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For my mother and father

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A Note on Transliteration

During the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Uzbek/ Turkic has been written in Arabic script, Cyrillic script, and several different versions of Latin script. I have opted for simplicity and uniformity in transliteration by following the version of Latin script currently used in Uzbekistan. This is relatively simple with respect to Cyrillic, but for the 1930s it sometimes has the unfortunate effect of flattening vernacular dialectal distinctions within the territory of Uzbekistan, as well as trans-regional intelligibility among Turkic languages. When the source text, e.g. a regional worker's correspondence, contains obvious evidence of dialectal or historical variation, I have attempted to reflect this in the transliteration, while I have corrected obvious typographical or spelling errors. However, readers interested in historical linguistics, for which these publications provide a rich though problematic source, are invited to return to the original texts.

For Russian and Tajik I have used the Library of Congress transliteration rules. I have made exceptions to these rules for toponyms and proper names with widely accepted non-standard transliterations in English (e.g. Ferghana not Farg'ona, Tashkent not Toshkent).

In the bibliography, authors whose works are published in more than one language may appear in multiple locations (e.g. Kakhkhar and Qahhor).

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Abbreviations and Foreign Words

Boi	(Uzb.) rich man
KP(b) Uz	Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Uzbekistan
Kulak	(Rus.) wealthy peasant
KUTV	Communist University for the Toilers of the East
MOPR	International Organization for Aid to the Warriors of the Revolution
MTS	Machine-Tractor Staion
Narkompros	People's Commisariat for Enlightenment (Education Ministry)
Narkomzdrav	People's Commissariat for Health
NKVD	Soviet Secret Police (1934-46)
O'zAPP	(Uzb.) Uzbekistan Association of Proletarian Writers
O'zMDA	Uzbekistan National State Archive
OGPU	Soviet Secret Police (1923-34)
OSOAVIAKHIM	Society for Cooperation with Defense and Aviation-Chemical Construction (USSR)
RGALI	Russian State Archive of Literature and Art
RGASPI	Russian State Archive of Social-Political History
RSFSR	Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic
SATASS	Central Asian Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union
SPUz	Writers' Union of Uzbekistan
SredAzBiuro	Central Asian Bureau (Communist Party)
TAPP	Tashkent Association of Proletarian Writers
Turkpolitprosvet	Turkestan Division Political Education
Zhenotdel	Women's Division

Introduction

Fig. 0.1
"In place of a mosque, a club"
SOURCE: "Vmesto mecheti - klub." *Pravda Vostoka*, April 15, 1929, p. 5.

In mid-April 1929, *Truth of the East*, the official Russian-language newspaper of the Communist Party's Central Asian Bureau, published a photograph showing the minaret of a mosque in Tashkent's old city.[1] The Bolshevik campaign against Islam in Central Asia had recently intensified, and the mosque had been closed not long before. In the picture, four young

[1] "Vmesto mecheti - klub." *Pravda Vostoka*, April 15, 1929, p. 5.

male activists stood around the base of the minaret, while three others leaned out of its windows. Several of the activists reached out their hands to raise two red flags over the minaret — one on the right, and one on the left. The caption claimed that these youth, members of the poor peasants' group Qo'shchi, were in the process of converting the now-defunct mosque into a Komsomol club. "In place of a mosque, a club," the caption summarized triumphantly.

The picture was striking, and presumably, the editors responsible for publishing the photograph believed it to show the victories of socialism in Central Asia. But within days, they came under attack from an agitprop administrator, Shumiatskii, who claimed that the image gave precisely the wrong impression. "This photograph documents for the viewer," he complained, "That the closure of the mosque is being carried out not by masses of the population, but only by Komsomol members; that even the Komsomol members do not appear as a mass, but merely in a group of seven; and that the closed mosque is not being handed over to the population, but merely as a club for the Komsomol cell."[2] In other words, Shumiatskii was concerned that in looking at the picture of the mosque-club, Central Asians would see only a handful of youthful zealots. Instead of an irresistible groundswell of popular mobilization, they would see only a trickle of state-manufactured initiatives. In short, looking at the *Truth of the East* photograph, Central Asian audiences would see themselves not as participants in the Soviet project, but merely as passive observers; or, worse, as the front for an illegitimate claim of popular sovereignty. The picture suggested that the mosque the Komsomol were ostensibly taking *for* the people, they were actually taking *from* the people.[3]

[2] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 1957, l. 18. The Shumiatskii mentioned here is almost certainly Boris Zakharovich Shumiatskii, who in 1929 was rector of the Communist University for Toilers of the East (KUTV) and a member of the Central Asian Bureau; in 1930, he was to become director of Soiuzkino, the official state institution for film production.

[3] For this observation and turn of phrase, I am indebted to Sam Hodgkin.

During the first two Five-Year Plans, the period covered in this dissertation, the Party-state aspired to unprecedented control over social, political, and economic life in Central Asia. At the same time, the transformations the state attempted to effect — creating new nations, "emancipating" women, promoting "proletarians," achieving cotton autarky, and collectivizing agriculture — required mass participation. Hence Shumiatskii's anxieties: on the one hand, the closure of the mosque was a state-led initiative, and a highly unpopular one at that. On the other hand, if any of the Soviet state initiatives were to move forward, the masses needed to get on board.

The Bolsheviks had long entertained a fantasy that mass participation and Party control would one day converge. According to this fantasy, once the masses achieved the proper level of consciousness, the state would wither away and a classless, communist society would reign supreme. In the meantime, socialism had to be mediated in order to facilitate participation from masses that were all too often backward, lazy, indifferent, or resistant. The picture from *Truth of the East* indicates two major ways that the Soviet system attempted to mediate socialism for Uzbekistan's masses. First, the club: state-sponsored "mass institutions" served as venues not only for the passive reception of propaganda, but also for organizing the masses around state discourses and state projects. These institutions included workers' clubs, women's clubs, cultural circles, the Soviet Writers' Union, and most of all, thousands of Red Teahouses. Second, the mass media, including film, radio, visual and material culture, and most of all print culture, served both to communicate Party directives, and to help Central Asians imagine themselves as participants in state projects. I term this nexus of mass institutions and mass media the *state public sphere.*

In this dissertation, I examine how Central Asians participated in and shaped the state public sphere during the first two Five-Year Plans (1928-37). I argue that, despite state aspirations to total control, the dynamics of mass participation inflected the functioning of the state public sphere in unexpected ways. Sometimes, the state public exhibited a sedimentary dynamic, as pre-existing norms of sociability and practices of cultural production persisted, albeit in an altered form, under the aegis of the state public.[4] The mosque may have become a club, but no one ever forgot that it used to be a mosque.

In other ways, the state public created the conditions of possibility for self-organization that went beyond, and sometimes undermined the Party-state's agenda for mass mobilization. As Alexei Yurchak has argued with reference to the late Soviet period, the "official" public sphere in fact facilitated the creation of multiple publics, all of which functioned "in relation to authoritative discourse" but were never entirely defined by it.[5]

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[4] In making this observation, I do not intend to posit a binary between a rational, Soviet European modernity and the survivals of a "traditional" Central Asian society. If anything, in fact, the most influential substratum for Uzbekistan's state public was the Islamic modernist intelligentsia, who were hardly "traditional." I discuss them at greater length below. I draw the language of a "sedimentary" social dynamic from Alfred Rieber, who used it to describe the persistence of older forms of social organization even in the face of top-down reforms and social change, such as Peter the Great's introduction of the Table of Ranks. Alfred Rieber, "The Sedimentary Society," in , *Between Tsar and People: Educated Society and the Quest for Public Identity in Late Imperial Russia*, eds. Edith W. Clowes, Samuel D. Kassow, and James L. West (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 343-66.

[5] Yurchak argues that state-sponsored institutions such as the Komsomol gave rise, in the late Soviet period, to what he describes as "multiple deterritorialized publics." Yurchak describes a late Soviet "performative shift" in which the authoritative discourses of socialism had long ago become ossified and therefore functioned performatively, rather than as units of "constative meaning." Yurchak draws on theory from Deleuze and Guattari in arguing that these publics were "deterritorialized" insofar as, when they were addressed, they recognized themselves to be part of a shared public, but not always the kind of public presumed in the address: "The kind of public these addresses brought into existence was *nonidentical* with how the addressed public was articulated in authoritative discourse, such as the 'Soviet people' or the 'Soviet toilers.'" I describe a situation, not of deterritorialization, but of *pre*territorialization, in which state discourses, particularly in the Soviet periphery, were very much still under construction. Yurchak, Alexei. *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), esp. pp. 116-118. For his insights into the unstable potentials of modern mass publicity, I am indebted to the work of William Mazzarella; see William Mazzarella. *Censorium: Cinema and the Open Edge of Mass Publicity*. (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2013); William Mazzarella. *The Mana of Mass Society*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017). Scholars of post-Soviet Russia have also noted the dynamics of the state-sponsored public sphere and civil society: see Julie Hemment. "Nashi, Youth Voluntarism, and Potemkin NGOs: Making Sense of Civil Society in Post-Soviet Russia." *Slavic Review* 71, no. 2 (2012): 234–60; Julie Hemment. *Youth Politics in Putin's Russia: Producing Patriots and Entrepreneurs*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015). Susan Gal has made a similarly nuanced use of the term "public"

Soviet Publicity, Soviet Subjectivity

The term "public sphere" is controversial when applied to the Russian Empire, and unusual when used with reference to the Soviet period. Consequently, my use of the term requires some explanation. At the most basic level, I use the term as a translation of the vocabulary that my historical actors used to refer to the masses as organized through mass institutions and media: in Russian, *obshchestvennost'*, and in Uzbek, *jamoatchilik*. For example, Party activists spoke of "mobilizing *obshchestvennost'*" on behalf of socialist competition by organizing events, putting up posters, and cultivating workers' correspondents in the periodical press.[6] The members of *obshchestvennost'* were called upon to promote the radio, pay more attention to theater and drama, distribute more books to rural areas, and help organize the 1934 Central Asian Musical-Cultural Olympiad.[7] A Soviet Uzbek writer argued that state institutions like the Narkompros would never be able to create a truly proletarian literature alone: the entire "*jamoatchilik* of proletarians and workers" would need to rally around literary associations to do so.[8]

To my knowledge, I am the first Western scholar to discuss this term as it was used in Soviet Central Asia. However, scholars of Russian history more broadly have extensively debated how to understand the language of *obshchestvennost'* and translate it into English. These debates, pertaining mostly to the late imperial period of Russian history, surround the relative strength of Russia's civil society or public sphere, and the presence or absence of a precedent for the

with respect to socialist Eastern Europe; see Susan Gal, "Semiotics of the Public/ Private Distinction." *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Spring 2002), pp. 77-95.

[6] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 1897, l. 16

[7] On the radio, see Iskandar Qalandarov. "Radio ko'rugi davom qiladi," *Kolxoz Yo'li*, Oct. 6, 1931, p. 3; on book distribution, see "Qishloqqa kitob," *Yosh Leninchi*, June 8, 1932, p. 2; on the Olympiad, see "Sho'ra, kasaba jamoatchiligining yordamini kutamiz," Jan. 14, 1934; on theater and drama, Ziyo Said, "Yosh dramaturglar, musobaqaga chaqirildingiz!" *Yosh Leninchi*, April 21, 1932, p. 2.

[8] O'razay, "Go'zal adabiyot sohasidagi vazifalarimiz haqida." *Alanga*, 1930 (no. 1), p. 9.

institutions of liberal democracy in Russia and its sphere of influence.[9] I do not purport to contribute to these debates. With respect to the Soviet period, the term is much less widely discussed. Matthew Lenoe, for example, has translated *obshchestvennost'* as "official society," claiming, too narrowly in my view, that the term denotes "party activists and officials."[10] Others have opted to leave the term untranslated, while also acknowledging the concept's kinship with ideas from European political theory such as civil society and the public sphere.[11]

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[9] This scholarship is far too extensive to discuss in full here. Vadim Volkov has argued that *obshchestvennost'* is Russia's "lost concept of a civil society." Vadim Volkov, "Obshchestvennost': Russia's Lost Concept of Civil Society," in *Civil Society in the Baltic Sea Region,* eds. Norbert Götz and Jörg Hackmann (Aldershot, Hants, England: Ashgate, 2003), pp 63-75. Joseph Bradley has used the term "public sphere"; see Joseph Bradley, "Voluntary Associations, Civic Life, and Obshchestvennost' in Moscow," in *Between Tsar and People,* eds. Clowes, Kassow, and West, pp. 131–48. Vera Kaplan does the same, with important caveats about is relative lack of autonomy from the state. Vera Kaplan. *Historians and Historical Societies in the Public Life of Imperial Russia*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2017). The scholarship on civil society and the public sphere in late imperial Russia varies from the optimistic — emphasizing the vibrant communities organized in late imperial Russia — to the pessimistic, emphasizing both the relative weakness of Russian civil society, as well as its role in fomenting anti-Semitism, among other social ills. On the positive end of the spectrum are Shevzov, *Russian Orthodoxy;* Joseph Bradley, "Subjects into Citizens: Societies, Civil Society, and Autocracy in Tsarist Russia." *The American Historical Review*, no. 4 (2002): 1094-1123; Joseph Bradley, *Voluntary Associations in Tsarist Russia: Science, Patriotism, and Civil Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009); Wayne Dowler, *Russia in 1913* (DeKalb, Ill: Northern Illinois University Press, 2012); on the negative end: Benjamin Nathans, *Beyond the Pale: The Jewish Encounter with Late Imperial Russia*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Faith Hillis, *Children of Rus': Right-Bank Ukraine and the Invention of a Russian Nation.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013); Laura Engelstein, "The Dream of a Civil Society in Tsarist Russia: Law, State, and Religion," in Nancy Bermeo and Philip Nord, eds., *Civil Society Before Democracy: Lessons from Nineteenth-Century Europe* (2000), (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), pp. 23-41. It is also worth noting that *obshchestvennost'* is used to translate the German term *öffentlichkeit,* the same as that used by Habermas, in a recent *begriffsgeschichte* published in Russian; see Lucian Hölscher. "Publichnost'/ Glasnost'/ Publichnaia Sfera/ Obshchestvennost' (Öffentlichkeit)." In *Slovar' Osnovnykh Istoricheskikh Poniatii: Izbrannye Stat'i*, ed. D. Sdvizhkov and I. Shirle, Vol. 1. (Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2014). See also the useful definition offered in Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd. "Obshchestvennost', sobornost': Collective Identities," from *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution, 1881-1940,* pp. 26-27. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. On the relationship between the often-confused terms "civil society" and "public sphere" in English, see Calhoun, Craig. "Civil Society and the Public Sphere." *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780195398571.013.0025. *Djama'a*, the Arabic root for *jamoatchilik*, has a long history in Islamic thought, referring originally to the Islamic community, whose consensus became a basis for Islamic law, particularly among Sunnis. By the late 19th-early twentieth century, Islamic modernist thinkers used the term *djama'a* and its derivatives to refer to what we might call civil society. Hence, in 1910 Bukharan modernists hosted a *Jam'iyat-i Tarbiyat-yi atfal,* a secret Society for the Education of Youth. For a useful summary of the history of the term, see L. Gardet, L. and J. Berque, "Djamāʿa", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, Ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, Consulted online on May 28, 2019.

[10] Matthew E. Lenoe, *Closer to the Masses: Stalinist Culture, Social Revolution, and Soviet Newspapers*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004, pp. 52, 56.

[11] "Introduction," from *Obshchestvennost' and Civic Agency in Late Imperial and Soviet Russia: Interface between State and Society*, ed. Yasuhiro Matsui, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 1-15; see also the other essays in the volume, especially Zenji Asaoka, "Nikolai Bukharin and the *Rabsel'kor*

For the purposes of this project, I concur with Stuart Finkel that the term "public sphere" can usefully be applied to translate *obshchestvennost'*, particularly insofar as it conveys the comparability of Soviet *obshchestvennost*' with the public sphere as theorized by Jürgen Habermas.[12] Habermas has described a bourgeois public sphere that once functioned as a space for rational-critical deliberation of private citizens about state policy, organized around a nexus of voluntary social institutions (e.g. coffeehouses) and the print media (newspapers).[13] In the twentieth-century age of mass media and the social welfare state, this public sphere underwent a "structural transformation," reducing its function from rational-critical deliberation to the mere "acclamation" of whatever agenda was communicated through the mass media.[14] The now-

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Movement: *Sovetskaia Obshchestvennost'* under the 'Dictatorship of the Proletariat', pp. 82-108; Yasuhiro Matsui, "*Obshchestvennost'* in Residence: Community Activities in 1930s Moscow," pp. 109-27; Mie Nakachi, "What Was *Obshchestvennost'* in the Time of Stalin? The Case of the Post-war Soviet Medical Profession," pp. 128-51. The introduction offers a useful overview of the scholarly debate surrounding the term, as well as a summary of its various meanings — *obshchestvennost'* could be used to denote a quality of character ("civic-mindedness") as well as a socio-political entity. See also Pate, Alice K. "Workers and Obshchestvennost': St Petersburg, 1906–14." *Revolutionary Russia* 15, no. 2 (December 1, 2002): 53–71.

[12] Stuart Finkel. *On the Ideological Front: The Russian Intelligentsia and the Making of the Soviet Public Sphere*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 12. Finkel notes that in the prerevolutionary period, the term was used with slightly different meanings among the radical intelligentsia and among liberals; see p. 6. Also of note for its use of the term "public sphere" with respect to the Soviet period is *Public Spheres in Soviet-Type Societies: Between the Great Show of the Party-State and Religious Counter-Cultures*, ed. Gábor T. Rittersporn, Malte Rolf, Jan C. Behrends, esp. "Exploring Public Spheres in Regimes of the Soviet Type," pp. 23-35; "Open Spaces and Public Realm: Thoughts on the Public Sphere in Soviet-Type Systems," pp. 423-452. In Russian scholarship, the term *obshchestvennost'* is often used to refer to self-organized associational life and the imagined community of engaged citizens. See the usage in Aleksandr Korobeinikov, "Iakutskaia Avtonomiia: Postimperskie Politicheskie Proekty Iakutskoi Inteligentsii, 1905-1922.," *Ab Imperio* 2017, no. 3 (December 28, 2017): 77–118; I. N. Il′ina, *Obshchestvennye organizatsii Rossii v 1920-e gody*. Moskva: In-t rossiiskoi istorii RAN, 2000.
Supporting my thesis about a "state public," some recent studies have begun to show the continued importance of self-organized associational life in the Soviet period, albeit without extensive theorization. Claire L. Shaw, *Deaf in the USSR: Marginality, Community, and Soviet Identity, 1917-1991*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017); Deirdre Ruscitti Harshman. "A Space Called Home: Housing and the Management of the Everyday in Russia, 1890-1935," Ph.D Diss., University of Illinois, 2018.

[13] Jürgen Habermas. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1991).

[14] Habermas, p. 232 (emphasis in the original). In the years since its publication, Habermas's description of a rational-critical eighteenth-century European public sphere has been widely critiqued. One major critique has centered around the fact that, although bourgeois publics are imagined to be universal, in fact the bourgeois public sphere has always excluded women, as well as nonwhite, working-class, and queer people, among others. For normative public sphere theory, the work of Nancy Fraser has been foundational; see Nancy Fraser. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." *Social Text*, no. 25/26 (1990): 56-80; Fraser, Nancy. "Special Section: Transnational Public Sphere: Transnationalizing the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World." *Theory, Culture & Society* 24, no. 4 (July

"mediatized public" was subject to a "*staged and manipulative* publicity displayed by organizations," such as political parties or corporations; and a new public relations apparatus took shape for the "engineering of consent."[15] For Habermas, the "degree of democratization" of a given society could be assessed based on the extent that rational-critical deliberation was overshadowed by acclamation in the public sphere.

In the Soviet Union in the 1930s, rational-critical deliberation was never a function of the public sphere. Instead, the state public sphere was oriented, not toward rational-critical deliberation about policy, nor even primarily toward acclamation of a charismatic leader or the Party, but toward mass mobilization for socialist construction. It also had a profoundly different relationship to the state, operating not under the auspices of capitalist corporations or liberal party politics, but under the exclusive sponsorship of the Communist Party-state.[16] In order to highlight this distinction, I use the terms "state public," "state public sphere," or "Soviet public sphere" when describing my case study. The term may seem oxymoronic, but it communicates the way that the state-sponsored mass media and mass institutions underpinned a social order that was highly undemocratic, but at the same time deeply participatory.[17]

1, 2007): 7–30. Negt and Kluge propose a "proletarian public sphere" that can be counterposed to the bourgeois public sphere; see Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt. *Public Sphere and Experience: Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* (New York: Verso Books, 2016). Michael Warner also problematizes the "self-alienation" that "minoritized" populations must undergo in order to participate in modern publics; see "The Mass Public and the Mass Subject," from Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*. (New York: Zone Books, 2002), pp. 159-186.

[15] Habermas, pp. 194, 232.

[16] Stephen Kotkin provides an essential overview of the nature of the Party-state: "In the absence of private property, all institutions in the USSR were technically part of the state. A key exception was the Communist party, which officially was a voluntary public (*obshchestvennaia*) organization. The party maintained a 'cell' in every institution, and party administrations at all levels had departments paralleling those of the state. The USSR was thus a dualist party-state." The hierarchy laid out in the following pages is the most complete available summary of the organization of the Party-state. See Stephen Kotkin. *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), pp. xix-xxiii.

[17] Nancy Fraser, invested in normative public sphere theory, has criticized the failure of the "dominant wing of socialists and Marxists" to adequately distinguish between the state and the public, resulting in an "authoritarian statist form" of polity wherever socialism has taken root. See Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," p. 56. In a succinct and incisive review article on *obshchestvennost'*, civil society, and the public sphere, Michael David-Fox gestures toward the participatory nature even of the twentieth century's most undemocratic polities, concluding, "A

So far, I have foregrounded the ways that a Soviet public came to be organized in Central Asia through the mediation of state-sponsored institutions and media. At the same time, my study is premised on the idea that a public is the object of imagination as much as organization. In examining the public as an imaginary, I draw especially on the work of Michael Warner, who defines a public as a relation among strangers, "self-organized through discourse."[18] In public communication, Warner points out,

> the available addressees are essentially imaginary, which is not to say unreal: the people, scholarship, the republic of letters, posterity, the younger generation, the nation, the left, the movement, the world, the vanguard, the enlightened few, right-thinking people everywhere, public opinion, the brotherhood of all believers, humanity, my fellow queers. . . They are in principle open-ended. They exist by virtue of their address.

For Michael Warner, it is a structural feature of public discourse that, when addressed as the member of a public, one understands oneself to be part of an indefinite community of strangers one may never meet face-to-face.[19]

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type of civil participation may have to be considered a feature of totalitarian dictatorship as well as a backbone of middle-class democracy." See Michael David-Fox, review of *Obshchestvennye Organizatsii Rossii v 1920-e Gody*, by Irina Nikolaevna Il'ina, *Kritika* 3.1 (2002): 173-81.

[18] Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002): pp. 56, 52. It should be noted that Warner highlights two dimensions of publics that do not entirely correspond to what I describe here: their universality and their autonomy from the state. First, Warner distinguishes publics from "nations, religions, races, guilds," which have membership criteria and are thus not as universal as a "public." I would argue, instead, that a nation (or the "proletariat") is a kind of public, insofar as it constitutes a relation among strangers that is self-organized through discourse, even though it may be exclusionary. Second, I argue that in the Soviet context, there was a space for mass publicity although it never functioned independently of the state. Indeed, in the end of his treatment, Warner points out that the public is easily connected to the state through "transpositions upward to the level of the state," because "public opinion" serves to legitimate state power. In modern political theory, including and perhaps especially in the Soviet context, the public was always understood as being sovereign. Even Stalin, despite his outsized personality cult, only legitimated his power through appeal to the love and support of the Soviet people. The Soviet case thus hardly corresponds to Warner's definition of totalitarianism as "nonkin society organized by bureaucracy and the law" (52). Beyond bureaucracy and the law, I argue, participation in "voluntary" institutions and the mass media were the bedrock of Soviet society in 1930s Central Asia. In questioning Warner's assumption that publics must always be autonomous from the state, I follow Yurchak, *Everything Was Forever*, p. 116. Dipesh Chakrabarty has discussed the use of the imagination in colonial and postcolonial national projects, arguing that imagination should not be dismissed merely as a category of European continental philosophy. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 149-79.

[19] Warner's definition of the public thus bears a striking resemblance to the understanding of the nation that Benedict Anderson articulated. Anderson's nation, like Warner's public is a modern relation among strangers,

In 1930s Uzbekistan, the categories of "proletarian," "worker," "Uzbek," and "Soviet" were all open-ended categories of public address, much like those Michael Warner enumerates above. These categories were not, or at least not only, social categories existing empirically in the world. Instead, insofar as they were mobilized in the mass media, they created the conditions of possibility for people in Central Asia both to imagine themselves as members of those publics and to participate in organizations oriented toward those publics. The creation of a state public was thus a dialectical project. When a novelist addressed a "proletarian" public in novel form, he attempted to call that public into being through address. Conversely, when a Red Teahouse patron heard a section of that novel read aloud, he could imagine himself as one among many Central Asian "proletarians," most of whom he would never meet. This project was fraught with discontinuities and disjunctures, which I discuss at greater length below. For now, suffice it to summarize that I examine Soviet mass publicity both as a project of organization and as a work of the imagination.

In its capacity robustly to theorize social life in Soviet Uzbekistan, Soviet publicity complements the theory of Soviet subjectivity that has dominated the social and cultural history of the Soviet Union for over twenty years. Stephen Kotkin pioneered the framework of Soviet subjectivity in his landmark 1995 volume, *Magnetic Mountain*. Drawing on the work of Michel Foucault, Kotkin foregrounded "the processes by which individuals are made, and also make themselves, into subjects under the aegis of the state."[20] Kotkin focused on the everyday,

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organized through discourses that circulate in the mass media. Strangely, however, Warner excludes nations from his understanding of the "public," insofar as they "select strangers by criteria of territory or identity or belief." (Warner, "Publics and Counterbpublics," p. 56). At the same time, as evident in the block quote above, Warner seems to contradict himself by putting forward the "nation" as a category of public address. This contradiction, as well as the apparent congruence between Anderson and Warner, is deserving of further investigation, albeit not in this project. Suffice it to say that in this project, I consider Soviet nation-building to be part of the broader condition of Soviet mass publicity, particularly since, in the Soviet case, the nation was defined first and foremost in terms of language, rather than race or even territory.

[20] Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain*, p. 22.

showing the ways that even in the act of resisting state policy on an everyday level, the people of Magnitogorsk became "New Soviet People." In the ensuing years, many scholars have adapted the lens of subjectivity to an ever-widening array of sources and contexts. Igal Halfin, Jochen Hellbeck, and others have shown ego-documents to be important venues for Soviet self-fashioning. When diarist Stepan Podlubny derides himself for his failure to sufficiently excise bad bourgeois habits, for example, Hellbeck argues that he is attempting to sculpt his flawed bourgeois self into a New Soviet Man.[21] Igal Halfin examines the diary as a device for integrating the individual into a collective: "the life story of a singular and autonomous individual needed to be shattered and recreated as the story of a life lived for the sake of the proletarian movement."[22] Thomas Lahusen, meanwhile, has examined one Socialist Realist novel, not as a "finished [aesthetic] product," but as part of a reflection of its author's ongoing process of self-fashioning.[23] "Indeed," concludes Lahusen, quoting Fredric Jameson, "'people formed in a nonmarket non-consumer-consumptive society do not think like we do.'"[24] According to the adherents of this approach, the entire Soviet system was devoted to creating a New Soviet Person with a new form of "Soviet subjectivity."

The subjectivity school has offered rich insights into the experience of Soviet life, the construction of Soviet social categories, and the participatory nature of Soviet mobilization.[25]

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[21] Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind: Writing a Diary under Stalin* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), especially chapter 4, "Secrets of a Class Enemy: Stepan Podlubny," pp. 165-223. See also Igal Halfin and Jochen Hellbeck, "Rethinking the Stalinist Subject: Stephen Kotkin's 'Magnetic Mountain' and the State of Soviet Historical Studies," *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas* 44, no. 3 (January 1, 1996): 456–63.

[22] Igal Halfin, *Red Autobiographies: Initiating the Bolshevik Self*, Donald W. Treadgold Studies on Russia, East Europe, and Central Asia (Seattle: Herbert J. Ellison Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies, University of Washington, 2011), p. 161.

[23] For his examination of the novel *Far from Moscow* as an effort to imagine and re-imagine socialism, I am indebted to Thomas Lahusen. See Thomas Lahusen, *How Life Writes the Book: Real Socialism and Socialist Realism in Stalin's Russia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 4.

[24] Thomas Lahusen, *How Life Writes the Book: Real Socialism and Socialist Realism in Stalin's Russia* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 4.

[25] On the legacy of the subjectivity school in Soviet studies, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Retrospect: A Personal View," *Slavic Review* 67, no. 3 (2008): 682–704.

More recently, however, scholars have critiqued the liberal preoccupations that continue to bedevil the denizens of the subjectivity school. Anna Krylova points out that dissimulation (as foregrounded in the totalitarian school) and sincerity (as emphasized by the subjectivity school) are two sides of the same coin, both positing the existence of a "stable and coherent Stalinist subject."[26] Other scholars have gestured to the necessity of new methods that would move beyond liberal notions of subjectivity and more robustly theorize the Soviet collective.[27] By framing my argument in terms of publicity rather than subjectivity, I bracket the questions of sincerity and authenticity, belief and resistance that continue to haunt the study of Soviet culture. If, as subjectivity scholars aver, the ultimate goal was for the subject to become integrated into a collective, then it is imperative that we understand the nature of that collective and how it functioned.

That, in a nutshell, is my project here: to understand how Uzbekistan's "masses" became members of a state public through parallel processes of organization and imagination. In order to illuminate both processes, I use a hybrid methodology, incorporating social and institutional history as well as close aesthetic analysis. In so doing, I contribute not only to the historiography of 1930s Uzbekistan, but also to broader debates about Soviet social engineering and the social function of Socialist Realism.

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[26] Anna Krylova. "The Tenacious Liberal Subject in Soviet Studies." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 1, no. 1 (2000), p. 145. William Mazzarella explains the Western fascination with sincerity in totalitarian contexts as a subconscious preoccupation of liberalism revealing more about liberalism itself than about totalitarianism; see William Mazzarella, "Totalitarian Tears: Does the Crowd Really Mean It?," *Cultural Anthropology* 30, no. 1 (February 2, 2015): 91–112.

[27] On the need to theorize the collective, see Choi Chatterjee and Karen Petrone, "Models of Selfhood and Subjectivity: The Soviet Case in Historical Perspective," *Slavic Review*, no. 4 (2008): 980. See also the exchanges between Adeeb Khalid and Anna Krylova in Goswami, M.; Hecht, G.; Khalid, A.; Krylova, A.; Thompson, E. F.; Zatlin, J. R.; Zimmerman, A. "AHR Conversation: History after the End of History: Reconceptualizing the Twentieth Century," *American Historical Review* 121, no. 5 (December 2016): 1567-1607.

Pre-Revolutionary Central Asia

The pre- and early-Soviet context of Central Asia is crucial for understanding the 1930s, which comprise the main subject of my investigation. During the fifty years before the 1917 Revolution, much of the territory that came to comprise the Soviet Socialist Republics of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan was contained in the Russian Governor-Generalship of Turkestan. The Russian Empire's dominion in Central Asia also included protectorates, most notably the Emirate of Bukhara and the Khivan Khanate.[28] The Governor-General ruled largely through local intermediaries, and left local institutions, including *sharia* courts, religious institutions, markets, and guilds, largely intact. The Central Asian territories appear to have been relatively unprofitable for the Russian imperial authorities, who never developed an effective system of taxation or administration.[29] Russians, including tsarist administrators, settler peasants, and industrial or railway workers, comprised a tiny minority of Central Asia's population and were concentrated in Tashkent province. The city of Tashkent, meanwhile, was divided into a native "Old City" and a European quarter.[30] For the mostly Muslim population of Central Asia, cultural life was polycentric, focused in Tashkent, Samarkand, Bukhara, Shahrisabz, and the Ferghana Valley. Samarkand and Bukhara in

[28] On the history of Khoqand up to and including its conquest, see Scott Cameron Levi, *The Rise and Fall of Khoqand, 1709-1876: Central Asia in the Global Age* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2017). On the conquest of Central Asia, see A. M. Malikov, "The Russian Conquest of the Bukharan Emirate: Military and Diplomatic Aspects," *Central Asian Survey* 33, no. 2 (April 3, 2014): 180–98; Sergei Abashin, "The 'Fierce Fight' at Oshoba: A Microhistory of the Conquest of the Khoqand Khanate," *Central Asian Survey* 33, no. 2 (April 3, 2014): 215–31. On the conquest and administration of Russian Turkestan, see Alexander Morrison. *Russian Rule in Samarkand, 1868-1910* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[29] On the motivation for the Russian conquest of Central Asia, see Alexander Morrison, "Introduction: Killing the Cotton Canard and Getting Rid of the Great Game: Rewriting the Russian Conquest of Central Asia, 1814–1895," *Central Asian Survey* 33, no. 2 (April 3, 2014): 131–42; Alexander Morrison, "'Nechto Eroticheskoe', 'Courir Après l'ombre'? – Logistical Imperatives and the Fall of Tashkent, 1859–1865," *Central Asian Survey* 33, no. 2 (April 3, 2014): 153–69. Morrison argues, convincingly, that the motivations for the imperial conquest of Turkestan must be sought locally, rather than attributed to economic incentives (ie. the "cotton canard") or to the Great Game.

[30] On Russian imperial and early Soviet Tashkent, see Jeff Sahadeo, *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent, 1865-1923* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007).

particular were historic trade hubs and home to world-renowned *madrasas*, or Islamic colleges, although they had been somewhat marginalized in the early modern period due to changing trade patterns.[31] The urban population included artisans, merchants, Islamic clergy, and a minuscule industrial working class in some cities. However, the population of Central Asia was largely agrarian, occupied mostly with subsistence farming, and, increasingly from the 1880s, cotton cultivation; Russian Central Asia also included significant nomadic populations.[32] The region was ethnically diverse. The most significant groups of the population included Sarts, or sedentary Turkic-speakers; Tajiks, or sedentary Persian speakers; and Kazakhs, or Turkic-speaking nomads.

Written literary production in Central Asia was embedded in transnational networks, many of which, in the late nineteenth century, consolidated around ideas of unity around Islam and Turkicness.[33] Because they constitute an important precedent for modern modes of publicity in Central Asia, I dwell in particular on the Jadids, or the progressively-minded Islamic modernist intellectuals.[34] To be sure, the Jadids comprised a tiny minority in Central Asian society, where,

[31] On the problem of Central Asia's early modern "decline," see Levi, *Khoqand*.

[32] Cotton growers enjoyed a tax break, and seem to have voluntarily shifted to cotton production in this period due to its economic benefits. See Beatrice Penati, "The Cotton Boom and the Land Tax in Russian Turkestan (1880s–1915)," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 14, no. 4 (November 16, 2013): 741–74.

[33] For discussions of some of these networks, see Nikki R. Keddie. *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamāl Ad-Dīn "Al-Afghānī."* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983); Ada Holland Shissler. *Between Two Empires: Ahmet Ağaoğlu and the New Turkey*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003); Leah Feldman. *On the Threshold of Eurasia: Revolutionary Poetics in the Caucasus*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018).

[34] The term "Jadid" is largely an exonym assigned later, derived from many Islamic modernists' commitment to new methods in education (*usul-i-jadid*). For the sake of brevity, here I have used the term to describe Islamic modernist reformers, but this should not be taken to suggest that they constituted a coherent and stable entity. On the use of this term, see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan,* 32. The definitive study of the Jadids, from which I have derived the material in this paragraph unless otherwise cited, is Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). Recently, some scholars have criticized Khalid for, among other things, what they perceive to be an excessive focus on the Jadids at the expense of the many other native intellectual and cultural networks. These critics have argued that the Jadids were not as coherent a group as Khalid and others have made them out to be; they also object to the binary of "tradition" and "modernity" they perceive to underpin the outsize attention to Jadids at the expense of other Central Asian cultural actors. I do not contribute to this debate here, but I foreground the Jadids for two main reasons: they formed the backbone of the early Soviet state in Central Asia, and they pioneered the print media in pre-Soviet and early Soviet Central Asia.

before the revolution, literacy rates were in the low single digits. Nevertheless, they represented new approaches to the media and society, creating during Turkestan's years under Russian rule something of an analogue, albeit not an "exact match," to the Habermasean public sphere.[35] Jadids came from diverse backgrounds, but found their strongest social base in merchant and clergy families, Turkestan's closest analogue to a bourgeoisie. Through their active associational life and the periodical press, Jadids engaged in conversations of broad political relevance, particularly concerning "self-strengthening" in the face of perceived decline.[36] For this purpose, the periodical press was indispensable, and Jadids quickly came to be represented in visual shorthand as newspaper-toting radicals, in contrast to "backward" clergy with their crumbling, handwritten manuscripts. Jadid-linked publications such as the Crimean Tatar newspaper *Terjuman* and the Transcaucasian satirical journal *Mulla Nasreddin,* as well as the Kazan Tatar press, circulated between and beyond the Ottoman and Russian Empires, generating a trans-imperial community of Turkic- and Persian-speakers.[37] Central Asian Jadid networks centered around the historic cultural centers of Bukhara, Samarkand, and the Ferghana valley, as well as hubs outside the region including Kazan, Istanbul, Ufa, Orenburg, and Baku. Jadids formed

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They thus constitute the direct antecedent to the public sphere I describe taking shape in 1930s Uzbekistan. See Devin DeWeese. "It Was a Dark and Stagnant Night ('til the Jadids Brought the Light): Clichés, Biases, and False Dichotomies in the Intellectual History of Central Asia." *Journal of the Economic & Social History of the Orient* 59, no. 1/2 (March 2016): 37–92; Jeff Eden, Paolo Sartori, and Devin DeWeese. "Moving Beyond Modernism: Rethinking Cultural Change in Muslim Eurasia (19th-20th Centuries)." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 59, no. 1–2 (February 11, 2016): 1–36; Paolo Sartori. "Ijtihād in Bukhara: Central Asian Jadidism and Local Genealogies of Cultural Change." *Journal of the Economic & Social History of the Orient* 59, no. 1/2 (March 2016): 193–236. For Khalid's response to an earlier installation of these critiques, see Adeeb Khalid. *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*. (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2015), pp. 11-12.

[35] For Khalid's discussion of the technical use of the term "public sphere" with respect to the Jadids, see Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, pp. 114-136.

[36] Nikki Keddie applied "self-strengthening" as a heuristic to articulate the commitment to progress in one's own community, even as the definition of that community fluctuated between various national and religious constructs. See Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism,* p. 44.

[37] For a brief discussion about the role of print culture in generating a Jadid public sphere, see Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform,* pp. 134-36. See also Adeeb Khalid. "Printing, Publishing, and Reform in Tsarist Central Asia." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 26, no. 2 (1994): 187–200. On Jadid associational life, see also Hisao Komatsu, "The Evolution of Group Identity among Bukharan Intellectuals in 1911-1928: An Overview," Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko, no. 47 (1989): 122-144.

benevolent societies (*jamiyat)* for the promotion of education and enlightenment in their own communities, sometimes functioning in secret.[38] Prominent leaders, such as Abdurrauf Fitrat (1886-1938) and Munavvar Qori (1878-1931), traveled widely in the Middle East, the Russian Empire, and even Europe, where they came to disdain the "backwardness" of Central Asian society. In particular, they believed that education for all, including women, was key to advancement for their society.[39] From a Jadid perspective, the roots of the Muslim world's decline were cultural, and it was through culture writ large — everyday life, religion, literature, art, and especially education — that progress would take root.

If the Jadids comprised a marginalized, oppositional intelligentsia in the latter years of the Russian Empire, they became vastly more important when the Russian Revolution reached Turkestan. Jadids made common cause with Russian revolutionaries, and their support resulted in decisive victories against the enemies they shared with the Bolsheviks.[40] Not least among these was the Bukharan Emir, whom the Jadids had long decried as backward, and who had consequently harshly repressed the Jadids. As the Bolsheviks attempted to solidify their hold on Central Asia, Jadids served as knowledgeable government administrators and strategists at a period when a Bolshevik victory was far from conclusive. Inspired by Bolshevik anti-colonial rhetoric, they contributed to the defeat of the *bosmachi* rebels who opposed Soviet rule, and provided a local face to a Bolshevik administration that was still struggling to win over regional elites.

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[38] For one important example, see Hisao Komatsu, "The Evolution of Group Identity among Bukharan Intellectuals in 1911-1928: An Overview," *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*, no. 47 (1989): 122ff. For a useful overview, see Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, *Islam and the Russian Empire: Reform and Revolution in Central Asia*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2009, pp. 89-118.

[39] For a discussion of the Jadids and gender, see "Jadids and the Reform of Women," in Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), pp. 32-53.

[40] Carrère d'Encausse, *Islam and the Russian Empire,* pp. 148-184.

As Adeeb Khalid has shown, during the course of the 1920s the Jadids' attachment to Turkic and Muslim identities came to be replaced with a more straightforwardly national project.[41] One of the most important Jadid figures was polymath Abdurrauf Fitrat, who advanced the cause of a modern Uzbek nation through his scholarship, literary production, and administrative work. The new Uzbek nation was rooted in the cultural heritage of the Timurids, but at the same time it was subject to a modernizing impulse. It was in dialogue with Jadid modernizers, including Fitrat, that the Soviet state implemented a script change in the late 1920s, replacing Arabic script with a modified Latin script.[42]

Arguably, the modernist reformers' most significant contribution to early Soviet administration was their role in the national delimitation of 1924, which gave rise to the Central Asian republics we are now familiar with — Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan.[43] The national delimitation of Central Asia concluded a process of carving the Soviet Union into nationally-defined administrative units, populated by categories such as "Uzbek and "Tajik" that were still very much under construction. To make matters more complicated, no Central Asian republic included the titular nationality exclusively. Uzbekistan included significant minorities of Tajiks, Kazakhs, and Kyrgyz; there were also considerable

[41] Khalid rejects the term "nationalism" as pejorative, preferring instead to describe the Jadid project of the 1920s as a "national project." Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, p. 16.

[42] The script change was announced in 1928 and gradually implemented through 1930. On Central Asian script reform, see William Fierman. "Identity, Symbolism, and the Politics of Language in Central Asia." *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 7 (September 2009): 1207–28.

[43] Only in 1929 did Tajikistan obtain the status of a separate Soviet Socialist Republic; until then, it had comprised an autonomous republic (ASSR) within the territory of Uzbekistan. Kyrgyzstan became an ASSR in 1926 and became a union republic only in 1936. Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*, (Ithaca ; London: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 31. On the status of Tajikistan, see "Tajik as a Residual Category," from Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2015), pp. 291-315. For a summary of the process of national delimitation in Central Asia, see Adrienne Lynne Edgar. *Tribal Nation: The Making of Soviet Turkmenistan*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), pp. 43-59.

populations who lacked a Soviet administrative territory, such as Uyghurs and local Persian-speaking Jews.[44]

The Jadids' nascent public sphere proved to be one of their most important assets in the early Soviet context. With the tolerance and, often, the support of the state, the 1920s saw an efflorescence of associational life, including Fitrat's "Chagatay Group," and a variety of men's discussion groups, or *gaps*, where participants debated questions surrounding modernity and national progress. Jadids' pre-Soviet experience with associational life served them well as new Party and Komsomol organizers. Unsurprisingly, Jadids were also some of the most active participants in the early Soviet periodical press in Central Asia. They thus cast a long shadow as the Soviet state public began to address the masses in a new way in the late 1920s.

1930s Uzbekistan: Cultural Revolution and Mass Publicity

My study picks up the story of Central Asian culture and politics in 1928 and concludes in 1937. This period represents a new era of state interventionism in Central Asia.[45] The First Five-Year Plan was announced in 1928. The Second Five-Year Plan took effect in 1933, after the First was "fulfilled" a year early. In Uzbekistan, the Five-Year Plans instituted a cotton monoculture, with the goal of achieving cotton autarky in the Soviet Union, thereby "freeing" the Soviet Union from reliance on trade with capitalist enemies.[46] Collectivization followed soon after, beginning

[44] Until 1938, Central Asia's "local Jews" (*mestnye evrei*), enjoyed a periodical press in Judeo-Tajik and dedicated cultural institutions; after 1938, they lost the status of a separate nationality, including the privileges that came along with it. On the troubled status of the Jews of Central Asia in the early Soviet period, see Levin, Zeev. *Collectivization and Social Engineering: Soviet Administration and the Jews of Uzbekistan, 1917-1939* (Leiden, the Netherlands: Brill, 2015).

[45] This discussion of the late 1920s' transformation is indebted to Chapter 11, "The Assault," from Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, pp. 342-362.

[46] Collectivization in Uzbekistan was preceded by land reform (1925-28), which redistributed land from larger landholders to smaller ones. To put it mildly, collectivization was not optional in Central Asia, but most collective farms in Uzbekistan took shape at least under a pretense of active consent on the part of participants. Unlike in other parts of the Soviet Union, collectivization did not result in devastating famine or starvation, probably because cotton

as a mass project in November 1929. Agitators for collectivization visited the countryside to convince villagers to join collective farms, and over the following years, the vast majority of Uzbekistan's farmers were collectivized.

The effects of collectivization on Central Asia's economy cannot be underestimated. But its impact on culture and society was no less profound, and 1928 marked the start of a "Cultural Revolution" in Central Asia as well as the rest of the Soviet Union.[47] Uzbekistan's cultural revolution reflected many of the characteristics of cultural revolution elsewhere in the Soviet Union— mass literacy initiatives, modernization of everyday life (*byt*), and a related emphasis

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was already so widespread in the region and Uzbekistan, as a cotton-growing nation, was not subject to intense grain requisitions. Nevertheless, there was a famine in Uzbekistan, on a far smaller scale than those of Kazakhstan or Ukraine, in the early spring of 1933. See Marianne Kamp and Russell Zanca, "Recollections of Collectivization in Uzbekistan: Stalinism and Local Activism," *Central Asian Survey* 36, no. 1 (January 2, 2017): pp. 55–72; Marianne Kamp and Russell G. Zanca, *Writing the History of Collectivization in Uzbekistan. [Electronic Resource] : Oral Narratives* (Seattle, WA : National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, 2008); Marianne Kamp. "Hunger and Potatoes: The 1933 Famine in Uzbekistan and Changing Foodways." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian & Eurasian History*, no. 2 (2019): pp. 237–67. On the Kazakhstan famine, see Sarah Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe: Famine, Violence, and the Making of Soviet Kazakhstan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018). Moshe Lewin argues that, from the perspective of the central state, collectivization was a "tactic" to solve the problem of grain shortages and to deal with the "rural nexus" that threatened the success of the revolution's goals; see Moshe Lewin. *Making of the Soviet System* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), especially Section II, "Collectivization." Collectivization is a significant element in the debate about whether the Soviet Union should be considered an imperial/ colonial project; see Christian Teichmann, "Canals, Cotton, and the Limits of de-Colonization in Soviet Uzbekistan, 1924-1941," *Central Asian Survey* 26, no. 4 (December 2007): pp. 499–519. Sergei Abashin foregrounds local participation and agency in the creation and administration of Central Asian collective farms; see Sergei Abashin, *Sovetskii kishlak: Mezhdu kolonializmom i modernizatsiei* (Moskva: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie, 2015). A useful summary of the process as it took shape in Uzbekistan, albeit with all the usual Soviet biases, is R. Kh. Aminova. *Osushchestvlenie kollektivizatsii v Uzbekistane (1929-1932 gg.)* (Tashkent: Fan, 1977). A wide variety of archival documents concerning collectivization and dekulakization in Uzbekistan have been published; see D. A. Alimova, *Tragediia sredneaziatskogo kishlaka: kollektivizatsiia, raskulachivanie, ssylka, 1929-1955 gg.: dokumenty i materialy* (Tashkent: Shark, 2006).

[47] Sheila Fitzpatrick favors a narrow definition of the "cultural revolution" as a phenomenon of 1928-1932, and characterized as a "proletarian seizure of power" from the old-guard denizens of Narkompros by younger cadres. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Cultural Revolution in Russia 1928-32," *Journal of Contemporary History* 9, no. 1 (1974): pp. 33–52; Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Cultural Revolution Revisited," *The Russian Review* 58, no. 2 (1999): pp. 202–09. Other scholars define it more broadly. Adeeb Khalid, for example, describes the ferment of the 1920s as a "cultural revolution." At the same time, he distinguishes between the lowercase revolution of the early-mid 1920s and the Cultural Revolution that began in the late 1920s; in Uzbekistan, this revolutionary moment extends well beyond 1932. For the purposes of this project, I examine the entire 1928-37 period as a cultural revolution. For a more extensive *Begriffsgeschichte* of the concept, see Michael David-Fox, "What is Cultural Revolution? Key Concepts and the Arc of Soviet Cultural Transformation, 1910s-1930s." from Michael David-Fox, *Crossing Borders: Modernity, Ideology, and Culture in Russia and the Soviet Union* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), pp. 104-132.

on "culturedness," encompassing everything from opera attendance to toothbrushing.[48] Mass institutions spearheaded efforts to popularize these initiatives: Red Teahouses hosted literacy and political education courses, modeled good hygiene and sanitation, and offered edifying entertainment like films and musical performances. As collectivization took hold in the countryside, these institutions vastly increased in number and expanded their activities.

In Uzbekistan, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union, the Cultural Revolution of the late 1920s entailed campaigns of violent repression against all deemed to obstruct the Party's campaign for mobilization. Between 1929 and early 1931, a major purge of "bourgeois nationalists" eliminated most of the Jadids from public life through forced retirement or outright murder.[49] By the early 1930s, the Soviet state had also thoroughly undermined the Islamic establishment in Uzbekistan, banning religious education, all but eliminating the local Islamic press, and strictly regulating public worship.[50] In the countryside, those deemed to be *kulaks*, or wealthy farmers, were dispossessed, and many of them were exiled, escaped abroad, or incarcerated in prison camps. These campaigns of state violence dramatically reconfigured the cultural landscape in 1930s Uzbekistan.

Gender-related initiatives also intensified significantly during the late 1920s.[51] From the earliest years of Bolshevik rule, activists both local and European had described Uzbek women

[48] "Culturedness" was the object of a concerted campaign in the mid-1930s, but as Michael David-Fox has argued, many aspects of the campaign were not new, but merely amplified agendas from the 1920s. See

[49] On this purge, see Chapter 12, "Toward a Soviet Order," from Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, pp. 363-389. The purge mirrored attacks on so-called "bourgeois nationalists" throughout the Soviet Union.

[50] See Shoshanna Keller. *To Moscow, Not Mecca: The Soviet Campaign against Islam in Central Asia, 1917-1941* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2001).

[51] The foundational studies of Soviet gender-related initiatives in early Soviet Uzbekistan are Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006); Douglas Taylor Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2004); Gregory J. Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919-1929* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1974).

as "oppressed" and encouraged them to emancipate themselves by unveiling.[52] Beginning in late 1926, the Bolshevik agenda for Muslim women's "emancipation" rapidly gained momentum.[53] The Party and its Women's Division announced an "attack," or Hujum, on veiling and female seclusion. In the Central Asian context, veiling meant more than just a fashion choice: it was embedded in a system of social norms that demanded "respectable" women socialize only with the men in their immediate families, limiting their access to the outside world, and, consequently, state-sponsored institutions and media. The Hujum thus represented a massive intervention in Central Asian social life. The Hujum was extremely controversial, resulting in mass protests and waves of violence against unveiled women, and its most aggressive measures were rolled back in the late 1920s.[54] Still, collectivization and cottonization demanded that women be mobilized to work, and the 1930s saw significant transformations in gender roles in Uzbekistan's society.

In this context, the Soviet media apparatus functioned more widely than ever before. New infrastructure facilitated a far wider distribution for newspapers and journals, whose print runs ballooned as they promoted collectivization and cotton production. For example, the national daily newspaper, *Red Uzbekistan,* reported a daily print run of 25,000 in 1930, which increased to 44,927 by May 1932.[55] The number of books printed in the Uzbek language in Uzbekistan increased from 1909 in 1928 to 8738 in 1933.[56] In 1928, there were 25 newspapers in any

[52] Because of social pressures, these cases were few and far between; some women unveiled on visits to Moscow in the early 1920s, but reveiled on their return to Central Asia. See Northrop, *Veiled Empire*, p. 79, n24.

[53] The Soviet campaign for Central Asian women's "emancipation" was so pervasive that Gregory Massell argued that it replaced even Bolshevik class rhetoric. See Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat*. This argument is an overstatement, to be sure, but it appropriately reflects the centrality of gender-related initiatives in Central Asian policy during the period.

[54] Some of these measures are detailed in Marianne Kamp, "Femicide as Terrorism: The Case of Uzbekistan's Unveiling Murders," in *Belief and Bloodshed: Religion and Violence across Time and Tradition*, ed. James K. Wellman (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).

[55] 1930 statistics are in RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2479, ll. 19-23; 1932 statistics are in RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2970.

[56] The following statistics come from Kh. Pulatov. *Kul'turno-Vospitatel'naia Deiatel'nost' Sovetskogo Gosudarstva v Uzbekistane* (Tashkent: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo uzbekskoi SSR, 1959), pp. 54-55.

language in Uzbekistan; by 1933, there were 49 newspapers in the Uzbek language alone.[57] Newspapers increased in frequency as well: a 1929 resolution, for example, called for several major newspapers to publish three or four times per week, rather than one or two.[58] New infrastructure, such as railroads and radio towers, made possible a vastly broader dissemination than had been possible before. Although radio and film never had the same reach as the print media in this period, radio and film technologies began to be distributed more broadly; the number of film projectors (*kinoustanovki*) in Uzbekistan nearly quadrupled, reaching 469 in 1932 from 121 in 1928.[59] The increased reach of the Soviet media was amplified by a reform that replaced the Arabic script, in which Uzbek and Tajik had previously been written, with a version of Latin script.[60] In addition to being easier to teach and learn, thereby aiding outreach to the masses, the script change had the effect of cutting new generations off from the older Islamic texts that would henceforth be available only to readers of Arabic script.

In light of these vast transformations, much of the scholarship on Central Asia has painted a stark distinction between the 1920s and the 1930s, with the 1920s representing an age of cultural efflorescence and experimentation that shut down with the start of the Cultural Revolution.[61] This narrative has most recently, and most extensively, been put forward by Adeeb Khalid: "the Cultural Revolution put paid to the cultural revolution—the blossoming of new forms of cultural

[57] Ibid.

[58] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2007, l. 58 ob.

[59] Kh. Pulatov, p. 55. The brand-new, but already definitive work on early Soviet film in Uzbekistan is Cloé Drieu, *Cinema, Nation, and Empire in Uzbekistan, 1919-1937* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019). In its attention to the process of film production, as well as aesthetic analysis and reception history, Drieu's approach complements mine. However, because film had a much smaller reach than the print media and music, and because film was dominated by Russians until the late 1930s, I have opted not to include it in my analysis here.

[60] On the script change, see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, pp. 262-266.

[61] Examples include Edward Allworth. *Uzbek Literary Politics*. (The Hague: Mouton, 1964); Ingeborg Baldauf. "Educating the Poets and Fostering Uzbek Poetry of the 1910s to Early 1930s." *Cahiers d'Asie Centrale*, no. 24 (March 10, 2015): pp. 183–211.

expression, the experimentation, and the autonomy— that had characterized the 1920s."[62] He points out that the new culture was spearheaded by "indigenous cadres," but that those cadres operated under the auspices of "highly centralized institutions" with "steadfast party control."[63] Consequently, the narrative Khalid puts forward gives little attention to the new indigenous cadres and the culture they created, undertaking instead the laudable task of memorializing the largely ex-Jadid intelligentsia that disappeared from public life in the late 1920s. In *Making Uzbekistan*, accordingly, the brief discussion of the 1930s concerns primarily the fate of the ex-Jadids, including the ideas they championed and the institutions they founded.

Post-Soviet Uzbek scholars draw a similar portrait of the 1930s situation. Because many cultural producers of the 1930s became integral to the contemporary Uzbek national canon, these scholars do examine some of the cadres that came to prominence after the 1929-30 purge. However, for the most part the Uzbek-language scholarship represents these cadres as outpourings of a national genius, largely ignoring the social and political context in which they made their careers.[64] When this scholarship acknowledges that context, it represents Uzbek mediators as victims who produced their masterworks in spite of state repression and control, rather than under the auspices of state sponsorship.[65] It is a crucial imperative to name and recognize the many victims of state violence during the 1930s, be they victims of dekulakization

[62] Khalid, pp. 379-380.
[63] Ibid.
[64] One important exception is the work of Naim Karimov, who has written significant institutional histories of Uzbek literature during the 20th century based on extensive work in both Party and State archives in Uzbekistan, as well as personal connections with the writers he discusses. Unfortunately, because of the different norms of Uzbekistan's academic culture, it is often impossible to adjudicate the source of the information he provides. See, for example, Naim Karimov, *XX asr adabiyoti manzaralari* (Toshkent: O'zbekiston, 2008); Naim Karimov, *Zulfiya: Ma'rifiy-Biografik Asar* (Tashkent: G'ofur G'ulom nomidagi Adabiyot va san'at nashriyoti, 2015).
[65] See, for example, Zamira Raiimovna Ishankhodzhaeva. "Repressivnaia politika sovetskoi vlasti i ee vozdeistvie na kul'turnuiu zhizn' uzbekistana (1925-1950 gg)." (Ph.D Diss, Republic of Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, 2012); Dilorom A. Alimova, and Nodira Mustafaeva. "Sovet Davrida O'zbekistonda Madaniy-Tarixiy Merosga Munosabat: Intilishlar va Muammolar." *O'zbekiston Tarixi*, no. 1 (2013). Ishankhodzhaeva provides an invaluable historiographical survey on the study of Uzbekistan's cultural life in the Soviet Union and modern Uzbekistan; see Ishankhodzhaeva, pp. 3-20.

or the Great Terror. The problem with focusing on the entire nation as a collective victim of the Party-state, however, is that it elides the ways that many members of that nation participated in the activity of the Party-state, sometimes but not always including its violence.

My research in this dissertation picks up the story where Khalid leaves off, focusing on a cohort of local activists that can be called "mediators." Mediators were a diverse group, ranging from collective farm youth to the inner circle of Tashkent's cultural intelligentsia. I call them "mediators" for two reasons. First, they stood between Moscow and Uzbekistan, representing and interpreting the central state agenda for Uzbekistan's population. Second, they worked creatively through aesthetic mediums and state institutions to render socialism intelligible to Uzbekistan's population. Some constituted a new intelligentsia, comprising the central cadres of the newfound Writers' Union and the Tashkent cultural establishment. Others were less elite, filling the ranks of village activists who organized literature circles, created wall newspapers, and submitted workers' correspondence letters to *Red Uzbekistan* or *Young Leninist*.

Obviously, these individuals worked in the context of a profoundly hierarchical, unprecedentedly interventionist state. However, I show that those vertical interventions took shape in the context of a new kind of horizontal social relationship: the Soviet state public. I investigate 1930s cultural production neither as an automatic regurgitation of totalitarian ideology, nor as the spontaneous outpouring of a resurgent national spirit. Rather, I seek to understand how Uzbek media and institutions channeled directives from Moscow, while also responding to realities on the ground. Ingeborg Baldauf speaks of the "beheading" of the Uzbek intelligentsia between 1922 and 1938.[66] But my research shows that when the Uzbek intelligentsia lost its head, a new kind of body politic took shape.

[66] Baldauf , "Educating the Poets and Fostering Uzbek Poetry," 201.

Soviet Social Engineering and the Universal Public

As my discussion thus far has indicated, the late 1920s inaugurated an unprecedented era of social engineering in Central Asia. In my dissertation, I bring together bodies of scholarship on the three primary axes of social engineering in the Soviet 1930s: gender, class, and nation. Most previous scholarship has foregrounded these social engineering projects as projects of differentiation, whether from the top down or from below. In my dissertation, I incorporate these bodies of scholarship into an analysis of a universalizing state public sphere. In so doing, I shift the focus from nation-making, women's "emancipation," and class differentiation to multinationality, gender integration, and class homogenization.

Today, perhaps the best-documented early Soviet social engineering project is the creation of Soviet nations. In recent years, a large body of scholarship has examined the processes by which Soviet nationality categories took shape with the support of the Party-state as well as local populations. Terry Martin has examined Soviet nationalities policy primarily from the perspective of the state. In his understanding, "ethnophilic" policies such as national delimitation and nativization (*korenizatsiia*) stemmed from a concern that non-Russian nationalism would destabilize the state and obstruct its agenda.[67] The Soviet "affirmative action empire" used concessions to nationalism strategically, in order to integrate its diverse population into a broader state project and forestall the destabilization that could come from national separatism. Francine Hirsch responded to Martin by foregrounding the pivotal role of Russian ethnographers in defining Soviet nationalities.[68] In the ensuing years, a growing body of scholarship has also examined how these categories were interpreted and implemented from the bottom up. Among

[67] Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*. Yuri Slezkine coined the term "ethnophilia," in the landmark article Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (1994): pp. 414–52.

[68] Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge & the Making of the Soviet Union*, Culture and Society after Socialism (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2005).

others, Elissa Bemporad has examined the transition from Jewishness from a religious to a cultural identity; Brigid O'Keefe has studied the role of performance culture in making Soviet Gypsies; and Sarah Cameron has argued that state violence was a crucible for the Kazakh nation.[69] Ali Igmen investigates how Kyrgyz cultural producers negotiated their national identities within the parameters of early Soviet cultural institutions.[70] In putting local initiative front and center in early Soviet Central Asian nation-building, meanwhile, Adeeb Khalid nuances both Hirsch and Martin's arguments about state and expert intervention.[71] In each case, however, the scholarship has emphasized Soviet nationalities policy as a project of differentiation: the creation of new administrative entities, linguistic standards, and national cultures for new Soviet nations. Only very recently has a small cohort of young researchers begun to situate Soviet nationalities in the context of the broader all-Soviet projects and multinational identities of which they were a part[72].

Although Central Asian history is a small field, a sizable body of research has examined early Soviet gender-related policy in the region. In *Veiled Empire,* Douglas Northrop examines the Hujum and its aftermath as neo-colonial projects. Utilizing post-colonial theory and adducing comparisons from the British Empire, Northrop argues that the association between women's "emancipation" and the Soviet state made veiling and seclusion expressions of resistance to

[69] O'Keeffe, Brigid. *New Soviet Gypsies: Nationality, Performance, and Selfhood in the Early Soviet Union.* (Toronto ; Buffalo ; London: University of Toronto Press, 2013); Edgar, *Tribal Nation.* Bemporad, Elissa. *Becoming Soviet Jews: The Bolshevik Experiment in Minsk*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Sarah Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe;* a variety of other approaches can be found in Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin, *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

[70] Ali F. Igmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan*, Central Eurasia in Context (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

[71] By foregrounding the decisive role of local elites, Khalid revises Hirsch's argument that Russian ethnographers were primarily responsible for defining Soviet nations. See Adeeb Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2015), p. 288n88.

[72] See Erin Hutchinson, "The Cultural Politics of the Nation in the Soviet Union after Stalin, 1952-1991," (PhD Diss., Harvard University, forthcoming 2020); Anna Whittington, "Forging Soviet Citizens: Ideology, Identity, and Stability in the Soviet Union, 1930-1991," (PhD Diss., University of Michigan, 2018); Isabelle Ruth Kaplan, "The Art of Nation-Building: National Culture and Soviet Politics in Stalin-Era Azerbaijan and Other Minority Republics" (Ph.D. Diss., Georgetown University, 2017).

Soviet rule.[73] Consequently, Northrop foregrounds the ways Soviet gender policy failed to achieve its stated goal, and in fact served less to emancipate Uzbek women than to subject them to colonial domination. Meanwhile, Marianne Kamp emphasizes the participation of Uzbek women in state-sponsored efforts for their own "emancipation," drawing on oral history and other underutilized sources to demonstrate the ways women's lives did indeed change in the context of Soviet efforts.[74] In so doing, she compares the Soviet project to gender-related modernization projects in Turkey and Iran. Adrienne Edgar brings the two interpretations together, arguing that although the Soviet intervention in Central Asian gender roles was an interventionist modernizing project akin to those of Turkey and Iran, the subjective perception of that intervention made it more similar to colonial feminisms, which were marked as foreign impositions.[75] In each case, however, women have been examined as an exceptional category, subject to separate policy initiatives and distinct discourses. This research has laid the groundwork for integrating Central Asia's women into a broader narrative, transitioning from women's history to gender history, and from the study of women's particularization to their integration. In particular, the framework of the state public sphere makes it possible to examine the ways that Central Asians struggled to create a masculinity in mixed company and a femininity for the public sphere. Gender-based reforms, this analysis shows, were not just about changing women's roles: they were about rebuilding the public sphere from the ground up.

Despite the pervasive discourse about women's emancipation in Central Asia, class remained a prominent category for Soviet administrators there.[76] As Sheila Fitzpatrick has shown, class

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[73] Douglas Taylor Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender & Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 2004).

[74] Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism*, Jackson School Publications in International Studies (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006).

[75] Adrienne Edgar, "Bolshevism, Patriarchy, and the Nation: The Soviet 'Emancipation' of Muslim Women in Pan-Islamic Perspective," *Slavic Review* 65, no. ii (2006): pp. 252–72.

[76] In making this point, I revise the claim by Gregory Massell that women became a "surrogate proletariat" in

categories were far from natural in much of the Soviet Union; rather than denoting Marxist categories, ie., actual relationships to the means of production, they were "ascribed categories."[77] Class ascription in Central Asia remains an under-examined topic. However, it is clear to any researcher on the topic that particularly in the 1930s, Bolsheviks espoused a commitment to bringing in members of social categories that had ostensibly been excluded, including farmers (*dehqon*) and workers, while eliminating unsavory class categories such as clergy; *boys*, or rich men; and *kulaks*. Accordingly, as Flora Roberts has shown, even the representatives of elite religious lineages successfully rebranded themselves as the members of more acceptable class categories, while continuing to benefit from the social capital that came with their background.[78] Class as a Soviet social category in Central Asia has, not surprisingly, proven difficult to analyze. Douglas Northrop, for example, speaks of a Bolshevik "decision to substitute gender for class," but also goes on to offer some of the most nuanced available discussion of the complicated overlap, and often, conflict between Soviet gender policy and class ascription.[79] Northrop concludes that the Bolshevik imposition of class categories ultimately obstructed the effort to transform Uzbekistan's society, and even to understand it; these categories became, in Northrop's words, "Bolshevik blinders."[80] In each of these discussions of class, the scholarship on Central Asia has foregrounded the Bolshevik project of class *differentiation* in a state where class ascription was a life-and-death matter.

Central Asia in the absence of a developed class society in Central Asia. Gregory J. Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919-1929* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1974).

[77] Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Ascribing Class: The Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia," *The Journal of Modern History* 65, no. 4 (December 1, 1993): pp. 745–70.

[78] Flora J. Roberts, "Old Elites Under Communism: Soviet Rule in Leninobod" (Ph.D., University of Chicago, 2016).

[79] Northrop, *Veiled Empire*, p. 77.

[80] On the fraught intersection of class and gender categories in Uzbekistan, see Chapter 3, "Bolshevik Blinders," from Ibid, pp. 102-38.

In my dissertation, I build on these bodies of literature, but shift the focus away from differentiation to integration. I proceed from the premise that at root, all these projects of state-led differentiation were part of a project of mass mobilization. Nation-building, women's "emancipation," and proletarianization were ultimately oriented, not toward promoting diversity for its own sake, but toward integrating categories of difference in a universal Soviet public.

The Social Life of Socialist Realism

In the context of the tripartite effort for Soviet social engineering, I argue that aesthetic mediums functioned as laboratories in which cultural producers attempted to imagine a Soviet public that would subsume national, gender, and class diversity within itself, and mobilize that public for socialist construction.[81] When read with careful attention to aesthetic form as well as state "message," these works reveal both aspirations for and subterranean faultlines in the state public of 1930s Uzbekistan.

In making an *imaginative* reading of Socialist Realist aesthetic mediums, I respond to a large body of scholarship that has framed 1930s Soviet culture as a tool for conveying a state-mandated message. This scholarship has its roots in the Cold War, when many Western scholars conducted "paranoid" readings of Soviet culture, seeking evidence of coded dissent, or alternatively, dismissing such works as evidence of total control over cultural production.[82] More recently, scholars have attempted to revise this approach, taking advantage of newly available

[81] In this section and in the remainder of the dissertation, I distinguish between the "media," i.e. newspapers, radio, books, and film; and "mediums," such as novels, songs, lyric poems, textiles, and medals. I use "media" exclusively in the plural, while "medium" is the singular of "mediums." The similarity of the terms is intentional, because in the period I examine, state-sponsored aesthetic mediums were always produced for and distributed in the mass media.

[82] Laura-Zoë Humphreys, "Paranoid Readings and Ambivalent Allegories in Cuban Cinema," *Social Text* 35, no. 3 [132] (September 9, 2017): 17–40; examples of the "paranoid" approach include Edward Allworth. *Evading Reality: The Devices of 'Abdalrauf Fitrat, Modern Central Asian Reformist*. Brill's Inner Asian Library, v. 4. Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2002; Hamid Ismailov. "Writing in Riddles: Too Much Metaphor Has Restricted Post-Soviet Literature." *Index on Censorship* 45, no. 3 (September 2016): 75–77.

archival sources and abandoning the moralizing tone of earlier scholarship. Nevertheless, among historians who work on Soviet culture and media, the assumption remains in much scholarship that the primary function of Socialist Realism was to convey a state "message." In his study on the topic, for example, Peter Kenez defines propaganda, from novels to newspapers, as "the attempt to *transmit* social and political values," and argues that the Soviet Union "was a propaganda state because of the extraordinarily significant role played by indoctrination in forming the state and in executing policy."[83] Accordingly, David Brandenberger pronounces the entire Soviet media system to be an "ideological fiasco," and its mass culture to have missed out on conveying a "single, systematic message."[84] In contrast, Jeffrey Brooks represents the Soviet press, literature, and the arts all as instruments in a concerted "seizure of the public imagination."[85] For Brooks, Socialist Realism was a weapon: "The leaders and supports of the Stalinist system used it to enlarge the domain of their moral and intellectual claims."[86] When Socialist Realism is seen as no more than a tool for conveying state messages, there is little to be said about it other than to assess whether it "succeeded" or "failed" in its work.

To be sure, the state exerted enormous influence over cultural production in the Soviet Union. For Brandenberger, Brooks, and Kenez, the situation was perhaps more command-oriented than what I describe with respect to Central Asia: *Pravda* was the hand-cultivated organ of the Moscow-based Communist Party, and Stalin personally participated in planning its messaging. Members of the Writers' Union in Moscow personally interacted with members of

[83] Kenez uses the term "propaganda" broadly, applying the term to posters, novels, and newspapers alike. In the Soviet context, however, "propaganda" had a narrow technical definition, and was usually, albeit somewhat nebulously, distinguished from "agitation." "Culture" (*kul'tura*) and "art" (*iskusstvo*) were also related to but not identical with propaganda. Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 4, 8; emphasis mine.

[84] David Brandenberger, *Propaganda State in Crisis: Soviet Ideology, Indoctrination, and Terror under Stalin, 1927-1941*. Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institution, Stanford University, 2011, pp. 142, 258.

[85] Jeffrey Brooks, *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 18.

[86] Ibid., p. 109.

the Politburo and with Stalin himself; Stalin was famously heavy-handed with respect to film censorship. But in Central Asia as well, there were clear directives for cultural activity. Mediators were expected to work according to the "production principle," i.e., to organize their entire activity around promoting production — in the case of Uzbekistan, mostly cotton. From kolkhoz music circles to Tashkent Writers' Union members, mediators were asked to read, discuss, and employ resolutions from Party congresses in their work. When works were deemed ideologically unacceptable, they could be withheld from publication or destroyed, often ending the careers of those who produced them and consigning them to imprisonment or death.[87]

In speaking of Socialist Realism as an imaginative mode, then, I do not mean to revise the established scholarly consensus that the Soviet system of cultural production was profoundly unfree. Nor do I mean to suggest that the state-sponsored arts functioned as mechanisms for authentic self-expression. If the search for authenticity ever makes sense, it certainly does not make sense in the 1930s. However, Socialist Realism functioned not only to *convey* a pre-packaged state agenda, but to *imagine* a public that could mobilize for that agenda, and to bring that public into being through address.[88] Mediators were judged according to their ability, not to parrot Party slogans, but to effectively bring those slogans to life through convincing characters, catchy melodies, and pleasant poems. In so doing, mediators aspired to engender not only

[87] At the same time, in Central Asia state "control" was never more than an aspiration. Because of language barriers, cadre shortages, and infrastructural shortfalls, it was nearly impossible to ensure that a central "message" was being appropriately transmitted in the Central Asian context. For these reasons, I prefer the language of state patronage to the language of control.

[88] In making this argument, I draw from William Mazzarella's recent argument problematizing the divide between the "apparently treacherous seduction of consumer advertising images and the supposedly legitimate magic of encounters with those objects and images defined as 'art,'" as exemplified in cultural critics such as Theodor Adorno. Mazzarella critiques the compartmentalization of "art" as a medium in which the autonomous subject can experience an affectively "resonant encounter" without suspending his or her "critical integrity," ie., he critiques art as an "aesthetic settlement." Mazzarella is concerned with capitalist mass consumer culture, but the opposition between autonomous "art" and treacherous "non-art" (ie., propaganda) informs many critiques of Soviet culture in a similar way. See William Mazzarella, *The Mana of Mass Society,* pp. 101-36.

intellectual affirmation or mindless obedience, but active participation in the Party-state's program.

In my analysis of Soviet aesthetic mediums, I draw on a growing body of scholarship on Socialist Realism, which was declared to be the sole artistic mode for all the Soviet republics at the 1934 All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers. Thenceforth, all writers and cultural producers in the Soviet Union would refer to Socialist Realism as a touchpoint for cultural production in every medium. For much of the twentieth century, following the scholarship on propaganda, Western scholars of literature and culture tended to dismiss Socialist Realism as a retrograde and aesthetically bankrupt imposition from the state.[89] More recently, however, scholars have begun to reevaluate Socialist Realism, arguing, for example, that it exhibited much more continuity with the Soviet avant-garde and with cultural modernism than had been previously acknowledged.[90] Others have taken Socialist Realism on its own terms, examining the debates that surrounded Socialist Realism in the 1930s, and attempting to define it according to its formal qualities.[91] Such scholarship notes that Socialist Realism was expected to exhibit "Party-mindedness," "populism" (*narodnost'*), "typicality" (*tipichnost'*), and sound ideology (*ideinost'*), and attempts to define what each of these categories meant to individual cultural producers.[92]

There are serious limitations, however, to an approach that attempts to produce a unitary definition of Socialist Realism according to specific formal or even ideological qualities. For

[89] One exemplary, and highly influential such account is Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," *Partisan Review* 6, no. 5 (1939): 34–49; with respect to Central Asian culture, see Allworth, *Uzbek Literary Politics,* pp. 70-80.

[90] Boris Groys. *The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond*. Trans. Charles Rougle. (London: Verso, 2011); Petre Petrov. *Automatic for the Masses: The Death of the Author and the Birth of Socialist Realism*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).

[91] On the controversies surrounding Socialist Realism and its definition, see Régine Robin, *Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992). Perhaps the most successful effort to assign formal qualities to Socialist Realist works was Katerina Clark's classic work on the Socialist Realist novel: Katerina Clark. *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).

[92] See Marina Balina, "Ideinost'-klassovost'-partiinost'," and Hans Günther, "Totalitarnaia narodnost' i ee istoki," from Hans Günther and E. A. Dobrenko. *Sotsrealisticheskii kanon*. (St. Petersburg: Gumanitarnoe Agentstvo "Akademicheskii Proekt," 2000), pp. 362-76, 377-89.

every generalization about Socialist Realism, there is a counterexample that complicates it. The Party line was constantly in flux, while the prevailing interpretations of populism, typicality, and ideology could change from month to month. Consequently, I favor a functional approach to Socialist Realism, showing how individual mediators expected Socialist Realism to work in society, and, as much as possible, how Socialist Realist works were received on the ground.[93] Accordingly, I situate my analyses of aesthetic mediums squarely in the context of their commissioning, production, and reception history, as much as it is possible to reconstruct it. Reconstructing the social life of Socialist Realism paves a path forward for understanding the new kind of public it imagined and created.

Sources and Chapter Outline

Like many other historians of Soviet Central Asia, I have benefitted from extensive work in RGASPI, the Russian State Archive of Socio-Political History. The RGASPI holdings are particularly rich with respect to the agendas of Russian-speaking administrators in Central Asia, and thus provide essential insight into the constraints within which local mediators operated. RGASPI also contains fascinating, although problematic reports from the OGPU/ NKVD, offering detail about the popular reception of state policy. Unfortunately, because the Central Asian Bureau of the Communist Party was closed in 1932, RGASPI contains very few documents for the years beyond that period. One important exception is the archive of the

[93] In taking a "functional" approach, I follow E. A. Dobrenko, *Political Economy of Socialist Realism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. xiii. However, Dobrenko argues, with extensive appeals to poststructuralist theory, that Socialist Realism functioned to "replace" reality, and has consequently proven frustrating to some historians, despite his invaluable contributions to the institutional and reception history of Socialist Realism in Russia. I concur with Dobrenko that Socialist Realism functioned as "an institution for the production of socialism" (p. xii), but not by replacing reality: instead, it produced socialism by producing a public that could then mobilize for socialist construction. For a critique of Dobrenko's "symbolic annexation of the public economic sphere," see Hans Günther. "Review of Evgeny Dobrenko, 'Political Economy of Socialist Realism.'" *Russian Review* 67, no. 2 (April 1, 2008): 369. See also Catharine Theimer Nepomnyashchy. "Review of Evgeny Dobrenko, 'The Political Economy of Socialist Realism," trans. Jesse M. Savage." *Slavic Review*, no. 3 (2008): 726.

Komsomol, which is housed in a separate location from the main RGASPI, and includes a vast number of documents on the operation of the Komsomol in Central Asia throughout the entire Soviet period. This collection remains largely untapped in the Western scholarship on Central Asia, and the present work barely scratches the surface of that vast archive. Similarly underutilized with respect to Uzbekistan is RGALI, the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art in Moscow. My chapters on the Writers' Union of Uzbekistan rely heavily on the documents held in RGALI, particularly Russian- and Uzbek-language stenographic reports from throughout the 1930s, including the era of the Great Terror. The Uzbekistan State Archive (O'zMDA) provided essential empirical data on mass institutions in Uzbekistan, as well as Writers' Union documents that complemented the holdings of RGALI. Finally, I found rare sources on Husayn Shams, including an otherwise-inaccessible manuscript for his novel *The Law*, in his personal archive, which is held at the Alisher Navoi Literary Museum in Tashkent.

By far the richest source for this study, however, are the vastly underutilized Central Asian print media, particularly the periodical press in Uzbek. My research is underpinned by careful analysis of a broad survey of articles, images, and literary works from newspapers, such as *Red Uzbekistan*, *Young Leninist, New Ferghana, Cultural Revolution, Truth of the East,* and *Komsomol of the East*. I have also conducted extensive research in journals, including *The Flame*, women's journal *New Way*, illustrated journal *Flower Garden*, satirical journal *The Fist*, and Writers' Union organ *Soviet Literature*.[94] I also made extensive use of first editions of

[94] Except for *The Fist* (*Mushtum*), all the above journals were renamed at least once during the 1930s. The women's journal was called *New Way*, then renamed *Bright Life* (*Yorqin Turmush* in 1934, and *Yorqin Hayot* beginning in 1936); *Flower Garden* (*Guliston*) was also called *Well Done* (*Mosholo*). The literary journal was first called *Construction* (*Qurilish*) under the auspices of the Association of Proletarian Writers, and then renamed *Soviet Literature of Uzbekistan* (*O'zbekiston Sho'ra Adabiyoti*, and then, later *O'zbekiston Sovet Adabiyoti;* in 1937, it was renamed simply *Sovet Adabiyoti*). The constant renaming of journals reflects the general institutional and intellectual turmoil of the period.

literary works that were published in book and brochure form during the 1930s; the most reliable holdings of such texts are at the Russian State Library in Moscow.

Each chapter of my dissertation examines an institution and/ or a medium of the Soviet state public in Uzbekistan. In Chapter 1, "'Not Just Tea-Drinking': Making the Teahouse Red in 1930s Uzbekistan," I examine the efforts of Uzbek activists to induct their compatriots into a Soviet public through the most widespread mass institution in Uzbekistan, the Red Teahouse. Teahouses had long been places for men to hear music, recite poetry, smoke, and share news. But in the Soviet period, administrators attempted to mobilize the teahouse's popularity in service of the state public that included women, fostered productivity, and, most of all, organized the masses around the "cultured" consumption of Soviet media.

In Chapter 2, "Socialist Melodies: Making Music for the Masses in Central Asia," I examine the 1934 Central Asian Musical-Cultural Olympiad in the context of a broader history of the place of music in Central Asian society. I argue that the Olympiad represents a sea change in the social position of music. Previously in Central Asian society, music had functioned to solidify relations of patronage, for private entertainment, or, for Jadids, to represent the nation. In the 1930s, I show, Uzbekistan's mediators worked to convert music into a medium that would integrate illiterate youth, peasants, and workers into state-sponsored Uzbek, Central Asian, all-Soviet, and global publics. They also worked to integrate musical performance into a national and all-Soviet system of mass institutions.

Chapters 3 and 4 show how Uzbekistan's intelligentsia attempted to turn literature into a medium that could also integrate a mass public, functioning through state-sponsored institutions. Chapter 3, "The Literary Public and the Inner Circle," illuminates the challenge of building an institution that both depended on the pre-Soviet intelligentsia and reviled it. The Soviet Writers'

Union of Uzbekistan was formed according to slogans about reaching the "masses," and during this period the Writers' Union made its first efforts to reach new readers through "beginning reader" pamphlets, literary circles, and writers' brigades. However, I show that in other ways the Writers' Union represented an unprecedented level of centralization in Central Asian letters, focusing Uzbekistan's literature around a small inner circle of mostly male, Tashkent-based writers with links to the Jadids.

Chapter 4, "Novel Publics: The Uzbekistan Novel Competition of 1933-34," examines three novels produced for a novel competition calling for works that would represent "Uzbekistan's heroic workers' struggle for proletarian dictatorship and socialist construction." In response to this most formulaic of prompts, the novelists produced widely disparate works, representing a transnational Persianate working class, a Turkist anti-Soviet conspiracy suffused with nostalgia, and the hyper-masculine brotherhood of a global urban proletariat. I argue that these works can be read as artifacts of "public-formation," much as ego-documents have been read as artifacts of the making of Soviet subjectivity. In so doing, I illuminate the challenges Uzbekistan's intelligentsia faced in integrating Central Asia's diverse population into a unified Soviet public.

In different ways, each chapter of the dissertation reveals gender to be a major sticking point in the creation of a Soviet state public in Uzbekistan. The dissertation's fifth chapter, "I am Clothed in Silk and Velvet: Women, Textiles, and the Textile-Text in 1930s Uzbekistan," foregrounds that problem. I argue that luxury textiles, particularly as they circulated in the mass media and mass institutions, played a distinctive role in shaping women's participation in the Soviet public during the 1930s. Through analysis of the use of textiles as rewards, the role of women in textile production, and the representation of textiles in the women's press, I argue that

women used textiles and textile-related texts as mediums to imagine themselves as belonging to the Soviet state public.

In an epilogue, I briefly trace the fate of the individuals, aesthetic mediums, and institutions that I examine in the chapters of my dissertation. In many ways, the 1928-37 moment was fleeting, as the Great Terror and World War II undid much of the work mediators had done in the previous decade. In other ways, the state public that took shape in the long 1930s continued to be in evidence throughout the Soviet period and has resonances in Uzbekistan even today. Finally, I analyze the implications of the Soviet state public for the global "interwar conjuncture," suggesting ways the phenomena I describe in Soviet Uzbekistan can productively be compared to scenarios of mass publicity throughout the world, with particular attention to Republican Turkey.

Chapter 1

"Not Just Tea-Drinking": Making the Teahouse Red

The late 1920s were a period of unprecedented state repression in Uzbekistan. Mosques and Sufi lodges were shut down. Jadid associations were denounced as "bourgeois nationalist" and replaced. Local artisanal guilds were supplanted with state-supported trade unions and cooperatives. In fact, one of the major preoccupations of state policy in interwar Central Asia was to replace religious, courtly, or otherwise un-socialist institutions with the institutions of the state public. In order to bring a Soviet public into being, it was necessary to eradicate "backward" social institutions of the past and create new ones in their stead. *Madrasas* became women's clubs; palaces became Farmers' Houses; shrines became schools.[1] An entire network of new institutions occupied not only the physical space, but also the social location of the institutions that had been discredited by religion or elite affiliation.

[1] For several examples of this phenomenon, see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan,* p. 349.

There was one institution, however, that instead of eradicating or replacing, the Communist Party attempted to transform. That institution was the teahouse. Teahouses had been widespread and highly popular in Central Asia for centuries. But after the Revolution, and increasing drastically during the late 1920s, Bolsheviks attempted to adapt the teahouse model and marshal it, along with other mass institutions, in service of creating a state public.[2] In this chapter, I examine the effort to make the teahouse red in the context of the broader network of state-sponsored mass institutions. I begin with a discussion of cultural patronage and teahouse culture in Central Asia before the Soviet period. Then, I show how Soviet administrators and a new cadre of young activists attempted to take advantage of the popularity of teahouses, turning them into the principal venue for mass mobilization and the promotion of "culturedness" during the 1930s.[3] At the same time, however, Red Teahouses facilitated another kind of public life — a gendered form of sociability that had long characterized teahouse life in Central Asia. Teahouses did more than just creating a state public: they unintentionally facilitated unofficial forms of public life. I show that, although the Bolsheviks shut down some forms of social and cultural life

[2] While I focus on Uzbekistan here, many of my archival sources pertain to all of sedentary Soviet Central Asia. The SredAzBiuro (which constitutes all my RGASPI citations) supervised all of Central Asia except for Kazakhstan until 1932. When the institutions I discuss here were being organized in the early 1920s, Uzbekistan was not yet an independent republic. Delineated as a separate republic in 1924, it still shared much administrative oversight with other republics, and policy directives from Moscow often pertained to all the Central Asian republics. Uzbekistan included the Autonomous Republic of Tajikistan until 1929, and Tashkent remained an administrative hub for all of Central Asia well into the 1930s. While all the newspapers I have consulted were published in Uzbekistan, there is no reason to believe the phenomena they describe about mass institutions did not also obtain in, for example, the sedentary communities of Kyrgyzstan.

[3] "Culturedness" is discussed at greater length in chapter 2. It encompassed everything from hygiene and sanitation, to attending the opera and playing chess. A useful summary of the meaning of "culturedness" in the Soviet Russian context can be found in "Kul'turnost' and consumption," from Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd, *Constructing Russian Culture in the Age of Revolution, 1881-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 290-313. Michael David-Fox also discusses the term in "Cultural Revolution: Key Concepts and the Arc of Soviet Cultural Transformation, 1910-1930s," from Michael David-Fox, *Crossing Borders: Modernity, Ideology, and Culture in Russia and the Soviet Union*. (Pittsburgh, Pa.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015), pp. 104-132. Vera Dunham famously argued that the rise of kul'turnost' heralded a "Big Deal" with middle-class values; see Vera Sandomirsky Dunham, *In Stalin's Time: Middleclass Values in Soviet Fiction*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990). For a discussion of "cultured leisure" in teahouses, see "Qizil Choyxonalar madaniy dam olish markazi bo'lsin." *Yosh Leninchi*, Feb. 27, 1934, p. 4.

in Central Asia, through promoting the Red Teahouse they actually allowed another kind of pre-revolutionary social life to persist.

For many readers familiar with the broader Soviet setting, the Red Teahouse will recall a similar institution, the *izba-chital'nia*, or village reading room.[4] A cursory examination of the Red Teahouse would thus lead some to believe there is little of interest in the topic, and that Red Teahouses functioned much in the same way as village reading rooms elsewhere in the Soviet Union. To be sure, the Red Teahouse and the village reading room had more than a coincidental affinity. Russian-speaking Soviet administrators clearly imagined the two institutions to play similar roles, and often used the terms "Red Teahouse" and village reading room interchangeably. Like village reading rooms for Russia, Red Teahouses constituted a critical node in implementing the Soviet agenda in Central Asia. When administrators announced new campaigns — the spring sowing campaign, the fall harvest, collectivization, dekulakization, women's emancipation or collective farm childcare — they invariably demanded that agitators begin their work at the Red Teahouse, just as, elsewhere in the Soviet Union, Party campaigns were propagated through the village reading room.

This impression is supported by the scholarly literature that has examined Red Teahouses thus far. Red Teahouses figure prominently in the reams of Soviet-era dissertations, articles, and books about "mass cultural work" and "socialist construction" in Uzbekistan, but this scholarship operates under an assumption that Red Teahouses always worked precisely in the way they were intended — ie., as venues for mobilizing the masses, propagating the Party line, and fulfilling the Five-Year Plans.[5] For this scholarship, it is of little importance that the Red Teahouse drew on a

[4] On village reading rooms (*izby-chital'ni*) in the 1920s, see Kenez, pp. 138-42.
[5] These include Pulatov, *Kul'turno-Vospitatel'naia Deiatel'nost' Sovetskogo Gosudarstva v Uzbekistane*; Maia Mubarakovna Babadzhanova, "Razvitie Seti Kul'turno-Prosvetitel'nykh Uchrezhdenii v Kishlakakh Uzbekistana (1925-27 gg.)." In *Sbornik Rabot Aspirantov TashGU: Istoriia KPSS.* (Tashkent: TashGU, 1964), pp. 152–56; Maia

local institution; what matters is that Red Teahouses contributed to "socialist construction," to collectivization, and so forth. Meanwhile, the small body of scholarship on early Soviet Central Asia has focused primarily on the urban intelligentsia, offering little attention to the mass institutions that served urban workers and proliferated in Uzbekistan's countryside during the 1930s. Writing on Kyrgyzstan, Ali Igmen has touched on the Red Teahouse alongside other mass institutions, including Houses of Culture and Red Yurts.[6] However, because Igmen is primarily concerned with the Sovietization of formerly nomadic Kyrgyz people, he gives little attention to the teahouse model, which was directed toward the traditionally sedentary people of Central Asia, and consequently much more common in Uzbekistan. Furthermore, Igmen does not offer a systematic analysis of the networks of state-sponsored institutions, focusing instead on specific episodes of cultural production within those institutions.

In this chapter, then, I make two contributions to the scholarship on mass institutions in Central Asia. At the most basic level, I offer the only comprehensive discussion of the administrative context and activities of Soviet mass institutions in 1930s Uzbekistan, and I compile detailed statistics about those institutions. This level of detail enables me to lay the groundwork for assessing the reception and production of the Soviet aesthetic media that I analyze elsewhere in this dissertation, from novels to newspapers and poems to songs. I also show that, more than just providing a place for top-down "indoctrination" or "propaganda," teahouses provided the institutional basis for horizontal networks of participation. However, insofar as the teahouses succeeded in attracting the masses, they also created the conditions of

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Mubarakovna Babadzhanova, "Kul'turnoe Stroitel'stvo v Kishlakakh Uzbekistana (1925-1932 Gg.): Avtoreferat Dissertatsii na soiskanie uchenoi stepeni kandidata istoricheskikh nauk," (Tashkent, 1975); Khushbekov, A. *Iz Istorii Kul'turnogo Stroitel'stva v Uzbekistane v Gody Pervoi Piatiletki*. (Samarkand: Sredneaziatskii gos. univ. imeni V.I. Lenina, 1959).

[6] Ali F. Igmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan*, Central Eurasia in Context (Pittsburgh, Pa: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

possibility for a kind of public relation that functioned with state sponsorship but not always in line with state agendas. This teahouse para-public existed alongside the state public, taking shape in its institutions and under the influence of its hegemonic discourses; but it reflected less the socialist or productivist ideologies that were pressed upon it, than the pre-existing norms of Central Asian social life.

The Central Asian Patronage State

In organizing the institutions of the state public, the Soviet Party-state took upon itself a role that, at least until the late 19th century, had previously been occupied by systems of patronage in Central Asian society. Consequently, in order to contextualize the discussion in this chapter and the chapters that follow, in this section I offer a brief summary of patronage culture in Central Asia. The Mongol conquest established a relationship between state power and urban society that had long-lasting consequences for social life in Central Asia. When Chinggiz Khan and his nomadic armies spread across the Eurasian landmass, they subjugated many urban centers. The Mongols dealt brutally with settlements that resisted, but to those who voluntarily submitted to Mongol rule, they granted a great deal of autonomy. In return for oaths of fealty from sedentary authorities, the Mongols adopted a hands-off approach to the governance of towns and cities, with their established religious hierarchies, merchant networks, and elite lineages. Marshall G. S. Hodgson termed this new form of polity the military-patronage state.[7] According to Hodgson's interpretation, nomads may have conquered the sedentary urban centers of Transoxiana and Western Asia, but they did not destroy the patterns of cultural and political

[7] Hodgson's work pertained to the entire Islamicate world, and consequently used terminology that derived from a variety of contexts. In Central Asia, for example, the term *ayan* was largely not used locally. Nevertheless, I follow a large portion of the scholarship on medieval and early modern Central Asia in using these terms, although they were not emic in some cases. Marshall G. S Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam, Volume 2: The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Periods*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), pp. 400-410.

life that had been established under Arab rule. Rather, during the late medieval period military leaders of nomadic extraction (*amîrs*) established patronage relationships with urban notables (*ayans*), including both religious leaders and mercantile interests. The *amîrs* sponsored and protected urban cultural, economic, and political life in the cities in exchange for support from sedentary urban *ayans*. *Shar'ia* law, the provenance of urban elites, synthesized with the Mongol code of law, the *Yasa*, especially as Mongol rulers adopted Islam. Over time, the distinction between *ayan* and *amîr* became ever more blurry, as some nomadic conquerors adopted sedentary ways and urban elites came to accept steppe ideologies, such as the legitimation of rule through connection to Chinggiz Khan.[8] And yet, the symbiotic relationship between military patrons and urban notables, what Hodgson termed the *ayan-amîr* system, continued to define political life in Central Asia — and most of the Islamic world — for centuries.

But the *ayan-amîr* system was not only a military patronage state, it was equally a cultural patronage state. As Hodgson phrases it, the Mongol-Islamic synthesis resulted in an "attempt to explain all economic and high cultural resources as appanages of the chief military families."[9] In other words, the *amîrs* became chief patrons of public works of all kinds, including bathhouses, markets, caravanserais, and mausoleums.[10] They also patronized cultural production for their own enjoyment and to entertain the court and its guests. In Central Asia, the political use of cultural patronage reached its apogee under the Timurids. Timur, the dynasty's founder, made his mark on Central Asia through sponsoring the monumental building projects that adorn the

[8] For a masterful analysis of how this synthesis of political ideologies developed in Central Asia, see Thomas Welsford. *Four Types of Loyalty in Early Modern Central Asia: The Tūqāy-Timūrid Takeover of Greater Mā Warā Al-Nahr, 1598-1605*. (Boston: Brill, 2013).
[9] Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam, Volume 2,* p. 406.
[10] The scholarship, often divided along disciplinary lines between historians and art historians or literary scholars, does not always acknowledge the close linkage between public works and "culture" (eg. poetry, ceramics, metalwork, and arts of the book). In practice, these were often simply different mediums for expressing the patronage relationship. In this sense a bridge is no different from a miniature. In different ways, each articulated both aesthetic preferences and social relations. In the long run it was these social relations that the Soviet onslaught aimed to undermine.

cities of Uzbekistan to this day. Importantly, while this type of patronage did garner social support, it was not just instrumental. Patronage projects bought the patrons influence, but they also expressed the aesthetic interests and social commitments of the donor.[11]

There were two primary sites of amirid patronage. First, *waqf* funds, or Islamic pious endowments, offered a crucial institutional base for the *ayan-amîr* system. Designating one's assets as *waqf* usually made them tax-exempt under Islamic law. It also exhibited religious piety and garnered social approbation. *Waqf* could support a wide variety of public goods, including infrastructure projects, religious educational institutions, pilgrimage sites, or Sufi lodges. Frequently, the endowment consisted of a plot of agricultural land or a profit-making endeavor, such as a caravanserai, a shop, or a bathhouse, whose proceeds would be used to run a pious institution. Samarkand's famous Registan Square, for example, began as a *waqf*-endowed caravanserai which supported the Islamic schools, or *madrasas*, that surrounded it. Over the centuries, other Timurid rulers dedicated further *waqf* funding to sponsor further madrasas and caravanserais.

In addition to the pious endowments, the courts of *amîrs* often served as major venues for cultural production. As Edmund Brown observed with respect to the minor principalities of early 16th century Iran, political instability often paradoxically contributed to cultural efflorescence at princely courts, especially in the less expensive arts, such as arts of the book and poetry.[12] A

[11] There are still many gaps in our understanding of the precise social and political role of patronage in Central Asia. Maria Eva Subtelny, who espoused a strongly utilitarian understanding of cultural patronage under the influence of Soviet scholarship, published several useful studies of the Timurid and Uzbek periods. See Maria E. Subtelny. "Socioeconomic Bases of Cultural Patronage Under the Late Timurids." IJMES Vol. 20, No. 4 (Nov. 1988), pp. 479-505; Maria Eva Subtelny. "The Poetic Circle at the Court of the Timurid, Sultan Husain Baiqara, and Its Political Significance." (Ph.D., diss., Harvard University, 1979). For a particularly enlightening study of how a single donor garnered support from a diverse social base through carefully selected architectural patronage projects, see Ellen V Kenney. *Power and Patronage in Medieval Syria: The Architecture and Urban Works of Tankiz Al-Nāṣirī.* (Chicago: Middle East Documentation Center, 2009).

[12] See Edward Granville Browne, *A History of Persian Literature Under Tartar Dominion (A.D. 1265-1502)* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1920), pp. 159-180.

court's ability to attract the most talented painters and poets across long distances became a potent statement of its clout. By sponsoring a bookmaking workshop or a poet, an ambitious leader could both project his influence and exhibit his good taste. Rulers of nomadic stock, such as the Uzbeks, could create an image of urban cultivation by sponsoring high culture at their courts.[13] In their effort to combat their reputation as "barbarians," ambitious nomadic rulers turned their courts into havens for high culture, frequented by sedentary notables and the artistic and cultural elites.

It may be tempting for readers familiar with Western European history to frame the *ayan-amîr* system as a state-society division, with the military leaders representing the "state," and the urban notables "society." But this temptation is misguided: at no point in post-Mongol Central Asia was it possible cleanly to delineate a non-state "public sphere" that deliberated independently on state affairs, as Habermas has described with reference to early modern Europe. As Beatrice Manz has shown, by the late Timurid period the the "*ayans*" and the "*amîrs*" were so closely imbricated that it is often difficult to distinguish one from the other.[14] In the absence of a strong central state, any elite male could reasonably aspire to gaining political power. All were connected through complex ties of patronage, blood relation, and marriage, such that neither one of them can straightforwardly be said to represent "society" over and against the "state." While Chinggisid lineage remained a crucial legitimizing principle for governance until at least the early modern period, in practice any individual who gained enough political leverage

[13] The Uzbek dynasty should not be confused with the modern Uzbek nation. Soviet-era scholars generally called the Uzbeks the Sheibanids in order to distinguish them from the state-sponsored Uzbek nation. For a discussion of how Uzbek courts developed a cultivated image to supplement the legitimizing force of their Chingizid descent, see Maria E. Subtelny, "Art And Politics in Early 16th Century Central Asia," *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. 27, No. 1/2 (1983): 121-148.

[14] See Beatrice Forbes Manz. *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran.* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007). Manz shows, in particular, that the identification of *amîrs* with Turkic nomads and *ayans* with Persian-speaking notables did not always correspond to reality in Central Asia, and that "state" authorities often overlapped with religious and cultural authorities.

could claim either Chinggisid lineage, or, as in the case of Timur, status as a Chinggisid deputy. Given the instability of Central Asian politics after Timur, "society" always had the potential to tip over into "state," and vice versa.[15]

In the context of such state weakness, "non-state" associations often held great influence over the official institutions of governance. First, *waqf* endowments often far outlasted political arrangements[16]. For aspiring rulers in the Early Modern period, gaining the allegiance of powerful *waqf* administrators (*mutawallis*) was a crucial mark of success.[17] In the absence of strong political authority, *waqf* administrators could take on the role of a state, managing infrastructure such as roads, controlling irrigation water supply, and even raising their own armies.[18] Later, although Russian administrators bristled at the *waqf* endowments' potential challenge to their authority, as well as their tax-exempt status, they never managed or even seriously attempted to abolish them.[19] *Waqf* also survived in the Soviet period until 1927, despite

[15] Much of the scholarship on early modern Central Asia has emphasized its apparent isolation and insignificance. In the Russophone scholarship, this representation served the Russian imperial and Soviet interest in justifying their intervention in the region. See V. V. Bartol′d, *Sochineniia.* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo vostochnoi literatury, 1963), especially Vol. 2. Recently, Scott Levi has convincingly argued that, despite the weakness of Central Asian states in the face of the great land empires, Central Asian states were closely connected to transnational trade networks and participated in global processes. See Levi, *The Rise and Fall of Khoqand.* See also Scott Cameron Levi, *The Indian Diaspora in Central Asia and Its Trade, 1550-1900*. (Leiden: Brill, 2002). For further discussion of the question of decline in early modern Central Asia, at times in polemical dialogue with Levi, see also Ron Sela, *The Legendary Biographies of Tamerlane: Islam and Heroic Apocrypha in Central Asia*, Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 135-140.

[16] Robert McChesney has set the standard for the study of Central Asian *waqf* with his magisterial longue durée account of the endowment at modern-day Mazar-i-Sharif between the 15th and 19th centuries. R. D. McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia: Four Hundred Years in the History of a Muslim Shrine, 1480-1889* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[17] When Nadir Shah Afshar occupied Balkh, for example, the *mutawalli* at Mazar-i-Sharif withheld his endorsement until it was clear that Nadir Shah was in the ascendancy, and withdrew that endorsement when Nadir Shah lost control of the region. See McChesney, *Waqf in Central Asia*, ch. 9, "The Nadirid Occupation of Balkh, 1737-47," pp. 198-216.

[18] McChesney describes such a "shrine-state" in McChesney, Chapter 10, "The Consequences of Autonomy: The Emergence of a Shrine-State in the Century after 1747," in *Waqf in Central Asia,* 217-256. This particular shrine-state emerged in the context of an overarching Bukhara-Kabul rivalry, which left a relative vacuum of power in the Balkh region where the shrine was located. Its main economic asset was the region's water supply, which gave it control over fertile lands that did not strictly belong to the endowment, but relied on the water that came from it.

[19] For the situation in Samarkand, see the concise discussion offered in Morrison, *Russian Rule in Samarkand,* 58-62. Pianciola and Sartori have also noted that, unlike other Middle Eastern polities and colonial powers, the Russian Empire barely took control of Central Asian *waqf*, making the process of establishing state oversight in the Soviet

some efforts to curb the endowments perceived by authorities to be most exploitative.[20] In particular, Jadids attempted to modernize *waqf* by channeling it toward education, a practice that continued well into the 1920s.[21]

Second, many *waqf* -endowed institutions harbored intense affective and practical attachments from the population. Central Asians were particularly devoted to holy sites such as shrines. When a *waqf* endowment sponsored a caravanserai, it also held great sway over the transnational merchant networks that relied upon it. *Waqf*-endowed Sufi orders became particularly powerful; in some cases, Sufi orders even developed aspirations to independent state power.[22] Once the Bolsheviks gained control, *waqf* endowments remained an institution to be reckoned with. One of the more explosive moments in early Soviet history was the "martyrdom" of poet and Soviet devotee Hamza at the site of a much-revered shrine he attempted to help confiscate for a workers' resort.[23] Certainly, no matter the political context, *waqf* endowments - and the pilgrims and travelers that visited them - were crucial locuses for social organization and cultural life in early modern and modern Central Asia.

"Black" Teahouse Culture

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period much more contentious than the parallel reforms in the Turkish Republic. See Niccolò Pianciola and Paolo Sartori, "Waqf in Turkestan: The Colonial Legacy and the Fate of an Islamic Institution in Early Soviet Central Asia, 1917-1924," *Central Asian Survey* 26, no. 4 (December 2007): 475–98.

[20] Here *waqf reform* must be distinguished from *abolition*. With their emphasis on education - which was usually funded by *waqf* until the Soviet period - the Jadids made significant efforts to classify *waqf* according to its function and to rationalize its working. See the excellent discussions of *waqf*, its classification and abolition in Sartori and Pianciola, "Waqf in Turkestan," as well as Penati, Beatrice. "On the Local Origins of the Soviet Attack on 'Religious' Waqf in the Uzbek SSR (1927)." *Acta Slavica Iaponica* 26 (2015).

[21] On the use of waqf in the 1920s before its abolition, see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan,* pp. 231-240.

[22] The development of states organized around Sufi orders was far from unusual in the Middle East and Central Asia. In Central Asia, for example, the chief rivals of the ascendant Khanate of Khoqand were the Naqshbandi Sufis of the region. See Levi, *The Rise and Fall of Khoqand, 1709-1876: Central Asia in the Global Age*, esp. Chapter 1, "A New Uzbek Dynasty, 1709-1769," pp. 14-49.

[23] See the full account in RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 1815, ll. 41-41 ob; as well as the discussion in Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan,* pp. 351-353.

If elite cultural patronage centered around religious and courtly institutions, before the Soviet period, teahouses were perhaps the most widespread non-religious and non-courtly institution of social life in Central Asia.[24] Danish writer Ole Olufsen, for example, noted in the early twentieth century that beyond teahouses and markets, there was little to see in most Bukharan small towns and villages:

> If one does not enter the bazaar where there is life and bargaining in the shops or passes by to the ponds where the men come together to drink, wash themselves, gossip and smoke hookah on the stone-steps which lead down to the water or take tea in the tea-houses round the pond, one may very well drive through a whole town without seeing anything but clay-walls.[25]

As Olufsen notes, teahouses were frequently located in the town or city center, near markets or pools. They were privately owned commercial establishments, often offering little more than a place to sit, tea-bowls, and tea or hot water for patrons to use in brewing their own tea.[26] If they wished to eat, patrons could bring their own food or purchase it from nearby vendors; more enterprising teahouse keepers provided bread, melon, or a water-pipe from which to smoke tobacco, hemp, or opium.[27]

Although they may have been simple as commercial establishments, teahouses constituted a central venue for men's sociability in Central Asia. In addition to eating and drinking, teahouse patrons could enjoy a variety of entertainments. Gambling was common: patrons played chess,

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[24] See, for example, Eugene Schuyler, *Turkistan: Notes of a Journey in Russian Turkistan, Khokand, Bukhara, and Kuldja*. (5th ed. London: S. Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1876), pp. 179-80; Ole Olufsen, *The Emir of Bokhara and His Country: Journeys and Studies in Bokhara (with a Chapter on My Voyage on the Amu Darya to Khiva)* (Gyldendal, Nordisk Forlag, 1911), pp. 305, 336, 436; Ármin Vámbéry, *Sketches of Central Asia: Additional Chapters on My Travels, Adventures, and on the Ethnology of Central Asia* (Wm. H. Allen & Company, 1868), pp. 172-73. I am grateful to Yuan Gao for directing me to these sources; my understanding of teahouse culture in imperial Turkestan was greatly enriched by her presentation: Yuan Gao, "Tea Trade and Tea Consumption in the Russian Turkestan," Paper Presented at Central Eurasian Studies Society Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, PA, Oct. 2018.

[25] Olufsen, p. 305

[26] Vámbéry, *Sketches*, p. 172; Schuyler, p. 179. A *risolia* (code of conduct) for teahouse owners has been published in *Risolia sartovskikh remeslennikov,* ed. and trans. Mikhail Gavrilov (Tashkent: Tipografiia pri kantseliarii general-gubernatora, 1912), 13-16. The *risolia* presents an origin myth for the samovar as an object handed down by God, and consists primarily of a set of prayers for the teahouse-owner to utter when opening his shop, pouring tea, filling the samovar, etc.

[27] Olufsen, p. 336; Schuyler, p. 136;

dice or, later in the 19th century, European-style cards; cock-fighting and pheasant-fighting were also common entertainments.[28] Enterprising teahouse owners hired musicians to perform, and competed with each other for patrons by hosting the most skilled performers.[29] Dancing-boys (*bachas*) performed frequently at teahouses, sometimes becoming teahouse managers themselves after they grew too old for performing.[30]

Entertainment could vary at teahouses, but one thing characterized them all: conversation. One traveler, Vámbéry, commented somewhat condescendingly that "the Bokhariot can . . . chatter away hours and hours, amidst his fellow tea-drinkers; for the meaningless conversations that are maintained weary him as little as the cup after cup of tea which he swallows." Teahouses were more than places to get a drink — they were sites for reciting poetry, and for sharing gossip, advice, and news. Outside Bukhara, where the Emir both banned teahouse music and attempted to limit political speech, men discussed politics at teahouses.[31] In a society where most men were illiterate, the teahouse thus constituted a crucial venue for both for political discourse and cultural activity in Central Asia.

As a major institution of men's sociability and political discourse in early-modern and modern Central Asia, teahouses make an obvious comparison to the coffeehouses of Habermas's eighteenth-century European public sphere.[32] Discussing teahouse culture elsewhere in the

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[28] Olufsen, pp. 336, 436.
[29] Musicians are discussed in Olufsen, p. 433; Anna Louise Strong, *Red Star in Samarkand* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1929), pp. 30-31; Joshua Kunitz, *Dawn over Samarkand; the Rebirth of Central Asia* (New York: Covici, Friede, 1935), pp. 37-38.
[30] Schuyler, p. 136.
[31] On political speech, see Vámbéry, *Travels*, p. 201. On the teahouse music ban, see E. Romanovskaia. "Muzyka v Uzbekistane." *Sovetskaia muzyka*, Sep. 1934 (no. 9), p. 5. McChesney describes tea and coffeehouses as major venues for poetry recitation and the sharing of news and political opinions; see R. D. McChesney, "'Barrier of Heterodoxy'? Rethinking the Ties between Iran and Central Asia in the 17th Century," in *Safavid Persia: The History and Politics of an Islamic Society,* ed. C. Melville (London: Tauris, 1996), pp. 231–67.
[32] Indeed, coffee originated the Middle East, and the development of coffeehouse culture in the Middle East was closely linked to that of teahouses. It is this linkage that Steven Shapin refers to when he makes a tongue-in-cheek reference to "The Ottoman Origins of Modernity"; see Steven Shapin, "At the Amsterdam," *London Review of Books*, April 20, 2006, pp. 12-14.

Middle East, Rudi Matthee has noted that Ottoman teahouses constituted an analog to the Habermasian public sphere, although he acknowledges they "did not contribute to the emergence of a modern press or a novel political consciousness."[33] Nevertheless, Matthee points out, these teahouses constituted a "public sphere by default, one that operated against the grain and in the interstices of officially sanctioned practice." To be sure, teahouses constituted an important venue for the oral circulation of texts and political discourse. They were institutions that facilitated a horizontal, self-organized public, rather than vertical relations of patronage. It is thus unsurprising, then, that in the Soviet period, administrators on the one hand wished to control this lively institution; and, at the same time, to take advantage of its popularity.

From the Patronage State to the State Public

As the Bolsheviks gained standing in Central Asia after 1917, they increasingly began intervening in local social life. As the principal source of practical and ideological opposition to the Bolsheviks, the emirs' and khans' courts were quickly extinguished. Gradually over the course of the 1920s, the state also began taking control of religious *waqf*, a process that reached its apex in 1927.[34] The effort to confiscate religious *waqf* coincided with a concerted effort to create a network of mass institutions in the late 1920s and 1930s. During the 1920s, Farmers' Houses and workers' clubs had dominated the Bolsheviks' limited efforts at mass outreach. But beginning with the cultural revolution of the late 1920s, Red Teahouses became the flagship institution in a broad network that stretched into the countryside in an effort to mobilize Uzbekistan's population for collectivization and cotton autarky. In this section, I offer an

[33] Rudolph P. Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Drugs and Stimulants in Iranian History, 1500-1900* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 296.
[34] Penati, "'Religious' *Waqf*."

overview of the main types of mass institutions around which the Soviet state public took shape, a set of institutions that the Red Teahouse overwhelmingly came to dominate during the 1930s.

Before proceeding to my discussion of the institutions themselves, a brief note on periodization is in order. Examining the Soviet press, Matthew Lenoe has noted a major shift in emphasis that began with the "Great Break" of the late 1920s. During the 1920s, Lenoe argues, Soviet Russian newspapers prioritized mass "enlightenment," or the effort to convey the truths of Marxism-Leninism to the masses and assist in their transformation into "New Soviet Men." After the Great Break, however, Lenoe claims, newspapers shifted in focus from "enlightenment" to "mobilization." My study of mass institutions in Soviet Central Asia corroborates such a trajectory toward mobilization, but it also nuances Lenoe's argument. I show that the shift to mobilization transformed, but did not abandon the prior emphasis on enlightenment. Instead, as the primary venue for the circulation of the state-sponsored media, institutions like Red Teahouses were supposed to *create* an enlightened public, an *obshchestvennost'*, that could then be mobilized for cotton production. In other words, in 1930s Uzbekistan mass institutions did not abandon the project of mass enlightenment; they merely transformed it. The "official society" did not exist independently of the press; instead, the press called it into being through address. Insofar as the press reached ever-expanding audiences through state-sponsored institutions, it facilitated the expansion of *obshchestvennost'*, rather than merely addressing a social group that existed independently of the print media.

While mobilization remained a major priority in mass institutions throughout the period I study here, it is important also to note that the mid-1930s saw the rise of a new discourse of "culturedness" that significantly affected the activities and goals of mass institutions. Productivity with respect to the Five-Year Plans now became linked to a broader narrative in

which workers and collective farmers were said to benefit from "culture and prosperity" as a result of their hard work. In my discussions below, I offer a schematic overview of the activities of each type of institution. In order to do so, I somewhat flatten the diachronic transition from enlightenment to mobilization and culturedness. Still, whenever possible I have noted those activities that were specific to one period or another.

With this context in mind, it is important to note that the Red Teahouse was far from the first mass institution that the Party sponsored in Central Asia. When the Bolsheviks gained ascendancy in the early 1920s, their tenuous support base in the region was limited primarily to a thin group of urban cultural elites, including the Jadids.[35] A tiny number of "workers" supported the Bolsheviks, mostly railroad workers and factory employees, many of whom were Russian-speakers. As a result, the first institution the Bolsheviks promoted in Central Asia was the club, on the model of the clubs that were being built in Moscow and other Russian cities.[36] In Central Asia, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union, clubs were attached to factories and other workplaces. Often, clubs targeted a specific population, such as members of the Red Army or militia, hospital workers, or railway workers.[37] As Soviet nationality categories solidified, there also developed a significant network of clubs dedicated to the members of non-titular nationalities, including, in Uzbekistan, Poles, Tatars, Uyghurs and Judeo-Tajiks.[38] At least in the early days, clubs were largely associated with the urban population, which was largely non-indigenous. Their activities were largely indistinguishable from those of clubs elsewhere in the Soviet Union: they offered a venue for agitprop work, as well as entertainment and cultural activities. Clubs hosted libraries

[35] Their role is thoroughly discussed in Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*.
[36] Richard Stites discusses workers' clubs at their most utopian in *Revolutionary Dreams*.
[37] For example, see the discussion of the active clubs of a military batallion (which sponsored native music and physical culture circles) and a military hospital club discussed in Rasul, "Komsomoleslar ko'ruk tashkilotchisi bo'lsinlar," *Yosh Leninchi*, April 9, 1934, p. 2.
[38] See the 1935 statistics in O'zMDA, F. 94, op. 5, d. 1787, ll. 1-36.

with books and current newspapers, and sponsored events, as well as literary, musical, and educational circles.[39]

Also significant was the network of women's clubs that the Zhenotdel founded during the 1920s, and that were later taken over by the Narkompros. For veiled or newly unveiled women, these clubs offered a space women could visit without fear of encountering non-kin men. The clubs offered literacy courses for women, as well as expert legal, medical, and childrearing consultations. Some had kitchens or buffets. Like other types of clubs, women's clubs also exposed patrons to the mass media; well-appointed ones were adorned with posters and featured libraries, including the latest issues of the newspaper and the women's journal. They also sponsored music, theater chess, and sports circles for women.[40] With the start of the Five-Year Plans, women's clubs added courses for women to learn to use farm and industrial machinery.[41] In 1936, women's magazine *Bright Life* even reported that, in addition to the usual newspapers and literacy courses, the "October Revolution" women's club had a sewing room with sewing machines; a chemistry room; and a dance room with a grand piano, where several well-known dancers had trained.[42] Graduates from its courses had become activists themselves, and the club supported the activities of franchises in other neighborhoods. The author of the article pointed out that, in addition to promoting women's literacy, the club's main mission was to attract women to public life (*jamoat ishlari/* Rus. *obshchestvennaia rabota*). In other words: the

[39] See the description of workers' clubs in Kenez, p. 135-36.
[40] On the activities of women's clubs, see O'zMDA, F. 94, op. 1, d. 401a, ll. 38-59, which is a report from a 1925 gathering of workers from women's clubs. The results of the following year's gathering are discussed in Z. Prishchepchik, "Itogi raboty zhenskikh klubov Uzbekistana*," Pravda Vostoka*, April 26, 1926, p. 3. The activities of an exemplary women's club, under the direction of a Komsomol activist named Roziya Qoratayeva, are described in Qodir G'ofurov, "Qaratayevaning namunali ishi," *Yosh Leninchi*, May 8, 1936, p. 4. Another exemplary women's club, this one founded by famed activist Jahon Obidova, is discussed in G'ulom Shodiy, "Ayollar qlubi*," Guliston*, 1935 (no. 5), pp. 12-13. See also Murtazo Q. "'Hujum' qlubi jonlandi," *Yosh Leninchi*, March 28, 1933, p. 4.
[41] See, for example, the expectations laid out in "Xotin-qizlar qulubi - ommaning talabiga muvofiq tuzilsin," *Yangi Yo'l*, 1933 (no. 11-12), pp. 9-10. See also Mo'minov, "Xotin-qizlar qulubining ahvoli haqida kuchli bong uramiz," *Yangi Yo'l*, 1933 (no. 6), pp. 30-31.
[42] A. Lutfullayev. "Ayollar qlubi." *Yorqin Turmush*, 1936 (no. 4-5), pp. 26-27.

women's club, like all other mass institutions, was dedicated first and foremost to bringing women into the state public.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the vast majority of clubs of all types were located in cities and served an urban population. And yet, since the population of Central Asia was predominantly rural, if the Bolsheviks wanted to reach the masses, they needed to reach the countryside. This was no small task: in the absence of even rudimentary roads to some areas, let alone rail lines, many areas of Central Asia were all but inaccessible.[43] In early 1923, a group of officials, with Responsible Secretary of the Turkestan Communist Party Epshtein at their head, sent out a circular with the start of a solution. They remarked that administrators frequently complained about the lack of access to the countryside. Meanwhile, when the peasants visited the city, they were left vulnerable to the machinations of unscrupulous capitalists, or NEPmen. But things didn't have to be this way. With a constant stream of peasants coming right to them in the city, why not begin by enlightening them while they were in town?[44] This strategy, the officials assured their regional subordinates, had succeeded to great effect in Russia itself.[45]

[43] On the profound effect of transportation infrastructure (or the lack thereof) on Central Asian life, see Patryk Reid, "'Tajikistan's Turksib': Infrastructure and Improvisation in Economic Growth of the Vakhsh River Valley," *Central Asian Survey* 36, no. i (2017): 19–36.
[44] O'zMDA, F. 34, op. 1, d. 1998, ll. 1-2.
[45] The rich literature on the peasantry in late imperial and early Soviet Russia complicates this assertion. The touchstone for research on the early Soviet peasantry is the work of Moshe Lewin, best represented in Moshe Lewin, *Making of the Soviet System* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985). Lewin is most famous for his thesis about the "peasantization" of Russian cities, which stated that the influx of "backwardness" undermined the Bolshevik project and ultimately led to its downfall. Lewin made crucial points about the peasantry's pivotal role in the early Soviet Union, but his discussion of peasant culture pivots mostly on unsubstantiated assumptions of benightedness, which reappear in works such as Boris Mironov, "Peasant Popular Culture and the Origins of Soviet Authoritarianism," from *Cultures in Flux: Lower-Class Values, Practices, and Resistance in Late Imperial Russia*, ed. Stephen P. Frank and Mark D. Steinberg (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 54-73. Sheila Fitzpatrick offers a corrective to some of these assumptions in Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). The most succinct summary of Fitzpatrick's response to Lewin can be found in Sheila Fitzpatrick. "Terkinesque." *London Review of Books*, Sep. 1, 2005: 15.

And so, the Peasants' Houses (*doma dekhkanina*) were founded in Uzbekistan, along the lines of Peasants' Houses (*doma krest'ianina*) in Russia.[46] In theory, Peasants' Houses were supposed to give the Bolsheviks maximal return on their investment by serving a rotating contingent of peasants.[47] At a base level, Peasants' Houses were flophouses for peasants who had business in the city, such as bringing produce to the market. In fact, ideally the Peasants' Houses were to hold their grand opening on a market day.[48] They provided dorm-style accommodations and an affordable meal; especially well-managed Peasants' Houses provided stables for animals the peasants brought along.[49] In their daily operations, Peasants' Houses were expected to provide a model of hygiene, sanitation, and rationality to their patrons. Additionally, they were to provide a reference desk that would assist peasants with questions of interest to them, as well as helping them compose petitions for their various needs. In short, Peasants' Houses were intended as beacons of enlightenment for the backward Central Asian peasantry, whenever they came to town on their own initiative.

This approach will sound familiar to those acquainted with the study of the peasantry in Russia.[50] But despite their Russian model, Uzbekistan's Farmers' Houses were not a straightforward copy of the Russian version. Even the choice of vocabulary made this clear. In Russia, such institutions were named with a Russian word (*krest'ianin*), which denoted serfs and their land-working descendants. In Uzbekistan, even when speaking Russian, local authorities

[46] O'zMDA, F. 34, op. 1, d. 1998, l. 3
[47] For a general overview of the activities of Peasants' Houses, see I. Alekseev. *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia*, s.v. "Doma krest'ianina." Moscow: OGIZ RSFSR, 1931.
[48] O'zMDA F. 34, op. 1, d. 1998, l. 4.
[49] TsGARUz, F. 34, op. 1, d. 1998, l. 4.
[50] On urban flophouses in early Soviet Russia, as well as the role of peasants in late imperial and early Soviet Russian cities, see Deirdre Ruscitti Harshman, "A Space Called Home: Housing and the Management of the Everyday in Russia, 1890-1935" (PhD Diss., University of Illinois, 2018). On the discourse of backwardness with reference to the Russian peasantry before 1905, see Laura Engelstein, "Morality and the Wooden Spoon: Russian Doctors View Syphilis, Social Class, and Sexual Behavior, 1890-1905," *Representations*, no. 14 (1986): 169-208.

employed *dekhkanin,* a Russian transliteration of the Uzbek word for farmer, *dehqon*.[51] The choice of terminology expressed a tacit acknowledgement that Soviet categories of class and social status did not transfer smoothly to the Central Asia context.[52] Momentarily, in fact, the distinct situation in Central Asia prompted administrators to dub them "red caravanserais."[53] The name was not entirely unjustified. Many of the Peasants' House's functions overlapped with those of a caravanserai, and the Bolsheviks used the Peasants' Houses for precisely the purpose patrons in Central Asia had used caravanserais in the past: to turn local affections to the patron. The only difference was that 1920s Uzbekistan, the patron was the Party-state; and the desired clients were not wealthy merchants, but peasants. In this sense, the Peasants' House simply took over a previous function of *waqf*.[54]

The name "caravanserai" did not stick, perhaps in part because, in other ways, the Peasants' Houses portended a new form of associational life. Rather than being run by a *mutawalli* or the representatives of a private donor, the peasants' houses were managed by a board consisting of representatives from state institutions and the Party, as well as elected members from among sharecroppers (*chayrikor*) and the members of the peasants' association, Qo'shchi.[55] Furthermore, in the early years, they were (in theory) to be funded not by an individual, nor even by the state, but by voluntary contributions, both from individuals and from

[51] See Kamp, *The New Woman*, p. 246n22.
[52] There is still very little published research on agricultural laborers and village-dwellers in late-19th century and pre-WWII Central Asia. Indeed, there is very little research on the non-Russian peasantry in general, at least in English. Important exceptions include Paul W. Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy: Mission, Governance, and Confessional Politics in Russia's Volga-Kama Region, 1827-1905* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002); Nicholas B. Breyfogle, *Heretics and Colonizers: Forging Russia's Empire in the South Caucasus* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).
[53] O'zMDA, F. 34, op. 1, d. 1998 l. 30.
[54] The most significant type of *waqf* function taken by the Bolsheviks, of course, is education, which I do not discuss here.
[55] O'zMDA F. 39, op. 2, d. 40, l. 90. Khalid has pointed out that there is no extensive study of Qo'shchi, despite its apparent significance in the early 1920s. See Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan,* p. 161n14.

organizations like the Peasants' Mutual Aid.[56] Meanwhile, members of these organizations were expected to sponsor meetings, lectures, and discussions. These modes of social life were more akin to Jadid civil society than *waqf*, linked more closely to a nascent Party *obshchestvennost'* than a patronage structure.

Their social organization was not the only thing linking Peasants' Houses to a state public. In addition to the new mode of associational life, the Peasants' Houses fostered a new relationship to the media. Peasants' Houses were a media-saturated environment. Posters, portraits, and slogans were supposed to adorn the walls, and the instructions called for film screenings. Not only were they expected to keep the latest newspapers and journals in stock, the Peasants' Houses were expected to sponsor daily readings of the newspaper for illiterate patrons, encouraging them to participate in discussions about them.[57] Self-consciously, then, the very earliest form of Bolshevik-sponsored mass institution for the local population in Central Asia was directed not only at enlightening the benighted peasantry from the top down, but also to inducting them into a state public through participation in voluntary communal activities and the periodical press.

Peasants' Houses were never supposed to be reproduced in great numbers. Even in 1933, after some effort had been expended to found one in every major city, there was a total of only thirty-eight in all of Uzbekistan.[58] And yet, despite their small number, in this early period the Peasants' Houses set the tone for Bolshevik mass enlightenment efforts in Central Asia. First, they emphasized the focus on the peasantry. Second, they attempted — albeit halfheartedly — to make use of a local model, the caravanserai, as a vehicle for the inculcation of *obshchestvennost'*.

[56] I have found no other archival references to this organization, and O'zMDA, F. 39, op. 2, d. 40, l. 88.
[57] See the descriptions of Peasants' House activities in O'zMDA, F. 39, op. 2, d. 40, ll. 87-92.
[58] O'zMDA F. 94, op. 5, d. 1219, l. 23.

The Red Teahouse and the State Public

There is a reason administrators chose to try out a Red Caravanserai, not a "Red *khanaqah,*" "Red Court," or "Red Mosque." According to Soviet ideological interpretations of local conditions, religious and courtly institutions were inherently parasitic, intended to entertain the wealthy and to sedate the masses. In other words, they were not truly popular institutions like the caravanserai could be. But the "red caravanserai," the Farmer's House, was always framed as a stopgap measure in preparation for organizing the countryside, and never made it to the level of a true mass institution. In contrast, the Red Teahouse did. Over the course of the late 1920s and 1930s, Red Teahouses became by far the most numerous and most popular state-sponsored institution in Uzbekistan.

From the very beginning, adopting the teahouse model was an explicit effort to enculturate the mission to build Soviet *obshchestvennost'*. In typical Soviet admin-speak, one agitprop officer called teahouses "a unique type of the cultural apparatus, adapted to local conditions."[59] As one Russian-language article about Red Teahouses affirmed, Central Asian farmers had been accustomed to spending time at teahouses "since ages past" (*ispokon vekov*).[60] A 1927 handbook for Red Teahouse activists echoed this language: the "specific conditions of Central Asia" made the Red Teahouse "one of the most basic instruments for making workers of the primary local nationalities participate in enlightenment work and the political life of the country."[61] A 1927 reference book about Central Asia made the goal explicit:

> Chaikhanas (teahouses) play a very significant role in the life of the sedentary population of Central Asia. Teahouses exist in every *kishlak* [village], and they are a peculiar type of club, where public opinion (*obshchestvennoe mnenie*) takes

[59] O'zMDA, F. 34, op. 1, d. 1998, l. 33.
[60] L. S-v, "Vnimanie krasnym chaikhanam," *Pravda Vostoka*, October 2, 1925, 3.
[61] *Qizil Choyxona*, Trans. Rauf Yaqubov (Tashkent: O'rta Osiyo Kasabalar Byurosi, 1927), p. 3.

> shape. It is clear, then, how significant it would be to organize a broad network of red teahouses with cultural-enlightenment goals.[62]

Not only were teahouses popular, they were popular among the right kind of people, peasants and "workers." Furthermore, teahouses were already the locus of a type of *obshchestvennost'*. In other words: teahouse were *already* popular, and they were already places for public association; why not put them in service of the state public?

What, then, distinguished a Red Teahouse from a Black one? The most obvious answer, of course, is their ownership and management. In the 1920s, most Red Teahouses were privately managed but tax-exempt because of their important role in Party work. By the time their numbers reached their peak in the 1930s, however, the vast majority of Red Teahouses were managed and funded by state institutions: collective farm, workshop (*artel'*), city, village, or neighborhood budgets.[63] This "Red" funding promoted "red" activities. From the very beginning, teahouses modeled modern, rational ways of everyday life. Chairs and tables replaced the more traditional cushions or rugs on the floor or a seating platform. A tea service was assumed but rarely discussed, except when teahouse administrators violated sanitary norms by failing to wash their dishes between users. In the early period, the greatest emphasis was laid on "reference" (*spravochnaia*) work, similar to that performed at Peasants' Houses.[64] Peasants could ask a Party member about how land reform would affect them, consult an agronomist about why tractors were useful, or learn about how to take advantage of the latest legislative changes. For particularly difficult questions, the consultants were supposed to keep a notebook to write them

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[62] *Spravochnik SSSR po raionam: Sredne-Aziatskie respubliki,* ed. M. B. Vol'f and G. A. Mebus. Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo (1927), p. 37n1.

[63] This is based on the January 1936 survey of Uzbekistan's "club-type institutions," including Red Teahouses, in O'zMDA, F. 94, op. 5, d. 1567.

[64] For the most thorough exposition of the "enlightenment"-era teahouse, see the resolution on teahouses in O'zMDA, F. 86, op. 1, d. 4106, ll. 34-37.

down for future research.[65] It also appears that teahouses were hubs for the administration of land reform, including interviewing local residents about the amount of land they held in preparation for redistribution.[66]

From the very beginning, teahouses were supposed to organize central Asians around the print media, especially the periodical press.[67] Nothing reveals this emphasis more clearly than the obsession with newspapers in Red Teahouses and Peasants' Houses. Even if they offered no other amenities, teahouse and Peasants' House managers were expected to subscribe to the latest publications, especially the Party daily *Red Uzbekistan (Qizil O'zbekiston*), the Komsomol newspaper *Young Leninist* (Yosh Leninchi), and journals such as *Poor Farmer* (*Kambag'al Dehqon*).[68] The first priority in programming was to read aloud newspapers for the benefit of illiterate patrons. For the convenience of semi-literate patrons, teahouse managers were called upon to mark the most important articles and phrases with a red pencil.[69] And although the newspaper was the fundamental form of media at the teahouses, they were not the only one. Radio receivers increased in number during the course of the 1930s, although radio programming in Uzbek still consisted primarily of live readings from the newspaper.[70] Film projectors were far less widespread, but in the countryside, Red Teahouses constituted the primary venue for film screenings. Visual media, such as diagrams and posters that drew on the latest newspaper headlines, served to organize public opinion (*jamoat fikri*).[71] In locales where there were

[65] *Qizil Choyxona*, 1927, pp. 8-9
[66] See the description in the novel, Abdulla Qahhor, *Sarob*. Tashkent: O'zdavnashr, 1937, pp. 99-118.
[67] On the reflexive circulation of discourse as a feature of modern publics, see Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," p. 62. On the importance of the temporality of the circulation of discourse, see p. 68, "In modernity, politics takes much of its character from the temporality of the headline, not the archive."
[68] This journal was later renamed *The Collective Farm Way* (*Kolxoz Yo'li*). On the periodical press at Peasants' Houses, see RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2445, l. 46 ob.
[69] *Qizil Choyxona*, 1927, pp. 10-11.
[70] See, for example, the discussion of radio programming in RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 108, l. 31; F. 62, op. 2, d. 2720, ll. 1-21.
[71] *Qizil Choyxona*, 1927, p. 16.

insufficient resources for a full Red Teahouse, activists could open a "Red Corner," which could feature some Party literature, a poster or two, and some slogans. In places where there was a Red Teahouse that only served men, "women's Red Corners" filled the gap, albeit unequally.

Fig. 1.1
"At the Teahouse," artist S. Mal't.
SOURCE: *Komsomolets Vostoka,* June 26, 1934, p. 4.

Table 1.1 "Club-type" institutions in the Uzbekistan SSR as of Jan. 1, 1934							
	Total number	Number of paid employees	At these institutions				
			Permanent libraries	Radio receivers (with loudspeakers)	Radio receivers (without loudspeakers)	Permanent film projectors	Mobile film projectors
Red Teahouses	3324	3061	4	1225	94	2	12
Village/ kolkhoz clubs	177	210	51	82	7	18	21
National minority clubs	23	46	13	9	1	2	1
Women and girls' clubs	56	104	29	33	1	2	1
Children and youth clubs	24	44	7	11	1	5	0
Educational workers' clubs	23	50	14	11	1	5	2
Industrial cooperative clubs	4	13	4	3	0	1	0
Farmers' (Collective Farmers') Houses	9	18	3	4	0	0	0
Sanitary education houses	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
Other	46	75	25	28	0	5	6
TOTAL	3688	3623	150	1406	104	40	43
NOTES: This table includes a rubric for Houses of Culture, but does not record their numbers.							
These figures are in O'zMDA, F. 94, op. 5, d. 1257							

In this context, the term "propaganda" will not be far from most readers' minds. To be sure, Red Teahouses were a major venue for agitprop work, ie. the promotion of state projects and the conveying of Party ideology. It was in Red Teahouses that activists held meetings agitating for collectivization, and in Red Teahouses that newspapers, posters, and pamphlets popularized the latest slogans. One does not need to search far to find lists of such slogans for propagandists working in Red Teahouses and other mass institutions. In January 1929: "5 years of Leninist nationality policy have placed Central Asia on a secure path toward socialist construction!"[72] For March 8, 1930: "Worker women! Organize *batraks* and poor people for the liquidation of the kulaks as a class in regions of total collectivization."[73] In 1934: "Making collective farmers prosperous."[74] In the 1930s all state propaganda was directed toward an overarching, all-encompassing campaign to get Uzbeks to the cotton field. For example, one 1930 bulletin for cultural propaganda workers called for Red Teahouses "to help cotton growers learn the political life of the republic and the village (*kishlak*)." Meanwhile, "political life" was shorthand for "the slogans of the Party (the cotton campaign, collectivization, work with poor people, and so forth)."[75] Teahouses, the author continued, would be ideal venues for cotton growers to meet textile producers and compare notes. Farmers' Houses, now renamed Collective Farmers' Houses, transitioned from mere "agro-literacy" to agro-activism. While enlightenment-related projects like literacy and sanitation remained important, from now on, "production propaganda" became a major priority.[76] In this new world of mobilization for mass production, even the passing of time was inflected by cotton. In the early spring, the cotton planting campaign dominated programming. For the first three months of 1933, the Central Collective

[72] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 1957, l. 1.
[73] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2437, l. 7.
[74] "'Boy bo'lingiz' shiori bilan 'kolxozchilarni davlatli qilish' shiori o'rtasida qanday farq bor." June 4, 1934, p. 2.
[75] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2482, l. 48.
[76] See the expectations of a 1933 Peasants' House in O'zMDA F. 86, op. 10, d. 119, l. 19.

Farmers' House" claimed to have served 35-52 visitors daily with reading aloud, informative pictures, lectures, and meetings - all about the spring sowing campaign.[77] In the fall, meanwhile, cotton-picking dominated the schedule. Agitprop officials had always demanded the timely circulation of newspapers, but in the context of ever-updated Plans and a production schedule that changed from week to week, demands for timely press distribution became ever more shrill.[78] It would be possible to continue enumerating such examples endlessly, but the point should be clear: the Red Teahouse, like all other mass institutions, was intended to be a venue for promoting the Party line. As American traveler Anna Louise Strong eloquently asked about the Red Teahouse, "Is it possible that the East may lose its leisure, and drink its tea with one lump or two of propaganda?"[79]

But the point I am making here is broader than the obvious one, that Red Teahouses facilitated the transmission of propaganda from Moscow to Uzbekistan's masses. More importantly, they organized Uzbekistan's masses into a horizontal public that operated under the auspices of state-sponsored institutions. In creating such horizontal relations, the Bolsheviks opened the door to forms of social life that were more difficult to control. This horizontal dimension of the state public is best exemplified through a more extensive discussion of their activities. Teahouse, Peasants' House, and club patrons were expected not only to imbibe the media, but to participate in (re-)producing it themselves. Teahouse visitors could participate in discussions of the newspaper stories they heard, or write their own articles for wall newspapers.[80] Particularly active and literate patrons could report on their local teahouse's activities by

[77] O'zMDA, f. 86, op. 10, d. 84, l. 75.
[78] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 3211, ll. 88-91.
[79] Strong, *Red Star in Samarkand*, p. 145.
[80] *Qizil Choyxona*, 1927, p. 12.

contributing to newspapers as an amateur village correspondent (*rabdekhkor*).[81] Teahouses sponsored circles (*kruzhki*) for village or workers' correspondents, as well as for political education, literature, art, music, physical culture, or military preparedness. Cultural and educational circles served two goals: on the one hand, they served to inculcate socialist values and convey state agendas; on the other hand they promoted participation by providing access to enjoyable activities and cultural resources. Indeed, despite the constant emphasis on political education (*politprosvet*) and sloganeering, it appears that by the mid-1930s, by far the most common circles at Red Teahouses and clubs were general education (ie. literacy) and musical (choral and instrumental) circles. Political reading groups and anti-religious clubs seem to have been far less common.[82] Although the Party facilitated such circles with staffing and resources, the aspiration was that they would engage active participation among the masses. In the village of Chinos, for example, one article reported that there were forty Komsomol members who were avid self-taught workers' correspondents. They had repeatedly asked for assistance in founding a circle for workers' correspondents, but never received the assistance they desired. The group of aspiring correspondents wrote to the journal *Correspondents' Companion* in an attempt to spur action.[83]

In the context of collectivization and cottonization, the once-disconnected peasantry became the main focus of Party organization, and the number of Red Teahouses increased dramatically. In the mid-1920s, the number of Red Teahouses and the number of clubs had been

[81] On the village correspondents' movement, see Michael S. Gorham, "Tongue-Tied Writers: The Rabsel'kor Movement and the Voice of the 'New Intelligentsia' in Early Soviet Russia," *The Russian Review*, no. 3 (1996): 412-29; Asaoka, "Nikolai Bukharin and the Rabsel'kor movement," from Yasuhiro Matsui, ed., *Obshchestvennost'*.
[82] Unfortunately, the file with statistics on circles at Red Teahouses and clubs seems to have been trimmed by an overzealous archivist, leaving more than half of the pages without full statistics. In making these claims about the popularity of different types of clubs, I have assumed that the stack of reports that remains intact is representative. See O'zMDA, F. 94, op. 5, d. 1567. While musical circles were more common than educational circles, the educational circles generally had larger numbers of participants.
[83] "Kruzhok kerak - kruzhok." *Muxbirlar Yo'ldoshi*, 1930 (no.1), last page.

comparable, but their numbers rapidly diverged during the first two Five-Year Plans, with the number of clubs remaining relatively flat when compared to the ballooning number of Red Teahouses. I have traced this rapid transformation in Figures 1.3 and 1.4, below.

Table 1.2			
Year[84]	Women's Clubs	Kolkhoz/ Village Clubs	Red Teahouses
1925	16	107	160
1926	32	130	177
1931		128	942
1932		109	1481
1933		217	2647
1934	56	177	3324
1935		141	2825
1936	28	222	2993
1937	29	429	3107

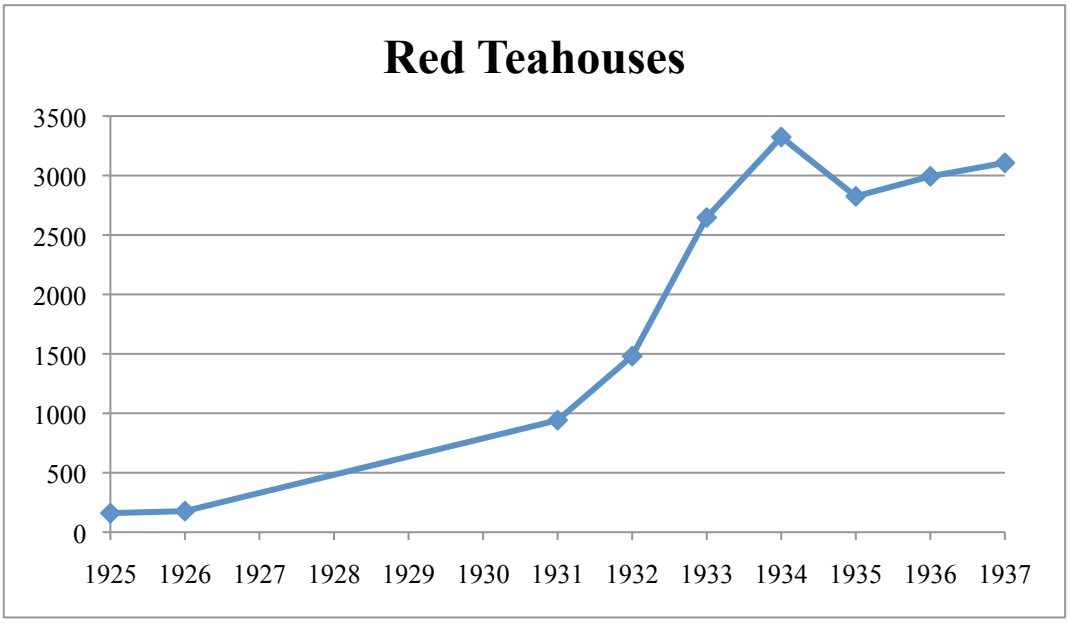

Fig. 1.2
Growth in number of Red Teahouses, 1925-1937
SOURCE: See fn. 85

[84] These figures are compiled from O'zMDA, F. 94, op. 1, d. 65, l. 93; O'zMDA, F. 94, op. 5, d. 1219, l. 23; O'zMDA, F. 94, op. 5, d. 1914, ll. 35, 36; and O'zMDA F. 94, op. 5, d. 1257. 1925-26 figures for women's clubs come from Babadzhanova, "Razvitie seti kul'turno-prosvetitel'nykh uchrezhdeni," 152-156. The category of clubs changes over time: the 1925-26 statistics enumerate the total number of clubs; in the 1930s, the terminology shifts from "village" (sel'skie) to "collective farm" clubs, and in these statistics, urban clubs are excluded. The 1934 dip in the number of Red Teahouses can likely be explained by the drive to consolidate collective farms (and the institutions they sponsored) in that year. Marianne Kamp, personal correspondence with author, April 11, 2019.

Several aspects of these statistics are worth comment, and I will return to this chart in the remainder of this chapter. For now, suffice it to note that the vast increase in the number of Red Teahouses after the start of the First Five-Year Plan is a trend that can largely be explained by the rapid growth of their number in the countryside. While Red Teahouses continued to operate in cities, these too were oriented toward the countryside, providing consultations to farmers and prioritizing the cotton production agenda in their programming.[85] Successful urban institutions also often sent delegations to help rural ones get on their feet, a practice known as *shefstvo*.[86]

Shefstvo only went so far, however, and in this period of rapid growth, Red Teahouses became increasingly dependent on local, rural cadres to run them. For the most part, the people who organized Red Teahouses are nameless and faceless; it would be very difficult to reconstruct the biography of any individual teahouse manager. However, it is possible to create something of a composite portrait of them based on passing references in the press. First, many teahouse directors came by the work under duress. Under pressure from the agitprop division, or the MTS, or some other such hierarchy, locals were sometimes pressed into teahouse work from above. I discuss this issue at greater length below. As for the teahouse managers who took their work seriously, most came to teahouse work from a variety of other state-sponsored organizations. Discussing the cadres who managed Red Teahouses during the 1920s, for example, Khushbekov notes that village teachers were the most consistent organizers of Red Teahouse activity.[87]

Komsomol members — who often overlapped significantly with village teachers — were particularly active in organizing Red Teahouses. Frequently, newspaper articles called on the

[85] "Qulub qizil choyxonalar haqida." *Yosh Leninchi*, May 12, 1930, p. 4.
[86] On *shefstvo* in 1920s Central Asia, see R. N. Shigabdinov, "Shefskoe Dvizhenie v Uzbekistane v Literature 20-X Godov," *Obshchestvennye Nauki v Uzbekistane*, no. 12 (1990): 44–45.
[87] Khushbekov, *Iz istorii kul'turnogo stroitel'stva*, p. 70.

Komsomol to whip delinquent teahouses into shape. One report noted that in the town of Ko'lli Qo'rg'on, a group of "important men" (*kattalar*) managed the teahouse, but were only interested in tea-selling, rather than the work of public organizing. The article called upon the local Komsomol to take over from those men, who were probably local elites of an older generation, accustomed to "black" teahouses.[88] In Naryn (Kyrgyzstan), according to the traveling editorial team of *Young Leninist*, the Red Teahouse had fallen into such disorder that the local trade union handed it over to the Komsomol's supervision. The local Komsomol cell agreed to take over with support from the newspaper staff, and even decided to rename the teahouse "Young Leninist*."*[89] *Young Leninist* frequently called upon local Komsomol members to take on *shefstvo* over ineffective teahouse managers.[90] In summer 1932, claiming the Komsomol had not sufficiently addressed the problems at Red Teahouses, *Young Leninist* inaugurated a month-long Komsomol inspection of Red Teahouses around the Republic of Uzbekistan, with a view to improving their work according to the "production principle."[91] And this seemed to work. In G'ijduvon, where more than a third of teahouse managers were illiterate, *Young Leninist* reported that the best-functioning teahouses were managed, either by trained Komsomol members, or by sincere nonparty youth.[92] Perhaps, given the heavy emphasis on the periodical press at Red Teahouses, young people simply took to the new medium more adroitly than their older compatriots.[93] This is not to say that youth activism went off without a hitch. One 1929 OGPU statement, for example, reported missteps such as the confiscation of prayer rugs to decorate club

[88] B. Sattor. "Aniqlangan kamchiliklar yo'qotilsin." *Yosh Leninchi,* March 30, 1933, p. 4.
[89] Karim, Rasul. "'Yosh Leninchi' ismiga qizil choyxona." *Yosh Leninchi*, April 22, 1932, p. 2.
[90] See, for example, T. Muratov. "Pskent choyxonalari komsomol otaligiga muhtoj." *Yosh Leninchi*, July 9, 1934, p. 4; J. G. "'Udarnik' sovxoz komsomoli qizil choyxonalardan uzoq." *Yosh Leninchi*, June 22, 1934, p. 4.
[91] RGASPI F. M-63, op.1, d. 257, l. 22.
[92] "Qizil choyxonalar malakali kadrlar talab qiladi." *Yosh Leninchi*, June 8, 1933, p. 2.
[93] I do not, of course, mean to suggest that newspapers did not exist in Central Asia before the Soviet period, but merely that they were unlikely to have reached many farmers in the countryside - the aspirational member of the Red Teahouse public.

walls, or the unsanctioned commandeering of mosque buildings.[94] But for the most part, the teahouses that functioned the most according to plan were those that were run by activist youth with a commitment to the Party cause.

In order to facilitate the proliferation of such teahouses, "exemplary" teahouses were often showcased as inspiration for activists.[95] To give an example: a local, Y. Hamdamov, wrote to *Young Leninist* in 1935 to applaud his local teahouse, which was under the direction of a man named Hasanov.[96] Hamdamov applauded the "expertise and beauty" with which the teahouse had been decorated. Its walls were adorned with posters, slogans, and pictures, while busts of Lenin, Stalin, Oxunboboyev and Xo'jayev rested on its tables. Those tables also enabled teahouse patrons to spread out and read the many newspapers and journals that were available there. The teahouse manager ensured the radio played frequently, and the teahouse was equipped with electric lights. The teahouse also facilitated a chess club, and it was equipped with dedicated corners for voluntary societies like military preparedness organization OSOAVIAKHIM and Red Cross analogue MOPR. On a more basic level, there was always plenty of tea for thirsty visitors. An exemplary Red Teahouse that was commended in 1937 offered all of the amenities mentioned above, as well as two billiards tables, a monthly wall newspaper, musical instruments, and weekly performances from a local theater troupe.[97] All exemplary Red Teahouses facilitated newspaper reading-aloud sessions for semi-literate patrons, and they were frequently commended for facilitating film screenings. In most cases, these exemplary activities were spearheaded by Komsomol members.

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[94] RGASPI, F. 62, op. 2, d. 1811, l. 85.
[95] S. Normurzayev, "Namunali choyxona," *Yosh Leninchi*, June 27, 1934, p. 4; S. Gadoyboyev, Sulaymanov, "Namunali choyxona," *Yosh Leninchi*, July 9, 1934, p. 4; Abdulla Xalilov. "Namunali choyxona," *Yosh Leninchi*, Dec. 3, 1935, p. 4; Xoltoy Isaev, Qurbon Oripov, "Madaniy xizmat kuchaytirildi," *Yosh Leninchi*, May 8, 1936, p. 4.
[96] Y. Hamdamov, "Namunali choyxona," *Yosh Leninchi*, Nov. 10, 1935, p. 4.
[97] "Namunali choyxona," *Yosh Leninchi*, Nov. 2, 1937, p. 4.

The State Public and "Black" Teahouse Practices

Red Teahouses were such a major focus of Party activism that, unsurprisingly, they sometimes became lightning rods for popular disaffection with Soviet policy. Archival reports from the OGPU describe several instances in which Red Teahouses were attacked by mobs of angry men. In August 1929, for example, seven men from the Ferghana Valley town of Vorukh were arrested for destroying a Red Teahouse.[98] The local Village Soviet had spent months attempting to find a satisfactory location for a produce processing point (*plodovinsoiuz punkt*).[99] As the summer wore on, presumably the produce harvest began to accumulate, still unprocessed. So on July 12, Saidov, Responsible Secretary of the local Communist Party cell, took matters into his own hands. He unilaterally ordered the flooding of a cemetery with a popular shrine, in preparation for converting it to the desired processing point. When the people of Vorukh angrily confronted him about the sacrilege, Saidov swore at them, saying he had already purchased the cemetery, "corpses and all," for a "bag of coins"[100] The crowd responded, first by beating up Saidov and his fellow-activists, then by destroying the Red Teahouse. When the authorities threatened to arrest the ringleaders of the mob, the people of Vorukh sent a messenger with a petition on their behalf, marked with "a thousand" fingerprints. Then, they barricaded themselves in the mosque attached to the cemetery. They emerged only when it became clear that law enforcement was in no position to respond. All the remaining Soviet authorities had taken cover;

[98] The town of Vorukh is now a Tajik exclave in Kyrgyzstan, disputed by the governments of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. However, maps from the late 1920s indicate that Vorukh belonged to the Tajik ASSR, and the archival report on this incident suggests that in August 1929, Vorukh was still being administrated by the UzSSR. (The Uzbek State Prosecutor, Mavlonbekov, made the decision to arrest the overzealous administrator who had attempted to take the cemetery). For a 1928 map showing the town as part of Khodzhent province, see *Atlas soiuza sovetskikh sotsialisticheskikh respublik* (Moscow: Izdanie TSIk SSSR, 1928), pp. 101-104.

[99] Presumably anticipating resistance, local activists had already proposed a different, less popular cemetery for this purpose, and offered to arrange to move the graves.

[100] It is unclear what Saidov meant when he said he had purchased the shrine, and the archival report does not elaborate.

the Chief Investigator was so terrified he had hidden in a silkworm cocoon dryer. No one was prosecuted until late August, and when the arrests did happen, Saidov was among those taken into custody.[101]

In the grand scheme of things, however, such occasions of outright resistance were rare. The Red Teahouse was problematic not because it was widely reviled, but to the contrary, because it was so popular. The administrators who adopted the teahouse model seem to have taken the pre-existing popularity of teahouses as an asset, pure and simple. But quickly, that very popularity proved to be a liability. Recognizing this problem, in 1925 an administrator for village work under the auspices of Uzbekistan's Commissariat of Enlightenment wrote a letter to all his subordinates in Central Asia. According to the letter, the teahouse model had failed. Instead of cultivating the masses, many Red Teahouses had become almost indistinguishable from ordinary, "black" teahouses. The letter called for an overhaul of the network of teahouses. In order to facilitate this, the writer proposed that Red Teahouses be renamed "Houses of Cultural Improvement" (*doma kul'turnogo vospitaniia*).[102]

The proposed name change never took place. But the anxiety about nomenclature revealed an enduring problem with Uzbekistan's mass institutions in general, and with Red Teahouses in particular. By adopting the teahouse as their prototypical mass institution in Uzbekistan, the Bolsheviks hoped to attract Central Asians to the Soviet cause. But for the people of Central Asia, teahouses came with a host of associations, practices, and attitudes, some but not all of which worked at cross-purposes with Bolshevik goals. In the following section, accordingly, I discuss the unintended consequences of the decision to adopt the teahouse model, as well as some of the strategies that activists used to address those consequences. My analysis reveals that,

[101] This event is described in detail in RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 1815, ll. 29-30 ob. The same file describes an attack on, among other things, a women's corner (zhenskaia lavka).
[102] O'zMDA, F. 94, op. 1, d. 202, l. 196.

by sponsoring the teahouse model, Bolsheviks created the conditions for pre-existing norms of sociability to persist within the institutions of the state public.

In addition to archival records, I rely heavily on the huge number of newspaper and journal reports on Red Teahouses that appeared throughout the late 1920s and 1930s, most from *Young Leninist (Yosh Leninchi*), the official organ of the Komsomol. Teahouse reports often appeared on the back page of the newspaper. Often, multiple teahouse reports were published per day. These correspondences sometimes praised, but more often harshly criticized local teahouses. It is difficult to ascertain the provenance of all these articles, but most of them appear to be written by village correspondents or local activists. Komsomol members took it upon themselves to keep Red Teahouses in line, and complaints that appeared in the newspaper newspaper could result in action.[103] To be sure, personal conflicts and local factors figured in these reports, and correspondents certainly drew on available scripts, such as the association of drunkenness with counter-revolution. However, taken in aggregate, these reports provide a fascinating untapped source for the shape of social life in Uzbekistan's mass institutions.

First and foremost, the administrator who hoped to rename the Red Teahouses felt that the population was using them, not as an institution of enlightenment, but as a space for vulgar commercialism. There were concrete material reasons for this state of affairs. Until the attempt to make them "red," teahouses had always been profit-making institutions. This issue was compounded by the fact that Red Teahouses were tax-exempt. In 1923, this generated an extended correspondence between educational officials (under the auspices of Turkpolitprosvet) and the People's Commissar for Finances. The educators argued that it was unfair to exempt the Russian Peasants' Houses and Village Reading Rooms (*izby-chital'ni*) from taxes while not

[103] See, for example, the correspondence between a Red Teahouse manager and the writer of a critical article in O'zMDA, F. 112, op. 61, d. 36, ll. 429-431.

doing the same for Farmers' Houses and Red Teahouses. They continued that although Red Teahouses had the appearance of commercial institutions, in reality they performed essential educational and propaganda functions. The Finance Commissar's office, meanwhile, affected concern for "black" teahouse owners, arguing that exempting Red Teahouses would put all other teahouses out of business.[104] In passing, the Finance Commissar's office also noted that this would reduce its own revenues.

Ultimately, both Peasants' Houses and Red Teahouses remained tax-exempt.[105] But the tax exemption for Red Teahouses did, in fact, cause problems, just as the Finance Commissar's office had predicted. By creating a financial incentive, the tax exemption invited any teahouse owner, regardless of his Communist commitment, to register as "Red." Theoretically, Red Teahouses were expected to generate profit for the sponsoring organization, such as a collective farm.[106] They were also supposed to attract clientele — and therefore, more participants— with their low prices.[107] But in reality, the press was full of complaints that local teahouse operators were no more than profiteers. In some cases, correspondents claimed, teahouses were run by men who were known to have been merchants before the Bolshevik ascendancy.[108] Other correspondents registered no complaint with the class background of the teahouse managers, but still claimed that they took advantage of their position by pocketing the profits.[109] In at least one case, a Red Teahouse owner went beyond selling hot tea and became a wholesale broker of dry tea leaves.[110] Another bought bread from a nearby bakery and sold it at a profit at the teahouse he

[104] O'zMDA, F. 34, op. 1, d. 1998, ll. 32-46.
[105] On the tax exemption of Peasants' Houses, see O'zMDA, F. 86, op. 10, d. 119, ll. 1-2.
[106] *Qizil Choyxona*, 1927, p. 4.
[107] Aminov, "Choyxonalarning vazifasi faqat choy sotish emas," *Yosh Leninchi*, Jan. 26, 1934, p. 4.
[108] Bolg'a, "Savdogar Shamsiev - choyxona mudiri," *Yosh Leninchi*, June 27, 1934, p. 4
[109] "Qizil choyxona - isropchilar qo'lida," *Yosh Leninchi*, June 24, 1933, p. 2.
[110] "Toshkent qizil choyxonalariga bir nazar," *Madaniy Inqilob*, March 23, 1933, p. 1.

managed.[111] In G'ijduvon, the head of the police Red Teahouse had even turned half of it into a barbershop, a type of institution that frequently operated alongside teahouses in pre-Soviet Turkestan.[112] Patrons reportedly had to pay just as much for tea at Red Teahouses as at black ones.[113] One article's title summed it up: many teahouses had made commercial work their primary focus, but a Red Teahouse's job was "Not Just Tea-Drinking."[114]

Profiteering was just the tip of the iceberg. With Red Teahouses mushrooming in the largely illiterate countryside, it became extremely difficult to furnish them with qualified cadres. Countless reports claimed that local Red Teahouse directors did not even know how to read. In 1933, for example, *Young Leninist* reported that 35% of G'ijduvon Raion's Red Teahouses were staffed by illiterate people, and even more Red Teahouse directors were only semi-literate.[115] Training courses had limited capacity when they did exist. In Yangi Yo'l raion, the regional director for the Commissariat of Enlightenment even lied, saying he had trained twelve Red Teahouse directors, when in fact no training had happened at all.[116]

Whether qualified or not, some Red Teahouse staff seemed to consider the job a sinecure. Often barely supervised, teahouse directors could get away with drawing a salary while doing little agitprop or cultural work.[117] In addition to having easy access to teahouse revenues, some collective farm teahouse directors benefited from a day off from work in the fields in order to "tend to the teahouse."[118] One agrotechnician employed by a Red Teahouse spent all his days drinking tea, but according to an incensed correspondent, had never actually made a single

[111] P., Qaynar, "Choyxona mudiri chayqovchi," *Yangi Farg'ona*, Oct. 14, 1935, p. 4.
[112] "Mudirlik qilsinmi, sartaroshlik?" *Yosh Leninchi*, June 8, 1933, 2. On barbers and teahouses, see Schuyler, *Turkistan*, p. 180.
[113] "Madaniy-maorif markazlari qaytadan qurilish talabiga javob bersin," *Yosh Leninchi*, April 23, 1930, p.4.
[114] "Faqat choyxo'rliq emas," *Yosh Leninchi*, March 23, 1933, p. 4.
[115] "G'ijduvon choyxonalari gapxonliq makoni bo'lmasin," *Yosh Leninchi*, June 8 1933, p. 2.
[116] Normat Rajabiy, "Yangi Yo'l choyxonalari talabga javob berarlik emas," *Yosh Leninchi*, June 10, 1934, p. 4.
[117] H. Ermatov, "Men qizil choyxona mudiriman," *Yosh Leninchi*, Jan. 15, 1934, p. 2.
[118] "Qizil choyxona - isropchilar qo'lida," *Yosh Leninchi*, June 24, 1933, p. 2.

agronomy consultation.[119] At the Central Peasants' House, meanwhile, the staff held some read-aloud sessions and participated to a degree in sowing campaigns. However, a 1931 inspection revealed that they could not be bothered to hold lectures, film screenings, or exhibits, nor did they keep the furniture in good condition, keep the place clean, or generally model the "new everyday life" (*novyi byt*). Several unauthorized people had taken up residence, and the staff had not bothered to evict them.[120] The cadres who ran these teahouses apparently understood their role to be much more similar to that of "black" teahouse-keepers. They were providers of hot water and rudimentary furnishings, not the curator-cum-reference librarian-cum-programming directors that Red Teahouse managers, in theory, were supposed to be.

Komsomol members often comprised the most active group of teahouse directors, but in some cases, Komsomol members were just as delinquent as everyone else. When a *Young Leninist* teahouse inspection drive began in 1933, the editorial board reported that only 8 raion Komsomol cells took up the charge immediately, while no one in the Ferghana Valley had paid the drive any attention at all.[121] Other Komsomol members, such as the ones at Stalin raion's redundantly named Stalin Collective Farm, spent hours drinking tea at the Red Teahouse. Despite their continual presence at the teahouse, in 1934 *Young Leninist* reported they never took on any kind of mentoring role to improve its cultural enlightenment work.[122]

Even dedicated Party activists did not always see the value of Red Teahouse work. At a 1932 conference for Central Asia's "agitational and mass workers," a Comrade Israilov complained that the Communist Party and Komsomol had failed appropriately to apportion their cadres. Too often, he argued, the best Party and Komsomol members were assigned to teahouse

[119] Sayohatchi, "Dumda qolgan choyxona," *Yosh Leninchi*, Oct. 28, 1935, p. 4.
[120] O'zMDA, F. 86, op. 1, d. 6741, ll. 24-29.
[121] "Madaniy bazalarning xizmati joyida bo'lsin," *Yosh Leninchi*, May 9, 1933, p. 2.
[122] Anvarov, "Otalik amalda bo'lsin," *Yosh Leninchi,* June 14, 1934, p. 4.

duty, when they should really have prioritized production. It might be possible to understand why a well-situated Party member might pull his weight in order to get a comfortable position at a teahouse. Israilov was not so understanding. Despite his activist pedigree, Israilov lacked a vision for teahouse work, preferring to send the most highly qualified individuals to the fields. "Any collective farmer can handle teahouse work," continued Israilov, "even a woman."[123]

The discussion of the Komsomol has revealed how much Red Teahouses depended on periodical publications, especially newspapers. In particular, Red Teahouses needed newspapers to reach out to the peasantry, and especially to new collective farm members. In practice, however, it proved extremely difficult to keep the vast network of Red Teahouses adequately supplied with periodicals. In the first place, according to a Central Asian Bureau commission on the press, many newspapers and journals were consistently published behind schedule. Once they made it off the presses at the few towns who had typographies, newspapers had to be sent at least partly to their destinations by rail. However, the railway administrators did not always cooperate with this plan. The newspapers lacked qualified staff to manage distribution and subscription.[124] Even the most dedicated agitprop staff, such as one Comrade Kamalov of Namangan, could pay for and subscribe to a publication, only for it never to arrive.[125] One 1932 cartoon even lampooned the incompetence of Uzbekistan's distribution infrastructure, portraying a Young Pioneer receiving *Red Uzbekistan*, while an adult received the Young Pioneers' newspaper, *Lenin's Flame* (*Lenin Uchquni*) [Fig. 1.5]. It was almost a cliche to note that a delinquent teahouse only had out-of-date books and periodicals; in 1934, one teahouse was accused of stocking books from 1924 at the latest.[126]

[123] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2913, l. 40.
[124] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 3211, ll. 88-91.
[125] RGASPI F. M-1, op. 23, d. 835a, l. 166.
[126] For examples, see Begmatov, "Tashlandiq choyxona," *Yosh Leninchi*, June 14, 1934, p. 4; "Qizil choyxonalar

Fig. 1.3
Title: "An Everyday Occurrence"
1-Who gets the Young Pioneer newspaper?
2-The grown-up newspaper for the Young Pioneer
3-Both sides are surprised
4-They happened to run into each other and got to the bottom of it.
Mushtum: Mail carriers don't distinguish between adults and children – this isn't the mail bag's fault!
SOURCE: *Mushtum* no. 3, 1932, p. 15.

But even when the right newspapers arrived to Red Teahouses in a timely manner, one could not assume that they would be read. Sometimes, they just lay around gathering dust. Other reports bemoaned the fact that books and newspapers were used for all kinds of things other than reading, including wrapping meat and rolling cigarettes.[127] Another teahouse headline stated gaspingly, "newspapers are being burned instead of wood!"[128] One particularly incensed Komsomol conference participant stated that in some Red Teahouses, books were hung from the ceiling, dusty, ripped, and, obviously, unread.[129] The same thing applied to other media as well. *Cultural Revolution* journal reported that, at many teahouses, radio receivers and film projectors

ko'klam xizmatiga," *Yosh Leninchi*, March 6, 1933, p. 3.
[127] Shermatov, "Qo'qon shaharqomi choyxonalar ishi bilan bog'lansin," *Yosh Leninchi*, Feb. 17, 1934, p. 4.
[128] M. Rajabiy, "Gazetalar o'tin o'rniga yoqilmoqda," *Yosh Leninchi*, June 29, 1933, p. 2.
[129] RGASPI F. M-1, op. 23, d. 835a, l. 109.

cluttered the space, neglected and in a state of disrepair.[130] In Urgut, no fewer than 100 radio receivers rested unused.[131] Circles for political reading, theater, music, etc, all too often fizzled out for lack of enthusiasm or dedicated leadership.

In a context when many visitors felt that the mere presence of Soviet media was sufficient to make a teahouse red, Soviet activists were hard-pressed to show that it was imperative also to *participate* in those media. Mushtum, the Uzbek satirical journal, addressed the problem of media indifference in 1933, with a cartoon showing a Red Corner at a so-called Red Teahouse, fenced off and locked. In the caption, when a collective farmer challenges the teahouse manager about this state of affairs, the manager retorts, "Our raion cultural base (*kul'tbaza*) instructed us to make the teahouse's Red Corner just like a club!" [Fig. 1.6] In other words: clubs were unpopular, and teahouses were popular — not *because* they provided access to the media, but *despite* that fact.

[130] "Toshkent qizil choyxonolariga bir nazar." *Madaniy Inqilob*, March 23, 1933, p. 1.
[131] Ibid.

Fig. 1.4
Title: What Everyone Thinks
Collective farmer: Why did you put a fence up here and lock it up? Doesn't anyone read the newspapers and books?
Red Teahouse director: The Raion kul'tbaza said that the teahouse's Red Corner should be just like a club.
SOURCE: *Mushtum*, no. 8, 1933, p. 10

So if many Red Teahouse participants did not care about Soviet media, and neglected to participate in circles, then what were they doing with their time? On the one hand, it was seemingly innocuous: all many teahouse visitors wanted to do was drink tea and talk with their friends. In Tashkent, for example, the Red Teahouse on Pravda Vostoka street served as many as 600 people per day, but there were no newspaper readings, Red Corners, circles, or agitational work of any kind.[132] From the activist perspective, the culture of tea-drinking became particularly problematic during the fasting season of Ramadan.[133] Because they could not eat or drink during the day, Central Asian Muslims were accustomed to resting for much of the day and socializing at teahouses by night. In order to combat this when Ramadan fell during important times for cotton production, Red Teahouses were called upon to close promptly in the evening and to hold anti-religious lectures when they were open.[134] But even during the rest of the year, teahouses kept people from their work. Propagandists put down their propaganda; cotton pickers abandoned their fields.[135] They even rejected modern furniture, such as tables and chairs. One observer complained that a certain teahouse lacked enough chairs for people to sit down and read — but what did that matter if everyone was sitting on the floor anyway?[136] It was only in the context of the battle for cotton autarky that mere tea-drinking and chitchat could become the most egregious form of civic neglect. In Soviet Uzbekistan of the 1930s, after all, the best expression of civic engagement was not to vote, but to work the cotton fields.

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[132] "Boqimsiz qolgan choyxona," *Yosh Leninchi*, March 28, 1933, p. 4.
[133] An interesting example of the Red Teahouse as a site of antireligious agitation in the Nabi Ganiev film *Ramazan* is discussed in Drieu, *Cinema, Nation, and Empire*, pp. 170-172.
[134] "Ro'za va hayitlar, sosializm ishlariga katta to'suqdir," *Qizil O'zbekiston*, Jan. 8, 1931, p. 4; RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 106, ll. 1-3.
[135] See, for example, the Komsomol and rabfak officials described in Komsomolets, "Ommaviy ish o'rniga oy ichadilar," *Yosh Leninchi*, June 20, 1935, p. 3.
[136] A. Muhamatjonov, "Komsomollar qizil choyxona ishidan bir chetda," *Yosh Leninchi*, March 6, 1933, p. 3; see another report of neglected furniture in "Madaniy-maorif markazlari qaytadan qurulish talabiga javob bersin," *Yosh Leninchi*, April 23, 1930, p. 4.

But matters did not stop with tea: narcotics and alcohol seem to have been quite common at Red Teahouses. Teahouses were often accused of being opium dens (*ko'knorxona*)[137] or cannabis houses (*nashaxona*),[138] and men also smoked tobacco.[139] Smoking was so closely associated with teahouse life that the 1927 Red Teahouse handbook argued that if it was banned altogether, patrons would simply take their business to a "black" teahouse.[140] Instead of a blanket ban, then, the brochure proposed a harm-reduction policy. Institute a "Red Pipe" (*qizil chilim*), the brochure said, making sure to sanitize the mouthpiece between users.[141] This would keep customers coming, while also inculcating them with the practices of modern everyday life. Although this level of tolerance did not continue into the 1930s, the approach shows just how difficult it was for Red Teahouse activists to eradicate the established social practices of public life. The brochure's section heading says it all: "It is terrifying to eradicate the *chilim* from teahouses."[142]

Somewhat less traditional, but no less widespread, was the consumption of alcohol at Red Teahouses.[143] Many teahouse directors spent the day drinking.[144] In a countryside Red Teahouse in Tashkent raion, the director, an Akbarov, spent his time drinking and playing a game called "pasha-pasha."[145] Another alcoholic worker, whose teahouse was near a train station, drank daily

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[137] Ibid; Muradov, Farhod, "Piskentda qizil choyxonalar vazifasi ko'knorixonaliq vazifasiga o'taydi," *Yosh Leninchi*, Jan. 26, 1934, p. 4; P., Qaynar, "Choyxona mudiri chayqovchi," *Yangi Farg'ona*, Oct. 14, 1935, p. 4.
[138] G'ofurov, "Choyxonami, nashaxonami?" *Yosh Leninchi*, Nov. 28, 1935, p. 4.
[139] P., Qaynar. "Choyxona mudiri chayqovchi," p. 4.
[140] Socially smoking tobacco, cannabis, and opium was a widespread practice across Central Asia and Iran in the early modern and modern periods. Generally, intoxicants were smoked in such small doses that they generated only a mild high. See Rudolph P. Matthee, *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Drugs and Stimulants in Iranian History, 1500-1900* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005).
[141] *Qizil Choyxona*, 1927, pp. 15-16.
[142] "Chilimni qizil choyxonadan chiqarib tashlash qo'rqinchlidir." Ibid., p. 15. On opium use in early Soviet Central Asia, see Alisher Latypov, "The Opium War at the 'Root of the World' : The 'Elimination' of Addiction in Soviet Badakhshan / Alisher Latypov," *Central Asian Survey* 32, no. 1 (2013): 19–36.
[143] Alcohol consumption was not unheard of in the Islamic world: for example, Rudi Matthee discusses traditional Iranian wine culture in *Pursuit of Pleasure*. However, wine was not as widespread or traditional in Central Asia, and when they referred to a specific type of alcohol, newspaper reports usually discussed vodka (*aroq*).
[144] Shermatov, "Qo'qon shaharqomi choyxonalar ishi bilan bog'lansin," *Yosh Leninchi*, Feb. 17, 1934, p. 4.
[145] M. R., Sh. G, "Akbarovning mehmonxonasiga aylandi," *Yosh Leninchi*, May 24, 1934, p. 2; Jo'ra Olim, "Nomiga qizil choyxona," *Yosh Leninchi*, May 24, 1934, p. 2.

and harassed the women who got off the train there.[146] In Khorezm, one Red Teahouse had no newspapers; instead, most patrons spent their time playing cards and drinking vodka.[147]

The drunken teahouse harasser was just a slightly updated version of an old problem with teahouses, at least from the Soviet perspective. Teahouses were, and had always been, spaces exclusively for men. While, in theory, Red Teahouses were expected to welcome women, in practice this seems rarely to have happened. The degree to which Red Teahouses were gendered spaces is best exemplified in an episode Fannina Halle, a German traveler, recorded from her journey in Central Asia during the 1930s.[148] On a village market day in winter, Halle encountered a group of women vendors who had given up on selling their wares in the midst of a hard freeze. Business was bad because of the weather, and many men had gathered inside a Red Teahouse near the market. According to Halle, the women gazed through the window of the warm teahouse in envy as the men enjoyed tea and conversation: women were not welcome there. Gathering behind a woman, Mastura, who had just been elected village elder (*oqsoqol*), the women vendors decided as a group to go into the teahouse to warm themselves. But when they stepped onto the threshold and announced their intention to enter, the men inside responded with laughter and mockery. Even the young Party secretary responded to Mastura, "Have you ever known women sitting in a *chaikhana*, that is meant for men?" Unperturbed, Mastura responded, "This is a new *ksyl [sic] chaikhana*, a Red *Chaikhana*, and nobody has said that it is only for men…" Halle reports that the men were sufficiently cowed that they abandoned the teahouse en

[146] G'ofurov, "Choyxonami, nashaxonami?" *Yosh Leninchi*, Nov. 28, 1935, p. 4
[147] T. Boltoyev, "Xorazm choyxonalarida nima gap," *Yosh Leninchi*, March 6, 1933, p. 3.
[148] Fannina W. Halle, *Women in the Soviet East* (E.P. Dutton & co., inc, 1938), p. 193-94. The precise location of the episode is unclear; it mentions *auls* and Kirghiz horses, so it is likely the episode took place in Kyrgyzstan. However, sedentary teahouse culture in Central Asia was fairly uniform across the entire region, so the situation Halle describes applies to Uzbekistan as well.

masse, leaving it for the women. She concludes the story with a promise from Mastura: "By the next bazaar we will have our own *chaikhana*."

The dialogue Halle reports is likely sensationalized, but the story is worthy of comment because it exemplifies a common dynamic in Red Teahouses. Although, in theory, Red Teahouses were supposed to welcome women, in practice they were patronized largely by men. To be sure, some particularly active Red Teahouses hosted events that included women; but frequently, these were events just for women, while the default, "co-ed" programming attracted mostly men.[149] It is significant that Mastura expelled the men, rather than attempting to organize a mixed-gender social occasion. The fact was that men and women simply were not accustomed to socializing in mixed company, and it was a massive overreach to assume that dubbing a teahouse "red" would automatically facilitate women's inclusion on an everyday level. Furthermore, while women's clubs were widely visible in cities and in the press, their numbers comprised less than one percent of the numbers of Red Teahouses. The only conclusion to be drawn is that, despite persistent rhetoric about emancipating women, outreach to women remained a lower priority for administrators in Central Asia than reaching farmer men; or, at best, that the administrators who spearheaded the growth of Red Teahouses made a grave miscalculation in assuming that calling a teahouse "Red" would immediately overturn centuries of gendered norms around teahouse sociability.

The gendered nature of teahouse sociability affected the stated goal for Red Teahouses as engines of mass mobilization. The reports I have discussed in this section show that, for every exemplary teahouse, there were many other Red Teahouses where older norms of teahouse sociability prevailed. At these teahouses, men who cared little about the latest issue of *Red*

[149] "Qulub qizil choyxonalar haqida," *Yosh Leninchi*, May 12, 1930, p. 4. March 8 was also a common occasion for women-oriented events at Red Teahouses; see RGASPI F. 112, op. 61, d. 76, ll. 13-14, 48.

Uzbekistan shirked their civic duty — cotton production — in favor of whiling away the afternoon at the teahouse, chatting, smoking and drinking tea. Red Teahouses, as a result, had quite the opposite of the desired effect in many cases. They lured men away from socialist construction, leaving their wives to work the fields, care for the children, and run the collective farm. [Fig. 1.7 and 1.8]

Fig. 1.5
"At the Ferghana region's Stalin Collective Farm, women work while the men never leave the teahouse."
SOURCE: *Kolxoz Yo'li,* Oct. 13, 1931, p. 1.

Fig. 1.6
Top left: "The Answer: In Zelenskii raion, work to attract men to cotton picking is in a bad state. In some places, there is not a single man participating in the picking."
Bottom:"Son: 'Father, why aren't you picking cotton?' Father: 'Shut up, cotton-picking is your mother's work.'"
SOURCE: *Mushtum*, no. 17, September 1932, p. 2.

"Cultured" Mass Institutions

Beginning in about 1934, the activities of teahouses began to expand to include a greater emphasis on "culturedness," a discourse that was taking hold throughout the Soviet Union. Before, teahouses were considered exemplary as long as they held read-aloud sessions, hosted consultations, and sponsored a few circles; now, their purview expanded to serving the

entertainment needs of the hard-working collective farmer, and keeping him comfortable. In addition to the usual newspapers and books, a 1937 charter for Red Teahouses called for supplies including a portable gramophone, billiards tables, chess sets and other table games, maps and a globe, a wall clock, and even a barbershop.[150] The priorities for teahouse managers still included political education, but also encouraged "cultured leisure."[151] The packed evening schedule — illuminated by electric lights — was to include discussions of world affairs, but also theater performances, musical interludes, and group games.[152] [Fig. 1.7] Importantly, this charter barely mentioned tea. In their supplies, activities, and priorities, teahouses were converging with clubs.[153]

[150] O'zMDA, F. 94, op. 5, d. 2701, l. 6a.
[151] Ibid., l. 32.
[152] Ibid, ll. 7-8.
[153] Indeed, it appears that some particularly well-appointed teahouses were upgraded to clubs; at least in part, this probably explains the reduction in number of Red Teahouses in the late 1930s, while the number of clubs continued to rise. "Eng ozoda va namunali choyxonaga ega bo'laylik," *Yosh Leninchi*, Jan. 5, 1934, p. 4. For a concise description of the concept of "culturedness," see "Kulturnost' and Consumption," form Catriona Kelly and David Shepherd. *Constructing Russian Culture,* 293-313. See the descriptions of ideal teahouse and club activities in O'zMDA, F. 94, op. 5, d. 1785, ll. 7-7 ob.

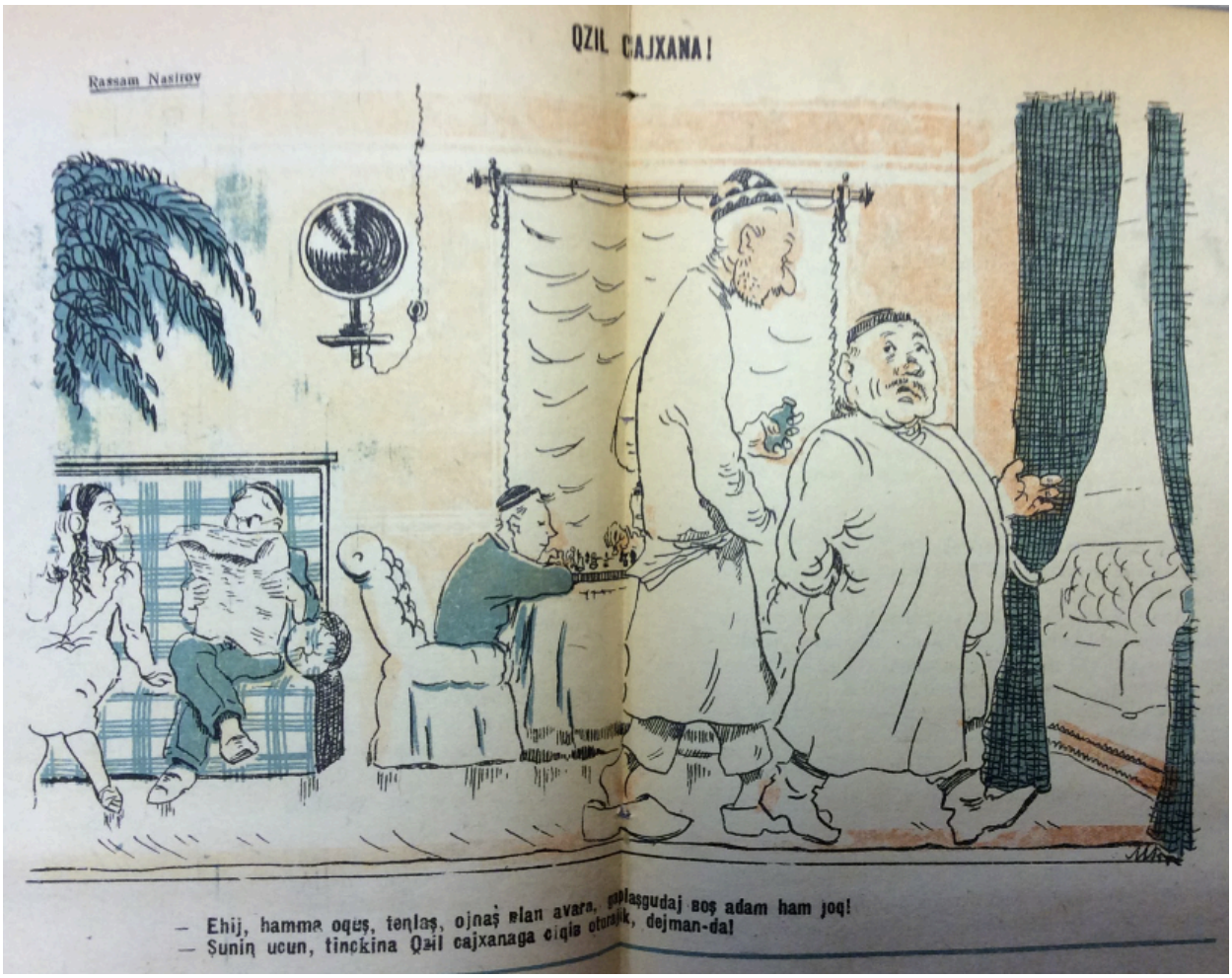

Fig. 1.7
Top: Red Teahouse
Bottom: "Everyone here is reading, listening, and [chess-]playing. Not a single person is free to chit-chat!" "Yes, let's go find a nice, *peaceful* Red Teahouse."
Artist: Nosirov
SOURCE: *Mushtum* no. 20, 1937, pp. 6-7.

In other ways, however, the increasing discourse of "cultured leisure" facilitated a return to older modes of public life. Teahouses in Central Asia had always offered entertainment in an effort to attract clients, including dance, theater, and musical performances.[154] Now, the Communist Party was emphasizing music just as much as it emphasized reading the works of

[154] For a discussion of the analogical institutions in the Ottoman Empire, see Chapter 7, "Society and the Social Life of the Coffeehouses," from Ralph S. Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988).

Lenin. And these were no mere piano recitals. The instruments one Red Teahouse was praised for having included a *dutor*, *chang, and nay*, traditional Central Asian string and woodwind instruments that travelers had reported seeing at teahouses already in the 19th century.[155] Perhaps it was an accident that this aligned with local expectations, but it was a happy accident for some activists, such as one who in 1933 had already proposed that Red Teahouses hire more singers and dancers in order to attract a larger clientele.[156]

With the new expectations came tighter control over teahouse administration. Since 1930, teahouses had been answerable to raion "cultural bases" (*kul'tbazy*), not all of which effectively fulfilled their mandate to supervise local Red Teahouses.[157] In 1935, as part of a broader effort to consolidate their efforts, the *kul'tbazy* were renamed as Houses of Culture. Now, their main job, according to a report from the Commissariat of Enlightenment, was to serve "the cultural needs of Stakhanovites" by increasing their programming and improving their staff.[158] Exemplary Houses of Culture would sponsor Saturday work days and cotton-picking competitions, as well as a wide variety of clubs — the Andijon House of Culture facilitated aeronautics, sewing and knitting, drama, music, and Russian language clubs. Additionally, the Andijon establishment served as both model and mentor for the "lowest-level" (*nizovoi*) public sphere institutions, the Red Teahouses.[159] Accordingly, in late 1936, the Commissariat of Enlightenment began issuing forms that all Red Teahouses were required to get signed at the House of Culture, confirming that they were indeed functioning as Red (rather than black) Teahouses, and that they were being appropriately supervised.[160] On the eve of the Great Terror, then, the Party-state both began to

[155] Xaltay Isaev, Qurbon Oripov, "Madaniy xizmat kuchaytirildi," *Yosh Leninchi*, May 8, 1936, p. 4.
[156] Jurgenev and Kotiboyev, "Butun rayon va shahar maoriflariga," *Madaniy Inqilob*, Feb. 23, 1933, p. 2.
[157] Vaxobjon, "Kultbaza mudiri choyxonalar ustidan tomoshabinmi?" *Yosh Leninchi*, Jan. 26, 1934, p. 1.
[158] O'zMDA, F. 94, op. 5, d. 1787, ll. 41-45.
[159] O'zMDA, F. 94, op. 5, d. 1219, l. 19.
[160] O'zMDA, F. 94, op. 5, d. 2701, l. 36.

assert greater control over teahouse life, at the same time promoting policies that facilitated concessions to older norms of teahouse culture in Central Asia. In Uzbekistan, it would seem, the Red and the Black teahouse had reached something of a truce.

Conclusion

There are several conclusions to be drawn from this discussion. First, that during the 1930s, the Komsomol and the Party put incredible effort into promoting mass institutions, by far the most prominent of which was the Red Teahouse. In doing so, they integrated Central Asians into a state public, in large part by promoting the mass media. At the same time, however, the very network of institutions that created a state public in Uzbekistan's countryside for the first time also facilitated forms of public life that long predated Soviet power in Uzbekistan. In particular, Red Teahouses made possible, and sometimes even promoted, forms of masculine sociability, cultural production, and leisure activity that had characterized "black" teahouses long before the Russian Revolution. Red teahouses were intended as an institution for the creation of *obshchestvennost'*,— and insofar as they created a cadre of Komsomol activists, they succeeded in that effort — but for most of Uzbekistan's masses, they turned out to function in much the same way as teahouses had "since ages past."

Chapter 2

Sounds of Socialism: Music for the State Public

СЛЕТ САМОЦВЕТОВ ИСКУССТВА

Фото М. ПЕНСОН

В июне откроется среднеазиатская музыкально-художественная олимпиада. Первоцветы искусств республик края дадут отчет о своей работе. На сцену выйдут молодые рабочие, колхозники, вузовцы, школьники. Игру на гитаре, декламацию, исполнение увертюр на рояле, выступление хоров, духовых оркестров, танцы—вот что увидят и услышат трудящиеся Ташкента в дни краевого соревнования мастеров самодеятельного искусства.

Fig. 2.1
"A Gathering of Art's Jewels," photographer Max Penson
SOURCE: *Komsomolets Vostoka,* May 26, 1934, p. 4.

On a Sunday in mid-June, 1934, the Central Asian Bureau of the Komsomol held opening ceremonies for the first Central Asian Musical-Artistic Olympiad [Fig. 2.1]. Newspapers reported that 40,000 people attended the opening festivities in Tashkent's Dinamo Stadium and the adjacent Gorky Park.[1] The competitors, all amateur musicians and dancers, had been selected in local and regional olympiads held around the republics of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. As the ceremony progressed, these hundreds of performers filed in to the accompaniment of a band. They listened to rousing speeches from Party officials,

[1] "40000 na prazdnike," *Komsomolets Vostoka*, June 18, 1934, p. 1; "Fanfary vozvestili otkrytie," *Komsomolets Vostoka*, June 18, 1934, p. 1. The precise capacity of Tashkent's Dinamo stadium is unclear, but it is highly unlikely it could fit a full 40,000 people. The newspaper's attendance figures probably included revelers from both the park and the stadium, and was undoubtedly a generous estimate. The estimate of "up to 20,000" in the SATASS press release is probably more realistic. See RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, ll. 22-23. The opening date for the Musical-Artistic Olympiad and the Conference on Culture and Everyday Life was June 17.

including Yo'ldosh Oxunboboev and Shapurji Saklatvala, a visiting leader of the British Communist Party and former MP. The evening's festivities concluded with a fireworks display. Over the course of four days, the contestants performed for the people of Tashkent at parks and theaters around the city, and on the last day, a lucky few were awarded prizes and the privilege of competing at the amateur music Olympiad in Moscow.

In recent years, scholars have examined important aspects of Soviet musical culture in Central Asia. The development of Central Asian operas has generated particularly fruitful insights into the interplay between national cultures, imperial dynamics, and Soviet anti-colonial discourses.[2] But if an interested reader were to look for this or any Olympiad in a history of Uzbek music, whether Soviet, post-Soviet, or Western, they would look in vain.[3] To a degree, this makes sense. From the perspective of the history of art music in Central Asia as it has been researched thus far— the composition of operas, the creation of Composers' Unions, the training of virtuoso performers — the Olympiad was, at best, a blip.[4] Most of the Olympiad's winners

[2] Boram Shin, "National Form and Socialist Content: Soviet Modernization and Making of Uzbek National Opera Between the 1920s and 1930s," *Interventions* 19, no. 3 (April 3, 2017): 416–33; Marina Frolova-Walker, "'National in Form, Socialist in Content': Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51, no. 2 (1998): 331–71; Sam Hodgkin, "'Romance, Passion Play, Optimistic Tragedy: Soviet National Theater and the Reforging of Farhad,' in *Cahiers d'Asie Centrale* No. 24: Littérature et Société En Asie Centrale, Ed. Gulnara Aitpaeva (Paris: Éditions Pétra, 2015), pp. 239-266; Nari Shelekpayev, "Making Opera in the Steppe: A Political History of Musical Theater in Kazakhstan, 1930-2015," Filmed July 2018. YouTube video, 1:37:33. Posted July 9, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLQOUrTQeUM.

[3] See, for example, F. Karomatov, *O'zbek Musiqasi Sovet Davrida* (Tashkent: O'zbekiston KP MKning nashriyoti, 1967); T. S. Vyzgo, I.N. Karelova, and F. M. Karomatov, eds., *Istoriia Uzbekskoi Sovetskoi Muzyki*, vol. 1, 2 vols. (Tashkent: G'ofur G'ulom nomidagi Adabiyot va san'at nashriyoti, 1972); and even the 1934 overview of Uzbek music by Romanovskaia: E. Romanovskaia, "Muzyka v Uzbekistane." *Sovetskaia muzyka*, Sep. 1934 (no. 9), pp. 3-9. Olympiads in Kyrgyzstan, with a special focus on the Olympiad of 1938, are discussed by Ali Igmen in Chapter 4, "Celebrations in Soviet Kyrgyzstan during the 1930s," from Ali F. Igmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent*, pp. 83-95. Igmen focuses primarily on a 1938 Kyrgyz Olympiad, but briefly mentions preparations for a 1934 Olympiad, presumably the Central Asian Musical-Artistic Olympiad; see p. 85. By extending the study of Olympiads to Uzbekistan, and by employing close, contextualized analysis of the pre-1930s background for Uzbekistan's musical cultures, this chapter complements and expands upon Igmen's study.

[4] Exemplary works in Uzbekistan's music history of the prerevolutionary and interwar periods include Alexander Djumaev, "Power Structures, Culture Policy, and Traditional Music in Soviet Central Asia," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 25 (1993): 43–50; Alexander Djumaev, "Musical Heritage and National Identity in Uzbekistan," *Ethnomusicology Forum* 14, no. 2 (2005): 165–84; F. Karomatov, *O'zbek Musiqasi;* Otanazar Matyakubov, "The Musical Treasure-Trove of Uzbekistan: The Phenomenon of Uzbek Classical Music," *Anthropology & Archeology*

appear just once in the historical record. Named on the pages of the newspaper for their exemplary performances, they vanished from there into secondary anonymity. To be sure, some of the organizers, judges and observers were well-known figures: world-renowned Armenian-Bukharan dancer Tamara Khanum; Muhiddin Qori-Yoqubov, founder of the first Soviet Uzbek musical theater; and renowned Uzbek composer Muxtor Ashrafiy were all involved in the planning and execution of the event. But for these luminaries of Uzbekistan's music history, the Olympiad largely vanished from their professional record. It was a generous outreach project and nothing more.

The Olympiad may not have much significance for the history of Uzbekistan's high culture, but it nevertheless represented a sea change in the social place of music in Central Asia. In the Olympiad moment, music was reoriented around new social institutions, integrated into a Soviet multimedia system, and situated within a broader notion of culturedness. Most importantly, it oriented young, amateur musicians, urban and rural, male and female, toward a multinational Central Asian state public centered in Tashkent, and toward a socialist international.[5] I demonstrate that this took place in two main ways: restructuring the institutions

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of Eurasia 55, no. 1 (January 2016): 60–105; Otanazar Matyakubov and Harold Powers, "19th Century Khorezmian Tanbur Notation: Fixing Music in an Oral Tradition," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 22 (1990): 29–35; Boram Shin, "National Form and Socialist Content."

[5] My argument contributes a multinational and transnational angle to the existing body of scholarship on Soviet mass festivals, which has foregrounded the role of state-sponsored pageantry in consolidating mass support, conveying state ideologies, and generating affective attachments to the Party-state. I concur with this assessment of the function of festivals, but give more attention to aesthetics and the social base of participation than is usually given in this historiography. In other words, as much as possible I tell the story of this festival "from below," rather than from the perspective of the state. Malte Rolf, *Soviet Mass Festivals, 1917-1991* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2013); James Von Geldern, *Bolshevik Festivals, 1917-1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Frederick C. Corney, *Telling October: Memory and the Making of the Bolshevik Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), especially Chapter 2, "The Drama of Power." Brigid O'Keeffe and Ali Igmen have both examined performance culture as a medium for nation-building; I bring that approach into my analysis here, but also move beyond the nation, investigating, for example, how music served to consolidate multinational solidarity and create urban-rural connections in Central Asia. The Olympiad can thus be contrasted with the post-Soviet celebrations described by Laura Adams, which were oriented toward nation-building to the exclusion of Soviet-era emphases on proletarianization and internationalization. See Laura L. Adams. *The Spectacular State: Culture and National Identity in Uzbekistan*. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010). The Olympiad, and other such Soviet cultural competitions, might also productively be compared to highly mass-mediated pop cultural

in which music was taught and performed for the masses, and remaking musical forms so they could more effectively be transmitted through those networks. Music was uniquely well-suited to reaching Central Asia's masses in a period when most Central Asians were still illiterate or semi-literate. At the same time, Central Asia had a long and storied history of using music in a variety of cultural contexts, expressing relationships of patronage and piety, and later, shaping a national community. I show that the Olympiad created the conditions of possibility for older norms of musical performance and instruction to continue to function under the aegis of the state public.

Modernity, Nation, and the Public

In the urban, sedentary portions of late imperial Central Asia, musical production operated primarily through networks of patronage that took shape around social institutions like courts, Sufi lodges, or teahouses. Before undertaking a discussion of these various social contexts for musical production, however, it is crucial to note that the Central Asian understanding of music did not neatly correspond to the concept of "music" as a European category. Depending on the school of Islamic law to which one belonged, many of forms of popular music were frowned upon. Thus, even though Qur'anic recitation may seem musical to a Western ear, a nineteenth-century Central Asian would have been unlikely to understand it to fit in the same category as *dutar* playing or professional mourning.[6]

competitions in the twenty-first century, such as the Eurovision Song Contest. As scholars have argued, the ESC performances not only reach national publics, but also serve to situate those publics within a broader European community. The ESC thus serves as a venue in which ideas of Europe as a multinational community take shape. In recent years, the debates about Russia's inclusion in the contest thus both reflect and shape the status of Russia as part of the European "imagined community." See *Empire of Song: Europe and Nation in the Eurovision Song Contest*, vol. 15, ed. Dafni Tragaki. (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2013).

[6] Although some strains of Islamic law condemned music, other Islamic philosophy had a long tradition of music theory. For a thorough discussion of classical Islamic philosophies of music, see Fadlou Shehadi, *Philosophies of Music in Medieval Islam*, vol. 67 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995).

As for popular music, instrumental and vocal performers usually described it with reference to the specific instrument, genre, or performance setting, such as a wedding, funeral, or other social occasion, or an institution such as a mosque or Sufi lodge. Thus, in Turkestan one might find a *maddoh*, or performer of Sufi verse; a *mehtor*, or surnai (long wooden pipe) player for festivals (*to'y*), such as weddings and circumcisions; or a *guyanda*, or professional mourner.[7] Stringed instruments including the *soz*, *tanbur*, *dutor*, as well as the bowed *g'ijjak*, were particularly common. These instruments were usually accompanied by percussion instruments, most commonly the Central Asian tambourine (*doira*). Musical performance was highly gender-segregated. Men performed for men, and women for women.[8] Women also played for male members of their immediate families, and music was a common entertainment inside the home (*ichkari*).[9] Among Muslims, only prostitutes or concubines would have performed in mixed company. Musical performance was also gendered: the *dutar* in particular was associated with female musicians, and female musicians called *sozanda* performed for audiences of women at festivals (*to'y).*[10] Other instruments, such as the *surnai* horn, were played primarily by men.

Influential men in Central Asia used cultural patronage as a way of exhibiting their wealth, good taste, and clout. Beginning in the late middle periods, we have stories of medieval Central Asian courts poaching poets, miniaturists, and musicians from other courts, as a way of

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[7] Theodore Craig Levin, *The Hundred Thousand Fools of God: Musical Travels in Central Asia (and Queens, New York)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), p. 102. A useful discussion of the *maddoh* tradition as practiced in the Pamirs can be found in Benjamin D. Koen, "The Maddoh Tradition of Badakhshan," from *The Music of Central Asia*, ed. Theodore Craig Levin, Saida Diasovna Daukeeva, and Elmira Köchümkulova, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016).

[8] Traditions of women's musical performance in Uzbekistan are discussed in Razia Sultanova, "Female Musicians in Uzbekistan: Otin-oy, Dutarchi, and Maqomchi," from *The Music of Central Asia*, ed. Levin, Daukeeva, and Köchümkulova, 2016. See also Tanya Merchant, *Women Musicians of Uzbekistan: From Courtyard to Conservatory*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015), pp. 4-8.

[9] Merchant, *Women Musicians*, pp. 7-8.

[10] Today, many such musicians trace their practices to pre-revolutionary traditions, although it is nearly impossible to reconstruct how, if at all, their practices have changed during the intervening century. See Theodore Craig Levin, *The Hundred Thousand Fools of God: Musical Travels in Central Asia (and Queens, New York)* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), esp. pp. 115-119.

jockeying for power in times of political competition.[11] This basic structure held true into the late Russian imperial period. So, for example, the last Bukharan Emir, Alim Khan, was known for hosting local Jewish musicians and dancers at his court when entertaining visitors. Sometimes, according to the grandson of one such performer, the Emir would invite several small groups of performers to compete by taking turns performing the same piece.[12] According to one 1934 account based on an interview with a former court musician, the Bukharan Emir also hosted an orchestra consisting of 70-80 Uzbek instruments, as well as an orchestra comprising exclusively European wind instruments, which was managed by a European staff member.[13] These orchestras were said to play only in unison, shunning both harmony and European music. All of these musicians were well provided for by the Emir in return for an agreement that they would perform exclusively at his court.[14]

Perhaps the most prominent form of court music in Central Asia and throughout the Islamic world was the *maqom*.[15] Although the *maqom* had begun as a collection of melodic modes, by the early nineteenth century the term had come to signify a "suite of musical pieces sequentially organized by melodic mode, metrical pattern . . . and rhythm."[16] In Central Asia, there were three primary versions of *maqom*, associated with the courtly cities of Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand. The *maqom* had a prominent place in Sufi practice as well. In Sufi thought,

[11] For example, see Maria E. Subtelny, "Art and Politics"; Maria Eva Subtelny, "The Poetic Circle."
[12] Levin, *The Hundred Thousand Fools*, p. 101.
[13] E. Romanovskaia, "Muzyka v Uzbekistane," *Sovetskaia muzyka*, Sep. 1934 (no. 9), p. 5.
[14] This account seems plausible, but must still be taken with a grain of skepticism because there was a strong bias against the Emir, both among Jadids, and among the activists who took their place. Theodore Levin argues that the emir's attitude toward music was "mercurial," and that the *maqom* was performed primarily outside his court — a description that is corroborated here. See Levin, *The Hundred Thousand Fools*, pp. 101-104. According to Levin, the term for a musician under the patronage of the Emir was *râstaxâr*, and it was still presumed that the beneficiary would have some form of (non-musical) outside employment; the musician Levin describes worked as a cobbler and a caterer of *plov* for large events.
[15] The most thorough and concise available English-language summary of the *maqom*, from which this description is derived, can be found in Will Sumits and Theodore Levin, "*Maqom* Traditions of the Tajiks and Uzbeks," from *The Music of Central Asia*, eds. Levin, Daukeeva, and Köchümkulova, 2016, pp. 320-343.
[16] Ibid., p. 321.

the term *maqom* described not only a musical mode, but also a stage of spiritual ascent. Sufi leaders, or *pirs*, would host collective gatherings for the "remembrance of God," or *dhikr*, which were often accompanied by music or movement. For practitioners of Sufism, then, playing the *maqom* was less a performance than a spiritual exercise.

Fig. 2.2
Dancing boy and musicians (Photographer Sergei M. Prokudin-Gorskii)
SOURCE: Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Prokudin-Gorskii Collection
http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/prok.02309/

It is, perhaps, this association with the spiritual life that positively disposed the Bukharan Emir toward the *maqom* at a moment when he appears to have banned other kinds of popular music performance: according to one critic, the Emir had denounced popular music as *harom*, or unclean.[17] The Bukharan Emir was also said to have banned musical performances at teahouses

[17] N. Rahimiy, "Kuchli bir san'atkorimiz," p. 27. Several Central Asian muftis appear to have condemned music as a

and in rural areas.[18] The Bukharan Emir's decision to ban teahouse music only serves to underscore the importance of the teahouse as a venue for musical performance. Teahouse owners competed for customers by seeking out the best musical performers for the entertainment of their guests.[19] Musical sets could include both "classical" music (presumably *maqom*) and popular song, which was often accompanied by other performances, such as the entertainment of a *qiziqchi*, a local clown or comedian. Dancing boys also appear to have constituted some of the entertainment at teahouses [Fig. 2.2].[20] Both dancing boys and popular singers were organized into a guild (*ghalibxâna),* while another guild, the *mehtarlik*, organized the activities of some musical performers as well as acrobats.[21] There appears to have been significant overlap between teahouse and *to'y* performers. Finally, regions of Uzbekistan with histories of nomadism boasted significant traditions of oral epic poetry and song.[22] For the most part, these artists appear to have been itinerant performers, relying for their living on payments they received from their audiences.

"diversion," but this was far from a universal stance among clergy, let alone the wider Central Asian population. For one example of such a condemnation, see Edward Allworth, "The Beginnings of the Modern Turkestanian Theater," *Slavic Review* 23, no. 4 (1964), pp. 680-681.

[18] Romanovskaia, "Muzyka v Uzbekistane," p. 5. Romanovskaia states that the Emir attempted to prevent any assembly of people in rural areas. As with Rahimiy above and with other Jadid and Soviet accounts, this must be read critically, but the Emir does certainly seem to have been anxious to prevent political unrest, and a ban on popular assembly and musical performance could have served those ends.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Dancing boys are discussed at length in Jennifer Wilson, "Queer Harlem, Queer Tashkent: Langston Hughes's 'Boy Dancers of Uzbekistan,'" *Slavic Review* 76, no. 3 (ed 2017): 637–46. Because Wilson relies exclusively on Langston Hughes's outsider account, she does not address the main critique leveled against the use of dancing boys (bachas) by the Jadids, who reviled the practice as pederasty. Dancing boys were usually orphans who lived together in the *ghalibxâna,* and were often prostituted. Their schedule, housing, and transportation to and from engagements were organized by the guild director, or *ghalib*. The youth of the dancing boys is evidenced by another term used to describe them, *besoqol*, or "beardless." Dancing boys usually dressed as women to perform, and their dances were often sexual in nature. Further research is essential to clarify the social position of the *bachas* and their level of personal autonomy, particularly given the evidently homophobic, but nevertheless damning nature of the Jadid critique. For a summary of the work of *bachas*, see Levin, *The Hundred Thousand Fools*, p. 298n13. Unsurprisingly, bachas were a sensational sight for European travelers, and were discussed at length in many travelogues; see Olufsen, pp. 436-439. For a brief discussion of the Jadid critique of this practice, see Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, pp. 145-146.

[21] Levin, *The Hundred Thousand Fools*, p. 102; Djumaev, *Power Structures*, p. 43.

[22] Among many nomadic populations, for example, oral poets were called *baxshis*, while in Karakalpakstan, they were termed *zhirau.* Levin, *The Hundred Thousand Fools*, p. 175.

Whether in courtly, religious, or commercial contexts, in the pre-Soviet period, musical production and performance occurred almost exclusively in face-to-face settings, linking people through relationships of kinship and patronage. This was true also of musical education. In order to learn to perform the *maqom*, for example, an aspiring musician apprenticed himself as a student, *shogird*, to a master musician, or *usto*. Through years of in-person training, the young musician learned to perform the various *maqom*, and eventually, gained enough experience to train his own students. The *maqom* was thus transmitted orally, and musicians kept track of their lineage in a long hierarchy of teachers and students.

The extent to which Central Asians understood music as a face-to-face phenomenon can be illustrated by two exceptions that prove the rule. In the latter years of Russian imperial rule, Theodore Levin relates, one Bukharan Jewish musician in the service of the Emir, Leviche Babakhanov, gained renown throughout the Russian Empire for his beautiful singing voice. A gramophone company in Riga, Latvia heard of him, solicited a letter of permission from the tsar, and sent a representative to Bukhara to record Babakhanov's performance of the *maqom*. Until that point, the Emir had claimed the exclusive right to all of Babakhanov's performances. According to Babakhanov's grandson, the Emir told Babakhanov, "If they record you, then anyone will be able to hear you and you will be lower than everything; your music won't have any weight."[23] Unable to resist a letter from the tsar, however, the Emir granted permission for the recording to be made.[24] Nevertheless, his reticence to allow his star performer to be recorded demonstrates that for the Emir and his circle, music was not a mass medium, but an intimate performance practice.

[23] This story is related in Levin, *The Hundred Thousand Fools*, p. 101.
[24] According to Levin, later stories circulated that the Emir had threatened to cut off Babakhanov's head because he consented to be recorded, and that Babakhanov's subsequent move to Samarkand was an attempt to flee the Emir's ire. Babkhanov's descendants deny these stories, but it is clear that the Emir did not see value in recording even the most accomplished performers.

The second illustration has to do with notation. When the *maqom* was written down, as it had been occasionally since around the twelfth century, this usually involved simply the transcription of its texts, with commentary including the name of the melody to which the text could be performed. The melodies themselves were not recorded; it was assumed that the performer knew these by heart.[25] These early "transcriptions" of the *maqom* were mere "knots [in a string] for the memory," and were intended to be auxiliary to the in-person hierarchy of master and apprentice. In the late nineteenth century, however, an attempt was made in Khorezm to fixate not only the names of *maqom* melodies, but the melodies themselves. According to Otanazar Matyakubov, these attempts at notation grew out of a small circle (*dasta*) of *maqom* performers, all connected with the court of Muhammad Rahim Bahadur Khan. This circle aspired to fixate a canon from which to develop a "new phase in the maqoms."[26] Accordingly, for their own use they devised a new form of notation specifically for the *tanbur*. Using this notation, they produced manuscripts of the *maqom*, eight of which survive to this day. The notation thus represented an effort to create a small number of canonical copies of the *maqom* that the musicians could use in their own efforts to reshape their performance practice. These were nevertheless hand-written copies, created for use by musicians trained in the traditional hierarchies, and intended for use in court circles exclusively.

This emphasis on orality and face-to-face transmission began to change in the late imperial period with the rise of the Jadids. The Jadids introduced European-style theater to Central Asia, first by hosting performance troupes from Tatarstan and Azerbaijan, and then by producing their own plays. Jadid plays often included songs, and Jadid societies held "musical soirees or benefit

[25] Otanazar Matyakubov and Harold Powers, "19th Century Khorezmian Tanbur Notation: Fixing Music in an Oral Tradition," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 22 (1990), p. 29.
[26] Ibid., p. 32.

concerts," which could include theatrical and musical performances.[27] These soirees were often organized by voluntary societies, and benefitted new institutions, such as reading rooms, schools, or the local chapter of the Red Crescent. These performances took place independently of court and religious institutions, forming a new kind of associational life in Central Asia. In developing a public performance culture, Jadids thus created opportunities for a new kind of relation among strangers. Rather than addressing friends, family, patrons or clients, the Jadid theater created a space for otherwise unrelated people to come together around a musical performance.[28] Music thus became an integral part of the Jadid public sphere.

Boram Shin has described the early Soviet musical project in Uzbekistan as one of "modernizing the national form."[29] At the heart of all the transformations of the early Soviet period was Jadid polymath Abdurrauf Fitrat, who shaped Central Asian music in three ways: nationalization, modernization, and standardization. Before the Russian Revolution, Jadids had defended music and theater as tools for "self-strengthening," whether they understood their communities as Bukharan, Turkestani, Turkic, or Islamic.[30] Beginning with the national delimitation of 1924, however, the Jadid effort consolidated around a national idea, and Jadid musicology followed suit. In 1926, Fitrat published a volume entitled *Uzbek Classical Music and Its History.*[31] In an introductory section entitled "Music of the East," Fitrat demonstrated the kinship of "Uzbek" music with other Islamicate musics, including "Azeri-Ottoman," Arab,

[27] See Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, pp. 129-132, 153-54.
[28] It is unclear precisely in what buildings Jadid performances were held. Allworth describes the location of the premiere of Behbudiy's *Parricide* (*Padarkush*) as a "370-seat house" in Samarkand. Pre-revolutionary Jadid theater performances were also held in Kokand and Tashkent. See Allworth, *The Beginnings of the Modern Turkestanian Theater*, p. 684.
[29] Boram Shin, "National Form and Socialist Content," p. 421.
[30] Alexander Djumaev points out that in this prerevolutionary/ revolutionary period, "culture was considered the common property of all Muslims (*ahli Islom*), a Muslim community (*Islom jamiyati*), or "the Islamic nation" (*millati Islom*). See Alexander Djumaev, "Musical Heritage."
[31] Fitrat's volume on music must be understood as continuous with the volume of Uzbek literature he also published in 1928, *Samples of Uzbek Literature*. See Abdurrauf Fitrat, *O'zbek Klassik Musiqasi va Uning Tarixi* (Tashkent: O'zbekiston respublikasi Fanlar akademiyasi "Fan" nashriyoti, 1993); Abdurrauf Fitrat, *Ozbek adabiyoti namunalari*(Samarkand-Tashkent: Oznashr, 1928).

Persian, and Indian traditions.[32] Nevertheless, Fitrat presumed that, although it may have been related to other musics, Uzbek music represented a distinct tradition deserving of independent analysis. In the remainder of the book Fitrat laid out in great detail the melodic and rhythmic patterns of Uzbek music, tracing its origins back to the times of "Uzbek" khans, and even as far back as Abdurahmon Jomiy, whom Fitrat described as writing in the "days of Navoiy."[33] Fitrat clearly saw Uzbek music as a centuries-long tradition, closely linked to but ultimately independent of other Islamicate musics.

In Fitrat's view, although national, Central Asian music was not timeless. Central Asian music had changed over the centuries, and now it needed to be brought forward into modernity.[34] In *Uzbek Classical Music*, accordingly, Fitrat argued that European music had reached a breaking point, and that European composers were attempting to breach this impasse by drawing on "Eastern" music.[35] Before the Revolution, Fitrat claimed, the yoke of the "khans and beks" had dried up Central Asian music "at its root." Meanwhile, "progressive" (*taraqqiyparvar*) individuals had unfairly shunned their own music, claiming that "the tanbur and dutar were condemned to death just like the hookah (*chilim*) and opium pipe (*nosqovoq*)."[36] Now that the revolution had freed Central Asia from the backward despots that had once ruled it, Uzbek culture could modernize while remaining true to its national roots.

[32] Fitrat, *O'zbek Klassik Musiqasi*, pp. 3-5.
[33] On Fitrat's work to include Navoiy as part of the cultural legacy of the Uzbek nation, see Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, pp. 282-83. The khans Fitrat named (Subkhankuli, Abdulloxon, and Ubaydulloxon) harkened from various Turkic Central Asian dynasties, such as the Ashtarkhanids and Uzbeks. (The Uzbek dynasty, sometimes called the Sheibanid dynasty, should not be confused with the later ethnonym "Uzbek"). Ibid., p. 8.
[34] Boram Shin describes the project of the 1920s as one of "modernizing the national form." See Shin, "National Form and Socialist Content."
[35] Fitrat, *O'zbek Klassik Musiqasi*, pp. 52-53.
[36] See Fitrat, *O'zbek Klassik Musiqasi*, p. 51.

Fig. 2.3
Fitrat and Uspenskii edition of the Bukharan *maqom*
SOURCE: Uspenskii, V. A. *Shest' muzykal'nykh poem (makom) zapisannykh V.A. Uspenskim v Bukhare*. Bukhara, 1924.

As part of the effort to modernize Central Asian music and to make it accessible to new audiences, in 1924 Fitrat commissioned a Russian musicologist, Nikolai Uspenskii, to transcribe

the Bukharan maqoms using European notation [Fig. 2.3].[37] If Fitrat had been aiming merely for an accurate transcription of the *maqom* that did justice to its national uniqueness, Western notation would have been a strange choice. But in commissioning his transcription, Fitrat sought not only nationality, but modernity. In creating a modern musical idiom, in fact, the Uspenskii *maqom* transcription sacrificed fidelity to the original. For example, although the *maqom* frequently includes microtones outside of the Western scale, Uspenskii did not develop any separate notation for them.[38]

Some Central Asian musicians considered notation to be a problem precisely for this reason. Writing in 1935, one musicologist pointed out that some performers of the *maqom* espoused a philosophy of "two ways."[39] In the *maqom*, according to this philosophy, a song's "construction" (*qurilish*) comprised one "way," while an individual "performance" (*chalinish*) comprised another "way." Performers of the *maqom* who espoused the "two ways" learned a *maqom* melody from their instructor, but they adorned it with ornamentation and even improvisation however they saw fit. This meant that any individual *maqom* mode could be performed in as many variations as there were musicians. Some performers were weak on accents (*zarb*); others deemphasized ornamental microtones (*molish*). All of this was part of an individual performer's style.

Unfortunately from the 1935 musicologist's perspective, this variance was a major problem. It made it impossible to standardize different performances so they all matched the transcription. There were so many different variations of each *maqom*, he said, that it "made a

[37] In the course of the 1920s, Uspenskii proceeded to conduct extensive studies of folk and classical music throughout Uzbekistan. See Vyzgo, Karelova, and Karomatov, *Istoriia,* vol. 1, pp. 52-53.
[38] It is not inconceivable that Uspenskii, if he had so desired, could have denoted quartertones using Western notation; today, for example, the quartertone is sometimes denoted by a flat (bemolle) sign written backwards or with a slash through the stem.
[39] A., "Rohat beraturgan ko'y, xushovoz musiqa asboblari," *O'zbek Sovet Adabiyoti*, 1935 (no. 1): pp. 105-107.

music student's head spin." He decried the old-fashioned musicians who resisted notation and standardization because they believed it would "ruin the song" (*ko'y* [sic] *buzuladi*). By upholding the "two ways," these musicians stood in the way of creating a musical culture that would be both modern and accessible to the masses. If that meant sacrificing individual performance styles, then so be it.

Accessibility to the masses, as I discuss below, was decisively a 1935 concern. When Fitrat commissioned his *maqom* transcription in 1924, the top priority was modernity. Accordingly, despite the "two ways," Uspenskii took great pains to create an impression of the *maqom* as a set of canonical melodies that were performed the same way every time, down to the sixteenth note. In this way, Uspenskii's transcription rendered the *maqom* comparable to so many pieces by Vivaldi or Bach. Because Uspenskii recorded the performances of an individual artist, the musician Ota Jalol Nosirov, this made that performer's style definitive, thereby erasing the other possible interpretations of the *maqom*.[40]

If Uspenskii's transcription rendered the "two ways" invisible, it also rendered invisible the multiethnic context in which the *maqom* had previously been performed. As Alexander Djumaev has shown, Fitrat repeatedly declined to publish the texts that accompanied the *maqom* melodies transcribed by Uspenskii. The sole surviving copy of the texts, preserved only in handwritten form in two school exercise books, indicates that the vast majority of the *maqom* transcribed by Uspenskii were performed not in Turkic/ Uzbek, but in Tajik/ Persian; and not by people of Muslim heritage, but primarily by Jews.[41] Djumaev concludes, "there was a deliberate act on Fitrat's side to replace the *shashmaqom*'s original texts with other texts."[42]

[40] Nosirov is cited as the source for Uspenskii's transcription in Romanovskaia, "Muzyka v Uzbekistane," p. 5.
[41] Alexander Djumaev, "Power Structures," pp. 47-48.
[42] Shashmaqom refers to the regional central Asian collection of six (*shash*) musical modes, as opposed to other Middle Eastern systems with different numbers of modes. Djumaev, "Power Structures," p. 48. This episode is also

Regional diversity, as well as linguistic diversity, troubled Fitrat's notion of a unitary national music. In 1928, Fitrat complained "the same song is performed differently in Khiva, Bukhara, Ferghana, and Tashkent."[43] In other words: the various cities that were supposed to be part of one nation in fact exhibited regional variation. Never mind that, before 1917, Khiva and Bukhara had been the capitals of rival khanates, while Ferghana and Tashkent had been administrative centers of Russian Turkestan. For Fitrat, all four cities represented the Uzbek nation, and accordingly, it was imperative to standardize musical performance in each city. Importantly, Fitrat did not represent one city as the center of Uzbekistan's music. Like literature, for Fitrat Central Asian music was polycentric, as much the heritage of Bukhara as of Tashkent.

Despite its polycentricity, Fitrat wished "Uzbek" music to be internally consistent and easily distinguishable from other national traditions. In recording and publishing the *maqom*, then, Fitrat primarily aimed not to create an accurate transcription system for Central Asian music, but to develop a canon of Uzbek national music that could easily be communicated both to denizens of the nation and to European observers. By employing European musicologists who used Western scholarly practices and notation, Fitrat introduced Central Asian music to a European audience and communicated that "Eastern" music could be just as modern as any European classical tradition. Fitrat's goal was thus not only to create a modern and national musical tradition, but to develop a national tradition that, by virtue of being modern, could hold its own against the classical traditions of Western Europe and other parts of the Islamic world.

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discussed in Levin, *The Hundred Thousand Fools,* p. 90.

[43] Abdurrauf Fitrat, "O'zbek musiqasi to'g'risida." *Alanga* 1928 (no. 2), p. 14. Interestingly, in later years, once the Uzbek nation could be taken for granted as existing a priori, scholars again began to acknowledge the regional diversity in Uzbekistan's performance practices; for a discussion of the "four basic local groups" of musical performance practice, see Vyzgo, Karelova, and Karomatov, *Istoriia,* vol. 1, pp. 26-31. This text names the four groups as Khorezm, Bukhara (and Samarkand), Surxondaryo (and Qashqadaryo), and Ferghana-Tashkent.

Fig. 2.4
Mironov and his students.
SOURCE: *Alanga*, no. 10-11, 1928, p. 12.

Writing in 1928, Fitrat proposed another plank of his strategy to nationalize and modernize Uzbek music: education.[44] "We must begin," Fitrat claimed, "from our music tekhnikums." In making this proposal, Fitrat referenced the extensive restructuring of musical institutions that had taken place in the 1920s. In 1921, Fitrat had organized the School for Oriental Music in Bukhara, whose instructors included former court musicians; in 1927 it was renamed the Eastern Musical Tekhnikum.[45] During the 1920s, conservatories, later renamed tekhnikums, also opened in Bukhara, Samarkand, Ferghana, and the old and new cities of Tashkent.[46] In 1928, a "Research

[44] Fitrat, "O'zbek musiqasi to'g'risida," p. 14.
[45] Vyzgo, Karelova, and Karomatov, *Istoriia*, vol. 1, p. 110.
[46] Some of these institutions were renamed *tekhnikum* in the late 1920s, and later became known as *uchilishche*. For a full discussion of the musical institutions opened during the 1920s, see Vyzgo, Karelova, and Karomatov, *Istoriia,* vol. 1, 103-112. This treatment does not emphasize the involvement of Jadids in the institutionalization of Uzbek music, and the authors are particularly interested in identifying when Western instruments began to be taught.

Institute for Uzbek Music" opened in Samarkand under the direction of Russian composer and Orientalist, Nikolai Mironov [Fig. 2.4].[47] The People's Commissariat of Enlightenment, Fitrat concluded, needed to develop a standard program for musical instruction at all these institutions. The new curriculum was to include songs transcribed with notation. Even Khorezmian notation, which had received a renewed traction among those sympathetic to the Jadids, would suffice if need be [Fig. 2.5].[48]

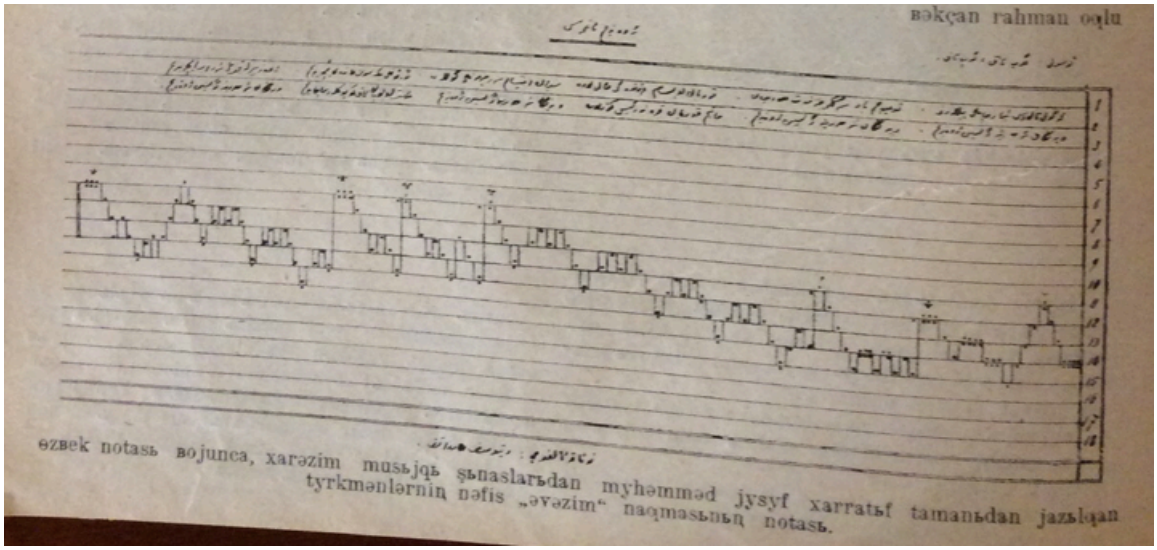

Fig. 2.5
Khorezmian *tanbur* notation.
SOURCE: *Alanga,* no. 3-4, 1928, p. 14.

As Alexander Djumaev points out, these new institutions not only formed a new network for state-sponsored musical instruction; they replaced many social institutions in which music

Consequently, little distinction is made between institutions of "national" origin and institutions oriented toward Europeans. Nevertheless, it is the most thorough summary of musical institutions in early Central Asia.
[47] On the Samarkand institute, see F. Rahmon, "O'zbek musiqiy tekshirish instituti," *Alanga*, 1928 (no. 9), p. 13. A detailed description of the Institute's curricular and research plans for the following three years can be found in Mironov, "O'zbekistonning klassik va xalq musiqasini o'rganish faniy tadqiqot instituti," *Alanga*, 1930 (no. 5-6), pp. 41-46. The curriculum, which was oriented toward youth from 12-20 years old, was quite comprehensive. Among other subjects, it included music theory, instruction in a variety of Central Asian and European instruments, orchestral performance, and music history, including Indian, Chinese and "primitive people's" (*yovoyyi xalq*) musics. It also called for students to learn the songs of a "variety of nations," including Japanese, Tuvan, Khakas, Mordvinian, and "Great Russian." It also included instruction in the transcription of national song.
[48] Bakjon Rahmon o'g'li, "O'zbek notasi," *Alanga*, 1928, (no. 3-4), pp. 13-14.

had previously been transmitted and performed, from courtly circles to Sufi *khanaqas* and *qalandarxonas*.[49] As the new theater troupes and *tekhnikums* were replacing the courts and *khanaqas*, the 1920s saw a transformation in the understanding of what it meant to be a professional musician. Previously, performers of the *maqom* often had a separate profession or vocation, whether as a Sufi practitioner or a tradesman, while more "popular" musicians were organized into guilds. When the performers of *maqom* were channeled into the new *tekhnikums* and research institutes in the 1920s, "popular" musicians from the *mehtarlik* became members of a Professional Union of Art Workers (RABIS).[50] They performed not just at festivals and life cycle events, but in new theaters and at public parks. For example, one of the earliest Uzbek "operas," a version of the Persian epic *Leyli and Majnun*, premiered at a garden in the old city of Tashkent.[51]

[49] *Khanaqas* and *qalandarxonas* are types of Sufi lodges. Djumaev, "Power Structures," p. 44.
[50] Djumaev, "Power Structures," p. 43.
[51] Shin, "National Form," p. 423. The opera, which was a largely urban medium frequented and created by the new Soviet intelligentsia, is beyond the scope of this chapter. However, it is worth noting that the opera constituted one of the more significant media through which urban Uzbeks attempted to articulate their relationship to Soviet, Russian, and European culture. Boram Shin argues that the transformation of the Uzbek opera from its Jadid origins in the late 1910s, to its apotheosis as a high Stalinist form in the late 1930s, tracks with a general trend toward Uzbek music's "assimilation" with European musics in the 1930s. For Shin, then, the opera exemplifies an "imperialist" dynamic in 1930s Central Asia. Samuel Hodgkin complicates this narrative with his close analysis of the librettos composed for the opera *Farhad va Shirin*. He argues that attention to the various librettos produced in various languages and for diverse audiences shows that Socialist Realism was understood differently in different contexts: In some cases as an Orientalist imposition; in others as a locally rooted Marxist aesthetic. See Sam Hodgkin, "'Romance." It is possible that Shin and Hodgkin reach different conclusions because they focus on different aspects of the performance; one might conjecture that Socialist Realism was more imperialist in the opera's musical form than its poetic texts, for example. This could suggest an avenue for future research that differentiates between Socialist Realism as it was incarnated in different mediums and languages, and for diverse audiences. Looked at through this lens, there could be multiple Socialist Realisms: some Orientalist and neo-colonial; others radically anti-imperial.

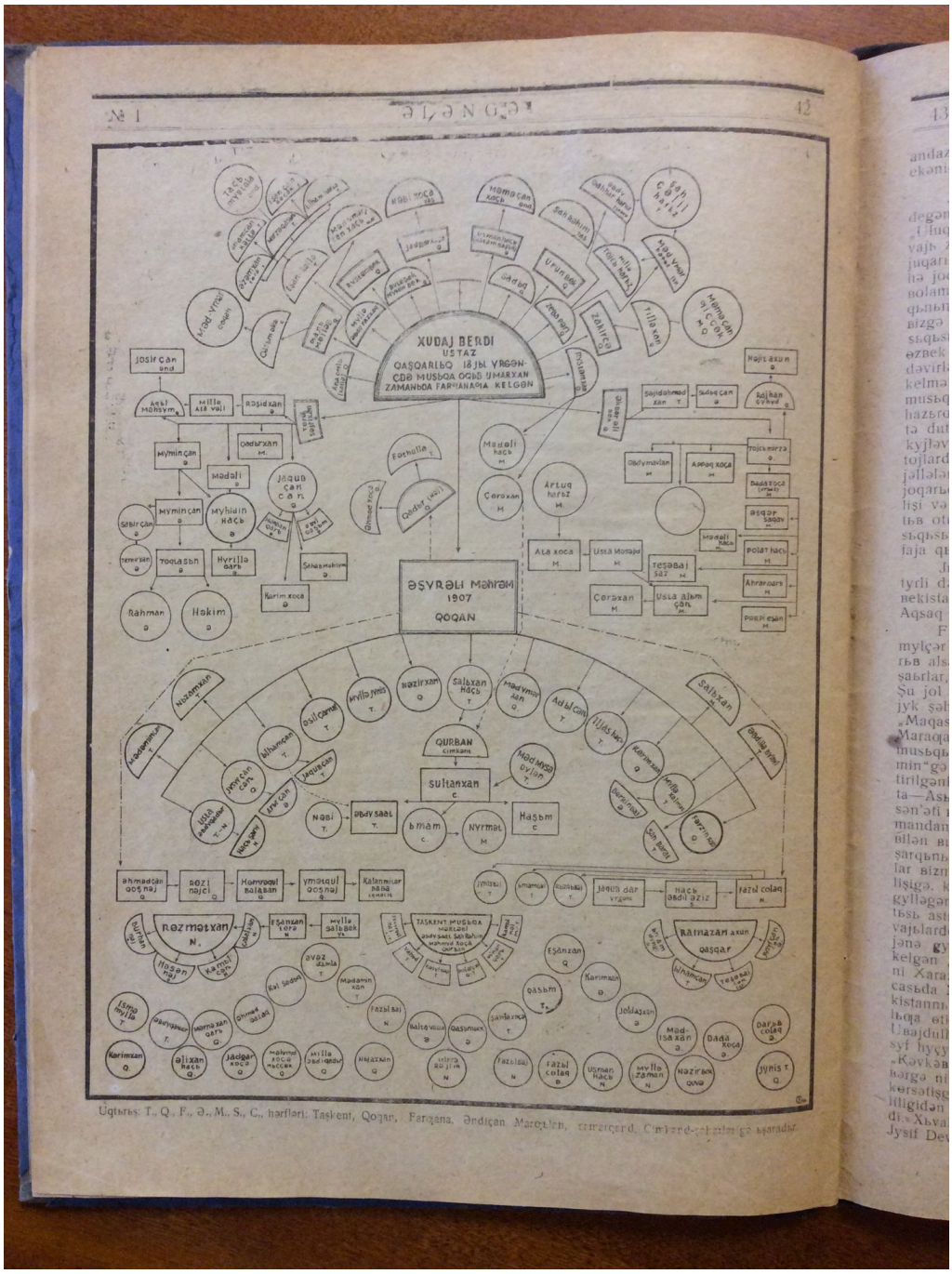

Fig. 2.6
Samarkand musical hierarchies
SOURCE: G'ulom Zafariy, *Alanga,* no. 1, 1930*,* p. 42

At the same time, not all prior hierarchies would be eliminated. For example Jadids described Bukhara's former court musicians not as collaborators with the Emir, but as his

victims. This enabled court musicians to retain their status in the Soviet system. One such example, Ota Jalol Nosirov, was the source for Uspenskii's transcription of the *maqom*.[52] Another musician said to have suffered under the Emir, Hoji Abdurahmon, was discussed in a biographical article in *The Flame*.[53] According to the article, Hoji Abdurahmon fled the Emir for Istanbul by way of Afghanistan and India, returning only in the Soviet period. He then became an instructor of the *tanbur* at the Musical Research Institute in Samarkand. In 1930, *The Flame* even published an extensive article about historic lineages in Uzbek music, based on interviews with multiple musicians from Tashkent, Kokand, Marg'ilon, and Andijon. The author, G'ulom Zafariy, evaluated Central Asian dynasties based on their attitudes toward music, representing Timur and his descendants, along with Alisher Navoiy, as "defenders" of music against the onslaughts of Islam.[54] Zafariy, both citing and building on Fitrat, took pains to argue that Uzbek music represented far more than a borrowing from Iranians or Arabs. A full-page map representing the personal networks of music instruction in seven of Uzbekistan's cities, but centered around Samarkand, accompanied Zafariy's article [Fig. 2.6]. The implication was that Uzbekistan's music could, and indeed should, remain rooted in a national tradition, while also becoming modern through institutionalization and standardization. For Fitrat and his interlocutors, the print media were crucial, both to prop up new institutions and to facilitate standardization.

By the early 1930s, Abdurrauf Fitrat and many of his interlocutors had been decisively marginalized from Uzbekistan's cultural life. Nevertheless, the transformations they initiated in

[52] Romanovskaia, "Muzyka v Uzbekistane," p. 5
[53] N. Rahimiy, "Kuchli bir san'atkorimiz," *Alanga*, 1930 (no. 8-9), p. 27.
[54] G'ulom Zafariy, "O'zbek musiqasi to'g'risida," *Alanga* 1930 (no. 1), pp. 41-43. G'ulom Zafariy (1889-1938), a composer and participant in the transcription of the *maqom*, was affiliated with the Jadids in the pre-revolutionary period, and was shot along with many other such intellectuals on Dec. 4, 1938. See "G'ulom Zafariy (1889-1938)," Ziyouz.com. http://www.ziyouz.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=97&Itemid=210 (Accessed Jan. 29, 2019). Zafariy also composed one of the first Uzbek "operas"; see Shin, "National Form," p. 423.

Uzbek music resonated long afterward. For the first time, a musical performance tradition that was multilingual, improvisatory, and transmitted through face-to-face networks, became a medium for the (national) public, rooted in state-sponsored institutions, and reliant on the print media.

Music for the Masses

In my discussion of the 1920s thus far, I have foregrounded the effort to create an Uzbek music that was both national and modern. This effort took place primarily in urban institutions, was populated by urban intellectuals (*ziyolilar*) and consolidated around print media that did not circulate widely beyond cities. However, the intellectuals that organized Uzbek music in the 1920s were not entirely bereft of concern for the "masses" or their revolution. In his volume on Uzbek "classical" music, for example, Fitrat opened with a disclaimer about the limits of his research. According to Fitrat, Uzbek poetic meter could be divided into *aruz* meter, inflected by Irano-Arabic norms, and *barmak*, or "folk" (*el*) meter.[55] Likewise, he argued, musical form could be divided into "formal songs" (*usul vaznidagi kuylar*) and "songs without form" (*usulsiz kuylar*). The latter, like *barmak* meter, was a "folk" form of music. Despite the term he coined for them, Fitrat claimed that these songs were no more "without form" than *barmak* poetry was "without meter." While Fitrat acknowledged that folk songs also boasted a "fiery cadence, full of flame," he concluded that he simply did not have the resources to do them justice, and restricted himself thenceforth to the "formal" tradition. In his 1928 article on music, Fitrat argued that some *maqom* modes — namely, *navo* and *iroq* — might be appropriate for feasts and festivals (*to'y* and *ziyofat*), but did not convey the right mood for revolution. In order to create a

[55] *Barmoq* means "finger"; the term is a reference to the fact that the metric feet can be counted on one's fingers. Fitrat, *O'zbek klassik musiqasi*, p. 10.

revolutionary music, Fitrat proposed identifying classical rhythms and melodies that conveyed the appropriate mood, as well as gathering folk songs for this purpose.

Fitrat was not the only Jadid to recommend folklore-collecting expeditions as a device for advancing the national project. Others were far more committed to reaching the masses than Fitrat. For example, as early as 1916, Hamza Hokimzoda Niyoziy had drawn on his own musical fieldwork in composing a volume entitled *National Poems for National Songs*, followed by a series of volumes of folk song texts.[56] By October 16, 1926, he reported that he had composed more than eighty songs based on musicological research he had personally conducted around Uzbekistan.[57] Hamza was a friend of Nikolai Mironov, and highly active in supporting the development of the Uzbek theater, including both dramaturgy and music.

Still, in the 1920s the primary emphasis was on the intellectual as popularizer and musicologist, not on mass participation. Speaking of the National Research Institute, a Rahmon in 1928 talked about creating a proletarian music.[58] But he still argued that in order to do this, the first order of business was to research "bourgeois" music, which could then be transformed for proletarian use. In other words, for Rahmon, as for Hamza and Fitrat, the creation of culture for the "people" (*el*) or for "proletarians" remained, first and foremost, an intelligentsia project. But in all cases, the "people" served as representatives of the nation. They were at the same time carriers of the national spirit and insufficiently modern to carry that spirit into the future. For that, they needed the intervention of intellectuals like Hamza, Fitrat, and the European musicologists they employed.

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[56] For a useful summary of Hamza's involvement in music during his short career, see Dilbar Rashidova, "Deiatel' Muzykal'noi Kul'tury," in *Khamza: Hayoti, Ijodi*, ed. A.M. Rybnik (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo literatury i iskusstva im. Gafura Guliama, 1980), pp. 141–52.
[57] Ibid., p. 142.
[58] F. Rahmon. "O'zbek musiqiy tekshirish instituti." *Alanga*, 1928 (no. 9), p. 13.

Fig. 2.7
A girls' school music ensemble. The school is not specified.
SOURCE: *Alanga*, no. 4, 1929, p. 15.

In conversation with Jadids and their interlocutors, a more strongly Bolshevik-inflected agenda for popular music took root in the 1920s.[59] Initially, this took the form of amateur music circles hosted in urban centers, primarily Tashkent [Fig. 2.7].[60] A variety of factories and educational institutions sponsored amateur music groups. At first, most of these music groups formed in Russian-dominated workplaces, but by the mid-1920s, some included members of local communities and employed traditional Central Asian instruments. A young Yunus Rajabiy,

[59] The mass musical work described below is of a piece with what was happening throughout the Soviet Union in this period; on the "proletarian" musical movement of the 1920s and early 1930s, see Neil Edmunds, *The Soviet Proletarian Music Movement* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000), especially Chapter 4, "Mass Musical Work," pp. 111-152. See also Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 135-140.
[60] Unless otherwise noted, the institutions mentioned in the following paragraph are described in Vyzgo, Karelova, and Karomatov, *Istoriia*, vol. 1, pp. 71-75.

who would become the most celebrated composer of 20th-century Uzbekistan, organized a musical circle at a Tashkent school, where aspiring young musicians obtained their first experience performing on "national" instruments.[61] Rajabiy also organized a 12-member "national" musical ensemble that regularly performed on the radio.[62] Both Russian and Uzbek-speaking primary schools began to sponsor amateur music circles. In Tashkent, Ali Ardobus organized a children's musical collective comprising sixty boys, and a Tashkent girls' school also sponsored theatrical and musical troupes, performing, among other things, songs by Hamza.[63] A rising star in Uzbek dance, the Bukharan Armenian dancer Tamara Khanum, choreographed dances for the group, including one entitled "Komsomol dance" that portrayed a girl being convinced to unveil and, ultimately, unveiling [Fig. 2.8].[64] In the late 1920s, under the direction of Ali Ardobus, the boys' and girls' groups began to perform together, calling themselves the "Blue Blouses" (*ko'k ko'ylak/ sinie bluzy*). The model soon spread to other cities.[65] Unusually, the Blue Blouses seem to have comprised both local nationalities and Europeans. For the most part, however Uzbekistan's music scene during the 1920s remained segregated, with "national" ensembles performing separately, and in different spaces, from "European" ones. The perceived dynamic of exclusion — particularly the exclusion of Central Asians from European spaces — would become increasingly problematic in the 1930s.

[61] Vyzgo, Karelova, and Karomatov*, Istoriia*, vol. 1, p. 47.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ali Ardobus later became known primarily as a pioneer in Kazakh dance; see "Ibragimov Ali Faizulla Khodzhaevich," ballet-enc.ru. http://www.ballet-enc.ru/html/i/ibragimov.html, accessed Feb. 6, 2019.
[64] This dance is discussed in Vyzgo, Karelova, and Karomatov.
[65] For one example of a Blue Blouse chapter opening in Samarkand, see "Muzika maktabi yangi yo'lda," *Yosh Leninchi*, May 30, 1930, p. 3. The Blue Blouses were far from a mass phenomenon, and within a few years, they would be condemned, like so many other cultural innovators of the 1920s, as perpetrators of "schematism." See Nikolai Sinev, "Za kul'turnuiu estradu!" *Literatura Srednei Azii,* May 25, 1934, p. 5; TENK, "Edinoglasno stavitsia 5," *Komsomolets Vostoka*, June 22, 1934, p. 1.

Fig 2.8
Tamara Khanum
SOURCE: *Theatre Arts Monthly* 18, no. 11 (November 1934), p. 828

Fig. 2.9
Muhiddin Qori-Yoqubov
SOURCE: *Qurilish*, 1931 (no. 1-2), p. 62.

However short-lived and small in number they may have been, all these efforts represented an early attempt to create institutions for "amateur" musicians to participate in a mixed-gender, multinational performance culture. Generally, the cadres that sponsored these new groups were oriented not toward the Jadids' transnational Islamic and Turkic communities, but toward Soviet institutions. For example, Muhiddin Qori-Yoqubov, one of the most prominent organizers of professional and amateur performance culture, got his start as a musician during his stint in a performance troupe that served the Red Army in Turkestan during the Civil War [Fig. 2.9]. Tamara Khanum, a dancer of Armenian extraction whose family had been exiled to Central Asia because of her father's participation in Baku labor unrest in 1905, joined him in many of his organizing activities during the 1920s and 1930s. The two married in the early 1920s, apparently

at the instigation of Fayzulla Xo'jayev, who feared that Tamara would be in danger if she performed on stage as an unmarried woman.[66] In 1921 Tamara Khanum joined Qori-Yoqubov when he enrolled at the Communist University for Workers of the East in Moscow; Qori-Yoqubov is said to have worked with Vsevolod Meyerhold during his time there.[67] Tamara Khanum also studied in Moscow, taking classes with choreographer Vera Mai and meeting luminaries of international leftist culture, including Stanislavskii, Meyerhold, Rabindranath Tagore, and Chinese dancer Mei Lanfang.[68] Tamara Khanum and Qori-Yoqubov were far from Islamic modernists, to say the least.

In 1926, drawing on this experience, Qori-Yoqubov and Tamara Khanum founded a multinational State Concert-Ethnographic Troupe based in Tashkent. The troupe included a cast of popular performers, including a *qiziqchi* comedian, a well-known dutarist, and Tamara Khanum's sister.[69] In 1929, the Troupe formed the basis for the Uzbek Musical Theater in Tashkent, and after the purges of the late 1920s, these cadres dominated the music and theater scene in Tashkent.

Gender dynamics were also fraught in all these early Soviet musicological projects. To be sure, in hosting Tatar theater troupes that included actresses, the Jadids had opened unprecedented space for women's performance in Central Asia even before 1917.[70] And yet, in focusing on their attention on classical musical traditions rather than "popular" ones, the

[66] Tamara Khanum's biography is outlined, with a particular focus on the wartime period, in Charles Shaw, "Making Ivan-Uzbek: War, Friendship of the Peoples, and the Creation of Soviet Uzbekistan, 1941-1945" (Ph.D Diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2015), pp. 100-104. On Tamara Khanum's long-term significance to Uzbek dance and music, see Merchant, *Women Musicians*, p. 21.
[67] Vyzgo, Karelova and Karomatov, *Istoriia* vol. 1, pp. 82-84. It is unclear if Tamara Khanum also studied at KUTV.
[68] Shaw, "Ivan-Uzbek," p. 101.
[69] Tamara Khanum's sister is discussed in Romanovskaia, "Muzyka v Uzbekistane," p. 7. For more contemporaneous English-language sources on Tamara Khanum, see Halle, *Women in the Soviet East, pp.* 246-49; Langston Hughes, "Tamara Khanum: Soviet Asia's Greatest Dancer," *Theatre Arts Monthly* 18, no. 11 (November 1934), pp. 829–35.
[70] Until the Soviet period, in contrast, the Jadid theater did not employ female actresses. Instead, female characters were played by cross-dressing men. See Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, p. 152.

institutions they created made it difficult at best for women to participate. The level of inclusivity to women in the institutions founded by Fitrat is best communicated through the photograph of the students at the Samarkand tekhnikum [Fig. 2.4]. In his *The Flame* article on Uzbek music, Fitrat further indicated the level of gender inclusivity in the earliest *tekhnikums* when he passingly mentioned the instructors (*ustod)* and the young men (*yigitlar*) they trained.[71] Jadid musicology may have made the first steps away from the priority of face-to-face interaction, but the fact remained that classical Uzbek musical training still took place in the context of an intense relationship of apprenticeship — a relationship that would be inconceivable for most Uzbek women to enter with a non-kin man. The main exception seems to have been the small number of girls' school ensembles, in which men instructed ensembles of girls rather than working one-on-one.[72] In addition to the fact that girls who attended schools were largely unveiled, the dynamic of an ensemble, as opposed to an individual instruction setting, presumably minimized the threat to women's respectability.

But gender inclusivity was not a problem exclusive to Jadid-sponsored institutions. Most Central Asian women were educated and worked separately from men; performance culture was no exception. If anything, it was more extreme: everywhere in Uzbekistan, social pressure made it dangerous for women from Muslim backgrounds to perform in mixed company. Multiple female performers were in fact murdered in the 1920s, and their killings were widely reported in the press.[73] There was a reason Tamara Khanum and her sister were the only female dancers in their Concert-Ethnographic troupe: one of the earliest Uzbek female recruits had been murdered

[71] Fitrat, "O'zbek musiqasi to'g'risida."
[72] One prominent girls's school that offered training in musical performance was the girls' school named in honor of Uzbek woman poet Zebuniso. During the early-mid 1920s, the ensemble was directed by a woman, Saodat Xonum Enikeeva, but most of the specialist instructors were men. See Vyzgo, Karelova and Karomatov, *Istoriia*, p. 72.
[73] For further examples of female performers, see the actresses mentioned in Kamp, *The New Woman*, pp. 162, 206. A poem on the murder of a female performer from the Uzbek State Troupe, Tursunoy, was published in 1928. See Anonymous, "Dog'li yo'qotish," *Maorif va o'qituvchi*, 1928 (no. 5-6), p. 38.

by her brother in 1929. All this compounded with the dynamics of Russia's performance culture, which, like Russian culture more generally, was far from a utopia of gender equality.

The 1929-30 purges reshaped not only the cadres of Central Asian music, but also the way those cadres theorized music. In the late 1920s, as my citations thus far reflect, a long stream of Jadid-inflected articles on music appeared in *The Flame*. In early 1930s, this tone began to change, and the editors included disclaimers alongside music articles they deemed ideologically unsound.[74] This stream of articles about national music ended in the July-Aug 1930 issue, which, among a series of general tirades about bourgeois nationalism, condemned the Jadids' approach to music.[75] In one of the issue's many programmatic articles, "The National Union's Actions on the Cultural Front," the author, a Muhitdinov, excoriated a nebulous category of "nationalists" because they "idealized the khans' age," and because of their attachment to national melodies "left over from the age of Chingiz Khan and Timur."[76] So attached were they to these "bourgeois nationalist" musics, Muhitdinov argued, these musicologists did not feel the need to collect "contemporary songs from the everyday life of working Uzbek farmers." Muhitdinov's attack was suffused with conspiracy theory, and it is difficult to identify any individual active in the 1920s who actually espoused all these views. But because Muhitdinov's article mentioned Jadids, including Fitrat, by name, the target of his attack was clear. From this moment on, Fitrat was a *persona non grata* in every sphere of culture, including music.

[74] For example, a disclaimer published with G'ulom Zafariy's article on Uzbek music acknowledges that Zafariy "does not call to mind the influences of economic and social factors" on music. See Zafariy, "O'zbek musiqasi to'g'risida," p. 41.
[75] This landmark issue of *The Flame* is discussed at greater length in Chapter 3, "The Literary Public and the Inner Circle."
[76] N. Muhitdinov, "'Milliy Ittihodchilar'ning madaniy frontdagi ishlari," *Alanga*, July-August 1930 (no. 7-8), p. 19.

The Olympiad and Musical Institutions

If Fitrat had been pushed out of Central Asia's music scene, Muhiddin Qori-Yoqubov and Tamara Khanum were decisively still included. In 1931, *Construction*, the official journal of the Writers' Union of Uzbekistan, published an article that, after excoriating Fitrat and his fellow Jadids, including a portrait of a triumphal Qori-Yoqubov as an exemplar of the transformation that was underway in Uzbekistan's performance culture [Fig. 2.9].[77] With the start of the First Five-Year Plan and the purge of the late 1920s, musical culture in Uzbekistan pivoted toward creating a music for the masses. In national republics, the rallying cry was for a music that would be "national in form, socialist in content."[78] This slogan had been much bandied about ever since Stalin coined it in a speech to the Communist University of the Toilers of the East in 1925, but with the purge of the "bourgeois nationalists," it became extremely politically risky to speak of national forms without mentioning socialist content in the same breath. Still, the devil was in the details. In the early 1930s, accordingly, musical mediators in Uzbekistan attempted to imagine a new musical culture, redefined both in its social organization and in its formal qualities.

With respect to the social organization of the arts, urban performers doubled down on their efforts to reach out to "workers" and collective farms. Activists began calling for the rapid expansion of musical programming on collective farms, and the amateur musical circles that already existed were subjected to increased scrutiny for the quality and inclusivity of their programming.[79] In 1932, for example, the deputy director of the State Uzbek Musical Theater,

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[77] Orif Ayyub, "Sog'lom tiyatru va inqilobiy muziqa uchun kurash," *Qurilish*, 1931 (no. 1-2), pp. 61-63.
[78] For a useful summary of the original context for this slogan with respect to music, see Shin, "National Form," pp. 418-19.
[79] For example, in Andijan, agitprop workers complained that city clubs were being used for "pernicious" (*vrednye*) pastimes such as dancing, and called for more art and music circles that would serve current political goals, such as the creation of sovkhozes and kolkhozes. See O'zMDA, F. 94, op. 5, d. 188, ll. 23-24. The agitprop division was not opposed to all dance, but since the complaint about dance referred to the Russian-dominated Railway Workers' Club, they presumably intended to refer to Western social dance, such as the foxtrot. Further anxieties about the foxtrot can be seen in RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2967, l. 9. For musical programming on collective farms, see, for

which was directed by Qoriyoqubov, issued a report demanding, among other things, a thorough overview of all of Tashkent's amateur musical circles.[80] He expressed particular concern that the circles might be exhibiting "opportunism" and proposed distrubuting a questionnaire to investigate how amateur circles served the masses: how well they prepared to celebrate Soviet holidays, how much they listened to the radio, and importantly, how cotton figured in their artistic repertoire. This concern with the integration of musical performance in broader state projects, including collectivization, is typical of the early 1930s.

In the planning for the Olympiad, these efforts came to a head. Citing the slogan "national in form, socialist in content," the Central Asian Bureau of the Komsomol announced the 1934 Central Asian Musical-Artistic Olympiad just six months before it happened, in December 1933. The event was part of a slate of events intended to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the Komsomol, including also a Conference on Culture and Everyday Life (*madaniy-maishiy konferentsiya/ kul'tbyt konferentsiia*). The event announcement laid particular emphasis on including both workers and collective farm members. Accordingly, the plans for the event tapped into a circulating discourse about making collective farms "prosperous," which Stalin had first enunciated at the Congress for Shock Working Collective Farmers in February 1933, and elaborated again at the Seventeenth Party Congress in January of 1934.[81] So far, so familiar: this

example, the musical performances staged for collective farm women on the occasion of March 8, 1934, in RGASPI, F. 112, op. 61, d. 76, l. 24.

[80] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2967, ll. 9-16

[81] For full texts of these speeches, see "Stalin I.V. Otchetnyi Doklad XVII S'ezdu Partii o Rabote TsK VKP(b) 26 Ianvaria 1934 g.," accessed January 23, 2019, http://grachev62.narod.ru/stalin/t13/t13_46.htm; "Stalin I.V. Rech' na Pervom Vsesoiuznom S'ezde Kolkhoznikov-Udarnikov 19 Fevralia 1933 g.," accessed January 23, 2019, http://grachev62.narod.ru/stalin/t13/t13_39.htm. The organizers of the Olympiad explicitly referenced these speeches by Stalin in articulating their plans; see RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 54, l. 35. On the pervasiveness of the discourse of "culturedness" in the early Soviet period, see "What is Cultural Revolution? Key Concepts and the Arc of Soviet Cultural Transformation, 1910s-1930s," from David-Fox, *Crossing Borders,* pp. 104-32.

set of stipulations could have been elaborated by any Komsomol organization anywhere in the Soviet Union.[82]

However, the Olympiad represented a major departure from the perspective of musical performance as it had been practiced in Central Asia before, from the *ustod-shogird* method of transmitting the *maqom*, to Fitrat's music for the modern national public. Even from the perspective of Bolshevik performance practice in Central Asia, the Olympiad marked a transition. Before, Bolshevik musical circles and performance troupes had been based in cities, mostly Tashkent, and any contact with rural Central Asia came as part of their work in agitbrigades. Rural participation had mostly been a matter of lipservice. Now, the Olympiad was calling for collective farmers to participate, not as audiences, but as amateur performers. And if there were few active musical performance groups on collective farms, that was no impediment. To the contrary, in the six months allotted for preparations, the Olympiad organizers were asked to conjure performers, instruments, repertoires, and musical circles. Inspired by the concept of socialist competition, the Central Asian Bureau expected that the Olympiad would become more than a diversion — it would be an engine for progress.

Accordingly, the announcement about the Olympiad called not just for individuals to select and practice their repertoire, but much more ambitiously, for the entire social structure of musical performance on collective farms to change. "The main task in preparing for and conducting the Musical-Artistic Olympiad," the announcement proclaimed,

> Is to develop initiatives in all branches of the arts in cities, villages, and *auls*; to organize a number of circles, bands, etc.; to help grow and exhibit artistic talents among youth; to create new songs, instruments, games, and

[82] Although the Olympiad and Conference seem to have been independent initiatives of the Komsomol's Central Asian Bureau, they were envisioned as a way to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the all-Soviet Komsomol. Amateur cultural organizations mushroomed throughout the Soviet Union in the mid-1930s; see, for example, the discussion of Saratov region in N., "Smotr khudozhestvennoi samodeiatel'nosti v kolkhozakh," *Sovetskaia muzyka*, March 1934 (no. 3), p. 77.

other such things; and to bring these things into the everyday lives of workers and collective farmers.[83]

The announcement specifically named several artistic forms, including instrumental performance, song, dance, and drama.[84] It also offered a decisively multinational list of instruments including the balalaika; the Central Asian lute, or *dombra;* the upright Central Asian violin (*g'ijjak*); and the flute, with its perennial popularity among both Europeans and Central Asians alike. The entire set of events, to be held in Tashkent, would include youth, ages 14-23, from throughout Central Asia, and by mid-April, all regional cells were expected to have selected and announced their delegates [Fig. 2.10].

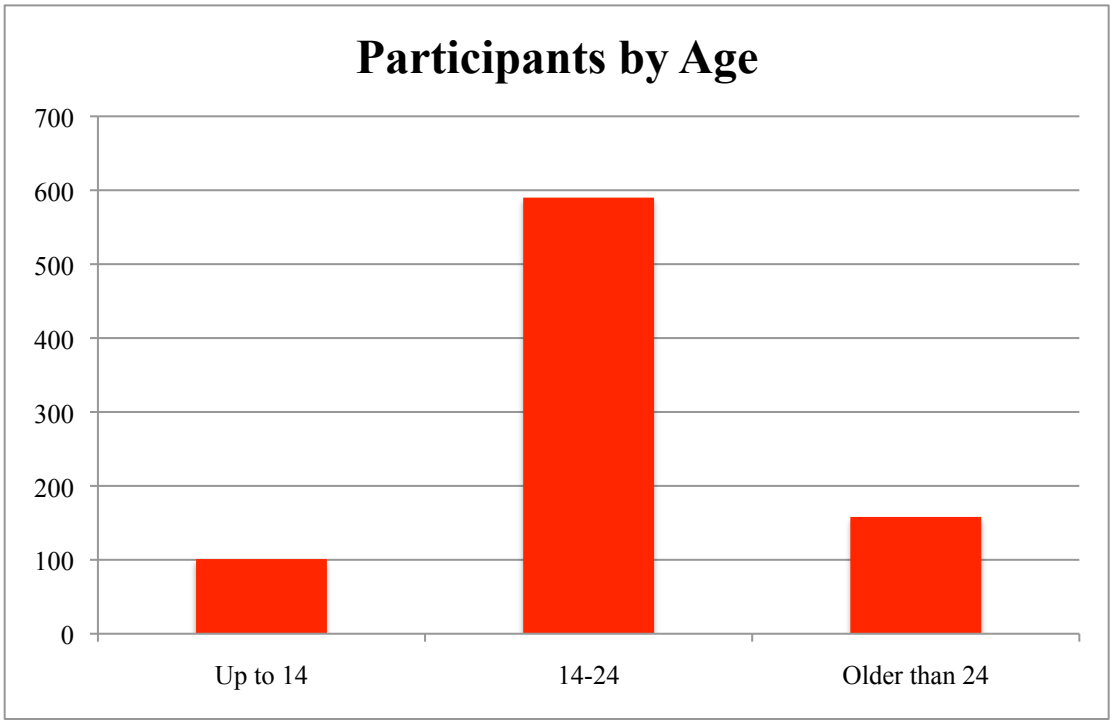

Fig. 2.10
Olympiad participants by age
SOURCE: RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, l. 35.

[83] "Komsomol va partiya yoshlarning madaniy ishlar bo'yicha konferensiyalarini hamda muzika-badiiy olimpiadalarini o'tkazish to'g'risida VLKSM O'rta-Osiyo o'lka qomi bilan O'zLKSM Markazqomining birlashgan biuro majlisining qarori," *Yosh Leninchi*, Dec. 17, 1933, p. 4.
[84] With the exception of a few "declamations," most of the drama performances at the Musical-artistic Olympiad appear to have included an element of musical theater.

The Olympiad thus represented a vast mobilizational effort. Its explicit goal was to catch up populations that, by and large, had fallen by the wayside of both the Jadid and the urban Bolshevik agendas in the 1920s. It should go without saying that, contrary to the Komsomol statement, these populations — the village youth and former nomads, the factory workers and collective farm women — had all had access to music before, whether in the form of a wedding performance, a mother's lullaby, or the dreaded foxtrot. From the perspective of the Komsomol's Central Asian Bureau, however, that music did not "count." For them, the music that counted circulated through the mass media, took shape in mass institutions, and nested within state-sponsored hierarchies. In other words: by participating in the Olympiad, Central Asia's masses were to be inducted into a Soviet state public.

Of course, music was one among many mediums that shaped the state public. But in several ways, music was unique. Music offered an opportunity for collective participation, even for illiterate and semi-literate people, in a way that most other mediums did not allow. To be sure, by and large the Central Asian population consumed the media collectively. Few Uzbeks had libraries at home, so among formerly illiterate populations, reading almost always took place in state-sponsored institutions. Newspaper read-aloud sessions, film screenings, and radio listening dominated Red Teahouse programming. But at live music performances, and particularly in music circles, even illiterate collective farmers could participate, not just as passive audience members, but as performers in their own right. Soviet mediators were well aware that music was popular, and brought people in the door of the Red Teahouse in a way that newspaper readings never would. For example, one 1933 article argued that Red Teahouses should hold performances by "local singers and musicians" in the evenings in order to attract "collective farmers and poor and middle farmers." Before those performances and during

intermissions, agitators should then speak to the audience about, among other things, "the importance of struggling for a large harvest [and] the need for lagging areas to catch up."[85] Furthermore, at its best, music was more than the bait before a switch to policy presentations: like all culture, the best music followed the "production principle." It was not only for entertainment, but also for agitation. In some cases this meant composing songs about tractors or praising Stalin; in others, as I discuss below, it meant something broader: cultivating a mood that would be appropriate for socialist construction.

If music was to communicate socialist construction, it represented more than entertainment or nation-building. Instead, it formed part of a much broader agenda to introduce Uzbekistan's workers to a "cultured" lifestyle that, ostensibly, only elites had enjoyed before. The Conference on Culture and Everyday Life that accompanied the Olympiad, and the Spartakiad that followed it soon after, were all oriented to the same goal: making workers, both agricultural and industrial, "cultured and prosperous."[86] Going to the cinema and going to the bathhouse, playing the violin and playing chess, listening to the radio and eating rice with a spoon — all were part and parcel of this "cultured and prosperous" lifestyle.[87]

At the same time, there were important differences in the ways that "culture and prosperity" took shape in different spheres, in large part because only some spheres were burdened with taking on "national form." An Uzbek song or dance had to be "national in form." Meanwhile, most of the trappings of everyday life were burdened only with modernity, not with nationality. Thus, no Party activists claimed that "national form" permitted Uzbeks to continue sitting at low tables on the floor, binding their babies to the *beshik* cradle, or living in adobe clay

[85] "Butun ray. va shahar maoriflariga ko'klam ekin kampaniyasida qizil choyxona ishlari to'g'risida," *Madaniy Inqilob*, Feb. 23, 1933, p. 2.
[86] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 54, ll. 59-61.
[87] Eating with a spoon was a front-page slogan early in the Olympiad campaign; see "Palovni qoshiqda yeymiz," *Yosh Leninchi*, Jan. 6, 1934, p. 1.

houses. These constituted not expressions of the national spirit but the vestiges of backwardness and oppression. They could therefore be eradicated without qualm. The arts, on the other hand, represented an outpouring of the national genius, even when they had taken shape under conditions of national oppression. They were therefore to be reformed but not entirely replaced.

Because they touched upon so many spheres of activity, the Olympiad and Conference required participation from a vast array of state and Party institutions.[88] This caused difficulties in implementation: the fact that everyone was held responsible for the event seems to have meant that no one took responsibility. In February, bemoaning the "completely unsatisfactory process of preparation" for the Olympiad and Conference, a meeting called by the Central Asian Bureau's Culture and Propaganda division included representatives from institutions for education, medicine, sanitation and hygiene, industry, and agriculture.[89] The committee issued a host of resolutions. Scholarly institutes were to conduct research expeditions into the "culture and everyday life" of non-titular minorities, such as Uyghurs and Baluchis. The People's Commissariat of Enlightenment (*Narkompros*) would prepare descriptive norms for exemplary Red Teahouses. The Narkompros was also asked to collaborate with the Union of Industrial Cooperation (Promsoiuz) in developing a plan for the production of musical instruments and props. The committee called upon the Central Asian Bureau of the Writers' Union to collect, publish, and disseminate songs, including "international" songs. These were just the largest of the institutions directly addressed: many other bureaucracies were set into motion, including theaters, regional and municipal Party and Komsomol organizations, and collective farms.

[88] A full list of the organizations and individuals the Olympiad planning committee called upon can be found in RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 258, ll. 3-4. These include teachers, parents, writers, poets, composers, representatives from the leadership of the Young Pioneers, the Narkompros, the Narkomzdrav, the press, industry, and more. Not all of them participated actively, but the long list shows the massive scope anticipated for the event.
[89] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, ll. 73-74. Instructions for organizing qualifying Olympiads can also be found in RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 258, l. 48.

Most prominently, the meeting called for nothing short of a media blitz. The media dedicated extensive resources to covering the preparations for, progress of, and follow-up to the event.[90] In Uzbekistan, the most extensive coverage appeared in *Young Leninist* and *Communist Youth of the East*, the Uzbek- and Russian-language publications of the Communist Youth League. *Red Uzbekistan*, the national newspaper of Uzbekistan, and *Truth of the East* also contributed coverage; during the summer after the Olympiad, the journal of the Writers' Union published articles summing up its achievements. And the effort did not stop with print media: publishing houses were also asked to produce posters on Red Teahouses, literacy, and sanitation.[91] Meanwhile, the Uzbek-language radio, which had always focused on musical programming, often to the consternation of authorities who found its programming insufficiently ideological, now broadcast performances by the competitors at the Olympiad.[92] Because the preparations for the Olympiad included distributing and installing radio equipment at collective farms, these broadcasts likely reached larger audiences than ever before.[93]

The media blitz did not occur in a vacuum: these newspapers, journals, and radios were both distributed in and intended to support mass institutions. During the 6 months that elapsed between the announcement of the Olympiad and the event itself, local Komsomol cells and collective farms were asked to open new amateur music, drama, and choir circles, or to bolster the numbers and programming for existing ones.[94] The Komsomol also invited professional

[90] The press contributed actively to the Olympiad, while, in contrast, most of the research expeditions and instrument production plans appear not to have materialized in the four months before the Olympiad.
[91] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, l. 74.
[92] On the excessive place of music on the radio, see RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2007, l. 93. The broadcasting of Olympiad performances is documented in RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, l. 44 and O'zMDA, F. 837, op. 32, d. 859, ll. 15-17.
[93] On the installation and repair of radio nodes in the runup to the Olympiad, see, among many other examples, "Radiolashtirish uchun yurishboshlaymiz," *Yosh Leninchi*, Jan. 20, 1934, p. 3; Barsukov, "Konets radiomolchaniia," *Komsomolets Vostoka*, May 29, 1934, p. 3; RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, l. 2.
[94] Summaries from April of the preparations for the Olympiad in several regions and municipalities can be found in RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, ll. 47-63.

musicians, performers, and playwrights to help mentor amateur music circles. For example, in Kokand the cast of the state musical-dramatic theater volunteered to support amateurs in their preparations for the Olympiad, while in Stalinabad, the Leningrad Music Comedy troupe happened to be in town and offered to help.[95] In advance of each regional Olympiad, urban and collective farm organizations worked to organize new Red Teahouses and cultural circles, to inspect the institutions that already existed, and to instruct them in music, culture, and everyday life. Soap, towels, and radio nodes were distributed in the countryside; some collective farms were even electrified as part of the campaign.[96] Collective farmers who wore clean underwear, brushed their teeth, whitewashed their houses, listened to the radio, and read the newspaper were interviewed and commended for their "culturedness."[97] In Frunze, the Kyrgyz Writers' Union held a competition for original plays, and the winners were to be published and distributed to amateur drama circles (it is unclear whether the plays ever were published). The Kyrgyz Writers' Union also held a meeting of prominent writers with Komsomol members, which they claimed was attended by "about 1000."[98] Frunze activists planted trees and held volunteer workdays (*subbotnik*) to clean and beautify the city.[99]

[95] "'Hamza teatrusi ishga kirdi," *Yosh Leninchi*, April 16, 1934, 4. RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, l. 58. Stalinabad, which devoted 10000 rubles to the Olympiad effort, is one of only a few municipalities that reported their budget to the central Komsomol authorities.
[96] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, l. 5. Ideal-normative plans for collective farm houses, collective farm administrative buildings, and rural Red Teahouses were commissioned from architects. The houses are clearly imagined as single-family homes, accommodating family units comprising from 4-7 members. The assumption seems to be that the ideal collective farm household is not a multi-generational home, as was and is quite common in Central Asia, but rather a home for a single nuclear family, comprising only two generations (parents and minor children). These documents would be worthy of more extensive analysis, particularly with respect to changing definitions of family, but that is beyond the scope of this work. See RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 258, ll. 30-40.
[97] The Kuva region of Tajikistan produced particularly detailed profiles of its most cultured collective farmers. All were male. See RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, ll. 6-7.
[98] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, l. 53.
[99] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, l. 66.

These efforts culminated in April and May, when the Komsomol organized qualifying Olympiads in regional centers.[100] The city of Bukhara, for example, held an Olympiad involving 380 participants, 98 of whom were selected for advancement to the Central Asian Olympiad in Tashkent.[101] As one might expect, Tashkent's cultural forces staged a particularly large Olympiad. The event spanned three days and included performances from a variety of urban institutions, from a Tatar choir and chapters of the Blue Blouse club, to string orchestras, drama clubs, and wind orchestras. At the concluding event where the results were announced included a concert by professional musicians from Tashkent.

Kokand region left particularly detailed records about its preparations, from the first organizational work to the last competition performance.[102] Komsomol organizers began their effort by circulating instructions about the Olympiad to a variety of cultural bureaucracies and Komsomol cells. A jury of 12 was appointed to judge the event, and a committee of 12 representatives of regional bureaucracies was called upon to plan it. A number of bureaucrats refused to participate, claiming that their higher-ups had given them no instructions to do so. The Department of Health and the State Film Committee, for example, came under fire for their lack of initiative. Nevertheless, the few bureaucracies who did spring into action managed to organize a competition including nearly 400 people from both city and country. Both in the city and on collective farms, the Komsomol opened new music and drama circles, organized new Red Teahouses, and produced new wall newspapers. They circulated repertoire for the newfound cultural circles. In keeping with the emphasis on sanitation and hygiene, activists deep-cleaned

[100] Summaries of how regions throughout Central Asia prepared can be found in RGASPI, F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, ll. 47-63.
[101] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, l. 44.
[102] Discussions of Kokand's preparations, from which the below summary is derived, can be found in RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, l. 2-7, and RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, ll. 58, 65-68.

Red Teahouses and clubs, and produced reports on their activities. Activists also worked to improve the nutritional and hygiene standards at collective farm nurseries.

To be sure, not all regions prepared as assiduously as Kokand. From the first months of planning, complaints circulated that far too little work was being done. One early report described the preparations as comprising too much "Hallelujah" (*alliluishchina*), or triumphalism, and too little actual work.[103] Despite its history as a hub of Central Asian culture, Samarkand reported very little activity with respect to music. As late as April 20, the city had held two volunteer days, planted 1500 trees, and organized discussions about "proletarian tourism," but reported no new musical circles or preparatory competitions. [104] In Samarkand, distributing radio receivers and broadcasting announcements about the event seem to have constituted most of the organizational work for the Olympiad.[105] Municipal administrators were also reported to have cut the funding they had promised for a symphony orchestra intended to attract youth to amateur music.[106] It is likely that Samarkand's uncharacteristic distance from musical organization was linked to the fact that it had recently been gutted by the transfer of most state, Party, and cultural institutions to Tashkent, when the capital moved there in 1930.

Haphazard as the preparations may have been, the Olympiad opened with a bang, and the periodical press went to work to emphasize its significance.[107] On the opening day of the Olympiad, an article published in *Young Leninist* began with a familiar thesis: the arts had once been a "weapon of exploitation" by the *boys*, the *beks*, and the bourgeoisie. Now, the dictatorship of the proletariat ensured the creation of a culture for the masses, one that would be "national in

[103] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 258, l. 105.
[104] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, l. 54; RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, l. 48.
[105] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, l. 54.
[106] T., "Odnim roscherkom pera v Samarkande glushat rostki samodeiatel'nosti," *Komsomolets Vostoka*, June 3, 1934, p. 3.
[107] Coverage of the opening day included "Uchastnikam sredneaziatskoi muzykal'no-khudozhestvennoi olimpiady privet!" *Pravda Vostoka*, June 17, 1934, p. 2; "Segodnia otkrytie olimpiady i konferentsii," *Komsomolets Vostoka*, June 17, 1934, p. 1.

form, socialist in content." The Olympiad represented the efflorescence of that new culture. The article pointed out multiple axes of "massness" that were now active participants in cultural production. For example, the participants included many "Uzbek, Tajik, and Turkmen girls, once imprisoned in four walls and deprived of the outside world." In addition to women, the article claimed, the Olympiad had brought in people from far-off corners of the region: "Here are Andijan, Yangi Qo'rg'on, Kokand, and many others. Here is Jarqo'rg'on province, far away from culture and the centers of scholarship."[108] Even in these "faraway kolkhozes," the article underscored, "collective farmers are building their everyday life anew. Instead of a *sandali*, they have an iron stove, a whitewashed house, a table and chairs; and instead of an oil lamp, a Lenin [electric] lamp." The Russian-language newspaper *Communist Youth of the East* echoed these claims, adding to them a florid triumphalism about the Olympiad as a statement to the other nations of the "East." One article from the Olympiad's opening day claimed that, in contrast to the cultural riches available to Central Asia's masses, Persia had but two national theaters, and that Afghanistan had only one.[109] Both publications represented the Olympiad as far more than just an enjoyable event. Instead, the Olympiad made a political statement, communicating the achievements of socialism to a Central Asian, all-Soviet, and proletarian international public.

The opening ceremonies of the Olympiad further foregrounded the event as addressing local, Union-wide, and global publics. Comrade Tubanov, Secretary of the Central Asian Regional Committee of the Komsomol, inaugurated the ceremony with a speech emphasizing the Olympiad as an event that would be watched — in Central Asia, in Moscow, and even around the world. "The laborers of Tashkent, the capital of the Central Asian republics of our great

[108] "Nodir talantlar bayrami," *Yosh Leninchi*, June 17, 1934, p. 1.
[109] TENK, "Kolonial'noe proshloe kanulo v vechnost'." *Komsomolets Vostoka*, June 17, 1934, p. 2. The section heading, with evocatively placed scare quotes, expressed the tone of casual neo-Orientalism in the Russian-language press: "Their 'culture' is at the brink of standstill." This tone is quite distinct from that of the Uzbek-language press, and exemplifies the importance of consulting sources in both Russian and local languages.

Soviet Union," he began, "are *witnesses* of the achievements in the life of our republics." A few sentences later, Tubanov changed the metaphor, arguing that the Olympiad would not only *be witnessed*, but was a *witness* in its own right:

> A witness of the correctness of the Party line, a witness of the great successes that our Central Asian republics have achieved by following the Leninist line of our Party, by struggling against all the enemies of the dictatorship of the proletariat, by struggling against chauvinists, by struggling against nationalists, by struggling with all types of people who depart from the general line of our Party.

In the next paragraph, Tubanov reiterated his emphasis on the Olympiad as an event that both witnessed to Soviet achievements and was witnessed by global publics. At the Olympiad and Conference, he said, "we must *show* the workers of Tashkent and the workers of our Soviet republics, our Party, and our government, what the youth of the Soviet Union, the youth of our national peripheries have achieved."[110] As he continued his speech, he directly addressed the audience members, reminding them that they too were among the witnesses of Soviet achievements. "The successes that you will see during the course of these four days," he reminded them, will show you the great strength that culture, the great strength that art has in the struggle to build socialism in our country." Tubanov then introduced Saklatvala as a reminder that the world was watching. "Comrade Saklatvala," said Tubanov, "is a *witness* of the fact that, in one of the largest parts of the Soviet Union — the city of Tashkent — laborers and working collective farm youth *show* what has been achieved by the proletariat of the Soviet Union." Tubanov concluded his speech with a flourish linking the ordinary Central Asian worker to all the masses at home and abroad. "The laborers of Tashkent and the entire worker-kolkhoz youth of Central Asia, through Comrade Saklatvala, pass on a warm proletarian hello to their class brothers and expect that their class brothers will raise their hand against their oppressors, and the

[110] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, l. 19-22. Emphasis in the following quotes is mine.

workers of Central Asia are prepared to come to their aid at any necessary moment." When Saklatvala took the stage, his role was laid out for him. He pointed out that India remained in thrall to English imperialism, while Soviet Central Asia had become an example of a "new life." The nationalists, Saklatvala stressed, had considered it enough to remove the khans from power, but the Olympiad attested that true "independence" came only through following Lenin and Stalin. And with that, the amateur bands began to play. The Olympiad had begun.

The bombastic rhetoric of Comrades Tubanov and Saklatvala will be familiar to any student of 1930s Soviet culture. Nevertheless, it deserves careful attention, because it communicates the new role of music in creating a state public. As Tubanov, Saklatvala, and the newspaper reports stressed repeatedly, the Olympiad was a joyous festival that served a serious political purpose. For the participants at the Olympiad who had come from around the region, for the many members of the audience, and for the masses experiencing the Olympiad only through the radio or the print media, the Olympiad and the music performed therein helped to imagine many overlapping state publics: urban, republican, regional, all-Soviet and global. For multinational audiences both in the Soviet Union and abroad, the music at the Olympiad underscored the rectitude of the Soviet way.

The activities undertaken during the four days of the Olympiad further exemplified this dynamic. On June 18 and 19, amateur groups performed at a variety of institutions around Tashkent: Gorky Park, Kafanov Club, Hamza theater, and a variety of factories; many performances were also broadcast on the radio.[111] Audiences at the competition performances added up to as many as 8000.[112] A group of young Uzbek women impressed the audience with their skills on the tambourine and *dutar*, a group of Baluchi collective farmers from

[111] For performances at factories, see RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, l. 40. The schedule was published in "Konferensiya va olimpiada kunlarida nimalar bo'lajak." *Yosh Leninchi*, June 18, 1934, p. 2.
[112] RGASPI F. M-63, op.1, d. 260, l. 36

Turkmenistan put on a striking dance with sticks, and the Tashkent Profintern, comprising performers primarily of European background, was commended for its skillful use of "topical" material. Welders played the dutar, and collective farmers exhibited their talent for singing.[113] The team from the musical tekhnikum in Frunze particularly impressed audiences, and a young Ashkhabad prodigy named Nuri-Sari performed virtuosically on the *kamancheh*, a stringed instrument played with a bow. Meanwhile, two of his comrades, both of whom had been admitted to the tekhnikum after beginning their careers on collective farms, performed exceptionally well on both European and "national" instruments.[114]

In each case, the performers did not only represent their individual performative talents; they stood in for the achievements of many others like them.[115] Photographs of Olympiad participants foregrounded the inclusivity of the event, duly ensuring that group photos included women and men from a variety of national backgrounds, even if that required creating a photographic montage. The *dutar*-playing Uzbek women exemplified the new freedoms granted by the Party to women like them throughout Central Asia. Performers from collective farms represented the opportunities for self-improvement now available to rural "workers." Performances from non-titular nationalities, such as Baluchis and local Jews, exhibited the equal opportunities extended to all proletarians, regardless of nationality. The inclusion of non-Europeans on an equal footing alongside Europeans served as evidence that Great Russian chauvinism was now a thing of the past. Uzbekistan's youth stood in for the workers of the entire "East." Saklatvala, who was present at the Frunze team's performance, was so impressed that he

[113] "San'atimizga, san'atkorlarimizga ko'ruk," *Yosh Leninchi*, June 21, 1934, p. 4.
[114] The examples from the above paragraph appeared in a press release, apparently from SATASS, which is reproduced in RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, ll. 25-27.
[115] In this respect, the Olympiad participants might be described as "performing" their nationality, as opposed to representing some internalized national subjectivity or primordial national identity. For analyses of Soviet nationality that foreground this performative dimension, see Brigid O'Keefe, *Gypsies*; Ali F. Igmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent.*

requested an interpreter to relay his response: "[Nuri-Sari's] playing reminded me of home. I think the hour will soon come when the children of India's workers will also be able to display their gifts and talents on the stage."[116] Both the Olympiad pageantry and the press coverage foregrounded the women, youth, workers, and collective farmers that participated.

But the Olympiad and Conference included much more than just performances. While in Tashkent, the performers attended workshops with the activists of Soviet culture who had organized the Olympiad. Muhiddin Qori-Yoqubov collaborated with others to conduct a workshop on supporting amateur music circles, and workshops were also conducted about hygiene and sanitation, work with children, literacy training, and physical culture. The young performers may have come to Tashkent because of their artistic talents, but they left the city with organizational skills and new forms of cultural literacy as well.

During the time they spent in Tashkent, the participants in the Olympiad toured the city, which was already being put forward as a model of Soviet modernity in newly "decolonized" Central Asia.[117] Each afternoon, groups of competitors visited the many attractions now open in Tashkent: a Museum of Nature and Industry, a Museum of People's Agriculture, and the Tashkent Zoo. They visited the Tashkent Public Library, and were familiarized with its collections. The Turkmen and Andijani delegations attended an amateur orchestra performance at a Tashkent garden, while the Tajikistani delegation enjoyed a visit to the cinema. With its carefully conceived program, its wide-ranging media coverage, and its intentional use of (inter-) national forms, the Olympiad invited Central Asians and their observers to imagine themselves

[116] "Zal slushaet Nurisari: Tov. Saklatvala voskhishchen molodymi darovaniiami." *Komsomolets Vostoka*, June 21, 1934, p. 1.
[117] On the earliest efforts to make Tashkent a model city, see Paul Stronski, *Tashkent: Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010). This project took on new importance in the Cold War era; see Masha Kirasirova. "Building Anti-Colonial Utopia: The Politics of Space in Soviet Tashkent in the 'Long 1960s'," in *The Routledge Handbook of the Global Sixties,* eds. Chen Jian, Martin Klimke, et al. Routledge Press, 2018, pp. 53-66.

as part of a Central Asian, all-Soviet, and global proletarian public. In its ideal form, the public was understood to comprise women and men, youth and collective farmers, Russians, Uzbeks, and all kinds of national minorities, all on an equal footing.

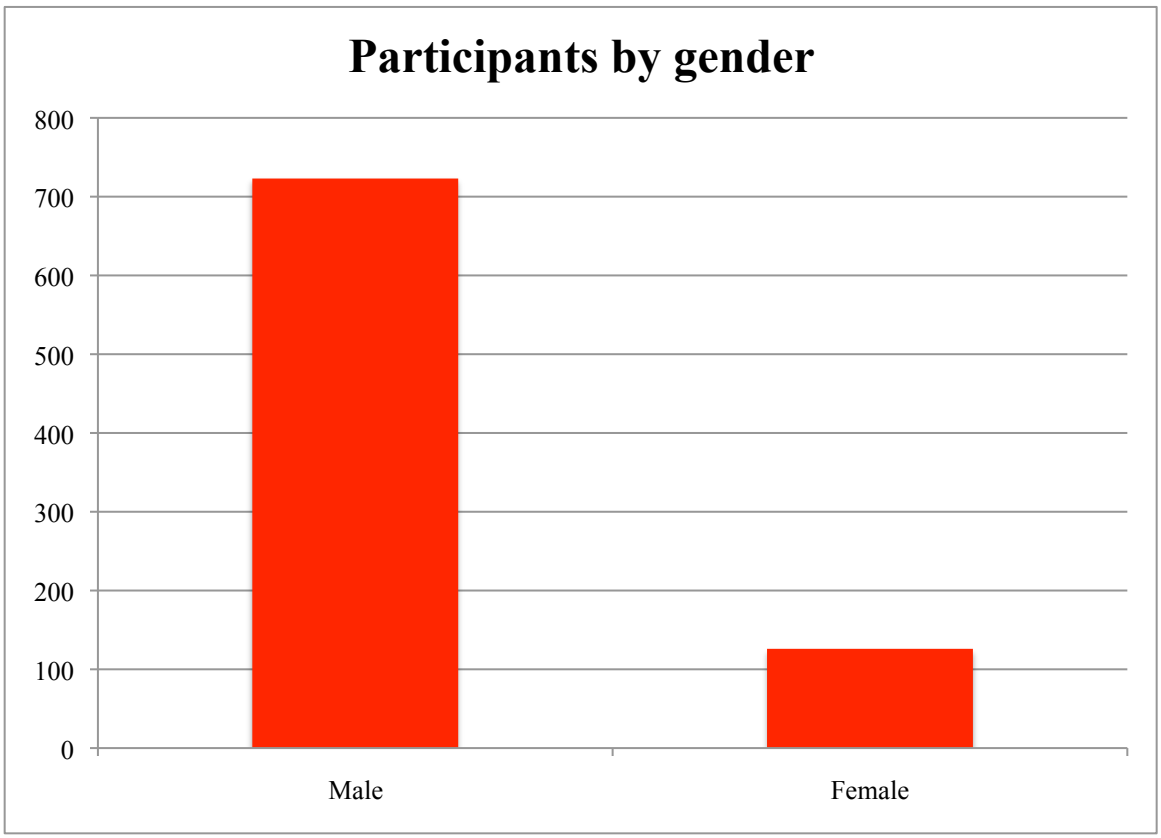

Fig. 2.11
Olympiad participants by gender
SOURCE: RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, l. 35.

But in many ways, despite all these ambitions, the Olympiad's actually existing social dynamics did not correspond to these normative expectations. First, despite all the rhetoric about emancipating Central Asian women, women and girls were severely underrepresented at the Olympiad [Fig. 2.11]. In large part, this probably had to do with the strong cultural taboos on women's public performance, and the danger they faced by appearing on stage. Only one woman, Tamara Khanum, participated in the planning committee and jury for the Olympiad.

Halima Nosirova, as well as several other actresses from the musical theater, participated in the other preparations for the Olympiad. Although these women constituted a minority in the planning and administration of the Olympiad, the press coverage of the Olympiad often featured photographs of them.[118] However, the press did not foreground the personal factors that permitted exemplary individuals such as Tamara Khanum to participate. Tamara Khanum's Armenian extraction and politically radical family background exempted her from religiously justified limitations on female mobility; it also did not hurt that her husband was on the planning committee with her.[119] For women who needed to travel to participate in the Olympiad, these challenges were compounded: the Olympiad would require permission not just to perform in public, but also to travel to a distant city for a co-ed event. Particularly for young unmarried women, who were under intense pressure to remain respectable in preparation for marriage, the threat this represented to their future was enormous. Even if an individual woman were willing to accept the threat to her respectability, it is difficult to imagine most ordinary Central Asian Muslim men permitting their female relatives to participate. Most likely, then, the women who competed at the Olympiad harkened from pro-Bolshevik Tashkent families, or were otherwise "free" of the tutelage of their male relatives.[120] It is impossible systematically to examine the backgrounds of the female participants in the Olympiad, but the available data bears out this conjecture. Archival reports indicate that some of the top performers at the Olympiad, male and female, came from state-run children's homes and were therefore "free" of the guardianship of

[118] See, for example, Roman Ianov. "Pervotsvety iskusstva respubliki." *Komsomolets Vostoka*, April 6, 1934, p. 3;
[119] In the rest of the Soviet Union and the worldwide stage, Tamara Khanum nevertheless became representative of the "emancipation" of all Central Asia's women. For example, Langston Hughes, who met Tamara Khanum during his travel in Central Asia, described her as being representative of all the region's women. See Langston Hughes, "Tamara Khanum: Soviet Asia's Greatest Dancer," *Theatre Arts Monthly* 18, no. 11 (November 1934): 829–35. Charles Shaw discusses this phenomenon as well; see Shaw, "Making Ivan-Uzbek," pp. 100-104.
[120] The amateur ensemble at Tashkent's Gostorgovlia and Kooperatsiia, for example, was integrated with respect to gender — the Uzbek concert ensemble comprised 23 members, 13 of whom were women. See RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, l. 56.

families that would have obstructed their participation.[121] Many of the female performers pictured in the press were also prepubescent girls and therefore somewhat less subject to the restrictions that governed women and girls of marriageable age.

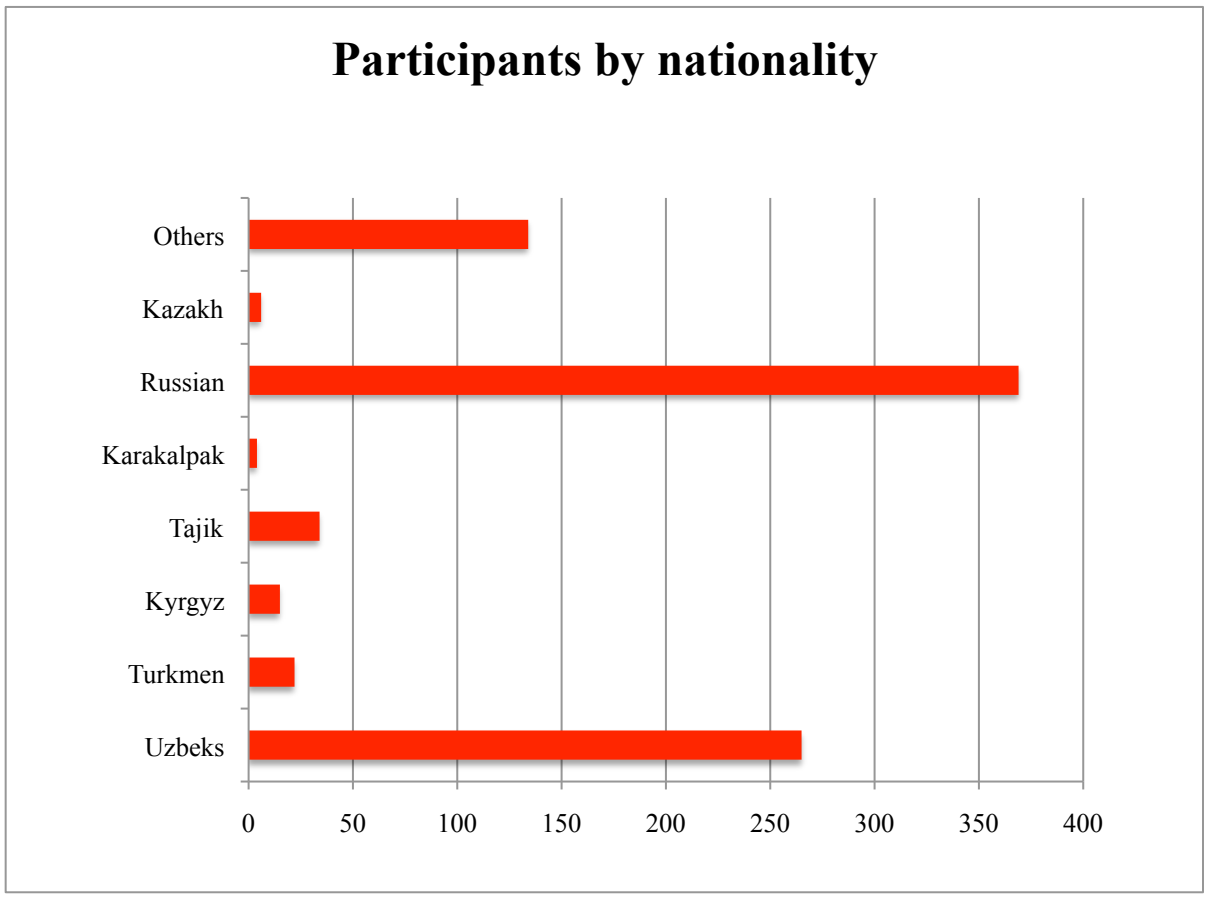

Fig. 2.12
Olympiad participants by nationality
SOURCE: RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, l. 35.

The national makeup of the Olympiad also revealed a more complicated picture than the multinational mixing represented in photographs [Fig. 2.12]. Although Russians represented a small minority of the overall Central Asian population, they comprised more than 40% of the

[121] For example, many of Frunze's performers came from the children's home there; see RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, p. 23.

Olympiad's participants.[122] In part, this may be explained by the fact that the Olympiad was held in Tashkent, where the Russian population of Central Asia was concentrated. In other significant feeder cities as well, Europeans dominated the statistics. At the qualifying Olympiad in Kokand, for example, there were 235 urban participants. Of these, only 95 were Uzbeks; the remainder comprised Europeans (120 competitors) and local Jews (20 competitors).[123] The overrepresentation of Russians also reflects the fact that, while musicians and musicologists from Fitrat's circle had taken a beating in the "bourgeois nationalist" purges of the late 1920s, Russian musical institutions continued their activities unassailed.[124] Russian groups thus benefited from the expertise of experienced performers, while members of local nationalities were reduced to relying on the dregs of decimated cadres. Finally, there are some indications that Russians' antipathy or indifference toward the non-Russians around them prevented more active ethnic mixing. For example, a May 1934 inspection of Tashkent's amateur musical institutions reported that Uzbeks were severely underrepresented in two of Tashkent's most active institutions. The Kafanov Club, which served the workers of the Tashkent Hydroelectric Station (*Tashges*), was revealed to include only 13 Uzbeks out of a total of 95 participants in amateur music programs.[125] To make matters worse, although Uzbeks comprised 70% of Tashges's workers, only two of these Uzbeks actually worked at Tashges. The other eleven had been invited from outside. In the Tashkent typographers' club, likewise, only Russian-language amateur groups were active; no apparent efforts had been made to integrate non-European populations into the typographers' cultural activities. Generally, the de facto assumption seems to be that "national"

[122] According to the 1939 census, Uzbeks comprised 65.1% of the total population of Uzbekistan. The other 35% include other Central Asian nationalities as well as Russians. Figures come from Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*, The Wilder House Series in Politics, History, and Culture (Ithaca ; London: Cornell University Press, 2001), p. 381.
[123] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, l. 65.
[124] On Tashkent's most active amateur music groups in the 1920s and 1930s, see Vyzgo, pp. 71-75.
[125] The below examples are found in RGASPI, F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, l. 56.

ensembles included only local nationalities, while ensembles performing European music incorporated non-Europeans as a minority.

The outsize influence of urban demographics reveal that the Olympiad was far less of a collective farm event than it was touted to be. Despite the rhetoric about collective farm culture, cities remained the hubs of preparation for the Olympiad, and urban competitors seem to have been most successful in the competition. At the qualifying Olympiad in Kokand, for example, only eight amateur circles from collective farms participated, as opposed to twenty-five from the city itself. The collective farm participants numbered 163, while urban competitors numbered 235.[126] Of 849 total participants at the all-Central Asian Olympiad, a mere 283 had never before been to Tashkent.[127] This attests not just to the urban nature of the Olympiad, but also to its Tashkent-centrism. In part, this condition can be attributed to the concentration of cultural cadres in Tashkent but was probably also exacerbated by the expense of bringing performers from elsewhere, when the onus was on local bureaucracies to fund Olympiad travel.

[126] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, l. 2.
[127] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, l. 35

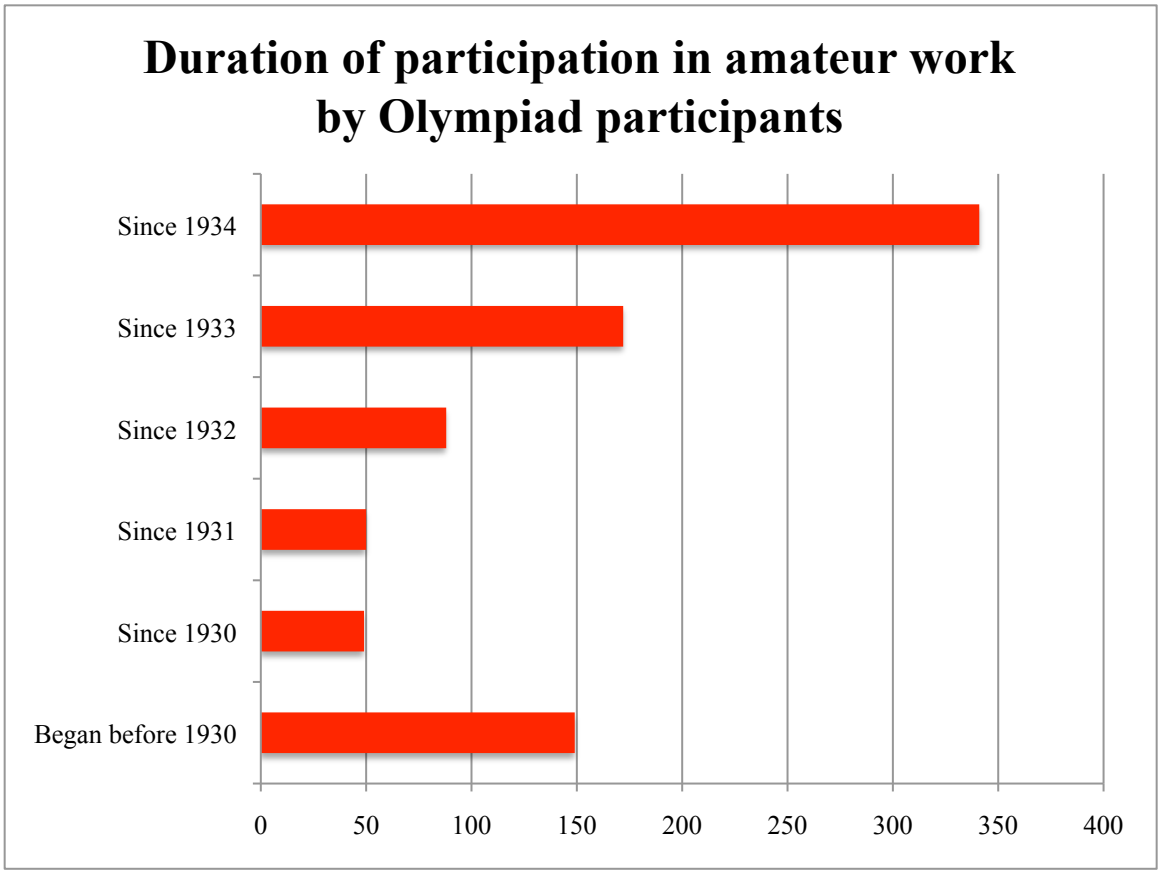

Fig. 2.13
Duration of participation in amateur work by Olympiad participants
SOURCE: RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, l. 35.

Despite the rhetoric about bringing culture to Uzbekistan's masses for the first time, there is significant evidence that the Olympiad organizers relied on older cultural forces. Like so many Stalin-era projects, the Olympiad called for massive organizational work in a short period of time [Fig. 2.13]. Accordingly, a huge proportion of the Olympiad participants began participating in music circles less than 6 months before the event. After those who began participating in amateur music during the 6-month runup to the Olympiad, the most numerous group comprised youth who had begun participating before 1930, when programming for musical circles was still quite disorganized, and Jadids still had an outsize influence on Uzbekistan's musical culture.

Under the circumstances, participants with pre-existing musical experience outside the newfound amateur circles had a clear advantage. Where did that experience come from? The older networks of musical instruction whose existence the Olympiad organizers denied. For example, Nuri-Sari, the Ashkhabad boy who impressed audiences with his virtuosic *kamancheh* performance, turned out to be the son of a *baxshi*.[128] In his research on Central Asian music, Theodore Levin offers further examples of musicians who brought prior expertise to amateur music circles. For example, renowned *dutar* player Turgun Alimatov learned to play first at (black) teahouses in the 1920s.[129] Only after these teahouse musicians were repressed by the government did he join the amateur music circle at his school. Another musician interviewed by Levin, Ma'ruf Xoja, reported that he first began singing and playing the *tanbur* after hearing an older musician perform at a funeral in his community.[130] From that musician's students, Ma'ruf Xoja obtained some recordings of his performances, and modeled his performance style on the recordings. One year after Ma'ruf Xoja began playing the *tanbur*, he joined an amateur music circle run by the silk factory where he worked.[131] Flora Roberts has shown that beginning in the 1930s, collective farm orchestras became refuges for renowned performers of the *maqom* who were no longer welcome in cities. Under the auspices of new institutions for amateur music, they ended up creating relationships of patronage with collective farm directors that resembled the patronage relationships at a Central Asian court 50 years before.[132]

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[128] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, p. 26.
[129] Levin, *The Hundred Thousand Fools of God*, pp. 56-59.
[130] It is impossible to reconstruct the identity of this musician, Sadir Khan, and where or how the recordings of him were made. Ma'ruf Xoja's story represents an interesting combination between face-to-face and modern, mediated forms of musical transmission. Although he heard Sadir Khan first in person, Ma'ruf Xoja did not have the opportunity to learn from him directly because he soon died. Instead, Ma'ruf Xoja learned to play from recordings that he obtained from Sadir Khan's students. The fact that Ma'ruf Xoja learned from recordings evinces the changing landscape of musical transmission. Nevertheless, it is still significant that Ma'ruf Xoja first learned music not by reading notes, but by improvising based on listening.
[131] Levin, *The Hundred Thousand Fools of God*, p. 39.
[132] Flora J. Roberts, "Old Elites Under Communism: Soviet Rule in Leninobod" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Chicago,

Despite the Olympiad's insistence on its own novelty, then, older hierarchies of musical performance continued to operate, only in different institutional settings. Women's marginalization, national segregation, and European privilege remained salient. Nevertheless, as mass spectacle and multimedia event, the Olympiad foregrounded the exceptions: the mixed-gender and multinational ensembles, the talented collective farm performers, the amateur autodidacts. Even though the Olympiad was not actually as inclusive as hoped, the effort to create an optics of inclusion mattered for the cultural landscape in Uzbekistan. Most importantly, regardless of the background of its performers, the Olympiad signified that music now played a new role in Central Asian society. Through participation in the Olympiad and the amateur music circles it promoted, Central Asian youth participated not in an Islamic *ummah*, a court patronage network, or a commercial relationship, but rather in a Soviet public.

The Olympiad and Musical Form

The Olympiad, with its immense organizational program throughout Central Asia, represented the culmination of years of demands for better outreach to the masses through amateur music. With respect to musical form too, the Olympiad both revealed the imperfections of prior work and renewed the efforts of Central Asia's mediators for a music that would be "national in form, socialist in content." Some discussion of the years leading up to the Olympiad is thus crucial to understand the performances there. In the late 1920s and early 1930s, as collectivization set in and the "bourgeois nationalists" vanished from the scene, calls for music for the masses intensified. The radio is an instructive example of this phenomenon. In November 1929, a meeting of the Uzbekistan Communist Party's Agitprop-Political Division complained that radio programming was politically weak because it consisted primarily of musical

2016), especially Chapter 3, "The Culture of Cotton Farms (1930s-1960s)," pp. 175-231.

performances.[133] The agitprop workers recommended remedying this by including more political programming instead of music. Soon, musicians began working to create music that doubled as political programming, rather than replacing music with (non-musical) political programming. By 1931, *This World* journal could report that radio musicians were working hard on the matter: "The Central Asian radio music ensemble consists of 15 members . . . The radio musicians are now engaged with all their strength toward the goal of aligning [their] music with the spirit of the proletariat."[134]

What did it mean for music to be aligned with the "spirit of the proletariat" while also remaining national? In a 1931 report on the state of Uzbek national musical culture, Qori-Yoqubov and Beliaev acknowledged the complexity of defining an appropriate national form. "It is impossible to reach an understanding of 'national form'," they argued, "without thoroughly studying music from the point of view of its national specificity, but also of its appropriateness for the goals of socialist construction and of strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat."[135] This project had to begin with extensive research into national ("folk and classical") musics, and in turn, that research could only proceed after the "oral" traditions of Uzbek national music had been "fixated" in recordings. In addition to the *maqom*, this included so-called "folk song."[136] After this research had been conducted, they argued, it would be possible to rework a musical

[133] See RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2007, l. 93. Presumably, the reference is to Yunus Rajabiy's radio ensemble.
[134] Iskandar Qalandarov. "Efir bong uradi." *Yer Yuzi*, January 1931, p. 19.
[135] O'zMDA, F. 94, op. 5, d. 844, ll. 11.
[136] On the topic of Soviet "folklore," see Margaret Ziolkowski, *Soviet Heroic Poetry in Context: Folklore or Fakelore* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2013); for a more traditional approach, see Frank J. Miller, *Folklore for Stalin: Russian Folklore and Pseudofolklore of the Stalin Era* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1990). "Fakelore" is discussed at greater length in Chapter 5, "I Dress in Silk and Velvet." One typical example of mass media folklore, accompanied by biographies and photographs of the performers, can be found in Hodi Zarif, "Xalq og'zaki adabiyotida LENIN," *O'zbekiston Sho'ra Adabiyoti*, 1934 (no. 1), pp. 18-24. This article comprises only texts, not melodies, as Qori-Yoqubov might have hoped. Not only musicians, but also writers were called upon to draw more extensively on the genius of national folklore. At the 1933 Congress of the Writers' Union of Uzbekistan, for example, a Russian writer, Sabutskii, effused about a "collective farm composer" (*kompozitor-kolkhoznik)* he had encountered during his travels in Uzbekistan. The composer performed a song on the dutar about the "victory of the Red Army over the *basmachis*." Sabutskii bemoaned the fact that such geniuses were "everywhere, except our books" (*vezde*, *krome nashikh knizhek*). See O'zMDA, F. 2356, op. 1, d. 2a, ll. 10-11

repertoire including music in a variety of genres, from "revolutionary songs" to a "national opera." The repertoire would be published and widely distributed. In order to perform this new repertoire, new ensemble styles and new types of instruments would also need to be developed. New cadres of performers, composers, and music instructors would benefit from all these resources in their outreach to the masses.

Qori-Yoqubov and Beliaev's report made it clear: the masses may have provided the raw material, but before their "national form" could become an appropriate vessel for socialist content, it needed to be processed by experts and distributed through the mass media.[137] Accordingly, in the early 1930s and particularly in the runup to the Olympiad, several folklore collection expeditions were undertaken. In 1931, for example, the Narkompros organized an expedition to gather musical culture from the Ferghana Valley, including women's folklore.[138] In 1934, the Writers' Union called upon its members to collaborate with musicologists to collect folklore in advance of the Olympiad.[139] On June 25, 1934, just four days after the Olympiad ended, an expedition that had undertaken its research as part of the Olympiad campaign issued its report on the "rich musical folklore" of the Khorezm Oasis.[140] These expeditions were only the

[137] This approach was hardly exclusive to Central Asia, nor was it new to the Soviet period. As Marina Frolova-Walker has shown, the professional creators of national musics throughout the Soviet Union in the 1930s worked to take advantage of Western musical norms, such as notation and harmony, and to combine them with features of national folklore. In doing so, they drew explicitly on the romantic music of Russia's 19th century: the Russian Big Five had first pioneered the approach of adopting "folk" melodic motifs and then situating them in European classical forms, such as the symphony. See Marina Frolova-Walker, "'National in Form, Socialist in Content': Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51, no. 2 (1998): 331–71. Frolova-Walker observes that national composers ran the risk of adapting the same techniques that had been used by Russian orientalist composers; this problem was noted also by official Soviet observers. For example, concerns about "orientalism" in music are articulated in RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2967, l. 32.

[138] Romanovskaia, "Muzyka v Uzbekistane," p. 7. In August 1934, *Cultural Revolution* journal reported that Romanovskaia was ready to publish a volume of women and girls' folklore, presumably from this expedition. "San'at xabarlari." *Madaniy Inqilob*, Aug. 14, 1934, p. 3. Although Nikolai Mironov did not apparently join the expedition to the Ferghana Valley, in 1932 he published a volume entitled "Songs of Ferghana, Bukhara, and Khiva." In 1939, Romanovskaia would undertake a folklore collection expedition at the site of the Ferghana Canal, producing another volume of songs from that experience. See Karomatov, F. *O'zbek Musiqasi Sovet Davrida*. Tashkent: O'zbekiston KP MKning nashriyoti, 1967, pp. 5-6.

[139] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 3372, l. 87;

[140] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, l. 42

successful results of a steady drumbeat of requests for more folklore gathering expeditions, most of which never actually materialized.

For musical mediators who were interested in propagating not only the texts of songs, but also their melodies, musical notation was crucial. To be sure, notation had been a programmatic goal for the Jadids in the 1920s. But now, it meant something different. No longer did musical notation modernize a national form in order to represent it to the world as a classical tradition. Now, notation existed to make music accessible to the masses. As one author effused in 1935, drawing lessons from the results of the Olympiad, "As revolutionary as the new alphabet was for the Soviet East, so revolutionary will be the introduction of musical notation for Uzbek music."[141] If the Latin script was intended to democratize Central Asian print culture, so too would European musical notation democratize Central Asian performance culture.

As Qori-Yoqubov's report stressed, however, not all "national" songs were adequate to create a music that was "national in form, socialist in content." It was critical for the new songs to convey the appropriate mood, and during the 1930s, there were persistent complaints that too much of Central Asian music was sad and whiny. This began with Fitrat, with his complaint that certain *maqom* modes, including *iroq* and *navo*, were inappropriate for revolution. In the 1930s, it was picked up without acknowledgement by First Secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, Akmal Ikromov himself. Speaking at the Fifth Congress of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan in 1932, Ikromov claimed that because Uzbek music came into existence during a time of "the khans' and beks' oppression, and foreign imperialism . . . Its main melodies were comprised of weeping, tears, and regret."[142] The concern that music convey the appropriately upbeat mood for socialist construction became a driving impetus for compositional work

[141] Rahmanov, Lavrov. "O'zbekistonda musiqa qurulishining navbatdagi masalalari." O'zbek Sovet Adabiyoti, p. 102.
[142] Cited in *Mushtum*, Feb. 1936, back cover.

thereafter. The offensively "regretful" songs even became became the objects of satire in satire journal *The Fist* [Fig. 2.14]. In contrast to these vestiges of feudalism, the organizers of the Olympiad called for new genres of music: "marches, songs, and musical vaudevilles."[143]

Fig. 2.14
"Moaning and Wailing"
Husband: When our son grows up, he will be a great singer, darling!
Wife: How do you know, dear?
Husband: Listen carefully – he's always wailing!
SOURCE: *Mushtum* no. 2 (1936), p. 11

One major way to achieve the appropriate mood for the age of socialism, according to observers at the time, was to harmonize. As Marina Frolova-Walker has shown, harmonization was "nonnegotiable" in musical cultures throughout the Soviet Union, from Russian folk song to Azeri *mugam*.[144] Historical evolutionism underpinned the demand for harmonization. Monophony, according to this understanding, was a vestige of a more primitive historical stage. In this view, polyphony represented not a foreign musical culture, but rather a more advanced

[143] Alimov. "Gotovim pesni, marshi." *Komsomolets vostoka*, p. 3.
[144] Frolova-Walker, "National in Form, Socialist in Content," p. 348.

stage in the historical dialectic.[145] In its rhetoric, the goal was thus not to replace Central Asian musical forms, but to combine them with European innovations in order to bring them into the modern age. "We must learn the rich techniques of European music," said one writer, Toshmuhamedov, "and in that way we will be able to create Uzbek national sounds (*o'zbek milliy sadolari*)."[146] As an example, Toshmuhamedov discussed Azerbaijan, where, he argued, musicians had made "progress" (*taraqqiyot*) by learning from the European masters. Specifically, he discussed Beethoven, whom he described as "one of the great leaders of the French Revolution." In other words, for Toshmuhamedov European classical music represented both modernity and revolution. In the 21st century, the equation of modernity with Europe, and the assumption of linear progress as an unequivocal good, ring as profoundly chauvinistic. But for mediators like Toshmuhamedov and Qori-Yoqubov, drawing on the thought of modernizers like Fitrat, harmonization was the only way for Uzbek music to survive and thrive in a rapidly changing world.

Harmonization was so crucial because it came as part of the broader effort to integrate Central Asian music into Europeanized national musics throughout the Soviet Union. Central Asians were now called upon to play their music on European instruments as well as national ones, and to transcribe their music using Western notation. This made it impossible to convey certain hallmarks of Central Asian music. For example, one author pointed out that Western notation eliminated ornamental microtones (*molish*) from Central Asian songs.[147] These notes were also impossible to play on certain European instruments, such as the piano. The author acknowledged that removing *molish* from Central Asian songs rendered them "flavorless"

[145] This attitude toward polyphony as an "advance" in Uzbek musical culture has persisted in Uzbekistan even since the Soviet period; see, for example, Feruza Mansurbekova, "Unisondan Polifoniya Sari: O'zbek Xor San'ati Tarixi," *Guliston*, no. 4 (2014): 38–39.
[146] Toshumuhamedov. "Yana musiqa to'g'risida." *Madaniy Inqilob*, Feb. 23, 1933, p. 2.
[147] A. "Rohat beraturgan ko'y, xushovoz musiqa asboblari." O'zbek Sovet Adabiyoti, no. 1 (1935), pp. 105-107.

(*shirasiz*), but that transcribing them was far too complicated. The author suggested that harmonization would remedy this situation. The author was unclear precisely how it would help — harmonization certainly could not reintroduce the lost microtones — but the implication seems to be that harmonization would return some of the "flavor."

In addition to conveying the appropriate modern mood, harmonized music was also particularly conducive to performance in large ensembles. In an age of the masses, ensemble performance was crucial. If the *maqom* had once been performed in groups whose members could be numbered on one's fingers, new Central Asian music was played by large orchestras or choirs. Rather than playing a single melody in unison, then, smaller sections of the ensemble could perform harmonies. The simple new notation made it easy for beginners to learn new pieces, and the large ensemble format was particularly forgiving to inexperienced and amateur players. If the old norm for *maqom* had been court virtuoso, the new norm was middle school band.

Fig. 2.15
New musical instruments made by Master (*Usto*) Usmon.
SOURCE: *Guliston* no. 6 (1935), p. 32.

Amateur ensemble performance of harmonized music required new kinds of instruments. The instruments that had been made for small, improvising ensembles in a teahouse or court needed to be updated for the concert hall. Accordingly, some master instrument makers began experimenting with new materials, construction techniques, and instrument types [Fig. 2.15]. They created instruments of different sizes to maximize resonance and to facilitate ensemble performance. For example, harmonized music could be played by three different sizes of the traditional Uzbek bowed instrument, the g'ijjak: a treble, tenor, and bass, corresponding roughly to a violin, viola, and bass.[148] To produce the large number of instruments required by the new mass ensembles, a factory opened in Tashkent.[149] Plans even materialized to open a large, all-Soviet factory in Chuvashia that could produce instruments for all the national republics together, prioritizing affordability, loudness, ease of use, and facility with Western scales.[150]

All these innovations in Uzbekistan's music marked a transition from an intimate, improvisational, highly specific oral performance tradition, to a modular music. In other words, the new forms took some aspects of "national music," such as national instruments or rhythmic and melodic figures from the *maqom*, and shaped them into a "national form." This "national form" directly corresponded to the "national forms" produced everywhere from Ukraine to Siberia. They could be published as a body of songs, distributed to the amateur clubs throughout the republic, and played uniformly throughout the republic. Musicians from different regions could convene as an orchestra in Tashkent and all play together. Then, these standardized works could be performed at Olympiads in Central Asia and in Moscow, the Dekada of Uzbek culture

[148] "Rohat beraturgan ko'y," p. 107. The balalaika also received a similar treatment, and enormous bass balalaikas, albeit rare, still appear on Russian stages to this day.
[149] On these experimental efforts with musical instruments, see Xotam Qirg'iz, "Yangi sozlar," *Guliston* no. 6 (1935), p. 32.
[150] A. Novosel'skii. "K voprosu ob organizatsii massovogo proizvodstva muzykal'nykh instrumentov." *Sovetskaia muzyka*, May 1934 (no. 5), pp. 43-50.

in Moscow, and even abroad. They fit neatly into an "international" program, with every nation putting forward its own recognizably national, but also easily comparable songs. This music would come to serve an important purpose, not just involving collective farmers and young women and men in musical performance, but also inducting them into a multinational all-Soviet public.

Overall, with respect to the Olympiad and for amateur music more broadly, mediators emphasized developing a repertoire that was maximally transferrable through the Soviet media and mass institutions: songs in Western notation could be published in the newspaper or books, and played by anyone, anywhere; loud, orchestral instruments worked at Red Teahouse and state theater alike; and even without an *ustod*, it was possible to hear and play a song from the radio. These new songs could be played anywhere from the most distant collective farm to before Stalin in Moscow, and even — moving down the road — in post-colonial India, for a socialist international.

The problem was that in the mid-1930s, a modular national repertoire simply was not yet ready. In a 1932 report, Khorvat, then vice-director of the State Uzbek Musical Theater, decried a list of songs that had been submitted to the Ministry of Education's administration for the arts (*Glaviskusstvo*).[151] According to Khorvat, the songs' themes were unclear, they lacked typical Uzbek rhythmic figures, and the harmonization was poorly executed. In short, the songs were neither politically nor aesthetically acceptable. Khorvat claimed that this was typical of the generally erratic quality of Uzbek music for the masses. The creation of the Writers' Union provided more structure for the creation of a musical repertoire, particularly in the form of musical theater. In spring 1934, the Writers' Union reported that an opera and several musical plays had been written and were ready for performance at the state theaters of Uzbekistan in

[151] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2967, ll. 31-33.

Tashkent.[152] But these works were certainly not distributed among Uzbekistan's masses in time for the Olympiad.

Consequently, in the runup to the Olympiad inspectors reported that local amateur circles had selected completely "arbitrary" repertoires, based primarily on whatever local instructors happened to know and like.[153] A report on the results of the Olympiad complained that the vast majority of participants in the Olympiad performed pieces from their respective classical traditions. The Uzbeks performed the same four melodies, only one of which was a "march"; the Russians performed pieces by composers like Tchaikovsky, Schubert, and Liszt — not even Beethoven the revolutionary.[154] Amazingly, one article even reported without comment that some Olympiad musicians had performed the Iroq *maqom*, precisely the one that Fitrat and Ikromov had denounced as conveying an inappropriate mood.[155] Tashkent's Kafanov club, which was commended for the quality of its performance, took matters into its own hands: the performers themselves arranged their own versions of Uzbek melodies.[156] Of course, this was an option only for those few clubs and circles that had musicians with sufficient training to make their own arrangements. In the runup to the Olympiad, *Young Leninist* had published the music for the Internationale but otherwise appears to have failed to ensure that Olympiad performers would have access to appropriate music.

After the Olympiad, many of Uzbekistan's musicians and composers claimed they had learned their lesson. *Komsomol of the East* reported that the Olympiad was a "reservoir of rich

[152] RGALI F. 631, op. 6, d. 118, l. 13.
[153] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, l. 55; F. 62, op. 2, d. 2967, ll. 31-32.
[154] O'zMDA, F. 737, op. 1, d. 1717, ll. 52-53. The names of the Uzbek melodies were Usmanya, Kashgarcha, Mirzodavlat, and "Signal." It is unclear precisely what these melodies were, but the names of the first three suggest pre-revolutionary provenance and link them to a Turkic, Islamic world. Usmanya shares a root with "Ottoman," while Kasghar means "Kashgar-style," i.e. from Xinjiang. "Mirzo" is a medieval title, roughly corresponding to "prince." These melodies are also mentioned in N. Lomaki, "Pobednyi itog," *Komsomolets Vostoka*, June 30, 1934, 3.
[155] "San'atimizga, san'atkorlarimizga ko'ruk." *Yosh Leninchi*, June 21, 1934, p. 4.
[156] RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, l. 57.

experience for developing the arts in all of Central Asia," as artists and performers from throughout the region learned from each other.[157] The director of the Sverdlov theater, Khil'kevich, reported that he had learned a great deal from the performances and planned to put them to use in the choreography and music at the musical opera.[158] In July, drawing on these lessons, the Komsomol's Central Asian Bureau published a series of resolutions based on the results of the Olympiad. Along with improving musical education, the document called for the publication of new musical repertoires[159]. New songs, with words and music, began appearing in the periodical press. For example, Yunus Rajabiy published a song about a tractor in the official journal of the Writers' Union [Fig. 2.16]. A song with words by Uzbek poet Usmon Nosir was published in *Young Leninist*, including recommendations that "all youth" learn it in preparation for the 18th anniversary of the October Revolution and that it be played on the radio.[160] Neither song was harmonized, but this was nevertheless a start. Meanwhile, in its plan for the second half of 1935, the Writers' Union planned to publish a collection of folk (*narodnye*) songs in Uzbek, including both texts and melodies, under the direction of Cho'lpon.[161] It also planned to organize a discussion about the "melodies of Uzbek songs."[162]

[157] "Za bodrost', za radost', za novogo cheloveka!" *Komsomolets Vostoka*, June 23, 1934, p. 1.
[158] Khil'kevich. "Moi opyt obogashchen." *Komsomolets Vostoka*, p. 3.
[159] "O'rtaosiyo yoshlarining madaniy-maishiy konferensiyalari va musika san'at olimpiadasining yakunlari to'g'risida." *Yosh Leninchi*, July 14, 1934, p. 3. A more extensive discussion of the work undertaken to create a national, harmonized repertoire can be found in "Obrabotka narodnykh melodii," from Vyzgo, Karelova and Karomatov, pp. 57-67.
[160] Usmon Nosir (words), Sheshtovich (music). "Uyg'on oppog'im," *Yosh Leninchi*, Nov. 4, 1935, p. 4; Yunus Rajabiy. "Traktor," *O'zbek Sovet Adabiyoti*, 1935 (no. 1), p. 106.
[161] RGALI F. 631, op. 6, d. 118, l. 3.
[162] Ibid., l. 8.

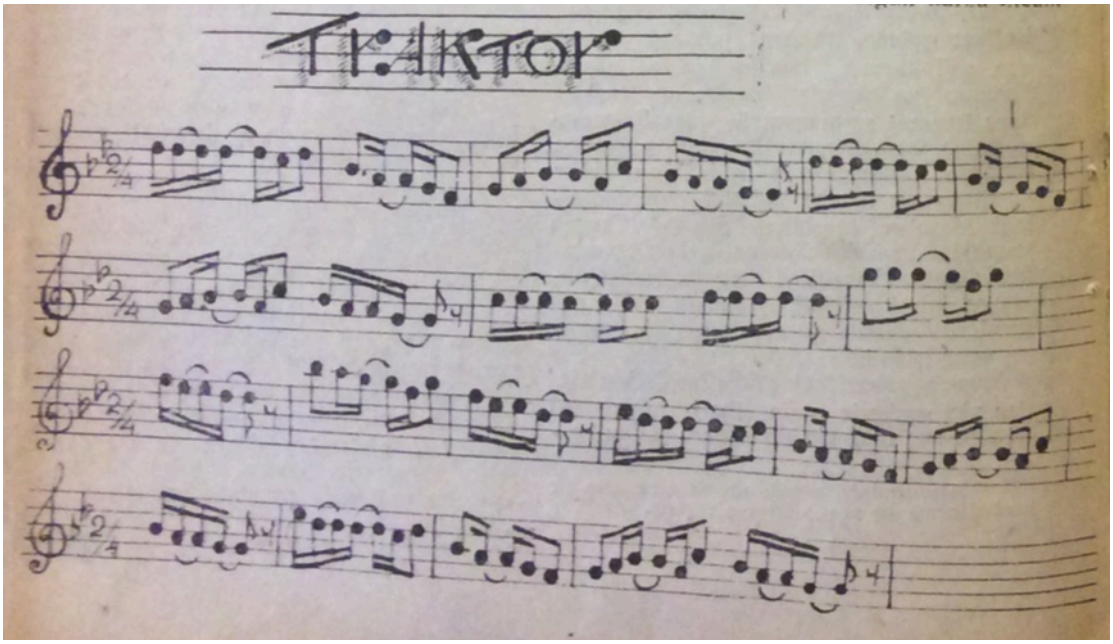

Fig. 2.16
Yunus Rajabiy, "Tractor."
SOURCE: *O'zbek Sovet Adabiyoti* no. 1 (1935), p. 106.

As a single event, the Olympiad did not revolutionize musical form in Central Asia, or even in Uzbekistan. If anything, it served only to reveal just how much work remained to be done. However, the Olympiad and the organizational work that took place in preparation for it showed that music was taking on a new social role as a medium for addressing a mass public. In order to facilitate this role, in the Olympiad moment, Uzbekistan's musicians began creating a repertoire that was rooted in "folk" song but processed through harmonization and notation into a form that was modular, easily reproducible, and generally accessible to the masses.

Conclusion

On the last day of the 1934 Musical-Artistic Olympiad, all the participants gathered again in Dinamo Stadium. Again, they displayed their talents before a multinational Central Asian, all-Soviet, and international audience. Tamara Khanum, Qori-Yoqubov, and Uspenskii joined

Comrade Saklatvala in observing the festivities. Foreign consuls, including from China and Afghanistan, occupied a special box seat in the center of the stadium.[163] For this distinguished audience, Tojieva, a young girl from Kokand, danced her national Uzbek dance; the Turkmen prodigy Nuri-Sari performed again on the *kamancha*; and the Kyrgyz children's home displayed its talents for the last time.[164] The prizes were announced.[165] The first prize went to Kyrgyzstan, which was commended for its "serious" preparation for the Olympiad and its talented, multinational cast of performers. The jury awarded Uzbekistan the second prize, commending it most of all for the quality of its "national" and European ensembles but chastising it for its failure to present more nationally integrated performances on European instruments. The jury cited the Baluchi stick dance in awarding the third prize to Turkmenistan. Finally, Tajikistan and Karakalpakstan tied for fourth prize because, despite presenting a few high-quality individual performances, they had evidently "failed to dedicate sufficient attention to preparing." Eighty-four winning performers received rewards: clothing, bicycles, certificates, and cash.[166] A multinational, mixed-gender group of thirteen young performers was selected to be sent on the the All-Union Olympiad to be held later that year in Moscow.[167]

Much like Comrade Tubanov on the Olympiad's opening night, writers in Central Asia's press represented the Olympiad as a triumph for a newly democratized Central Asian performance culture. Taking stock of the Olympiad a few months after it took place, an article in the Writers' Union journal noted that thanks to the Olympiad "the culture and art that once

[163] "Yoshlarning O'rta Osiyo muzika-san'at olimpiadasi yopildi." *Yosh Leninchi*, June 23, 1934, p. 1.
[164] "Tysiachi na stadione 'Dinamo'," *Komsomolets Vostoka*, June 22, 1934, p. 1.
[165] N. Lomakin. "Pobednyi itog." *Komsomolets Vostoka*, June 30, 1934, p. 3.
[166] "Yoshlarning O'rta Osiyo Olimpiadasi yopildi, p. 1. It appears that some of the cash promised to performers was never received; the archive contains a letter from a performer from Kyrgyzstan with a Russian name, complaining that he never received his prize money and hoped to use it, once received, to sponsor an amateur music circle. See RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 260, l. 7.
[167] "Butun ittifoq olimpiadasiga vakil bo'lib boruvchilar." *Yosh Leninchi*, June 24, 1934, p. 3.

served only a handful of 'chosen people' has now become the wealth of millions."[168] The Olympiad thus became a spectacle showcasing not primarily the talents of individual performers, but rather the collective achievements of socialism. By bringing together representatives from all around Central Asia, and by repeatedly foregrounding their national diversity, their status as representatives of the proletariat, and their inclusion of women, the Olympiad created a space for Central Asians to imagine themselves part of a multinational, gender-inclusive, proletarian Soviet public. All this took shape through an intense multimedia initiative involving both radio and the print media. As performers in and consumers of the media, the participants in the Olympiad became Soviet mediators, often for the first time. Performing before their foreign guests, they also became early examples of mediators for the proletarian "East" outside the Soviet Union. In this sense, the Olympiad was indeed a showcase for the transformations in Central Asian music that had taken place under socialism.

However, these transformations did not always align with the triumphalist narrative put forward through the press. The Olympiad both reinscribed old hierarchies and created new ones. For example, newspapers attributed Tajikistan and Karakalpakstan's poor performances to underpreparation but did not acknowledge that, shortchanged in the national delimitation, they lacked the financial, administrative, and personal resources of Central Asia's historic cultural centers.[169] These republics' marginalization in Central Asian culture, especially when compared to Uzbekistan, would continue throughout the Soviet period and beyond. Even old cultural centers such as Samarkand ended up marginalized at the Olympiad. In its structure and organization, the Olympiad showed that all roads in performance culture now led to Tashkent.

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[168] Rahmanov, Lavrov. "O'zbekistonda musiqa qurulishining navbatdagi masalalari." January 1935 (no. 1), *Sovet Adabiyoti*, p. 100.

[169] Although Tajikistan had earned the status of a Soviet Socialist Republic in 1929, it took shape out of the dregs of the broader Turko-Persianate sedentary space that had once included Bukhara and Samarkand. See "Tajikistan as a Residual Category," from Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan,* pp. 257-290.

The renowned professional performers of Tashkent's theaters rarely harkened from collective farm stock; and in theory, if not in practice, the songs collective farm music circles now performed may have come from the "folk," but only reached them by way of the new intelligentsia in Tashkent. Those intelligentsia remained indebted to "bourgeois" projects of musical public-making. And despite all the rhetoric about their newfound emancipation, Central Asian women who wished to become performers still faced a hard road.

As the 1930s progressed, the Olympiad faded from memory. The campaign for amateur music receded before the national pageantry of the late 1930s, with their Moscow *dekadas* and national operas. Yet the legacy of the Olympiad moment never vanished from Central Asia. Beginning in the early 1930s, the Olympiad shows how Central Asian music became a medium of the Soviet state public, one that integrated collective farmers, urban intellectuals, and even colonials from the Global South into an international proletarian public comprising millions of people like themselves. Modular "national" songs about subbotniks, factories, and farmers would be staples at schools and Houses of Culture for decades to come, and even beyond the Soviet period. All this took place because of the new position of music in the mass media: the radio, the newspaper, and the journal.

Chapter 3

The State Public and the Writers' Union Inner Circle

In March of 1934, the Soviet Writers' Union of Uzbekistan - just two years old - held its first official congress. Oydin Sobirova, one of the most experienced members of the Writers' Union, and its only prominent female member, began her speech with a confession. "In Uzbekistan in particular," she admitted, "there used to be many people who did not know or understand how important literature is. The first reason is that we did not know how to bring literature to the working masses, and, second, we did not know how to connect writers closely to the masses." Despite these failures, Oydin expressed optimism about the future. Her optimism was rooted, not in the "old" writers, distant from the masses; but in the aspiring young writers who filled the lecture hall. It was these writers, Oydin stressed, who would become the "creators of our literature." It was these writers, she said, who would become "engineers of the human soul."[1]

When Oydin called Uzbekistan's writers "engineers of the human soul," she repeated a widely circulated epithet for Soviet writers that had come from the mouth of Stalin himself.[2] The metaphor expressed the Soviet faith in the power of literature to create a New Soviet Person. At the same time, the metaphor held a more concrete meaning. Writing, like engineering, was highly specialized labor that the Party needed to achieve its goals. When the Five-Year Plan called for increased steel production, it required expanded cadres of engineers to design steel mills and mines; when the Party called for increased literary production, it needed greater numbers of writers to compose novels and poems. Oydin heralded the newfound Writers' Union

[1] The Uzbek is *kishi ruhini quraturgan inzhenerlar.* Oydin, "Yutuqlar yana mustahkamlansin," *O'zbekiston Sovet Adabiyoti* 5 (1934): 21.
[2] For a full history of the phrase, see Omri Ronen, "'Inzhenery chelovecheskikh dush': K istorii vyskazyvaniia," in *Poetika Osipa Mandel'shtama*, vol. 1 (Sankt-Peterburg: Giperion, 2002), pp. 164-174.

as the institution to train those young writers — writers that would both come from, and write for the masses, including women, workers, and national minorities. Accordingly, during the 1930s, the Soviet Writers' Union of Uzbekistan devoted unprecedented organizational effort to including Uzbekistan's "masses."

In practice, however, patronage networks and personal pedigree proved much more powerful than the pressures of cultural revolution. In this chapter, I examine how the Soviet Writers' Union of Uzbekistan took shape out of the ashes of the native institutions that had once dominated Central Asian literary culture. In place of the Jadid public sphere, now tarred as counter-revolutionary and anti-Soviet, the Writers' Union was to unite the entirely "writerly public" (*yozuvchilar jamoatchiligi/ pisatel'skaia obshchestvennost'*) around itself. As other scholars have done, I trace a lineage from Uzbekistan's "old intelligentsia," especially the Jadids, through Red Pen, a Communist writers' group with native origins, through the Uzbekistan Association of Proletarian Writers (O'zAPP), and to the Writers' Union of Uzbekistan. Most of this scholarship has accurately presented the formation of the Writers' Union as evidence of increasing state control and ideological hegemony over cultural production.[3] However, in this

[3] Allworth, *Uzbek Literary Politics*, esp. pp. 109-152; Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, esp. 381-83; I Baldauf, "Fostering Uzbek Poetry," p. 201. Allworth, Baldauf, and Khalid are unequivocally negative, foregrounding the homogenizing effect of the establishment of the Writers' Union. The post-independence narrative in Uzbekistan has examined literary production under the Writers' Union as evidence of the national genius, shining forth *despite* pressures from Moscow. See Alimova and Mustafaeva, "Sovet Davrida O'zbekistonda Madaniy-Tarixiy Merosga Munosabat"; Ishankhodzhaeva, *Repressivnaia politika sovetskoi vlasti*; Bakhtier Vakhapovich Khasanov, *Natsional'naia intelligentsiia Uzbekistana i istoricheskie protsessy 1917-nachala 50-x godov* (Doctoral diss., Republic of Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, 2000); Nodira Mustafaeva, *XX Asrda O'zbekistonda madaniyat va tafakkur: tarixshunoslik tahlili* (Tashkent: Navro'z, 2014); Nodira Mustafaeva, "XX asrning 20-30 yillarida O'zbekiston madaniyatining asosiy yo'nalishlari va muammolari davr tarixshunosligida" (Doctoral diss., Republic of Uzbekistan Academy of Sciences, Institute of History, 1999). Naim Karimov also emphasizes the Writers' Union as an illustration of increasing ideological control, although he goes on to acknowledge that many Uzbek writers produced works of "high literary mastery" under its patronage, and that the Writers' Union performed a "great service" in building Uzbek literature. See Karimov, *XX asr adabiyoti manzaralari*, pp. 234-255. Most Soviet-era scholarship presents essentially the same narrative of increasing Party-state control, albeit with a positive rather than a negative tone: the Writers' Union represents a victory for socialism, rather than a loss for the national or free-thinking spirit. See, for example, Z. S. Kedrina and S. Kasymov, *Istoriia uzbekskoi sovetskoi literatury* (Moscow: Nauka; Glav. red. vostochnoi literatury, 1967), p. 94; R. Karimov, *Partiinoe rukovodstvo razvitiem kul'tury Uzbekistana* (Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1982); I. Mirzaev, *Puti razvitiia*

chapter I show another side of the story. Even as the Writers' Union espoused a rhetoric of bringing in the formerly excluded "masses" and promoting socialism, it was consolidating around an inner circle of "specialist" writers in Tashkent. Although most of these writers could identify with one or two of the formerly excluded categories, they also benefited from hidden connections to Soviet pariahs, including those who had been tarred as Jadids. In order to illustrate these subterranean dynamics, I examine the biographies of four major Writers' Union members, each of whom represents a different social dynamic within the Writers' Union. Sadriddin Ayniy represents one way that select Islamic modernists became grandfathered in to the Soviet establishment; Abdulla Qahhor represents a liminal generation, between the Jadids and the Young Communists; and Husayn Shams and Oydin represent the dilemmas of tokenism that followed the representatives of non-elite categories, such as women and workers.[4] In telling this story, I complicate the narrative about the Writers' Union as a mechanism of control over intelligentsia life in Uzbekistan. Instead, I show the ways that the Soviet Writers' Union became an institution that allowed subtle networks of patronage and privilege to persist under the aegis of the state public sphere.[5]

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uzbekskoi realisticheskoi prozy (20-30-e gody) (Tashkent: Fan, 1984), p. 120.

[4] These biographies both support the social-historical analysis I advance here, and provide crucial background for the next chapter, which examines the first three Socialist Realist novels written in Uzbek. Ayniy, Qahhor, and Shams all produced the novels as submissions to a contest calling for long prose works, while Oydin judged the contest.

[5] In making this analysis, I build on a large body of research examining the personal networks that defined Soviet social and political life. J. Arch Getty has argued, for example, that Stalinist "patrimonialism" was a survival of much more ancient political practices in Russia, pointing to the patterns of medieval Muscovy. J. Arch Getty, *Practicing Stalinism: Bolsheviks, Boyars, and the Persistence of Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013). Sheila Fitzpatrick has examined the role of personal networks and patronage, but explains it as a function of the state's monopoly on the apportioning of resources, rather than a primordial Russian cultural heritage. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), especially pp. 62-66, 110-114. Fitzpatrick responds to Getty's approach in Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Whose Person Is He?," *London Review of Books*, March 20, 2014, pp. 27-29. For a useful review of the topic as examined in scholarship from before the new millenium, see Barbara Walker, "Review: (Still) Searching for a Soviet Society: Personalized Political and Economic Ties in Recent Soviet Historiography. A Review Article," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 3 (2001): 631–42.

Jadids: Uzbekistan's Native Intelligentsia

The Jadids cast a long shadow over literary production in Uzbekistan, and a discussion of their role in Central Asian's cultural life provides important context for the development of the Writers' Union. For their activity between scholarship, politics and the arts, Jadids claimed a long lineage stretching back as far as the fifteenth-century politician-cum-scholar-cum-poet Alisher Navoiy, whom Jadids like Fitrat hailed as a founder of the Uzbek literary language.[6] The members of Soviet Central Asia's earliest intellectual organizations were remarkable polymaths, capable of expounding on music theory, gender relations, land reform and historical linguistics alike. Pre-revolutionary Jadid publications were decisively non-specialized: political cartoons appeared alongside poetry, scholarly treatises alongside fiction. In the newspapers they edited, and the societies they shepherded, Jadids began experimenting with literary language form, drawing on Turkic and Persianate antecedents as well as European and Ottoman models. From creative essays to morality plays, Jadid literature served intensely practical ends. For example, one of Abdurrauf Fitrat's best-known pre-Soviet works is the *Tales of an Indian Traveler* (*Bayonot-i Sayyoh-i Hindi*), a fictionalized travelogue in which an Indian Muslim traveler visits Bukhara and is scandalized by the backwardness of its religious practice and everyday life.[7] Theatrical works by writers such as Behbudiy and Abdulla Qodiriy addressed other pressing

[6] For a discussion of Navoiy as both politician and poet, see Maria Eva Subtelny. "A Timurid Educational and Charitable Foundation: The Ikhlāṣiyya Complex of ʿAlī Shīr Navāʾī in 15th-Century Herat and Its Endowment." Journal of the American Oriental Society 111, no. 1 (1991): 38-61. See also the discussion of Navoiy's patronage work in Terry Allen, *Timurid Herat* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1983) and his promotion of music and textiles in Zahriddin Muhammad Babur, *Baburnama*, from *A Century of Princes: Sources On Timurid History and Art,* ed. W. M. Thackston (Cambridge, Mass.: The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, 1989), pp. 247-278.

[7] Abdurrauf Fitrat, "Bayonoti sayyohi hindi." ed. Kholiq Mirzozoda, *Sadoi Sharq,* 1988, no. 6, pp. 12-57. The work was also published in Russian translation: Abdurrauf Fitrat, *Rasskazy indiiskogo puteshestvennika* (Samarkand, 1913); and is available also in Turkish: Abdurrauf Fitrat, *Buhara'da Cedidcilik-Eğitim Reformu: Münazara ve Hind seyyahının Kıssası,* ed. Seyfettin Erşahın (Ankara: Kültür Bayanlığı, 2000).

social issues, including marriage practices and pedagogical philosophy.[8] For this reason, it is nearly impossible to discuss Jadid literature outside the context of the broader Jadid project for cultural reform. Although he explicitly dedicated his *Uzbek Literary Politics* to belles-lettres, it is for good reason that Edward Allworth entitled his chapter on the Jadids "Jadid Educators and Writers."

Generally, the term "intelligentsia" has been used without comment to describe the Jadids and their progeny in Central Asia. Indeed, when Russian-speaking administrators referred to the "intelligentsia" in Central Asia, the Jadids - if not explicitly named - were never far from their discussion.[9] For example, in 1930, a classified report on the "intelligentsia" of Central Asia argued that, excepting former civil servants under the Emir or tsar, anyone who had been educated at a Jadid or Russian native (*tuzemnaia*) school should be considered "intelligentsia." The vast majority of the "intelligentsia" consisted of rural teachers, many of whom would have been trained using Jadid methods. The report noted the outsize role this intelligentsia played in education and cultural life, including the arts, music, and theater, and noted that "proletarian" influence in the arts was still minimal.[10] As a result, the report continued, it was imperative that the intelligentsia be properly trained and mobilized in support of the Soviet cause. In 1933, one participant at a gathering of Communist Party member writers argued that many members of the intelligentsia who had once actively combated Soviet policy were making an effort to adopt a "Soviet platform." The speaker specifically cited only two names, both of them prominent Jadids: Abdurrauf Fitrat and Abdulla Qodiriy.

[8] On Jadid theater, see Allworth, "Modern Turkestanian Theater."
[9] See the use of the term in Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*; Roberts, *Old Elites Under Communism*; Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan;* see also the literature on the topic from Uzbekistan, Ishankhodzhaeva, "Repressivnaia politika sovetskoi vlasti"; Khasanov, "Natsional'naia Intelligentsiia Uzbekistana."
[10] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2455, l. 7.

Despite important ideological differences, the Jadid "intelligentsia" make an instructive comparison with Russia's intelligentsia.[11] In the early Soviet period, large segments of both the Jadids and the Russian intelligentsia found common cause with the Bolsheviks, helping to build new state institutions and promulgating the Bolshevik cause to the masses. Like the Russian intelligentsia, the Jadids operated through technologies that are usually associated with civil society and the public sphere — voluntary associations and the periodical press. Like the Russian intelligentsia, they approached Western Europe with a mix of emulation and envy, and adopted a tutelary role with respect to the peasant and worker "masses." But there was one important difference between Jadids and their Russian intelligentsia counterparts: despite the Jadids' stated interest in technology and science, there were almost no native Central Asian cadres in engineering and technology. As a result, the story about the fate of the Jadids has to do almost exclusively with education and culture.

The story of the Uzbekistan Writers' Union, then, is in large part the story of what happened to the Central Asian native intelligentsia after the purge of the Jadids, as well as the fate of the Jadid public sphere. To be sure, after 1929 the category of "Jadid" became increasingly nebulous. "Jadid," by this time, was less an associational or an ideological category than an epithet that could be applied to anyone who fell afoul of official institutions. Consequently, the official discourse obscured the continued influence of ex-Jadids and the long

[11] The literature on the Russian intelligentsia is vast. For a useful overview of the pre-revolutionary Russian intelligentsia, its contested definition and role, see G. M. Hamburg, "Russian Intelligentsias," in *A History of Russian Thought*, ed. William Leatherbarrow and Derek Offord (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 44–69. Martin Malia has influentially defined the intelligentsia in terms of its emphasis on "ideas over all," thereby identifying the roots of Bolshevism in the intelligentsia; see Martin Malia, "What Is the Intelligentsia?" *Daedalus* 89,3 (1960): 441-458. Others have emphasized the political diversity of the intelligentsia, such as Laura Engelstein in her work on the liberal intelligentsia: Laura Engelstein, *The Keys to Happiness: Sex and the Search for Modernity in Fin-de-Siecle Russia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992). On the intelligentsia's tutelary role with respect to workers and masses, see Engelstein and the work of Reginald Zelnik, including Reginald Zelnik, "'*To The Unaccustomed Eye':* Religion and Irreligion in the Experience of St Petersburg Workers in the 1870s," *Russian History* 16, 2-4 (1989): 297-326. For the early Soviet period, see the definitive Sheila Fitzpatrick.*The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia*. (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1992).

afterlife of their ideas. In this chapter, I argue that although the Jadids were explicitly repudiated, the Uzbekistan Writers' Union carried on the torch from the Jadids in many significant ways — not only did it incorporate some ex-Jadids and many of their students and companions, but also some aspects of their sociability.[12]

At the same time as the Bolsheviks leaned into a discourse of mass legitimation, they relied on the intelligentsia to staff the bureaucracy, produce the press, and organize the institutions of the state public. It is the uniquely Soviet dependence on the intelligentsia, even in an age of mass politics, that has led Michael David-Fox to describe the Soviet condition as an "intelligentsia-statist modernity."[13] As David-Fox has argued, the Soviet intelligentsia engaged in an "internally focused civilizing mission," dedicated to enlightening the backward masses of their own country.[14] At the same time, they responded to a new and uniquely Bolshevik expectation that they would expand their ranks with members of those masses. The intelligentsia, then, were both enlighteners and representatives of the masses. This uneasy dialectic between enlightenment and representation characterized much of Soviet cultural politics in the interwar period.[15] Those who were most prepared to serve as enlighteners — those who had the requisite educational credentials, social connections, and cultural experience — were often least qualified to represent the masses, because they came from elite backgrounds that the Communist Party officially repudiated. Frequently, members of the intelligentsia rewrote their autobiographies in an effort to

[12] In stressing the continuities between 1920s modernism and 1930s Socialist Realism and the Writers' Union, my argument parallels those made about the continuities between Russian modernism and Socialist Realism in Russia. See, for example, Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism;* Petrov, *Automatic for the Masses*.
[13] Michael David-Fox, "The Intelligentsia, the Masses, and the West," in *Crossing Borders,* pp. 48–74.
[14] Ibid.
[15] With respect to Soviet Central Asian literature, Samuel Hodgkin has proposed the term "representation-work" to describe the function of the writings of Soviet Iranian poet Abu'l Qasem Lāhūtī. Hodgkin argues that Soviet authors attempted to "represent" their communities in a mimetic sense, but at the same time positioned themselves as "representatives" (Uzb/ Taj. *vakil*) in the political sense - proxies who *speak for* the public and who can be expected to serve the interests of the masses they represent. See Samuel G. Hodgkin. *Lāhūtī: Persian Poetry in the Making of the Literary International, 1906- 1957*, Ph.D Diss. University of Chicago, Chicago, 2018, chapter 1, "The Personae of a Persianate Modern Subject: Revolutions and Representation-Work,"

portray themselves as legitimate representatives of the masses.[16] Consistently, members of the Soviet intelligentsia foregrounded the less elite elements of their biographies — a worker father, a period of homelessness, an early orphanhood — in an effort to highlight their "mass" background. In the distinct context of Uzbekistan, I argue below, these Bolshevik notions of the relation between the intelligentsia and the masses melded with the Islamic modernist discourse of the Jadids to create a uniquely Central Asian understanding of the intelligentsia.

Well into the 1920s, Jadid literature continued to espouse social critique and religious reform. But as religion became increasingly unacceptable under the Bolsheviks, the Jadids doubled down on an national project.[17] The Chagatay Conversation (*Chig'atoy Gurungi*) is a telling example. An independent discussion circle under the direction of Fitrat, the Chagatay Conversation brought intellectuals together around a shared Turkist project, identifying the roots of Central Asian Turkic culture in medieval heritage of the steppe, especially Timurid literature. The return to Chagatay, the Central Asian Turkic language that was used at the Timurid court - including by Alisher Navoiy - emphasized a distinct Central Asian identity, over and against Ottoman, Tatar, Arab, and Russian counterparts.[18] Toward that end, in their publications and meetings the Chagatay Conversation advocated script reform, historical research, and ethnographic work, as well as literary production. Although banned in 1922, the group cast a long shadow over politics in Uzbekistan, cultural and otherwise. Indeed, as Adeeb Khalid has argued, the Chagatay idea played a major role in the national delimitation of Central Asia's republics.[19] With Fitrat as editor, a literary anthology appeared in 1927, entitled *Examples of the*

[16] On the conventions of Soviet autobiography, see Halfin, *Red Autobiographies;* Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind.*
[17] On the use of the term "national project" when applied to the Jadids, as opposed to the more pejorative "nationalism," see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, p. 16.
[18] See Allworth, *Uzbek Literary Politics,* esp. chapter 5, "The Jadid Spirit in Nationalist Literature," pp. 43-51; see also the discussion in Komatsu, "The Evolution of Group Identity."
[19] For an excellent overview of the group, as well as a case for the Chagatay group's role in the national

Oldest Turkic Literature (*Eng Eski Turk Adabiyot Namunalari*).[20] It was soon followed by a companion volume, *Examples of Uzbek Literature* (*O'zbek Adabiyoti Namunalari*). The volumes contained examples of Turkic oral poetry and written literature, and their publication indicated not only that medieval Central Asian literature should serve as a source for 20th-century Uzbek literary production, but also that the Uzbek nation had deep and enduring roots in the distant past, completely independent of any Russian influence and unencumbered by class distinctions.[21]

Ayniy the Jadid

The early career of Sadriddin Ayniy followed a trajectory that was representative of many Soviet Jadids. His fate in the Writers' Union on the one hand exemplifies the Jadids' ongoing influence, and represents on the other hand an unusual exception to the rule of their overall marginalization [Fig. 3.1]. His biography, consequently, explains the complicated legacy of the Jadids in the Writers' Union of Uzbekistan. Born in 1878 in a village in the Bukharan Emirate, then a vassal state of the Russian Empire, Ayniy enjoyed an upbringing by a literate father. Despite his cultural privilege, Ayniy's social background easily counted as "proletarian" in the early Soviet context - his father was a subsistence farmer who further supported his family through craftsmanship, including millstone-making. When Ayniy was six years old, his parents placed him in a local *maktab*, or old-style school. Later in life, Ayniy would decry the rote instruction and archaic texts he encountered at that school. In fact, Ayniy claimed, when his father found out he was as illiterate after a year in the *maktab* as he was when he had started,

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delimitation, see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, pp. 258-290.

[20] Abdurrauf Fitrat. *Eng Eski Turk Adabiyot Namunalari.* Samarkand/ Tashkent: UzGIZ, 1927; Abdurrauf Fitrat, *Uzbek Adabieti Namunalari, 1-Zhild*, ed. Orzigul Hamroeva and Hamidulla Boltaboev. Toshkent: Mumtoz So'z, 2013. For further discussion of the latter anthology, see Allworth 1964, pp. 52-56.

[21] On the transformation of discourses about the "nation" in Fitrat's early work, see Adeeb Khalid. "Nationalizing the Revolution in Central Asia: The Transformation of Jadidism, 1917-1920." From *A State of Nations: Empire and Nation-Making in the Age of Lenin and Stalin*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny and Terry Martin. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Ayniy's parents made the unconventional decision to enroll him in a small school for girls run by a local woman, or *otin*.[22] Ayniy's elder brother enrolled in a *madrasa* in Bukhara, and Ayniy also aspired to a higher education in that city. These ambitions would stall temporarily when Ayniy was orphaned as a preteen, but he managed to fund his education by working hard during school vacations. Eventually, Ayniy was able to complete his education through the patronage of a Bukharan merchant.[23]

[22] On *otins*, see Kamp 2006, pp. 77-83.

[23] Much of our information on Ayniy's early life comes from the memoirs he first published between 1949-54: Sadriddin Ainī. *Eddoshtho*, vol. 1 (Stalinabad: Nashrieti davlatii Tojikiston, 1949). They are available in translation as Sadriddin Aini. *The Sands of Oxus: Boyhood Reminiscences of Sadriddin Aini*, trans. John R. Perry and Rachel Lehr (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1998). This text is a rare source on old-method education in Central Asia, but must be read with some skepticism, as it is obviously tinted by the Soviet preoccupations he acquired later in life. In constructing Ayniy's biography, I have also drawn on I.S. Braginskii, *Problemy Tvorchestva Sadriddina Aini* (Dushanbe: Irfon, 1974); Matyoqub Qo'shjonov, *Ayniy Badiiyatining Evolyutsiyasi* (Tashkent: Fan, 1988); Z. Radzhabov, *Sadriddin Aini - Istorik Tadzhikskogo Naroda* (Stalinabad: Tadzhikgosizdat, 1951); N. Rahimov, *Sadriddin Ayniy: Tanqidiy-Biografik Ocherk* (Tashkent: O'zSSR Fanlar Akademiyasi Nashriyoti, 1984); A. Rakhmatullaev, *Proza Aini* (Dushanbe: Irfon, 1970); and Sokhib Tabarov. *Sadriddin Aini - Osnovopolozhnik Tadzhikskoi Sovetskoi Literatury (k 90-Letiiu so Dnia Rozhdeniia)* (Moscow: Znanie, 1968); John Perry, "Ayni, Sadriddin," in *Supplement to the Modern Encyclopedia of Russian, Soviet, and Eurasian History*, Vol. 3, ed. Edward J. Lazzerini (Louisville, KY: Academic International Press, 2001).

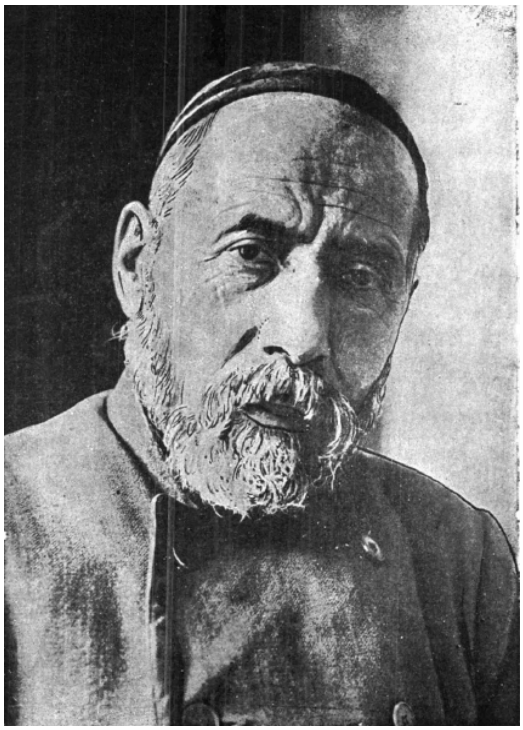

Fig. 3.1
Sadriddin Ayniy, 1934.
SOURCE: Sadriddin Ayniy, *Qullar* (Tashkent: O'zdavnashr, 1935), frontispiece.

As a young man, Ayniy joined forces with the Jadid reformers of Bukhara. He engaged deeply with the writings of Ahmad Donish, a prominent Bukharan intellectual.[24] He published extensively in local newspapers, read widely in *Terjüman* and *Mulla Nasreddin*, and generally espoused the same commitment to educational reform, technological advancement, and anti-despotic resistance as his fellow Jadids. In 1917, Ayniy joined a Jadid coalition calling itself the "Young Bukharans" in an abortive attempt to overthrow the Bukharan Emir with support from a Russian Red Army commander. In response, Ayniy and many of his collaborators were

[24] It is largely due to Ayniy's exuberant discussion of Donish that he is perceived to be a founding figure in the Jadid movement. Khalid argues that this is an overstatement; see Khalid 1998, pp. 101-102.

imprisoned and severely beaten in the Emir's palace.[25] Deep into the Soviet period, the scars he bore on his back served to prove his credibility as a revolutionary [Fig. 3.2].

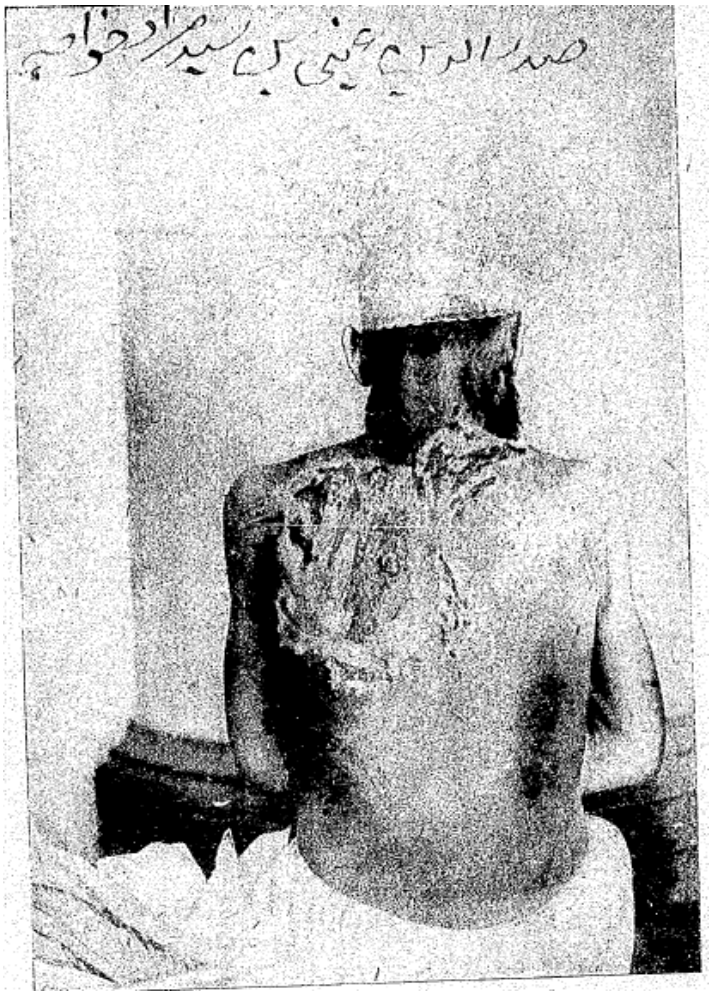

Fig. 3.2
Sadriddin Ayniy's scars, as pictured in the frontmatter for his *Samples of Tajik Literature*
SOURCE: Ainī, Sadriddin. *Namūnah-i 'adabīyāt-i tājīk*. Moscow: Nashrīyāt-i markazī-'i khalq-i Ittiḥādi Jamāhīr-i Shūravī-'i Sūsiyālīstī, 1926, p. v.

When the Red Army finally did gain control of Bukhara, many Young Bukharans, Ayniy among them, joined forces with the Communists. Pushed out of Bukhara after his imprisonment

[25] For a full description of this episode, see Khalid 2016, pp. 62-65.

there, Ayniy continued to publish extensively from Tashkent and Samarkand, producing pro-Communist articles in both Turkic and Persian for Soviet leaflets and newspapers.[26] After the Bukharan People's Socialist Republic triumphed in his hometown, Ayniy briefly held a position in its Central Executive Committee, but ultimately settled in Samarkand, where he held a variety of positions in education and government, all the while continuing to write. His first long work of prose fiction, a novella relating the plight of a Tajik villager, appeared in 1924 under the title *The story of a poor Tajik, or, Odina*. Ayniy would live out the rest of his days in Samarkand, which became part of Uzbekistan. In the period that concerns us in this chapter, Ayniy easily straddled the then-porous Uzbek and Tajik spheres, publishing widely in both languages and taking leadership positions in both Uzbek and Tajik republican institutions. Nevertheless, he gained a lasting reputation as touchstone of Tajik literature and culture, and in the long term, his contribution to Uzbek letters has largely been forgotten.[27]

The political and cultural views Ayniy publicly espoused changed dramatically during the course of his career, but several of his earliest intellectual dispositions withstood the test of time. Like many Jadids, for example, in his early career Ayniy believed Islam to a crucial unifying force for the diverse peoples of the "East." If they managed to overcome their other, significant differences, Ayniy believed that all Muslims could unite around a shared cultural progress against the cultural onslaught of the colonizing West. In a letter composed during the WWI siege of Edirne, for example, Ayniy wrote, "The unbelievers are united in their attempts to destroy the

[26] For a thorough, year-by-year discussion of Ayniy's publication record and professional activity, see Kholida Aini, *Zhizn' Sadriddina Aini: kratkii khronologicheskii ocherk*, ed. Iurii Stepanovich Mal'tsev (Dushanbe: Izd-vo "Donish," 1982).

[27] Once the distinction between Uzbeks and Tajiks had been solidified in a republican level, there was little place for hybrid individuals like Ayniy in the canon of either literature. As a result, the Uzbek scholarly establishment effectively ceded Ayniy to the Tajik national canon. For one rare exception to this trend, see Koshchanov, Matiakub. "Pisatel' dvukh literatur." In *Shchedrost' talanta: stat'i ob uzbekskoi literature* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1980), pp. 51-71.

Muslim world."[28] In a 1909 poem, he denounced the animosity between Shiites and Sunnis as a regressive force for the entire people.[29]

With the triumph of the Red Army, even as openly religious language gradually became unacceptable, Ayniy's commitment to "self-strengthening" for the populations of Central Asia and the Middle East remained a driving motif in his writings. This commitment transcended the linguistic boundaries that, under Stalin, would become calcified as national delineations. In the period covered by this chapter, Ayniy would see the Jadids denounced, Tajikistan created as a separate republic, and proletarianism upheld as the primary criterion for Soviet literature. When they acknowledge Ayniy's early Muslim nationalism, some Soviet scholars have described Ayniy's changing stances as a conversion.[30] According to them, Ayniy's exposure to Soviet ideology helped him realize his religious superstition and lack of class consciousness. Others have ignored the early Muslim nationalism, representing him primarily as a champion of the Tajik people from the very beginning.[31] More cynical observers might explain Ayniy's changed stances as a capitulation to political realities.

Instead of emphasizing discontinuity in Ayniy's life and thought, or back-projecting the national principle that defined his late career, I will instead stress continuity. Even as Ayniy's perspective on the charged categories of language, nation, and class changed in the new context, he remained stalwart in a belief that the Turkic and Persian-speaking peoples of Central Asia could and should unite around a common progressive cause, be it an Islamic modernist project or socialist construction. Ayniy never became one of the main faces of ethno-nationalism in

[28] Cited in Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, p. 196.
[29] The poem was entitled "On the Shi'i-Sunni Tragedy," and is discussed in Braginskii, *Aini,* p. 71.
[30] For example, one of the most prominent Soviet scholars of Sadriddin Ayniy states, "It was as if Sadriddin Ayniy lived two lives," arguing that only a man of great talent and moral strength could transition "from the Middle Ages to socialism," from a *mudarris* (madrasa professor) to a "true revolutionary." Braginskii, *Problemy*, pp. 14-15.
[31] See, for example, see Radzhabov, *Sadriddin Aini;* Tabarov, *Sadriddin Aini.*

Uzbekistan; he successfully translated his commitment to self-strengthening into a language that helped him avert the lethal accusation of "bourgeois nationalism." In the contingent moment of the mid-1930s, as we shall see in the next chapter, this uneasy synthesis even became acceptable as an expression of Socialist Realism in the form of Ayniy's pathbreaking novel, *Slaves*.

Proletarianizing the National Intelligentsia: Red Pen and the Proletarian Writers

During the first Soviet decade, the Jadids dominated cultural policy in Central Asia. In the late 1920s, however, the diffuse organization of Soviet Uzbek letters began to change. Beginning in 1925, the generation Adeeb Khalid terms the "Young Communists" began to displace the earlier generations of Muslim clerics and Jadid intellectuals that had defined cultural affairs in the early 1920s.[32] Often, the Young Communists harkened from less elite backgrounds than their predecessors. When this new generation of cultural activists spoke of the public sphere, they spoke in terms that explicitly challenged what they perceived to be the Jadids' elitism. While Jadids were attacked as nationalists, the new generation espoused internationalism. While Jadids were denounced for marginalizing women, the Young Communists defended greater inclusion for women. Not coincidentally, their ascent corresponded with the 1927 rollout of the "Attack" on women's oppression. Class enemies - *boys*, clergy, landowners - were the oppressors of women, and it followed that women were therefore allies of the proletariat.

Because of the Young Communists' later accession to power in Uzbekistan, proletarian literary societies were much slower to take root in Central Asia than in Moscow. A Tashkent Association of Proletarian Writers' (TAPP) had formed in 1923 in imitation of the Moscow-based Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP), but the Uzbek-language section of

[32] Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, p. 173.

TAPP, directed by a teenaged Sotti Husayn, remained largely inactive.[33] For the remainder of the decade, TAPP was overwhelmingly dominated by Russian-speakers - so much so, in fact, that by 1931 it was attacked as a hotbed of Great Russian chauvinism.[34] In 1926 in Samarkand, then the capital of Uzbekistan, a group of Young Communists announced the creation of a new literary society, Red Pen (*Qizil Qalam*), under the leadership of Shokir Sulaymon. Sister chapters soon opened in Ferghana and Namangan.[35]

At first, Red Pen did not attempt to exclude the old-guard Jadids. Cho'lpon and Fitrat still held prominent positions in the literary pantheon, and still inspired open imitation among their proteges.[36] Jadid literature, after all, was the best available model for Uzbek writing. In modernist poetry, in prose narrative, in the essay form, their experience was irreplaceable. One early review of Red Pen's ephemeral journal expressed the mood of cautious acceptance toward the Jadid legacy. On the one hand, the reviewer, Tohiriy, welcomed Red Pen's turn away from the "hopelessness and pessimism" of previous literature, which had been dominated by the Jadids.[37] It welcomed the publication's newfound emphasis on the short story (*hikoya*), although it argued that young writers needed to stop taking their cues from "old" short stories, with their extended introductions and verbose, self-referential descriptions. At the same time, it recognized that the group's young writers could have benefited from better mentorship from their elders, and

[33] In 1928, TAPP was replaced by a chapter of SAPP, or the Central Asian Association of Proletarian Writers, but this seems to have entailed little structural or ideological reorganization. See Karimov, p. 250.
[34] Umarjon Ismailov. "Proletariat adabiyoti hegemoniyasi uchun," *QU* 1931:4:13, p. 3. This complicates Adeeb Khalid's claim that Russians were accused only of "nationally unmarked political sins." See Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, p. 319.
[35] N. Karimov, *XX asr adabiyoti*, p. 247. Red Pen existed also in Azerbaijan, where it was established at the instigation of the Council for Propaganda that was established at the Congress for the Peoples of the East. It is likely that the Uzbekistan chapter of Red Pen opened in imitation of that chapter, although I have found no evidence that Uzbekistan's Red Pen was established under state tutelage. For a discussion of the literary production of Red Pen in Azerbaijan, see Chapter 4, "Broken Verse: The Materiality of the Symbol in New Turkic Poetics," in Leah Feldman, *On the Threshold of Eurasia: Revolutionary Poetics in the Caucasus* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018), pp. 176-207.
[36] See, for example, the roster given by Ishankhodzhaeva, *Repressivnaia politika*, p. 237.
[37] The reference is to the critical tone of much Jadid literature, especially prose. The implication is that in an age of socialist construction, critique is not enough: it is imperative also to laud the successes of the revolution.

called for it to establish separate sections for experienced and young writers, in order to facilitate mentorship.[38]

Although Red Pen heralded a new era of consolidation at the republican level, the institutional base of literary production remained diffuse. Membership in Red Pen did not exclude membership in other literary or intellectual organizations. Parallel to Red Pen, several Uzbek cities also hosted prominent literary circles, often organized around institutions of higher education or regional publications. Most notable among these were the literary circles formed around *New Ferghana (Yangi Farg'ona)* newspaper, the regional newspaper for the Ferghana valley, and based in Kokand; and the literary circle formed around *Young Leninist (Yosh Leninchi),* initially in Samarkand but later moved to Tashkent.[39] Involvement in literary affairs in the early 1920s had become a liability because of the association with Jadidism. Meanwhile, the youthful latecomers at *New Ferghana* and *Young Leninist* took on the mantle of proletarian literature. Many members of Red Pen were also members or even leaders in these other literary circles, and Red Pen membership was far from necessary for a successful literary career. Furthermore, despite the polarizing rhetoric, in practical terms the boundaries between ex-Jadids and Bolsheviks remained fluid.

But Red Pen did not remain so pluralistic for long. In 1928, 24-year-old poet Botu, an active Red Pen member, expressed the mood of disequilibrium in an article for *The Flame (Alanga)*, the official magazine for propagating the new Latin script, and a major literary publication in the absence of a dedicated literature journal. Full of contradictions, Botu's article

[38] Tohiriy, "Qizil Qalam majmuasi to'grisida," *Maorif va o'qituvchi*, 1929 (no. 9-10), pp. 12-13. The publications of Red Pen are very difficult, if not impossible to access. They appear to have been destroyed after Red Pen was repudiated, and are no longer held at post-Soviet libraries. However, some of the writings of Red Pen were republished elsewhere; see, for example, the satirical poem mocking dispossed kulaks: "Qochoqlar," *Yosh Leninchi*, Oct. 22, 1930, p. 4.
[39] Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, pp. 331-332.

claimed that the Jadids were a mouthpiece for the wealthy (*boy*) class and relics of "feudalism." At the same time, Botu argued that some Jadids, such as the Chagatay Group of which he had once been a member, had spurned the most regressive wing of the Jadids and fostered a promising "proletarian" agenda. To many young writers of Red Pen, desperately in search of guidance, the Jadids were both feudal relics and proletarian vanguard, literary mentors and false guides.[40] Surely, for writers like Botu who had grown up under Jadid tutelage, it would have been difficult entirely to spurn all their literary forefathers. By spring 1929, the Division for Agitprop and the Press (APPO), which was staffed predominantly by Europeans, initiated an investigation into Red Pen.[41] In the fall, the first rumblings of lasting reorganization began — the APPO removed Shokir Sulaymon as director and appointed a new organizational bureau for Red Pen, incorporating more tractable Young Communists.[42] This transition marked a new moment of Party control and European intervention in Central Asian letters. At the same time, it created the opportunity for a new kind of local self-organization under the auspices of Party-supported institutions, one that would culminate in the mid-1930s in the official Writers' Union.

[40] Botu, "O'zbek adabiyotining oktabr inqilobidan so'nggi davriga bir qarash,"*Alanga* 1928, no. 10-11.
[41] Concerns were raised first in April 1929, and the issue was deferred to a later meeting. In June, a commission of three men with Muslim names was delegated to investigate Qizil Qalam. One is called Urazaev in the archival record; it is unclear, but possible, that this is the writer O'razay. The identity of the others is also unclear. The APPO as a whole comprised mostly individuals of European background. See RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2007, ll. 34, 45, 45 ob.
[42] Organizational bureau members included Ziyo Said, Uyg'un, Robita Akhmedzhanova, Botu, O'razay, Shokir Suleymon, Oltoy, Hamid Olimjon, and Ilhomjon. See RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2007, l.58 ob.

Abdulla Qahhor: Between Jadid and Proletarian

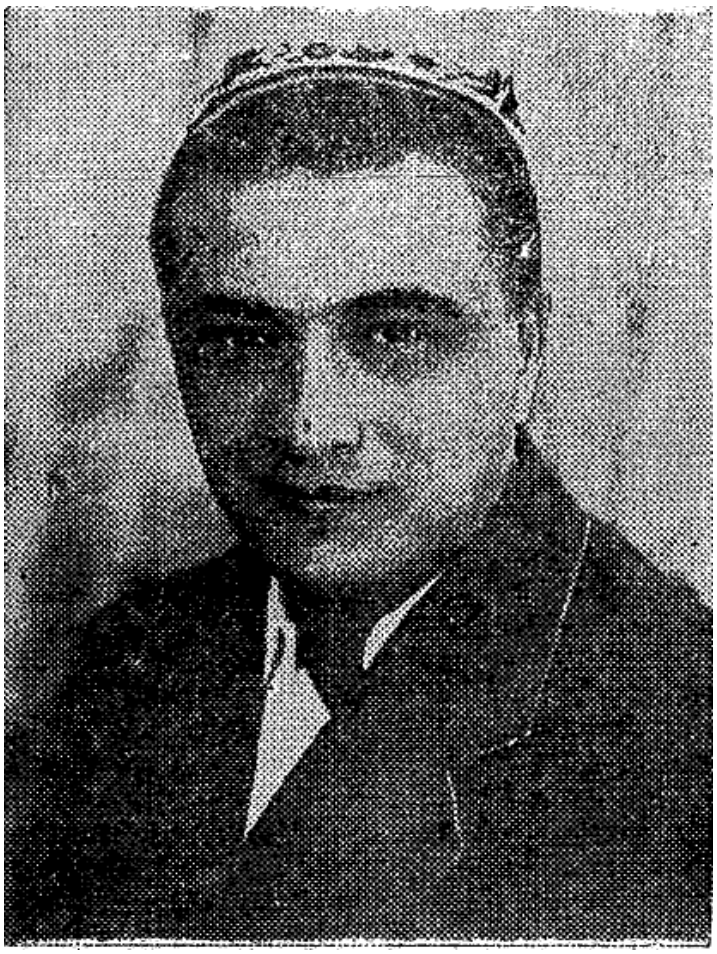

Fig. 3.3
Abdulla Qahhor.
SOURCE: *Sovet Adabiyoti* no. 10, 1935, p. 70.

Abdulla Qahhor [Fig. 3.3] was one young writer to get his start in this rapidly changing climate. Born in 1907, Qahhor represented a liminal generation of Soviet writers, one that benefited from education in Jadid schools but was young enough to grow up Soviet. His trajectory from the unofficial public sphere of the late 1920s to the state public in the 1930s exemplifies the hidden background of many writers that landed in the Writers' Union of Uzbekistan.

Qahhor was the sole surviving son of a blacksmith's family in the Ferghana Valley. Qahhor learned to read at an early age from his father.[43] Like Ayniy, Qahhor attended lessons at the home of a local female instructor. After 1917, Qahhor entered a Jadid school in the town of Oqqo'rg'on taught by Muhammadjon Qori, whom he later called an "open-minded fellow.[44]" When his father moved to Kokand, soon to enlist in the Red Army, Qahhor entered the Soviet school there. The first books he read were works of classical Turkic and Persian poetry, and the first contemporary texts he encountered, most likely at the Jadid school, were the poetry of Jadids Abdulla Avloniy and Tavallo. At the House of Knowledge (*Bilim Yurti*) in Kokand, where he matriculated in approximately 1923, he frequently associated with the Jadid luminati Cho'lpon and Rafiq Mumin, and even met soon-to-be martyr for the Soviet cause Hamza Hakimzoda.[45] It was only as a late teenager that he began to learn Russian, and even later that he gained any extensive familiarity with the works of Chekhov, Gogol, and Gorky that would provide models for his later works. Although so little acquainted with Russian revolutionary thought or literature, Qahhor joined local Soviet institutions as soon as they were formed. In later life, Qahhor represented the Bolshevik ascendancy as a personal coming-of-age. When the Red Army finally gained control of Kokand in 1920, he claims, "That week my voice broke. I was beside myself with joy."[46]

Qahhor thus represented a transitional generation of Uzbek intellectuals. Trained as a young adolescent in Jadid institutions, he moved smoothly on to Komsomol activism and Bolshevik institutions, where he made his first professional endeavors. Qahhor began his literary

[43] Qahhor's father claimed he had learned to read "in a dream." See Abdulla Qahhor. "Ozgina o'zim haqimda." From Ozod Sharafiddinov, *Abdulla Qahhor. Adabiy va ijodiy faoliyati haqida lavhalar* (Toshkent: Yosh Gvardiya, 1988), pp. 249-255.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid. For more detail on the Houses of Knowledge and their activities, see Kamp 2006, pp. 86-88 and p. 293. On Hamza's career in the 1920s, see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan,* pp. 189-90.
[46] Qahhor, *Tanlangan Asarlar* (2016), vol. 1, p. 224.

career with feuilletons and satirical verse on backwardness in religion and everyday life. Although he later represented these as "anti-religious" works, they stand squarely in the tradition of Islamic reform-minded satire, such as the works that appeared in Azerbaijan under the auspices of *Mulla Nasreddin*. Importantly, for such satirical works, as for most Jadid literature, the categories of "fiction" and "non-fiction" were completely irrelevant. Some satirical works lampooned general trends, while others - especially feuilletons - addressed individuals so directly that any local reader would know the topic immediately. Qahhor's publications in the Uzbek analogue to *Mulla Nasreddin*, *The Fist* (*Mushtum*), as well as short works in women's journal *New Way (Yangi Yo'l)*, distinguished him enough to earn him an invited position with *Red Uzbekistan* in Tashkent, beginning in 1925. While in Tashkent, Qahhor earned a degree from the Eastern Faculty of the Central Asian Communist University, and in fall 1929 transferred to a position as responsible secretary and editor of the satirical column, "Cotton Gin" ("Chig'iriq"), at *New Ferghana* newspaper.[47]

1929 was a tense moment in the Ferghana Valley. The struggle for Bolshevik control there had been long and bloody, and local resentments were stoked again by the increasingly interventionist Soviet policies of the late 1920s - especially the launch of land reform in 1925, the Hujum in 1927, and the inauguration of Stalin's First Five-Year Plan in 1928. In August 1928, an active correspondent for *New Ferghana* was killed with his wife by opponents of the Bolsheviks.[48] Another Communist activist, G'ani, was murdered in December of the same year, and in March 1929, Qahhor's old mentor Hamza was killed by a mob while attempting to

[47] I have been unable to determine whether Qahhor ever became a member of O'zAPP. For a more extensive discussion of Qahhor's early publications, see N. Iakubov, *Publitsisticheskaia Deiatel'nost' Abdully Kakhkhara: Avtoreferat Dissertatsii* (Doctoral diss., TashGU, 1970); and V. Smirnova, "Abdulla Kakhkhar Iz Ferganskoi Doliny," *Druzhba Narodov*, no. 7 (1963): 258–68.
[48] Kh. B. Begmatov. "K Voprosu O Roli Pechati v Osushchestvlenii Kul'turnoi Revoliutsii v Uzbekistane," *Trudy Samarkandskogo Gosudarstvennogo Universiteta Im. A. Navoi* (no. 121), 1963, p. 60.

confiscate and convert a much-venerated Ferghana Valley Sufi shrine, Shohimardon, into a resort for Soviet workers.[49] In this tense climate, Qahhor drastically revamped *Cotton Gin*, increasing the proportion of prose feuilletons to verse, and changing the layout of the section.[50] The shift to prose not only reflected Qahhor's personal preference — it showed a shift from his earlier models, and a new orientation toward Russian prose literature. In these earliest works, he drew most on the literature that Soviet critics would later dub "critical realism": the tragic short stories of Chekhov and the absurdist satire of Gogol. During this time, Qahhor also made and remade connections with local intellectuals, including his old mentor Cho'lpon, and Young Communist Botu, who frequently came to stay in Kokand.

Qahhor was linked not only to individual Jadids or Jadid schools, but also to the institutions of the Jadid public sphere. Most significantly, Qahhor joined a *gap* affiliated with former Jadids soon after his arrival in Kokand. At its most basic, *gap* simply means "talk" or "discussion." However, a *gap* also denotes a social gathering for men, usually held in an individual's home, and often dedicated to the discussion of an agreed-upon topic. *Gap* literally means "talk," and *gaps* typically involved men in the same trade or from the same neighborhood. For the Jadids, the *gap* became a type of *salon*, in which members debated cultural and political issues. These "modern" gaps, as Khalid calls them, became hubs for a shared Jadid discourse; before the Revolution, Qahhor's teacher, Munavvar Qori, led a large and influential *gap* in Tashkent.[51]

[49] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 1815, ll. 41-41 ob. For a full account of the "martyrdom" of Hamza, see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, pp. 351-352.
[50] Iakubov, *Publitsisticheskaia deiatel'nost'*, p. 10.
[51] My discussion of pre-revolutionary *gaps* draws on Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, pp. 96, 123. However, much more remains to be understood about this institution of Central Asian social life, which exists to this day.

Qahhor's uneasy combination of Bolshevik activism and Jadid-style discourse and sociability did not last long. In January 1930, he was arrested along with the other members of his *gap* for conspiring against Soviet power. The OGPU claimed the *gap* had a name — the "Brave Debaters" (*Botir Gapchilar*) — and an agenda to overthrow Soviet "colonial" hegemony and establish an independent state based in the Ferghana valley.[52] In the denunciations that accompanied this purge, the Kokand branch of Red Pen was explicitly connected with the *New Ferghana "*conspiracy.[53]" Importantly, the OGPU's discussion of the group indicates that it was not exclusively an ethno-nationalist project — the secret police report indicates that participants spoke in terms of "Europeans" or "Russians," who were variously opposed to the interests of "Uzbekistan," as well as those of "Uzbeks" and "Turks." Qahhor himself was booked as a Tajik, and later archival documents indicate his wife was a Tatar[54]. According to the report, *gap* participants even used some "class" language directly from the Soviet playbook, arguing that Soviet agendas were destructive to the "wide peasant masses."[55] The *gap* was ultimately denounced as a "bourgeois nationalist" conspiracy, but in reality, it appears to have actually been a relic of the Jadid societies, and its discourse little more than a continuation of the anti-colonial rhetoric that had been tolerated in post-revolutionary Turkestan less than ten years before.[56]

There is no indication the so-called "Brave Debaters" actually had any intention to carry out an uprising, or that they had the organizational capacity to do so. Most likely, they simply

[52] *Gapchi* denotes a "discusser" or "debater," or a participant in a *gap*. RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2199, ll. 2-14. This was not the only *gap* that was shut down at this moment — the employees of Narkompros in Uzbekistan were also said to have sponsored a counter-revolutionar *gap* of their own, named G'ayratlilar Uyushmasi. The "conspiracy" is also discussed in Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, pp. 374-78.
[53] "O'zbekistondagi butun proletar, sho'ra yozuvchi, adib, shoirlariga va rabochi, batrak, kambag'al kolxozchi muxbirlarga," *Alanga* 1930, no. 7-8, p. 8.
[54] This complicates Qahhor's later legacy as a founder of "Uzbek" literature, and is therefore rarely, if ever, noticed in the Uzbek-language scholarship on him. See O'zMDA, f. 2356, op. 1, d. 28, p. 4.
[55] "O'zbekistondagi butun proletar, sho'ra yozuvchi, adib, shoirlariga va rabochi, batrak, kambag'al kolxozchi muxbirlarga," *Alanga* 1930:7-8, p. 4.
[56] On anti-colonialism in the early revolutionary years, see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, pp. 102-112.

gathered to complain about the most destructive of Soviet policies.[57] But the *New Ferghana* purge was just part of a major Party-sponsored operation to ferret out supposed anti-Soviet conspiracies throughout Uzbekistan, particularly in courts and education institutions.[58] European Party bureaucrats, paranoid about counter-revolutionary activities among non-Russians, appear to have been major initiators for these arrests. Many former Jadids were taken into custody and almost all were thoroughly denounced in the press. The majority of those arrested in the purge did not outlast the year — many were shot after being deported to Moscow — but Qahhor was released under mysterious circumstances, and permitted to return to his journalistic work under the auspices of a reorganized literary establishment. Qahhor's formative experience in the *gap* around *New Ferghana*, and his narrow escape in the purge that followed, would comprise the kernel of the novel he submitted to the Writers' Union competition. The critical disposition he developed in this period also never left him, though as we shall see in the next chapter, by the mid-1930s this disposition made it difficult for him to fulfill the positive demands of Socialist Realism.

Red Pen Purged

In the context of the 1930 purge, the uneasily tolerant tone of Red Pen turned vastly less tolerant. In *The Flame*'s final issue of 1930, everything came apart in the open. A series of articles about the state of contemporary Uzbek literature argued that what had seemed like

[57] This view is shared by Khalid; see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, p. 374.
[58] As Adeeb Khalid notes, this purge followed a "script" that played out in most Soviet national republics in the same year. In fact, when it was denounced, Red Pen was explicitly associated with supposedly parallel organizations in, for example, Belarus (see Alexandrovich, "Proletariat adabiyotining gegemoniyasi uchun," *Qizil O'zbekiston*, April 12, 1931, p. 3.). There is no reason to believe there was any organized anti-Soviet resistance left in 1930, let alone a fully mobilized conspiracy to overthrow the government. But it is perfectly plausible that, in private, the Brave Debaters did indeed articulate some of the anti-Soviet sentiments they were accused of harboring: critiques of land reform and the cotton monoculture, or speculations that Moscow was effectively colonizing Central Asia for its cotton revenues. For a more extensive treatment of the purge, see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan,* pp. 373-378.

polyphony was really dissonance. The bogeymen of pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism had riled good Communists for some time, but now even good Communists were accused of being secret counter-revolutionaries. Some — Fitrat, Cho'lpon — were perpetrators of "right opportunism"; others, including young writers like Hamid Olimjon and Mirtemir, were accused of "left opportunism." All were susceptible to being fronts for the plots of bourgeois nationalists: right opportunists for not being radical enough, and left opportunists for scaring Uzbeks away from the Soviet cause by being *too* radical.[59] By far the worst offender was Red Pen. As it turned out, *The Flame*'s articles emphasized, Red Pen was an attempt to garb the nationalist wolf in proletarian clothing. Seemingly benign comments — about what to name the organization, about precisely how harshly to censure Jadids like Cho'lpon – became clues indicating secret sympathies with counter-revolutionary agendas. The issue included an extended address to "all proletarian, Soviet writers, literatteurs, and poets, as well as worker, hired day laborer (*batrak*), and poor collective farmer correspondents," entitled, "for the purity of proletarian thought," and signed by prominent Young Communist writers including Ziyo Said, Sobira Holdarova, and Sotti Husayn.[60] It denounced Red Pen for its failure to make inroads among workers and day laborers. In the collapse of Red Pen, there seems also to have been an element of regional conflict: in 1931, defending himself before the Central Asian Bureau's Cultural Propaganda division, Sotti Husayn would claim that the Samarkand circle, in particular, was to blame for Red Pen's counter-revolutionary tendencies.[61]

No matter what the precise source of the conflict, Red Pen was no more, as were all literary associations of Central Asian origin. For, most importantly, after denouncing Red Pen,

[59] Otajon Hoshim, "O'zbek proletariat adabiyoti uchun kurashmoq kerak," *Alanga* 1930, no. 7-8, pp. 30-34.
[60] See, for example, the discussion in "O'zbekistondagi butun proletar, sho'ra yozuvchi, adib, shoirlariga va rabochi, batrak, kambag'al kolxozchi muxbirlarga," *Alanga* 1930, no. 7-8, pp. 7-9.
[61] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2703, l. 18. On regional identity in Soviet Uzbek politics, see Donald S. Carlisle, "The Uzbek Power Elite: Politburo and Secretariat (1938–83)," *Central Asian Survey* 5, no. 3/4 (January 1986): 91.

The Flame's manifesto announced the creation of an Uzbekistan Association of Proletarian Writers (O'zAPP), along the lines of its Russian counterpart. The nomenclature was crucial, since, according to the authors, previous efforts to establish an *Uzbek* Association of Proletarian Writers manifested obvious nationalist tendencies. There were some surprises among those who remained in O'zAPP. Fitrat had been roundly denounced, but he survived and would remain prominent among literary circles into the mid-1930s.[62] A few writers, both Jadids and Young Communists, were decisive *personae non gratae* from now on- Cho'lpon, Botu, and Mannon Ramzi, in particular, appeared without fail. Others who had been criticized, but spared from the purge, attempted to redeem themselves with strident attacks on those less fortunate. In *Young Leninist* during early April 1931, building up to O'zAPP's first and only convention, the tone was particularly panicked. Mirtemir published a poem, "The Alarm," that mentioned Ramzi and Botu by name, and featured an ominous singsongy refrain: "GPU/ GPU/ It is the will of our eyes/ The arm of the Bolsheviks!"[63] In the same issue, Hamid Olimjon responded to criticisms from fellow writer Shokir Sulaymon in an essay entitled, "I am first a Komsomol member, and only then a poet!"[64] Like Mirtemir, he attempted to distance himself from acknowledged nationalists, vowing that he was rectifying all his past mistakes through self-criticism. In addition to incorporating already-prominent authors, two of the main resolutions made at O'zAPP's first and only congress involved affirmative action for proletarians: organizing literary circles at collective farms, and electing nineteen factory workers to official membership in O'zAPP.[65]

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[62] Although Fitrat appeared in press denunciations, and many authors attempted to publicly distance himself from him, Fitrat continued to hold positions of authority in the Soviet Writers' Union once it was established. His publication volume, however, reduced drastically during the early 1930s, although an increasing number of his writings appeared in the Tajik press, in Tajik. On Fitrat's "pivot to Tajik," see Hodgkin, "Lāhūtī," pp. 154-55.
[63] The GPU is the Soviet secret police. Mirtemir, "Bong," *Yosh Leninchi*, April 6, 1931, p. 3.
[64] Hamid Olimjon, "Men eng avval Komsomol, keyin shoirman!" *Yosh Leninchi*, April 6, 1931, p. 3.
[65] "Kengashma yopildi" and "Proletariat adabiyoti kurash maydonlarida tug'ilmoqda," *Qizil O'zbekiston,* April 14, 1931, p. 4.

Unlike many of his prominent Jadid peers, Ayniy appears to have made it through this purge relatively unscathed. Perhaps, as Khalid suggests, this had something to do with the difficulty in tarring Ayniy as a "bourgeois nationalist" due to his status as a minority Tajik in Uzbekistan.[66] In the late 1920s, many of Ayniy's colleagues in Uzbekistan, such as those in the Chagatay Group, were exploring the Turkic heritage of Central Asia, laying themselves open to charges of pan-Turkism. In the meantime, Ayniy was making a reputation for himself as spokesman for the Tajik nation, especially for its literary tradition. In 1926, before Tajikistan had even been granted the status of a Soviet Socialist Republic (it remained, until 1929, an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in Uzbekistan), Ayniy was commissioned to produce an anthology of Tajik literature, beginning from the Samanids and continuing to Soviet times. The collection of Tajik "literature" represented the general polymathy of late Jadid writings. For example, it included excerpts from the works of Avicenna, best known for his contributions to medicine. Most important, however, was the book's national project. It audaciously attempted to carve out a space for "Tajik" literature as distinguished from broader Persianate and Islamicate canons; Rudaki, the first poet in the anthology, had long held a prominent role in the Persianate canon centered around Iran, and Avicenna was claimed by Arabs and Iranians alike.[67] Nonetheless, Ayniy does not seem to have considered his Tajik project a zero-sum game with projects like that of the Chagatay Group. To the contrary, Ayniy argued in his introduction to the anthology that the Tajik literary heritage belonged to the cultural sphere of "Mawara ul-nahr and Turkestan."[68] While he acknowledged oppression from Mongol and Turkic rulers — the

[66] Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, pp. 386-7.
[67] On the inclusion of Avicenna in modern Persian literary anthologies, see Alexander Jabbari, "The Making of Modernity in Persianate Literary History," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 36, no. 3 (2016), pp. 423-24.
[68] Sadriddin Ainī, *Namūnah-i 'adabīyāt-i tājīk* (Moscow: Nashrīyāt-i markazī-'i khalq-i Ittiḥādi Jamāhīr-i Shūravī-'i Sūsiyālīstī, 1926), p. 3. Mawara ul-nahr is the Arabic term for Transoxiana, or the region between the Amu Darya

Chinggisids, the Timurids, the Manghits, and their descendants the Bukharan Emirs, for whom he reserved a special ire — his use of the term "Turkestan" showed that he did not consider the Persianate tradition to be incompatible with the Turkic heritage of Central Asia (another toponym he used extensively). In fact, Ayniy seemed unconcerned with the Soviet republican map, preferring to speak instead of the urban areas where Tajik was spoken widely: "Bukhara, Samarkand, Istaravshan (O'ratepa), Khojand, Ferghana, Falgar, Matcha."[69] Ayniy's anthology was banned and almost the entire run pulped after a 1930 decree from the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party in Moscow.[70] But Ayniy escaped the harshest press denunciations, let alone the imprisonment and death that took some of his fellow Jadids, as well as many avid Young Communists, during that dark year.[71] When the Uzbekistan Soviet Writers' Union was formed in 1932, Ayniy became one of the first and most prominent members. And he never really relinquished his attachment to urban Persianate culture, whether expressed in Uzbek or Tajik. In the 1930s, including in his contribution to the literary competition of 1933-34, he merely rebranded it as a uniquely Central Asian kind of proletarian internationalism.

Shams: The True Worker

Husayn Shams, as the only truly "proletarian" writer in the Writers' Union, represents the extent of the Writers' Union's success in bringing in the "laboring masses" of Uzbekistan, but his life story and work reveal the shadow that tokenism cast over his career. Of all the writers of the inner circle, Husayn Shams [Fig. 3.4, 1903-1943] had perhaps the most credible claim to a proletarian background. For one, he was unsullied by a membership in Red Pen or participation

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and Syr Darya rivers.
[69] Ibid. These towns and cities are located in modern-day Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
[70] Kholida Aini, *Zhizn' Sadriddina Aini,* p. 70; Hodgkin, "Lāhutī," p. 169.
[71] Munavvar Qori, Qahhor's teacher and prominent Jadid, was executed in 1931; among Young Communists, Botu and Oltoy, both radical poets, were arrested. See Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, p. 376.

in other "counter-revolutionary" circles. Shams apparently began writing in his hometown of Kokand as early as 1922. But while his future Writers' Union colleagues built the doomed organizations that preceded the Writers' Union, Shams never found organizational support for his literary activity; he later claimed, falsely, that there were "no literary organizations" in Uzbekistan at the time.[72] Instead, Shams spent the 1920s working himself up in the ranks of typography and printmaking, having begun working as a typesetter at the Kokand publishing house at age 11.[73] In 1924, he was invited to Tashkent to work at the First Exemplary Typography, and in 1927 transferred to the Uzbek State Publishing House in Samarkand and then Tashkent. Probably because of his pedigree as a trade unionist, at the First Congress of Soviet Writers Shams was one of only three Uzbek delegates who claimed to be "workers."[74] By 1931, he was sufficiently committed to a literary career to join O'zAPP. In 1936, he became Secretary of the Writers' Union, in which position he continued until his demotion during the Great Terror.[75]

[72] Husayn Shams, "Chto nuzhno nachinaiushchemu pisateliu," *Literatura Srednei Azii*, Jan. 16, 1934, p. 4.
[73] As Mark Steinberg has shown, typographers may be considered proletarians, but because they were literate by necessity, they occupied a different social position than other types of workers, such as manual laborers. On the role of printing workers in the development of a Russian revolutionary movement, see Mark Steinberg, *Moral Communities: The Culture of Class Relations in the Russian Printing Industry, 1867-1907* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).
[74] The others were Hasan Po'lat (1911-1942), born in the Middle Volga region and therefore likely a Tatar, but raised at an orphanage in Namangan; and G'ayratiy (1902-1976), who appears to have been born to the family of a literate artisan and received part of his education at a new-method Jadid school. G'ayratiy's background is therefore more similar to Qahhor's than Shams's, and, like Qahhor, G'ayratiy continued his career into the post-Stalin years. He continues to be read and anthologized today. In contrast, like Shams, Hasan Po'lat has been largely forgotten since his death. See "Khasan Pulat (1911-1942)," ziyouz.com, http://www.ziyouz.uz/ru/uzbekskaya-literatura/55-literatura-sovetskogo-perioda-30-80-kh-xx-veka/878---1911-1942, Accessed July 8, 2019; "G'ayratiy (1902-1976)," ziyouz.com, http://www.ziyouz.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=103, Accessed July 8, 2019.
[75] The details of Shams's biography are quite sparse. General sketches are available in Dilbar Fayzieva, *Husayn Shams: Adibning 70 Yilligiga* (Tashkent: G'ofur G'ulom nomidagi Adabiyot va san'at nashriyoti, 1973); Husayn Shams, *Tanlangan Asarlar*, ed. Turob To'la, S. Anorboyev, T. Jalolov (Tashkent: O'zSSR Davlat Badiiy Adabiyot Nashriyoti, 1959).

Asrar xoçanьn вoşanlьqь, u qadar hə-
vəsini joqlьqь ycynmi usta unqa kөp
əhəmijət вermәs edi...

Ortaq X. Şəms

Toqrusь, unь jaxşь sevməjdir...
Asrar xoça 6-7-aj işlәgəndə kençə ta-
mam вir usta qatarьqa өtiв qaldь...

Fig. 3.4
Husayn Shams.
SOURCE: Unattributed clipping from ANLM Archive, Husayn Shams fond, d. 458.

Shams was perhaps the single most prolific author in 1930s Uzbekistan. His first volume of poetry, *The Bell* (*Gudok*), appeared in 1930. Between the publication of that collection and his temporary repression in 1937, Shams published at least 30 volumes, ranging from pamphlet

editions of his short stories to poetry anthologies to "Workers' Library" abridgments of his longer works to plays and children's literature.[76] He also appeared frequently in periodicals such as *Soviet Literature of Uzbekistan*, *The Flame*, *Flower Garden*, and *Red Uzbekistan*. While his literary talent did not astound local critics, Shams enjoyed a reasonable prominence simply because of his willingness to take on the most challenging "proletarian" subject matter. Immediately after discussing Qahhor in his overview of Uzbek literature, for example, Olimjon also mentioned Shams as a major prose writer who had "bravely" taken on the topic of collectivization in a "voluminous" work that was ultimately "successful."[77] By comparison to Olimjon's rhapsodies about Qahhor, this amounted to a damnation by faint praise. Yet no one else had dared to attempt an entire novel about collectivization, or one about Uzbek factory workers, as Shams would do for the novel competition. Shams was an affirmative action token writer, the only "real" worker in the inner circle of the Writers' Union, and it could not afford to lose him. At the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers, Majidiy specifically mentioned Shams as evidence of the Writers' Union's success at bringing young workers into literature.[78]

The Writers' Inner Circle

When the Soviet Writers' Union was formed by decree from Moscow in April 1932, the Central Asian Bureau quickly took up the charge, adopting a parallel resolution for Uzbekistan on May 9.[79] *Construction* (*Qurilish*), the official literary journal of O'zAPP, was closed, and replaced by midsummer with *Soviet Literature of Uzbekistan* (*O'zbekiston sho'ra adabiyoti*).

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[76] These works include, but are certainly not limited to, *Radio (hikoya)* (Tashkent: O'znashr, 1931); *Qurulush* (Tashkent: O'znashr, 1932); *Tanqid (p'esa)* (Tashkent: O'zdavnashr, 1932); *Hikoyalar* (Tashkent: O'zdavnashr, 1933); *Dushman* (Tashkent: O'zdavnashr, 1934); *Haqqoniyat* (Tashkent: O'zdavnashr, 1937).
[77] Olimjon, "Adabiyotimizning tikka ko'tarilish davrida," p. 2.
[78] Rahmat Majidiy, *Literatura Uzbekistana* (Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1934), p. 20.
[79] For the Uzbek version of the central decree as well as its Uzbek adaptation, see *O'zbekiston Sho'ra Adabiyoti* 1932, no. 1-2, pp. 32-33; Karimov, p. 253.

From now on, much like the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers (RAPP), O'zAPP was rejected, ostensibly for its "left opportunism," or its overly aggressive rejection of the "classics" and an unnecessarily restrictive attitude toward literary production. In Uzbekistan, "bourgeois nationalism" was added to the denunciations of prior literary activity. Localized accusations, against the denizens of Red Pen and the Jadids, combined with the anxieties about "left opportunism" and "right opportunism" that had given rise to the Writers' Union in Moscow. In Uzbekistan, then, local political concerns overlaid with Moscow-based discourses about the Writers' Union as a "big tent" that could accommodate some degree of artistic and political diversity. After spring 1932, in the context of these attacks from both sides, O'zAPP was no more.

Into its place stepped the fledgling Uzbekistan division of the Soviet Writers' Union. Mirroring an organizational lag in the central Writers' Union, in Uzbekistan it took almost two years to organize the first all-republican congress of the Uzbekistan Soviet Writers' Union. Although plans were announced for a 1933 meeting, the congress actually took place only in March 1934, soon after a brigade had visited from Moscow to help bring Uzbekistan into the Writers' Union fold.[80] Until then there is no archival or press evidence that other general meetings were occurring with any regularity. Smaller ad-hoc groups seem to have managed what work the Writers' Union did accomplish.[81] But despite the modest reality, the Writers' Union

[80] Plans for a June 20, 1933 congress of the Uzbekistan Writers' Union appeared in *Qizil O'zbekiston,* April 3, 1933, p. 3, but never materialized. The brigade to Uzbekistan, announced in August 1933 but apparently not sent for several months, was supposed to include four Writers' Union delegates. The goal of the brigades was to assess the status of national literatures, to increase the connection between the Writers' Union center (Moscow) and the periphery, to facilitate literary translation to and from Russian, and to generally support the institutionalization of peripheral Writers' Union chapters. See Kathryn Douglas Schild, "Between Moscow and Baku: National Literatures at the 1934 Congress of Soviet Writers" (Ph.D. diss, University of California, Berkeley, 2010), pp. 69-74. On the brigade to Tajikistan, which was led by Abulqasem Lahuti, see Hodgkin, "Lāhutī," pp. 184-187.

[81] The institutional confusion seems to have been compounded by the fact that, although the Writers' Union was supposed to be organized on a republican level, until 1934 the main mechanism for Party management in Central Asia was the Central Asian Bureau, not republican organizations.

aspired to nothing less than to serve as the vanguard of a mass literary public. As the Secretary of Uzbekistan's Communist Party Central Committee Akmal Ikromov laid out in an August 1933 resolution, the tasks of literature under the Writers' Union were invariably directed toward increasing its reach to the masses: working more extensively with minorities; improving outreach to workers; highlighting women's emancipation; edging out bourgeois nationalism; and combating "cliquishness" à la O'zAPP.[82]

Crucially, as Ikromov indicated, the new Writers' Union was to be a republican, not a national institution. Uzbekistan's titular nationality could not expect to set the entire agenda for the republic's literary production just because they now had an all-republican organization. The new Writers' Union combined the members of O'zAPP, SAPP/ TAPP (mostly Russian speakers), and other prominent Uzbek, Tajik and Tatar literati who had not participated in O'zAPP.[83] The central committee included Russian and Tatar members, and during the 1930s the Writers' Union supported active Judeo-Tajik (*mestnye evreiskie*), Uyghur, Tatar, Kazakh, and Russian sections.[84] By the March 1934 Congress, Writers' Union members were claiming that minority work had much improved, citing the Uyghur section in particular.[85] In the new political atmosphere, overly enthusiastic commitment to a national (Uzbek) rather than republican (Uzbekistan) identity was risky, and "nationalism" remained a common denunciation

[82] Akmal Ikromov. "Adabiyot to'g'risida: O'zbekiston kommunist (bolshevik)lar partiyasi markaziy komitasining qarori." *Yosh Leninchi*, Aug. 1, 1933, p. 1.
[83] Calls for greater attention to national minorities began with O'zAPP. However, institutional support for national minority literatures in Uzbekistan appears to have begun only under the auspices of the Writers' Union. For an early O'zAPP call for minority literatures, see Alexandrovich, "Proletariat adabiyotining gegemoniyasi uchun," *Qizil O'zbekiston,* April 12, 1931, p. 3. Compare this narrative to Khalid's in Making Uzbekistan, pp. 381-82.
[84] Although Tajiks were the largest minority in Uzbekistan, there was no Tajik section, probably because many of "Tajikistan's" writers, including Ayniy, lived within Uzbekistan's borders. However, the Tajikistan's Writers' Union did host an Uzbek section. See Sadykov, "Luchshe sviazat'sia s uzbekskoi sektsiei," *Literatura Srednei Azii*, March 11, 1934, p. 2. The Jewish-Tajik section was closed in 1938. For further discussion of the politics of Jewish-Tajik language, see Levin, *Jews of Uzbekistan,* especially chapter 7, "Reclaiming the Cultural Wastelands," pp. 188-231.
[85] "Vakillar qurultoy minbarida," *Yosh Leninchi,* March 10, 1934, p. 4. On Central Asia as the venue for forging the category of "Soviet Uyghur" during the 1930s, see David Brophy, *Uyghur Nation* (Harvard University Press, 2016), esp. pp. 220-232.

through the end of the 1930s. At the same time, the Uzbek section was numerically dominant, and it carried on most of its activity independently of the other national sections. For the remainder of this discussion, I focus on the Uzbek section exclusively.

Despite its explicit rejection of Red Pen and O'zAPP, the Soviet Writers' Union's consolidation of literary activity on a republican level carried on trends that had begun already in the late 1920s. Although Red Pen was far from coordinated across the entire Republic of Uzbekistan, it represented an early attempt to create an institutional home for all of Uzbekistan's prose writers and poets. In the early 1920s, Central Asia hosted a diverse and diffuse literary world, full of competing organizations defined along regional and ideological lines, and characterized by a broad polymathic approach. Red Pen attempted to consolidate and corral these institutions while also imposing a greater level of ideological commitment and disciplinary uniformity than ever before. However, these goals appeared to conflict. Red Pen's stringent ideological stance - its "left opportunism" - obstructed its efforts to bring together Uzbekistan's writers.[86] O'zAPP, as the first literary organization defined explicitly by its republican affiliation, accelerated the effort. When the Writers' Union formed, the process was completed. "Literature," as a modern institution, with a historical canon, and with a cadre of professional "writers," took on its modern disciplinary shape only with the formation of Uzbekistan's Writers' Union.[87]

[86] RGASPI f. 62, op. 2, d. 2703, l. 18. This claim comes from a contentious 1931 testimony by Sotti Husayn in his own defense. Despite the temporal remove and Husayn's personal stake in the narrative, Husayn appears to take this portion for granted, and it remains unchallenged by his otherwise hostile interrogators.

[87] I do not mean to suggest, of course, that Central Asia lacked an indigenous lettered culture before the 1930s, or that writing did not occur outside the Writers' Union during this period. In making this argument, I parallel arguments made by scholars of Persianate and Arab literatures in the same period about the formation of literature as a discipline. See Jabbari. "The Making of Modernity"; Wali Ahmadi, "The Institution of Persian Literature and the Genealogy of Bahar's 'Stylistics,'" *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 31, no. 2 (2004): 141–52. Institutionalization and professionalization was a global trend in the period; see, for the Bulgarian case, Irina Gigova, "In Defense of Native Literature: Writers' Associations, State and the Cult of the Writer in Pre-1945 Bulgaria," *Slavic Review* 77, no. 2 (2018): 417–40.

The Writers' Union may have brought Uzbekistan's writers into a single institution, but this did not mean that the Writers' Union effectively coordinated the activity of various cultural centers in Uzbekistan. Rather, it marginalized literary life outside the capital city. In the 1920s, literary production in Uzbekistan had been multicentric. We have already seen that Abdulla Qahhor got his start in the Ferghana Valley, and that the most active cell of Red Pen took shape in Samarkand, then the capital of Uzbekistan. By the mid-1930s, in contrast, the Writers' Union met almost exclusively in Tashkent. Many of Red Pen's earliest organizers, as well as other Young Communists, had relocated to Tashkent with the capital.[88] These included major figures such as Anqaboy, Ziyo Said, and Oydin, who became Secretary of the Writers' Union. According to a 1933 article, of the 84 administrative regions (*raion*) in Uzbekistan, only 12 had a chapter of the Writers' Union.[89] On paper, the Writers' Union at least maintained chapters in major cities, but it appears the central administration generally ignored requests for financial and administrative support from regional chapters.[90] Already in 1934, for example, a Termez attendee at the Tashkent Writers' Congress demanded greater support for his regional chapter of the Writers' Union.[91] In June of the same year, a Termez writer petitioned the Tashkent governing body for information about why it had failed to publish two compilations that the Termez Writers' Union had prepared.[92] In a petition apparently from the same year, the Termez Writers' Union also complained that the central organizational bureau had neglected to send

[88] Meanwhile, beginning in 1930, many "Tajik" writers had been relocating to Dushanbe, the center of the newfound Tajik literature. See Chapter 5, "City on Paper: Writing Tajik in Stalinobod (1930-38)," from Roberts, *Old Elites,* pp. 290-359.
[89] Fozil Tojiy, "So'z yosh yozuvchilar ustida," *Yosh Leninchi*, August 27, 1933, p. 2.
[90] This trend seems to have held in the minority sections of the Writers' Union. Thomas Loy points out that the Judeo-Tajik section apologized in its Writers' Union anthology for being overly Tashkent-centric, despite the fact that Judeo-Tajik culture was historically centered in Bukhara. See Thomas Loy, "Rise and Fall: Bukharan Jewish Literature of the 1920s and 1930s," In *Iranian Languages and Literatures of Central Asia: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, ed. M. De Chiara (Paris: Peeters, 2015), p. 321.
[91] "Vakillar qurultoy minbarida," *Yosh Leninchi,* March 10, 1934, p. 4.
[92] O'zMDA, f. 2356, op. 1, d. 4, ll. 24-25.

funds for the chapter head secretary's salary since November 1933, and that the local newspaper, *Red Border* (*Qizil Chegara*) also lacked essential funding.[93] In 1937, one Writers' Union member was even accused of gathering up all submissions from Xorezm and stuffing them in an archive, dignifying them with neither response nor publication.[94]

It would perhaps make sense that, if any Writers' Union chapters were to be neglected, the distant Afghan border city of Termez and culturally distinct Xorezm would be first. But the major cultural centers of Samarkand and the Ferghana Valley seem to have fared no better. In 1934, the Andijon Cultural Propaganda division wrote to the Writers' Union, claiming that the Andijon chapter existed "in name only."[95] The chapter had no desk, let alone an office, so the chapter's supplies were kept at its secretaries' homes.[96] In April 1936, Sadriddin Ayniy petitioned the Uzbekistan Writers' Union on behalf of Samarkand, pointing out that its chapter had received no money from the central Union during that year.[97] Apparently he received no response, because in March 1937 he telegrammed Tashkent in an even more exasperated tone: "Either close the Samarkand chapter or support it financially. . . Local organizations are not financing us. Respond by telegram."[98] The Writers' Union in Tashkent produced and distributed content to the regions; it did not, however, fund much independent cultural activity elsewhere than Tashkent, and it did not, generally, promote the work of regional authors on a republican level. To succeed as a writer on the republican level, one had to move to Tashkent.

[93] O'zMDA, f. 2356, op. 1, d. 5, l. 88.
[94] RGALI f. 631, op. 6, d. 199, l. 19. Although this is a purge-era document and must be taken with a grain of salt, this claim is plausible given that, indeed, very few regional submissions made it to central publications during the mid-1930s.
[95] O'zMDA, f. 2356, op. 1, d. 3
[96] The neglect of Andijan appears to have lasted until 1937, when it was marshaled (spuriously) as evidence of an anti-Soviet conspiracy. See RGALI f. 631, op. 6, d. 199, l. 31.
[97] O'zMDA, f. 2356, op. 1, d. 19, l. 8.
[98] O'zMDA, f. 2356, op. 1, d. 19, l. 5

In the increasingly Tashkent-centric literary world of Uzbekistan, and the republican-oriented structure of the Writers' Union, Sadriddin Ayniy was something of an outlier. At the August 1934 Writers' Union Congress in Moscow, Ayniy became the face of Central Asia, posing in his skullcap for a photograph with Maxim Gorky. He delivered a speech in which he presented a galloping history of Tajik literature that coincided remarkably with the framing of his 1926 anthology.[99] Ayniy attended the Congress on behalf of Tajikistan, and helped manage its Writers' Union and literary journal, but as we have seen, he was also an active participant in the Uzbekistan Writers' Union. He wrote prolifically in both Tajik and Uzbek, and published frequently in both languages. Even as he gained in personal status, then, the disjuncture between Ayniy's residence and his nationality, as well as his unapologetic bilingualism, distinguished him starkly from the typical member of the Uzbekistan Writers' Union.

Ayniy's advanced age also set him apart from most of his Central Asian writer colleagues. At the 1934 Moscow congress, all ten of the Uzbek delegates were born in the 20th century.[100] Only one, Ziyo Said, exceeded 30 years of age.[101] At age 56, Ayniy was positively grandfatherly. Although Fitrat seems to have continued participating in some Writers' Union activities during the 1930s, Ayniy, traveling with the Uzbek delegation, was the only remaining former Jadid who managed to maintain full standing. At the Moscow Congress, where his old intelligentsia status was a serious liability, he emphasized that he belonged among the youth: "I have been working in literature for about 40 years. . . Everything in my work that deserves attention came after October. That's why I say that from an old man, I've become a youth. The

[99] Sadriddin Ayniy, "Oktiabr' dala mne tvorcheskuiu molodost'," *Pravda,* August 30, 1934, p. 6.
[100] Non-Uzbek delegates from Uzbekistan, all of whom were either Jewish or Russian, also tended to be older. But unlike Ayniy, they did not write in Uzbek or generally publish in Uzbek-language journals. Officially, Ayniy was a delegate from the Tajikistan Writers' Union.
[101] RGALI f. 631, op. 30, d. 4, entire.

dictatorship of the proletariat returned my youth to me."[102] In Uzbekistan, on the other hand, his age seems to have afforded him an authority that the 20-somethings did not deserve. Certainly, his linguistic capacity and literary pedigree were unparalleled.

Fig. 3.5
Caption, top left: A friendly jest in honor of the first Congress of Soviet Writers of Uzbekistan.
Caption, top right: Writers' Preschool in honor of the Uzbekistan Soviet Writers' Union.
Banner: Children, instead of memorizing words like "firmament" (*samo*) and "horizon" (*ufq*) play with these and don't break them. When you come of age, you will not regret it!
SOURCE: *Mushtum* 1933, no. 10, p. 4.

[102] Ayniy, "Oktiabr' dala mne tvorcheskuiu molodost'," p. 6.

In 1933, around the time the First Congress of the Writers' Union of Uzbekistan was announced, satirical journal *Mushtum* published a cartoon that rendered the generational divide between Ayniy and the majority of the Writers' Union comical. The cartoonist rendered Ayniy as a buxom nanny, wearing a red scarf like his co-worker, the Writers' Union's only prominent female member and a member of the old intelligentsia, Oydin (discussed below). Uzbekistan's writers, caricatured as children, played on the floor of the preschool. A banner above the children instructed them to spurn the lofty theological vocabulary of the past, such as "firmament" and "horizon," in favor of toys that emblematized Soviet modernity: a tractor, a train, blocks with Latin-script letters. The cartoonist seemed to suggest that Uzbekistan's writers were incompetent youth, merely playing at literature: they might be able to string together a few letters, and they might talk of tractors, but in the long run, they were still in sore need of instruction. Oydin and Ayniy played that role. The Latin script may be new to them, and they may not be as familiar with modern machinery as the youth, the cartoon suggested, but only under their tutelage could the young members of the Writers' Union "reach maturity." The cartoon thus clearly represented the paradoxical social dynamics of the Writers' Union. The youth who dominated the Writers' Union were far from a vanguard of revolutionary literature; they were like children at play, helpless and unskilled. Meanwhile, their only instructors were impotent, feminine/ feminized relics of the past.

In addition to further consolidating literary institutions, the Writers' Union carried on from Red Pen and O'zAPP's early attempts to define "literature" as distinct from other kinds of writing. Ultimately, this gave rise to a category of specialized writers and poets. The Soviet Writers' Union, Red Pen, and O'zAPP set a new agenda, then, not only because of their

ideological attack on the Jadids and their heirs. For the first time in Central Asian history, they carved out "literature" as a separate sphere of cultural activity that would be managed by full-time professional writers. O'zAPP published the first dedicated literary journal in Uzbekistan, *Construction*, which then converted to the organ of the Writers' Union. But the real problem was financial - until the 1930s, it was not possible to make a living exclusively as a writer. As early as 1930, one author had argued that the lack of professionalization resulted in "poetry sickness" - in other words, preoccupied with their other professional responsibilities, Uzbek authors turned to short forms not out of a cultural preference, but simply due to a lack of time.[103] Providing a full-time salary to prominent authors would enable them to produce longer prose works, a project that was essential for Uzbek literature to become a modern literature in Moscow's eyes.

This line of reasoning came to fruition in a December 1932 resolution by the Uzbekistan Soviet of People's Commissars to offer a select list of thirty writers and visual artists the same privileges enjoyed by other professional specialists, such as medical and sanitary personnel, engineers, and technicians.[104] These benefits included access to high-quality housing and food, as well as higher salaries.[105] The measure was intended to improve the everyday life (*byt*) of Uzbek writers, thereby, theoretically, improving their outreach to the masses. In reality, it promoted the work of a select group of Uzbek writers, who then proceeded to dominate literary publication on a republican level throughout the decade. In Uzbekistan, literature became a

[103] O'razay, "Go'zal adabiyot sohasidagi vazifalarimiz haqida," *Alanga*, 1930, no. 1, p. 11.
[104] O'zMDA, f. 2356, op. 1, d. 5, l. 75. The non-Russian writers included Oydin, Abdulla Qodiriy, Ziyo Said, G'ofur Gulom, Ahmed Okhundiy (Akhundov), A. Saraev, Josur Zokirov, Hamid Olimjon, Pazir Safarov, Husayn Shams, R. Israilov, Giyas Sagatov, Umarjon Ismailov, Hasan Po'lat, Uyg'un, Anqaboy, Komil Yashin, R. Majidiy, Nosir Saidov, Abdullaev, Nigmatullaev, Elbek, Oybek, and Abdulla Qahhor.
[105] Ishankhodzhaeva argues that these benefits both incentivized cooperation with the Soviet regime's priorities, including whitewashing the repressions, and cultivated authors that made "significant contributions" to Uzbek national literature. See Ishankhodzhaeva, "Repressivnaia politika," ch. 4, "Ideologizatsiia literatury i iskusstva Uzbekistana i repressii v etoi sfere v 1925-1950," especially pp. 217-70.

salaried, full-time job at precisely the moment it was supposed to be closest to the working masses.

Ortaq Ikramov, Maçidij, Abdulla Qadirij, Ƣafur Ƣulam, Krasina, Ajdin, Ƣajratij, Elbek, H. Alimçan, Krukovskij, M. Hasan, Kartsev, Ataçan, Pinhasik, Beregin, Anqabaj va başqa ortaqlar.

Fig. 3.6
Writers' Union members with Uzbekistan First Party Secretary Akmal Ikromov: Majidiy, Abdulla Qodiriy, G'ofur G'ulom, Krasina, Oydin, G'ayratiy, Elbek, Hamid Olimjon, Krukovskii, M. Hasan, Kartavev, Otajon, Pinkhasik, Beregin, Anqaboy, etc.
SOURCE: *Guliston* 1935 (no. 5), p. 2.

It is difficult to document by precisely what process the recipients of special benefits were selected [Fig. 3.6]. Almost certainly, the principle of selection had something to do with the personal relationships of Fayzulla Xo'jayev, Chair of the Soviet of People's Commissars of

Uzbekistan.[106] To be sure, a perfect record of ideological support for the Party's current positions does not appear to have been the main criterion. A huge proportion of the list had widely known Jadid connections. Oydin, Qahhor, and Ayniy all had close Jadid ties. Abdulla Qodiriy (1894-1938), the second on the list, was perhaps the most prominent ex-Jadid to be included. He had begun publishing in the Jadid press before the revolution and made his name in the mid-1920s as author of the first Uzbek-language novel.[107] In the purge of 1929-30, he very nearly succumbed to the same fate as Cho'lpon.[108] But he remained active in the Writers' Union until the Great Purge. As late as 1936 the Presidium was assisting him with housing, and in September 1937, a Purge commission bemoaned the fact that he had received a payout of 1000 rubles just three days before his arrest that June.[109] Elbek, characterized by Khalid as one of the "early-revolutionary intelligentsia," had attended one of the most prominent Jadid schools, associated with Jadid circles, and was even anthologized by Fitrat.[110] Yet he too continued to publish extensively, participate in the Writers' Union Presidium, and use official funds for personal events.[111] Certainly, some Jadids — Fitrat in particular — were marginalized after 1930. It is to Fitrat in particular that Khalid's representation applies best: "They [major Jadid figures] existed on sufferance . . . and the drumbeat of their vilification never ebbed."[112] But until the Great Terror of 1937-38, the main movers and shakers in Uzbek literature were also former Jadids and their associates. These intellectuals denied their backgrounds and contributed to the articulation of an anti-Jadid discourse. As such, they not only survived, but thrived with the financial support and social network the Writers' Union provided.

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[106] This offers further circumstantial support for Khalid's tantalizing, but undocumentable suggestion that many former Jadids survived the 1929-30 purge due to patronage from Xo'jayev. See Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, p. 380.
[107] See the brief description of Qodiriy's pre-rebolutionary background in Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, pp. 53-54.
[108] See Khalid *Making Uzbekistan*, pp. 371-72.
[109] RGALI f. 631, op. 6, d. 118, ll. 24-25; RGALI f. 631, op. 6, d. 198, l. 102.
[110] Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, pp. 189, 329.
[111] See meeting protocols in RGALI f. 631, op. 6, d. 118, ll. 24-25.
[112] Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, p. 381.

Former Jadids were not the only at-risk intellectuals to thrive under the auspices of the Writers' Union until the Great Terror. Despite the Writers' Union's denunciation of O'zAPP and Red Pen as overly exclusive and regressively nationalistic, the rosters of the Writers' Union — including the inner circle of "specialists" — continued to be filled with former members of those organizations, including Uyg'un, Oybek, Oydin, Hamid Olimjon, Anqaboy and Ziyo Said.[113] In many cases, as in those of Elbek and Qodiriy, Jadid ties and involvement with O'zAPP or Red Pen overlapped. The same members appeared again and again in newspaper bylines and *Soviet Literature of Uzbekistan*'s tables of contents, as well as the attendance records for organizational meetings. In the mid-1930s, between a fifth and a third of the features in *Soviet Literature of Uzbekistan* were written by beneficiaries of the specialists' stipend. Many other features were written by prominent members who did not receive the stipend, such as Davron, Shayxzoda, and Shokir Sulaymon.[114] Prominent Jadids who lacked the political credibility to receive the stipend, such as Cho'lpon and Fitrat, continued to contribute with some regularity. Sadriddin Ayniy also published frequently in the Uzbek literary journal, but was supported from Tajikistan. Considering that many features in the journal were written by committee (e.g. Party statements and Writers' Union resolutions) or translated from Russian (speeches by Lunacharskii and Stalin, stories by Gorky and Chekhov), then, the influence this inner circle held over literary production during the 1930s cannot be underestimated. In April 1933, for example, *Red Uzbekistan* published an announcement of a planning meeting for the anniversary of the formation of the Writers' Union. While in theory all writers were welcome, the announcement called for the attendance of seventeen authors by name, thirteen of whom were party to the special benefits.[115]

[113] The connection was resurrected in the Great Purge. See RGALI f. 631, op. 6, d. 198, l. 131.
[114] It is likely that Sulaymon did not receive the stipend because he was tainted by his directorship of Red Pen in the late 1920s. Perhaps Davron and Shayxzoda, who had both also been active in the 1920s, were similarly tainted.
[115] "Yozuvchilar yig'ilishi," *Qizil O'zbekiston,* April 17, 1933, p. 4.

Until the Great Terror, this inner circle of Uzbek writers, almost all residents of Tashkent, was to remain relatively static. In part, this stemmed from a simple lack of qualified cadres for literary work in Uzbekistan. It was impossible completely to eradicate everyone who was linked to the Jadids without also eliminating Uzbek literature altogether. On another level, it reflected how much the personal ties between members of the "old intelligentsia" and the new cultural elite continued to define cultural life in 1930s Uzbekistan.

The more centralized process of literary production quickly affected the landscape of periodical publications. Beginning from the founding of O'zAPP's organ *Construction*, the most important "literary" work would appear primarily in the official publications of O'zAPP and the Writers' Union.[116] The literary pages at *Red Uzbekistan* and other newspapers drew on Union-approved works, while other significant literary-intellectual journals like *The Flame* closed altogether. *This World* (*Yer Yuzi*), later renamed *Well Done!* (*Mosholo)* and then *Flower Garden* (*Guliston*), was an important exception, probably because it styled itself more generally, as an "illustrated arts journal" (*rasmli nafis zhurnal*). Still, members of the Writers' Union inner circle dominated the pages of *Flower Garden* as well. Likewise, *Mushtum* styled itself a satirical journal and therefore occupied a somewhat different niche from the literary journal, but its main editor during the 1930s, G'ofur G'ulom, was a member of the Writers' Union's inner circle and a beneficiary of the specialists' stipend.[117] Regional newspapers did continue to publish the works of local authors, but they also drew extensively on works from the Tashkent inner circle, even reprinting works from *Construction/ Uzbek Soviet Literature*. This repetitive use of the same few works was not a divergence from the Plan, but rather an integral part of the Writers' Union's

[116] The official Uzbek-language literary journal was called *Construction* (*Qurulush*) from 1931-32; it was then renamed *Soviet (Sho'ra) Literature of Uzbekistan* after the promulgation of the Writers' Union. In 1934, it was called *Soviet (Sovet) Literature of Uzbekistan*, in 1935-36 merely *Soviet Literature (Sovet Adabiyoti)*, and in late 1937 was renamed *Literature and Art of Uzbekistan*.
[117] G'ofur G'ulom is the bespectacled, tractor-toting child in the cartoon above.

effort to "educate" regional intellectuals and worker-writers by exposing them to exemplary works.[118]

The Tashkent-centric, professionalized organizational structure of the Writers' Union in Uzbekistan contrasted with the agenda of proletarianization that it espoused. The upper echelons of the Writers' Union, after all, now consisted of full-time literary professionals. The Uzbekistan Writers' Union squared this circle, as did many other Soviet institutions, by relying on nebulous designations of class background. It now became totally unacceptable openly to acknowledge one's non-proletarian background. All ten Uzbek delegates to the 1934 Writers' Union Congress in Moscow claimed to be workers, white-collar workers (*sluzhashchie*), or peasants.[119] Ayniy, as well as both female delegates, Oydin and Sobira Holdarova, claimed peasant status. During the 1930s the Writers' Union broadly promoted programming dedicated to proletarians, such as literary circles at factories and collective farms. And yet, the same inner circle of Tashkent "proletarians" continued to dominate republic-wide publication. Unless they had a personal connection to the inner circle, worker-writers rarely published beyond wall newspapers and regional publications.[120] In short, while lip service to Soviet class categories was crucial, the real determinant of literary prominence in 1930s Uzbekistan was inclusion in the financial — and, as we shall see, social — inner circle.

The career of Abdulla Qahhor during this period reflects the professionalization and centralization that generally characterized the Writers' Union until the Great Purge. Qahhor's early career had blurred the line between journalism and literature, but by the 1930s, after

[118] See, for example, the Plan for Writers' Union activity in late 1935 from RGALI f. 631, op. 6, d. 118.
[119] Rabochie, sluzhashchie, or krest'iane respectively. Several specified that they were workers, but came from artisans' (kustar') families. RGALI f. 631, op. 30, d. 4, entire. Other than Shams, the two writers to claim non-artisan, non-white-collar worker background were Hasan Po'lat and G'ayratiy. On *sluzhashchie* as a decisively non-proletarian kind of worker status, often associated in Russia with the petit bourgeoisie (*meshchane*), see Fitzpatrick, "Ascribing Class," pp. 751-52.
[120] Zulfiya Isroilova, with her marriage to Hamid Olimjon, is one such example.

relocating to Tashkent, Qahhor began to attempt to move away from satire.[121] Ever more immersed in Russian writers like Chekhov, Gogol, and Gorky, he began producing short stories and developing his prose style. The Persianate genre hierarchy Qahhor had once subscribed to, with poetry at the top, was replaced with a new Soviet hierarchy that prioritized prose. With his new specialist's income, he no longer had to support himself with editorial work. The new opportunity to specialize seems to have paid off, and Qahhor quickly distinguished himself as a master prose stylist. In a 1934 review of the accomplishments of Uzbek literature, Hamid Olimjon praised Qahhor for his "deep study of topic and everyday life, his well-done and serious work . . . His ability to distinguish the necessary from the unnecessary, the important from the unimportant, and his mastery of his craft."[122]

Outreach to the Masses

Although the Writers' Union centered around a small, tight-knit Tashkent inner circle, this does not mean that no mass work took place in the newfound Writers' Union. To some degree, the Writers' Union did fulfill its mission of reaching the masses. Accordingly, the 1930s saw some expansion in literary programming for workers, even if those worker-writers did not usually earn republic-wide recognition. The most important model for mass outreach was the literary circle (*to'garak*/ *kruzhok*). These existed before the foundation of the Writers' Union: TAPP sponsored some circles in Tashkent, while several newspapers and schools also sponsored literary circles.[123] The 1930 classified report on the Central Asian intelligentsia even

[121] This may have had to do with the Writers' Union's apparent discomfort with satire in general, often commented on in satirical journal *Mushtum.* One cartoon lampooned how the Writers' Union had made space for various kinds of prose, poetry, and dramaturgy, but still seemed ambivalent about admitting satirists. See *Mushtum,* 1933, no. 7 (April), p. 10.
[122] Hamid Olimjon, "Adabiyotimizning tikka ko'tarilish davrida," *Yosh Leninchi*, March 6, 1934, p. 2.
[123] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2476, ll. 2-3. A literary circle at a girls' school is pictured in *Qurulish*, 1931 (no. 3), p. 49.

recommended literary circles as a way to get them on board with the Bolshevik program.[124] But under the auspices of the Writers' Union, the activity of literary circles became systematized and centralized around the Tashkent leaders. In the official journal of the Writers' Union, they published curricula for literary programs. These curricula included a narrative about the history of Uzbekistan's literature — from bourgeois nationalism to left opportunism — as well as some discussion of Party policy.[125] Most prominent in the programs, however, were readings from literature, also presented with discussion questions. These readings were often published in the Writers' Union journal alongside curricula. For example, a section of Tolstoy's *Hadji Murat* was published in the journal in the same month as the literary circle curriculum assigned it. The curriculum included readings from Russian literature, especially Gor'kii, but also, in 1936, Pushkin, Mayakovsky, Gogol, and Nekrasov.[126] As for Uzbek literature, the readings were written exclusively by beneficiaries of the specialists' stipend — Qahhor, Qodiriy, Ayniy, Shams, Oydin, and so forth.[127] Participants in literary circles were also asked to read and critique one another's writings.

Plans for literary circles were normative documents and it is difficult to ascertain who, if anyone, used them. However, there is some evidence that some literary circles did indeed function. At Red Teahouses, the number of literary circles seems to have been far lower than the number of music circles, but some did exist.[128] In Tashkent in May 1934, *Komsomol of the East* reported eleven functioning literary circles, although it reported that some of them were under

[124] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2455 l. 11.
[125] This element is strongest in Oydin, "Adabiy to'garaklar uchun qo'llanma," *Sovet Adabiyoti*, 1935 (no. 5), pp. 55-67.
[126] "Adabiy to'garaklar programmasi, *Sovet Adabiyoti*, 1936 (no. 5), pp. 76-81.
[127] "To'garaklar uchun programma," *Sovet adabiyoti*, 1936 (no. 4), pp. 84-94; another program for literary circles, penned by Abdurahmon Sa'diy, is discussed in O'zMDA, F. 2356, op. 1, d. 7, ll. 1-24. Sa'diy is accused of several ideological errors, in particular his garbling of "political terms."
[128] O'zMDA F. 94, op. 5, d. 1567. Many of the pages in this 1936 statistical report are cut off, so it is impossible to compile precise statistics about the number of literary circles.

poor direction.[129] At the first Congress of the Writers' Union of Uzbekistan, three young female aspiring writers from around the country gave reports about their local literary circles in Andijon, Marg'ilon, and Bukhara. They were cautiously optimistic, claiming that their circles needed more attention from Tashkent but were still producing good work.[130] In January 1934, a 43-year-old factory worker spoke to *Literature of Central Asia* about his participation in a literary circle: he was a "highly qualified carpenter," but with support from his local literary circle, he said he hoped also to become a "master of words." He mentioned meeting Abdulla Qahhor and reading Ziyo Said and even Cho'lpon (whom he described as a good writer, but with an ideology that was "not ours.").[131] All these examples were highly mediated, centered in Tashkent, and suffused with likely tokenism — the women, in particular, were part of an important, but often inaccurate optic of women's inclusion in the Writers' Union. Nevertheless, these episodes indicate that writers were newly active in "mass work."

Circles were not the only venue in which amateurs could participate in literary public life. If a writer successfully drafted a work and wished to move toward publication, the Writers' Union also sponsored consultations, in which young writers could request critiques from more experienced ones.[132] The Writers' Union also sponsored regular literary evenings, at which young or established writers read their works, or a significant work was subject to public critique and discussion.[133] Aspiring writers could publish in wall newspapers, or local or regional papers.

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[129] "Literaturnaia khronika," *Komsomolets vostoka*, May 26, 1934, p. 4. Some exemplary literary circles are also discussed in "Obraztsovymi kruzhkami vstretim s'ezd pisatelei," Dec. 19, 1933, p. 3.
[130] "Adabiy to'garaklarga chiniqqan kishilar qo'yilishi kerak," *Yosh Leninchi*, March 9, 1934, p. 3.
[131] Khasanbaev, "Govoriat litkruzhkovtsy fabriki im. Khodzhaeva," *Literatura Srednei Azii*, Jan. 16, 1934, p. 4.
[132] For more detail on the consultation model, see H. Yaqubov, "Yosh yozuvchilar bilan ishlashda konsultasiyaning ahamiyati va vazifasi," *O'zbekiston sovet adabiyoti* 1934, no. 5, pp. 74-76.
[133] For some pre-Writers' Union examples, see "Katta adabiy kecha o'tkazildi," *Yosh Leninchi*, May 1, 1932; Meli Jo'ra, "Adabiy kecha," *Qurulish*, 1931 (no. 3), pp. 86-87. See also the announcement of a meeting for young writers, "Yosh yozuvchilar diqqatiga," *Qizil O'zbekiston*, April 20, 1933, p. 4. The announcement listed by name the authors who would be expected to attend, including a much broader group than usual in such meeting announcements. Very few of these young authors ever appeared in national publications.

A report from early 1935 enumerated all the efforts the fledgling Writers' Union had made to bring the masses into their work since its creation in spring of 1932.[134] As a report to the center, it probably exaggerates the amount of "mass work" the Writers' Union had conducted, but nevertheless provides a rough description of its activities. The Union reported it had hosted literary evenings for seventeen writers, most of whom were members of the inner circle, but including also some from national minorities and four young writers. It also claimed to have hosted a series of seminars, at which beginning writers could familiarize themselves with the materials produced at the All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers and learn from the experiences of more senior writers. 26 young writers had attended a 3-month-long course that the Writers' Union sponsored, where they were taught "literary theory, Soviet literature, the history of the underground revolutionary movement in Central Asia, Marxism, Leninism, language, etc." The report acknowledged that an "office for worker-writers" (*kabinet rabochego avtora*) had been opened only recently, but it had already managed to assist forty writers from a variety of national backgrounds in person. The official Consultation Bureau of the Writers' Union had corresponded with 286 beginning writers about 494 works, 222 of which were in Uzbek.[135] 55 youth writers had also received oral consultations.

The report acknowledged that much remained to be done, pointing out in particular that the active members of the Writers' Union were extremely overburdened. Nevertheless, the report attached a plan for the second half of 1935 that promised to increase outreach to the masses.[136] For example, two writers were delegated to organize "exemplary libraries" at Chirchiq, a river near Tashkent where a major project to construct a hydroelectric station had just begun; and at several clubs and factories in Tashkent. Regional chapters of the Writers' Union were also asked

[134] RGALI F. 631, op. 6, d. 118, ll. 12-21.
[135] The majority of the remainder was in Russian.
[136] RGALI F. 631, op. 6, d. 118, ll. 4-11.

to do the same for collective and state farms. Consultations, seminars, literary evenings, conferences, and literary circles were also all on the agenda in the 1935 plan. For example, the report called for a discussion of "one of the most relevant works of Soviet writers," the precise work to be discussed as yet undetermined, at two Tashkent factories and a collective farm, also as yet undetermined. "Writers' corners" were to be opened at a variety of locations around Tashkent, as well as the state libraries in Andijon, Samarkand, Bukhara, Kokand, and Ferghana.

In Uzbekistan, literary outreach to workers and beginning writers had never been undertaken in such a systematic fashion, and this early organizational work cannot be underestimated. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the vast majority of Writers' Union-sponsored events and organizations were based in Tashkent. The exemplary works mentioned in the Plan were written by members of the inner circle, and many of the literary evenings were focused on their works. Paradoxically, at the same time as the Writers' Union girded its loins to reach the masses, it concentrated that "mass work" in Tashkent at the same few institutions.

Oydin, gender, and the inner circle

One major priority of Soviet policy in Central Asia in particular — women's "emancipation" — failed to make it into the overarching agenda of the Writers' Union. Although the Writers' Union generally took control of literary publication on a republican level, women's activism seems to have been sufficiently distinct from literature that it continued to warrant its own publication. With few exceptions, female writers published primarily in the dedicated women's journal, *New Way* (*Yangi Yo'l*, later renamed *Yorqin Turmush* and then *Yorqin Hayot*). In general literary publications, writings by women other than Oydin appeared almost invariably in March, in honor of the 8 March women's holiday. Even in these issues dedicated to women,

the female contributors generally had close ties to the inner circle — Hamid Olimjon's wife Zulfiya was a frequent contributor, as was Sobira Holdarova, a prominent Party member, editor of *New Way*, and a close colleague of Oydin's since the 1920s, whose husband was also a Party member.[137] The Writers' Union of Uzbekistan only sponsored a few separate literary circles for women.[138] In large part, this probably had to do with the extremely low literacy rates among women, but it is nevertheless surprising given the emphasis placed on women's emancipation in official discourse. Like the Red Teahouse, the Writers' Union was de facto an organization for men.

According to the meeting protocols of the Uzbek Writers' Union during this period, in fact, only one woman participated in the Writers' Union Presidium until at least the end of the Great Terror.[139] This woman, Oydin (Manzura Sobirova), had come from an intelligentsia (*ziyoli*) background [Fig. 3.7].[140] Although she had participated in Red Pen, she escaped denunciation and transitioned smoothly to the Writers' Union, where she served from 1932-37 as Responsible Secretary.[141] Oydin was also the only woman in the Writers' Union to benefit from specialists' privileges, while most women writers did not make the transition to the Writers' Union at all.[142] During the 1930s, Oydin participated on the editorial boards of most journals that published literature, including *Mosholo/ Guliston* and the women's journal *Bright Life* (*Yorqin*

[137] For further detail on the life and work of Sobira Holdarova, see Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan*, pp. 100-101.
[138] One exception is the plan for an "exemplary library" at the central women's club in Tashkent, mentioned in RGALI F. 631, op. 6, d. 118, l. 3; it is unclear, of course, if the plans every materialized.
[139] For meeting protocols, see O'zMDA f. 2356, op. 1, d. 2a; O'zMDA f. 2356, op. 1, d. 28; RGALI f. 631, op. 6, d. 118.
[140] Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan*, pp. 101-103.
[141] As happened throughout the Soviet Union, but especially in Central Asia, women frequently escaped purges that took their male relatives and colleagues. See Roberts, "Old Elites," Chapter 4, "Purging the Elite: Politics and Lineage (1931-38)," pp. 232-289.
[142] For general biographical details, see Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan,* pp. 101-103; Saidulla Mirzaev, *Oydin: Adabiy Portret* ("Tashkent" Badiiy adabiyot nashriyoti, 1965); Mashhura Sultonova, *O'zbek Sovet Adibalari* (Tashkent: "Qizil O'zbekiston," "Pravda Vostoka," and "O'zbekistoni Surkh" birlashgan nashriyoti va bosmaxonasi, 1963), pp. 7-14; Zulfiya. *Oydin Sobirova* (Tashkent: O'zdavnashr, 1953).

Turmush/ Yorqin Hayot). She attended the first meeting of the Writers' Union's Organizational Committee, held in 1932 in Moscow, as well as the 1934 Congress of Soviet Writers and almost every other major Moscow literary event to which Uzbekistan sent a delegation. As an accomplished poet, prose writer, and organizer, Oydin certainly deserved such recognition; but her visibility in Moscow must be ascribed to tokenism, given the importance of Muslim women's "emancipation" for propaganda in the center.

Fig. 3.7
Oydin.
SOURCE: *Literatura Srednei Azii*, Jan. 16, 1934, p. 1.

Although women were drastically underrepresented in republican Writers' Union activities, there is no record of open discrimination against women in the Writers' Union until Oydin was personally accused of it during the Great Terror. One denunciation claimed she

actively turned younger women away from literature. "Only after Oydin dies will we come to the Writers' Union to visit her," her (male) accuser represented these supposedly disgruntled women writers as having said.[143] Oydin repudiated these claims almost flippantly, pointing out that she had spent years working to support young women, and claiming she had never actively discouraged anyone.[144] These accusations relay a latent assumption that only women should be held responsible for supporting women writers, and a gendered expectation that Oydin would take on a mentoring and caregiving role for younger authors, especially those of her own sex (see Fig. 3.5). No matter what the origin of these claims, they joined others about her connections to "nationalists" such as Elbek and led to her temporary expulsion from the Writers' Union.[145]

As Oydin pointed out, there is no factual evidence that she actively obstructed fellow women writers. Indeed, her protege Zulfiya was to argue in the much-changed political environment of 1953 that Oydin had been a crucial mentor for her during the 1930s.[146] The question remains, then, of what prevented women's participation in literary production on a national level. Here, the Terror-era documents, however fraught with political considerations, offer some clues. The testimonies made during the Terror came under intense pressure, and often drew on accusations that circulated in newspaper reports from purges in Moscow and other republics.[147] It is particularly important to take such cliched reports critically, as well as to be aware of the definitive role that fear and personal animosity played in purge-era denunciations.

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[143] The accusation appeared in a testimony by Umarjon Ismailov. RGALI f. 631, op. 6, d. 198, l. 139. It also seems to have been repeated by others; see O'zMDA, f. 2356, op. 1, d. 31, l. 330.
[144] O'zMDA, f. 2356, op. 1, d. 31, l. 331.
[145] She was expelled from the Writers' Union in October 1937 and cleared of the charges against her in March 1938. For her exclusion, see RGALI f. 631, p. 6, d. 198, l. 107. For her reinstatement, see RGALI f. 631, op. 6, d. 246, l. 58.
[146] Zulfiya, *Oydin Sobirova*.
[147] In utilizing Terror-era interrogation and stenographic reports, I concur with the approach taken by Alexander Vatlin in his recent study of the carrying out of the Terror in the town of Kuntsevo. Vatlin argues that, although archival documents on the Terror are all highly problematic and often falsified, they can nevertheless shed light on "the realities of those years." See Alexander Vatlin, *Agents of Terror: Ordinary Men and Extraordinary Violence in Stalin's Secret Police* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2004), p. 7.

At the same time, especially when these denunciations are supported by earlier archival records, they can offer unusual insight into the inner workings of the Writers' Union. By combining multiple archival and press sources from a range of years, as well as taking into account the responses from the defendants, it is possible to elicit a nuanced picture of the situation in the mid-1930s.

With these caveats in mind, it is clear that informal socialization defined the Writers' Union's activities throughout the 1930s and likely affected women's participation. The accusations along these lines, mostly from fall 1937, followed scripts about cliquishness (*semeistvennost'*) and conspiracy that must be read against the grain. However, as with the claims of regional neglect, they do appear to contain some kernels of fact. For example, beginning in July 1937 many members of the inner circle were accused of holding frequent gatherings in the Union-sponsored writers' vacation lodge (*dom otdykha*) or in private residences, such as the home of Elbek.[148] They supposedly made pilaf and served astonishing amounts of wine on the Union's dime, or, when the bureaucracy could not be prevailed upon to pay for the alcohol, through individual contributions. Oydin and her co-secretary, Shams, used the Writers' Union's official car and driver for transportation to and from such events, as well as for carting around their own relatives.[149] They generally did not show up for work until midday, but on weekends and days off they exploited the Writers' Union driver "mercilessly."[150] Once, G'ofur G'ulom supposedly appeared drunk at the Writers' Union office on a weekday and screamed all kinds of inappropriate language at Oydin, for which he received no

[148] Already in 1933, a group of Party members preparing for the upcoming Convention of Soviet Writers had decried the "groupishness" (*gruppovschina*) of Tashkent's writers, although it is unclear whether they were referring to the Russian or Uzbek-speaking writers. See RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 3196, ll. 18-20. During the Great Purge, the first such accusation appeared in a letter from Literary Fund Secretary, the Russian Kol'tsov. See RGALI f. 631, op. 6, d. 198, ll. 124-29. The *dom otdykha* seems to have been opened in a village outside Tashkent in mid-1933. See "Adabiy khronika," *Yosh Leninchi,* June 18, 1933, p. 2.
[149] RGALI f. 631, op. 6, d. 198, ll. 124-29.
[150] RGALI F. 631, op. 6, d. 198, l. 124.

consequences.[151] The culture of heavy drinking in Tashkent publishing circles was also corroborated by Party activist Saodat Shamsieva, who ultimately separated from her husband, Husayn Shams's brother Zokirjon, due to his heavy drinking.[152]

Later, these accusations were parlayed into spurious evidence for a nationalist, Fascist, or Trotskyite conspiracy, which all the defendants strenuously denied.[153] But they did admit to copious drinking, and to socializing primarily with a core group of Union members, albeit a group they claimed was neither exclusive nor conspiratorial.[154] Nonetheless, the fact remains that literary success on a republican level generally required participation in the Tashkent Writers' Union social circle. Those who appeared in the attendance lists from Tashkent Writers' Union meeting protocols during the mid-1930s coincided with the hard-partying purge-era "conspirators," as well as the most frequently appearing names in Union publications.

Especially for women, the informal socialization that defined the Writers' Union during the 1930s must have been punishingly obstructive. For a young woman, married or unmarried, the consequences of participating in social gatherings with large groups of men would have been profound, especially if alcohol was known to be present. The dynamic of social ostracism seems to have played out in Oydin's personal life. In the late 1920s, Oydin had unveiled at a Moscow conference and then, fearing the social repercussions of appearing in public unveiled, re-veiled on the train back to Tashkent. Her father was so upset to see her name and portrait in print that she stopped publishing under her given name and patronymic, Manzura Sobir qizi, and took on the pen name Oydin. She failed, however, to follow her father and uncle's instruction to stop

[151] Ibid.
[152] Personal correspondence with Marianne Kamp, citing interview with Saodat Shamsieva, Sep. 29, 2017. For further information on Saodat Shamsieva, see Marianne R. Kamp, "Three Lives of Saodat: Communist, Uzbek, Survivor," *The Oral History Review* 28, no. 2 (2001): 21–58.
[153] For one such accusation, see RGALI f. 631, op. 6, d. 198, ll. 131-39.
[154] For example, see Shokir Sulaymon's defense in RGALI f. 631, op. 6, d. 199, ll. 43-45.

publishing altogether, which seems to have led to her estrangement from her male relatives.[155] Ultimately, she also unveiled permanently. Probably because Oydin was "free" from the tutelage of her male relatives, she was able to participate in the Writers' Union's social gatherings. This combination of factors, especially rejection by her family, could explain why Oydin seems never to have married. Whether Oydin wished to marry or not, that is certainly the explanation her peers would have offered. It is hard to imagine many women would have been willing to accept such consequences for the sake of a literary career.

For young men, although the stigma would have been far less, it was no doubt also difficult to break into this narrow social circle once it was established. Indeed, the Writers' Union's failure adequately to promote the work of "young" writers - that is, breakthrough writers younger than the average Writers' Union member in his late 20s - also appeared in purge-era accusations. In his testimony in October 1937, for example, the poet Davron described the process by which a journal's editorial staff were supposed to cultivate young writers. "Writers gather around journals, write letters to them, and mature through those journals. We know from the past that all writers come of age by gathering around journals."[156] Davron went on to argue that the editors of *Guliston,* including Rahmat Majidiy, Anqaboy, A'zam Ayyub, and Oydin, had failed to encourage young writers in this way. Instead, he pointed out, accurately, that month after month they had almost exclusively published works from established Writers' Union members. They also printed works from long-discredited Jadids, including Cho'lpon, whose works were appearing in *Guliston* as late as 1935, and whose *Night and Day* (*Kecha va Kunduz*) was published in 1936.[157] The poet Davron also claimed that as editor of *Young Leninist*,

[155] See Zulfiya, *Oydin Sobirova*, pp. 7-9.
[156] RGALI, f. 631, op. 6, d. 199, l. 20.
[157] These works include "Bizning Vatan," *Mosholo,* 1934, no. 2, p. 15; "Diyorim! (O'zbekiston)," *Guliston* 1935, no. 3, p. 39; "To'rt Xat," *Guliston* 1935, no. 5, p. 8. All three works are relatively traditional in form and quite patriotic, but blatantly pro-Soviet.

Anqaboy had created such an unsupportive environment that Davron almost left.[158] Davron argued that these facts evidenced a widespread bourgeois nationalist conspiracy ultimately leading back to the discredited First Secretary of Uzbekistan's Communist Party, Akmal Ikromov. This section of the denunciation was otherwise entirely unfounded.

A non-beneficiary of the specialist's stipend, Davron may have felt personally excluded and therefore more willing than most to offer damning denunciations. But his observation that republican-level literary publications did not prioritize young writers as much as they could have, despite repeated Party injunctions to do so, is certainly true. In other words, the centralization of literary activity in Tashkent under the Writers' Union undermined youth outreach throughout Uzbekistan. According to a four-part 1933 article series on Writers' Union youth outreach, Tashkent, Namangan, and Andijan had the most active youth outreach programs, with Tashkent by far the best-resourced. Fozil Tojiy, the author of the overview, argued, "The main reason for these deficiencies is the Uzbekistan Soviet Writers Union Organizing Bureau's lack of lively support for other cities and regions (*raions*)."[159] One author reported that it was possible to get his work published by the Uzbekistan State Publishing House (O'znashr) only if he visited Tashkent and pulled strings with his friends there, but that it was otherwise very difficult for young authors to get published in all-republican journals or in the state press if they did not live in Tashkent.[160] Similarly, Tojiy claimed that the most active literary circles were based in Tashkent, and those primarily at institutions of higher learning.[161] Youth outreach in Tashkent and the provinces was a perennial topic of discussion at Writers' Union events, and the situation seems to have somewhat improved after 1933.[162] But the fact remains that until the Great Terror,

[158] RGALI, f. 631, op. 6, d. 199, l. 26.
[159] Fozil Tojiy, "So'z yosh yozuvchilar ustida," Part II, *Yosh Leninchi,* Aug. 27, 1933, p. 2.
[160] Fozil Tojiy, "So'z yosh yozuvchilar ustida," Part III, *Yosh Leninchi,* Aug. 28, 1933, p. 2. There was, however, more opportunity for young aspiring writers to publish in regional or non-specialized publications, a phenomenon I discuss at greater length in chapter 1. For example, in an otherwise negative report on her local literary circle, one young woman from Andijan province remarked that she had been able to publish one of her poems in the Ferghana Valley newspaper *The Cotton Front* (*Paxta Fronti*). See "Adabiy to'garaklarga chiniqqan kishilar qo'yilishi kerak," *Yosh Leninchi*, March 9, 1934, p. 3.
[161] Fozil Tojiy, "So'z yosh yozuvchilar ustida," Part IV, *Yosh Leninchi*, Aug 30, 1933, p. 2.
[162] The 1934 convention discussed the topic at length; see *Yosh Leninchi*, March 10, 1934, p. 4. In 1935-36, the

youth rarely appeared in the national press, and the most active literary circles continued to be concentrated in Tashkent.[163] A series of survey quotes from young writers, including a younger Davron, further reiterated the need for increased direction for young writers from around the entire country. There is no evidence that the neglect of aspiring writers outside Tashkent was part of the concerted conspiracy of which some Writers' Union members were later accused. Rather, it seems to have resulted from a combination of limited funding and a Writers' Union culture that revolved around face-to-face socialization among a select group of writers.

Conclusion

Building national literatures, proletarianization, outreach to youth, women, and the working masses - all of these are themes that will be familiar to students of the Soviet Writers' Union in any corner of the USSR. But in Uzbekistan, these programs enmeshed themselves in local social norms and took shape under the guidance of a highly contingent set of personalities. Although the Jadids all but disappeared as a public intellectual force in the 1930s, their influence continued to be felt in more subtle ways throughout the decade. As I have shown, writers with elite or Jadid connections — including Ayniy, Oydin, and Qahhor — maintained their position of respect despite the official decline of traditional modes of authority. All three publicly emphasized the less elite elements of their biographies — Oydin her gender; Ayniy his orphanhood and poverty; Qahhor his father's blacksmith work — even though their connections to pre-revolutionary intellectual networks are what gave them their start. Although they never would have acknowledged it, all three developed their command of Uzbek literary language in

curriculum for literary circles was updated and distributed in the Writers' Union journal, and training for literary circle leaders was also revamped. See the series of programs: "Adabiyot to'garaklari uchun programma," *O'zbekiston Sho'ra Adabiyoti*, 1935, no. 5, pp. 55-67; 1936, no. 4, pp. 84-94; and 1936, no. 6, pp. 76-81. In 1934, training courses for literary circle organizers were announced, to be held at the Writers' House of Rest outside Tashkent. See *Komsomolets Vostoka,* June 1, 1934, p. 4.

[163] See, for example, "Obraztsovymi kruzhkami vstretim s'ezd pisatelei," *Literatura Srednei Azii,* Dec. 18, 1933, p. 3.

dialogue with discredited Jadid writers, such as Cho'lpon and Fitrat. Even in content, their works under the auspices of the Writers' Union responded to the Jadids. Such unacknowledged connections to the "old intelligentsia" existed for many writers of the inner circle, even those who had come of age under the auspices of Red Pen and Uzbekistan's Association of Proletarian Writers.

There was, however, at least one exception. Remarkably, Husayn Shams's seemingly impeccable proletarian pedigree did not exempt him from the purges. Indeed, in the long term, Husayn Shams experienced essentially the same short-term fate as Oydin and Qahhor: temporary denunciation, then rehabilitation, albeit with a reduced status until destalinization. Only Ayniy managed to continue from glory to glory throughout his lifetime, although, in the long run, his role in shaping Uzbek literary culture was forgotten as he became every more decisively a Tajik. The story of the Uzbekistan Writers' Union in the 1930s, then, is not exclusively a story of the making of a Soviet Uzbek nation, the elimination of the Jadids, or the replacement of the Jadids by "proletarians." Rather, it is the story of a contingent group of personalities, all linked by personal connections and informal sociability in the newly central city of Tashkent.

Overall, then, the story of the Uzbekistan Writers' Union belies the official rhetoric: it spoke of bringing in the masses, but actually centered literary authority in Uzbekistan's new capital; it paid lip service to gender equality, but really only one woman had a leading role; it called for cultivating up-and-coming young writers, but it actually marginalized them; it claimed that "proletarianness" was the main criterion for literary work, but in practice, the term was so broadly interpreted as to be meaningless. Even as the Writers' Union took orders from Moscow, it took shape under the influence of distinct personalities and the social networks they formed. In

Uzbekistan, Cultural Revolution was no match for the self-replication of local elites, nor could it proceed without the tutelage of those selfsame elites.

In this chapter, I have shown how this dynamic played out in the social organization of the Writers' Union. But nowhere was the ad hoc implementation of central directives more evident than in the Writers' Union's most important aesthetic instruction of the 1930s — the promulgation of Socialist Realism. While Socialist Realism has frequently been marshaled as evidence of increasing colonial control of the center over the periphery, in reality the implementation of Socialist Realism in Uzbekistan tells quite a different story. When the Writers' Union held a competition for Socialist Realist novels in 1933, inner circle members Shams, Ayniy, and Qahhor won every single prize, while Oydin judged the competition. It is to that inner circle effort, the novel competition, that we turn in the next section.

Chapter 4

Novel Publics: The Uzbekistan Novel Competition of 1933-34

On March 27, 1933, the Uzbek Soviet of People's Commissars announced a competition for literary works to be administrated by the Uzbek Soviet Writers Union -- the fledgling Union's first major programmatic undertaking. Fayzulla Xo'jayev, who made the announcement, claimed that Uzbek literature had failed so far to illuminate "Uzbekistan's heroic workers' struggle for proletarian dictatorship and socialist construction,"[1] as well as the fight against Central Asia's anti-Soviet *basmachi* guerillas. Xo'jayev continued that such works were needed to help "educate the masses (*omma*) in the spirit of socialism." In Uzbek literature, Xo'jayev specified, prose lagged behind poetry and drama, so long prose works would receive special consideration for the prizes: large sums of cash – 10000, 7000, and 5000 rubles for first, second and third prizes respectively; but also highly coveted all-expenses-paid professional development trips (*komandirovki*) to the central cities of the USSR, ranging in length from two to six months.

The Uzbek Writers' Union quickly approved the competition plans, and throughout most of 1933 and 1934, the Writers' Union of Uzbekistan devoted its best and brightest to the project of producing a socialist novel for the masses of Uzbekistan. The jury was to include a who's who of Uzbek letters, among them Usmon Majidiy, Usmonov, Oydin, Fitrat, Abdulla Qodiriy, Ziyo Said, and Anqaboy. Less than a month after the competition announcement, and precisely one year after the KP(b) had formed the Uzbek Writers' Union, several prominent Writers' Union members announced their plans for submissions on the pages of *Young Leninist*.[2] Anqaboy, apparently not deterred by his role on the jury, promised in the vaguest terms to submit a novel

[1] Fayzulla Xo'jaev, "O'zbekiston mehnatkashlarining turmushidan va ularning SSSR paxta mustaqilligi uchun va O'zbekistonning sosialistik qurilishi uchun kurashidan olingan badiiy asarlarga konkurs e'lon qilish to'g'risida," *Qizil O'zbekiston,* March 28, 1933, p. 2.
[2] "Davrimizga munosib: hukumatning chaqirig'iga sho'ra yozuvchilari ijodiy ko'tarilish bilan javob beradilar." *Yosh Leninchi,* April 23, 1933, p. 2.

about the 1916 Turkestan uprising, the February revolution, and the October Revolution and its consequences. Despite the specific request for large prose works, Umarjon Ismoilov could not restrain himself from proposing a play in verse. But he did manage to align, in this preliminary stage, with the theme of "socialist construction," focusing on the class conflict as he saw it play out in methods of silk production in the Ferghana valley. And Abdulla Qahhor planned to submit his first novel, depicting "counter-revolutionary nationalists" and "several episodes of their wrecking." Qahhor claimed that he had already completed the preliminary work and was ready to begin writing.

Even for these most talented of Uzbekistan's writers, the competition presented no simple task. Although at least 39 writers formally declared their intention to participate in the competition, only 14 of them managed to submit even partial drafts in time for the November 1934 deadline.[3] Four of these were not even works of prose, and two of the prose works were written by already-disgraced Jadids, Cho'lpon and Qodiriy. That left only eight serious candidates for the prizes. In the eyes of the jury, even the three winning novels were flawed. In the end, the judges announced that none of the submissions deserved the grand prize.[4] Instead, they awarded two second prizes - one to Sadriddin Ayniy for his sprawling historical novel *Slaves*, and another for Abdulla Qahhor's conspiracy novel *The Mirage.* The third prize went to Husayn Shams for *The Law*, which followed the revolutionary career of a factory worker from Kokand.[5]

[3] O'zMDA F. 2356, op. 1, d. 9, ll. 41-45. An incomplete list of 39 intended submissions (excluding even Qahhor's winning novel) can be found on l. 41, while the list of 14 actually submitted works is on l. 45.
[4] It is also possible this decision resulted also from the failure of the Soviet of People's Commissars to transfer the necessary funds for a grand prize. A series of correspondence from 1933 shows the Writers' Union asking for the promised funding for the competition, which had not been delivered on time, and it is unclear whether it was ever delivered in full. See O'zMDA F. 2356, op. 1, d. 9, l. 36.
[5] The results were announced in "Badiiy asarlar konkursining yakunlari," *Qizil O'zbekiston*, Oct. 12, 1935, p. 3.

Fig. 4.1
Image title: "At the [Novel] Competition"
Caption: "The walker speeds along, the runner meets the mark, and those who don't miss a beat emerge victorious."
SOURCE: *Mushtum* 1933 (no. 16), back cover.

A cartoon published on the back cover of *Mushtum* in August 1933 vividly represented the stakes of the novel competition. In the cartoon, the competition becomes a steeplechase race,

and the writers runners, using their pens as pole vaults to help them surmount the hurdles they encounter. Many of the racers struggle in comical ways. A man on a donkey pitifully lags behind the pack of racers; his mode of transportation is clearly not up to the task at hand, much like the verse forms that so attracted Uzbek writers. And even those who have adopted an appropriate vehicle still struggle to traverse the course of obstacles: one racer struggles so much to surmount a hurdle that he accepts an undignified boost from a female assistant. The runners in the cartoon, like the writers in the competition, were all men, but they all reckoned with the reality that women were newly visible in their world. And all these embarrassing contortions happen in front of a huge, cheering crowd, comprising Russians and Uzbeks, men and women, and workers of all stripes.

In the *Mushtum* cartoon, the viewer takes the vantage point of the crowd, looking down on the race as if from the highest row of bleachers. Along with Xo'jayev's first announcement, then, the cartoon suggests that the competition was not primarily a contest among the competitors, but a spectacle for the masses who looked on. After all, according to Xo'jayev, the winning novels would work for the masses in more than one way. First, the novels would portray the proletarians' "heroic struggle," a struggle that was already in the past. Second, they also needed to "educate" these same proletarians for the future. In other words, the novels presumed the existence of an already-existing "proletarian" public in Uzbekistan, but at the same time, they were instruments for calling that public into being and educating it in "the spirit of socialism."[6]

In this chapter, I examine the three prizewinning novels from the 1934 Writers' Union of Uzbekistan novel competition. In analyzing the novels, I suggest that these Socialist Realist novels can be productively read as artifacts of Soviet public-formation, much as Soviet ego-

[6] In foregrounding the circularity of public address, I draw on Michael Warner's definition of a public as a "relation among strangers" constituted through address. See Michael Warner, "Publics and Counterpublics," *Public Culture* 14, no. 1 (2002): 49–90.

documents are read as artifacts of self-formation.[7] Stepan Podlubny wrote his diary to turn himself into a Soviet man; the competition novelists wrote their works to shape, not an individual subjectivity, but a Soviet public.[8] Through their novels, each author made an imaginative effort to integrate a diverse public, including workers, minority nations, and women, even as he explicitly excluded others he perceived to be class enemies. In so doing, each author brought different aspects of his background to bear on the public he imagined.

Close attention to each novel thus reveals both the attractions of and the faultlines in the Soviet state public for these representative members of the intelligentsia. For Qahhor, Ayniy, and Shams, different social categories represented unique challenges to public-making, but one — gender — was a particular obstacle for all three. Although all three novelists paid lipservice to women's "emancipation," for all three of them, women presented a major challenge to this integrative process, and all three novels struggled in distinct ways to imagine how women might be included in a mass Soviet public.[9] Important research on Central Asia has highlighted the threat to masculinity posed by Soviet policy with respect to women's "emancipation,"

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[7] In his analysis of the lived experience of the construction of Magnitogorsk, Stephen Kotkin introduced the category of Foucauldian subjectivity to Soviet studies. See Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain.* See also Halfin and Hellbeck, "Rethinking the Stalinist Subject." Since then, much rich work has appeared examining the formation of Soviet subjectivity throughout the Soviet period. Igal Halfin and Jochen Hellbeck have utilized literary methods to analyze "ego-documents," such as diaries and memoirs, as artifacts of "self-formation," in which people worked to fashion themselves into dutiful Soviet subjects. See Halfin, *Red Autobiographies;* Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind.* Thomas Lahusen has productively read the Socialist Realist novel *Far From Moscow* as a sort of ego-document; see Lahusen, *How Life Writes the Book.* Few scholars have employed the lens of subjectivity with reference to Central Asia; one notable exception is Shaw, "Soldiers' Letters." On the legacy of the subjectivity school in Soviet studies, see Fitzpatrick, "Revisionism in Retrospect."

[8] On Stepan Podlubny, see Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind*, Chapter 4, "Secrets of a Class Enemy: Stepan Podlubny," pp. 165-223.

[9] Through psychoanalytically informed readings of Russian Socialist Realist films and literature, Lilya Kaganovsky has convincingly argued that the dominant images of male dismemberment reflect "a simultaneous desire for, and the impossibility of belief in the extreme models of masculinity promoted by Stalinist culture." See Lilya Kaganovsky, *How the Soviet Man Was Unmade: Cultural Fantasy and Male Subjectivity under Stalin*, Pitt Series in Russian and East European Studies (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008), p. 7. From a historical perspective, the crisis of masculinity I describe in this chapter can also effectively be compared to similar crises in the same period, elsewhere in the Middle East. See Elizabeth Thompson, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000); Camron Michael Amin, *The Making of the Modern Iranian Woman Gender, State Policy, and Popular Culture, 1865-1946* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002).

highlighting its galvanizing effect for anti-Soviet social elements.[10] It has been well documented that even many Party members in Uzbekistan continued to require their wives to wear veils, prompting strong official backlash.[11] My research here complements that work, suggesting ways that Soviet policy threatened the masculinity even of the most enthusiastic participants in Soviet officialdom.

Socialist Realism and the Soviet Public

On the same *Young Leninist* page where Writers' Union members declared their competition plans, Union member Ziyo Said published an article that set the tone for what the literary competition was to accomplish.[12] According to Said, the competition represented the culmination of a year's worth of accomplishments by the Writers' Union, among them publications by hundreds of young authors, new translations to and from Russian, and newly expanded membership in the Writers' Union fold. Although, quoting Akmal Ikramov, Said maintained that the plague of factionalism (*gruppovshchina*) had not been entirely shed by the Writers' Union members, he held out hope that a new literary method, Socialist Realism, would supersede the vagueness of O'zAPP's slogans and the cliquishness of its members.

Unfortunately for Said's readers, his definition of Socialist Realism was quite vague in itself. Although required to adhere to "realism," Said argued, an author was permitted to write using any "way or method" (*yo'llardan, metodlardan foydalanish*) provided she or he followed Engels's definition of realism as "revealing reality itself, along with all its tendencies"

[10] See, for example, Northrop, *Veiled Empire;* Marianne Kamp, "Femicide as Terrorism: The Case of Uzbekistan's Unveiling Murders," in *Belief and Bloodshed: Religion and Violence across Time and Tradition*, ed. James K. Wellman (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007).
[11] Douglas Northrop, "Languages of Loyalty: Gender, Politics, and Party Supervision in Uzbekistan, 1927-41," *The Russian Review* 59, no. 2 (2000): 179–200.
[12] "Yuksak badiiy ham vazmin asar yaratayik: dastlabki yakun," *Yosh Leninchi*, April 23, 1933, p. 2.

(*haqiqatning o'zi bilan butun tamoyillarni ochishi*). The quote sounds remarkably similar to the famous definition Zhdanov gave one year later of Socialist Realism as "the representation of reality in its revolutionary development" — a definition that would become the subject of intense debate at the First All-Union Convention of the Soviet Writers' Union the following year.[13] It was particularly confusing that Said sanctioned any "method," as in the previous paragraph he had already specified that Socialist Realism was *the* artistic method (*ijodiy metod*) for Soviet literature. Said summarized, as if conceding his own self-contradiction, that Uzbek writers would learn Socialist Realism best by reading the works of Maxim Gorky. However, many of Uzbekistan's writers would have found this difficult, since many of Gorky's works were still unavailable in Uzbek translation.[14]

For many of Uzbekistan's writers, Ziyo Said's convoluted definition of Socialist Realism would be the most specific one they had. But even for writers who spoke Russian and lived in Moscow, the Socialist Realist mode was in flux between March 1933, when the Uzbekistan novel competition was announced, and October 1935, when the final results were announced. Joseph Stalin had first proposed the term "Socialist Realism" in October 1932. As Ziyo Said's 1933 article shows, Socialist Realism was already a prominent topic of discussion in the Writers' Union between 1932 and 1934. However, it was not promulgated as the official mode of Soviet literature until the First All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers in August 1934, with a 17-strong delegation from Uzbekistan. The Congress hosted intense debates, and many questions remained unresolved. Still, by the time the Congress concluded, Socialist Realism had developed a loosely defined canon that grandfathered in works from the 1920s. Socialist Realist novels had to portray

[13] Stanislav Lesnevskii, ed., *Pervyi Vsesoiuznyi S'ezd Sovetskikh Pisatelei, 1934: Stenograficheskii Otchet*, (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel′, 1990), p. 4. For a particularly detailed account of the controversies swirling around the definition of Socialist Realism at the convention, see Robin, *Socialist Realism.*
[14] On Gorky's status as the paragon of Socialist Realist method, see Clark, *The Soviet Novel,* p. 33.

a "positive hero," and they needed to exhibit "party-mindedness" (*partiinost'*).[15] Despite this apparent unanimity, the Socialist Realist mode remained malleable and open to interpretation: there were many ways to emulate Gorky, and many interpretations of the Party-sanctioned definitions.[16]

However, there was one assumption that all the debates about Socialist Realism took for granted. This was the need to reach the "masses" - not only to portray them mimetically for the consumption of progressively minded elites, as the pre-revolutionary Russian and Jadid intelligentsias had once done; but to produce literature that was both accessible and attractive to them. But who were these masses? When authors composed Socialist Realist novels, they did not only imagine characters and storylines; they imagined a reading public that would identify with those characters and engage with those storylines. Accordingly, the promulgation of Socialist Realism as an aesthetic also accompanied concerted efforts to produce a public for that aesthetic. This included creating reading groups and literacy courses; opening libraries and literary circles; and distributing literary works in affordable editions, legible scripts, and abridged formats.[17]

In the 1930s, the Writers' Union made many plans that failed to materialize, and it is impossible to ascertain who read the mass editions of the novel competition works. It is even more difficult to reconstruct how readers reacted to these novels in the 1930s.[18] However,

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[15] On the "positive hero," see Katerina Clark, "The Conventions for the Positive Hero," in *Socialist Realism without Shores*, ed. Thomas Lahusen and Evgenii Dobrenko (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 27-50.

[16] On the definition of Socialist Realism, and the varieties of plot devices and narrative structures that were available to Soviet writers, see Clark, *The Soviet Novel.* More recently, Boris Groys and Evgenii Dobrenko have emphasized the radical dimensions of Socialist Realism, foregrounding particularly its links to the Soviet avant-garde; see Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism.* Dobrenko argues, also controversially, that Socialist Realism was "the mechanism for realizing socialism and simultaneously de-realizing life." See Dobrenko, *Political Economy of Socialist Realism*.

[17] The parallels here cannot be missed to the efforts elsewhere in the Middle East to create vernacular literatures and communities of readers among the "masses"; see Farzin Vejdani, *Making History in Iran: Education, Nationalism, and Print Culture* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015).

[18] The later reception history of the novels is easier to reconstruct, but that is beyond the scope of this work. Suffice it to note that Ayniy translated *Slaves* into Tajik just a year after publishing the Uzbek version, and in subsequent years, it became known as the founding novel of the Tajik nation. Qahhor's *Mirage*, meanwhile, is widely

regardless of the actual readership of these works at the time they were first written, the fact remains that, for the first time in Uzbek history, members of the intelligentsia were making a self-conscious effort not only to represent, but also to address their works to and thereby bring into being a state public. This state public comrised not only the members of the Tashkent intelligentsia, but a mixed-gender, multinational proletariat.[19]

In foregrounding the three novelists' efforts to integrate Uzbekistan's diverse population into a mass public, I emphasize the novel as part of an ongoing, self-conscious of public-fashioning on the part of Uzbekistan's creative intelligentsia.[20] My methods parallel those of the Soviet subjectivity school with respect to ego-documents, such as diaries, official autobiographies, and memoirs. Applying literary methods to these documents, scholars such as Igal Halfin, Jochen Hellbeck, and others have shown ego-documents to be important venues for Soviet self-fashioning. When diarist Stepan Podlubny derides himself for his failure to sufficiently excise bad bourgeois habits, for example, he is attempting to sculpt his flawed raw material - his bourgeois self - into a New Soviet Man.[21] Igal Halfin emphasizes the diary as a device for integrating the individual into a collective: "the life story of a singular and autonomous individual needed to be shattered and recreated as the story of a life lived for the sake of the proletarian movement."[22] In this chapter, I follow Halfin's model, focusing on the

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recognized as one of the earliest and most important Uzbek novels, rivaled only by the writings of former Jadid Abdulla Qodiriy, who won an honorable mention in the 1934 competition. Shams's *The Law*, in contrast, has been almost completely forgotten.

[19] In this sense, Ayniy, Qahhor, and Shams can be understood to be performing "representation-work," a term recently proposed by Sam Hodgkin to describe another Central Asian writer, Abu'l Qasem Lāhūtī. That is, these authors attempt to "represent" their communities in a mimetic sense, but they also position themselves as "representatives" (Uzb/ Taj. *vakil*) in the political sense - proxies who *speak for* the public and who can be expected to serve the interests of the masses they represent. See Hodgkin, "Lāhūtī," chapter 1, "Representation-Work and the Invention of the Literary Representative," pp. 49-100.

[20] For his examination of the novel *Far from Moscow* as an effort to imagine and re-imagine socialism, I am indebted to Thomas Lahusen. See Lahusen, *How Life Writes the Book,* p. 4.

[21] Hellbeck, *Revolution on My Mind,* especially chapter 4, "Secrets of a Class Enemy: Stepan Podlubny," pp. 165-223.

[22] Halfin, *Red Autobiographies,* p. 161.

shaping not of an individual, but of the collective as a whole. For these authors, the novel functioned as a device through which Uzbekistan's writers attempted to "shatter and recreate" the history of Central Asia as the history of a proletarian movement, and, in so doing, to imagine a Soviet public in Central Asia.

Qahhor's Mirage: the Phantom Public

Abdulla Qahhor's *The Mirage* opens in the busy lobby of Central Asia State University. The novel's protagonist, a student and aspiring writer named Rahimjon Saidiy, encounters an attractive young woman named Munisxon. I quote the passage at length, because it is the only passage in the novel in which Qahhor managed to represent a proletarian public, integrated with respect to nation, gender, and class:

> From the first floor lobby came the smell of a train station: crowding, heat, dust. Sweaty people flowed toward the outside - not to the fresh air, but to the front of the lobby, toward the announcement boards. Even when bread was handed out for free in the famine year, things hadn't been this bad.
>
> Here were the girls; here were the young women, blooming like flowers, as if in the presence of a dearly betrothed. Too bad for their dresses made from silk and marquisette -- they stuck tightly to the girls' sweaty bodies. Hair that had been brushed smooth and laboriously, attentively braided was now untidy and disheveled. Perfume, sprayed excessively in honor of the occasion, now melded with the smell of sweat, producing a smell that was neither repulsive nor pleasant to the nostrils. The young dandies - who had ensured their vests and shirts were properly buttoned in the presence of girls - now sported crooked ties and hairstyles that resembled crabgrass stuck to a shoe. Their frequently worn, carefully cared-for shirts were as wrinkled as dishrags and disgusting as bath towels.
>
> The lobby really was just like a train station. There were all kinds of people there: Tajiks from Hisor, Ko'lob, Badaxshon and the environs; youths from villages and nomadic settlements; workers and other people looking all sorts of ways.
>
> Looking briefly into the lobby, the girl [Munisxon] laughed: "The university really has become a mockery…"
>
> Saidiy politely joined in on her laughter, and then commented, "There's the Workers' Faculty (*rabfak*) too. These people belong at the Workers' Faculty. There are twenty-nine

> different nations enrolled at the Workers' Faculty these days. I saw the diagram yesterday.[23]

In theory, the passage about the university gets a lot of things right. It shows students from all around the young Soviet Socialist Republic of Uzbekistan gathering in their new shared capital. Those students include both men and women, thanks to new Soviet policies that made coeducation possible, brought women out of seclusion and veiling, and raised the legal age of marriage. The students belonged to the different nations that populated Uzbekistan -- not just Uzbeks and Russians, but Tajiks too, along with the other unnamed twenty-six, likely including Tatars, Jews, and Uyghurs. They came from cities, villages, the countryside, and even from nomadic settlements. But in 1939, this very passage became the topic of an intense debate at a meeting of the Uzbekistan Writers' Union dedicated entirely to *Mirage.* "Qahhor compared a university lobby to a stinky train station," attacked his harshest critic, Habib Musaev. In response, Qahhor feebly retorted, "Where do you see the word 'stinky'?"[24]

Musaev's critique may seem trivial. But he had touched on a much larger problem than how precisely the Tashkent university smelled on admissions day: the problem of how to render an integrated socialist public — mixed not only in gender and nationality, but also in class— attractive. Like the passage about the university, *The Mirage* as a whole ostensibly defended the Soviet project. It portrayed a young Uzbek student, Saidiy, attempting to make his way in the world of Soviet journalism. Over the course of the novel, Saidiy becomes ensnared in a bourgeois nationalist conspiracy that has infiltrated the world of Soviet letters. Saidiy's life ends tragically when he ventures into a snowstorm after realizing that the entire conspiracy was nothing but a "mirage." A simple summary of this plot suggests the novel was a moralistic fable, warning readers of the dangers of fraternizing with class enemies.

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[23] Abdulla Qahhor, *Sarob* (Tashkent: O'zdavnashr, 1937), p. 11.
[24] O'zMDA, F. 2356, op. 1, d. 56, l. 43.

However, the novel had quite the opposite effect for some of Qahhor's readers. In the critical article that sparked the public meeting, Musaev had denounced *The Mirage* because, he argued, it engendered sympathy for counter-revolutionaries and disdain for Soviet workers[25]. According to Musaev, the stinky lobby was just one symptom of Qahhor's failure to render Uzbekistan's new proletarian community attractive. And this was not just a problem for Musaev. In November 1937, one critic concluded an otherwise positive review of the books first edition with fighting words, concluding that *The Mirage* was an "enemy work" (*yot asar*) because it caused the reader to sympathize (*achinish*) with bourgeois nationalists.[26] Moreover, this review pertained to the significantly edited second published edition of the work, which had first been published serially in the Uzbekistan Writers Union's official journal, *Soviet Literature.* And yet, as the debate showed, Qahhor's editorial efforts in the second edition were still unsuccessful. In this section, I will make a close reading of two types of public that appear in *Mirage*. Although pushed into the underground in the Soviet period, I show, the "bourgeois" public is a great deal more tactile and compelling than its "proletarian" counterpart.

For most of *Mirage*, Saidiy straddles the bourgeois and the proletarian, much like Qahhor himself had in his early life. Saidiy comes from a bourgeois family - his father was a merchant who committed suicide after the 1917 revolution - and was educated at a Jadid school. Invited by his love interest Munisxon's brother, Saidiy begins participating in anti-Soviet discussion groups (*gap*) and becomes slowly enmeshed in a bourgeois nationalist conspiracy.[27] At the same time, he does have some proletarian credentials. Saidiy is fatherless, and therefore at a significant social disadvantage. His closest friend, Ehson, harkens from a proletarian background, and

[25] Habib Musaev, "'Sarob' qanday roman?" *Yosh Leninchi*, Jan. 30, 1939, pp. 3-4.
[26] Qahhor later claimed that a highly negative paragraph had been added by someone else to Sultonov's otherwise relatively positive review. Yusuf Sultonov, "*Sarob* haqida," *Qizil O'zbekiston,* Nov. 17, 1937, p. 3.
[27] On the *gap* as a Jadid institution, see Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, p. 132.

encourages Saidiy's early efforts to produce poetry for the local literary journal. When the novel opens, Saidiy is a Komsomol member, and visits a village on assignment to assist in the collectivization process. He participates in the debates put on by the local literary organizations – debates about, for example, how best to portray land reform in literature. Throughout the novel, Saidiy advances a career in the world of Soviet journalism, holding editorial positions in local and national newspapers, much like those Qahhor himself had held. As Saidiy's allegiances shift from the Soviet to the counter-revolutionary, however, he retreats into a conspiratorial dreamworld, an imaginary republic with a green flag, based in the fertile Ferghana Valley and governed from an Ark, or Central Asian fortress. It is this seductive "mirage" that dances before Saidiy's eyes in the tragic conclusion of the novel, when a blizzard buries Saidiy alive as the Red Army takes his co-conspirators into custody.

Clearly, the novel was meant to indict the ephemerality of bourgeois aspirations. But the novel's sensuous portrayals of bourgeois public spaces belie this interpretation. Early in the novel, for example, Saidiy has a defining conversation with Munisxon in a workers' park where the two have come to study. Although Munisxon disdained the university as a "mockery" in the stinky lobby scene, as Munisxon and Saidiy discuss the status of their relationship, she uncharacteristically praises the Komsomol for its acceptance of open social relationships between the sexes, like hers with Saidiy. And yet, despite the benefits of the Soviet order for her personal life, Munisxon pines for her pre-Soviet childhood. "We are children of the old way of life [*turmush*]," admits Saidiy, triggering a reverie in Munisxon about outings with her late father:

> Munisxon knew the place where she was sitting from those [childhood] days. In those days, this place was a site of pilgrimage. The roots that twisted and criss-crossed as they emerged from the ground; the crooked doors that shone in the rain that washed them; the wagon beds that lay helter-skelter, forming a stairway to the pavilion; the wheel hubs; the

> many-colored broken clay pots; the rusty bits of iron; the old mulberry tree with flags tied to its branches; the sycamores, and the withered grave markers beneath them; the bushes that grew like no other - there was a unique pleasure for people here, specific only to this place. There was no pleasure in today's standard buildings, built as if according to a plumbline; no pleasure in the young city, young garden, young air, young trees and flowers. For Munisxon, a single broken clay pot, a single withered grave marker from that old pilgrimage site was greater, more beautiful than all those things - the symbol of a sweet way of life. Tears came to her eyes again, but this time she quickly blinked, swallowed her tears, and involuntarily sighed quietly[28].

Munisxon's reverie emphasizes everything that socialist construction is supposed to supersede. In place of superstition — venerating saints, tying prayer rags to twisted trees — Soviet power brings modern medicine and technology. Instead of rust and rot, Soviet power offers steel and concrete. Instead of everything crooked, narrow, and decrepit, Soviet power builds right angles and spacious boulevards. It does not make logical sense, in the world of *Mirage*, for anyone to reject the promises held out by the Soviet project. But when the alternative is a smelly, crowded "train station," the old world may not be sensible, but it is pleasurably sensual.

Munisxon and Saidiy's encounter at the garden/ pilgrimage site is sensual in more ways than one. By this time, Munisxon and Saidiy have been "studying" together daily, although Saidiy is far too preoccupied with flirting with Munisxon to tutor her on Marx and Darwin.[29] They have even begun holding hands, flouting social disapprobation, and Saidiy is thinking of marrying her. The garden is adorned in the foliage of spring and overlooked by a brilliant blue sky. Saidiy and Munisxon engage in a flirtatious back-and-forth, in which Munisxon gives Saidiy the bud of a red flower in exchange for a handful of green apricots.[30] The conversation quickly turns serious, however, when Munisxon announces that, if she were given the garden, with all its "standard buildings," she would begin by surrounding it with an adobe wall and

[28] Qahhor, *Sarob* (1937), pp. 57-58.
[29] Qahhor, *Sarob* (1937), p. 33.
[30] Green apricots (g'o'ra/ dovcha) are frequently eaten as a snack during the spring in Central Asia.

installing a pavilion in the middle. “But wouldn’t you leave the place of honor for your prince (*amir*)?” asks Saidiy. Munisxon asks Saidiy if he would take that place in her imaginary garden, and, although “his entire body said yes,” he is unable to respond. Munisxon shouts in response: I will not marry you!

The garden scene clearly articulates the central paradox of *Mirage*. For Qahhor and his readers, the garden Munisxon describes clearly harkens back to the Timurid garden tradition. thereby linking her reverie to the Jadids and their discredited attachment to Central Asia’s Timurid heritage.[31] And yet, Munisxon suggests that she could only ever marry Saidiy if he were enthroned in the center of just such a garden, even though it may represent a relic of the past. For Munisxon, and consequently for Saidiy as well, Soviet modernity is incompatible with romantic and sexual fulfillment.

As the rest of the novel, Munisxon’s intimation is correct. We soon find out that Munisxon and Saidiy are destined never to be together, and that, in fact, they will soon be married unhappily to others. Saidiy’s wife will be Soraxon, the cruel, childish, and sickly daughter of his anti-Bolshevik mentor, and their relationship will never be consummated. When Munisxon and Saidiy arrange a desperate tryst after their marriages, Saidiy will prove impotent; they will never see each other after that tryst, since Munisxon will shoot herself in her husband’s cellar, and Saidiy, in his grief, will wander out into the blizzard where he dies. Perhaps all these plot developments are intended to prove how worthless was Saidiy and Munisxon’s attachment to the crooked, decrepit vestiges of the past. But despite all the tragedy that awaits Munisxon and Saidiy, the scene at the pilgrimage site remains an emotional fulcrum for the novel. In moments

[31] Munisxon’s imagined walled garden draws on Central Asian traditions of gardens; see, for example, the Timurid gardens described in Lisa Golombek, “The Gardens of Timur: New Perspectives,” *Muqarnas* 12 (1995): 137–47.

of crisis, Saidiy returns to his conversation there with Munisxon as a symbol of what could have been.

The pilgrimage site is a pre-revolutionary gathering space, where the Muslim faithful would once have come to venerate the shrine, and the novel makes clear that the time for such spaces has passed. Another such public space is the school Saidiy attended in the early Soviet years. In a chapter-long flashback to Saidiy's youth, Saidiy recalls his time there in the present tense, and with sensuous detail – including the clanging of the bell used to wake students during Ramadan, the splashes of water used to wake the students who oversleep, and the darkness of a teacher's room where students once gathered around a divination table. Over a decade later, Saidiy's ears still "hear" the songs he and his classmates sang at school, accompanied by a grand piano: "The stars on the sky's face/ Shine down on this world of vanity. . . "[32]

As readers, we know that the school is a place of injustice. The very most wealthy – those with merchant fathers, connections to the Ottoman glitterati, and the resources to study abroad – enjoy special treatment from their instructors, while many of Saidiy's worker classmates are expelled for insubordination. But despite the obvious injustice of the school order, Saidiy remembers the place with intense feeling. Indeed, Saidiy's recollection of his school days is spurred by a collection of photographic portraits, belonging to Munisxon's conspiratorial brother, that he finds at her house. When Munisxon shows him several of the images — of a Turkish officer (*zabit*) Saidiy recognizes, of intellectuals who used to visit his school — the photographs attract him irresistibly.[33] Apparently concerned about betraying the conspiracy, Munisxon attempts to hide the photographs by covering them with a newspaper. But during a

[32] Qahhor, *Sarob* (1937), p. 46.
[33] On the role of Ottoman POW's in education in early Soviet Turkestan (1918-1920), see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, pp. 79-81. Due to their Turkist orientation, by the time of Qahhor's writing these officers had become *personae non gratae*.

moment when Munisxon is distracted, Saidiy snatches several and takes them home.[34] It is these photographs — wormholes to the seductive past — that spur Saidiy's fit of nostalgia for his childhood school. His encounter with the portraits is his first step into the world of bourgeois nationalist conspiracy.

Before long, Saidiy meets many of the subjects of these portraits in person. Although not always attractive — Saidiy's mentor in the conspiracy is compared repeatedly to a waddling, quacking duck — these characters are always vividly drawn.[35] There is Haydar Haji, owner of a pre-revolutionary publishing house who dresses shabbily, but commands great respect from Saidiy, and gives off an air of honor (*abru*).[36] A leading literary critic and co-conspirator, Abbosxon, makes vocal defenses of "art for art's sake," comparing it favorably to a portrait of a nude woman. Art, Abbosxon seems to suggest, must be pleasurable. Abbosxon, too, is pleasurable, not like a nude woman, but like a "merchant who has come with plenty of products and is willing to sell them cheaply to whomever he pleases."[37] He is always surrounded by young poets, including, eventually, Saidiy. Salimxon is personable and friendly, while his sister Munisxon is the most seductive of all.

Munisxon's attempt to hide the counter-revolutionary portraits with a newspaper underscorse the primary conflict of *Mirage* between the bourgeois nationalist counterpublic and the proletarian public, between the transnational Turkist intellectual and the Soviet newspaper. But the two do not meet on equal terms: the nationalist counterpublic functions underground, while the Soviet public works openly, with the sanctioning of the state. According to official state policy, "old" spaces such as pilgrimage sites, mosques, and religious schools were supposed

[34] Qahhor, *Sarob* (1937), p. 45.
[35] For the first of these instances, see Qahhor, *Sarob* (1937), p. 94.
[36] Qahhor, *Sarob* (1937), p. 156. His title, indicating that he has performed the *hajj*, further underscores his honorable presence.
[37] Ibid., p. 39.

to be replaced entirely by Soviet institutions. In the long run, in fact, the Soviet public was to subsume even the private sphere.

These underground spaces exhibit a similar sensuousness to the ones they replaced: they are saturated with music, textures, scents, and tastes. For example, the guest room of Abbosxon, Saidiy's conspiratorial mentor, is typical of such an underground space. The walls of the room are adorned with portraits of writers in lushly decorated gilded frames, and mesmerizing landscapes with sunsets and moon rises. The soft couch is upholstered with black velvet, while the bed frame, adorned with a silk comforter and a feather pillow, is coated with shiny nickel. A seductive statue of a naked woman "calls" Saidiy to work at the finely decorated desk, while a thick shag rug muffles his footsteps.[38] Munisxon's brother, Salimxon, holds weekly meetings in his warm, hospitable guest room, where alcohol flows freely and the walls are so thick that the "Komsomol cell cannot reach."[39] In the piano that furnishes this room, Saidiy again hears the music he'd first heard as a child in the Jadid school: militant Arabic marches (*mashq*) and lilting Turkic songs.[40] Such bourgeois luxury — almost certainly obtained by illegal means — forms the backdrop to the conspiratorial meetings Saidiy begins attending.

For Saidiy, then, the seduction of sedition has little to do with rational argument. Instead, it is rooted in the embodied, interpersonal experience of counter-revolution: face-to-face encounter, first with photographs, and then with the people they represent in sensuously charged spaces. Munisxon, with her elusive feminine appeal, represents this most intensely. Compared to the vivid, sensuous public spaces Saidiy inhabits with the bourgeois nationalists, the "proletarian" public sphere is bland at best. In fact, the university lobby is perhaps the most tactile of all Soviet spaces Saidiy enters. The level of detail Qahhor offers in the lobby scene compares only to the

[38] Qahhor, *Sarob* (1937), p. 188.
[39] Ibid., p. 75.
[40] Ibid., p. 43, 278.

description of a village Red Teahouse where Saidiy is sent to help enact land reform. Although less overtly unpleasant than the university lobby, the Red Teahouse is crowded with villagers, noisy, and furnished only with a coarsely hewn wooden table. Otherwise, Qahhor offers few descriptions of the university's lecture halls, the newspaper's editorial office, the Komsomol meeting room, the university library, or other ostensibly proletarian public spaces Saidiy frequents. In part, this is because Saidiy quickly begins avoiding them. Every time he enters the Workers' Faculty hall, for example, he feels as if the room echoes with the voices of his fellow Komsomol members, chastising him for his failure to attend meetings and his negligence as a Komsomol activist.[41] By the end of the novel, this feeling becomes so intense that Saidiy prefers to remain in the "warm embrace" of his father-in-law's courtyard, rather than going out in public.[42] At this point, the meetings of the nationalist cell have ceased under pressure from the government, effectively shutting down the counterpublic sphere that once seduced Saidiy. But Saidiy still prefers his exclusive dreams of bourgeois life — idyllic gardens, publication in Hearst journals, a retreat to nature "like Thoreau"[43] — to the harsh realities of Soviet public life.

Qahhor portrays the members of the Soviet community as vaguely as the spaces they inhabit. Qahhor rarely offers physical descriptions of Soviet men, including Barat and Kenja, eager Komsomol poets and Saidiy's newspaper colleagues; Tesha, a miner and Saidiy's Komsomol mentee; or Ehson, Saidiy's childhood friend and a Moscow-trained doctor. *Mirage* includes far fewer scenes with these men than with conspiracy members. In fact, Ehson, the most well-rounded of all the "positive" characters, is away for his studies in Moscow for the vast majority of the novel; we get to know him primarily in absentia, through the letters he writes Saidiy. In the 1939 debate about *Mirage*, an otherwise sympathetic critic addressed this issue:

[41] Ibid., p. 139.
[42] Ibid., p. 364.
[43] Ibid., p. 222.

"Why did the positive types, like Ehson, Barat, and Tesha, turn out as dry and soulless (*jonsiz*) as mannequins? . . . The reader has a right to demand that [Qahhor] give blood and a living (*jonli*, lit, "ensouled") organism to the novel's skeletons dressed in positive costumes."[44] The absence of any pro-Soviet female characters is equally glaring.

This was not the first time Qahhor had been criticized for his failure to present heroes, despite his vividly drawn antiheroes. In 1935, the same year Qahhor won the novel competition, critic Saidg'ani Valiev argued that Qahhor's short stories had exhibited "mastery" in their representation of "negative types," but showed positive characters in a "one-sided" manner.[45] The Writers' Union's official assessment of *Mirage*, which led to its victory in the novel competition, acknowledged Qahhor's mastery of prose style but chastised him for his failure to represent a "positive hero."[46] But if Saidiy was an antihero, it was only because of his incapacity to integrate himself into a Soviet public: he represented less an anti-Soviet *subjectivity*, than an anti-Soviet *publicity*.

Qahhor began responding to such criticisms almost immediately after the novel was published. Between the original version, serialized between 1934 and 1936, and the first book edition in 1937, Qahhor made significant changes to help correct the imbalance between the unappealing proletarian public and seductive bourgeois nationalist counterpublic. Early in the 1937 edition, for example, a still-uncorrupted Saidiy visits a literary journal's office, where the editor Kenja offers kindly advice ("Write a short story about land reform") and helps Saidiy track down why his earlier submissions were rejected with no comment (a conspiracy member-cum-journal editor blocked their publication).[47] This chapter is absent from the journal run, as is

[44] O'zMDA, f. 2356, op. 1, d. 56, ll. 103-106.
[45] Saidg'ani Valiev, "Abdulla Qahhor to'g'risida," *O'zbekiston sovet adabiyoti* no. 6 (1935), pp. 47-54.
[46] O'zMDA, f. 2356, op. 1, d. 9, ll. 11-12.
[47] Qahhor, *Sarob* (1937), pp. 81-88 (chapter 15).

another chapter in which Saidiy visits the local Komsomol cell in an attempt to evade his service obligation.[48] In later editions, Qahhor and his editors further tilted the balance by excising passages about "old" public spaces, including the evocative flashback chapter about Saidiy's Jadid school.[49]

Still, although the proletarian public is a major theme of the novel, readers encounter it more through its absence than its presence. In the second half of *Mirage*, Saidiy no longer attends Komsomol meetings, proletarian literary discussions or university lectures. He stops working as a newspaper editor, and avoids his proletarian friends. And yet, the proletarian public continues continue to crop up in Saidiy's thoughts: he feels guilty about his absence from the university and the newspaper, and retreats gradually into a deep depression. Unaware of Saidiy's betrayal, Ehson tracks him down when he returns from Moscow, inviting him to the new opera house - the last proletarian public space the reader sees. Afterward, Ehson regales Saidiy with accounts of the site of Uzbekistan's new hydroelectric power plant, where Ehson has been invited to assist with public health initiatives. Ehson is full of enthusiasm about the power plant's new "workers' city", but as readers, we never encounter it. For the future, Ehson imagines a sterile scene: "peaceful buildings and laboratories, silent as the grave; countless glistening instruments; rabbits and dogs lying on top of experiment tables." But for now, even Ehson describes the site as nothing but a dusty, smoky construction site, crowded with people and full of noisy machines.[50] Saidiy finds himself at an impasse: he is caught between a conspiratorial dreamworld that is highly seductive, but lacking in substance, and a rectilinear Soviet world that

[48] Ibid., pp. 96-99 (chapter 18).
[49] Rahmon Qo'chqorov laments the removal of the chapter about the Jadid school from the editions of 1957 and 1967 in Rahmon Qo'chqorov, "Uch 'Sarob,'" in *Iste'dod Qadri* (Tashkent: G'ofur G'ulom nomidagi Adabiyot va san'at nashriyoti, 1989), pp. 3–31. The paragraph about the pilgrimage site is absent from the 1977 Russian edition, but remained in the Uzbek editions of 1957 and 1967. Abdulla Kakhkhar, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia v dvukh tomakh*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1997), pp. 1-230; Abdulla Qahhor, *Tanlangan asarlar,* vol. 2 (Tashkent: Yangi Asr Avlodi, 2016), p. 60.
[50] Qahhor, *Sarob* (1937), p. 325.

fails to appeal to him in any way, including sexually. There are, in fact, no real Soviet women in the novel. In *The Mirage*, the bourgeois public pulses with life, while the proletarian public sphere is ephemeral as a phantom. The anti-Soviet activists may be a dying breed, but they bleed red, while proletarian men are skeletons with no flesh. Bourgeois public spaces bring warmth, music, texture, while the proletarian public languishes under construction, destined anyway only for sterility and right angles.

Responding in 1938 to the barrage of criticism he had begun to receive, Qahhor wrote a letter in his own defense, addressing it to the editors of *Pravda* and the USSR Writers' Union. In perfect Russian, he admitted that, from the very beginning, he had known the topic of bourgeois nationalism to be "slippery and very dangerous." Still, he claimed, it mattered that the novel was at least realistic, if not entirely socialist:

> I considered thus: the bourgeois nationalists are the enemies of the Uzbek people - that much is true. If that is the case, then why should I not tell people what I know? If a pig stands before me grunting, why can't I call him a pig? Am I really such a bad artist that when I try to paint a pig, it will turn out to look like a cow or a silkworm instead? One of Chekhov's characters says, "Look the devil straight in the eyes, and if he is the devil, then say so — don't go digging around in Kant and Hegel for explanations."[51]

Qahhor argued that his critics should value *Mirage* not because of its philosophical sophistication, or, by implication, its Soviet ideological purity. Rather, he defended the novel as a tool to help the masses know their enemy. Although Qahhor does not elaborate on it, his oblique reference to Hegel is telling, since Qahhor's argument about the novel is, above all, dialectical. In order to advance to socialism, he implies, it is imperative to negate all that came before it. Unfortunately for Qahhor, Socialist Realism – especially the Socialist Realism of the late 1930s – demanded positivity first and foremost.

[51] RGALI F. 631, op. 6, d. 281, l. 8.

Ayniy's Slaves: The Persianate Public

In *Slaves*, Sadriddin Ayniy offered one positive model of a Central Asian proletarian public. But if the readers of Ayniy's competition entry expected his heroes to be from Uzbekistan, they would have been disappointed. They first encounter the protagonists of *Slaves* not in Tashkent or Kokand or even Ferghana, but in nineteenth-century Herat, part of modern-day Afghanistan. They are fruit farmers, growing melons, grapes, and apricots. It is fall, and Hasan's large extended family, men and women alike, are busy harvesting the fruit and laying it out to dry in the sunshine. Their numbers are diminished since a Turkmen slave raid the previous year, but there are still enough hands to do all the work, if they are sufficiently industrious. And that work brings them renown far beyond Herat. According to a brief excursus from the narrator, these dried apricots are famous in distant lands: in Iran, where the apricots are transported to be sold, they're called "Bukharan apricots"; in Bukhara, Samarkand, Ferghana, and Tashkent, the narrator points out, they're called "Herat apricots." From the start, then, Ayniy situates the historic cities of Uzbekistan not with reference to the Soviet Socialist Republic to which they now belong, but in a triangle of the historic hubs of Persianate learning, including cities that are part of Soviet Uzbekistan, and cities far beyond its borders.[52]

But these heroes appear only in Chapter Two — and Chapter Two is not the first time we hear of Herat. Chapter One of *Slaves* begins the novel by introducing readers to the enemy. Somewhere in the desert, surrounded by sand dunes, in a Turkmen settlement protected from the evil eye by the skulls of camels, goats, and sheep, an old man, Qilich Khalifa, concludes his prayers and turns to his guest: a trader named Abdurahmon. Between pots of tea and opium pipes served by silent women, Abdurahmon states his business. Trade is bad these days, Abdurahmon

[52] R. Amonov describes the geographical scope of Ayniy's works as spanning "from Badakhshan to Turkmenistan and from Turkestan to Iran and Afghanistan." See R. Amonov, "Geografiiai osori badeii ustod Ainī," from *Jashnnomai Ainī*, vol. 5 (Dushanbe: Nashriёti Akademiiai fanḥoi RSS Tojikiston, 1963), p. 16.

says; he's not making much money off the rugs and blankets his slaves and wives weave, and wool is hard to come by in these parts. Can Qilich khalifa offer any advice? The old man responds that he can. The wars in Afghanistan have made its borders porous, and Herat might be a good place for Abdurahmon to try his fortune with a raid. The agrarian idyll and the desert haunt; the industrious family and the grizzled patriarch; the sedentary workers and the rootless parasites: these are the binaries that structure the opening chapters of *Slaves.* The two worlds collide when Abdurahmon's horsemen descend on Hasan's fruit farm, capturing his entire family and carting them away to be sold as slaves in the Ark of Bukhara.

The rest of *Slaves* is a historical epic in five parts, tracing Hasan's family, its fellow slaves, and their descendants through a series of episodes that span generations. Over the course of five books, the Herati fruit farmers become Manghit Bukharan slaves, Turkestani sharecroppers, Red Army soldiers, and, finally, farmers on a collective cotton farm as the vanguard of Central Asia's working class.[53] Likewise, Ayniy clearly links the Turkmen raiders of Book I to the antiheroes of the later books — the Bukharan Emir, the greedy landowners and tax collectors, the clergy and the Tatar capitalists, the *bosmachi* rebels, and the wealthy peasants who attempt to bring down the collective farm. When Ayniy imagined the Central Asian "proletariat," then, he characterized it in terms of an agrarian Persianate community, rooted in a shared literary tradition, that spanned Soviet nations and extended beyond the borders of the Soviet Union.[54] In contrast, the "class enemies" are not just violators of proletarian agriculture, they are violators of proletarian culture. And yet, when those enemies are finally defeated, Ayniy leaves his readers in a moment of

[53] On the slave trade in Central Asia, see Jeff Eden, "Beyond the Bazaars: Geographies of the Slave Trade in Central Asia," *Modern Asian Studies* 51, no. 4 (July 2017): 919; Scott C. Levi, "Hindus beyond the Hindu Kush: Indians in the Central Asian Slave Trade," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 12, no. 3 (2002): 277–88.
[54] In highlighting the Persianate dimension of Soviet internationalism, I follow the work of Sam Hodgkin; see Hodgkin, "Revolutionary Springtimes"; Hodgkin, "Romance, Passion Play, Optimistic Tragedy"; Hodgkin, "Lāhūtī."

irresolution: the victory of the proletariat entails a challenge, both to Persianate culture, and to the proletarian model of masculinity.

Given the long time span and changing geographical scope covered in *Slaves*, many aspects of the workers' lifestyle change in the course of the novel. There are, however, a few things that remain constant. First, the workers are always closely connected to the land. Whether they grow fruit, grain, or cotton, they are always farmers. When they do raise livestock, such as sheep, the text notes that they supplement their herding with grain cultivation. In contrast, the class enemies are parasites who survive by exploiting the agricultural labor of the working class. Henceforth in my discussion of *Slaves*, when I refer to "workers," I mean the agrarian laborers that are the heroes of all five books of the novel.

Agriculture is not the only thing that defines Ayniy's working class, however. For Ayniy, agriculture is linked to the learned literary culture of the great cities of Bukhara, Samarkand, and Herat that frame the novel. The novel is studded with shorter forms produced by the worker: stories, fables, aphorisms, jokes, and, most of all, lyric verse. For Ayniy, verse — memorable and accessible, even to the illiterate masses — was the most proletarian of forms. As Samuel Hodgkin has observed, Ayniy inaugurated an era in which the image of "the good, politically-conscious Tajik citizen . . . was an instinctive singer of ghazals, [or lyric poems], which spontaneously poured out at moments of high emotion."[55] Accordingly, in moments of great pain and great desire, in situations of combat and romance, Ayniy's working-class heroes break out in verse and song. Working the fields for a cruel master, they trade verses; in breaks from work on the collective farm, they hold the Central Asian version of a poetry slam (*askiya*). Early in the novel, verse works often as a form of protest. For example, when an older slave concubine

[55] Hodgkin, "Revolutionary Springtimes," p. 284.

named Qolmoq is supplanted a younger slave wife, she effortlessly composes a *ruboiy*, or quatrain, while tending the kitchen fire:

> Thistles are good for the fire
> Qolmoq is good for a wife
> What an unmanly (*nomard*) thing
> To take a new lover when you've still got another."[56]

Later, when the same master instructs his foreman to arrange liaisons among childless female slaves and healthy male slaves, Qolmoq responds by changing the final line of the song:

> Thistles are good for the fire
> Qolmoq is good for a wife
> What an unmanly thing
> To force your own lover to marry.[57]

For Qolmoq, a powerless slave woman whose days are spent in drudgery and nights in sexual slavery, composing verses is the only way to register her protest. By repeating the word "unmanly," Qolmoq shows class enmity to be more than just a failure of economic justice; it is a pathology of masculinity as well.

But poetry is not just a protest tool: it reveals the slaves' humanity even in the face of their subservience. In the context of their forced "breeding," for example, a slave woman named Gulsum avers that women are not just for men's pleasure and childbearing. She dreams of building a companionate home with her lover, Neqadam. Stealing away in the night, they, compose quatrains. Gulsum begins, telling Neqadam she composed her verse while sitting along a dried-up irrigation canal:

> As water does not flow through the Suvoqar[canal],[58]
> So dry words do not quench the soul.
> I have a rose, all wilted;
> My nightingale does not even look at it.

[56] Ayniy, *Qullar* (1935), p. 59.
[57] Ibid., p. 88.
[58] "Suvoqar" literally means "that which through water flows."

The verse is no naive ditty - it is again a *ruboiy*, a form that traces back to illustrious Persian poets including Rumi, Sa'di, and Omar Khayyam. In using the motif of the nightingale and its beloved rose, Gulsum taps into a long lineage of Persian love poetry. Traditionally in Persian lyric, the lovestruck nightingale sings of its unrequited love to the cruel and inconstant beloved rose, whose thorns pierce the nightingale and cause it anguish. Here, Gulsum inverts the motif, turning the rose into the lover, left to wilt away, and the nightingale into the inattentive beloved. By changing the motif, Gulsum converts a lyrical mode that had almost always presumed a masculine speaker into one that can accommodate a feminine voice.[59]

Through its use of long-beloved verse forms and imagery, the poem places Gulsum in a broader Persianate tradition. This pattern continues throughout the book, with workers making references to the Iranian calendar, Central Asian history, Islamic cosmology, and Persian literary tradition. The text is laden with footnotes explaining everything from Manghit dynastic history to local topography, meteorology, and pre-Soviet bureaucracy. Ayniy's decades of scholarship and erudition do not go to waste, at least in the novel's Uzbek and Tajik versions. These references proved very difficult to convey outside Central Asia, and the 1977 Russian translation of *Slaves* omits many such references.[60]

At the same time, to a much greater degree than in his early career, in *Slaves*, Ayniy makes a serious effort to foreground a Central Asian "proletariat" over and against the elite. Gulsum's vocabulary is simple, and her composition has little in common with the intricately

[59] Although the vast majority of Persian love poetry presumed a male speaker, it is important to note that it did not always entail a female addressee. Much ink has been spilled on the homoerotic undertones of Persianate lyric poetry; for a useful summary, see Encyclopedia Iranica, "Homosexuality iii. In Persian Literature," *Encyclopædia Iranica*, XII/4, pp. 445-448 and XII/5, pp. 449-454, available online at http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/homosexuality-iii. Ayniy both creates a place for a female speaker and firmly situates the Persianate lyric in a heterosexual context.

[60] Sadriddin Aini. *Raby: roman*, Trans. Sergei Borodin (Dushanbe: Izd-vo "Irfon," 1977).

intertextual "Indian-style" verse that Ayniy would have encountered as a youth.[61] Even in his most erudite moments, Ayniy makes an effort to create a believable working class. After all, even an illiterate farmer can be expected to be familiar with the movements of the stars, the basics of Islamic cosmology, and the type of windstorm that might affect his crops.

Nowhere is this effort to create a working-class "culture" more evident than in Ayniy's representation of the Jadids to whom he once belonged. In Part III of the novel, which covers the period from 1917 to 1920, Ayniy introduces a Jadid character, Shokir, who encounters a group of farmers while traveling in disguise in 1917 on a secret mission against the Bukharan Emir. In the course of their conversation, it becomes clear that Shokir is completely clueless about the real plight of the "working class." Shokir expresses surprise that the shepherds' bread has hay in it, and the shepherds explain that their landlord has told them to stretch their grain by refraining from threshing it. He asks why the shepherds have salted their tea, and they respond that the water they have access to is so saline that it affects the flavor of their food. Despite his ignorance of the hardships that define their lifestyle, Shokir persists in condescending to the shepherds about trivial matters, such as their superstition against slicing bread with a knife and their unsanitary habit of sharing a spoon. The conversation with Shokir comes to a head when he embarks on a series of speeches to the shepherds about how important it is for them to adopt the Jadid program. He waxes eloquent about the value of universal education for raising the welfare of the nation, and, referring to the recent reforms undertaken in Iran and the Ottoman Empire, he excoriates the Bukharan Emir for his crimes against freedom (*hurriyat*). There is nary a Jadid talking point or catchphrase that Shokir fails to mention.

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[61] For a useful discussion of the "Indian style" that reached its apex in the early modern period, see Z. Safa, "Persian Literature in the Safavid Period." In *The Cambridge History of Iran*, vol. 6. Edited by Peter Jackson and Laurence Lockhart. Cambridge Histories Online. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, pp. 913-28.

The shepherds humor Shokir by listening to him, and even agree that the accusation that Jadids are infidels is unfounded. Nonetheless, they reject his transnational Islamic modernist program, replacing it, instead, with a new kind of internationalism. Drawing on their boundless reserves of folk literature, the shepherds tell parables articulating their suspicion that Shokir is not really interested in workers' advancement at all. Just as a foolish farmer might cut off his bull's head to prevent damage to its horns, they say, so Shokir is willing to sacrifice the workers for the sake of his misguided ideas about education and freedom (*hurriyat*). As one former slave, Qulmurod, argues in response to Shokir's claim that education will solve all his problems, "So you'll make everyone a mullah [through education], but isn't it the mullahs that are getting on our nerves already?"[62] As for "freedom," Qulmurod says, "Go ahead and rejoice from afar about your Turkey and Iran that have turned into paradise, but don't hope to see them in reality — you'll be disappointed." "All I know is what I've seen," continues Qulmorod, "and if Iran has become free and turned into a paradise, and if every citizen (*fuqaro*) can enter that paradise, then why are so many city-dwellers (*hamshahri*) coming here from there, seeking bread?"[63] Effectively, then, Qulmurod replaces Shokir's elite, Jadid cosmopolitanism with another type of cross-border connection: international solidarity among workers.

But this is not your stereotypical Soviet internationalism, linking the oppressed urban workers of, say, Moscow, Berlin, and New York. Ayniy integrates Qulmurod not into a European proletariat, but into a Persianate one, embracing the migrant workers, sedentary pastoralists, and peasants of Turkestan, Iran, and the Ottoman Empire. For four out of five of the

[62] Qulmurod is referring to the fact that Islamic clergy were the most prominent educated class in pre-Soviet Central Asia; "mullah" is shorthand for a highly educated person.
[63] "Fuqaro" is a technical term for a citizen, implying the rights and responsibilities of a participant in representative democracy. "Hamshahri," or "fellow city-dweller," is less technical, implying shared residence but no specific political theory. By making this shift in vocabulary, Qulmurod casts aspersions on Shokir's claim that the Ottoman and Iranian governments are really better for the common people than that of Manghit Bukhara. Ayniy, *Qullar* (1935), p. 182.

novel's books, Turkestan, not Uzbekistan, is the operative category. Ayniy's proletariat is international not only in the spatial sense that it crosses Soviet borders into Iran, but also in the sense that it incorporates Turkic and Persian speakers, Tajiks and Uzbeks. Importantly, although we know that Tajikness was a major preoccupation for Ayniy, in *Slaves* it is often unclear whether even the Soviet-era characters should be considered Tajiks or Uzbeks, especially in light of the fact that Ayniy published his own Tajik translation just one year after the Uzbek version.

In the context of a Stalinist nationality policy for which language was the key defining feature of a nation, the language of the novel also serves to drive home the Tajik-Uzbek linkage. When Ayniy's workers compose poetry and tell stories, their vocabulary is the shared language of Persianate culture, regardless of the language. In the slave woman's *ruboiy* about the nightingale and the rose, for example, the words "nightingale" (*bulbul*) and "rose" (*gul*) are cognates in Uzbek and Tajik, as is the word "soul" (*jon*). Of course, in verse forms that developed in a Persian-dominated context, a high proportion of cognates is not surprising. But even in normal dialogue, as well as in the narration of the novel, the language is Persian-inflected. Analyzing *Slaves* in Ayniy's Uzbek original and Tajik translation, linguist H. Tursunova has identified 705 "parallel" phrases in *Slaves,* in addition to the wide variety of cognate Tajik-Uzbek vocabulary. According to her analysis, about two thirds of these phrases are direct cognates; the other third consists of a combination of calques and near-equivalents.[64] The novel blurs the distinction between Uzbek and Tajik as much as possible.[65]

[64] Husniya Tursunova, *Tadqiqi Muqoisavii Frazeologizmhoi Paralleli Zabonhoi Tojiki va Uzbeki (dar Asosi Asari S. Ainii Ghulomon/Qullar)* (Dushanbe: Donish, 1979), p. 25.

[65] In later years, Ayniy was christened the father of Tajik literature, and his contribution to the formation of Uzbek literature was correspondingly downplayed. When Soviet scholars noted this aspect of his work, they cited it as evidence of the Uzbeks and Tajiks as "brother nations." For example, this aspect of Ayniy's work is the subject of Koshchanov, "Pisatel' dvukh literatur."

But Ayniy's choice to elevate the Persianate community does not efface all national boundaries; it merely shifts them. By maximizing the Persian vocabulary in the Uzbek version of *Slaves*, Ayniy correspondingly downplayed the other major element of the Uzbek language: Turkic.[66] In a moment of Bolshevik panic about "pan-Turkism," which linked the sedentary Turkic-speakers of Transoxiana and Western China with the Turks of Republican Turkey and the pastoral nomads of the Eurasian heartlands, this ambivalence toward the other Turkic nations of Eurasia insulated *Slaves* from the wrong kind of internationalism. In *Slaves,* therefore, Kyrgyz and Turkmens are invariably parasites, like Abdurahmon who enslaves the Herati family.[67] Later, "Kazakh" bounty hunters assist in returning escaped slaves, and "Kazakhs" sell arms to the White Army.[68] Tatars, the primary perpetrators of pan-Turkist conspiracy in Soviet discourse, fare no better: in one extensive monologue set around the early 1860s, a nameless "Tatar *boy*" defends a potential Russian conquest of Central Asia, arguing that the infrastructure it brings will be good for trade, and that even slaves "emancipated" by the tsar will continue to be profitable to merchants like himself. Ayniy does not denounce Kazakhs, Tatars, and Turkmen as such — they are, after all, officially recognized nationalities of the Soviet Union. But insofar as they represent parasitic nomads and class oppressors, they are excluded from Ayniy's proletariat. For Ayniy, the proletarian international that matters is Persianate.

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[66] Arabic vocabulary is also an important component of the Uzbek language, but in this case, it is difficult to disaggregate from Persian vocabulary, since any Arabic vocabulary would be shared between Uzbek and Tajik. It is worth noting, however, that Ayniy downplays both religious themes and religious language, which minimizes the proportion of Arabic vocabulary in the text.

[67] To a degree, this antipathy toward nomads accorded with the Bolshevik policy of sedentarization, which toggled between paternalistic claims that nomadism was more "primitive" and therefore backward; and more hostile understandings of nomads as rapacious predators toward the simple sedentary folk of Central Asia. On Soviet attitudes toward nomadism, see Edgar, *Tribal Nation* and Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe*, especially pp. 97-98. "Turkmen" meant very different things in early 19th century Turkestan, in which Part I of *Slaves* is set, and in 1930s Uzbekistan. This is a reality of which Ayniy was surely aware, but a large portion of his desired readership would not have grasped the distinction. Although Ayniy uses footnotes liberally, he chose not to clarify the definition of "Turkmen" here, which suggests that he did not consider it important.

[68] Ayniy, *Qullar* (1935), p. 79.

In contrast to the proletarians who gush forth verse in the Persianate tradition, in the entire novel, there is but one scene in which class enemies participate in any way in the production of verse. After the successful raid on Herat, Abdurahmon and Qilich khalifa hold a feast, where, in full view of their starving slaves, they gorge themselves on meat and drink wine until their bellies are swollen. Meanwhile, they are entertained by a Turkic epic poet (*baxshi*), who lauds their martial prowess. "Where Qilich's men race their horses/ The summer pastures (*yaylov*) of Astarabad will turn to desert. . . Oh bird of Herat, do not fly about, and do not make a sound/ Abdurahmon the horseman has come, your life has ended!" Here, the baxshi underscores the class enemies as the enemies of all cultivated lands, turning even Turkmen grasslands to desert. Moreover, they are about to murder the songbirds of cultured Herat.[69] So pleased are the Turkmen raiders with this song that they reward the *baxshi* with a sheep and a three-year-old slave girl. In contrast to the slaves, who compose lyrics that convey their feelings or portray nature, the class enemies are consumers of poetry, just as they are gluttonous consumers of food. And this is no Persianate lyric — it is the coarse, heartless epic narrative of Central Asia's nomads, produced not from deeply felt emotion, but for earnings.

From the very beginning of the novel, women are equal participants with men in labor and cultural production alike. In contrast, for most of the novel, the class enemy is masculine: the *boys*, mullahs, nomadic raiders, and wealthy capitalists are exploiters of women, and their wives, who often harken from slave stock, are identified more with the workers than the oppressors. However, this changes in Book 5, which covers the periods of land reform and collectivization. By the time land reform begins, male class enemies are clearly on their way out. They huddle in

[69] Many nomadic pastoralists practiced a combination of agriculture and herding, cultivating seasonal crops such as millet, and migrating between summer pastures (*yaylov*) and winter pastures (*qishlaq*). On the varieties of nomadism, see Anatoly M. Khazanov, *Nomads and the Outside World* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994).

dark guest rooms, plotting their revenge, while in the outside world, socialism is reshaping the countryside in ways they cannot control. By contrast, their wives and daughters are welcomed into the new collective with open arms.

Such a woman is Qutbiya, the daughter of a wealthy peasant, who attracts the affections of Qodir Ergash, the descendant of slaves and a major activist for the collective farm. Qodir Ergash knows that the most strategic alliance would be a marriage to Fotima, a dutiful Komsomol member. Still, he is unable to resist the magnetic attraction Qutbiya exerts toward him. Trusting her declaration of repentance, as well as her feminine wiles, Qodir Ergash secretly agrees at a rendezvous in the dark to marry Qutbiya: "As Qutbiya's thin lips moved toward Qodir and joined with his lips, Qodir gave up his resistance and said to himself with joy, 'I have brought a petit bourgeois (*meshchanka*) woman into socialist construction'."[70] As the remainder of Book 5 reveals, however, Qutbiya's repentance is insincere, and she uses her connection to Qodir to sabotage collectivization in every way possible. Even Qutbiya's name, from an Arabic root meaning "magnetic pole" or "axis," serves to underscore her role as an alternative — and pernicious — point of orientation for the working class.[71] Much as Munisxon did for Saidiy, then, the class enemy worms its way into socialism through an attractive woman.

The novel ends with an emotionally charged scene at a Red Teahouse, in which Qutbiya is revealed as the class enemy she truly is. Fotima, newly vindicated, leads the collective farmers in a series of five slogans, all lauding Stalin, and laden with borrowed Russian terminology. "Long live great Stalin, leader of the world proletariat!/ Long live the shock-working brigadier and

[70] Ayniy, *Qullar* (1935), p. 412.

[71] The term "qutb" has an extensive history in astronomy and science, as well as in Sufi thought, where the *qutb* is a figure toward which the mystical search is directed. See P. Kunitzsch and F. D Jong, "al-Ḳuṭb", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, eds. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 10 July 2019.

organizer of collective farm construction, our Stalin!"[72] Qodir and Qutbiya, meanwhile, form a dramatic tableau, motionless and speechless:

> Only two people did not move a muscle. One of them, Qutbiya, had turned into a corpse and fallen on the floor; the other was Qodir Ergash, a victor, but like a heroic victor who did not comprehend his own victory, he stood coolly smiling, with his hands in his pockets.[73]

At the end of the novel, then, at the moment of proletarian victory, Qodir Ergash encounters a block. Fotima is inducted into the world of Stalin's proletarian international, where the Persianate lyric is superseded by the Stalinist slogan. Qodir Ergash, meanwhile, is left in an impossible position. To join Fotima, to enter the proletarian public, Qodir Ergash is forced to abandon his masculinity, relinquishing heterosexual attraction in favor of companionate solidarity among workers of both sexes.[74]

Shams's The Law: The Proletarian Brotherhood

Of all the 1934 prizewinners, Shams followed the novel competition guidelines most scrupulously. The hero of *The Law,* a young factory worker named Sodiq, was proletarian in the most technical sense, and the novel foregrounded not Ayniy's pre-revolutionary Persianate world, nor the decadent counterpublic of Qahhor's pan-Turkist conspiracy, but precisely what the competition had called for: the fight for "proletarian dictatorship." In Shams's case, this meant the conflict in Kokand from World War I until the Bolshevik victory.[75] And yet,

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[72] Ayniy, *Qullar* (1935), p. 476.
[73] Ibid.
[74] This ending was sufficiently disconcerting that it was replaced in later versions of *Slaves*. See, for example, its later Russian edition, Aini, *Raby*, trans. Borodin.
[75] As a result of the checkered publication history of *The Law*, there is no authoritative manuscript of the novel. The one held by the Alisher Navoiy Literary Museum archive in Tashkent (hereafter ANLM), which is the only extant copy from Shams's own lifetime that I have been able to find, is missing pages and, in many portions, illegible due to Shams's own markings. The only published version, from a 1958 collected works, is not a critical edition; it appears merely to reproduce most of the legible portions of the ANLM copy, with very little editorial effort. See *Huquq*, from Shams, *Tanlangan Asarlar*, pp. 271-481. Whenever possible, I have checked quotes and facts against

inextricably intertwined with the proletarians' struggle is Sodiq's more personal struggle: his persistent efforts to find and emancipate his beloved, Nodira, from the clutches of the class enemies that have sullied her reputation. This most superficially ideological novel turned out to rely, not on the principles of class conflict, but on a logic of masculinity that generated the most potent affective hubs of the novel.

From the very beginning of the novel, Sodiq's proletarianness and his masculinity are closely intertwined. When the novel opens, young Sodiq, imprisoned for his role in organizing a rebellion against the WWI draft in Turkestan, helps to orchestrate a prison break and returns stealthily to his hometown. He slips by night into the home of his old work friend, Egamberdi, where, over the course of several intense days, he attempts to find out what has happened during the three months he was away. First, he asks after his ailing father and grandmother, but without him to support them, he learns, they both have died. After overcoming the shock of their death, he asks after the factory and learns that since he and his fellow organizers were arrested there has been no more "conflict or unrest" (*janjal, to'polon*). Finally, by the light of the moon, Sodiq asks after a girl, Nodira. Egamberdi tells Sodiq that scandalous rumors began to circulate about her soon after Sodiq's departure: "Nodira's really turned bad, she sleeps with young men every night, Nodira needs to be driven from the neighborhood, she's a dirty girl, a thousand curses be upon such young Muslims."[76] Unable to bear the social stigma, Nodira and her mother, Sora xola, have disappeared.[77] Perhaps, Egamberdi conjectures, they fled to a village, where they could hide in anonymity. Just as Sodiq's father and grandmother relied on him for their lives and livelihoods, Nodira relied on Sodiq for her reputation. From the beginning of the novel, then,

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the earliest version from the ANLM. Citations to the 1959 edition are the only available copies of the given passage. I have cited page number (rather than *list*) when referring to the archival copy of *The Law*.

[76] ANLM, Shams fond, d. 15, l. 32.

[77] *Xola* is not a name but a title. It means "aunt" but is used to refer to any woman of the speaker's parents' generation.

Sodiq's work as a labor organizer is linked to his effort to maintain the sexual purity — or at least, the reputation for sexual purity — of his chosen beloved. For the remainder of the novel, the struggle to restore Nodira's sexual honor, or *nomus*, becomes a driving force for the plot.

This emphasis was not an idiosyncrasy particular to Shams. By the time Shams wrote *The Law*, local understandings of female honor had been in crisis for some time. At the time the Bolsheviks prevailed in Central Asia, it was widely understood among the local Muslim population that a "respectable" woman did not appear unveiled in public, and socialized primarily in single-gender settings.[78] Public musical or dance performance was out of the question for "respectable" Muslim women in pre-Bolshevik Turkestan, and while women's education was available to some elites, it occurred only in strictly sex-segregated settings. Any breach of these norms threatened the *nomus,* or honor and respectability, of the woman in question. The Hujum "attack" on women's seclusion and veiling in 1927 put forward an aggressive challenge to these norms, employing drastic measures such as mass unveiling ceremonies. After the violent counter-Hujum, some of the most drastic measures were rolled back. But even the legislative measures that remained - changes in family law, mass education for women, non-mandatory unveiling - drastically threatened the norms of *nomus.* When Shams wrote *The Law*, then, Central Asians were still attempting to negotiate how a woman could participate in the Soviet public while remaining respectable in their families and communities.[79]

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[78] In noting the Islamic context of *nomus*, I do not mean to suggest that Islam as a religion necessarily inhibits women's autonomy. Indeed, Leila Ahmed has argued that many of the sexual proscriptions and gender-related rules that are attributed to "Islam" should actually be understood as the trappings of the cultures into which that religion was adopted. In the modern world, in fact, Ahmed argues that colonial "feminist" efforts had the reverse effect, leading local Muslim leaders to double down on misogynistic practices that could otherwise have been dispensed with more easily. See Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). In other words, there are many Islamic feminisms and misogynies, and none of them should be taken as essential to the religion as such.

[79] For a discussion of female honor in Central Asia and how it was negotiated under new Soviet policies, with special reference to woman writers, see Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan,* especially pp. 119-122. In the early Turkish Republic, gender-related policies entailed strikingly similar negotiations around *nomus*; see three articles by

When Shams foregrounded Nodira's *nomus* he responded to a debate that was far from resolved in the society of Uzbekistan.

To be sure, on the most straightforward level, *The Law* is a novel of political revolution. It dramatizes the struggle for Bolshevik supremacy in Shams's native city of Kokand, where local clergy and intelligentsia had put up some of Central Asia's most organized resistance.[80] In *The Law*, Shams attempted to follow the Party line that began to emerge in the early 1920s: namely, that workers organized the anti-draft resistance and that the clerical establishment attempted to co-opt it; and that the local government, or Shuroi Islomiya, was no more than a front for the multinational bourgeoisie to join their imperial allies in consolidating a stranglehold on the proletariat. Although the final pages of the novel are now lost, the outcome of this story is clear in advance, as well as in the mass-market excerpts from the novel: by fighting shoulder to shoulder with his fellow proletarians, Sodiq secures the domination of the proletariat over those who would oppress them.[81]

It was this historical narrative that made Shams's novel technically eligible for the competition prize. But when the members of the novel competition jury recommended *The Law* for the third prize in 1934, they did not mention the extended storyline outlining Sodiq's participation in the pro-Bolshevik forces and his activism against the bosses and the clergy. Instead, they commended Shams's moving presentation of Sodiq's personal relationships: his

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A. Holly Shissler: Ada Holland Shissler, "Beauty Is Nothing to Be Ashamed Of: Beauty Contests As Tools of Women's Liberation in Early Republican Turkey," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, no. 1 (2004): 107; Ada Holland Shissler, "'If You Ask Me': Sabiha Sertel's Advice Column, Gender Equity, and Social Engineering in the Early Turkish Republic," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, no. 2 (2007): 1; Ada Holland Shissler, "Womanhood Is Not for Sale: Sabiha Zekeriya Sertel Against Prostitution and for Women's Employment," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies*, no. 3 (2008): 12.

[80] There are still many gaps in our understanding of the Kokand Autonomy, but a concise English-language discussion can be found in Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, pp. 72-83, and in D. A. Alimova and R. Ia. Radzhapova, eds., *Turkestan v nachale XX veka: k istorii istokov natsional'noi nezavisimosti* (Tashkent: Shark, 2000), pp. 80-112.

[81] What appears to be the last chapter of the novel, entitled "The Bolsheviks Come Out On Top," is published in a paperback brochure marketed to "beginning readers," a series which I discuss below. The chapter concludes with a Bolshevik flag being hung on Sodiq's factory, and all the workers of the factory waving red ribbons with joy. See Husayn Shams, *Haqqoniyat* (Tashkent: O'zSSR Davlat Nashriyoti, 1937), pp. 65-75.

father, from whose sufferings he "[grew] up to hate the factory bosses"; and Nodira, whose "torture" at the hands of a class enemy brought him to class consciousness.[82] Sodiq's father, who dies at the beginning of the story, barely figures in the majority of the novel. According to the jury, then, *The Law* won the novel prize not for its historical accuracy or its ideological purity, but for its emotional intensity — and, particularly, the emotional intensity of Nodira's story.

Still, like *The Mirage* and *Slaves*, *The Law* makes a conscious effort to imagine a proletariat for Uzbekistan. For Shams, Central Asia's proletariat is linked to the global anti-capitalist struggle, with its centers in Germany and the Russian metropole. Shams takes great pains to show the multinational provenance of the factory workers who fight for Kokand alongside Sodiq. In prison, Sodiq gets his first introduction to the global proletariat through "Meta" — evidently "Mitya or Mitrofan"[83] — a "Russian boy" who had "learned to speak Muslim as smoothly as flowing water.[84]" From Meta, Sodiq learns of Lenin, of his work in "Moskop" (Moscow) and "Girman" (Germany).[85] Another fellow-prisoner, Salim the thief, teaches Sodiq how to read and write in "no'g'oycha," or Tatar.[86] Sodiq's friends from the Kokand factory are also a multinational bunch, including Yashka and Grishka, whose "bright-blue eyes" are said to "embolden" Sodiq. Other factory friends include Haydar "the No'g'oy," or Crimean Tatar; and Faxri, whose blond mustache, sculpted nose, and mountain province, Karategin, give him away as a Tajik.[87] The spontaneous internationalism of this proletariat is only underscored by the conspiratorial internationalism of their capitalist enemies: Kokand's wealthy men (*bais*) get help from Austrian medics, British colonialists, Tatar merchants, and Russian capitalists.

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[82] O'zMDA F. 2356, op. 1, d. 9, ll. 12-13.
[83] Shams, *Tanlangan Asarlar*, p. 279.
[84] The quote is "Musurmonchani [sic] suv qilib ichib yuborgan edi." ANLM, Shams fond, d. 15, l. 23.
[85] ANLM, Shams fond, d. 15, l. 25.
[86] "Nogay" refers specifically to Turkic speakers from Crimea; see Kamp, *The New Woman,* p. 248n10.
[87] ANLM, Shams fond, d. 16, p. 113. The 1959 edition simply summarizes all these hints in an epithet: Faxri "the Tajik." See Shams, *Tanlangan Asarlar*, p. 321.

There is one commonality between the "proletariats" put forward by Shams, Ayniy, and Qahhor: they are all male, without a single woman worker among them. In fact, in *The Law*, the proletarians' homosocial bond is solidified by their manly defense of helpless women. When Sodiq's friends see his despondency about Nodira's disgrace, for example, independently of Sodiq they hatch a secret plan to liberate her from the brothel. Although their effort ultimately fails, it knits the group together in a shared effort to free the oppressed woman. Part III of *The Law* consists almost entirely of the suspenseful story of the defense of Sodiq's factory, which is besieged by the Shorai Islomiya. The soldiers are all men; within the factory cower groups of women and children. Sodiq and his "brothers" are thus defined more by their defense of women than their factory work. In fact, there are no scenes of factory labor in the novel, and in terms of its relevance to the plot, the factory they defend may as well be a medieval fortress. The novel calls Sodiq's worker prisonmates "brothers," and in the novel, proletarians truly are a band of brothers.[88]

It must be acknowledged that Nodira's story — the only female-oriented storyline in the novel — is not completely devoid of class categories. Her disgrace comes directly at the hand of class enemies, and she is the fatherless daughter of a poor family. However, Nodira's struggle is presented primarily in terms not of class, but of gender. Nodira and her mother, Sora xola, are destitute because they lack the protection of a breadwinning father and husband. After her husband's death, Sora turns to gendered forms of labor: she supports herself and Nodira for some time as a washerwoman, but eventually, in order to avoid destitution, she takes on a clandestine lover who helps to support her. After that lover dies, she hopes that a marital alliance between Nodira and Sodiq will secure her and Nodira's future. But when Sodiq goes to prison, Nodira is first aggressively wooed, then offered money for sex, and, when she refuses, brutally gang-raped

[88] ANLM, Shams fond, d. 15, l. 29.

at the instigation of Sodiq's arch-enemy, the merchant's son Mirzaqosim. Because of Mirzaqosim's machinations, Nodira finally ends up, involuntarily, with her first paid work – in a brothel. Although now a "worker" in the technical sense — but not by Bolshevik standards — she remains first and foremost a woman, not a proletarian. If the historical storyline was governed by class conflict, Nodira's story is governed by gender politics.

The profound linkage between masculinity and proletarianness comes out in some of the most suspenseful chapters of the novel, in which Sodiq's worker friends attempt to rescue Nodira from the brothel. When Sodiq's worker-friends come to the brothel, they first encounter her in a state of abject femininity: posing as prospective customers, Sodiq's friends ask the madam to see Nodira, and are told to wait because she already has a customer. The scene emphasizes Nodira's physical appearance: the madam notes that Nodira is one of the two most beautiful women in the brothel, and offers Sodiq's friends a virgin as an equivalent alternative if they prefer not to wait. When Sodiq's friends are finally admitted to Nodira's quarters, her physical attractiveness is just an extension of the sumptuousness of her surroundings. The guest room where she receives Sodiq's friends is adorned with copper dishes, "piles and piles" of rugs, silk mattresses, and musical instruments hung on the walls.[89] In contrast to Nodira, a decorative and passive woman, the madam emphasizes the masculinity of Sodiq's friends to Nodira: "Make your brothers glad, Nodira! These brothers of yours are some of our city's brave young men!"[90]

After the madam departs, leaving her alone with Sodiq's friends, for a short while Nodira continues to model passive femininity. When they propose an escape, Nodira casts down her eyes and expresses doubt that such a plan could ever succeed. But all that changes when Nodira follows Toshpo'lat's barked command to go with him into the curtained corner of the room

[89] ANLM, Shams fond, d. 16, p. 157.
[90] ANLM, Shams fond, d. 16, p. 158.

(*chimildiq*) reserved for intercourse. Minutes later, not Nodira, but a "very youthful little young man" (*yoshgina bir yigitcha*) emerges with Toshpo'lat from the curtains.[91] As if he has forgotten something, that "young man" returns briefly into the curtains, bringing out a knife and sheath. Symbolically, then, Nodira is only inducted into the proletarian brotherhood through becoming a man. The process culminates with her obtaining of a phallus-knife; and the mechanism of that transformation is her symbolic intercourse with the (male) proletarian.

Unfortunately for Sodiq, Nodira's emancipation does not last, and once apprehended by the bourgeois police (*mirshab*), she returns to her abject femininity. Her next form of captivity, however, further underscores the proletariat's masculinity, this time by comparison to its un-masculine class enemies. After staying in jail for several days, Nodira is given as a wife to a local official (*mingboshi*) named Sarimsoqxo'ja. The description of Sarimsoqxo'ja emphasizes his apparent virility: he is known for cycling through wives, keeping from three to five wives at any given time; and even beyond his wives, he has a reputation for his womanizing (*xotinbozlik*). But that virility is just an appearance with no substance, for despite all his sexual escapades, Sarimsoqxo'ja does not have a single child.[92] Out of his desire to dispel the gossip about his childlessness, Sarimsoqxo'ja takes Nodira as his wife. Nodira does not oblige him by becoming pregnant - but she does manage to garner special treatment from him by feigning pregnancy symptoms. And Sarimsoqxo'ja is not the only un-masculine class enemy. Throughout the novel, Shams emphasizes the effeminacy of bourgeois characters. As a teenager, for example, Sodiq's enemy Mirzaqosim loses badly in a fistfight with Sodiq. Once the civil war breaks out, the proletarians bravely fall into formation, while the class enemies, for the most part, enlist ignorant

[91] Shams, *Tanlangan Asarlar*, p. 351.
[92] ANLM, Shams fond, d. 17, p. 219.

villagers as mercenaries. Even at the brothel, Nodira, cross-dressed and wielding her knife, is more of a man than the bourgeoisie, who fail to take up arms themselves.

Nowhere is Shams's intense preoccupation with gender politics more clear than in the terms he uses to describe Nodira's struggle - the language not of class conflict, but of gendered respectability. The term *nomus* appears first in the account of Nodira's demise: according to Egamberdi, Sora xola left town because her "nomus" could not bear the destruction of Nodira's reputation.[93] When the wealthy villain, Mirzaqosim, hires a go-between to secure Nodira's sexual services, he openly states, "There are very few people left who would stand on *nomus* in the face of hunger and duress."[94] When Sora xola rejects that go-between, she does so for fear of "*nomus* and the tortures of the day of judgment."[95] Furthermore, around the term *nomus* arises an extensive vocabulary of purity. Nodira is repeatedly said to be "disgraced" (*sharmanda; sharmandayu sharmisor*); the wealthy perpetrators of that disgrace are called "filthy" (*iflos*) and "dogs," epithets that are particularly offensive from the perspective of Islamic law. In conversation with a friend, Sodiq demands "justice" (*insof*) for Nodira, and the friend responds that, by marrying Nodira, he can make her ritually pure (*halol*) again. With reference to Nodira, Shams returns over and over to the Islamicate language of ritual purity.

Shams's use of this vocabulary is particularly striking in light of the corresponding lack of the language of class warfare and, more generally, of historical detail. Writing in 1937, the most brutal reviewer of *The Law*, Cheprunov, eviscerated Shams for his many "errors." For instance, instead of more technical terms – strike, uprising, demonstration, revolution – Shams consistently used the onomatopoeic Uzbek word *janjal*, meaning "fight" or "uproar." Too often,

[93] The phrase is "nomusiga chidolmay, qizini olib, qishloqqa qochib ketganmish." ANLM, Shams fond, d. 15, l. 32.
[94] This passage comes from pages that are now missing from the archival version. See Shams, *Tanlangan Asarlar*, p. 310.
[95] "nomus, ruz-qiyomat azobi." ANLM, Shams fond, d. 16, p. 100.

in Cheprunov's view, Shams avoided terms like "proletarian" or "worker" in favor of the less explicitly Communist term *kambag'al*, or "poor person."[96] According to Cheprunov, Shams confused the February Revolution with the rise of the Shuroi Islomiya, and failed to distinguish between Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, and SR's.[97] In other moments, he noted, Shams made strange distortions of time and space. In one case, a character predicted already in 1916 that Kerenskii would come to power and that Tsar Nicholas II would abdicate the throne — events that, in reality, did not occur until 1917.[98] And this was not just about Cheprunov's peevishness: a kinder 1937 reviewer, Usmonov, also noted the "vagueness of some historical events and the confusion of one event with another[99]." Meanwhile a member of a writers' brigade that visited from Russia in 1937 remarked upon the many factual inaccuracies of Shams's novel, concluding that the novel was "weak from a literary standpoint, politically, and in every way" (*literaturno politicheski i vsiacheski slabyi*).[100] He even claimed that no one actually read the novel before awarding it the prize.[101]

However marginalized they may have been, in the Soviet context Alexandra Kollontai and her followers had set a precedent for overturning repressive sexual mores as part of class struggle.[102] This is not the case for Shams. Shams made no attempt to dispense with or call into

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[96] ANLM, Shams fond, d. 231, p. 7.
[97] Ibid., p. 2. Based on Shams's overview of the novel's publication history in ANLM, Shams fond, d. 259, I conjecture this is Boris Cheprunov's 1937 review of the novel. The archival version is a typewritten document and appears to be intended for internal use within the Writers' Union. I have found no published version.
[98] To be sure, many of these "errors" were actually failures properly to apply a Bolshevik teleological reading to the events Shams had personally witnessed: in 1917, it would certainly have been difficult to distinguish a "February Revolution" or an "SR" in Kokand's political setting.
[99] ANLM, Shams fond, d. 230, l.7. This review is undated, but internal evidence suggests it was written around the same time as Cheprunov's review; certainly, no earlier than January 1937, because it refers to the 1936 edition of *The Law*.
[100] RGALI, f. 631, op. 6, d. 198, ll. 24-28.
[101] Ibid., l. 27.
[102] On the effort to reimagine the family and sexuality in the early Soviet period, see Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Eric Naiman, *Sex in Public: The Incarnation of Early Soviet Ideology* (Princeton, N.J.; Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1999). For Kollontai's own works on the topic, see Alexandra Kollontai, *Selected Writings of*

question the language of *nomus*; instead, he attempted to redefine it to include a poor woman once ensnared by prostitution and a helpless mother who takes on a lover in order to feed her family. These situations do not challenge the discourse of *nomus*. To the contrary, they reinforce it by showing class enemies to be its primary offenders. The class enemies' violation of helpless women is their primary crime, and, correspondingly, the proletarians' job is not to overturn, but to reinstate *nomus* as the reigning standard in the face of its bourgeois violations. From the vantage point of the late 1930s, Shams's job had been to transform a *janjal* into a revolution, the *kambag'al* into a proletariat. But in 1933, that revolution was still all too nebulous and un-revolutionary. So Shams latched onto the script he found most potent: violated women and masculine rescuers.

It would be simple at this point simply to conclude that *The Law* is not "really" about proletarians at all.[103] It eschews most of the technical language of class conflict in favor of a dense web of vocabulary about ritual purity and sexual respectability. It offers a historical narrative riddled with logical holes and factual errors, while its romantic subplot is so engaging that the competition judges cited it specifically in awarding *The Law* its prize. But this is not a zero-sum situation. Nodira's struggle may be defined primarily by her gender, not her class; but for Sodiq, his class status is so imbricated with his masculinity as to be inseparable from it. Sodiq, unlike Nodira, is both proletarian and lover; his opponents are both class enemies and sexual rivals. For Shams, then, the imagined public is a "proletariat," in the most technical sense, but the proletariat is inherently male, and it maps neatly onto his own fantasies of helpless women, besmirched honor, and manly rescuers.

Alexandra Kollontai (Westport, Conn: L. Hill, 1977).

[103] Consider the parallels with Gregory Massell's argument concerning gender-related in Central Asia in Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat.*

The problem, then, is not that *The Law* is insufficiently proletarian. The problem is that the attraction of the proletariat derives from its masculinity, excluding women. Cheprunov touched on this issue when he argued that Sodiq's emotions, like those of his fellow workers, were "primitive and savage" (*primitivny, pervobytny*), particularly with reference to Nodira. "What a strange, zoological feeling," said Cheprunov of Sodiq's intense sexual feelings for her. "Sodiq is a man of the moment. He lives only in the moment."[104] If *The Law* was to succeed as a work of Soviet literature, in Cheprunov's view, Sodiq's emotions needed to be reworked. He needed to become not the spontaneous, hyper-masculine hero propelled by his sex drive, but a conscious hero, who progressed through "life lessons" in the course of the story.

Responding to his critics in March 1937, Shams attributed his "failings" to the rushed time frame in which he had composed *The Law*, and promised to correct his errors if the Writers' Union offered him a paid sabbatical to that end.[105] It is unclear whether Shams ever received the desired sabbatical, but no matter the circumstances, Shams did end up taking a pen to his galley proof. In Arabic and Latin scripts, Shams added words, phrases, and extended passages; he scribbled out entire paragraphs and chapters until they were completely illegible; he corrected major errors. By the time he was finished, though, Shams had been excised and reinstated, much chastened, to the Writers' Union during the Great Purge. The novel was never published until 1958, fifteen years after Shams's death. To this day, the novel's ending is missing as it appeared in its full edition, and, although Shams expressed an intention to turn *The Law* into the first part of a trilogy, those plans never materialized. Perhaps, had he lived to write Volumes II and III, Shams would have found a way to tame the hyper-masculine impulses of his proletarians, to

[104] ANLM, Shams fond, d. 231, l. 5.
[105] ANLM, Shams fond, d. 258.

induct Nodira and her sisters into the community of workers. As it stands, the Uzbek proletarian public that Shams imagined in *The Law* was exclusively and intensely masculine.

Addressing the Masses

So far, I have used close readings of the three successful competition novels to demonstrate how each author portrayed and addressed a socialist public. But this was only part of the effort to create a mass public. At the same time as the Writers' Union announced the novel competition, it began increasing its efforts to reach the masses with literature, and the novels became part of that effort. While it took years — in Shams's case, more than 20 years — for full editions of the novels to be published, smaller excerpts appeared in newspapers, magazines, and brochures, all targeted toward the masses. One of the major venues for this effort was the periodical press. The illustrated journal *Flower Garden* (*Mosholo/ Guliston*) published excerpts from all three competition novels, highlighting, in Qahhor's case, a scene involving one of the few "positive" peasant characters, and, in Shams's case, showing a battle scene in the struggle for Kokand.[106] *Cultural Revolution (Madaniy Inqilob*), the organ of the People's Commissariat for Education (Narkompros) oriented toward teachers, published an episode from *The Mirage* in which, according to an introductory preface, Saidiy unsuccessfully attempted to win over to his conspiracy "a member of the old intelligentsia [*eski ziyoli*], Salohiddin, who had converted to the Soviet platform and worked for it in good faith."[107] *New Ferghana* newspaper published a chapter from *The Law* detailing the mob killing of a Bolshevik agitator against the Sho'rai

[106] Husayn Shams, "Huquq: Romandan parcha," from *Mosholo*, no. 3 (1934), p. 23ff; Sadriddin Ayniy, from *Mosholo*, 1934, no. 1; Abdulla Qahhor, "Muvaffaqiyatsizlik: *Sarob* nomli romanidan," from *Guliston,* no. 3 (1935), pp. 16-18.
[107] Abdulla Qahhor, "Qarorli huruvat," *Madaniy Inqilob*, Nov. 7, 1934, pp. 3-4.

Islomiya.[108] In short, newspapers selected excerpts that were particularly relevant to their target audiences, whether rank-and-file workers or educators.

If a reader's interest was piqued, there were other ways to access further excerpts of the novels. *The Mirage* first appeared in serialized form in the official organ of the Uzbekistan Writers' Union, as were portions of *Slaves*. Before the novels appeared in book form, the journal runs presumably served as the authoritative edition. A curriculum produced by the Uzbekistan Writers' Union for literary circles included Ayniy's *Slaves,* dedicating as many hours to it as to Gorky's canonical *Mother*.[109] Unspecified excerpts from *Slaves* and *The Mirage* were also included in the school reading list for Uzbekistan's Uzbek-speaking 7th graders that was published in 1935.[110] In late 1935, when the Komsomol announced a "month of acquainting collective farm work with literature," *Slaves* and *The Mirage* - presumably in their journal runs, which were then the only available editions - were on the list of recommended works. Some works by Shams were also included on the list, although not *The Law*.[111] The month was introduced in the newspaper with a spread comprising several articles, and was headed up with the tagline, "May every collective farmer study the best literature on earth!"

To facilitate mass readership, excerpts of each novel were published in brochure form, in large print, as part of the "beginning readers" (*boshlang'ich kitobxonlar*) series. The print runs for these editions far exceeded those of the full editions of the novels. From *The Mirage*, for example, the "beginning readers" series published two brochures: *The Story of Sarimsoq (Sarimsoqnoma)*, a largely discrete episode that detailed the tragic life story of a young village entertainer; and *The Uprising* (*Qo'zg'olish*), an episode detailing how a poor woman was

[108] Husayn Shams, "Birinchi fojia," *Yangi Farg'ona*, Nov. 7, 1935, p. 3.
[109] "Adabiy to'garaklar programmasi," *Sovet Adabiyoti*, no. 3 (1936), pp. 76-81.
[110] O'zSSR MXK Boshlang'ich va o'rta maktab boshqarmasi, *Adabiyot Programmasi: O'rta Maktablarning V-VI va VII Sinflari Uchun* (Tashkent: O'zdavnashr, 1935).
[111] "Badiiy adabiyotni kolxozchi yoshlarga yetkazish oyligi," *Yosh Leninchi*, Dec. 10, 1935, p. 3.

victimized by bourgeois nationalists, whose corruption had infiltrated her local social safety net.[112] *Sarimsoq* merited 50,125 copies, while *The Uprising* was printed in a run half that size, 25,125. The full 1937 edition of *The Mirage*, meanwhile, was published in a print run of just 10,125. The "beginning readers" series also published an abridged version of *The Law*, entitled *Justice (Haqqoniyat*), which today contains the only extant copy of the novel's last chapter, in which the victorious Bolsheviks hang their flag on the factory flagpole to great jubilation.[113] This version largely omitted the sexual subplot, including the brothel scenes. Nodira plays merely a bit part, and the main narrative concerns Sodiq's development of a Bolshevik self-consciousness.[114]

In the 1930s, the Writers' Union made many plans that failed to materialize, and it is, of course, impossible to ascertain who, if anyone, read the mass editions of the competition novels. However, regardless of the actual readership of these works at the time they were first written, the mere effort to reach the semi-literate masses through abridged easy-reader editions and relevant plots is, in itself, telling.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that the results of the novel competition reflect an imaginative experiment in public-formation. Much as Soviet workers struggled to shape a Soviet subjectivity through writing and rewriting their autobiographies, the novelists in the competition attempted to call a Soviet public into being through addressing it in the novel form. The prompt

[112] Abdulla Qahhor, *Qo'zg'olish: "Sarob" romanidan parchalar* (Tashkent: O'zdavnashr, 1936); Abdulla Qahhor, *Sarimsoqnoma: "Sarob" romanidan parchalar* (Tashkent: O'zdavnashr, 1936).
[113] Husayn Shams, *Haqqoniyat* (Tashkent: O'zSSR Davlat Nashriyoti, 1937).
[114] This was not the first of Shams's work to be published in brochure-like mass editions; he had already published plays, stories, and novellas in this format in the early 1930s. See Shams, *Radio (Hikoya)*; Shams, *Qurulush*; Shams, *Tanqid (p'esa)*; Shams, *Hikoyalar*.

to which the novelists responded was highly formulaic. With a few minor alterations, it could have been reproduced in any other Soviet republic. But in their responses, Uzbekistan's authors made a serious creative effort to engage the concrete social order around them, and generated widely disparate results: the insufficiently negative dialectic of Qahhor, the anti-nomadic chauvinism and Persianate internationalism of Ayniy, and the hypermasculine urban proletariat of Shams. In each novel, women served as metaphorical stand-ins for the difficulties of forming an attachment to the socialist public. In *The Mirage*, Munisxon represented the illusory attraction of the bourgeois Turkist public sphere, in contrast to the sterile and undesirable Soviet public. In *Slaves*, a woman, Qutbiya, is the last person to stand in the way of achieving socialist utopia, since that utopia entails renouncing male heterosexual attraction. And in *The Law*, the struggle for Bolshevik rule derives its erotic charge from the struggle to free Nodira that it maps so neatly onto.

Although each novel reveals localized commitments, each author also engaged all-Soviet discourses. Because of his nostalgic attachment to the "bourgeois" past, Abdulla Qahhor managed to represent the proletarian public only as a phantom. But, as one of his readers from the Writers' Union, Shokir Sulaymon said, it mattered that Qahhor had laid out clearly and precisely what that public was *not* — not a bourgeois Turkist public sphere, conspiring to undermine the Red Teahouse and the rectilinear Soviet garden. Sadriddin Ayniy represented the public as an internationalist Persianate world linking Tajiks with Uzbeks in an unbroken chain of workers' resistance that stretched back to the early modern period. For Ayniy, it remained a struggle to integrate Russians, Tatars, and Turkmens into that public. But it mattered that he had created a public that was both working-class and Persianate. Husayn Shams, meanwhile, represented the public as an internationalist proletariat, including men of all nations. For Shams,

to an even greater degree than the other novelists, it was especially difficult to integrate Central Asia's women into the global proletariat. But it mattered that he had imagined a public that was urban, industrial, and Central Asian — all at the same time.

Chapter 5

"I Dress in Silk and Velvet": Women, Textiles, and the Textile-Text

In late December 1935, the Soviet Writers' Union sponsored a "comradely meeting" between Soviet writers and shock working cotton farmers from Uzbekistan. Speaking in front of luminaries of Soviet culture and politics, including future Writers' Union First Secretary Vladimir Stavskii, Uzbekistan Writers' Union Chair Rahmat Majidiy, and First Secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan Akmal Ikromov, shock worker Tojixon Turaeva spoke of her poverty before collectivization: "I could not even dream of having five meters of new fabric. I always wore the remnants and castoffs of my masters' clothes." "How is my life different now?" she clarified, "I dress in silk and velvet. Before I never had enough, but now I have plenty."[1] At another speech before assembled dignitaries during the same visit to Moscow, Turaeva repeated her reference to clothing. After detailing the most tragic elements of her childhood, including the loss of her mother and several siblings to hunger, Turaeva effused about how happy she was now to be a Komsomol member and a Stakhanovite. Now, in contrast to her dark past, she had a lot of grain and a local power station, as well as "many clothes" (*kiyim-kechagim ko'p*).[2] All this, because the Party and Soviet power had freed her from "slavery" and given her a new life.[3]

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[1] RGALI F. 631, op. 6, d. 86, l. 8. Turaeva joined many other Stakhanovites and shock workers who descended upon Moscow in November and December 1935 for a series of conferences and congresses about hyper-production. For a full list of such events, see Mary Buckley, *Mobilizing Soviet Peasants: Heroines and Heroes of Stalin's Fields* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006), p. 54. One such event is discussed by Terry Martin as a foundational episode for the "Friendship of the Peoples" metaphor; see Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, pp. 437-39.

[2] Turaeva's self-representation draws an instructive comparison to Tojixon Shodieva's, with her *gimnasterka* and apparent lack of attachment to fine textiles. At the same event where Turaeva spoke of the power station, in fact, Shodieva also spoke of textiles. But unlike Turaeva, and unlike countless other activist women, Shodieva made no reference to her new, luxurious wardrobe. In fact, her speech seemed explicitly to counter the narrative that Turaeva espoused about textiles. Shodieva's speech, unlike Turaeva's, was laden with statistics: the tonnage of cotton that Uzbekistan had produced in 1935, the proportion of it that comprised long-staple cotton, the relative success of Egyptian cotton along the Uzbek Amudarya River when compared with the (capitalist) Nile itself. Shodieva emphasized that Uzbekistan needed cotton not just for "marquisette and batiste" - in other words, for dress-making fabric; but also "for national defense, for the very best parachutes, and for you too, Comrade Voroshilov [then People's Commissar of Defense]." See "O'rtoq Tojixon Shodieva so'zi" and."O'rtoq Tojixon To'raeva so'zi," *Yosh*

Turaeva earned her renown through feats of cotton production. Indeed, in the very same speech, she announced that she had managed to pick 150 kilograms of cotton per day in the previous season, and stated her intention to raise that number to 180 in the upcoming year. To the unfamiliar reader, then, it may seem strange that Turaeva communicated her success in terms of silk and velvet instead of cotton. But for Turaeva, and for those who heard her speech or read it in the newspaper, the connection was obvious: Turaeva's access to luxury fabrics was intimately linked to her role in cotton production, and to the cotton industry on collective farms more broadly. In this chapter, I address how this linkage came to seem so obvious in 1930s Uzbekistan. In the 1930s, textiles became more than just something for Uzbek women to wear: they became a medium through which Uzbek women could imagine themselves as belonging to a Soviet public including millions of working women like themselves. This took place not only because textiles were distributed to Stakhanovite women, but because representations of those textiles circulated widely through the Soviet media system. In other words, not only textiles, but the textile-text, became a medium of mass publicity in 1930s Uzbekistan.

This chapter consists of three main parts. It begins with an analysis of the Soviet unveiling campaign not just as an effort to "free" Uzbek women from patriarchal oppression, but to induct them into a Soviet media public as consumers, producers, and objects of media representation. Then, in part two of this chapter, I show how in the early 1930s, textiles became a medium that Party activists used to encourage women to participate in Soviet projects, from unveiling to collectivization. I demonstrate that textiles worked not just as a material reward, but also as a physical congealment of Soviet ideologies about labor.[4] As such, they had significance beyond

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Leninchi, Dec. 24, 1935, p. 2.

[3] This speech follows a general paradigm observed by Sheila Fitzpatrick in Stakhanovite peasants' speeches; see Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants*, pp. 274-79.

[4] In using the term "congealment," I intentionally echo Marx's language about the commodity as a vessel of

the women who received the awards, with effects that rippled out to all who encountered those rewards or their media coverage. In part three, I examine several concrete examples of "textile-texts," all written by women, and primarily published in the women's press. These texts illustrate how by the late 1930s textiles, and the print media that represented them, generated a feedback loop. Textiles exuded political significance, which the print media then reported on, thereby causing textiles to accrue new significance.[5] For Uzbek women and those who addressed them through the media, textiles came to offer a productive convergence between the state's agenda, women's tastes, and their families' material needs.[6]

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congealed labor. See Karl Marx. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy,* trans. Ben Fowkes. New York: Penguin, 2004, p. 130.

[5] In discussing the political significance of clothing and textiles, I draw on an approach pioneered by Leora Auslander, who argues with reference to revolutionary periods in France, the United States, and Britain, that "the aesthetics of everyday life [. . . are] crucially important in the constitution of national identities, or personal affinities or group consciousness." Leora Auslander, *Cultural Revolutions: Everyday Life and Politics in Britain, North America, and France* (University of California Press, 2009), p. 2. Auslander examines the politics of material culture, including textiles such as silk and homespun, to shed light on the ways "ordinary" people, especially women, created political meanings through everyday life. She argues that this approach complements the more traditional objects of scholarly attention with respect to these revolutions, such as "the more explicitly political visions that had emerged from Enlightened salons, coffeehouses, and the press in this period." (Ibid., p. 5). Here, I bring the two approaches together, arguing that the press and material culture worked in tandem, mutually informing each other. The case study I examine here can also productively be contrasted with the global phenomenon of the "modern girls" in the same period, who were characterized by "their use of specific commodities and their explicit eroticism." In this case, Uzbek women use consumer goods precisely to deflect attention away from their sexuality and to present themselves as respectable despite being in public. See Alys Eve Weinbaum, et al., ed., *The Modern Girl around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008). Of particular interest with reference to the problem of Uzbek women's respectability is the phenomenon of the openly sexual Indian *sitara* of the 1920s and 1930s, who was displaced in the following decades by a more demure and "respectable" nationalist heroine; see, from the above volume, Priti Ramamurthy, "All-Consuming Nationalism: The Indian Modern Girl in the 1920s and 1930s," pp. 147-173. Central Asia had no similarly consumerist counterpart to the "Soviet Modern Girl" that Anne Gorsuch observes in the NEP period; see Anne Gorsuch, "The Dance Class or the Working Class: The Soviet Modern Girl," in *Modern Girl*, pp. 174-193.

[6] For a discussion of the representation of textiles in the Soviet media outside Uzbekistan, see Emma Widdis, "Sew Yourself Soviet: The Pleasures of Textile in the Machine Age," in *Petrified Utopia: Happiness Soviet Style*, eds. Marina Balina and E. A. Dobrenko (London: Anthem Press, 2009), pp. 115-132. Widdis argues that, although the Soviet Russian press continued to reject "fashion" as bourgeois, they promoted attention to the appearance of one's clothing and home, encouraging textile handicrafts (*rukodelie*). She concludes that tactile "pleasure" should thus be considered a major element of the "happiness" that Soviet discourse prioritized in the 1930s. My discussion below extends such an analysis to the Soviet periphery, arguing for the importance of sensory experience in grafting Uzbek women into an all-Soviet public. Although I do not discuss it here, handicraft patterns were also published in the Uzbek women's press, possibly in imitation of the publications described by Widdis. Examples include "Odiyal, yostiq jilt, ko'ylak va choyshablarga tikish uchun nusxalar," *Yorqin Turmush*, 1937, no. 3, p. 29; "Deraza pardasiga nusxa," *Yorqin Turmush*, 1937, no. 7-8, p. 46.

Unveiling as Getting Dressed

Soviet activists' use of textiles in the 1930s was rooted in the discourses and practices that surrounded the Soviet unveiling campaign of the late 1920s. In order to understand Uzbek textiles as a media phenomenon, then, it is crucial first to understand the significance of unveiling for Central Asian material culture, social life, and political culture. When the Bolsheviks came to Central Asia, they encountered a society where women's veiling was widespread, albeit not universal. In sedentary central Asia, particularly in urban areas, women began wearing the veil once they reached maturity — sometimes as early as age nine, but in the early twentieth century, more frequently between the ages of twelve and sixteen.[7] By the early twentieth century, the most common form of veil, at least in cities, consisted of a face-veil made of horsehair (*chachvan*) worn underneath a head-veil (*paranji).*[8] The *paranji* was most commonly gray or white with blue stripes, but young women could also wear red *paranjis*.[9] Bikzhanova notes that even in Tashkent, the *paranji* did not become universal until the second half of the nineteenth century. Until then, she notes, many women simply pulled their robes over their heads when going out in public.[10] According to the Nalivkins, this was particularly common in rural areas, where the *paranji* and *chachvan* would have been beyond the means of most peasant women.[11] Although it is possible to debate how widespread the *paranji* was as an object,

[7] Kamp, *The New Woman*, p. 136.
[8] More extensive discussions of veiling practices can be found in Northrop, *Veiled Empire*, pp. 43-46; Kamp, *The New Woman*, pp. 134-38.
[9] Kamp, *The New Woman,* p. 136. On the red *paranji*, see Bikzhanova, p. 142.
[10] While Northrop argues that the *paranji* and *chachvan* appeared only in the late 19th century, Kamp adduces fifteenth-century textual evidence to suggest that these veils had a long history in the region. The discrepancy can possibly be explained by difference in social status; Bikzhanova, for example, suggests that the *paranji* and *chachvan* were worn by wealthy or high-status women, and were only later adopted on a wide scale by lower-status women. See Northrop, *Veiled Empire* p. 44; Kamp, *The New Woman*, p. 134; M. A. Bikzhanova, "Odezhda uzbechek tashkenta XIX-nachala XX v," in *Kostium narodov Srednei Azii: istorik-etnograficheskie ocherki*, ed. O. A. Sukhareva (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), p. 141.
[11] V. P. Nalivkin and Mariia Vladimirovna Nalivkina, *Muslim Women of the Fergana Valley: A 19th-Century Ethnography from Central Asia*, trans. Marianne Kamp and Mariana Markova (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), p. 95.

even in rural areas Muslim Turkestani women were expected to cover their faces in the presence of non-kin men.[12]

From the earliest years of Bolshevik rule, activists both local and European had described Uzbek women as "oppressed" and encouraged them to emancipate themselves by unveiling.[13] But in late 1926, the Bolshevik agenda for Muslim women's "emancipation" rapidly gained momentum. The Party and its Women's Division announced an "attack," or Hujum, on veiling and female seclusion. Women tore off and burned their veils at mass demonstrations. Although women in Soviet Central Asia were not unveiled by force, the full weight of the Party apparatus was brought to bear in encouraging them, including economic incentives. For example, male Party members and state functionaries were subject to increased pressure to ensure their wives unveiled, and risked losing their positions if they failed to do so.[14]

In the context of the Hujum, unveiling became loaded with meanings about respectability, religiosity, and dispositions toward the state. This was in part due to the fact that veiling was a social phenomenon. The veil represented a social order in which the sexes were strictly segregated, and many women were permitted to venture out in public only with covered faces.[15] "Respectable" women socialized only with kin. At weddings and festivals, men celebrated separately from women and children. Work outside the home was widely frowned upon, so in early Soviet Uzbekistan most workplaces were sex-segregated in order to accommodate female laborers' concerns about respectability. If women unveiled — as was the case with some activists before the Soviet campaign against the veil — they were subjected, at best, to

[12] Kamp suggests that rural women who worked in the fields did not veil; see Kamp, *The New Woman*, p. 135.
[13] Because of social pressures, these cases were few and far between; some women unveiled on visits to Moscow in the early 1920s, but reveiled on their return to Central Asia. See Northrop, *Veiled Empire*, p. 79, n24.
[14] This persisted through the 1930s; see Northrop, "Languages of Loyalty."
[15] As Marianne Kamp notes, however, the veil can be understood as a concession to facilitate women's mobility; some women, veiled or unveiled, were not permitted to leave the home at all. See Kamp, *The New Woman*, p. 135.

harassment about their character, and at worst, to rape or murder.[16] The association between unveiling and a loss of respectability was exacerbated by the fact that prostitutes were the primary category of women that consistently did not veil.[17]

For many Central Asians, veiling was also associated with religiosity. Throughout the Islamic world, the meaning and extent of women's veiling, and the female seclusion that accompanied it, had long been the subject of heated debate.[18] In the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in particular, Muslim women and men had experimented with various styles of veiling and unveiling, with a view toward forging a mode of femininity that was both Muslim and modern. As had been the case throughout Islamic history, some women saw no conflict between being unveiled and being Muslim. Others proposed decoupling the veil as an article of clothing from the system of women's seclusion with which it was associated. This range of views was represented in Central Asian society as well.[19] Nevertheless, the fact remained that, in Central Asia, many men and women couched their opposition to unveiling in religious terms. Relatedly, in the few cases when religious authorities openly argued that unveiling was licit

[16] Examples of violence against women for unveiling can be found in RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2064, ll. 1-10 and O'zMDA F. 86, op. 10, d. 634. This kind of violence remained frequent well into the 1930s; see RGASPI F. 112, op. 61, d. 76, l. 6, which discusses the murders of female collective farmers by their husbands. Women also were subject to violence for the activism in which they participated once unveiled. In 1935, for example, a female activist noted in a speech that a woman had been murdered by her husband for attending a Komsomol meeting, for which crime he received a sentence of eight years in prison. At the festival where this speech was delivered, several women were said to have been beaten because of their intention to attend; see O'zMDA F. 86, op. 10, d. 634, ll. 186, 279. For further analysis of unveiling murders in Central Asia, see Kamp, "Femicide as Terrorism."

[17] On prostitutes and veiling, see Northrop, *Veiled Empire,* p. 134.

[18] For one example from within the Russian Empire, in which measures for women's equality, including unveiling, were framed in terms of Sharia, see Marianne Kamp, "Debating Sharia: The 1917 Muslim Women's Congress in Russia," *Journal of Women's History* 27, no. 4 (December 22, 2015): 13–37. On Egyptian discourses about unveiling, a useful summary can be found in Beth Baron, "Unveiling in Early Twentieth Century Egypt: Practical and Symbolic Considerations," *Middle Eastern Studies* 25, no. 3 (July 1, 1989): 370–86. See also Margot Badran, *Feminists, Islam, and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001). On Iran, Camron Michael Amin offers a useful summary, albeit one that somewhat marginalizes women's own contributions because of its focus on state policy; see Amin, *Modern Iranian Woman*. Parvin Paidar offers a useful complement to Amin's account; see Parvin Paidar, *Women and the Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran*. (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[19] On Central Asian ideas about veiling and unveiling before the Hujum, see Chapter 6, "Unveiling Before the Hujum," in Kamp, *The New Woman*, pp. 123-149.

according to Islamic law, this led to much more widespread unveiling than when nonreligious or openly atheist activists tried to persuade women to unveil. In one neighborhood in the Andijan region, for example, 1600 women unveiled after a local mullah (*ishan*) announced his support for the Soviet unveiling campaign, argued that the Qur'an did not mandate women's veiling, and permitted his own wife to unveil.[20]

Despite the participation of Uzbek women in the campaign for women's unveiling and emancipation, the campaign only took place on such a wide scale because it had the force of the state behind it. That state was centered in Moscow, run at the upper levels by Russians, and widely perceived as foreign among Uzbekistan's population. In this context, among many Central Asians unveiling became associated with Russianness and Soviet power. Even among segments of the population that may have otherwise tolerated loosening the norms of women's seclusion and veiling, veiling became a way of communicating opposition to the Soviet agenda. If unveiling expressed support for the Party agenda, then veiling could express opposition to it.[21]

The Soviet unveiling campaign cannot be explained simply. It would be reductive to attribute it solely to neo-imperialism, statist modernization, or feminist agitation. Instead, in the Hujum and in the projects that succeeded it, all three of these elements were at play. The Party's decision to implement the Hujum was certainly inflected by racialized assumptions of Central Asian "backwardness," and a presupposition that Islam represented a unique and inherent threat to women's rights.[22] At the same time, the status of women was a matter of concern not only in European empires, but in the modernizing nation-states of the Middle East as well. Native elites

[20] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 1811, l. 99. This episode is also discussed in RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2064, l. 18.
[21] This argument is put forward by Douglas Northrop; see Northrop, *Veiled Empire*, p. 320. The situation is not dissimilar to that described by Partha Chatterjee in British colonial India. See Partha Chatterjee. "The Nation and its Women." In *The Partha Chatterjee Omnibus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 116-134.
[22] This dimension is emphasized most by Douglas Northrop; see, especially, Chapter 3, "*Hujum*, 1927," in Northrop, *Veiled Empire*, pp. 69-101. More broadly, the phenomenon of white feminism as an Orientalist and imperial project has been examined in the classic work by Antoinette Burton, *Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865-1915* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1994).

who were concerned with modernity, and who desired to compete with industrialized nations from Japan to Britain, considered the creation of "modern" femininity and family life to be essential to their goals. Accordingly, in the 1930s, the governments of Pahlavi Iran and Kemalist Turkey both implemented unveiling campaigns that were, in many ways, more invasive than the Soviet campaign in Uzbekistan.[23] In Uzbekistan, Islamic modernists, or Jadids, also made a significant contribution to the discourses of women's "emancipation."[24] The Jadids developed their own agenda in conversation with and in mutual emulation of their fellows in the Middle East. Finally, the Soviet project with respect to women was both conceived and implemented by Uzbek women themselves. Some women were affiliated with the Jadids; others came to their role in the project through connections to Bolsheviks, including Russian feminists.[25]

[23] On these campaigns, see Amin, *Modern Iranian Woman*, especially Chapter 4, "Unveiling and Its Discontents," pp. 80-113; Chapter 2, "Women, Politics, and the Culture of Dress in the making of a New Turkish Nation," in Hale Yılmaz, *Becoming Turkish: Nationalist Reforms and Cultural Negotiations in Early Republican Turkey, 1923-1945*. (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2013), pp 78-139.
[24] On the Jadids and gender, see Chapter 1, "Jadids and the Reform of Women," from Kamp, *The New Woman*, pp. 32-52. On the influence of Jadids on early Soviet policy, as well as their transnational connections with modernist thinkers and policymakers throughout the Middle East, see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan.*
[25] For some examples of these women, see Chapter 5, "New Women," from Kamp, *The New Woman In Uzbekistan,* pp. 94-122.

Fig. 5.1
Women's dress in the late 19th-early 20th centuries
SOURCE: M. A. Bikzhanova, "Odezhda uzbechek tashkenta XIX-nachala XX v." In *Kostium narodov Srednei Azii: istorik-etnograficheskie ocherki*, ed. O. A. Sukhareva, (Moscow: Nauka, 1979), p. 136.

I have established that veiling had many overlapping meanings in society and politics. But at the most basic level, unveiling simply meant uncovering the clothes women wore beneath. Beginning in the late 19th century, Uzbek women's dress was subject both to economic pressures and new social dynamics, particularly the arrival of Russian and Tatar textiles and fashions. Generally, women's dress, at least in the Tashkent region, consisted of a long tunic (*ko'ylak/ ko'ynak*) over loose pantaloons (*ishton*) [Fig. 5.1].[26] If required by the weather or social

[26] The majority of the description in the following two paragraphs is adapted from the information given by M. A. Bikzhanova, who bases her account on fieldwork among Tashkent women, and an ethnography written by the Nalivkins based on their experience in the late 1870s and 1880s. Bikzhanova specifies that her work pertains to women from the city of Tashkent, but most of it can be extrapolated to sedentary Central Asian Muslim women more broadly; I have noted exceptions when necessary. See M. A. Bikzhanova, "Odezhda uzbechek Tashkenta."

occasion, women wore robes or jackets of various kinds over their tunics. Women usually wore scarves on their heads.[27] The colors of clothing were linked to the age of the woman; bright colors such as red were reserved for young women, while women over approximately age 30 wore more subdued colors such as gray and light blue. Black, dark blue, and green were considered mourning colors, and during the summer, women of all ages wore white. During the Russian imperial period, the most widespread textiles were cotton fabrics woven by local artisans, although in the late nineteenth century, factory-made chintz from Russia began to be sold in Turkestan.[28] Wealthier women could also afford finer textiles, such as silk, semi-silk, velvet, and brocade. If at all possible, even women of lesser means made efforts to obtain one or two silk dresses for special occasions.[29] The most common footwear consisted of soft boots (*mahsi/ ichig*) worn under ankle-height galoshes made of rubber or leather. Depending on their means, women could wear both or might be limited to either *mahsi* or galoshes alone. Lace-up ankle boots also arrived with the Russians. These were the object both of desire and anxiety in the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth, because they were said to be worn by

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Further information on Central Asian costume in the pre-revolutionary period can be found in Nalivkin and Nalivkina, *Muslim Women*, especially Chapter 4, "Woman's Appearance and Her Clothing," pp. 89-102. Northrop suggests that women who unveiled would be left wearing *khalat* and *ichkilar*, "the psychological and sociocultural equivalents of a Russian woman's brassiere, panties, and slip." This may have been true in some cases of extreme poverty. However, in contexts of women's sociability in single-sex contexts, eg. weddings and other festivities, the clothes worn under the veil were as important as the veil itself. As Bikzhanova notes, women who had any means would prioritize acquiring a dress made of finer fabric for special occasions. Nevertheless, as I discuss below, unveiling required women to have more publicly presentable clothing than before, and placed considerable financial strain on poor families. See Northrop, *Veiled Empire*, p. 131.

[27] Interestingly, Bikzhanova claims that skullcaps (*tiubeteika*) were not widely worn by Uzbek women until the Soviet period, because they were associated with prostitutes and with *satangs*, or women "who, while remaining in female company, imitated men in their behavior and dress." This instance of gender-bending goes otherwise unremarked. See Bikzhanova, "Odezhda uzbechek tashkenta," p. 148. In 1927, an article entitled "A *satang*'s proposal" argued that men who thought women should veil should instead veil themselves, ie., they should cross-dress. Cited in Kamp, *The New Woman*, n20, p. 165. The word *satang* otherwise can be roughly translated as "dandy."

[28] On factory-made fabrics and the arrival of chintz, see Nalivkin and Nalivkina, *Muslim Women*, p. 100.

[29] Nalivkin and Nalivkina, *Muslim Women*, p. 97. For beautiful full-color images of these textiles, as well as a brief discussion of their production and distribution, see Susan Meller, ed., *Russian Textiles: Printed Cloth for the Bazaars of Central Asia* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2007).

prostitutes.[30] Although some of this changed during the early Soviet period, most of these pre-revolutionary descriptions can be extrapolated to the 1920s and 1930s.[31]

Because unveiling required women to obtain a new wardrobe, it put unprecedented economic pressure on women and their families. Before, women would have worn cheap cotton clothing in the home, and, if possible, they would obtain a silk dress for special occasions. Now, women needed clothes that would be presentable on the street on an everyday basis. Even if men were able to overcome their anxieties about unveiling as a threat to their masculinity, religiosity, or political views, some of them still resisted unveiling because they feared they would not be able to afford the new clothing their unveiled female relatives would need.[32] For example, one secret police report noted the widespread complaint that unveiled women needed dresses, a coat, stockings, shoes, and underwear — a wardrobe that cost far more than most families could spare.[33] Many women also replaced their veils with scarves, creating another article of clothing that they needed to own.[34] Soviet unveiling put pressure on Uzbek men's patriarchal role not just as defenders of women's honor or protectors of the faith, but also as economic providers.

The question of what to wear once unveiled thus sheds light on a broader question that followed unveiled women in Uzbekistan: what next? Unveiling entailed a transformation in women's social roles, challenging notions of respectability, reshaping women's work, and creating new forms of political participation. It also transformed their ability to participate in the mass media. By giving women access to institutions outside the home, unveiling brought women into a Soviet media system. At state-sponsored mass institutions like Red Teahouses, libraries, or

[30] See Nalivkin and Nalivkina, *Muslim Women*, pp. 95 and 100.
[31] In the late 1930s, for example,some effort was made to promote "European" dress patterns; I will discuss these at greater length below.
[32] Douglas Northrop adduces further examples of this complaint in Northrop, *Veiled Empire*, p. 131-134.
[33] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 1811, l. 140.
[34] On the headscarf as a tolerable but less than ideal replacement for the *paranji*, see RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2437, l. 7. 1930, l. 26.

women's clubs, unveiled women could read the newspaper, brochures, books or journals.[35] Although literacy rates among women were still quite low, they were growing quickly due to the increasing scope of state-sponsored literacy courses.[36] Mass institutions worked to include even illiterate women by hosting read-aloud sessions for newspapers and other texts. Radio, film, and posters were likewise accessible to an illiterate audience, and widespread literacy courses worked to increase the proportion of women who could read for themselves. Of course, these efforts were not without their challenges. Co-ed spaces were often unwelcoming to women, and institutions specifically for women often suffered from understaffing and underfunding. But the fact remains that in the 1930s, women had access to the mass media in a completely unprecedented way.

Women could and did have access to the "co-ed" media — newspapers such as *Red Uzbekistan* and *New Ferghana*, or journals such as *The Flower Garden*, *This World,* or *Soviet Literature of Uzbekistan.* However, as I have discussed with reference to the Soviet Writers' Union of Uzbekistan, in these publications women's writings constituted a tiny minority of the works published.[37] Because women's "emancipation" was such a significant part of the state agenda, works *about* women, but written by men, constituted a somewhat larger proportion of those that appeared in publications for general audiences. Nevertheless, the tacit assumption in these publications was that the default audience consisted of men, and that women were a marked category, whose affairs were not a matter of general concern.

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[35] These institutions are discussed at greater length in Chapter 1, "Not Just Tea-Drinking."

[36] In the 1920s, according to Marianne Kamp, rural literacy was almost nonexistent, and urban literacy rates were 25% for men and 5% for women. In 1939, the state reported literacy rates of 73% for women and 83%. These latter statistics are almost certainly exaggerated, but it is indisputable that literacy rose dramatically during the 1930s due to illiteracy liquidation (*likbez*) campaigns. See Kamp, *The New Woman*, pp. 16, 222. Among young activists, as might be expected, literacy rates were much higher but still far from perfect. A 1932 Komsomol report stated that among Komsomol members in Uzbekistan, literacy was at 84.7%. See RGASPI F. M-63, op. 1, d. 259, l. 7. The definition of "literacy" was also slippery, particularly for local-level administrators who wished to exaggerate their successes.

[37] This is discussed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation, "The State Public and the Writers' Union Inner Circle."

In this context, the women's press was a major venue for publishing works by women, and for addressing topics that pertained to women. The first women's journal, *New Way,* was founded in 1926 under the direction of the Women's Division of the Communist Party Central Committee. In its early years, the journal was edited by prominent Uzbek female activists, including Tojixon Shodieva, Sobira Xoldarova, and Oydin.[38] As Marianne Kamp has shown, during its years under the direction of the Women's Division, *New Way* put forward a vision of Uzbek femininity that was strongly inflected by Jadid concerns about modernizing family life and women's education. Although the journal was founded as an analogue to Russian-language women's journals such as *Peasant Woman* (*Krest'ianka*), *New Way* presented a contextualized interpretation of Soviet projects. On its pages, contributors defended women's education, advocated unveiling and companionate marriage, and deplored practices such as polygyny, brideprice (*qalin*), and child marriage.

The early years of *New Way's* existence coincided with the formulation and execution of the Hujum campaign. Consequently, the process of unveiling, and the social transformations that accompanied it, dominated the pages of *New Way* during those years. Elsewhere, I have argued that this gave rise to a "Hujum aesthetic," which foregrounded unveiling as an ongoing process.[39] Stories often portrayed women as helpless girls sold into marriages with much older men, ending with the moment of their deliverance by representatives of Soviet modernity. Poetry dramatized scenes of unveiling demonstrations or called for still-oppressed women to be emancipated. These works represented unveiling as an ongoing process, and they concluded with an open-ended

[38] For brief biographies of many of the editors of *New Way*, as well as a discussion of the content published in *New Way* during the late 1920s, see Chapter 5, "New Women," from Kamp, *The New Woman*, pp. 94-122.
[39] Claire Roosien, "New Ways: The Aesthetics of Unveiling in Uzbekistan and the Formation of Socialist Realism" (MA Thesis, University of Chicago, 2014).

expectation that the future had yet to be worked out. In this sense, that it prioritized critique over positive modeling, the Hujum aesthetic might be described as "negative."

Fig. 5.2
"Unveiled women and girls, cast off your chains and raise the red flag high!"
SOURCE: Courtesy Russian National Library; from *Yangi Yo'l* 1927:10-11, p. 27

A drawing published in women's magazine *New Way* concisely exemplifies this aesthetic [Fig. 5.2]. The drawing portrays a woman raising a red banner as she removes her veil and stomps on the whip that symbolized her former oppression. At her right, a throng of veiled

Uzbek women await their own moment of emancipation, while at her left, a factory crowned with a star dwarfs the famous landmarks of Central Asian architecture. The image shows the woman at the moment of her unveiling, when her emancipation consists of pure potential, and she is still trampling down the vestiges of her past. Unveiling, in this representation, becomes the first step in a process of becoming modern, Uzbek, and Soviet, all at the same time. But what precisely that would look like remains to be determined.

In the late 1920s, with the announcement of the First Five-Year Plan, this began to change. If *New Way* had once foregrounded women as the beneficiaries of new Soviet policies, now, it presented them as the implementers of state production plans. Previously, cartoons of modernizing women had illustrated the pages of *New Way*; now, photospreads of women at work dominated its pages. Far fewer articles discussed unveiling, even though veiling was still widespread, or the ongoing need for women to be protected from patriarchal violence, although that too was still a major problem.[40] Instead, articles exhorted women to work hard and summarized the new expectations for cotton and silk production. Importantly, this change in emphasis also corresponded to a dramatic jump in distribution figures. In 1927, the average print run of *New Way* had hovered around 1000 copies; beginning in 1928, these figures began to rise, peaking at 20000 copies in Feb/ Mar 1930.[41]

[40] RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 1811 l. 100, points out that many men feared their wives would be subject to sexual violence if they unveiled. RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 1811 l. 88, for example, describes an episode in which unveiled activist women were raped by male Komsomol activists. Although fellow Komsomol members witnessed the crime, they did not intervene to stop it.

[41] This figure was an outlier: in the early 1930s, the average print run of *New Way* comprised 6000-7000 copies. Because of widespread paper shortages, print runs were a frequent subject of controversy, and are a useful index of the level of priority given by the Party to a given publication. In April 1930, the Press Sector of the Central Asian Bureau reported that *New Way* was to be published monthly in a print run of 10000 copies, a figure that was rarely achieved. Compare to *New Village*, monthly at 18000 copies; *This Earth* (*Yer Yuzi*), monthly at 15000 copies; and the journal with the highest print run, satirical journal *The Fist* (*Mushtum*), bimonthly at 28000 copies. See RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 2479, l. 40.

Beginning from the April 1930 issue, *New Way* shifted to the administration of the Uzbekistan Communist Party Central Committee's Division of Agitation and Mass Work. The journal continued to address women's issues, and many of the original editorial board continued working at *New Way* — including Oydin, Sobira Xoldarova, and Hosiyat Tillaxonova. But now veiling, and the oppression and violence that came with it, were represented fully as vestiges of the past. If these things appeared at all in the new *New Way*, they were represented as throwbacks to a way of life that had already been defeated. When *New Way* closed in early 1934 and was replaced in early 1936 with a new women's journal named *Bright Life* (*Yorqin Turmush)*, this trend only continued.[42]

The transition in administration thus solidified the move away from the Hujum aesthetic and toward what Sheila Fitzpatrick has described as a "discourse of Socialist Realism."[43] Socialist Realism has almost as many definitions as works that purported to represent it.[44] Common to most definitions of Socialist Realism, however, is the understanding that it is a *positive* aesthetic, one that puts forward positive heroes and visions of the socialist future. The

[42] In early 1938, the journal was renamed *Yorqin Hayot*, which can also be translated as "Bright Life," but with a more abstract connotation (*turmush* can be translated into Russian as *byt*, or "everyday life"; *hayot* means *zhizn'*. It continued to be published under this name until mid-1941. In this chapter, I also address some works that appeared in journals for a "general" audience during the 1934-1935 gap when there was no dedicated women's journal in Uzbekistan.

[43] Fitzpatrick, "Becoming Cultured: Socialist Realism and the Representation of Privilege and Taste," in *The Cultural Front,* pp. 216-237.

[44] Evgeny Dobrenko describes Socialist Realism as a means for "de-realizing" the drabness of everyday Soviet life. In this sense, he argues, it must be understood as the only venue in which socialism truly took shape in the Soviet Union, rendering everything outside the purview of Socialist Realism "unreal." In arguing that Socialist Realism "produced" socialist reality rather than "replacing" it, Dobrenko polemicizes with Boris Groys, who has argued that Socialist Realism must be understood as the continuation of the Russian avant-garde in its efforts to aestheticize reality. Both Dobrenko and Groys remain on the level of artistic theory and have been criticized for their ahistorical approaches. Katerina Clark and Regine Robin focus on institutional history and historical debates, giving a more nuanced understanding of the diverse implications of "Socialist Realism" for individual cultural producers and theorists. Of course, for decades during the Cold War Socialist Realism was understood to be a propaganda tool, not worthy of serious aesthetic analysis to begin with. See Dobrenko, *Political Economy*; Groys, *Total Art*; Nepomnyashchy, "Review: *Political Economy*"; Günther, "Review of *Political Economy*"; Catherine Merridale, "The Total Art of Stalinism. Avant Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond Boris Groys," *The Slavonic and East European Review* 71, no. 3 (1993): 537; Vyacheslav Ivanov, "The Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond. Boris Groys," *Slavic Review* 52, no. 3 (1993): 600; Clark, *The Soviet Novel*; Robin, *Socialist Realism*.

classic definition, from Zhdanov's speech at the First All-Soviet Congress of the Union of Soviet Writers, states that Socialist Realism must represent "reality in its revolutionary development."[45] Fitzpatrick argues that this discourse extended far beyond literature, where it originated, and defined representations of Soviet life in the press and public life throughout the Soviet Union.[46]

In the mid-1930s, Fitzpatrick argues, this discourse of Socialist Realism came to overlap with Stalin-era discourses about "culturedness."[47] In the Soviet press, this meant that, despite persistent shortages and a decidedly unprosperous way of life, representations of the plenty that was coming to be dominated coverage. Reports claimed that food stores would soon sell sausages aplenty, and now-cramped housing would soon be replaced by comfortable apartments. Clothing was also an important part of this discourse; although readymade clothing was now poorly sewn, a time was coming when everyone would be able to wear comfortable, attractive clothing made of quality fabrics.[48]

In Uzbekistan, fine textiles occupied pride of place on the pages of women's magazines and in works addressed to women. In particular, as I show below, silk and velvet became representative of the prosperous Soviet life that awaited Uzbek women, if only they persevered in their hard work on the collective farm or at the silk factory. Textiles are thus a microcosm of how the discourse of Socialist Realism functioned in Central Asian society. In foregrounding textiles and textile-texts, I make a case for Socialist Realism as a uniquely tactile aesthetic, one

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[45] *Pervyi Vsesoiuznyi S'ezd Sovetskikh Pisateleĭ, 1934: Stenograficheskii Otchet*, ed. Stanislav Lesnevskii, (Moscow: Sov. pisatel′, 1990), p. 4.

[46] Interestingly, Fitzpatrick foregrounds women's journal *Obshchestvennitsa* as a major forum for the overlapping discourses of "culturedness" and Socialist Realism. See Fitzpatrick, "Becoming Cultured: Socialist Realism and the Representation of Privilege and Taste," in *The Cultural Front*, p. 232.

[47] Vera Dunham argued that, in the late Stalin period, "middle-class values" had an ascendancy, including bourgeois models of consumption. See Dunham, *In Stalin's Time*.

[48] Food, housing, and clothing are all discussed in Fitzpatrick, "Becoming Cultured." As both Fitzpatrick and Widdis point out, private tailoring had been outlawed in the RSFSR, and was only re-legalized in March 1936. This does not appear to have been the case in Uzbekistan, where readymade clothing does not seem to have been widely available in the 1930s. On the banning of private tailoring, see Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism*, p. 44.

through which Uzbek women came to imagine themselves as part of the Soviet public not only on a discursive, but also on a sensory level.

Clothing and Politics in 1930s Central Asia

In post-Hujum Uzbekistan, textiles — in particular the fabrics of which women's clothes were made — had important implications for national identity, class ascription, and political allegiance. First, in the period immediately following the Hujum, the national categories of Central Asia were still under construction. Prior to 1924, when the national delimitation of Central Asia took place, most sedentary Turkic-speaking women in the territory that became Uzbekistan would have identified as "Sarts." In the early years of Soviet rule in Central Asia, then, national categories such as "Uzbek," "Kazakh," and "Kyrgyz" were highly unstable. The category of "Tajiks" was even more complicated, since the Tajiks had received their independent republic only in 1928, and in many Central Asian cities, bilingualism in Turkic and Persian was the norm.[49] Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, rallying around Stalin's slogan "national in form, socialist in content," denizens of the new nations worked to forge national cultural forms, and textiles and clothing were no exception to this effort. Although the texts I discuss in this chapter do not explicitly thematize nationality, they appear in publications in the new literary "Uzbek," and describe women's attachments through textiles to women in cities throughout the newfound

[49] The most complete discussion of the national delimitation in Central Asia, particularly with reference to Tajikistan, can be found in Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, pp. 257-315. For an overview of the process of national delimitation in the Soviet Union more broadly, see Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*. On the Soviet effort to create and celebrate national cultures under certain controlled conditions, see Martin, *Affirmative Action Empire*. Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Uzbek, Uyghur, and Tatar are Turkic languages; Tajik is a Persian language, and is mutually intelligible with the dialects spoken in Iran and Afghanistan.

republic. They are thus among the first documents in which textiles such as *atlas* silk become attached to the Uzbek (and Tajik, and Kyrgyz) nations, with women as their representative.[50]

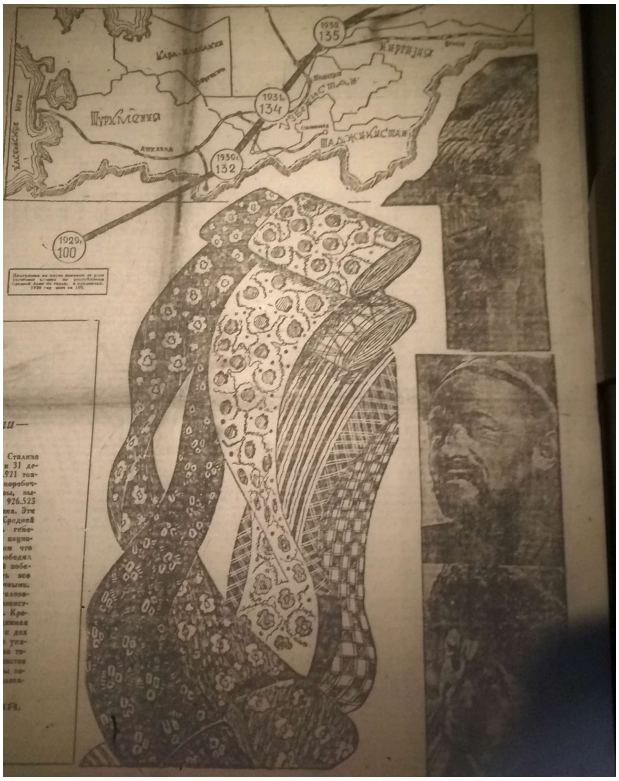

Fig. 5.3
Cascading textiles on the front page of *Truth of the East*. The chart above the image of textiles is an infographic about the growth in cotton production.
SOURCE: *Pravda Vostoka*, Jan. 4, 1934, p. 1.

[50] *Atlas* silk became attached to Central Asian nationhood in the early Soviet period, and remains a major symbol of Uzbek nationality until the present day. One prominent early example of this linkage appears in the color film of the 1939 *Youth in Bloom* physical culture parade. The female marchers from Uzbekistan, who are preceded by a giant seal of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Uzbekistan, wear *atlas* silk pantaloons in bright yellow, green, red, and white. Their yellow shirts are adorned with cotton blossoms, and on their heads, they wear embroidered skullcaps. The women's costumes are far more colorful, and more "national," than the men's — most men wear white dress shirts and white slacks with light blue ties, and a few march only in tan pantaloons and skullcaps (*do'ppi),* showing off their sculpted torsos. See History Club, "Tsvetushchaia iunost' 1939/ Blooming Youth," YouTube clip, 17:18, "History Club," Dec. 4, 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtMSvRuSkTE. The linkage between clothing and nationality could also be a liability; for examples from the late Soviet period, see Jeff Sahadeo, "Black Snouts Go Home! Migration and Race in Late Soviet Leningrad and Moscow," *The Journal of Modern History* 88, no. 4 (December 2016): 797–826. A vast body of scholarship emerged in the late Soviet period examining the "national" dress of Uzbeks; see, for example, Turgun Abdullaev and Salamat Abdulvakhitovna Khasanova, *Odezhda uzbekov: XIX-nachalo XX v* (Tashkent: Fan, 1978). Such costumes became a major part of the pageantry of post-Soviet Uzbek nationhood as well. A significant body of scholarship has addressed the role of material culture in post-Soviet nationalism, but scholars have yet to address the roots of these approaches in early Soviet nation-building projects. See Adams, *The Spectacular State*; Gabriele Mentges and Lola Shamukhitdinova, eds., *Textiles as National Heritage: Identities, Politics and Material Culture* (Münster: Waxmann, 2017).
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If textiles lent themselves to "national form," in the context of Uzbekistan, they were particularly well-suited to "socialist content" as well. If Ukraine has been called the "bread-basket" of the Soviet Union, then it might be possible to call Uzbekistan its wardrobe [Fig. 5.3]. Uzbekistan was a major producer of cotton, and the lynchpin of Stalin's ambition to achieve cotton autarky. In Uzbekistan, collectivization entailed sowing land that had previously been used for food production with cotton — a hard sell for farmers who were rightly suspicious of the ability of the central state to provide their families with the food they needed.[51] Although most Uzbek cotton was shipped elsewhere, its link to textile production was never far from its representation in Uzbekistan's press. To Uzbek-speaking audiences, cotton was explicitly linked with textile production, and those textiles were represented as the birthright of all who participated in fulfilling the Five-Year Plans [Fig. 5.3]. In a speech he delivered alongside Turaeva, the Stakhanovite who opened this chapter, Akmal Ikromov himself referred to textiles in calling on the people of Uzbekistan to produce more cotton. In particular, he called for Uzbekistan to produce enough cotton that Uzbek women could own eight dresses each, while men needed half that number of shirts.[52] Although silk was less essential to Stalin's economic ambitions and produced in far smaller quantities, Central Asia was also a major hub for silk production in the Soviet Union. For Uzbekistan's workers, to a far greater degree than, say, for a

[51] Some regions of Uzbekistan did experience famine during the collectivization period, but this was far less widespread than has been observed with reference to other portions of the Soviet Union, especially Ukraine and Kazakhstan. The most severe famine appears to have occurred between March and June 1933 and seems to have been consistent across Uzbekistan. See Kamp, "Hunger and Potatoes." On the famine in Kazakhstan, see Sarah Cameron, *The Hungry Steppe: Famine, Violence, and the Making of Soviet Kazakhstan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2018).

[52] In Uzbek, *ko'ylak*, the word Ikromov uses here, means "dress" for women and "shirt" for men; it could also be translated as "tunic." "19-dekabrda O'zbekiston, Qozog'iston, va Qoraqalpog'iston ilg'or kolxozchilarining kengashida o'rtoq Akmal Ikromov so'zi," *Yangi Farg'ona*, Dec. 22, 1935, pp. 3-4.

Russian collective farmer, textiles symbolized not only the prosperity that was now available to Soviet people, but also the congealment of their own labor power.

For women in particular, the prominence of textiles in Soviet Uzbek discourse was significant. In the pre-revolutionary period, women had often assisted with some aspects of silk production, especially the cultivation of silkworms, but they did not generally work in the shop itself for any craft.[53] Beginning in the 1920s, however, the state began creating separate silkmaking cooperatives and silk factories for women. Work in textile production was consequently less of a threat to women's respectability than other forms of work. As a result, at a moment when Soviet activists were still struggling to get all women out to work on the collective farm alongside men, they constituted a majority in textile and clothing production. A newspaper report from 1932, for example, claimed that women comprised 64% of workers in silk production, 45.3% in weaving, and 77.7% in sewing factories.[54] This disproportionality was not seen as a problem: in fact, in 1935 the chair of the Uzbekistan Council of Trade Unions wrote to the Party Central Executive Committee of Uzbekistan recommending that the proportion of women in silk production be increased to 90%.[55] Furthermore, by the start of the shock work campaign, agitation for increased participation in textile production had long been a significant part of Party work among women.[56] In the early 1930s, the press frequently reported on the successes of women's factories and workshops [Fig. 5.4, 5.5]. Female textile workers were also

[53] Silkmaking was concentrated in Bukhara, Marg'ilon, Kokand, Khodzhent, and especially Ferghana, while Samarkand specialized in semi-silk fabric. See Thomas Mark Skallerup, "Artisans Between Guilds and Cooperatives: A History of Social and Economic Change in Russian Turkestan and Soviet Central Asia, 1865-1928" (Ph.D Diss., Indiana University, 1990), pp. 61, 97.
[54] "G'alabani mustahkamlashga!" *Yosh Leninchi*, no. 51 (March 8, 1932), p. 1.
[55] Incongruously, given the previous statistic from *Young Leninist*, the note also recommended increasing the proportion of women in sewing to 75%. The note also recommended increasing the proportion of women included in food production. See O'zMDA, F. 86, op. 10, d. 207, l. 142.
[56] For example, one of the slogans put forward by the Central Asian Bureau's Agitprop Division in 1930 was "Toward fulfilling the cotton and silk program, and toward a full engagement of the textile and silk-producing industry of the Union with Soviet raw material!" See RGASPI, F. 62, op. 2, d. 2437, l. 7.

uniquely visible in the women's press, with articles, photo essays, short stories, and poems published about them in the women's press throughout the decade.[57]

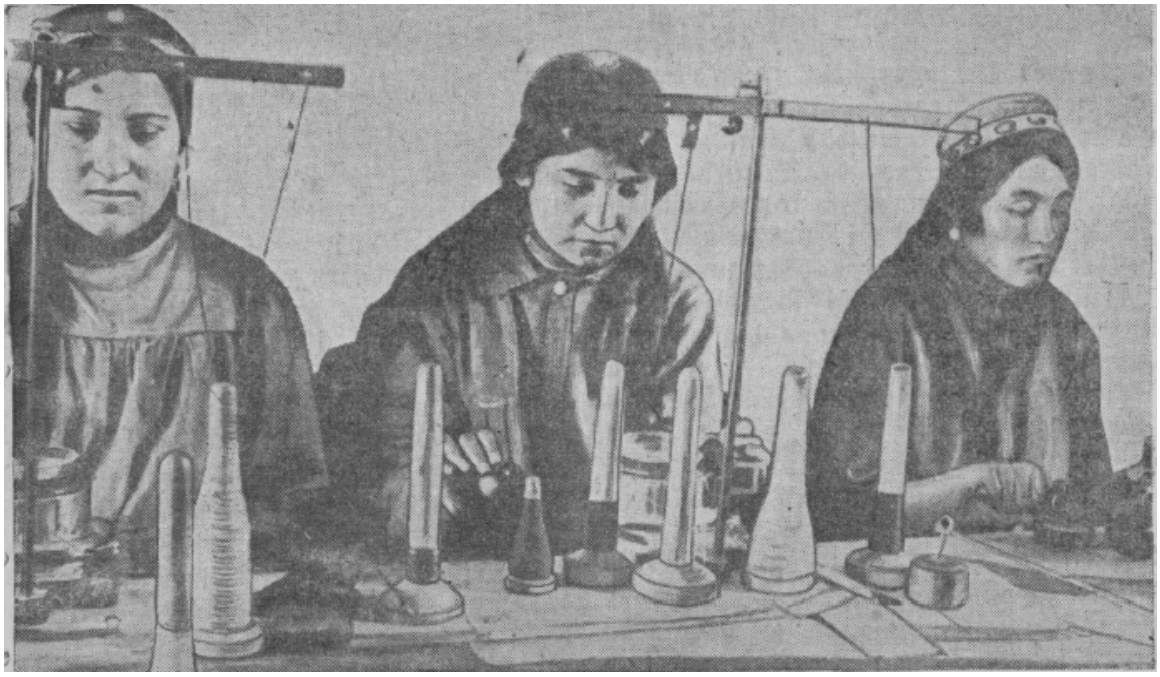

Fig. 5.4
Women silk workers
SOURCE: *Yangi Yo'l*, 1933 (no. 3-4), p. 27.

[57] There was a reference to textile production in almost every issue of the women's magazine; examples include Yo'ldosh, "Atlaschi qizlar," *Yorqin Hayot*, 1938 (no. 2), p. 18; Mo'minov, "Buxoro ipak fabrikasi millionlar shartnomasini bajarishda namuna bo'lsin," *Yangi Yo'l*, 1933 (no. 1), p. 37; "Ipakchilik sanoati yangi vazifalar oldida," *Yangi Yo'l*, 1934 (no. 1), pp. 5-7.

Fig. 5.5
Silk workers. Note the women at right hiding from the camera.
SOURCE: *Yangi Yo'l*, 1930 (no. 1), back cover

Fig. 5.6
Woman with silk cocoons
SOURCE: *Yangi Qishloq*, 1931 (no. 6), front cover.

Women played an important role with respect to textiles not only as producers, but also as consumers. By the late nineteenth century, and continuing into the Soviet period, most ready-made cotton fabric came from mills in Russia.[58] In contrast, luxury fabrics such as silk and velvet were locally produced. According to Thomas Skallerup, Uzbekistan's silk production increased significantly during the 1920s, and most of that increase was oriented toward meeting local demand for "unique colorings." In 1926-27, silk comprised 3.3% of Uzbekistan's total gross

[58] Skallerup, "Guilds and Cooperatives," p. 58. For examples of this fabric, see Meller, *Russian Textiles*.

product in the crafts industry, and that silk was intended "exclusively for local consumption."[59] Unlike in Russia, dressmaking was not outlawed in Uzbekistan, but domestic dressmaking was still widespread, particularly in rural areas.[60]

Given unveiled women's material need, the outsize role of Central Asian women in textile production, and the symbolic value of textiles as a marker of nationality and gender, textiles proved an ideal tool for advancing the Soviet agenda in Central Asia. But before the textile-text came the textile reward. As Botakoz Kassymbekova notes with respect to Tajikistan, which was subordinated to Uzbekistan until 1928, textiles were frequently used as incentives to win over local populations to the Bolshevik cause.[61] When the Hujum began, women were sometimes given clothing and footwear at unveiling demonstrations.[62] This trend continued with the First Five Year Plan, when the hyper-ambitious quotas for agricultural and industrial production gave rise to a system of incentives for top production.[63] Accordingly, with the start of the shock worker movement in the late 1920s, and the Stakhanovite movement it fed into, the state began

[59] Skallerup, "Guilds and Cooperatives," pp. 194-95.
[60] Skallerup's description of pre-revolutionary garmentmaking suggests that artisans produced mostly robes (*khalat*), hats, coats, and belts, not dresses; we can assume these were mostly made at home and by hand. With respect to the 1920s, Skallerup notes that urban dressmakers often made dresses according to European fashions, but rural dressmakers sewed according to local styles. More research is needed to understand the proportion of clothing that was made at home versus by professional dressmakers, although I suspect that most women sewed their own clothing in this period. Skallerup, "Guilds and Cooperatives," pp. 67, 195.
[61] Another example can be observed in Sadriddin Ayniy's *Slaves,* in which a wealthy man, or *boi*, is rewarded with a silk mattress for agreeing to cooperate with Soviet authorities. See Ayniy, *Qullar* (1935), pp. 252-260.
[62] One archival report described an occasion when this effort backfired — in 1929, Eid al-Fitr fell on March 13. The secret police reported that many women who had demonstratively unveiled at the massive parades on International Women's Day, March 8, reveiled for the religious holiday several days later. The police knew this to be the case because, below their veils, it was possible to see the stockings and boots they had been rewarded just a few days earlier. RGASPI F. 62, op. 2, d. 1811 l. 111. The report notes that, if they had not unveiled on March 8 a few days before, some of these women were likely to be the wives of "otvetrabotniki," or responsible workers whose wives were expected to be unveiled. Either way, their reveiling was a problem. Most likely, reveiling was not a sign of resistance, but contextual: one could unveil for the 8th of March, but for religious holidays, a veil was necessary. As for women in other religious traditions, high holy days were occasions for "reverting" to more conservative modes of dress.
[63] On the rural Stakhanovite movement elsewhere in the Soviet Union, see Buckley, *Mobilizing Soviet Peasants;* see also Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants*, pp. 274-79.

promoting hyper-production in Uzbekistan through material incentives, including shoes, clothing, and bolts of raw fabric.[64]

In the early 1930s, the press began to report frequently on prizes that women received for shock work.[65] In 1931, for example, an article in *New Way* reported that shock worker women from Mirzacho'l had been rewarded with galoshes, fabric, and scarves.[66] But the textile prize as a genre reached its apex in the mid-1930s, as the shock work and Stakhanovite movements came into their own. A January 1934 report in *Truth of the East* (*Pravda Vostoka*), for example, announced that exemplary collective farm brigades in Central Asia would be rewarded with prizes including wool suits (*kostiumy*), women's scarves, bolts of factory-made fabric (*manufaktura*), robes (*khalat*), sewing machines, Russian-style boots (*botinki*), and local-style boots with galoshes (*ichik s galoshami*).[67] In this case, both men and women were rewarded, but for women textiles were particularly common prizes. For example, during the festivities around International Women's Day on March 8, 1934, collective farms throughout Central Asia awarded female shock-workers with various textiles, clothing, and footwear, including satin and other

[64] The distribution of material rewards, including textiles, to Stakhanovites and other high performers is a well-known phenomenon throughout the Soviet Union. Lewis Siegelbaum's definitive work on the topic of Stakhanovism examines it as an economic, social, cultural, and political phenomenon. My discussion here complements his work, and the work of other researchers on Stakhanovism, by foregrounding the aesthetic reception of these rewards and their cultural embeddedness in the context of Central Asia. Prizes of textiles and clothing were given to Stakhanovites elsewhere in the Soviet Union, but nowhere but Central Asia do silk and velvet seem to have figured so prominently in the discourse of Stakhanovism. See Lewis H. Siegelbaum, *Stakhanovism and the Politics of Productivity in the USSR, 1935-1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 229-32; on rural Stakhanovism, see Buckley, *Mobilizing Soviet Peasants.*

[65] Examples include Mahbuba, "Ish maydoniga 17 nafar madaniyat armiyasi," *Yangi Yo'l*, 1933 (no. 6), l. 33; Ergash Niyoziy, "8-nchi martda mukofotlandilar," *Yangi Yo'l*, 1933 (no. 3-4), p. 51.

[66] "Mirzacho'l zarbdor xotin-qizlari sosial mehnat qo'ynida," *Yangi Yo'l*, 1931 (no. 10-11), pp. 11-12. For another example from the early 1930s, this time portrayed in a poem, see Zohira Tohirova, "Terim xotiralari," *Yangi Yo'l*, 1932 (no. 3-4), p. 14.

[67] On this occasion, other prizes included record players and pocket watches. Fewer of these were awarded, a state of affairs that probably reflects both their greater expense and their lesser popularity. See "Chem premiruiutsia brigady," *Pravda Vostoka*, Jan. 4, 1934, p. 4. Traditional shoes (*ichik* and *kafsh*, or galoshes) were much more common in Central Asia and were locally produced; Russian-style factory-made boots, like all European-style shoes, were much more rare, and were mostly imported from Russia. See Skallerup, "Guilds and Cooperatives," pp. 197-98.

fabrics, scarves, and galoshes.[68] A report from one Machine-Tractor Station described awarding shock worker women with "[sewing] machines, samovars, calico [*chit*], velvet [*baxmal*], scarves, and coats."[69] Such rewards were frequently mandated from Tashkent, and regional authorities were often required to report the yardage of fabric and the numbers of articles of footwear and clothing that had been distributed. Because these awards were distributed in mass assemblies and then reported on in the press, they reached Uzbekistan's women twice: first, in the assemblies where they were distributed; and, second, in the mass media where they were pictured and discussed. These awards made an instructive comparison to the capitalist world, where worker women, according to Soviet publications, were too poor to afford decent clothing.[70]

It is impossible to imagine an unmediated source that would elucidate the extent to which "ordinary" Central Asian women sincerely believed the rhetoric about newfound prosperity.[71] We can assume that most women did not own multiple dresses made of luxury fabrics; these were reserved for the shock-working, Stakhanovite, and Party elite. We also know that many Uzbek women suffered from food shortages and even famine in the years of collectivization. Nevertheless, even when individual experiences contradicted the media narrative about "silk and velvet" prosperity, the ubiquitous presence of that narrative shaped the way some women told their stories, and how they spoke of the communities to which they belonged. Even though everyday life did not always correspond to the media narrative, women foregrounded the ways

[68] See the reports on the 8th March festivities in RGASPI F. 112, op. 61, d. 76 and F. 112, op. 61, d. 77.
[69] RGASPI F. 112, op. 61, d. 77, l. 56.
[70] See, for example, "Ikki dunyo," *Yangi Yo'l*, 1933 (no. 10-11), p. 18, featuring a photo of an American beauty pageant where, the caption reports, "worker girls' old clothes are mocked."
[71] I concur with Sheila Fitzpatrick that categories such as "identity" and the "file-self" are more accessible to the historian than subjectivity. Although ego-documents do provide unique insight into how individuals experienced Soviet life, the generic forms of a diary, memoir, or autobiography are invariably at a remove from the individual subject. Even with access to the best sources, it is still possible only to triangulate the interior experience of another human being. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear off the Masks!: Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), pp. 8-9.

that their lives did correspond to that narrative in an effort to articulate a place for themselves in communities of women, Uzbeks, and Soviet workers that they would never meet face-to-face.

A 1934 collection of fourteen biographies and autobiographies of Central Asian MTS political division women's organizers serves to illustrate this point.[72] The (auto)biographies appear to have been solicited in recommendation for a prize which was to be awarded "for the best work in the spring sowing campaign and in the cultivation of cotton."[73] Some are autobiographies by literate women, written in self-nomination; several are composed on behalf of illiterate or semi-literate women. All are composed in Russian. The (auto)biographies follow a similar format, and seem to have been composed in response to a prompt requesting information on the woman's class background, the time and conditions under which she joined the collective farm, and the nature of her work on the collective farm.[74] The biographies come from MTS Political Divisions around Central Asia.[75] The biographies are clearly highly mediated sources. They cannot be assumed to represent any interior beliefs, and they surely conceal far more than they reveal. Nevertheless, they constitute rare and useful sources on how female Central Asian

[72] RGASPI F. 112, op. 61, d. 78, ll. 9-26. It is impossible to tell the nationality of the subjects of the biographies by name alone, and in this period, national categories were in flux. However, only one, Beliaeva (l. 11), has a Russian-sounding name; the others have Muslim names, and one is identified as an Uzbek.
[73] Ibid., l. 11.
[74] The autobiographies thus roughly follow a format that will be familiar to most scholars of early Soviet culture from the work of Igal Halfin. Two of the biographies do not follow this format because they decline to recommend the nominee, one because the writer does not know the nominee well enough, and the other because the writer believes the nominee unsuitable for the prize. In this case, the nominee took five days off rather than working to mobilize the women on her collective farm. See Igal Halfin, *Terror in My Soul: Communist Autobiographies on Trial* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003); Halfin, *Red Autobiographies*.
[75] Some authors do not identify their location, and for others, the geographical reference is unclear. Nevertheless, because the prize was intended for a cotton farmer, we can conjecture that the letters came from Uzbekistan or the cotton-growing regions of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, or Kyrgyzstan. In cases where I have been able to identify the locations, they are all in Uzbekistan, eg. Bukhara and New Chirchiq. The MTS political division was an ephemeral bureaucratic entity that nevertheless generated a significant body of useful archival information. In Uzbekistan, there were 75 MTS Political Divisions, and 16 sovkhoz Political Divisions. On the MTS political division in Uzbekistan, see A. N. Nuritov, "Rabota Politotdelov MTS Uzbekistana Sredi Sel'skoi Molodezhi (1933-1934 Gody)," *Nauchnye Trudy (TashGU)*, no. 281 (1966): 97–103; see also A. N. Nuritov, "Vozniknovenie i Deiatel'nost' Politotdel'skoi Pechati v Uzbekistane (1933-34 Gg.)," vol. 169, "Trudy" TashGU. (Tashkent, 1960).

activists described their relationship to a broader community of collective farm women, and how textiles figured in the representation of that relationship.

Most of of the biographies follow a predictable narrative arc, describing the poverty and privation the woman experienced prior to joining the collective farm, the hard work she has undertaken on behalf of cotton cultivation, and the ways her life has improved since collectivization.[76] A large proportion of the writers adduce evidence of a difficult background: several of the women lack parents or a father; others merely report that they harken from a "worker" or "poor" family.[77] One woman elaborates her background at length, telling a story straight from the Hujum playbook.[78] Her father was a wage worker, and her family lived "very poorly"; there was nothing to eat, and because she was an extra mouth to feed, her parents married her off at age sixteen to an older man who beat her and forced her to wear her *paranji* constantly, permitting her to unveil only when she lay down to sleep. After five years of marriage, the woman fled home. This was 1927, and the woman earned meager pay embroidering skullcaps until collectivization. In 1930, the woman entered the collective farm, becoming a Party member in 1931, and taking on responsibility as the director of the collective farm nursery.

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[76] Interestingly, the most accomplished woman, who became a Party candidate in 1928 and studied abroad in Baku before becoming a literacy teacher and collective farm activist, does not offer any evidence of a difficult background. Instead, the letter reads like a resume, describing the woman's many educational and professional accomplishments. Among the biographies of this length — hers is a full single-spaced page long — this is a remarkable omission. It suggests that the author believed her background to be a liability. This woman composed her biography in excellent Russian despite apparently not being a native speaker; it is also, of course, possible that the biography was ghostwritten. See RGASPI F. 112, op. 61, d. 78, l. 17.

[77] Orphanhood not only served as a useful plot point in a narrative of salvation by the Party; it also deprived women of paternal guardianship, which offered social protections that many women were unwilling to sacrifice in order to become a Party activist. Examples include Ibid., ll. 25, 26. One woman reported living with her parents for only seven years before moving to Kokand. She does not give further detail, but this too suggests a difficult background. See Ibid., l. 20.

[78] I do not mean to suggest the story was false: it is plausible and represents the experiences of many Central Asian women. But the woman's decision to elaborate her story at length indicates that she was aware of its political expediency. This is an autobiography, and composed in good Russian with some grammatical and spelling errors. RGASPI F. 112, op. 61, d. 78, l. 10.

Of the twelve positive recommendations, half mention textiles directly. In each case, the biographies adduce the woman activist's clothing as evidence both of her dedicated work on behalf of the Party and of her newfound prosperity. The woman who once made a living embroidering skullcaps, for example, enumerates that she now owns three silk dresses, two silk scarves, three velvet robes, and one silk robe, as well as two sewing machines.[79] This woman goes into unusual detail, but she is not the only writer to specify both that she owns several outfits, and that these outfits are made of silk or velvet.[80] Another recommender reports that her nominee now owns "several festive outfits of clothing for her entire family," with the primary Central Asian festive textile being, of course, silk.[81] Writers favorably compare these new wardrobes to their previous poverty and report that they have received some of the items as rewards for their dedicated labor. In other words, for these activists, clothing is not just a pleasant reward for good work or a material fulfillment of need; it is both at the same time.

In the context of the widespread coverage of textile rewards in the mass media, it is obvious that these women did not autonomously decide to speak of their "silk and velvet." Instead, drawing on what they had heard of and seen in the mass media and at mass institutions, they described their personal prosperity as part of a broader trend across their entire republic. They understood their own prosperity to be available to any collective farm woman who was willing to work hard, and regardless of the difficulty of her background.

After enumerating all the fine clothing she now owned, the former skullcap-embroiderer put it directly: "Our woman collective farmer (*nasha kolkhoznitsa*) of Uzbekistan has stepped

[79] It is unclear why one woman would need two sewing machines; this detail serves as evidence of the Party's overflowing generosity to this activist. Some authors mention other evidence of prosperity, including cows, blankets, food aplenty, etc. Clothing is nevertheless the most frequently mentioned item.
[80] Ibid., ll. 12, 26.
[81] Ibid., l. 25.

onto a bright path and is building a new collective farm life."[82] The last in the woman's biography, this sentence reads like a slogan. Nevertheless, the sentence indicates how textiles functioned in a broader project to induce Uzbek women to understand themselves as belonging to a community of women like themselves that they would never meet face to face. By describing her own life trajectory, and then generalizing it to "*our* woman collective farmer of Uzbekistan," she expresses an understanding that she is just one of a growing mass of prosperous, cotton-growing, Central Asian women.

The discourse about textiles as a marker of prosperity was thus more than a mere attempt to "buy out" needy or greedy women. To be sure, silk and velvet looked good and felt nice, particularly to women who may have otherwise struggled to obtain adequate clothing for themselves. At the same time, they communicated women's contribution to socialist production, and linked them to other working women throughout Uzbekistan and in the Soviet Union more broadly.

The Stakhanovite's Silk Dress

A poem published in the official Uzbek literary journal in June 1935, "My Silk Dress" by Nartachi Abdullayeva, expresses the combination of sensual enjoyment and labor congealment that made textiles such a productive medium for women's participation in the Soviet public during the 1930s. The poem begins with a description of the shimmering, colorful fabric the dress is made of, repeatedly stressing how visually attractive the fabric is:

> Its warp is blue, its woof is pink;
> It shimmers in the sunlight's rays.
> Its shimmering adds beauty to beauty;
> Whoever sees it stops to look.

[82] Ibid., l. 10.

Most simply, then, the silk fabric is beautiful, so beautiful that passersby stop to look at it. The speaker emphasizes this feeling of being seen later in the poem, where she suggests that even the birds around her are singing in admiration.

It may seem obvious to note that the dress, when worn out, will be seen. But in the context of post-Hujum Uzbekistan, this has a particular significance. Every reader of the poem would be aware that, for many Uzbek women, stepping out unveiled in public was an exercise in being seen. The great anxiety for newly unveiled women and their relatives was that they would be looked at in untoward ways. As one woman who unveiled early in the Hujum put it, speaking in the 1990s with oral historian Marianne Kamp:

> In the mahalla [NB: neighborhood], I was the only one [who unveiled then] . . . I used to do this with a newspaper [she demonstrates walking with newspaper in front of her face]. I didn't tell you about that. Everyone was staring at me. At the little bazaar I would get on the tram. There was a tea-seller there. . . They [the men at the teahouse] watched. There was one who stared really badly. He'd look at everyone and say, "Look at that!" They'd say, right in front of me, "Must be some Russian's wife, unveiled like that." So then, poor me, I walked with a newspaper.[83]

In drawing attention to the *dress* the unveiled woman wears, rather than the woman's face or body, Abdullayeva proposes one way a woman can be seen in public, even admired, while remaining respectable. For newly unveiled women, it was embarrassing, even violating to be stared at in the face. In contrast, being noticed for a beautiful dress was flattering, particularly since part of a dress would have been visible even under a *paranji* and *chachvon*.

Nevertheless, the dress is a pleasure not just for others to see, but also for Abdullayeva to wear. Abdullayeva describes the feeling she has when she puts on her dress: "When I wear my silk dress/ My soul opens like a flower." When she walks, the dress smoothly swirls around her.

[83] Kamp, *The New Woman*, p. 162.

In the poem's concluding couplet, Abdullayeva articulates her intense emotional attachment to the dress: "My loving heart is tied to you/ I honor you with great regard, oh my silk dress."

Given the detailed sensual description of the dress, Abdullayeva's emotional attachment is clearly rooted in her embodied experience of wearing it. And yet, that individual experience does not completely explain Abdullayeva's attachment, for the dress also represents the skilled labor of her fellow women workers. In the second stanza, Abdullayeva specifically notes that the dress was made at the factory in Ferghana. Describing for a second time the colorful, shimmering fabric, Abdullayeva notes that the factory "has no blame in the art (*hunar*) of weaving." Later, she says she "loves" the dress that has come from "her women friends' labors." When Abdullayeva concludes with a statement of her "love" for the beautiful silk dress, then, that love is caught up in her attachment to fellow female workers, and, by implication, to the Five-Year Plan that directs their work and to the Party that emancipated them all.

In "My Silk Dress," Abdullayeva only implies the linkage between fine fabric and Party largesse. Other works, however, make this much more explicit. One of the places where textiles appeared most prominently is in the "folklore" gathered by Writers' Union members and published in the periodical press. The works of folklore that appeared in the women's press were just a few examples of the broader phenomenon of explicitly political folklore produced throughout the Soviet Union.[84] Such literary production has pejoratively been described as "fakelore" because, due to its pro-regime content, standardized form and language, and sloganeering tone, it has been presumed to be inauthentic. Some works of "fakelore" have even been suspected of being fabrications by their purported "collectors." More frequently, however, it appears that performers of folklore were encouraged to compose works on a given topic —

[84] For a more extensive discussion of this phenomenon in the RSFSR, see Miller, *Folklore for Stalin;* Ziolkowski, *Soviet Heroic Poetry.*

say, the Five-Year Plan, or Lenin and Stalin. Then, with guidance from the "collector," these performers would compose a song expressing their (positive) dispositions toward the topic. The "collector" would transcribe the work and standardize its language before publication.[85]

Under these circumstances, it is obviously pointless to attempt to recover some kind of authentic "folk" voice that speaks independently of state slogans and intelligentsia intervention.[86] Regardless of their level of authenticity, however, framing these texts as "folklore" meant their voice was understood to be representative of the masses and their experience of state policy. Rather than foregrounding ideological or theoretical terms, these works instead focused on everyday life as it was experienced in a Soviet context. The experiences and dispositions these works described thus show what was becoming the norm for ordinary workers' participation in the Soviet project. In this case, folklore/ fakelore articulates a model for how women could become Central Asian Soviet workers. In many of these works, textiles and clothing figured prominently.

One exemplary work of fakelore is the song "Tursunoy," published in the Uzbek women's magazine, then called *Bright Life*, in 1936.[87] It appeared alongside several short biographies of exemplary collective farm workers, including, on the previous page, a female collective farm directory wearing white. The song is described as "the song of a collective farm girl"; the author/ composer is otherwise anonymous. It praises an Uzbek female Party activist named Tursunoy, and is comprised of seven quatrains with varying rhyme scheme and a memorable, rhythmic meter, incomplete iambic tetrameter. This meter lends credence to the claim of the song's oral

[85] Ziolkowski offers a detailed account of how this process worked in a few exemplary cases; see Chapter 4, "The Making of the Noviny," in Ziolkowski, *Soviet Heroic Poetry*, pp. 91-122.
[86] In Uzbekistan, for example Oydin, among others, was involved in the gathering of folklore. The collector of the works I discuss below is unknown unless otherwise noted. Of course, as Ziolkowski notes, authenticity in folklore is a problem that is not exclusive to the Soviet Union. See Chapter 1, "Tampering with the Folkloric Evidence: Famous and Infamous European Precedents," in Ibid., pp. 1-36.
[87] "Tursunoy," *Yorqin Turmush*, August 1936, p. 15.

composition, and makes it easy to read or sing aloud for illiterate audiences. Most of the stanzas include an enigmatic folkloric motif, often making sense primarily because they generate a singsongy rhyme: the moon, a pipe, water, the earth, a stone. These motifs are then combined with descriptions of Tursunoy's admirable qualities, which are always represented as something the singer has seen for herself. For example, several stanzas points out Tursunoy's leadership role in the singer's own community: "She's young, but that matters not:/ She is boss (*bosh*) to all of us." Tursunoy, we learn in the course of the song, is both educated and an avid Party activist.

It is no surprise, given Tursunoy's admirable qualities, that the singer describes her as being "like Tojixon."[88] But, unlike Tojixon, who we can assume to be accessible to the singer only through reputation, Tursunoy is personally known to the singer. In one stanza, the singer reports that Tursunoy personally invites her to official functions: "Come, let's go to the meeting!" The penultimate stanza remarks that Tursunoy can hold her own even in front of men, including "Mahkamboy my brother" (*akam*).[89] Later, in pointing out Tursunoy's literacy and political awareness, the singer emphasizes Tursunoy's personal accessibility: "If you ask Tursunoy/ She reads newspapers every day." Later, the singer underscores this again: "If you ask Tursunoy,/ She is a Party member." Although the song is suffused with admiration for Tursunoy's boldness among men, her literacy, and her Party activism, Tursunoy remains accessible to the singer on a personal level, unlike Tojixon, with her ubiquitous, but heavily mediated presence.

In the poem, Tursunoy's link to working girls like the singer is further underscored through references to textiles: in the final stanza, the singer reports that "Tursunoy's dress/ Is made of

[88] Although Turaeva was also named Tojixon, the reference here is most likely to Stakhanovite Tojixon Shodieva, who was far more widely discussed in the media because of her Stalin Prize. Tojixon Shodieva is the subject of Chapter 6.

[89] "Aka" is an honorific term for an older brother or any older man. "Akam" means "my brother," and emphasizes the speaker's personal relationship to him (though it is still not possible to assume he is a blood relation).

fine white silk (*oq shoyining tozasi*)." On the most basic level, as in the case of Abdullayeva's poem, the silk dress is beautiful. It simply adds to the description given in the first stanza, which concludes that beauty like Tursunoy's can be found only "on the moon, not on earth."

At the same time, on a subtler level the silk dress and the physical description of Tursunoy advance political attachments, not just personal dispositions. In Persianate poetry, the moon was a frequent poetic trope to describe a woman's face; the epithet "oychehra," or moon-faced, was and is used in Uzbek to describe a woman with a beautiful face.[90] Because of her Party activism and work among men and women, we can assume Tursunoy to be unveiled. The physical description thus reminds the reader that unveiling was a precondition for Tursunoy's other admirable traits. Similarly, Tursunoy's silk dress can be assumed to be a reward or payment for her dedicated service to the Party. It also links Tursunoy to the women who presumably worked to produce that silk. This point is underscored by the poem's clear reference to women's participation in textile production: "Girls at the factory/ Weave scarves every day." In wearing a silk dress, Tursunoy exhibits not just her good taste and good looks, but her political rectitude and dedication to the cause of working girls. Or, to be more precise: Tursunoy's political rectitude *is* an expression of good taste, and vice versa; the two cannot be separated.

This point is important, because Tursunoy's other admirable features were not easy ones for the average collective farm girl to emulate. When the poem was published in 1936, literacy initiatives were just beginning to reach rural populations, particularly rural women. A collective farm girl might be able to look at pictures in the newspaper, to hear it read aloud, and perhaps to read the headlines occasionally – but to read it daily for herself was another matter altogether. Being a leader in public, particularly in a co-ed group, was daunting to say the least for women

[90] This is the Turkic version of a Persian epithet, *māh-chihr*, meaning "face bright as the moon." See *māh-chihr*, from Francis Joseph Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*, p. 1146. Retrieved from https://dsalsrv04.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/steingass/.

who may have unveiled only recently, and who had been taught to behave with modesty in mixed company. Tursunoy's silk dress, thus, is perhaps the least difficult aspect of her persona to emulate. It serves as an attractive, intensely tactile gateway into imitation of Tursunoy's other qualities, and into Party loyalty more broadly. In the 1930s, Tojixon Shodieva never appeared in public wearing silk. With her *gimnasterka* and her larger-than-life celebrity persona, Tojixon was both admirable and unattainable. In the song, then, Tursunoy appears as a mediating figure between Tojixon and the ordinary working girl.

Another "fakelore" poem reiterated this fraught link between white silk and Shodieva. The poem, "Tojixon," published in the following issue of *Bright Life*, begins thus, with a quatrain in the same singsongy meter as "Tursunoy":

> Long live those who wove
> My dress of white silk.
> Long live Tojixon,
> Shock-worker of women and girls.

As with "Tursunoy," the poem is intensely personal. It alternates between descriptions of Tojixon's admirable qualities and of the speaker's hopes and dreams. "Like sister Tojixon," the speaker says, "I want to become a district committee chair (*raikom*)." In the concluding stanza, the speaker offers a further description of what Tojixon wears:

> Sister Tojixon's hat (*shapka*)
> Suits her very well.
> The medal (*orden*) on her breast
> Is a fitting reward for her labor.

The poem is thus bookended with clothing: on the one hand, the silk dress; on the other hand, the Lenin prize and worker's cap. It is not without significance that the vocabulary used to describe Tojixon's clothing hat and medal is borrowed from Russian. On the one hand, Shodieva is a

hero and model for Uzbek women; on the other hand, the women who follow in her footsteps might wear white silk, but they are highly unlikely to don the *gimnasterka*.

This is not to suggest that clothing and its meaning remained static for ordinary Uzbek women during the 1930s. Tojixon's *gimnasterka* may have been unique, but for Uzbek women who aspired to social mobility, an Uzbek-style silk dress was not sufficient. For example, a work of "fakelore" from Kokand, "The Song of Unveiled Women and Girls," exemplifies how dress could signify not only prosperity and sensual enjoyment, but also modernity and professionalism.[91] The text introducing the song indicates that the Revolution had brought innovations into everyday life (*turmush*), and that these innovations had made their way into works of folklore. In first-person voice, the song expresses how happy the singer is to be unveiled. She walks about with an exposed face and does not fear the "enemy." The *paranji* has turned to "ashes," and the speaker has done away with the "wrinkled scarf" (*ro'mol*).

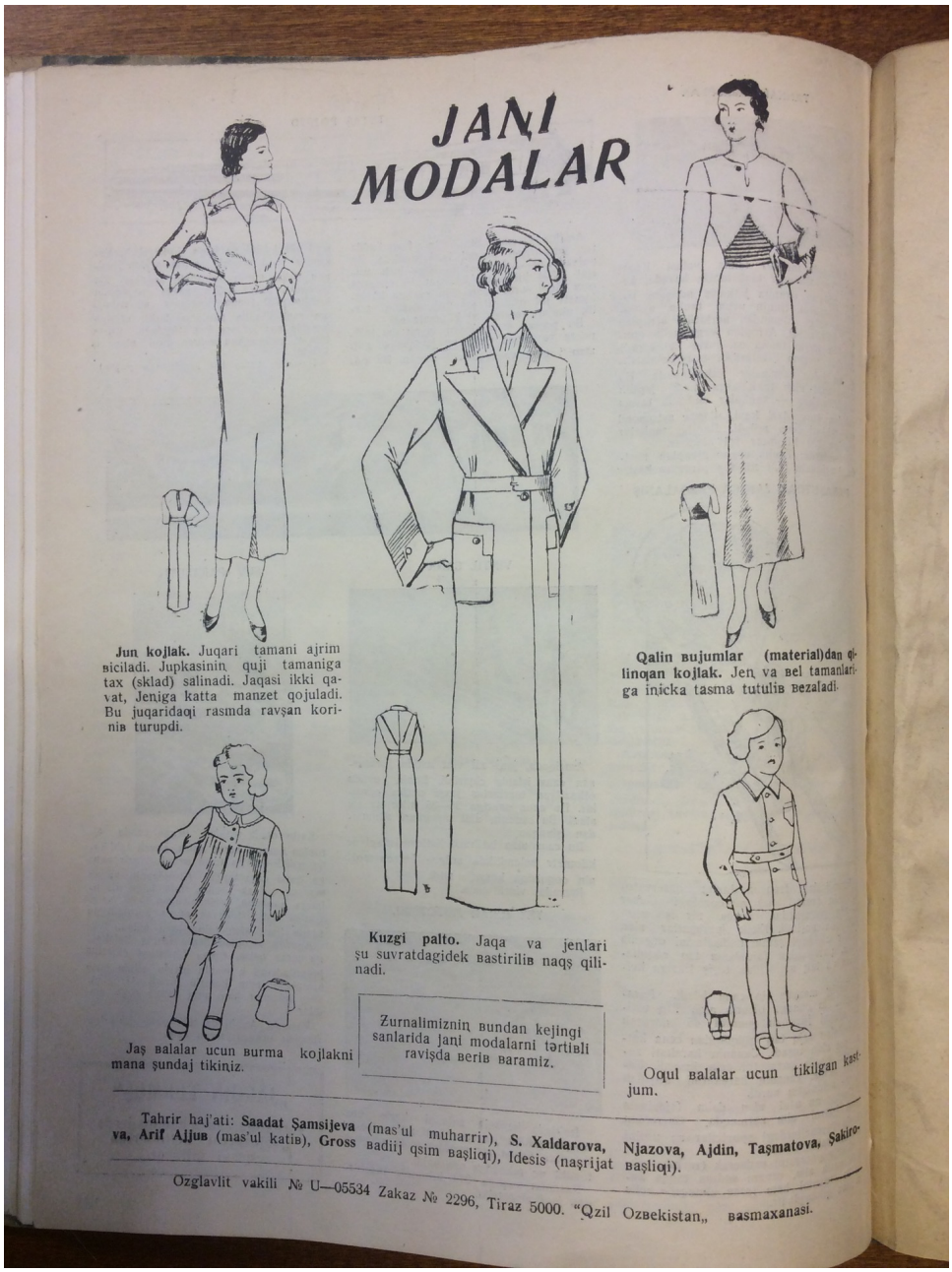
If other "fakelore" poems pertained to agricultural and factory work, this song is concerned with white-collar labor. The speaker offers illustrations of her newfound modernity. She doesn't need to sign with a thumbprint at the marriage registration office [ZAGS] — the implication is that she knows how to sign her own name. One verse points out that she does not need a hanging lantern; we can assume that her home has electric lights. The speaker's language even points to her orientation to modernity: she describes the new era as an "open era" (*otkrit zamon*). By using a Russian word here, *otkrit*, instead of the usual Uzbek term, *ochilgan*, the speaker points to the continued association of unveiling with Russianness, and her own familiarity with the lingo of the European white-collar worker. The woman's clothes are also both modern and European: she "squeaks" around in lace-up boots (*botinka*), using another Russian borrowing to describe her footwear. Between her literacy, her urbanity, and her leather

[91] "Ochilgan xotin-qizlar ashulasi," Transcribed A. Zohirov, *Yorqin Turmush,* 1936, no. 3, p. 14.

boots, the speaker is well-suited for a professional job. She concludes the song, "I want to be/ An accountant in an office" (*idorada o'ltirgan/ hisobchini xohlayman*).

The poem thus elucidates another dimension of the linkage between clothing, class, and nationality: the *atlas* dress may well have bedecked the shock-worker of field or factory, but European clothing better befit upwardly-mobile urban women. In another Oydin poem, a young activist woman named Adolatxon is described as wearing "a black elastic vest," a "satin dress," a "red wool scarf," and "leather boots," impermeable by mud and water.[92] Adolatxon is the dedicated leader of a work brigade — so dedicated that she walks around from door to door at dawn each morning, awakening the women in her brigade. The fine fabric of Adolatxon's dress suggests that her hard work on behalf of socialism has made her prosperous, while the modern vest and leather boots remind the reader that Adolat is no ordinary, rank-and-file worker: she is a modern, capable administrator.

[92] Oydin, "Adolatxonning brigadasi," *Yorqin Turmush* 1936, no. 3, p. 11.



JANI MODALAR

Jun kojlak. Juqari tamani ajrim вiciladi. Jupkasinin quji tamaniga tax (sklad) salinadi. Jaqasi ikki qavat, Jeniga katta manzet qojuladi. Bu juqaridaqi rasmda ravşan korinib turupdi.

Kuzgi palto. Jaqa va jenlari şu suvratdagidek вastirilib naqş qilinadi.

Qalin вujumlar (material)dan qilinqan kojlak. Jen va вel tamanlariga inicka tasma tutulib вezaladi.

Jaş вalalar ucun вurma kojlakni mana şundaj tikiniz.

Zurnalimizniŋ вundan kejingi sanlarida jani modalarni tərtibli ravişda вerib вaramiz.

Oqul вalalar ucun tikilgan kostjum.

Tahrir haj'ati: **Saadat Şamsijeva** (mas'ul muharrir), **S. Xaldarova, Njazova, Ajdin, Taşmatova, Şakirova, Arif Ajjuв** (mas'ul katiв), **Gross** вadiij qsim вaşliqi), Idesis (naşrijat вaşliqi).

Ozglavlit vakili № U—05534 Zakaz № 2296, Tiraz 5000. "Qzil Ozвekistan„ вasmaxanasi.

Fig. 5.7
"New Fashions"
SOURCE: *Yorqin Turmush*, 1936 (no. 3), last page.

Adolatxon may have been a fiction, but the effort to modernize clothing was not. In 1936, with the campaign for "culturedness" and the conservative turn in full swing, *Bright Life* began

publishing regular features on fashion [Fig. 5.7].[93] The feature, entitled "New Fashions" (*yangi modalar*), included drawings of dresses in a European style, often including technical recommendations on how to sew them, suggestions for which fabric to use, or remarks about seasonability. Images of children's clothing also frequently accompanied this feature. Like the women's dresses, they were pictured from both front and back, presumably to make it easier for a seamstress to copy the style. For example, the January 1938 issue featured images of winter coats for mother and daughter, while in summer 1937, there were instructions for sewing a swimming dress.

Occasionally, the feature included commentary on how to select clothing appropriately to meet norms of hygiene and taste. This occasional feature, entitled, "How to Dress?" first appeared in spring 1936. The first iteration of the feature began with a familiar slogan: "Now our life (*turmush*) has become better and more joyous."[94] The author then continued, "In every sphere of our life (*turmush*), demands have changed, tastes have become more delicate, and the desire to live in a cultured manner has grown." For women, the text thus implied, dress was a frontier on which the battle for culturedness was still being waged. Because many women continued to dress sloppily (*palpisroq*), the author offered a series of suggestions: keep your clothes clean, wash and deodorize your body appropriately, iron your clothes, and make sure to match! It was not necessary, the author insisted, to have dresses of "fine silk" (*shohi-atlas*) in

[93] This conservative turn, particularly in the women's press, is widely connected to the abortion ban of June 1936. See Chapter 9, "Compulsory Motherhood: the 1936 Abortion Law," from Lynne Attwood. *Creating the New Soviet Woman: Women's Magazines as Engineers of Female Identity, 1922-53*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1999, pp. 115-25. In Central Asia, where single motherhood was far less widespread than in Russia, and large families were the norm, the abortion ban likely had a smaller impact than elsewhere in the Soviet Union. Surely the promises of increased support for women, and the new state appreciation for motherhood and childrearing, were welcomed by Uzbek women who had children already. The increasing emphasis on consumption and domesticity in the women's press has been observed in the Russian women's press in this period as well; see Attwood, *New Soviet Woman*, p. 129; Natalia Igorevna Tolstikova, "Reading Rabotnitsa: Ideals, Aspirations, and Consumption Choices for Soviet Women, 1914-1964 (Ph.D Diss., UMI, 2001), p. 155.

[94] M. S., "Qanday kiyinish kerak?" *Yorqin Turmush,* 1936, no. 4-5, p. 46.

order to dress well. In fact, if one reeked of sweat, wearing dresses of *atlas* silk would do nothing but disgust those around you. Likewise, it would never do to wear mismatching clothes: "a white dress, black socks, red shoes, and a green scarf." The cultured woman would wear perfume, select her clothes appropriately for the season and the occasion, and she would never wear unduly flashy clothes to work. A later issue exhorted women to consider their body type and skin tone when selecting dress patterns and colors.[95]

Although the clothing portrayed in "New Fashions" was exclusively European in style, it is important to note that these styles were far from the norm. In fact, it was because they were abnormal that they appeared with instructions on the pages of the journal: women could be assumed to know already how to sew more traditional Central Asian dresses, and to have plenty of examples around them on the street. In running this feature, then, the magazine's editors thus did not mean to suggest that the old styles would disappear. Instead, they oriented themselves toward upwardly mobile, urbane women with the means to dress well. For these women, dresses in a European style, worn with impeccable taste, and accompanied by a well-groomed body, communicated the height of culturedness.[96] Their presence on the streets of a city like Tashkent, even if they constituted a small minority of women, thus came to serve as evidence that Party policy was indeed making life "more joyous."

[95] Maryamxan, "Qanday kiyinish kerak?" *Yorqin Turmush* 1937, no. 1, p. 29.
[96] *Bright Life* also ran occasional features on personal grooming; see M. Yurina, "Go'zallik va madaniyat," *Yorqin Turmush,* July 1936, no. 1, pp. 18-19.

Fig. 5.8
Woman wearing *atlas* or *adras*
SOURCE: *Yorqin Turmush*, 1937, no. 1, front cover

In the meantime, for everyone else, the average woman who was neither an activist nor an office worker, an *atlas* dress would do just fine. But no matter what she wore — from the worker's red scarf to the Stakhanovite's silk dress, from the accountant's European gown to the activist's leather boots —Uzbek woman's clothing became potent mediums for the integration of women into the Soviet public. In the 1930s, I have shown, textiles became part of a major

multimedia effort, represented, even foregrounded, in posters and poems, newspapers and journals. As such, women's clothing became in their own right a medium of the Soviet public.

Conclusion

Cotton was king in 1930s Uzbekistan. It filled the front pages of newspapers and turned former wheat fields white. Cotton blossoms appeared on teapots and tapestries, at parades and in poems. The entire collective farm calendar centered around an annual liturgy of sowing, irrigation, cultivation and harvest. In volume and value, cotton far exceeded the other products of Soviet Uzbekistan. And yet, at the same time, not cotton, but silk and velvet became the textiles of choice when Stakhanovites spoke of the rewards for their work (picking cotton) or when collective farmers composed poems about their new, joyous lives in the (cotton) fields. In this chapter, I have suggested that this strange conjuncture occurred because silk did work for the Party, both emotional and ideological. In this way, in Uzbekistan all-Soviet discourses about productivity and the material prosperity of Stakhanovites took on locally specific meanings. Through the distribution of luxury textiles, and the circulation of textile-texts in the media, Party activists made Uzbek women modern, national, Soviet, and proletarian all at the same time. Most of all, it attached them sensually to all of these publics.

Conclusion

In many ways, the period I have described in this dissertation was ephemeral. In the late 1930s, winds of change began to blow that reshaped the Soviet state public in Central Asia and throughout the Soviet Union. Most obviously, the Great Terror struck like a tornado, whirling through the ranks of Uzbekistan's mediators and decimating their ranks. Given the current state of research and availability of sources, it is almost impossible to enumerate the effects of the Terror on the village activists and smaller-scale mediators I have discussed. However, it is safe to say that the Cultural Revolution ate its young, and that many of the most active participants in the state public were sent to the Gulag or shot. In a twist of dark irony, the "lazy" village tea-drinkers probably fared much better than the Komsomol activists who had worked so hard to mobilize them for cotton production.

For the Writers' Union, however, the effects are unmistakeable and documentable.[1] On April 5, 1937, the Writers' Union had a meeting at which many of the members of the inner circle came under attack.[2] Cho'lpon, the ex-Jadid who had been tolerated during the 1930s under the assumption he was "reforming" himself, came under renewed attack. At one point, Cho'lpon found himself arguing that it was not a counter-revolutionary act that he had accepted a gift of mulberries from a class enemy while relaxing at his *dacha*. The mulberries were necessary for his diabetes, he explained. Speaking in broken Russian, he argued that it was difficult to reinvent oneself, and that he needed more time and more help to become truly Soviet. Nevertheless, he claimed he had made a good-faith effort to help the younger generation of writers, many of whom were struggling with their literary style. Both Cho'lpon and Qodiriy, also an ex-Jadid, were excoriated in the press for holding themselves aloof from the state public (*jamoatchilik*),

[1] For the broader context of the Great Terror in Uzbekistan, including the arrests of Fayzulla Xo'jayev and Akmal Ikromov in July 1937, see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan*, pp. 384-88

[2] RGALI F. 631, op. 6, d. 200

sequestering themselves in ingrown circles comprised of enemies of the people.[3] Nevermind that the state public had sequestered *them.* Cho'lpon was arrested on July 13, Fitrat on the 23rd, and Qodiriy at the end of the year. In the following year, they would all be shot.[4] From this moment on, the state public had no place for former Jadids.

Ex-Jadids were not the only ones to come under suspicion during the Great Terror. Abdulla Qahhor was interrogated in July 1937, with particular attention given to conversations he had had with Elbek, another member of the inner circle.[5] Deliberations on the acceptability of most of the Writers' Union's inner circle continued at another long meeting in August.[6] Writers G'ofur G'ulom, Oybek, Oydin, Shams, and Qahhor all came under scrutiny. Affiliation with Red Pen and participation in *gaps* again became a major liability. When a brigade led by Aziz Niallo came to Tashkent to Uzbekistan, Shams, Oydin, and Hamid Olimjon were all held up to intense scrutiny for their associations with "enemies of the people" like Young Communists Anqaboy and Botu, as well as the ex-Jadids.[7] Oydin, Shams, and Hamid Olimjon were all excluded from the Writers' Union in the fall of 1937.[8] In a five-page-long, handwritten letter Shams wrote in February 1938 to request clemency, he claimed that he had learned of his exclusion from the

[3] "Toshkent sovet yozuvchilari yig'ilishi," *Qizil O'zbekiston*, April 12, 1937, p. 3.

[4] The names of those shot and imprisoned in Uzbekistan during the Great Terror have been compiled by the Russian NGO Memorial: http://stalin.memo.ru/regions/regi74.htm

[5] In the stenographic report of his conversation, Qahhor mentions some anti-Tatar comments he claimed to have heard Elbek making. In response, Qahhor's interrogator, Komil Yashin, put words in Qahhor's mouth: "So you say there is an anti-Tatar group (*guruh*)?" Later at the meeting, Qahhor participated in interrogating Elbek. Elbek acknowledged that he had studied with Jadid Munavvar Qori as a youth, and admitted that, while socializing with "bourgeois nationalists" like Qodiriy, he had sometimes said things that might be construed as nationalist. He denied condemning Tatars. All these accusations could have been applied to Qahhor as well, but somehow, Qahhor survived the Terror unscathed while Elbek was imprisoned, dying in a gulag in Feb. 1939. O'zMDA F. 2356, op. 1, d. 28, l. 18.

[6] O'zMDA F. 2356, op. 1, d. 31

[7] "Sovet yozuvchilarining respublika kengashi," *Madaniy Inqilob*, Oct. 17, 1937, p. 2. On Aziz Niallo, a Russian named Stanishevskii who wrote under a pseudonym, see Babajanov, Bakhtiyar M., "'Ulama-Orientalists," from Michael Kemper and Artemy M. Kalinovsky, eds., *Reassessing Orientalism: Interlocking Orientologies during the Cold War*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2015, p. 114n32.

[8] RGALI F. 631, op. 6, d. 198, ll. 116-117; "O'zbekiston sovet yozuvchilari soyuzida," *Qizil O'zbekiston*, Nov. 17, 1937, p. 4. The precise date of Oydin's exclusion is unclear, but I assume she was excluded in the fall with the others; her reinstatement was documented in March of the following year.

newspaper.[9] He defended himself against the accusations that had been leveled against him, including that his brother was a Trotskyite. With his writings banned from publication, Shams said that he had been reduced to taking his four children with him to the bazaar to peddle wares. In fall of 1937, even Ayniy was attacked in the press as an "enemy of the people."[10]

For a time, the Writers' Union was completely gutted. In early spring 1938, a trickle of reinstatements began. Ayniy was never excluded from the Writers' Union, but he was not cleared of the accusations against him until an investigation in February concluded that he had acknowledged the mistakes of his Jadid youth.[11] Oydin, Shams, and Olimjon were all reinstated to the Writers' Union in March 1938.[12] The state of Uzbekistan's literature after the Terror can be pithily encapsulated by the comment of one Mstislavskii, who was sent from the Moscow Writers' Union in 1939 to inspect the condition of Uzbek literature:

> the Uzbek writing youth is cut off . . . from the heritage of Eastern literatures, because with the transition to the Latin alphabet, most of them do not know the Arabic alphabet, and therefore lack the key to books written in Arabic script. In conclusion, the younger generation is far from the cultural level that is absolutely necessary for the writer of Soviet modernity (*sovremennost'*).[13]

Just one year after most writers who had the "key" to the "heritage of Eastern literatures" had been shot, Mstislavskii's comment, delivered utterly without irony, is astonishingly tone-deaf. But it reveals the transformation from only a couple years before, when many members of the Writers' Union inner circle had routinely corresponded in Arabic script.

Scholars have noted a turn in Soviet nationalities policy beginning as early as 1933. But as Terry Martin has argued, "By 1938, the Friendship of the Peoples was the officially sanctioned

[9] RGALI F. 631, op. 6, d. 246, ll. 95-97.
[10] O'zMDA, F. 2356, op. 1, d. 37, l. 99.
[11] Ibid.
[12] O'zMDA F. 2356, op. 1, d. 37, l 94 (Olimjon and Shams), l. 98 (Oydin); RGALI F. 631, op. 6, d. 246, l. 62.
[13] RGALI F. 631, op. 6, d. 246, l. 141

metaphor of an imagined national community."[14] Along with the Friendship of the Peoples came an idea of the Russians as the "first among equals," whose status as a nationality in their own right was reaffirmed, and the RSFSR exalted as the hub of a multinational Soviet state. In mid-1936, the tone of the Uzbek-language press began to change, evincing a more explicit emphasis on a primordial Uzbek identity and an ancient Uzbek culture. This change in tone culminated in the *dekada* of Uzbek culture, held in Moscow in May-June 1937 as part of an extended series of ten-day festivals for many of the titular nationalities of the Soviet republics. The celebration of multinational identity on the republican level that was evident in the 1934 Central Asian Musical-Artistic Olympiad, with Baluchis performing on behalf of Turkmenistan and local Jews as representatives of Uzbekistan, receded in the face of "a highly cliched essentializing rhetoric of national character."[15] Tamara Khanum still performed, but no one in Moscow had to know she was Armenian. Baluchis and Central Asian Jews were no longer recognized as Soviet nationalities.[16] This transformation was represented by yet another script change. In 1940, Cyrillic became the script for Uzbek, Tajik, and most other languages of the Soviet Union. From now on, Russia, not the Middle East, and certainly not Western Europe, were the main reference points for Central Asia's culture.[17]

The turn to Russocentrism was only part of what scholars have termed a "Great Retreat" in Soviet culture more generally, beginning in the mid-1930s and intensifying through the wartime

[14] Martin argues that the turn toward a friendship metaphor and away from the "affirmative action empire" began in about 1933, but culminated only in 1938. In the Uzbek-language press, I see a distinct change in tone with respect to the status of Russians in the late 1930s. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, p. 432.

[15] Ibid., p. 443. On the *dekadas*, see also Kaplan, "The Art of Nation-Building."

[16] Hirsch, *Empire of Nations*, p. 333-34. In the 1926 census, Baluchi (Beludjis) and Central Asian Jews (Dzhugurs) were recognized separately. See Ibid., pp. 329-32.

[17] On script changes in Central Asia, see Fierman, "Politics of Language"; John Perry, "Script and Scripture: The Three Alphabets of Tajik Persian, 1927-1997," *Journal of Central Asian Studies* 2, no. 1 (Fall/ Winter 1997): 2–18.

period.[18] In 1936, the ban on abortion transformed the way women were represented in the media. No longer were unveiled women represented merely as heroes of production. Now, women's magazines offered a two-track path to public participation: Stakhanovism on the one hand, heroic motherhood on the other. This corresponded to an increasing emphasis on romantic love and companionate marriage. In 1935, women were valued for the weight of their cotton bundles; by 1937, they were being assessed according to the birth weight of their babies.[19] In 1932, young poet Zulfiya was writing poems about tractors and factory girls; by 1937, she was composing sentimental poetry about lovers' vows.[20]

Indisputably, then, the late 1930s heralded massive changes in Uzbekistan's society and culture. But from the perspective of the state public, these changes were almost immaterial: they were changes in content, not structure. The work of organization and imagination had begun, and would continue along the same trajectory thenceforth. Uzbekistan's state public could now be mobilized for war, not just cotton monoculture; later, it would be mobilized for Cold War. Even in the post-Soviet period, the underlying patterns of state-sponsored mass publicity persisted, and persist even to the present day. What mattered was that in the early-mid 1930s, the state public

[18] The term "Great Retreat" was coined by Nicholas Timasheff in 1946, and has since become the object of some controversy regarding whether Stalinism was in fact a "retreat" from socialism or continuous with the 1920s, whether NEP should be considered a "retreat" in itself, and the precise timing or nature of the change in the mid-1930s. Nevertheless, some scholars continue to find the term useful, albeit with caveats; see, for example, Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, pp. 414-422. Undoubtedly, the mid-1930s heralded profound changes in emphasis in Soviet culture and policy; whether all of these changes should be called a "retreat," and whether they were already latent in Soviet society in the 1920s is a matter of debate. For a useful summary of the controversy, see the set of articles in the Fall 2004 issue of *Kritika:* Matthew E. Lenoe, "In Defense of Timasheff's Great Retreat," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 4 (October 13, 2004): 721–30; Jeffrey Brooks, "Declassifying a 'Classic,'" *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 4 (October 13, 2004): 709–19; E. A. Dobrenko, Jesse Savage, and Gust Olson, "Socialism as Will and Representation, or What Legacy Are We Rejecting?" *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 4 (October 13, 2004): 675–708; David L. Hoffmann, "Was There a 'Great Retreat' from Soviet Socialism? Stalinist Culture Reconsidered." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5, no. 4 (October 13, 2004): 651–74. The text under discussion is Nicholas S. Timasheff, *The Great Retreat; the Growth and Decline of Communism in Russia* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, Inc., 1946).

[19] See the article on women's pregnancy and childcare work as true "Stalinist" (*stalincha*) labor: Malika Rahmanova, "Onalar nimalarni bilishlari kerak: naslimizga stalincha g'amxo'rlik qilaylik," *Yorqin Turmush*, 1937 (no. 2), p. 22-23.

[20] Zulfiya, *Hayot Varaqlari*, Tashkent: O'znashr, 1932; Zulfiya, "Ahd," *Yorqin Turmush*, 1937, no. 2, p. 21.

had generated far-reaching networks of state-sponsored institutions and claimed aesthetic mediums for its own. Uzbekistan's masses, from collective farm tea-drinkers to urban intelligentsia to working women, were now being integrated into an all-encompassing Soviet state public sphere. At the same time, in creating an infrastructure for mass participation, the Soviet state public created the conditions of possibility for public participation under the aegis of, but not always totally determined or controlled by top-down discourses. This dynamic of self-organization in the context of state sponsorship would define an Uzbek national culture that, despite its tight linkage to Moscow-based state hierarchies, is worthy of independent study and thoughtful analysis on an aesthetic and organizational level throughout the Soviet period.

In many ways, the story I have told here is not only ephemeral, but highly specific. First, it was unique to the Soviet Union: arguably, no state before the Soviet Union was as invested in state-sponsored media and institutions. No state intervened so radically in social life. No state before the Soviet Union aspired to, let alone achieved this level of control over the public sphere. Even within the Soviet Union, the story I have told is unique to Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan had a unique history of social organization and aesthetic mediation, and that history inflected its reception of all-Soviet institutions and discourses. Even discourses and institutions that were universal to the Soviet Union took different shapes in Uzbekistan than elsewhere. Female Stakhanovites may have been awarded bolts of fabric everywhere in the Soviet Union, but only in Uzbek women's fakelore were textiles infused with the unique combination of nationhood, gender, and labor.

But in other ways, the rise of mass publicity I have described with respect to Uzbekistan was a global phenomenon. As a growing cohort of Soviet historians has argued, many Soviet state

practices and social changes were far from an aberration on the world stage. Placing the Soviet Union in comparative perspective with interwar modernizing states such as Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Kemalist Turkey, as well as the US and Britain, Stephen Kotkin terms the decades between World War I and World War II an "interwar conjuncture," characterized by structural features such as mass production, mass culture, mass politics, and state violence.[21] This "age of the mass" took different shapes in different political contexts, but drew on similar technological repertoires. David Hoffmann advances a similar paradigm, showing that the Soviet Union adopted many state practices that were used around the world, including pronatalism campaigns, social welfare, and surveillance and propaganda.[22] Michael David-Fox has developed frameworks for understanding phenomena from the Russian Revolution and its unique brand of "intelligentsia-statist modernity" in comparative perspective.[23] All of these comparative works foreground the increasing importance of the mass media worldwide, whether as tools for propaganda or vehicles for mass entertainment and marketing. But in taking a birds-eye view of modern state practices and social phenomena, these studies limit themselves to observing the increasing prominence of the media. They have yet to deeply investigate how the mass media functioned in society.

The concept of the state public sphere sheds light on the unique relationship between state media, state institutions, and society in the Soviet Union. Consequently, it equips scholars more robustly to compare the mass-mediated societies of the twentieth century worldwide, from East Asia and the Middle East, to Fascist Germany and Italy, and to the liberal democracies of

[21] Stephen Kotkin, "Modern Times: The Soviet Union and the Interwar Conjuncture," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History*, no. 1 (2001): 111-64.

[22] David L. Hoffmann, *Cultivating the Masses: Modern State Practices and Soviet Socialism, 1914-1939* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2011).

[23] David-Fox, *Crossing Borders*; Michael David-Fox, "Toward a Life Cycle Analysis of the Russian Revolution," *Kritika* 18, no. 4 (Fall 2017): 741–83.

Western Europe and North America. This framework gives rise to a number of promising questions for further research. In the Soviet Union, for example, the state public sphere took shape over a substratum of pre-Soviet social organization: in Russia, the liberal intelligentsia, the self-organized right wing, and everything in between; in Central Asia, the Jadid public sphere and the networks of religious and patronage relationships of the late imperial period. In Uzbekistan, the mass media were not widespread before the creation of the state public sphere. But what happened when authoritarian states attempted to overtake a pre-existing bourgeois public sphere and mass media system, as in Germany under the Third Reich?[24] How did the Soviet effort to create Red Teahouses in 1930s Central Asia compare to the socialist effort to shape teahouse sociability through the media in Maoist China?[25] Did the state-sponsored People's Houses, Village Institutes, and Tea Gardens in Republican Turkey work more or less effectively for state ends because they were new kinds of institutions, rather than pre-existing ones?[26] In other words, how does the sedimentary nature of the state public sphere affect its historical development and its political use?

[24] To begin examining this question, we might begin looking at the work of Sabina Hake, who has traced the continuities in cinema across the Weimar, Third Reich, and postwar periods of Germany's history. Hake argues that cinema in the Third Reich cannot be understood without moving beyond a top-down "propaganda" paradigm, much as I have argued with respect to the Soviet Union. See Sabine Hake, *Popular Cinema of the Third Reich* (University of Texas Press, 2010).

[25] On this topic, see Di Wang, *The Teahouse under Socialism: The Decline and Renewal of Public Life in Chengdu, 1950–2000* (Cornell University Press, 2018).

[26] On People's Houses, Village Institutes, and Tea Gardens, see M. Asim Karaömerlïoğlu, "The People's Houses and the Cult of the Peasant in Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 4 (1998): 67–91; M. Asim Karaömerlioğlu, "The Village Institutes Experience in Turkey," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 25, no. 1 (1998): 47–73; Sharon Wohl, "The Turkish Tea Garden: Exploring a 'Third Space' With Cultural Resonances," *Space and Culture* 20, no. 1 (February 2017): 56–67. On the Turkish state effort to manage coffeehouse sociability, which was essentially identical to teahouse sociability in Central Asia, see Serdar Öztürk,"The Struggle over Turkish Village Coffeehouses (1923–45)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 44, no. 3 (2008): 435–54. Hale Yılmaz has examined how the modern Turkish nation took shape through mass participation in state initiatives, including sartorial reform and mass festivals; many of these took place with the support of state-sponsored institutions, including schools and People's Houses. See Yılmaz, *Becoming Turkish*. Mustafa Tuna, presenting a more negative picture than Yılmaz, has argued that the Soviet project to revolutionize the countryside was largely unsuccessful when compared to the Soviet effort. See Mustafa Tuna, "The Missing Turkish Revolution: Comparing Village-Level Change and Continuity in Republican Turkey and Soviet Central Asia, 1920-50," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 50, no. 1 (February 2018): 23–43.

The concept of the state public also has potential to further nuance the conversation about the Soviet Union's status as an empire or modernizing nation-state.[27] One of the key problems in this debate, but one that frequently goes unacknowledged, is that the colonizing empire, with the British looming large in this analysis, is a product of the nineteenth century. In the case of the modernizing state, in contrast, the comparisons always refers to the twentieth century.[28] Thematizing the state public foregrounds one of the major differences between nineteenth-century empires and twentieth-century modernizing states, namely, the increased centrality of the mass media. The distinct form of Soviet nationalities policy, its "empire of nations" undergirded by an explicitly multinational state public, was uniquely adapted to an age of mass publicity at a moment when other polities were making a decisive turn to the nation-state. The Soviet case serves as an instructive comparison to the formation of national and supranational "imagined communities" through public institutions and aesthetic mediums, including but not limited to state-sponsored institutions and media.[29] In the early Turkish Republic, for example, the state worked to assimilate minorities, such as Kurds, with the newfound Turkish nation. In Nazi

[27] This is one of the longest debates in Central Asian studies, and shows little sign of abating. Douglas Northrop has made the colonizing empire argument in the most theoretically sophisticated fashion: Northrop, *Veiled Empire*. Others, including Adeeb Khalid and Marianne Kamp, have observed the similarities between Soviet Central Asia and modernizing states elsewhere in the Middle East, especially Kemalist Turkey. See Adeeb Khalid, "Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization: Early Soviet Central Asia in Comparative Perspective," *Slavic Review* 65, no. 2 (July 1, 2006): 231–51; Adeeb Khalid, "Central Asia between the Ottoman and the Soviet Worlds," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 12, no. 2 (2011): 451–76; Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan*. Others have noted that some state policies in Central Asia were explicitly framed as decolonizing, and were interpreted as such on a local level; however, see Teichmann, "Limits of Decolonization." The debate is essentially insoluble, as different perspectives (economic, political, cultural) and time periods will produce different approaches to the question.

[28] Obviously, many nineteenth-century empires existed well into the twentieth century, but it might be suggested that their ultimate demise had to do with their inability to devise a structure of administration that would reckon with the age of mass publicity. One interesting example of this phenomenon is British India during WWII; see William Mazzarella, "A Torn Performative Dispensation: The Affective Politics of British Second World War Propaganda in India and the Problem of Legitimation in an Age of Mass Publics," *South Asian History and Culture* 1, no. 1 (December 22, 2009): 1–24.

[29] Useful works to begin such comparisons with respect to Turkey include Nergis Ertürk, *Grammatology and Literary Modernity in Turkey* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2011); on architecture, Sibel Bozdogan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001).

Germany, on the other hand, official ideology explicitly excluded non-Aryans, both excluding them from participation in mass institutions, and vilifying them in the state-sponsored media. In each case, the state exerted varying levels of sponsorship of and control over cultural production and mass institutions. Foregrounding mass publicity in such comparisons has the potential to elucidate the linkage between state-sponsored publics, aesthetics, and violence in twentieth-century states. From this perspective, some of the peculiarities of the Soviet empire come into focus: a twentieth-century empire may require colonial intermediaries, but at the same time, and perhaps more urgently, it needs mediators of the state public.

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