratova and the Official Kazakh History of the 1940s

The following project was directed by Anna Pankratova (1897-1957) during WWII when a number of prominent historians were evacuated to Tashkent (Uzbekistan) and Borovoe (Kazakhstan). This evacuation played a significant role in the historiography of Central Asia. Well-educated and experienced scholars from Moscow and Leningrad found themselves in a region which, in most cases, had not been central to their scientific interest before. Many of them began not only to teach at local universities but also to conduct collective work on the national histories of Central Asian peoples. For the first time such a collective monograph was requested by the Kazakh SSR soon after the appearance of the national republic, in 1936.³⁸⁵ The war-time evacuation of historians to Central Asia made the task easier. For example, in August 1941 one of the prominent specialists on Russian medieval history, the author of the comprehensive monograph *The Mongols and Ancient Russia* (1940)³⁸⁶, Arsenii N. Nasonov (1898-1965) was evacuated from Leningrad to Ash-

³⁸² S.S. Alymov, "Na puti k 'Drevnei istorii narodov SSSR,'" 133, 165; S.S. Alymov, "Kosmopolizm, marrizm i prochie 'grekhi': otechestvennye etnografy i arkhologii na rubezhe 1940-1950-kh godov," in: *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie* 97 (2009), 7-38.

³⁸³ S.P. Tolstov, *Drevniaia kul'tura Uzbekistana* (Tashkent, 1943).

³⁸⁴ Yu. Bregel, *Notes on the Study of Central Asia*, 13-14.

³⁸⁵ RA NA IIMK, F. 2, Op. 1, 1936, №49, *Protokoly zasedanii Sredneaziatskoi komissii*, f. 37 b.

³⁸⁶ A.N. Nasonov, *Mongoly i Rus': Istorii tatarskoi politiki na Rusi* (Moscow, Leningrad, 1940). This book provided a feudal interpretation of the Russian medieval history and for the first time demonstrated the total dependence of Russian domestic politics on the Golden Horde's rulers from the second half of 13th to the early 15th centuries. Before the war such a claim was still possible.

khabad, where he became head of the Historical Sector of the Institute of History, Language, and Literature of the Turkmen Branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.³⁸⁷ Here Nasonov headed the project of *Sketches on the History of Turkmenia and the Turkmen People* the results of which were published ten years later.³⁸⁸ Working together with other colleagues strengthened the existing network ties and allowed for a wide circulation and discussion of ideas and theories.³⁸⁹ This was especially the case when Tolstov and Iakubovskii, two major authorities in the Soviet humanitarian sciences, found themselves in the same place. At the same time Nasonov also wrote *A Short History of the Uzbek SSR*, which was never published and remained in manuscript form in his archive,³⁹⁰ maybe because Nasonov's views were different from common theories or because the author, a specialist in Russian chronicles, did not consider it a work worthy of interest.³⁹¹ Important to note is also that in evacuation, some prominent scholars from other fields, such as academicians (i.e. full members of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR) Sergei V. Bakhrushin and Iurii V. Got'e³⁹² could not continue to work in their specialties, and thus used the opportunity and began to investigate the poorly studied Central Asian history, which at that time still kept its "Orientalist" romantic and sacred aura.³⁹³ Still, for the careers of these scholars this period did not mean a crucial change in their professional orientation, since

³⁸⁷ During the war time five hundred professors and their families were evacuated to Ashkhabad, while only two hundred of their colleagues found themselves in Tashkent, where facilities and infrastructure were much better (P. Stronski, *Tashkent: Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 94-95).

³⁸⁸ A. Karryev, V.G. Moshkova, A.N. Nasonov, A.Iu. Iakubovskii, eds., *Ocherki iz istorii turkmenskogo naroda i Turkmenistana v VIII-XIX vv.* (Ashkhabad, 1954).

³⁸⁹ For memories on the writing of the 1943 *History of the Kazakh SSR* see: N.M. Druzhinin, *Erinnerungen und Gedanken eines Historikers*. Übers. von B. Eschment (Göttingen, Zürich, 1983), 54-56. Academician Nikolai Mikhailovich Druzhinin (1886-1986) was a historian of the Decabrist movement and Russian peasantry.

³⁹⁰ A.L. Stanislavskii, "Lichnyi fond A.N. Nasonova v archive Akademii nauk SSSR," in: *Arkheograficheskii ezhegodnik za 1974 g.* (Moscow, 1975).

³⁹¹ Iu.V. Krivosheev, M.V. Mandrik, "Arsenii Nikolaevich Nasonov i ego trudy po istorii Rusi," in: A.N. Nasonov, *'Russkaia zemlia' i obrazovanie territorii Drevnerusskogo gosudarstva; Mongoly i Rus'* (St. Petersburg, 2006), 357. Unfortunately, the manuscript of Nasonov's work has remained out of my reach.

³⁹² In cooperation with Soviet Orientalists, the historian of Russian feudalism Sergei V. Bakhrushin edited the first version of the *History of Peoples of Uzbekistan (Istoriia narodov Uzbekistana, 2 vols*, eds. S.V. Bakhrushin et al. (Tashkent, 1947, 1950).

³⁹³ For memoirs on the historical landscape of early Soviet Central Asia see: M.E. Masson, *Iz vospominanii sredneaziatskogo arkheologa* (Tashkent, 1976).

almost none of the evacuated scholars continued with Central Asian studies after the war. Nevertheless, their temporary occupation with the history of Central Asian republics had very serious consequences for local scholarship.

Like Nasonov, before the evacuation also Anna Pankratova's scientific interests were far remote from Kazakh history. Being a child of a working family and an active participant in the revolutionary movement, Pankratova obtained her education at the historical faculty of Odessa University and then at the Moscow Institute of Red Professors, from which she graduated in 1925.³⁹⁴ In Moscow Anna Mikhailovna's historical views were heavily influenced by the famous historian Mikhail Pokrovskii (1868-1932), who in his writings preached internationalism and denounced the chauvinism of Russian historiography and the colonial character of the Russian Empire. The increasing criticism of Pokrovskii and his historical school began in 1936 and also affected Pankratova: "she was dismissed from her MGU professorship in spring 1937 and was exiled to Saratov,"³⁹⁵ where she worked at the University. In 1938-40 Pankratova was forced to publish articles attacking her former teacher Pokrovskii. In 1940 she was called back to Moscow. Pankratova's writings show that she was an orthodox Marxist historian and of course not a professional Orientalist. Instead, Pankratova's scientific interests revolved around the history of the labor movement and the first Russian Revolution of 1905-1907. These were classical topics of Soviet historiography, closely connected to the official ideology. Due to her skills and proudly pronounced party membership, Pankratova eventually enjoyed strong administrative authority as an academician, as the vice director of the Moscow Institute of History (1939-52) and as the chief editor of its official journal *Questions of History* (*Voprosy istorii*) in 1953-57. However, as Reginald E. Zelnik, one of Pankratova's biographers, puts it, "during her professional career she was dethroned and restored more than once."³⁹⁶

³⁹⁴ The Institute of Red Professors (*Institut krasnoi professury*) was established by the Soviet government in 1921. It was a governmental school for party officials and for lecturers in the humanities. In 1921-1931 Mikhail N. Pokrovskii, a famous Marxist historian, served as director of this organization. M. S. Fox, "Political Culture, Purges, and Proletarianization at the Institute of Red Professors, 1921-1929," *The Russian Review*, 52 (January 1993), 20-42.

³⁹⁵ Reginald E. Zelnik, *Perils of Pankratova. Some Stories from the Annals of Soviet Historiography* (Seattle and London, 2005), 23.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 12. Other accounts on Pankratova's life included: *Zhenshchiny-revoliutsionery i uchenye*, ed. by I.I. Mints and A.P. Nenarokov (Moscow, 1982), 5-80; *Istoriik i vremia: 20-50-e gody XX veka. A.M. Pankratova*, ed. by Iu. S. Kukushkin, Iu.I. Kir'ianov, et al. (Moscow, 2000).

During evacuation Pankratova initiated and directed the writing of the first Soviet history of one individual republic, the Kazakh SSR.³⁹⁷ The presence of scholars evacuated to Alma-Ata allowed Pankratova to invite such specialists as Boris D. Grekov, Nikolai M. Druzhinin, Mikhail P. Viatkin, Ermukhan B. Bekmakhanov and Aleksandr N. Bernshtam into the authors' collective. They started writing during evacuation in Alma-Ata in 1941. This book, the *History of Kazakh SSR*, appeared in 1943, with Anna Pankratova as chief editor.³⁹⁸

It is both easy and difficult to analyze this collective monograph because footnotes and references are lacking altogether, except for the classics of Marxism: it was clearly presupposed that the reader would take its narrative as self-evident. We can only guess which parts of the text were written by whom and on the basis of which sources. What distinguishes this book from previous works is its strong stress on the role of city civilization, and that a debate of the nomadic life style is carefully avoided;³⁹⁹ this peculiarity and innovation might go back to Aleksandr N. Bernshtam, who had already spent considerable time with archeological work in Kazakhstan before WWII.⁴⁰⁰ Bernshtam contributed a lot to the change of the Soviet discourse from the nomadic conception of Asfendiiarov and Viatkin to the theory of a syncretism of settled and nomadic civilizations. Bernshtam distinguished two cultural areas in Kazakhstan, i.e. South and North, since the epoch of the Qarakhanid dynasty in the 10th-13th centuries.⁴⁰¹ I assume that he chose the Qarakhanids as a watershed because Islam became the official religion in the time of this dynasty. The evaluation of Islam in the 1943 *History of the Kazakh SSR* is still negative, and the authors stated that both the central and the northern territories of Kazakhstan had not been subject to Islamic

³⁹⁷ A. M. Pankratova, "Osnovnye voprosy istorii Kazakhskoi SSR," in: *Bol'shevik Kazakhstana*, 10 (1943), 22-24.

³⁹⁸ *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei* (Alma-Ata, 1943).

³⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 61.

⁴⁰⁰ More details see in the fourth chapter.

⁴⁰¹ *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei* (Alma-Ata, 1943), 91. The Qarakhanid state (991-1209) was located in the Eastern Turkestan and Semirech'e. This dynasty had a significant role in the process of Islamization of Southern Kazakhstan. Boris Kochnev was a leading specialist in Qarakhanid studies. See his posthumously published book: B. D. Kochnev, *Numizmaticheskaia istoriia Karakhanidskogo Kaganata (991-1209)* (Moscow, 2006).

influence before the Mongols.⁴⁰² This was perhaps a result of archeological investigations: archeologists did not find any trace of Islamic cultural presence in the 10th-13th centuries.

We do not know who authored it, but the book contained the first description of the Muslim scholars Abū Naṣr Muḥammad al-Fārābī (873-950) and Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī (1029-1101) as symbols of Kazakh cultural heritage: “In the cities of Southern Kazakhstan scholarship appeared in the 10th century... Al-Fārābī worked at the court of the caliphs of Baghdad, but by his origin he was a Turk from the city of Otrar on the Sir Darya River.”⁴⁰³ The national identity of these scholars was not discussed in detail; they were simply linked up with the territory of the modern Kazakh SSR.

Furthermore, the authors postulated a single (not plural) Kazakh state which was allegedly established in the 15th-16th centuries. Probably they intended to demonstrate a long history of Kazakh statehood, not a complex sequence of state development in the Steppe (i.e. several Khanates). According to the authors, the Kazakh Hordes of later centuries resulted from the sign of fragmentation (*razdroblennost'*) and split-up of the Kazakh khanate in the 16th century.⁴⁰⁴

The *History of the Kazakh Republic* of 1943 met with a lot of critique, as we will see below; still, the book established a tradition of writing large series of national histories. In the following, similar works appeared on the history of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan.⁴⁰⁵ The production of these volumes was also accompanied by serious debates around the question of regional and national approaches and concerning the issue how to divide the common cultural heritage. The variant of the Uzbek history partially written by Aleksandr Semenov,⁴⁰⁶ who was a ‘Bartol’ dist’, was harshly criticized, and a new version was published under redaction of Aleksandr Iakubovskii.⁴⁰⁷ Significantly, some Oriental-

⁴⁰² *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei* (Alma-Ata, 1943), 71.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 94-108.

⁴⁰⁵ B.G. Gafurov, *Kratkaia istoriia tadzhikskogo naroda* (Stalinabad, 1947); *Istoriia narodov Uzbekistana*, ed. by S.V. Bakhrushin, A.Iu. Iakubovskii, et al., 2 vols. (Tashkent, 1947-1950); *Istoriia Turkmenskoi SSR*, ed. by M.E. Masson, vols. 1-2 (Ashkhabad, 1957). Cf.: Subtelny, “The Symbiosis of Turk and Tajik,” 53-54.

⁴⁰⁶ *Istoriia narodov Uzbekistana*, vol. 2. *Ot obrazovaniia gosudarstva Sheibanidov do Velikoi oktiabr'skoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii*, ed. by S.N. Bakhrushin (Tashkent, 1947).

⁴⁰⁷ S.N. Abashin, “Ethnogenesis and Historiography: Historical Narratives for Central Asia, 1940s-1950s” (forthcoming).

ists of the Leningrad school who had actively participated in the projects of source editions since the 1930s also played key roles in preparing and debating these new national histories of Central Asia.

2.8. Discussions around Kazakh History: The Late 1940s-1950s

The first edition of the 1943 history of the Kazakh republic became a subject of strong criticism because it evaluated the Russian Tsarist colonialism not as the 'lesser evil', according to the previously prevalent evaluation supported by Stalin, but as an ultimate evil.⁴⁰⁸ Also the time and circumstances of the formation of the Kazakh nationality (*narodnost'*) were among the most debated issues. A certain M. Morozov, in a review on the 1943 edition of the *History of Kazakh SSR* published in the Party journal *Bol'shevik*,⁴⁰⁹ drew on several 'mistakes' of the authors of the book, mainly focusing on its positive evaluation of the "Kazakh national-liberation movements" and its rejection of Russian colonialism. According to Morozov, the authors did not use Marxist methodology and did not understand the characteristics of socio-economic development in the Kazakh steppes. Interestingly, Morozov repeated several Tsarist-time stereotypes on the history of nomads. First of all, he rejected the assumption that a Kazakh state came into being after, and partly as a result of, the thirteenth-century Mongol invasion. In Morozov's eyes, the Mongols only "destroyed many cities, the agriculture of Central Asia, and killed thousands of people."⁴¹⁰ Morozov evaluated the nomadic state very strictly: "In reality, in the 15th-18th centuries there were only rudimental forms of a Kazakh state, which did not become centralized. The Kazakh state appeared and developed on a rather low level of economy and culture." Nomadic life style was presented by Morozov as a regressive form of economy which prevented further development. Therefore, the Russian annexation of the Kazakh steppes was a progressive act, because Russia was "much more civilized than Asian states."⁴¹¹ Morozov's arguments were supported by Tolstov in his 1944 article where he claimed that there was no other

⁴⁰⁸ Weinerman, "The Polemics between Moscow and Central Asians," 429-481.

⁴⁰⁹ M. Morozov, "Ob istorii 'Kazakhskoi SSR'," *Bol'shevik*, 6 (1945), 28-35. See also: L. Tillet, *The Great Friendship*, 80-81.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 33.

way for the Kazakh people but to be included in the Russian Empire.⁴¹² Of course, this argumentation shows clearly that the Soviets to a large degree perpetuated the concept of Russia's 'civilizing mission' of the 19th century, because in their view it was solely the Russians who brought modernization to Central Asia, pushing it onto a new stage of social-economic development.

The 1943 book was meant to prove that the Kazakh people were not barbaric. It revealed a serious level of political, economic, and cultural development in the region prior to Russian colonization. This postulate along with the description of the Russian invasion as a form of colonization became the focus of harsh critique. In summer 1944, on the initiative of Anna Pankratova herself, the Central Committee of the Communist Party convened a meeting on historical issues. Pankratova wanted to strengthen her positions within the Soviet historical scholarship and sent several letters to the Central Committee of the CP asking to solve the questions debated by historians, namely the estimation of the Tsarist past and national movements. Pankratova also wanted to have a Party feedback to the first experience of collective national history writing. Pankratova's critique focused on the 'chauvinistic' historians who thought the Russian military conquest of Central Asia was legitimate (E.V. Tarle, B.D. Grekov). However, the reaction of the Party bosses was the opposite. The meeting of fifty leading historians was led by the Central Committee secretaries of A.S. Shcherbakov, A.A. Andreev and G.M. Malenkov. They did not agree with Pankratova's view on the Russian conquest as 'an absolute evil' and blamed her for idealizing the Kazakh past.⁴¹³ Sergei Tolstov, who was also criticizing Gafurov's 1944 book on Tajik history, for similar reasons, loathed the Kazakh narrative for its alleged anti-Russian inclination and recommended that all questions that go beyond the history of a particular republic should in the future be discussed in a centralized way.⁴¹⁴ The *History of the Kazakh SSR* included a section by Mikhail Viatkin on Kenesary Kasymov's national movement (1837-1847), which Viatkin evaluated as a progressive demarche against the Tsarist invasion. Given Stalin's support of Russian nationalism in WWII and afterwards, such a

⁴¹² S.P. Tostov, "Istoricheskie korni druzhby narodov SSSR [1944]," *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 5 (2007), 159.

⁴¹³ "Novye dokumenty o soveshchanii istorikov v TsK VKP(b) (1944 g.)," *Voprosy istorii* 1 (1991), 189-190.

⁴¹⁴ S.S. Alymov, "Na puti k 'Drevnei istorii narodov SSSR'," 141-142; "Novye dokumenty," 188-205; "Stenogramma soveshchaniia po voprosam istorii SSSR v TsVKP(b) v 1944," in: *Voprosy istorii* 5-6 (1996), 84-90.

claim was now interpreted as harmful; the book was termed ‘anti-Russian’⁴¹⁵ and mandated to be re-written. The main reason for attack on Pankratova was that she ambioned on the role in historical science that the Party and Stalin personally regarded as their prerogative. Though Pankratova ‘confessed’ her mistakes, she had to leave her post of the deputy director of the Moscow Institute of History. No further repression was implemented, she “truly had nine lives.”⁴¹⁶

On 1 April 1948 the project of the second edition of the book was discussed at a meeting of the Sector of the Pre-Nineteenth Century History of the Soviet Union of the Moscow Institute of History of the USSR Academy of Sciences. The atmosphere of the discussion was politically tense: the influence of Iakubovskii’s dogmatic brochure on Uzbek ethnogenesis can be felt in almost any speech at the conference. The Moscow historian Serafim Iushkov (1888-1952), who had also been evacuated to Alma-Ata and for a short time even served as the first director of the Alma-Ata Institute of History (1946-48),⁴¹⁷ stated that the process of the formation of the Kazakh nationality began during the Turkic Kaganate in the 6th-7th centuries. Iushkov followed the view that the nomadic societies were feudal in character; the appearance of feudal relations in the Qarakhanid Khanate enforced the Kazakh ethnogenesis. The Mongol invasion in the first half of the 13th century was also regarded as a step towards the consolidation of the Kazakh tribes, which were included into the Great Mongol Empire. Iushkov even referred to “our” linguists (without mentioning names) who believed that the Kazakh language appeared already in the 13th-14th centuries.⁴¹⁸ However — and in this aspect Iakubovskii’s influence is obvious — Iushkov also stated that the newly appeared nationality of that time did not yet develop under the name of Qazaq. Just like Iakubovskii did with respect to the Uzbeks, Iushkov claimed that it is necessary to distinguish between the time of nationality formation and the time when the ethnic name appeared. Iushkov concluded that eventually the Kazakh na-

⁴¹⁵ Reginald E. Zelnik, *Perils of Pankratova*, 40.

⁴¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁴¹⁷ “Iushkov Serafim Vladimirovich,” in: *Qazaqstannyngh tarikh ghylymy: Sh.Sh. Valikhanov atyndaghy Tarikh zhene etnologiiia institutynyngh 60-zhyldyghyna amalady* (Almaty, 2005), 333-334.

⁴¹⁸ Someone corrected it by pen into “the 14th-15th centuries”.

tionality appeared in the 15th-16th centuries, i.e. only with the creation of the centralized Kazakh state. The united Kazakh Khanate was established by Qasim Khan (1455-1523).⁴¹⁹

In 1941 historian Mikhail P. Viatkin, the author of the sketches of the Kazakh history that we have discussed above, had put it the other way around: first the Kazakh Khanate emerged and only then the nationality slowly appeared, i.e. after the 16th century. Another position was held by historian Viktor Shakhmatov (1908-1964),⁴²⁰ who claimed that in the 15th-16th centuries various nationalities of Central Asia appeared from similar tribal components of the Dasht-i Qipchāq and that originally the Kazakh people spoke “the old Uzbek language, i.e. Chaghatay.”⁴²¹

Another issue which was discussed briefly is the possibility of using Vladimirtsov’s conception of nomadic feudalism. The specialists did not come to an agreement in this question. Savelii L. Fuks (1900-1976), a historian of Kazakh law,⁴²² suggested at the 1948 conference to avoid a mechanic borrowing of this concept, because Vladimirtsov did not claim that nomadic feudalism existed in all nomadic societies. By contrast, Nikolai Ustiugov (1896-1963), a Moscow historian of socio-economic relations in seventeenth- to nineteenth-centuries Russia, stated that the existence of nomadic feudalism in medieval Kazakh society was obvious. Ustiugov claimed that the redaction committee or certain authors of the book were against Vladimirtsov’s conception, but that they did not provide any arguments for their opposition. They just disregarded the possibility of using the concept of nomadic feudalism, elaborated on the Mongol material, for their investigation of Kazakh history.⁴²³

These debates had a certain connection to the notorious ‘struggle against cosmopolitanism,’ which came up as a witch-hunt in the late Stalin period in 1948-53. One important

⁴¹⁹ OVN KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 42, Sv. 3, *Stenogramma zasedaniia sektora istorii SSSR do XIX veka Instituta istorii Akademii nauk SSSR po obsuzhdeniiu glav “Istorii Kazakhskoi SSR”, ot 1 apreliia 1948*, ff. 5-7.

⁴²⁰ “Shakhmatov Viktor Fedorovich,” in: *Qazaqstannyng tarikh ghylymy*, 538-539.

⁴²¹ OVN KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 42, Sv. 3, *Stenogramma zasedaniia sektora istorii SSSR do XIX veka Instituta istorii Akademii nauk SSSR po obsuzhdeniiu glav “Istorii Kazakhskoi SSR”, ot 1 apreliia 1948*, f. 37.

⁴²² S.L. Fuks, *Obychnoe pravo kazakhov v XVIII – pervoi polovine XIX veka* (Alma-Ata, 1981). This doctoral dissertation by Fuks was defended in 1948, but was published only as late as in 1981, due to the efforts of a Kazakh scholar Salyk Z. Zimanov.

⁴²³ OVA KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 39a, Sv. 2, *Zamechaniia ko vtoromu izdaniuu istorii KazSSR, 1948 god*, f. 3.

example, concerning Uzbek national history, should be taken into account. On 21-27 April 1949 there was a discussion at the meeting of the Department of Humanities of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR between adherents of the regional approach ('Bartol'dists', now under suspicion of being 'cosmopolitans') and of the Soviet national approach. Among the main speakers at the meeting were: the Director of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Uzbek SSR Academy of Sciences, V.Iu. Zakhidov, the Director of the Uzbek Institute of History and Archeology R.N. Nabiev, the Iranist A.A. Semenov, the Arabist M.A. Sal'e as well as the historian I.I. Umniakov and L.I. Klimovich, a major authority in Soviet anti-Islamic propaganda and by that time making himself a name of a specialist in literatures of the Soviet Orient.⁴²⁴

Vakhid Iu. Zakhidov (1914-?) provided the main report criticizing the research methods of V.V. Bartol'd, E.E. Bertel's, A.A. Semenov and others who studied the culture of Central Asian peoples in the context of the great Persian culture. These authors were blamed for their misrepresentation of history, and for their denial to regard the Uzbek, Tajik etc. literatures as self-sufficient and independent of Persian models.⁴²⁵ Even though Bertel's actively participated in the celebration of Nizāmī (1141-1202) as an Azerbaijani poet in 1938 (probably, Bertel's' previous political imprisonments made him careful enough to follow the Party line), in his 1948 article on Persian literature in Central Asia he still had attempted to explain that "Persian literature, although it is a multiple [phenomenon], is one integral whole."⁴²⁶ He also had claimed that there were no special national literatures: "each attempt of studying the literature of only one certain territory inevitably leads to wrong interpretations and to the creation of abstract conceptions that lack any foundation."⁴²⁷ Similar ideas were provided by Iranist A.A. Semenov who in his 1945 investigation of the history of Central Asian architecture detected strong Iranian influences.⁴²⁸ This work was edited and supported by Babadzhan Gafurov, at that time First

⁴²⁴ About him: M. Kemper, "Ljucian Klimovich: Der ideologische Bluthund der sowjetischen Islamkunde und Zentralasienliteratur," in: *Asiatische Studien* LXIII 1 (2009), 93-133.

⁴²⁵ *O marksistsko-leninskom osveshchenii istorii i istorii kul'tury narodov Uzbekistana, Stenograficheskii otchet rasshirennogo zasedaniia otdeleniia gumanitarnykh nauk AN Uzb. SSR, 21-27 apreliia 1949* (Tashkent, 1951), 16-19.

⁴²⁶ E.E. Bertel's, "Persidskaia literatura v Srednei Azii," in *Sovetskoe vostokovedenie*, 5 (1948), 200.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 202.

⁴²⁸ A.A. Semenov, *Material'nye pamiatniki iranskoj kul'tury v Srednei Azii* (Stalinabad, 1945).

Secretary of the Tajik Communist Party Branch, who two years later himself provided a Tajik interpretation of Central Asian history.⁴²⁹

According to Semenov, all significant architectural monuments of Islamic Central Asia had been built by Arians. On the Tashkent meeting, all these claims of ‘Bartol’ dists’ were strongly criticized by V.Iu. Zakhidov as manifestations of cosmopolitanism. Again, following Iakubovskii’s pattern, Zakhidov stated that the Uzbeks were the indigenous population of Central Asia and one of the most ancient peoples of the region. In his own words, “The cosmopolitan thesis of the Iranian character of Central Asian history, their neglect of the history of [the indigenous] Central Asian population, their tendency to disregard their culture and to attribute it to Iranians, Turks, and Arabs, their ignorance of the beneficial Russian influence and its progressive culture; Pan-Iranism, Pan-Turkism, and Pan-Islamism — all of these are very serious political dangers, because they mean an orientation on the feudal states of Iran, Turkey, and other countries whose governments sold their homelands to American and English imperialists and turned them into military bridgeheads against the Soviet Union.”⁴³⁰

These were very heavy charges that could lead to serious consequences. Therefore both Bertel’s, whose position was discussed at the Institute of Oriental Studies in the same year of 1949,⁴³¹ and Semenov ‘confessed’ to their colleagues that they had committed such mistakes. Indeed, Bertel’s did not return to his ideas anymore. Semenov, on the contrary, said that he understood that he misinterpreted Central Asian history, but at the same time he brilliantly uncovered the incompetence of his opponents in concrete facts, such as the level of centralization in the Mongol states and the role of Khwāja Ahrār in Ulūghbek’s murder. Moreover, in his reply to Zakhidov, Aleksandr Semenov just replaced the words “Iranian” or “Persian” by other terms: “The art on the territory [of present-day] Uzbekistan and Tajikistan existed a long time before the Arab invasion. (...) Central Asian peoples

⁴²⁹ B.G. Gafurov, *Istoriia tadzhikskogo naroda v kratkom izlozhenii* (Dushanbe, 1949). There is nothing surprising in the fact that the recent English translation of Gafurov’s books was entitled as: B.G. Gafurov, *Central Asia: Pre-Historic to Pre-Modern Times*, 2 vols. (Kolkata, 2005), re-thinking the title of Gafurov’s *opus magnum* in a regional context.

⁴³⁰ *O marksistsko-leninskom osveshchenii*, 41. Cf.: A.O. Tamazishvili, “Posleslovie [k publikatsii doklada B.N. Zakhodera “E.E. Bertel’s”],” in *Iranistika v Rossii i iranisty* (Moscow, 2001), 185-186.

⁴³¹ A.O. Tamazishvili, “Iz istorii izucheniiia v SSSR tvorchestva Nizami Giandzhevi: vokrug iubileia – E.E. Bertel’s, I.V. Stalin i drugie,” in V.V. Naumkin (ed.), *Neizvestnye stranitsy otechestvennogo vostokovedeniia*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 2004), 192-193.

had their own scripts; especially the *Soghdian script* (italics is mine – A.B.) enjoyed wide circulation.”⁴³² Clear enough that his words “art” and “scripts” were meant to refer to the Iranian-speaking population. It is also important to mention here that Semenov referred to the opinion of “several of our scholars, such as Struve, Tolstov, Ptitsyn and others that Zoroastrianism, the epic of *Shāh-nāme*, and the Modern Persian language were created and [for the first time] appeared on the territory of Central Asia, and the Iranian people only adopted this culture [for Central Asia].”⁴³³ What he was doing here was putting the issue on its head — not Central Asia copied Iranian models, but Iran copied Central Asian culture. In this regard Semenov did not invent something new, he just repeated what Iakubovskii had stated shortly before, in 1950: “The peoples of Central Asia possess priority in the invention of the [so-called] ‘Iranian’ art, epic literature, architecture, and other aspects of cultural life.”⁴³⁴ This was an acceptable way of treating the role of Persian civilization in Central Asia. Such a claim was not regarded as nationalism, but rather as a patriotic point of view.

These debates did not find an echo in the Kazakh republic, even though in the meantime some scholars (for example, Alkei Kh. Margulan for his monograph on the Kazakh cities) were also punished for their ‘wrong perceptions of history’ and ‘nationalist approaches’. In the 1940s-50s nobody seriously discussed the role of Persian and Arabic civilization in Kazakh history, because scholars were more interested in the 14th-17th centuries when presumably the first Kazakh states were formed. The Islamic and Chinese sources, which formed the basis for any investigation, were helpful in studying that period.

In the same year of 1949 the second version of Pankratova’s Kazakh national historical narrative was published.⁴³⁵ Again, it was prepared by a collective of authors in close collaboration between specialists from Moscow, Leningrad and Alma-Ata. In the meantime an Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences had been established (1946). Since the very beginning it had close relations with

⁴³² *O marksistsko-leninskom osveshchenii*, 61-62.

⁴³³ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁴³⁴ A.Iu. Iakubovskii, “Zhivopis’ drevnego Piandzhikenta,” in: *Izvestiia AN SSSR, Serii istorii i filosofii* 7 (1950), 5.

⁴³⁵ *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishchikh vremen do nashikh dnei, vtoroe izdanie, ispravlennoe i dopolnennoe*, 2 vols. Ed. by I.O. Omarov and A.M. Pankratova (Alma-Ata, 1949).

colleagues from Leningrad and Moscow. As mentioned above, Mikhail Viatkin visited the Institute in Alma-Ata several times and reviewed the work that had been done there. Personal and strong institutional ties played an important role in the renewed formulation of the main points of the 1943 book. Among the authors of the new edition were Mukhtar Auezov, Ermukhan Bekmakhanov, Aleksandr Bernshtam, Mikhail Viatkin, Nikolai Druzhinin and others. It is important to mention that the first volume, which dealt with pre-revolutionary history, was produced in consultation with Aleksandr Iakubovskii.⁴³⁶ This fact set the tone of the whole treatment. The authors referred to the large experience of prerevolutionary Orientalists and to sources recently published by the Leningrad school, including Tizengauzen's second volume of materials on the Golden Horde's history and collections of sources on various republics, published in the 1930s. The entire book represented the history of the Kazakh SSR since times immemorial as a place of interaction between Turkic and Mongol tribes, with the latter gradually being assimilated by the Turkic ethnic component. Bartol'd was shown as a scholar who overestimated the role and influence of Persian culture in Central Asia and in particular on the territory of the future Kazakh republic.⁴³⁷ In response to their previous ideological mistakes, the authors acknowledged in the second edition that in the first edition they overstressed the significance and importance of the Khans as rulers of centralized Kazakh states that emerged and developed in the 15th-18th centuries. The level of centralization of the local statehood was now depicted as considerably low, because this was crucial for justifying Russian colonization; Russian conquest was the force that ultimately united the dispersed Kazakh tribes and brought them the light of a better life.

The first volume of the 1949 edition begins with the Upper Paleolithic era, to which were attributed the first steps of humankind on the future Kazakh territory. The formation of the nomadic life-style was traced back to the society known as the Andronovo archeological culture (Rus., *andronovskaia kul'tura*) of the 14th-9th centuries BC. Since that time nomadism had been a key feature of tribes in the region that "formed the core of the Kazakh people."⁴³⁸ However, it was claimed all the time that since ancient times some

⁴³⁶ Ibid., vol. 1, 16.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 30.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 49. This was a clear contradiction to Viatkin's thesis that the Andronovo archeological culture was an agricultural one (M. Viatkin, *Ocherki po istorii*, 25).

groups, especially in South Kazakhstan, practiced agriculture. No explanation was given for this special way of development of this region and its relation to the more southern lands, Transoxania. Indeed, even though there were clear references to the nomadic past of the Kazakhs and their predecessors, almost the whole historical narrative that followed in the book concentrated on the settled regions of Sir Darya and of Semirech'e. These lands were better known from the published sources and from systematic Soviet archeological investigations that had just started.

Even though Bartol'd was blamed for his Pan-Iranism, the authors repeated their statement that it were Iranian-speaking Soghdians who were at the core of economic life of the Turkic Kaganate (again, on the southern territories). The Qarakhanid State (10th-13th c.) in Semirech'e was claimed to be the first state of feudal type in the region. The ruling dynasty originated from a Turkic tribe and accepted Islam early. The authors' evaluation of Islam remained the same: it "spread only among the elite of southern Kazakhstan, while central and northern Kazakhstan were beyond Islamic influence."⁴³⁹ This means that the south-north binary opposition was kept in the second edition. Al-Fārābī, Yūsuf Balāsaghūnī, Maḥmūd Qāshgharī, and Aḥmad Yasawī were counted among the cultural symbols that were tied to the Kazakh history, and again all of them came from the south.⁴⁴⁰ As a result, Northern Kazakhstan appears as a blank spot. Curiously enough, the authors distinguished between two dimensions in Sufism, namely those Sufis who served only the aristocracy and those who shared the fate of the oppressed masses. According to the Soviet analysis of the *Diwān-i Hikmat*, a collection of Turkic verses ascribed to Aḥmad Yasawī by Soviet scholarship⁴⁴¹, Aḥmad Yasawī belonged to the latter group of Sufis and therefore could be celebrated as part of Kazakh history.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 1 (Alma-Ata, 1949), 79-80.

⁴⁴⁰ Arienne Dwyer regards the competition of the Soviet nations for cultural symbols as "overlapping identities"; "for example, the Uzbeks, Uyghurs, and Kyrgyz all claim Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī, the well-known 11th century scholar, as their own." In the 1980s there were a number of Uighur translations of works by Yūsuf Balāsaghūnī and Maḥmūd Qāshgharī. See: A.M. Dwyer, *The Xinjiang Conflict: Uyghur Identity, Language Policy, and Political Discourse* (Washington, 2005), 30, 46-47.

⁴⁴¹ On the questionable ascription of these verses to Ahmad Yasawī, and on the Soviet interpretation of this figure: D. DeWeese, "Ahmad Yasawī and the *Divan-i hikmat* in the Soviet scholarship," in: Kemper & Conermann (eds.), *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies*, 262-290.

⁴⁴² *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR* (Alma-Ata, 1949), 81.

The invasion of the ‘barbarian’ Mongol tribes in the early 13th century was regarded as a mere disaster. They destroyed many cities of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, including those along the river of Sir Darya. The denial of any positive effect of Central Asia’s inclusion into the Mongol Empire became a dogma and shaped all Soviet studies on the topic: “The sudden reduction of agricultural and settled civilization and the spread of nomadism were the main economical consequences of the Mongol conquest. The Mongol yoke [sic!] was harmful for the economies of Kazakhstan and terminated its historical progress. For a long time the processes of Kazakh ethnogenesis and formation of statehood ceased. The Tatar-Mongols brought to Central Asia and Kazakhstan nothing but destruction and oppression.”⁴⁴³ These claims were supported by reports from written sources about the conquest and by similar opinions expressed by some Soviet scholars, including Boris Grekov with regard to the Mongol campaigns against Russian lands. On the one hand this dogma reflected the limited amount of research done at that time (for example, numismatic materials were not used at all), but, on the other, it reflected the general aim to show the advantage of the settled way of life over nomadic societies. Cattle-breeders, according to the official historical narrative, caused danger to their neighbors, did not have any written history, and their states were characterized by pre-feudal unstable formations. Needless to say, the use of the terms “Mongol yoke” and “Tatar-Mongols” (which does not make sense for Central Asia at all) are clearly derived from nineteenth century Russian views of the Mongol period.⁴⁴⁴

Of special interest was the question how the name of a Khan of the Golden Horde, Uzbek (1283-1341), was turned into the name of a people. First his name was given to the political entity which existed in the Kazakh steppes in the 15th century. In full agreement with Iakubovskii’s concept of ethnogenesis, the authors of the Kazakh national history claimed that the Uzbek Khanate was not named after any nationality which inhabited it, but rather after the name of the 14th century ruler.⁴⁴⁵ Moreover it was postulated that the

⁴⁴³ Ibid., 95.

⁴⁴⁴ M. Bilz-Leonhardt, “Deconstructing the Myth of the Tatar Yoke,” *Central Asian Survey* 27 (2008), 33-43; C.J. Halperin, “Kliuchevskii and the Tatar Yoke,” *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 34.4 (2000), 385-408; id., “Soviet Historiography on Russia and the Mongols,” *Russian Review* 41 (1982), 306-322.

⁴⁴⁵ *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 1 (Alma-Ata, 1949), 104. In greater details the question of the origin of poliethnoname *Uzbek* was studied later by Aleksandr A. Semenov in his article “K voprosu o proiskhozhdenii i sostave uzbekov Sheibani-khana,” *Trudy Akademii Nauk Tadzhikskoi SSR*, vol. 12 (1953), 3-37.

Uzbeks as a nationality emerged not in Uzbekistan but in what was is now Kazakhstan, and that the Kazakhs emerged on lands with nomadic economies.⁴⁴⁶

Another topic is related to Uzbek Khan's ambition to make Islam the "official religion" in the Golden Horde which supposedly happened in 1320.⁴⁴⁷ As in all other cases when talking about the history of Islam, it was mentioned that the Islamic religion spread slowly, and only among the highest ranks of the aristocracy. In present-day Kazakhstan the spread of Islam was limited to the southern regions. Islam spread due to the activity of merchants and to military efforts by rulers. These claims showed the tendency to neglect Islam as a serious socioeconomic force — not only in the past, but also in contemporary Soviet society. The remnants of the feudal past, such as the nomadic way of life and the Islamic religion, symbolized the backwardness against which the Soviet regime fought so obstinately.⁴⁴⁸ Very symptomatic is the following quote from the 1949 *History*: "As the Kazakhs were less bound to the religious rules of Islam, they were freer to express their talents in poetry, music, and arts."⁴⁴⁹

One might expect that as the southern regions were better known from Oriental written sources and were well-developed, then Kazakh statehood and nationhood should have appeared there. Yet instead, the authors claimed that it were the central and western regions of Kazakhstan with their Qipchaq populations that became the birthplace of Kazakh identity. This is surprising, because the Qipchaq tribes were characterized in the book as

⁴⁴⁶ *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 1 (Alma-Ata, 1949), 109.

⁴⁴⁷ The St. Petersburg historian Aleksandr Iurchenko implacably opposed this theory, claiming that Uzbek Khan remained infidel. However, Uzbek Khan's foreign politics, reflected in Mamluk sources, suggest the opposite. See: A.G. Iurchenko, *Khan Uzbek: Mezhdū imperiei i islamom. Struktury povsednevnosti. Knigakonspekt* (St. Petersburg, 2012). Arabic authors narrated how Mamluk Egypt celebrated the Islamization of the Golden Horde. See: D. Aigle, "Le grand jasaq de Gengis-Khan, l'empire, la culture mongole et la shari'a," in *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, vol. 47, no. 1 (2004), 31-79; id., "Loi mongole vs loi islamique. Entre mythe et réalit ," in *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales*, 2004/5 59e ann e, 971-996; M. Favereau-Doumenjou, *La Horde d'Or de 1377   1502: aux sources d'un si cle "sans histoire"*, PhD Thesis (Paris, 2004).

⁴⁴⁸ This situation contributed to the decline of Islamology in the Soviet Union, and to the questionable theory of 'Islamic-Pagan syncretism,' and of a presumed dualism of 'official and non-official Islam' in Soviet ethnography. For a critique of these dogmas see: B.M. Babadzhanov, "Novshestvo (bid'at) – khudshee iz zabluzhdenii?" Fetishizatsiia ritual'noi praktiki glazami kokandskikh avtorov XIX veka," in *Pax Islamica*, 1/4 (2010), 36-41; V.O. Bobrovnikov, "Sovieticum vs. Islamicum: nekotorye itogi i perspektivy izucheniia islama v Rossii," in *Vestnik Evrazii*, 3/ 37 (2007), 8-21; D. DeWeese, "Islam and the Legacy of Sovietology: a Review Essay on Yaacov Roi's Islam in the Soviet Union," in *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2002/ 3 (13), 298-330.

⁴⁴⁹ *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR* (Alma-Ata, 1949), 158.

those without cities and written culture.⁴⁵⁰ The Qipchaqs' historical memory was represented as nothing but folklore.

When describing the separation of the first Kazakh Khans Janibek and Giray from the rule of Uzbek Khan Abu'l-Khayr, and their emigration from the Dasht-i Qipchāq to Eastern Turkestan in the 1450s, the authors of the Kazakh history did not claim that the emigrating population formed the first Kazakh state, but rather that the trek was only an important step towards the later formation of a united Kazakh state in the 16th century.⁴⁵¹ This artificial delay aimed to attack the opinion that the strong Kazakh state appeared as early as in the 15th century and that this 'emigration' (*otkochevka*) is a sign of state-building. Just like in the first edition of the *History of the Kazakh SSR*, it is not clear which particular authors were responsible for these statements.

The appearance of the Kazakh nationality was referred to the following 16th century and "not earlier", because it was in the early 1500s that the Uzbeks of Shaybānī Khān conquered cities of Transoxania and moved from Kazakhstan in southern direction. It was only in the 16th century, in this conception, that a clear economical distinction between Kazakh nomads and Uzbek farmers (more precisely – settling nomads) crystallized. This turned out to be almost a colonial narrative, since the authors claimed that the 'peculiar' form of Kazakh society lay in the absence of cities and in illiteracy, and in a low level of economic development and in nomadism. In fact, the authors of the book just repeated what had been suggested by M. Morozov in his review on the first version of the History: "In the 15th-18th centuries there were only the basic forms of Kazakh statehood. (...) Nomadic life style supported the remnants of the patriarchal system, broke the feudal development, and caused the relatively slow progress among the Kazakhs."⁴⁵² This had been written against the 1943 edition, and probably in particular against archeologist Aleksandr Bernshtam⁴⁵³ who emphasized the existence of medieval city civilization on the territory of the Kazakh SSR. During the campaign against cosmopolitanism in the early 1950s the topic itself became an issue for repression against those Kazakhstani scholars who agreed with Bernshtam's

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid., 104-105.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 111.

⁴⁵² M. Morozov, "Ob istorii Kazakhskoi SSR," 31.

⁴⁵³ *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei* (Alma-Ata, 1943), 61.

views, as we will see in the last chapter. The pathos of this tendency is clear: destiny had it that it was the Russians who brought the Kazakhs from the darkness of their nomadic past to the light of socialist modernization. Therefore the Russian presence in the Kazakh steppe was more than justified.

In conclusion, the second edition of the Kazakh national history was a complete rejection of the first edition, and a return to and strengthening of the nomadic concept, which represented the Kazakhs as a backward people in need of foreign help for further development. According to this narrative, there was almost nothing in the Kazakh medieval history that could be useful in the future. The authors of the first edition were not purged: they just changed their minds and rewrote the historical narrative in a way suitable to the state. This situation (just like Asfendiiarov's radical change of opinion in 1935) demonstrates that the political discourse was quite fluid, depending on the current political circumstances. The 1943 edition had been relatively 'free', because Pankratova was confident in her strong position within the Soviet historical science and relied on possible Party support. As a result, a second, very conservative version of the Kazakh history had to be produced riding the wave of Russian patriotism in the late Stalin time. However, as Lowell Tillett observed, "the 1949 history of the Kazakhs, like its predecessor of 1943, had the ill fortune to appear on the eve of a shift in the party line. In a few months it joined the growing number of 'un-books'. So complete was its liquidation that, although 25,000 copies of it were published, not a single one appears to have reached a Western library."⁴⁵⁴

2.9. The 1954 Tashkent Conference: Freezing of the Dogma?

After Stalin's death, debates around the national histories of Central Asian republics did not stop. These active discussions made it necessary to organize a conference where all problematic issues should be solved once and forever. As usual, the initiative for convening such a conference was ascribed to the Academies of Sciences of the Kazakh and Kirgiz republics. Most probably, this centralized enterprise was initiated by Party officials and then handed on to the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR; the organizational committee of the conference worked in Moscow and included many famous Orientalists, such as S.P. Tolstov, E.E. Bertel's, I.P. Petrushevskii, I.S. Braginskii, and A.A. Se-

⁴⁵⁴ L. Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 122.

menov (almost all of them being Iranists).⁴⁵⁵ The “United Scientific Conference Devoted to the History of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in the Pre-October Period” was held in Tashkent between 30 January and 6 February 1954.

At this point we should remember the role of Tashkent in the cultural life of Central Asians, and of the Kazakhs in particular. As we have already seen above, in the 1920s the Kazakhs had made a strong claim on Tashkent, and regarded the city the key centre of Kazakh culture, as a ‘Kazakh Samarkand’.⁴⁵⁶ As Tashkent was eventually attached to the Uzbek SSR, it was Alma-Ata that became the main modern city of the Kazakhs in their republic. Significantly, during the war years Alma-Ata and Tashkent were regarded as the most preferable places for spending the evacuation time,⁴⁵⁷ because both were highly Russified and already equipped with some cultural infrastructure. Still, for the Soviet government Tashkent was the main city of Central Asia, which represented the Soviet modernization project for Asian countries. With this goal in mind, the Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies was set up in Tashkent in 1943. It was the only specialized academic institution of Orientalology for the whole region; no wonder then that it was Tashkent, the cradle of Russian Turkestan studies (*turkestanovedenie*), where the most significant conferences on Central Asian history took place. Tashkent also hosted the Central Asian University (SAGU) with its strong expertise in the history, archeology and architecture of the region. After WWII Tashkent was portrayed as a national capital with a strong international flavor. Tashkent was also an important educational centre for the Kazakh students, especially for those who wanted to study Oriental languages (Arabic and Persian) as well as archeology. Yet in 1960 the Central Asian University was renamed as *Tashkent* University; this reflected the fact that Tashkent had gradually lost its regional significance.

The 1954 conference in Tashkent is an example of how Moscow installed scientific dogmas on Central Asian scholarly communities. Representatives of ‘Muslim’ Soviet republics took part in the conference, namely scholars from the Academies of Sciences of the Uzbek, Kazakh, Tajik, and Turkmen SSR, as well as from the Kirgiz Branch of the Soviet

⁴⁵⁵ RGANI, F. 5, *Obshchii otdel Tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS*, Op. 17, D. 427, ff. 58-61. I would like to express my gratitude to Artemy Kalinovsky (Universiteit van Amsterdam) who provided me with copies of these archival documents.

⁴⁵⁶ A. Haugen, *The Establishment of National Republics*, 195. Haugen does not mention who is quoted here, referring just to the Kazakh side in the debates.

⁴⁵⁷ P. Stronski, *Tashkent: Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 95.

Academy of Sciences, with participation of colleagues from Azerbaijan, Dagestan, Bashkiria and Tataria.⁴⁵⁸ The Tashkent conference united specialists of various sciences, such as history, economics, and philosophy, from central and local scientific institutions. Three main problems were in the focus of the conference: 1) the character of socio-economic relations of nomadic peoples; 2) the formation of bourgeois nations of Central Asia; 3) the character of the 1916 rebellion; 4) the periodization of Central Asian history. In the following I will only discuss questions one and four.⁴⁵⁹ The conference rejected the ‘bourgeois-nationalist theory’ of classless tribal organization of nomads (probably, targeting Asfendiiarov) and evaluated their socio-economical structure as feudal, thus as having a class structure, since the 6th century. Moreover, it was underlined that there is no special way of nomadic societies, they had been developing according to the same rules as other peoples, including settled civilizations: feudalism in the Orient as well as in the West was based on the possession of land, not of cattle.⁴⁶⁰ Iranist Iosif S. Braginskii formulated the only ‘correct’ conception of the succession of formations in Central Asia: until the sixth century BC there was a slave system, which was then replaced by the feudal formation until the October revolution.⁴⁶¹ Unfortunately, the available documentation on the conference does not indicate who was particularly accused at the Tashkent conference. The proceedings of the conference contain only general trends that were marked as harmful.

After the Tashkent conference the discussion became even more ideological and followed the strict rules that had been formulated at the conference. It had to be accepted that in the medieval Central Asian societies there were “patriarchic-feudal” economic relations (*patriarkhal’no-feodal’nye otnosheniia*), and not a clan system (*rodovoi stroi*). As the *piatichlenka* had *rodovoi stroi* as the more primitive formation, the emphasis on feudal relations meant an upgrading of Central Asia on Marx’s ‘ladder of human progress.’ The opposite view was represented only by the two scholars Viktor Shakhmatov and Sergali Tolybekov, who were working at the time at the Alma-Ata Institute of History. In their

⁴⁵⁸ *Materialy ob’edinennoi sessii, posviashchennoi istorii Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana v dooktiabr’skii period* (Tashkent, 1955); *Reshenie ob’edinennoi sessii, posviashchennoi istorii Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana v dooktiabr’skii period* (Tashkent, 1954).

⁴⁵⁹ For the study of other issues refer to: L. Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 185-193.

⁴⁶⁰ *Reshenie ob’edinennoi sessii, posviashchennoi istorii Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana*, 4-5.

⁴⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

statements at the discussion of the *History of the Kazakh SSR* they considered the socio-economic relations in medieval nomadic societies as early feudal or as transitional from a primitive communal system to feudal relations.⁴⁶² In 1955 during a discussion of the commission of the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist Party, historian Tolybekov⁴⁶³ tried to defend his position by claiming that the Tashkent conference was conducted in an atmosphere of ideological pressure on so-called ‘dissidents’. Tolybekov, who was previously attacked as a ‘dissident’, complained that the colleagues at the Tashkent conference criticized his opinion by using political categories such as “anti-Marxist” and “anti-Leninist”. He was even blamed for supporting the concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production which had allegedly been elaborated by Trotskyites i.e., by counterrevolutionary thinkers. In the 1930s such criticism was more than enough for execution or at least for exile. And while after Stalin’s death such “dissidents” could express their opinion, they were still attacked by their more ‘orthodox’ Marxist colleagues.

Tolybekov underlined that in previous years (i.e. in Stalin’s time) the discussion was biased. Only one point of view was accepted, and adherents of opposite opinions were treated as non-Communists. In his conception of Central Asian history Tolybekov referred to the role of the geographical factor for the nomadic lifestyle in Kazakhstan. He distinguished three zones of nomadic economies in the Kazakh steppes: northern Kazakhstan with its settled cattle breeding, southern Kazakhstan with its semi-nomadic economies, and finally central Kazakhstan (in Tolybekov’s mind about 70-75% of the whole country) with its archaic fully nomadic civilization. Tolybekov believed that the latter area was intensively destroyed during the forced collectivization in the early 1930s.⁴⁶⁴ For this group of the Kazakh population it was impossible to switch from a nomadic economy to agriculture because of geographical and economical reasons.⁴⁶⁵ Tolybekov, at least from what we see in the protocols, was very careful in his statements and did not elaborate them, maintaining that it was a mistake to change traditional way of life in Central Kazakhstan.

⁴⁶² OVA KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 136a, *Stenogramma zasedaniia komissii TsK KPK po retsenzirovaniiu 1-go toma “Istorii KazSSR”, 1955*, f. 5, 8.

⁴⁶³ Sergali E. Tolybekov (1907-1995) was an economist; he headed Institute of economics of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR between 1952 and 1963. Tolybekov was highly interested in socio-economic history of the Kazakh people and wrote a number of monographs in this field.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 134.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, ff. 132-137.

The periodization of Kazakh history was also framed according to the general rules of Soviet historiography. There were no attempts to subdivide Kazakh histories according to the various ruling dynasties, simply because all Kazakh Khans belonged to the Chingizids, particularly to the descendants of Tukāy Tīmūr, the thirteenth son of Juchi, the son of Chingiz Khan. It was maintained by the conference organizers that Uzbek scholars were wrong when they divided Uzbek history into Chingizid, Timurid, Sheibanid and other dynastical periods.⁴⁶⁶ Also, Kazakh scholarship agreed to divide the history into one period before and one after the Russian invasion, with the watershed in the 1860s.

As we see, the discussions around Kazakh national history circulated mainly around certain theoretical positions among which the character of socioeconomic relations and the role of the Russian invasion remained the most disputed. The political context of these debates was clearly understood by the participants; however, some of them continued to struggle for their own views against the mainstream.⁴⁶⁷ The border-line dividing ‘dissidents’ from ‘orthodox’ did not correspond with such denominations as center vs. periphery or Russian vs. Kazakh scholars. The picture was much more complex.

In 1957 a post-Stalin version of Kazakh national history was published, again with Pankratova as chief editor.⁴⁶⁸ Curiously, in many respects this edition was a return to the concepts first expressed in the *History of the Kazakh SSR* of 1943. The reason was that in the situation of de-Stalinization it was possible to go back to previously banned opinions. Also archeologists played an important role in the writing of this book. Among them were E.I. Ageeva, A.Kh. Margulan and B.G. Erzakovich.⁴⁶⁹ All of these authors worked at the Alma-Ata Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography; they tended to draw a more balanced picture, pointing out that “the process of feudalization passed differently in various regions: while in Semirech’e and South Kazakhstan it was stronger (along the rivers of Chu, Talas, and Sir Darya agriculture was developed, new cities appeared, even though

⁴⁶⁶ L. Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 191.

⁴⁶⁷ Scholars from the Turkmen SSR similarly opposed decisions of the 1954 Tashkent Conference. For example, A.A. Rosliakov and A. Karryev maintained their position of a critical evaluation of Tsarist colonization of Central Asia. L. Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 241-249.

⁴⁶⁸ *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, 2 vols., ed. by A.M. Pankratova (Alma-Ata, 1957). Tillett suggested that most probably this third version of the History was ready at the eve of Stalin’s death, and that after a discussion it was completely rewritten. See: L. Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 236.

⁴⁶⁹ Their detailed biographies see in the fourth chapter.

there was cattle breeding as well), in the steppe regions this process went slower.”⁴⁷⁰ It was claimed that since the time of the Turkic Kaganate the population inhabiting the Kazakh territory was Turkic-speaking and nomadic. If previously only the Mongol invasion was evaluated negatively, in 1957 the harmful aftermath of the Arab conquest was also underlined, especially its destruction of cities and of the economic ties that broke down under Arab control.⁴⁷¹ The local population of southern Kazakhstan was constantly represented in the monograph as Turkic-speaking. Iranian groups, such as the Soghdians, were regarded either as ‘colonizers’ or as refugees. In other words, the line of cities along the Middle-Sir Darya River, regularly destroyed by foreign nomadic attacks (Arab and Mongol), was attributed to the local Turkic population. What is also peculiar to mention is that even though there were no specialists in Oriental numismatics in the Kazakh republic, the authors of the book regularly referred to the coins issued by various dynasties and rulers, to demonstrate the active socio-economic process and to elucidate the history also of regions which were absent on the pages of medieval historical narratives.

It seems that the 1957 edition of the *History of the Kazakh SSR* was the first of this kind to come up with what was to become a long-lasting myth, namely that of the so-called ‘Otrar catastrophe.’ In details this point will be analyzed in the fourth chapter, here I would like to mention only that Soviet historians tended to believe firmly in the narratives about the total destruction of the city of Otrar by the Mongols in 1219. This story was mainly based on the famous account in Juwaynī’s *Ta’rīkh-i Jihāngushāy*; in Soviet accounts it turned into the “heroic struggle of the masses of Kazakhstan and Central Asia against the Mongol conquerors.”⁴⁷² The concrete origins of this interpretation are unclear, especially when the authors claimed that the Mongols destroyed “many great cultural monuments, such as an Otrar library regarded as the second in the world according to the quantity and quality of books preserved there.”⁴⁷³ The opposition of nomadic barbarians against civili-

⁴⁷⁰ *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 1, 55-56.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 60-61.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*, 115. Much later, doubts on the catastrophic character of the 1219 campaign were first expressed by Vladimir N. Nastich, who analyzed written, numismatic, and archeological sources which contradict the generally accepted conception. See: V.N. Nastich, “K periodizatsii monetnoi chekanki Otrara i ee roli v denezhnom khoziaistve goroda i oblasti,” in: *Bližnii i Srednii Vostok: Tovarno-denezhnye otnosheniia pri feodalizme* (Moscow, 1980), 162-171.

⁴⁷³ *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 1 (Alma-Ata, 1957), 117.

zation was again expressed in the monstrous acts of Mongols who allegedly killed thousands of people, destroyed settled civilization and the whole regional economy.⁴⁷⁴ Again, the Mongol invasion was claimed to be the only reason why since that time it was the fate of the Kazakh people to be nomadic. Curiously, in the same token Tīmūr, a big city builder, was also disliked in the book because of his savage treatment of enemies. Probably this negative appraisal resulted from the fact that Tīmūr was also a conqueror who originated from a nomadic tribe, the Barlas. On the contrary, the Uzbek treatment of Tīmūr, as first drawn by Iakubovskii, was more balanced and regarded him as a contradictory figure.⁴⁷⁵ Generally speaking, the 1957 edition was a success, though no central journals reviewed it,⁴⁷⁶ which probably was a sign that Moscow ideologists began to be less concerned with the content of national histories.

To sum up, what we observe over the 1940s is that the big projects of writing republican histories had a specific purpose: to identify and define, in the light of the frequently changing Party line, what needed to be accepted as the correct view on the crucial stages and events of Kazakh national history. The constant re-writing of Kazakh history in the 1940s and 1950s is therefore a clear reflection of the general trends in Soviet politics, and especially of the late Stalin years as well as during De-Stalinization.

The republican histories were all addressing large audiences, and were to popularize the view that had been agreed upon by the Party and the Academy of Sciences (and its sub-organizations) at a specific time. These general postulates would then be used and refined in articles and monographs on more specific questions.

Given this purpose of ‘cementing’ a dogma in a popular history book, it is stunning to see that the general line changed so often from Asfendiiarov’s account in 1935 and Viatkin’s book in 1941 to the first collective monograph on the Kazakh history in 1943, then to its corrected version in 1949, and finally to the more elaborated two-volume work of 1957. In view of these uncertainties, and of the dangers connected to political criticism

⁴⁷⁴ Also Western miniatures from the 13th-14th centuries represented ‘Tartars’ and ‘Moghuls’ as barbaric people who eat human flesh. See: A. Martyniuk, *Die Mongolen im Bild. Orientalische, westeuropäische und russische Bildquellen zur Geschichte des Mongolischen Weltreiches und seiner Nachfolgestaaten im 13.-16. Jahrhundert* (Hamburg, 2002). These images had a long-lasting impact on Russia and European Orientalism.

⁴⁷⁵ A.Iu. Iakubovskii, “Timur. Opyt kratkoi kharakteristiki,” in: *Voprosy Istorii* 8-9 (1946), 42-74. This same account was repeated in many Uzbek national histories: *Istoriia Uzbekskoi SSR*, vol. 1, *kniga pervaiia* (Tashkent, 1955), 313-364; *Istoriia Uzbekskoi SSR*, vol. 1 (Tashkent, 1967), 435-460.

⁴⁷⁶ L. Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 237.

in periods of official campaigns against dissidents or “cosmopolitans”, scholars must have experienced a tremendous pressure from above to conform to the new dogmas, coupled with considerable insecurity as to how their work would be perceived.

Still, some of them (Shakhmatov, Semenov, and Tolybekov) managed to maintain a certain amount of agency, either by adjusting their perspectives only in form (and maintaining their own research agendas) or by defending themselves through a renunciation of their previous views, or by openly accusing the practices of their opponents, as for instance in the aftermath of the 1954 Tashkent Conference. The most striking case in point is Pankratova, who in spite of all criticism continued to be the driving force behind all Kazakh history editions between 1943 and 1957. She also appears to have been one of the few scholars who survived accusations without a serious loss of her authority as a scholar and science manager; this was due to her central position in the Moscow Institute of History and her function as editor of its journal *Voprosy istorii*. Probably her personal network, strong adherence to Marxist ideas, and ability to follow the Party line were the main pillars that saved her from repressions. Another example is a career of Aleksandr Semenov who, after the harsh criticism in Tashkent, moved to Dushanbe and perfectly fit into the system there.

Finally, the period of the 1940s also witnesses the emergence of a native Kazakh school of historians, institutionalized in the new Institute of History of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences. The 1957 volume, although still edited by Pankratova, is therefore also a step in the process of building up a native Kazakh school, a process which culminated in the 1970s in the publication of a voluminous new version of the republican history (see below). To be sure, the school of Kazakh historians was guided and directed by the Center, but its work was carried out at home. It is this slow transfer of activity from Moscow/ Leningrad to Alma-Ata which one can also observe in classical Oriental Studies and in archeology. This transfer made it possible to give a more nuanced view of the development of socioeconomic formations, especially with regard to the various local specificities on the enormous territory of Kazakhstan.

2.10. The Rehabilitation of ‘Bourgeois’ Orientalists: Bartol’d Re-Emerging in the 1950s-70s

The years after Stalin’s death and the 20th Congress of the Communist Party (1956) have been defined by M. Kemper as the time of an expansion of Soviet Oriental studies.⁴⁷⁷ This process was evident in the creation of new departments and research institutes mainly dealing with the study of ‘Oriental’ manuscripts. The government understood the importance of classical Orientology along with the study of the modern Orient, the latter being conducted mainly in Moscow. Perhaps not the least role in this turn towards the rebirth of classical topics belonged to Iosif A. Orbeli (1887-1961), Director of the State Hermitage (1934-51), Dean of the Oriental Faculty of Leningrad University (1955-60) and Director of the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies (1956-61). In October 1954 he wrote a petition to the Academy of Sciences of the USSR arguing for the necessity to revive classical philological Orientology. At the same time he pointed out that also the investigation of the modern Orient was an organic part of the interests of Leningrad school of Oriental studies.⁴⁷⁸ According to Orbeli, “the progressive position [of Russia’s Oriental studies] was conditioned by the humanistic character of Russian science [in general], by the close ties between the best representatives of Russian Orientology and many Russian enlighteners who were in the vanguard of the Russian intelligentsia in the second half of the 19th century.”⁴⁷⁹ After Stalin’s death Orbeli dared to say that it was a mistake to carry out such a powerful reorganization of the biggest center of Soviet Oriental Studies, the Institute of Oriental Studies, when persons in charge “wrongly understood and interpreted” the orders of the government to strengthen studies of the new and modern Orient and thereby abolished the study of the Ancient Orient, resulting in the removal of very useful and promising scientific crafts from the Institute of Oriental Studies. As the main message of his letter Orbeli highly recommended to revive philological Oriental studies. His call was heard, and already in 1955-56 Orbeli became the leader of Leningrad Orientology: as a Dean of the Oriental Faculty of Leningrad University (since 1955) and Director of the

⁴⁷⁷ M. Kemper, “Introduction: Integrating Soviet Oriental Studies,” in Kemper & Conermann (eds.), *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies*, 10.

⁴⁷⁸ I.A. Orbeli, “Soobrazheniia po voprosu o sostoianii i zadachakh filologicheskoi raboty v oblasti vostokovedeniia,” in: SPFA RAN, F. 909, Op. 3, №114. Cited in: K.N. Iuzbashian, *Akademik Iosif Abgarovich Orbeli, 1887-1961*, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1986), 93.

⁴⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies as well as Director of the State Hermitage, Academician Orbeli tried to guarantee the continuity with the prerevolutionary traditions of Russian Oriental Studies.⁴⁸⁰

A young generation of scholars was recruited in the Leningrad institutions headed by Orbeli. They were ordered to conduct several large Oriental projects, in the form of long-term programs. For the elderly generation who worked in the 1930s-40s there had been three main programs, namely the edition of sources, archeological investigations, and, on the basis of source editions and archeological evidences, the compilation of national histories. The generation of the 1950s and 1960s continued the previous archeological studies and was also engaged in the decades-long work of manuscript description. Yet they also embarked upon the edition of catalogues and started to re-edit the classics of Russian Orientalology. Peculiar to mention that both of these new directions, i.e. the cataloguing of manuscripts and the rehabilitation of Orientalists, were started and largely completed under the directorship of Bobodzhan Gafurov (1908-1977) who actively supported these projects.⁴⁸¹ Gafurov had been First Secretary of the Communist Party of Tajikistan (1946-56), and then, between 1956 and 1977, headed the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences in Moscow. In what follows I will discuss the rehabilitation of 'bourgeois' Orientalists since the late 1950s, especially through the multivolume editions of the full or selected writings of four early Soviet Orientalists, namely Arabist Ignatii Iu. Krachkovskii (1883-1951), scholar of Central Asian studies Vasilii V. Bartol'd (1860-1930), Turkologist Vladimir A. Gordlevskii (1876-1956), and Iranist Evgenii E. Bertel's (1890-1957).⁴⁸² Their extensive oeuvre was partly devoted to Islamology. As classical Islamic Studies had not

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid., 94-95, 97. See also: Iu.A. Petrosian, *Vstrechi i rasstavaniia: zapiski vostokoveda* (St. Petersburg, 2002), 28-50.

⁴⁸¹ Iu.A. Petrosian, *Vstrechi i rasstavaniia*, 36.

⁴⁸² V.V. Bartol'd, *Sochineniia*, 9 vols. (Moscow, 1963-1977); E.E. Bertel's, *Izbrannye trudy*, 5 vols. (Moscow, 1960-1988); V.A. Gordlevskii, *Izbrannye sochineniia*, 4 vols. (Moscow, 1960-1968); I.Iu. Krachkovskii, *Izbrannye sochineniia*, 6 vols. (Moscow – Leningrad, 1955-1960). To be added is prominent Sinologist Nikolai Aleksandrovich Nevskii (1892-1937) who had been repressed and executed by the Bolsheviks. Nevskii was officially rehabilitated in 1957 and several of his works were published. One of them, *Tangut philology*, even obtained the Lenin price in 1962. See: L.L. Gromovskaia, E.I. Kychanov, *Nikolai Aleksandrovich Nevskii* (Moscow, 1978); "Na steklakh vechnosti... Nikolai Nevskii. Perevody, issledovaniia, materialy k biografii," in *Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie*, vol. 8 (St. Petersburg, 1996), 239-560. A plan of a three-volume edition of selected works by repressed Turkologist Aleksandr N. Samoilovich (1880-1938, rehabilitated in August 1956) was proposed by the Institute of Linguistics of the Academy of Sciences in 1968, but the project was not implemented. See: G.F. Blagova, D.M. Nasilov, "Ot sostavitel'ei," in: A.N. Samoilovich, *Tiurkskoe iazykoznanie. Filologiya. Runika* (Moscow, 2005), 3-4.

been continued as such in the USSR, textological Islamic studies were accessible to the reading audience only through the works of scientists who had already passed away before 1957.

The central figure in the re-edition program was Vasiliĭ Bartol'd (1869-1930) whose in-depth study of Central Asian Islamic history had provided the solid ground for most of what came after him, and who also had brought to light many Arabic-script sources from European, Ottoman and Central Asian archives. Bartol'd's academic authority in scientific circles had always been enormous, and had always been acknowledged as such.⁴⁸³ Bartol'd's figure even grew after his death for anyone studying Central Asian history. Though there are many topics where modern scholarship went further and corrected his statements, Bartol'd's works remain a handbook for Orientalists. After Bartol'd died in 1930 his heritage began a separate life. Bartol'd's name became the incarnation of the regional (i.e., non-national) approach to the history of Central Asia, as well as the personification of a whole epoch in the history of Russian Oriental studies.

Paradoxically, Bartol'd's writings had proven to be groundbreaking not only for studying Central Asia as a historic-cultural region, but also for the establishment of the national style of historiography. In this respect one might refer to one of his first works devoted to the area that was later transformed into a part of the Kazakh republic. This work was called *A Sketch of the History of Semirech'e* (first publication: Vernyi, 1898). Even though this monograph did not have any references to the individual modern nations (Kazakhs or Kirgiz), Valerii A. Romodin, editor of the first part of the second volume of Bartol'd's *Works* (Moscow, 1963), evaluated this *Sketch* as the first step in the following line of Bartol'd's monographs.⁴⁸⁴ In 1925, very soon after the national delimitation in Central Asia, the Academic Centre (*Akademicheskii Tsentri*) of the Kirgiz Autonomous Republic, which was a predecessor of the future Kirgiz Branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, asked Bartol'd to write a book on the history of the Kirgiz republic. This was published in Frunze in 1927. It was followed by two other sketches on the Tajik people (1925) and the Turkmens (1929). Bartol'd himself regarded these books as preliminary work that

⁴⁸³ Yu. Bregel, "Barthold and Modern Oriental Studies," in: *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 12 (1980), 385-403.

⁴⁸⁴ V.A. Romodin, "Predislovie," in V.V. Bartol'd, *Sochineniia*, vol. 2, part 1 (Moscow, 1963), 6-7.

should encourage further in-depth studies. How Bartol'd worked on the national histories can be seen from his introduction to the *Sketch of the History of the Turkmen People*:

“This sketch, written in a short time, does of course not include the full range of information on the past of the Turkmen people. Such a goal would possibly require several generations of studies. My goal was [rather] to provide the cultural workers of Turkmenistan with a general report on the history of the Turkmens with which they were not familiar before, and which has not yet been put together because of the present state of affairs. I did not care much about the interpretation of facts in the fashion of modern historical science; this remains a task for the future. In my mind, any attempt of drawing up a historical picture on the basis of previously stated principles without the collection and critical analysis of facts will be utterly useless. My sketch [therefore] belongs to the field of preliminary works which have been absent so far. Without them it is impossible to solve serious scientific tasks. The future will show in how far it was successful.”⁴⁸⁵

As we see, though Bartol'd wrote the history of a nation, he openly ignored Party lines, maintaining his own methodological approaches and rejecting ‘the fashion of modern historical science.’

There is clear evidence that Bartol'd's huge experience in Central Asian studies was regarded as useful in the 1930s, when the Leningrad scientific institutions dealing with the Soviet Orient began with the production of national histories of Central Asian republics: first through the translation and publication of sources and then through compiling meta-histories for each republic. This double program was implemented in two ways: studying written sources (classical Oriental Studies, textual studies) and organizing large-scale archaeological investigations. Both directions were formulated already in Bartol'd's works (even though he preferred libraries to field work). Thus, in 1938 Arabist Semen L. Volin (whose biography and work in the field of classical Orientology have been briefly discussed in the first chapter) came up with the idea of re-editing Bartol'd's huge published and unpublished heritage, which was dispersed in archives and in various Russian and Western publications.⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁵ V.V. Bartol'd, *Sochineniia*, vol. 2, part 1 (Moscow, 1963), 547.

⁴⁸⁶ RA NA IIMK, Razriad 2, Op. 6, № 82, *Dokumenty, sviazannye s izdaniem 'Sobraniia sochinenii' V.V. Bartol'da*, f. 68.

The introduction of the first volume of Bartol'd's *Sochineniia* (*Works*, 1963) maintains that Volin's project did not succeed because of the war.⁴⁸⁷ This is, however, not correct; rather, Volin perished in a Siberian labor camp shortly after his arrest in July 1941. Another reason is that all of the Russian Orientalists were at the time busy with other projects. Such an initiative required serious attention as well as considerable financial support, at a time when other, ongoing projects already suffered from budgetary uncertainties.

Already in 1943, in Bishkek/ Frunze Aleksandr N. Bernshtam republished two works of Bartol'd on Kirgizia, namely *A Sketch of the History of Semirech'e* and *The Kirgiz: a Historical Survey*. This re-edition was meant for the use of historians in evacuation and local cadres. Encouraged by these publications, one of Bartol'd's closest students and friends, Ignatii Iu. Krachkovskii, recommended the rehabilitation of Volin's project. However, this idea was not accepted until Gafurov became Director of IVAN in 1956. Significantly, the first All-Union Conference of Orientalists, which was held in Tashkent in June 1957, suggested to the Soviet Academy of Sciences to start the edition of Bartol'd's oeuvre as soon as possible, because the majority of his works was almost inaccessible for researchers.⁴⁸⁸ Therefore I assume that the whole campaign for editing the classics of late Imperial and early Soviet Orientalists was started in 1957, when the topic became one of the research directions of the Institute of Oriental Studies.⁴⁸⁹ N.A. Mukhitdinov (Tashkent), First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Uzbek SSR (1955-57), stressed in his speech at the conference that "Soviet Orientology (...) went a long and difficult way. We have obtained a scientific heritage that should be used reasonably and critically. Russian Orientalists have contributed much to world science. (...) They have created basic works

⁴⁸⁷ "Ot redaktsionnoi kollegii", in: V.V. Bartol'd, *Sochineniia*, vol. 1, *Turkestan v epokhu mongol'skogo nashestviia* (Moscow, 1963), 8.

⁴⁸⁸ B.V. Lunin, *Iz istorii russkogo vostokovedeniia i arkhologii v Turkestane. Turkestanskii kruzhok liubitelei arkhologii (1895-1917 gg.)* (Tashkent, 1958), 210.

⁴⁸⁹ *Plan nauchno-issledovatel'skikh rabot Instituta vostokovedeniia na 1959-1965*, in: RGANI, F. 5, *Obshchii otdel Tsentral'nogo komiteta KPSS*, Op. 35, D. 118, ff. 97-98. In addition to the works of the Orientalists mentioned above also the comprehensive dictionary of Turkic languages by Vasilii V. Radlov (1837-1918) was republished in Moscow in 1963. First publication: V.V. Radloff, *Versuch eines Wörterbuches der Türk-Dialekte*, 4 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1893-1911). Interestingly, the European reproduction of the dictionary was published three years earlier in The Hague. For the first time this project had been proposed by Aleksandr Samoilovich as an all-European enterprise in the late 1920s, even though he knew that his colleagues in Europe did not particularly like Radlov. See: A.N. Samoilovich, "Pereizdanie 'Opyta slovaria tiurkskikh narechii' V.V. Radlova," in: *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk SSSR*, seriia 6, 1927, No. 18. In 1960 another famous dictionary of the Chaghatay language was also reproduced in facsimile in Moscow: L.Z. Budagov, *Sravnitel'nyi slovar' turetsko-tatarskikh narechii*. 2 vols. (St Petersburg, 1869).

which sometimes opened up new fields of Orientalology. These works influenced not only Russian but also foreign Orientalists. The Soviet Orientalists, in full awareness of the Marxist-Leninist theory, should creatively use all the best from the heritage of Russian and foreign scholars.”⁴⁹⁰ The final decision to publish Bartol’d’s work was made by the Branch of Historical Sciences of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in June 1960. All organizational and financial issues were delivered to the Institute of Oriental Studies, with Gafurov and Orbeli in charge of the organization.⁴⁹¹

First of all, why did Soviet scholarship turn towards the heritage of those Orientalists who had maintained a ‘bourgeois’ worldview in the 1920s-40s? Just a few years earlier they had been heavily criticized by ideologically engaged colleagues and blamed for their lack of Marxist methodology. However, the all-Union expansion and revival of academic Oriental studies, based on textology and in-depth knowledge of languages and academic instruments, was in heavy need of the previous experience, however nonorthodox it might have been. Responding to my question ethnologist Sergei N. Abashin summarized the reasons for this return to Bartol’d as follows. First, Bartol’d had died before the peak of the political repressions, and was himself no victim of incrimination; this made his ‘rehabilitation’ easy. Second, Bartol’d was a teacher of a huge number of Orientalists who exactly in the 1950s rose to positions of importance and decision-making. Third, the 1950s was the time of ‘rehabilitations’, which meant that ideological prescriptions turned to be less strong and rather vague. According to Abashin, multiple elements came together and allowed the re-emergence of Bartol’d.⁴⁹²

The present-day Director of the State Hermitage Mikhail B. Piotrovskii (b. 1944), when asked about the reasons for the rehabilitation of Orientalists, suggested the following: “First of all, the new generation of scholars came after WWII, when the Oriental faculty of Leningrad State University and the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies received a new life. This generation needed to know the research that had been

⁴⁹⁰ N.A. Mukhitdinov, *K novym uspekham sovetskogo vostokovedeniia (Rech' na pervoi Vsesoiuznoi konferentsii vostokovedov 11 iunია 1957 g. v Tashkente)* (Tashkent, 1957), 24-25. In the memories Mukhitdinov claimed that the conference was his initiative: N. Mukhitdinov, *Gody, provedennye v Kremle, vol. 1. O deiatel'nosti TsK KPSS i ego Politbiuro v 50-e gody* (Tashkent, 1994), 308-311.

⁴⁹¹ The text of the project see: RA NA IIMK, Razriad 2, Op. 6, № 82, *Dokumenty, sviazannye s izdaniem 'Sobraniiia sochinenii' V.V. Bartol'da*, f. 3.

⁴⁹² Private letter from Sergei N. Abashin to the author, 2 October 2011.

done earlier. Second, [the edition program] provided a great and important work experience for those young Orientalists, because they were to write massive commentaries for these editions, to express the last word of modern science on them. Otherwise it would have been very difficult to publish addenda and corrigenda for classical works that were produced about forty-fifty years earlier. And the specialists who worked on the editions also gained good money for that. The appearance of these books was a great fortune for Soviet scholarship, because now each student can find anything he needs in those collected works, and they did not lose their actuality to this very day. (...) Gafurov played a certain role in this process. He was a very good manager, invented new projects and proved to the whole world how important Orientology was for human culture in a global understanding. His role in these projects was positive: he provided work opportunities for many colleagues.”⁴⁹³ Even though Piotrovskii suggested here the contrary, according to archival sources, scholars at the meeting of the Branch of Historical Sciences of the USSR Academy of Sciences initially restricted the number and extent of academic commentaries, which should be minimal and “in no way could have a goal to express the last word of science on this or that question after Bartol’d’s works. The main goal [of commentaries] is to mention new literature on the topic.”⁴⁹⁴ Obviously the initiators of the project wanted to leave Bartol’d’s works as they were written by him, without any further development of his ideas, which could have become difficult. In fact, the whole establishment of Soviet Orientology participated in the project, and many Orientalists received the best part of their professional training when working on these huge projects. Among those who collaborated in the edition program are many who later obtained huge authority: Iranian studies scholars Il’ia P. Petrushevskii, Iurii E. Bregel’, Aleksandr M. Belenitskii, and Aleksandr N. Boldyrev; Arabists Anas B . Khalidov and Oleg G. Bol’shakov; and Turkologists Anna S. Tveritina, Andrei N. Kononov, and Sergei G. Kliashtornyi.⁴⁹⁵

Sergei G. Kliashtornyi, who edited the fifth volume of Bartol’d’s works, told me an interesting story about international collaboration during this edition work. Kliashtornyi

⁴⁹³ Interview with Mikhail B. Piotrovskii by Hanna Jansen and the author; Amsterdam Hermitage, 16 April 2011. I would like to express my gratitude to the administration of the Amsterdam Hermitage that made this meeting possible.

⁴⁹⁴ [See: RA NA IIMK, Razriad 2, Op. 6, № 82, *Dokumenty, sviazannye s izdaniem ‘Sobraniiia sochinenii’ V.V. Bartol’da*, f. 8].

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, f. 5.

knew that the only Russian original of Bartol'd's *Twelve Lectures on the History of the Turkic Peoples* was kept as a typescript by Ahmed Zeki Velidi, the well-known Bashkir émigré politician and historian in Istanbul. Kliashorny wrote him a letter asking to provide him with a copy. Another letter was written by Academician Iosif Orbeli to a certain V.A. Matveev, the Head of the Near and Middle East Sector of the Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship and Cultural Cooperation with Foreign Countries, asking to obtain a copy through the General Consulate of the USSR in Istanbul.⁴⁹⁶ This copy was finally brought to Leningrad from Istanbul by Andrei N. Kononov, the head of the Turkological Sector of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, where Kliashorny was working. Accordingly, the redaction committee acknowledged Velidi in the introduction to the volume.⁴⁹⁷ This fact raised protests from Bashkir party officials. However, nobody paid special attention to their concerns.⁴⁹⁸

One should also mention that rehabilitation was rather selective. Of course, those were the greatest names, each of them representing a certain field in Oriental Studies. A vast range of works written by other scholars of various fields was not carried over to the new epoch. Among these are, for example, the ground-breaking monographs of the prominent Turkologist Vladimir V. Vel'iaminov-Zernov (1830-1904), of Arabist Aleksandr E. Shmidt (1871-1939) and many others; their publications were not re-edited and remained a bibliographical rarity.

One other interesting point here is that all these Orientalists had dealt, at some point, with the history of Islam and Sufism: the sixth volume of Bartol'd's collection of works (1966, ed. by Arabist Anas B. Khalidov) was called *Works on the History of Islam and the Arabic Caliphate*, while the third volume of Bertel's works was devoted to Sufism and Sufi culture (1965, ed. by specialists of Iranian studies Aleksandr N. Boldyrev and Mukhammad-Nuri O. Osmanov). Accordingly, classical Islamology as the investigation of Islamic history was kept alive. True, the study of the modern situation in the Muslim East

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid., f. 18.

⁴⁹⁷ V.V. Bartol'd, *Sochineniia*, vol. 5 (Moscow, 1968), 16.

⁴⁹⁸ Interview with Sergei G. Kliashorny by the author, St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, 24 September 2009.

was clearly not adequately continued before 1980,⁴⁹⁹ but academic Islamology was maintained in the form of the re-edition and research of textual studies by earlier Orientalists.

The next question is why these Orientalists were rehabilitated in spite of their allegedly ‘cosmopolitan’ views on Oriental cultures and their common rejection of the national character of the Islamic past. This still remains an open question, though we can only assume that the necessity of ‘objective’ knowledge for the new generation of scholars was of greater importance than their rejection of the national approach. However, as is evident from interviews, the edition of these volumes heavily influenced the new generation’s understanding of Central Asian history in a regional way. For example, Sergei G. Kliashornyi proudly maintained that the Leningrad school of academic Orientology had always been adhering to the regional approach, rejecting national versions of history.⁵⁰⁰

Bartol’d’s regional approach regained open prominence through the so-called ‘Bartol’d conferences’ (*Bartol’dovskie chteniia*), initiated by Boris A. Litvinskii’s wife, Elena A. Davidovich, in 1973. These regular conferences continued up to 1990 and aimed at the study of written sources of Central Asia from the perspective of scholars from local and central institutions, united by Bartol’d’s regional view. The re-edition of classical works, and simultaneously the publication of sources, were also started in a new series, *Monuments of the Oriental Written Heritage*. These new editions made significant contributions to the furnishing of Soviet Oriental studies libraries, which of course stimulated the further development of the field.

2.11. A Great Provocation? A Tentative Switch to the Regional Concept of History in the USSR

As we have seen in chapters one and two, the edition of sources in Oriental languages, archaeological investigations, and the projects of republican meta-histories had created since the 1930s very strong walls between previously interconnected populations. In fact, these

⁴⁹⁹ See on this topic: H.E. Jansen, M. Kemper, “Hijacking Islam: The Search for a New Soviet Interpretation of Political Islam in 1980,” in M. Kemper, S. Conermann (eds.), *The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies* (London – New York, 2011), 124-144; Y. Ro’i, “The Impact of the Islamic Fundamentalist Revival of the Late 1970s on the Soviet View on Islam,” in Y. Ro’i (ed.), *The USSR and the Muslim World: Issues in Domestic and Foreign Policy* (London, 1984), 149-177.

⁵⁰⁰ Interview with Sergei G. Kliashornyi by the author, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, 24 September 2009.

delimitations of the humanities appear ever stronger than geographical and political borders. Although the regional perspective continued to exist in limited form after WWII its voice was drowned by the new generation of scholars from the republics who used to operate within the frameworks of republican histories. The macro-regional approach was therefore limited to the center in Moscow and Leningrad — a curious observation given the widely-accepted assumption that it was the center that benefitted from the splitting-up of Central Asia into individual republics.

To be sure, state-supported work on the edition of sources and meta-histories deeply and very quickly affected scholarly perceptions. It was accepted that each republic has national symbols and a past of its own. Since the mid-1920s, the official Soviet policy of “affirmative action”,⁵⁰¹ i.e. support of non-Russian ethnic groups, continued to contribute to the growth of national self-consciousness among the peoples of Central Asia after WWII. There are indications, however, that in the early 1970s it was the central government’s intention to manipulate or contain this process of growing nationalism.

The first event was inspired by two Orientalists from Tajikistan whom Gafurov brought to the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, namely Boris A. Litvinskii (1923-2010) and his wife Elena A. Davidovich (b. 1922). Litvinskii was an archeologist of pre-Islamic Central Asia, while Davidovich became a world-famous specialist in Islamic numismatics of the same region. Shortly after their move from Dushanbe to Moscow Davidovich organized the above-mentioned regular all-Soviet conferences devoted to Vasilii V. Bartol’d, to his biography, scientific views and oeuvre. The goal of the *Bartol’dovskie chteniia* was to continue Bartol’d’s scientific approaches in the investigation of Central Asia. Every four years a conference united scholars from various republics and Russia in Moscow. The individual lecturers usually did not go beyond the framework of this or that republic, but they used similar methods that go back to the Bartol’dist school.⁵⁰² This regular conference was not a political event, and its organizers carefully cleaned up all issues which might relate to modern history. For example, in 1981 Timur K. Beisembiev, a historian from Alma-Ata, made a report on the political relations between

⁵⁰¹ T. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire. Nation and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca, 2001); R.G. Suny, T. Martin (eds.) *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford, 2001).

⁵⁰² *Bartol’dovskie chteniia*, 8 vols. (Moscow, 1974-1993).

the Kokand Khans and the rulers of Kashghar (Eastern Turkestan). For the subsequent publication he was requested to cut out passages on the bad relationships between certain historical persons, because this might have cast a shadow upon the friendship of the USSR and the Chinese republic.⁵⁰³

Another important event happened in 1974, when a conference of historians of Central Asia and Kazakhstan devoted to the creation of a *Regional History of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (since the Ancient Times up to Present Days)* was organized in Moscow. Academician A.N. Narochnitskii delivered the main report *On the Plan and Principles of the Production of a History of Central Asia and Kazakhstan*, where he represented the idea of the project and its preliminary structure. Narochnitskii stated that the Institutes of History of the USSR, of Oriental Studies, of Ethnography, and of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR as well as several scientific institutes in the USSR republics were obliged to include this project as a most prominent task in their work-plan of 1976-1980.⁵⁰⁴ The overall project was to be guided and coordinated by the Moscow Institute of History, not by the Oriental Institute.⁵⁰⁵

For the first time in Soviet historiography, Narochnitskii, who was not himself a specialist in Central Asian studies,⁵⁰⁶ formulated and defended the concept of regional history. Here it should be mentioned, however, that Narochnitskii as a director of Moscow Institute of History played rather the role of a speaker of the enterprise, but not that of a generator of ideas. We still do not know who the author of the proposal of regional histories was.⁵⁰⁷ I assume that Narochnitskii did not write the speech himself; still we have to refer to him as the official author. Narochnitskii defended regional history as a progressive development of history writing and argued that historiography had to move from the republican narratives to regional ones. Narochnitskii evaluated the compilation of republican histories

⁵⁰³ From Timur K. Beisembiev's private letter to the author, 24 March 2011.

⁵⁰⁴ OVA KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 1231, Sv. 120, *Dokumenty po chetyrekhtomniku "Regional'naia istoriia Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana" (s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei), 1976-1977*, f. 1.

⁵⁰⁵ OVA KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 1375, Sv. 137, *Dokumenty po uchastiiu v nauchnykh konferentsiakh, o sniatii s plana rabot temy "Regional'naia istoriia Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana," 1979*, f. 19.

⁵⁰⁶ Aleksei Leont'evich Narochnitskii (1907-1989) was a specialist in the history of Russian external affairs in the beginning of the 19th century. He became an Academician shortly before this enterprise in 1972.

⁵⁰⁷ Moscow-based historians Sergei Abashin and Dmitrii Arapov suggested in private conversation with the author that it might be Sergei G. Agadzhanov (1928-1997), historian of mediaeval Turkmenistan, who worked at the Institute of History since 1976. However, there is no clear evidence for such a conclusion yet.

as an indicator of the maturity of the republican historical schools (even though he must have known that the majority of their books were written at least in close collaboration with central scientific institutions), but also as an already achieved goal. Narochnitskii called upon his colleagues to go further, to make a step towards the regional approach. He pointed out that this would yield a number of profits. First, regional histories would support the spirit of internationalism through the elucidation of centuries-old relations between peoples in various areas, their solidarity in anti-colonial and revolutionary movements. Regional histories were even to become an example of how to write the history of the Soviet peoples. From my perspective, the political inclination of this argument is more than clear. The Soviet government had detected the potential of nationalism in individual republics; therefore it tried to find a balance by appealing to internationalism and the concept of the Friendship of Peoples.

Second, regional histories would elaborate a common chronology, evaluate the most significant events and historical persons (although Narochnitskii did not mention names and dates) which had been ‘incorrectly’ represented from republican points of view. This statement recalls the large discussions and even the judicial verdicts against historians (for example, Bekmakhanov⁵⁰⁸) who offered an opinion different from the predominant scholarship. Obviously, Narochnitskii’s plan was to tackle the issue of national delimitation in the cultural field (arguments on the question to which national heritage this or that ‘great ancestor’ should be assigned). Thirdly, Narochnitskii argued that the work on the regional histories was to strengthen ties between historians in various republics and between the Centre and the periphery.⁵⁰⁹

In clear contrast to the previous republican historiographies, which had as their main goal to prove the birth of the respective nationalities in most ancient times, Narochnitskii argued that the majority of modern nations of Central Asia appeared rather late, and on the basis of other ethnic unions; these unions should be regarded as the common ancestors of the modern Uzbeks, Kazakhs and others. This was a clear reproduction of Marr’s ideas, who rejected the possibility of the construction of long national histories from times immemorial. Referring to Marr, Narochnitskii thus replaced *republican autochthonism*,

⁵⁰⁸ L. Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 110-120.

⁵⁰⁹ OVA KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 1231, Sv. 120, *Dokumenty po chetyrekhdomniku “Regional’naia istoriia Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana” (s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei), 1976-1977*, f. 7-8.

which presupposed the birth and development of nationalities within the borders of the modern Soviet republics, by *regional autochthonism*, and by the idea of active interaction between the tribes in the region, recognizing that in ancient times the borders were not stable. No doubt, such a position could have serious consequences in politics, because there is only one more step to the claim of common ('regional') political borders.

In Narochnitskii's mind, each work on the ancient and medieval history of any Central Asian people has to focus on a similar scope of scientific problems, common for the entire region. In the following Narochnitskii even showed that the regional entity of Central Asia was formed already in the Stone Age. He referred to the archeological works of Novosibirsk scholar Aleksei P. Okladnikov⁵¹⁰ in order to demonstrate the close ties of the Central Asian population with contemporary cultures of Siberia. According to Narochnitskii, the regional approach helps to understand the history of Central Asia in the Bronze Age, when the bipolar world of settled farmers in the south and nomadic cattle-breeders in the north emerged. He marked Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan as the border between two cultural zones.

Academician Narochnitskii concluded that "there is no reason to limit the work to producing the history of an individual people and republic separately, cutting a large historical picture into pieces by borders which appeared only much later and in a specific historical situation."⁵¹¹ He also argued against extreme nationalistic opinions, such as claims that the entire cultural heritage written in Persian belongs to the Tajik people, not to Iran. This 'nationalization' of cultural heritage in Central Asia was officially going on since the 1930s.

It was planned to compose the Central Asian work in four volumes, each on a certain epoch. The project had to combine research results of specialists in research areas such as the history of cities, the study of written sources, political history, and socio-economical studies. Probably Narochnitskii was aware of the fact that before 1974 the scholars in almost all Central Asian republics made a lot of new discoveries in ancient and medieval

⁵¹⁰ Academician Aleksei Pavlovich Okladnikov (1908-1981) was one of the leading Soviet archeologists, director of the Institute of History, Philology, and Philosophy of the Siberian branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in Novosibirsk. His research interests were focused on the ancient history of Siberia. About him: A.K. Konopatskii, *Proshlogo velikii sledopyt (Akademik A.P. Okladnikov: stranitsy biografii)* (Novosibirsk, 2001).

⁵¹¹ OVA KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 1231, Sv. 120, *Dokumenty po chetyrekhtomniku "Regional'naiia istoriia Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana" (s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei), 1976-1977*, f. 10.

history. Therefore the idea to create a generalizing book on the entire region was well justified, all political motivations notwithstanding.

Dmitrii Iu. Arapov, Moscow historian of Islam in Russia, once saw a part of Narochnitskii's plan dealing with Central Asia and Kazakhstan in a special collection (*Spetskhran*) of the Russian State Library in Moscow. From this document Arapov assumes that the project had been drawn by the Moscow Institute of History on the order of the Central Committee. However, the Central Committee did not exert much pressure on the national scientific institutes that were responsible for writing the regional narratives; in Arapov's mind, the idea met resistance in the republics and was eventually given up.⁵¹²

It is clear from all sources that the idea of regional histories was not just Narochnitskii's initiative. First, institutes of four specializations (i.e. history, ethnography, archeology, and oriental studies) from all over the Union were obliged to participate in the project, therefore it must have been agreed with the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR or, most likely, by central governmental and party institutions. Second, there were similar regional history projects on the Northern Caucasus, Transcaucasia, and the Baltic republics.⁵¹³ Maybe the overall initiative for these projects was a governmental response on the rise of Mirasism⁵¹⁴ – the general rehabilitation of the Islamic heritage by Muslim peoples of the Soviet Union –and nationalism in all republics. However, only the volume on the Northern Caucasus ever saw the light of the day.⁵¹⁵

Meanwhile the writing of national histories continued. The new collective of well-educated Orientalists in the Alma-Ata Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography started to edit a huge five-volume *History of the Kazakh SSR since Ancient Times up to the*

⁵¹² This is cited from a private letter of Sergei N. Abashin to the author. 26 September 2011. I am indebted to Sergei N. Abashin, who asked Dmitrii Iu. Arapov on my request about this project.

⁵¹³ OVA KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 1231, Sv. 120, *Dokumenty po chetyrekhtomniku "Regional'naia istoriia Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana" (s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei), 1976-1977*, f. 52.

⁵¹⁴ S.A. Dudoignon, "Djadidisme, mirasisme, islamisme," in: *Cahiers du Monde russe*, vol. 37, no. 1/2 (Jan. – Jun., 1996), 12-40; E.J. Lazzarini, "Tatarovedenie and the "New Historiography" in the Soviet Union: Revising the Interpretation of the Tatar-Russian Relationship," in: *Slavic Review*, Vol. 40, Issue 4 (Winter 1981), 625-635; E.L. Lazzarini, "The Revival of Islamic Culture in Pre-Revolutionary Russia: or, why a Prosopography of the Tatar Ulema?" in: Ch. Lemercier-Quelquejay, G. Veinstein, S.E. Wimbush, *Turco-Tatar Past – Soviet Present. Studies Presented to Alexandre Bennigsen* (Paris, 1986), 367-372; A.K. Bustanov, *Miras: Knigi kak kul'turnyi kapital: Musul'manskie rukopisi v Zapadnoi Sibiri* (Moscow, 2013).

⁵¹⁵ *Istoriia narodov Severnogo Kavkaza, konets XVIII veka – 1917*, 2 vols. ed. by A.L. Narochnitskii (Moscow, 1988). I am very grateful to Dr. Vadim V. Trepavlov, senior researcher of the Institute of Russian History (Moscow) for this reference.

Present Day.⁵¹⁶ This edition is still most authoritative in scholarly circles, because of the large amount and diversity of sources used, and also because of the unquestionable skills of the collective of authors. However, the main theoretical positions remained the same as in the 1950s, except a more complex understanding of nomadism in close historical interaction with the settled world, and a growing acknowledgement of the common cultural characteristics in southern Kazakhstan and other Central Asian republics.

In 1975 the meeting of historians of Central Asia and Kazakhstan was organized in Andijan (Uzbek SSR). There it was decided to conduct symposiums on the less-studied problems of the history of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in 1976-1977. Most probably, the conference *Early Medieval Culture of Central Asia and Kazakhstan* in Penjikent (Tajikistan, August 1977)⁵¹⁷ was one of these symposiums, which were meant to help composing a regional history. As Daghestani Arabist Amri R. Shikhsaidov (b. 1928) remembers, also in the Northern Caucasus regional collectives of authors gathered for meetings, for example in Nal'chik. Shikhsaidov was a chief of the group responsible for the Northern Caucasus. He also underlined that even the participants of the project did not know who was behind the entire idea.⁵¹⁸

However, in 1979 the Branch of History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR suddenly decided to abort the project. From the perspective of the Alma-Ata Institute of History it was stated that for two years (1977-1979) the scholars prepared considerable material which was now to be used in other works. In Kazakhstani documents I have found only one unclear explanation why the project was closed: "in the region of Central Asia and Kazakhstan there were certain problems with the writing of such a book".⁵¹⁹ Nothing surprising, since by contrast to the 'central' discourse on regionalism, the national discourses were overall aggressive. Their adherents did not want to share their identities with their neighbors.

⁵¹⁶ *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei v piati tomakh*, ed. by A.N. Nusupbekov (Alma-Ata, 5 vols., 1977-1980).

⁵¹⁷ OVA KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 1231, Sv. 120, *Dokumenty po chetyrekhtomniku "Regional'naia istoriia Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana" (s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei), 1976-1977*, f. 52, 84.

⁵¹⁸ Interview with Amri R. Shikhsaidov by Michael Kemper and the author, Makhachkala, Daghestan, 14 June 2011.

⁵¹⁹ OVA KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 1375, Sv. 137, *Dokumenty po uchastiiu v nauchnykh konferentsiakh, o sniatii s plana rabot temy "Regional'naia istoriia Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana"*, 1979, f. 19.

Turkologist Sergei G. Kliashtorny provides us with a more detailed view from Leningrad. This is what he says:

“There was a surprising incident in our history in the 1970s. In the Academy of Sciences Academician Narochnitskii, a good historian of the Russian school, was Academic Secretary of the Branch of Historical Sciences. Probably someone suggested to him to organize work about regional histories instead of national differentiation. The thing is that peoples in the Caucasus and Central Asia have a common heritage, it is necessary to write regional history. Then emissaries from the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences came [to the Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad] and ordered: here is your part of the general regional history of Central Asia which you have to write together with the Moscow colleagues and with scholars from the national republics. *It is not a request and not a task, it is an order* (italics is mine – A.B.). I obtained an order that was included in the scientific work plan of the Institute: you should write it by this and that date. To refuse it was impossible. The Soviet Academy of Sciences was a state institution: you have to do what the bosses order. I am a civil servant. Usually our themes appeared ‘from below’ as a result of how science develops out of itself; but sometimes political influence made itself felt.

Local scholars tried to write the history of adjacent territories on the basis of a common set of sources, everyone drew from the general heritage for his own nationality. We understood that it [i.e. trying to bring national histories together] does not work. When we wrote, for example, the history of Kirgizia or Kazakhstan, we put the same material into different books. This was [regarded as] correct, because a separate history within Turkestan did not exist. But suddenly the whole work was brought to a close. When materials from various places came to Moscow, the leaders of the project saw that the ‘national staff’ discredited each other in national matters, no people wanted to be in a general history with their neighbor. Scholars in the Academy of Sciences were puzzled, they rushed to the CPSU Central Committee, and the officials there were horrified: ‘Who in the Academy decided to have our Soviet peoples quarrel among themselves?’ All themes were closed, and we returned safely to the normal employment. Thus when politics interfere with science, they fail.”⁵²⁰

Kliashtorny is also doubtful that the initiative came from Academician Narochnitskii, at least because the latter was not an expert in the question, although he al-

⁵²⁰ Interview with Sergei G. Kliashtorny by the author, the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, 24 September 2009.

ways appeared as the main promoter of the project. The leading Leningrad specialists were obliged to write certain parts of the regional history. They already began doing that, but it soon became clear that colleagues from Central Asian republics (and probably also in other regions) did not want to appear in a common history with their present neighbors. Cultural symbols had already been divided between the republics; nobody wanted to share his centuries-old cultural heritage with their neighbors.

When the program stopped, academician Narochnitskii was punished: the Party officials realized that a common history of Central Asian peoples is a utopia and sought a person in charge to blame. In Moscow it was explained that ‘someone’ had wanted to pose the Soviet peoples against each other. However, Narochnitskii did not suffer much; according to Kliashturnyi he was simply reprimanded. The entire project lasted six years (1974-1980), and judging from its large-scale character it was not an accidental decision to start writing regional histories. From the project’s concept it is obvious that the authorities wanted to equalize nationalities all over the Soviet Union. What is difficult to understand is that previously the government spent almost fifty years, millions of rubles, and two generations of scholars to build cultural borders between Central Asian nations. Of course, this project of regional history did not imply the dissolution of national republics. Rather, it aimed at finding a common language for the various national elites and intelligentsias, because at that time the disagreements between national schools were getting larger. This attempt failed, but the Soviet government did not put pressure on the elites. Obviously, the times had already changed — after Stalin the Center preferred to solve issues in the framework of agreements rather than by means of repression.

All manipulations in relation to the national peripheries, be it dividing or integrating, pursued the goal to achieve and maintain the unity of the Soviet state. As Francine Hirsch recommended, “it is important to remember that the Soviet regime was not interested in ‘making nations’ for their own sake. The regime’s administrators and experts delineated and manipulated nationality categories and territories with the aim of consolidating the Soviet state.”⁵²¹ However, by the 1970s the Central Asian states had grown mature and the center clearly lacked both the authority and the power of conviction that it had enjoyed under Stalin and Khrushchev. The failure of imposed regionalization on Central Asian his-

⁵²¹ F. Hirsch, “Toward an Empire of Nations: Border-Making and the Formation of Soviet National Identities,” in *The Russian Review* 59 (April 2000), 209.

toriography therefore provides another facet to our emerging understanding of Brezhnev's 'Stagnation' — an immobility that had been achieved through the delegation of authority and resources to the republics.

Conclusion

The national historical narratives had a number of common features. First of all, the language of science: almost all works written in this genre were produced in Russian, from the 1920s up to the years of independence, when finally a couple of works appeared in Kazakh as well⁵²². The use of Russian was a common feature of national metanarratives for the whole of Central Asia, but in the Kazakh as well as in the Kirgiz cases, the Russian language dominated the academic sphere more than anywhere else, not only in print form but also on the level of daily conversation. In other Central Asian republics this was not necessarily the case; while the main works were published in Russian, there was always a certain space for scientific publications in the native languages.

For example, Bobodzhan Gafurov first published his book *Istoriia tadzhikskogo naroda v kratkom izlozhenii* in the Tajik language (1947) and only later in Russian (1949). All other major national histories of Central Asia were published only in Russian, often with shorter versions in the native languages. The reason lies in the demographic situation in the Kazakh republic. It is well known that up to the 1990s the Kazakh people did not constitute a majority in their own republic, especially in urban centers. Russians, Uzbeks, and Tatars dominated the cities, where also the main academic institutions were located. Alma-Ata, the former Russian outpost Vernyi, had been the main (if not only) city of importance in this context. As Ronald Suny states:

“[In] Kazakhstan the Russian language was overwhelmingly the language of urban Kazakhs — not to mention the more than 50 percent of the population that was not Kazakh. Although the government and party apparatus had been ethnically Kazakhized from the 1960s, that elite, as well as the great bulk of the educated population, preferred Russian to Kazakh in both their official and daily lives. (...) About 40 percent of Kazakhs could express themselves in their “mother tongue” and some three-quarters of urban Kazakhs [used] Russian [rather] than Kazakh in everyday conversations. Kazakh had a low status among non-Kazakhs, and few bothered to

⁵²² For example: S. Aspendiiarov, *Kazaqstan tarikhining ocherkteri* (Almaty, 1994).

learn the language, whereas Russian was understood by Kazakhs to be the medium for social advancement.”⁵²³

Indeed this demographical situation caused the appearance of a category of the Kazakh population which was purely Russian-speaking, and which the rural population pejoratively referred to as “asphalt Kazakhs” (Rus. *asfal’nye Kazakhi*). The majority of Kazakh scholars, especially after WWII, was close to this category or was at least bilingual. This did not mean (or at least did not aim at) Russification: the Russian language became a lingua franca for a multiethnic intelligentsia⁵²⁴, which continued to be nationally colored.

The second feature is that the writing of national histories moved from the hands of the Kazakh intelligentsia (Asfendiiarov, Tynyshpaev) to the large academic collectives that included specialists from Leningrad, Moscow, and Alma-Ata. If the first experiences of history writing were individual work following pre-revolutionary traditions, the Soviet style of organizing scholarship transferred this task to huge collectives of authors.

National historiography was based on those sources which started to be discovered and published on a large scale since the mid-1930s, when the investigation of the Soviet Orient became a state priority. The combination of written and archeological sources allowed scholars to focus on the history of the southern regions of the Kazakh republic, while at the same time acknowledging that Kazakh statehood was born in the central and western provinces. The national narrative addressed a number of problematic issues concerning the role of nomadic life style, its backwardness, the question of the existence of cities and the role of settled civilization, the time and birth place of the first Kazakh state and its character, the type of socio-economic relations, and the role of foreign invasions in cultural development. The general Party line determined which opinions were accepted at which point in time, and which were treated as pan-Islamist, pan-Iranist, and so forth. It was possible to totally rewrite a given history (as for example the 1957 edition of the 1943 *History of the Kazakh SSR*) and to invite scholars to conferences where all decisions had already been made previously and were then aggressively lobbied.

⁵²³ R.G. Suny, “Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations,” in *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 73, no. 4 (Dec. 2001), 878.

⁵²⁴ P.A. Blitstein, “Nation-Building or Russification? Obligatory Russian Instruction in the Soviet Non-Russian School, 1938-1953,” in R.G. Suny, T. Martin (eds.), *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (Oxford, 2001), 253-274.

The politics of creating independent histories of the different republics for cementing the national demarcation of the past bore fruits: when in the late 1970s the Soviet government tried to reintroduce an opposite approach, i.e. regional histories of the Baltic republics, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, this attempt failed. The construction of a common identity became impossible: each republic claimed its own rights on the symbols of the past. At the same time we see the development of ‘Mirasism’ – the revival of national pasts, often including a partial rehabilitation of the Islamic heritage.⁵²⁵ Also this phenomenon had its roots in the strategy of dividing history into national pieces.

The regional concept of Central Asian history had always been present. Sometimes it was used by adherents of the new national methods, or it was transformed into a new ‘friendship of republics myth’ on the new stage of socialist development. If regionalism in historiography was an attempt to manipulate ethnic identities through moving accents from national markers to regional ones, then we can state that it failed. Almost fifty years of the predominance of nationality obviously led to strong walls between republics on the cultural level. The national intelligentsia who participated in history writing did not want to be situated in a common historical space with its neighbors; vertical ties with Russians were overall accepted, but not horizontal ties on the regional level.

⁵²⁵ S. A. Dudoignon, “Djadidisme, mirasisme, islamisme,” *Cahiers du monde russe*, vol. 37, no. 1-2 (1996): 13-40; Y. Ro’i, “The Soviet and Russian Context of the Development of Nationalism in Soviet Central Asia,” *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* vol. 32, no.1 (1991), 123-141.