

THE ROOTS AND GENESIS OF PAN - TURKISM AND ETHNIC CONFLICT – AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The collective identity whether in the garb of religion, or in the form of territorial, tribal, ethnic or any other kind of micro or macro entity had all along been the prized possession of an individual's psyche in the complex story of human development. It is in the light of this assumption that the paper seeks to bring to light the emblems and traces of origin, roots and genesis of Pan-Turkism –commonly believed to be a nineteenth century phenomenon though flickering in the historical accounts in different hues since time immemorial.. To be sure, the ethnic and tribal identification of Turks as a homogenous people was never disturbed despite the fact that they were scattered over a large area and often appeared in history under their micro definition. Pan Turanianism so vehemently emphasized by Zia Gokalp, a great exponent of Pan Turkism could be indicative of such feelings in recent centuries but the facts that these features did exist earlier also and Pan -Turkism was in continuum with its roots in hoary past had seldom been so clearly seen and realized. The consciousness of belonging to a particular group –the mutual rapport in the name of oneness of Turkish or Turanian origin, rivalries against other such homogenous entities (eg. Tajiks or Iranians) at all levels and in court politics, the pride in their respective racial superiority, contemptuous evaluation of each other in the pages of history are symptomatic of presence of Pan Turkism centuries before this peculiar term denoted its characteristics.

Key Words: Pan-Turkism, Pan-Turanianism, ethnic.

The twin movement (the Pan- Turkism and the Pan-Islamism) had dominated the political scenario during the nineteenth-twentieth centuries playing a significant role in determining the development of events and trying to unite the different Turkish speaking people into one string.

Turanianism which encompasses a broader vista was a more general term than Turkism which could be applied only to Turkic ideology. It is commonly (and perhaps somewhat rightly) believed that ‘Although Turkish people often ‘shared historical, cultural and linguistic roots, the rising of Pan Turkism was a phenomenon of only nineteenth and twentieth centuries’. It emerged as a parallel movement to Pan Slavism, Pan Germanism, or with middle eastern Pan Arabism. Some, therefore feel that if frontiers and borders of different places are removed and such (mis)conceptions as patriotism are removed, the world will have chances of better survival, progress and development.

One of the greatest exponent of Pan Turanianism Zia Gokalp (1876-1924), the “outstanding theoretician of the Turkish movement and regular contributor of the Turkish literary review “Young Pens” (*Genc Kalemler*) (founded in 1911) explained in one of his poems “Turan” published in 1911, the affinity of Ottoman Turks with the Turanian Turks. The underpinnings of “pan-Turanianism” and pan Turkism are well reflected through the following couplet.

*“The country of the Turks is not Turkey, nor yet Turkistan;
Their country is a vast and eternal land: Turan”.*

Zia Gokalp like others of his hopeful, allies once again emphasized in his poem *Kizil Destan* (Red epic) that:

*“The land of the enemy shall be devastated
Turkey shall be enlarged and become Turan”.*¹

In retrospect Zia Gokalp’s voice seems to be an echo of the past reverberations. To be sure the signals of a common heritage are too clear to be missed. The Turkish orbit was too expansive The bond of consanguinity and kindred relationship existing among the Eurasian population spread between Mongolia and Turkey have been emphasized time and again in the sources written in different medieval centres of Turkish power eg. India, Turkey, Central Asia, Iran and other places. The population in Eurasia never objected to their Macro identity of being the “Turks” which by all means was, as the medieval historians make us believe, quite a widely acknowledged and a roaring proclamation long before the idea of Pan Turkism dawned upon the modern mind. A careful survey of the medieval sources and modern works proves beyond doubt that the macro entity of belonging to a Turkish nation (aqwami Turk) was allowed to coexist with their individual micro identity which could be a traditionary hang over of sub-tribal affiliations or merely a psyche or mechanism of self assertion .

¹ Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, (Oxford: 1968), 351.

The collective identity whether in the garb of religion, or in the form of territorial, lingual, tribal, ethnic or any other kind of micro or macro entity had all along been the prized possession of an individual's psyche in the complex story of human development. It is in the light of this assumption that the paper seeks to bring to light the emblems and traces of origin, roots and genesis of Pan-Turkism –commonly believed to be a nineteenth century phenomenon though flickering in the historical accounts in different hues since time immemorial. The forms and genesis of ethnic conflicts as perceived and presented by the medieval chroniclers is as varied as the ones put forward by modern analysts. In this paper, an attempt is also being made to wade through, assess and correlate the evidence available in medieval sources and modern works. Beginning with an overview of some of the modern works and reviewing them in the mirror of the past paradigms, the paper seeks to address to several questions. Whether the ethnic conflict was a by-product of the division of Central Asia into “nation states” or it prevailed before the Soviet regime and Stalin's cartographic exercise; Whether the ethnic consciousness among the Central Asian people was vibrant enough to generate mutual conflict or was it merely a sporadic event sparked off by certain sudden political provocations . Did the squabbles overterritorial possessions or clash of economic interests proved to be the igniting factor or were there some other inherent or inherited reasons for the conflict.

To be sure, the ethnic and tribal identification of Turks as a homogenous people was never disturbed despite the fact that they were scattered over a large area and often appeared in history under their micro definition. Pan Turanianism so vehemently emphasised by Zia Gokalp, a great exponent of Pan Turkism could be indicative of such feelings in recent centuries but the facts that these features did exist earlier also and Pan –Turkism was in continuum with its roots in hoary past had seldom been so clearly seen and realized. The consciousness of belonging to a particular group –the mutual rapport in the name of oneness of Turkish or Turanian origin, rivalries against other such homogenous entities at all levels and in court politics, the pride in their respective racial superiority, contemptuous evaluation of each other in the pages of history are symptomatic of presence of Pan Turkism (though in a rudimentary form) centuries before this peculiar term denoted its characteristics.

The epistolary records confirm beyond doubt that solidarity in the name of common Turkish origin and Sunni Hanafite religion and military and

political alliance was frequently demanded though not so vehemently responded². The consanguineal ties and kindred relationships were always exploited whenever the exigencies of the situation so demanded. On the eve of war against Sultan Bayazid of Turkey, Timur had tried to entice the Ottoman nobles instigating them to desertion and to win them over to his side in the name of blood ties. In his letter to Amir Fazil, he recounted “Your nobility is also mine and your race joined with mine and our countries with yours : We have the same ancestors. We are all shoots and branches of the same tree. Our forefathers long ago in the past grew up in one nest and gradually occupied several others, you are, therefore truly a shoot from my stock, a branch of my branches, members of my members, my own marrow and my own intimates. And why should you be slave of a man who is a son of slaves set free by Ali seljuqi? . –But now outwardly, you will be with the Othman, inwardly with us, until at our invasion you separate and slide over to our army”³. While exhorting the amir for desertion, Timur ignored the basic fact that even those who received the grants from Alauddin were also the fugitives from his native land.

Sultan Salim’s letter to Ubaidullah Khan of Turan on the eve of battle of Chaldiran, inviting him to take revenge of martyrdom of Shaibani Khan and later on Ubaidullah Khan’s overtures on the eve of his invasions on Iran to persuade ottoman rulers to collaborate are glaring examples of such union. When Abdullah Khan Uzbek was planning to invade Iran, he had requested for cooperation from Akbar a number of times through several letters. In the very first letter, he had referred to mutual concord, long standing ties of consanguineal and kindred relationship and common sunni Hanafite faith which had bound them together and can gear them up for a combined aggression against Iran as they had deviated from the correct path of Sharia and even warned that if “ material and moral support was not forthcoming, help should not be given to those who fled from our sword to your side⁴. Similarly Shahs of Iran had incessantly sent messengers to Akbar reminding him of the military and moral support given by Safavid rulers Ismail and Shah Tahmasp to Timurid rulers Babur and Humayun to recover their territory successfully and expecting a reciprocal attitude from them in the hour of need. When Kandahar was lost , similar letters were written by Jahangir to Uzbek ruler. The letters of Ottoman sultans to Uzbek rulers further testify to this fact.⁴

² (Ibni Arab Shah, Tamerlane or Timur the Great Amir tr. by J.H. Sanders, London 1936, pp.178-179).

³ For details see, Mansura Haidar, Central Asia in the Sixteenth century, (3)(Ibni Arab Shah, Tamerlane or Timur the Great Amir tr. by J.H. Sanders, London, 1936pp. 178-179).

There is another view that medieval mind at times thought in terms of Pan Asianism also as someone had said :

“I remember, I am Asian;
I long for my roots;
I feel homesick for our way”

It is surmised that Timur’s “aim was quite different and directed to a great far flung objective. Timur wanted to create Pan Asia in Asia, an Asia clearly defined and firmly established, organized as one state without internal frontiers or divisions respected as a powerful dominion made wealthy by the productivity and trade of its peoples and brilliant and celebrated for the splendour of its art and culture. An Asia prepared to give the rest of the world what it desired of her , and what it wished to give her she wanted to accept.⁵

Understandably, the identity is important because it gives a people self awareness, self consciousness and cognizance of one’s worth. The expression of one’s entity is determined by his ethnic identity, language, ,culture and patriotism. Such consciousness may often lead to conflicts as in case of Turks and Tajiks. it is also claimed by some that Tajiks were the original inhabitants of Central Asia being the Aryans, whereas all others Turkmen, Kazakhs, kyrgyz and Uzbeks came later as invaders. Turks appeared in Central Asia as conquerors of Sakas’ lands (Kazakhstan and Kyrghizia), and further occupied Sichan, kashghar and khutan etc. ⁶ While discussing the ancient roots of Turk-Tajik conflict in his valuable article, iraj Bashiri says that “In recent times, especially after the fall of the Soviet Union, the Turks have revived the idea of Pan-Turkism at least to the point of denying the Tajiks their identity” and further concludes that “Used as a symbol of legitimacy and divine right by Firdowsi ,the farr distinguishes the Iranians from Turanians and the Turanians from the Turks. inspite of their irreconcilable differences, the Iranians and the Turanians of the Shahnama emerge from the epic as two branches of the same ethnic group. The Turks whose culture does not recognize the the farr emerge as extras in a world dominated by Iranians”. He further adds that “Iran is endowed with the farr and has a blessed army. Turan is divested of the rarr and in contention for it with the aid of the army comprised of infidel Turks. The Turks are a subject nation with no governmental or command structure of

⁴ See mansura Haidar, Indo Central relations .Azmi Ozcan, Pan-Islamism, Indian muslims , the ottoman and Britain(1877-1924)1997 pp 23-40.

⁵ Stephen Ronart, Turkey today, London MCMXXXVIII p. 35) .

⁶ U. yaqub Shah, The doctrine of self consciousness in the Samanid era, The Samanids and the revival of the civilization of Iranian peoples, ed. and tr. by iraj Bashiri; compiled by A . Rajabov , Dushanbe, 1998, 45-56.

their own. The view is implicit in Faridun's division of his kingdom and in the subsequent murder of Iraj by Tur:

Digar Tur ra dad Tura zamin,
Bira kard salari Turkan va chin

(He then gave Tur the land of Turan; and made him the overlord of Turks and Chinese⁷. In this context, a few points may be added. The population in Eurasia never objected to their Macro identity of being the "Turks" which by all means was, as the medieval historians make us believe, quite a widely acknowledged fashion and a roaring proclamation long before the idea of Pan Turkism dawned upon the modern mind. A careful survey of the medieval sources and modern works proves beyond doubt that the macro entity of belonging to a Turkish nation (aqwami Turk) was allowed to coexist with their individual micro identity which could be a traditionary hang over of sub-tribal affiliations or merely a psyche or mechanism of self assertion. The farr was not confined to the court of Iranians alone as it transmitted or was evolved out of political necessity by the Turkish rulers also. Mahmud Kashghari had asserted the primacy of Turks in the same vein: "When I saw that God had caused the Sun of Fortune to rise in the Zodiac of the Turks, and set their kingdom among the spheres of Heaven; that he called them "Turk," and gave them Rule; making them Kings of the Age, and placing in their hands the reins of temporal authority; appointing them over all mankind, and directing them to the Right; that He strengthened those who are affiliated to them, and those who endeavor on their behalf; so that they attain from them the utmost of their desire, and are delivered from the ignominy of the slavish rabble;- [then I saw that] every man of reason must attach himself to them, or else expose himself to their falling arrows"⁸. As early as the reign of Seljuqids, the works like Imam Ghazali's *Nasihatul Muluk* and Rawandi's *Rahatussuddur* emphasized the divine rights of sovereignty with the same vehemence as *Kiyan khwarah* and *farri izdi* were stressed by Akbar and reproduced by his deputy Abul Fazl in his various works.

Apart from the Turk Tajik conflict certain other kinds of tensions often pervaded. These had preexisted, continued and followed the Soviet regime. Recent happenings in Central Asia had brought numerous (though not so new) problems to surface providing a fodder for thought and the ground

⁷ Iraj Bashiri, *The Turk-Tajik conflict: Ancient roots*, Article in *The Samanids and the Revival of the civilization of Iranian peoples*, ed. & tr. by I. Bashiri, Dushanbe 1998, pp. 56-67).

⁸ Introduction of Mahmud Al- Kashghari's book "*Diwan Lugat at Turk*", Part I, Edited and Translated with Introduction and Indices by Robert Dankoff in collaboration with James Kelly, Page 70).

for discussions over polemics. Much has already been written for example about ethnic , ethno-lingual ,ethno national and ethno religious factors contributing earlier to homogeneity and now a days to internal tensions and playing an important role in the geo- political, extra territorial and security jangles. The scholars and political savants alike had expressed well thought out views and each perception has richly contributed to the sphere of already existing information, expanding the horizons of interpretations and dilemma of its extensive dimensions .

The geo-cultural identity of Central Asia, –an area spreading over 3993300 square kilometers, sparsely populated–with a fine blend of nomadic and sedentary elements, had multifarious niches of its milieu . If the statistical data of 1979 is to be believed ,out of the entire population ,89 percent people were speaking various Turkish dialects whereas only 11 percent were Tajik speaking.⁹ As the territory was having no geographical barriers, foreign invasions were a regular feature . Equally frequent were the imperialist wars bringing in external elements in the form of prisoners of war, captive artists and artisans, refugees from the marches to the hinterland in cases of invasion, disbanded soldiers and tribesmen and so on. The emigrations and immigrations due to the search for greener pastures was a common phenomenon. From pax Mongolica to Pax Turcica and from Russian occupation to Soviet regime, Central Asia had undergone another metamorphosis. Brisk exchanges in the sphere of ideas, and commodities, the ingress and egress of merchants, manufacturers, Buddhist monks, missionaries, muslim Sufis and Influence of India, Iran, China, Arab lands had brought gradually and definitely prominent transformations. Russia left its impact in myriad ways. The intermingling of varied ethnic elements, subsequent synthesis of numerous cultures and trajectory of this hybridization resulted in as many shades of aspirations and struggles that vying contests and conflicts were bound to occur.

In his valuable article, Azmat Hayat khan ¹⁰ has discussed the problem at length, the excerpts of the same are being quoted here. He had summed up the situation in the following manner: ”Central Asia including the territory of Kazakhstan is a single region,historically, ethnically, economically, socially,and politically endowed with specific features. Ethnically, Central Asia used to be regarded as a sort of a bridge between the Turkic and Iranian world. While occupying different economic niches, the peoples

⁹ See Haidar ,Central Asia 500.

¹⁰ Azmat Hayat Khan, Ethnic Factor In Central Asian Republics, Central Asia, Journal of Area Study Centre, Russia And Central Asia, University of Peshawar,no. 47, Peshawar pp. 77-104.

of different lands and animal farming nations were at the same time, the aborigines on the same territory. The ideology and culture of the respective societies were formed on a multilingual basis. This process was facilitated by the fact that the nation states as they are understood in Europe, did not form in Central Asia for many centuries. Local emirates and khanates never relied on any one ethnic community. No ethnic criteria was kept in mind in forming the state elite. The Russian colonial administration in Central Asia also ignored people's ethnic backgrounds in governing the territory, the religious affiliations, of the subjects of the Russian crown was taken into account." The present borders in Central Asia are neither ethnic nor natural but were administrative demarcations finalized by Stalin. Ethnic crisis or clash is not as serious or in fact not even an issue as it is talked about and projected by western scholars. Different groups are so mixed up and scattered throughout Central Asia, touching this issue would be opening a Pandora's box which would have no end. So far almost all the issues mentioned in the western press or by Western Scholars have about potential flash points in Central Asia, have not been proved correct and so is this issue of ethnicity. The question of ethnicity did not figure much in their lives, it was very loosely used, and that only among the educated elites of those days, for reference sake. Presently the ethnic reference is only given to identify one with the republic whose passport the person holds. The "nations" of Central Asia had no tradition of statehood prior to their creation by Stalin in 1920s and 1930s. Prior to that the mass of Central Asians distinguished themselves mostly as urban versus rural, nomadic versus sedentary, Turkic speaking versus Persian speaking or by the clan they belonged to. Each Soviet Socialist Republic was named after one specific predominant ethnic group, but in reality, as a result of centuries of transmigration, the Republics instead bore a decidedly multiethnic character. Moscow's attempts to create a Soviet identity which transcended ethnicity, nationality and religion failed. When Boris Yeltsin unleashed and encouraged ethnic nationalism to wrest Central power from the Communist party, he succeeded instead in destroying the Soviet Union and breaking it along ethnic lines. Thus, as the new states try to come to grip with their own identity, each struggles to build institutions that integrate and assimilate often antagonistic ethnic groups. Stalin's 'cartographic exercises' purportedly cut across nationalities 'to divide and conquer', borders were drawn deliberately to generate internal ethnic tensions to make each Republic a sort of Matreushka -doll with minorities inside minorities inside minorities all dependent on Moscow. Central authorities

meant these borders as internal administrative control mechanisms; no one dreamed that Soviet Socialist Republics would ever become actual states. As a result each state claims territory from its neighbours. Powerful external forces also complicated the ethnic mix within Central Asia. The region became a wartime dumping ground for exiled nationalities such as Volga German, Crimean Tartars, Koreans, Meskhetian Turks. The 'nation states' of Central Asia suffer from the dysfunction that occurs when the territorial boundaries do not coincide. When cognizance of ethnicity background becomes a vital part of identity, ethnicity is elevated to ethnic consciousness. When ethnic consciousness becomes an active factor in decision making, it then becomes ethnic politics. Ethnic politics is reflected within Central Asia in four main areas between Moscow which has appointed itself defender of diaspora; Russians living outside Russia's borders and the new Republics; among ethnic groups within each republics and among individuals in their neighbourhoods"¹¹

Han Woo Choi echoes the same when he stresses the fact that the Republics in Soviet Central Asia were artificial entities and it is difficult to define a clear cut ethnic and national identity of each, despite the Soviet made Uzbekness, Kazakhness, Tajikness etc.

In his opinion, their Turkic and Islamic bastions were too strong to be broken¹²

The indigenous views are equally divergent (or at times uniform). Ashirov believes that "national peculiarities formed during a long historical periods are founded in natural and geographical conditions of the area, ethnic and cultural interrelations, religious beliefs and on these grounds moral and psychological views of the people, all this makes the platform for forming of traditions, customs and rituals. He further emphasizes that the Uzbeks were "local ethnos" who inhabited the territory and second the Turks gave second root to creation of an Uzbek nation –and that the Uzbek national mentality has been greatly affected by other neighboring nations, particularly, by Persian and Arab people¹³ Similarly Abdullaev has discussed at length the inter ethnic contacts among Kirghiz, Uzbeks and Tajiks¹⁴ harping upon their cultural assimilation in the Ferghana valley.

In the post script of her book, Gross writes "the present situation and

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Han Woo Choi, *Geo-cultural Identity of Western Turkestan*, *International Journal of Central Asian Studies*, vol 18, 2003, ISSN,1226-4490, pp. 1-20.

¹³ Ashirov, A. *On The Concept Of Uzbek Mentality*, *International Journal of Central Asian Studies*, vol 8, 2003, pp. 260-6.

that of 1917 are very different with respect to the status of ethnic and national identity.¹⁵ This is made clear by the Declaration of the Congress of People's deputies on 5 September 1992: "The new union must be based on the principles of independence and territorial integrity of states, and observance of the rights of the nation and the individuals and social justice and democracy"¹⁶. Precisely what such a situation will mean in practice for the large population of Muslims in Central Asia and what implications the ongoing events have for Muslims in other areas of Central Asia—particularly in north west China, where rebellions have already been reported during the past year remain to be seen. However, it is clear that, increasingly, nationalism and ethnic separatism are replacing the false vision of closed, homogenous nation states.¹⁷

The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus defined ethnic as "(of social group) having common national or cultural tradition; having specified origin by birth or descent rather than nationality; or cultural, folk, national, racial, traditional, tribal." According to this definition, and going by ethnological assessment, the peoples of Eurasia were of one stock whatever be their nomenclature. In the context of Central Asia "ethnicity is defined as the basis for groups whose membership is determined by ties of kinship, language, religion, race, or culture contacts with other sources of identification, gender, class, occupation, locality, and institutional affiliation—to produce the complex social and political fabric of the new Republics. Ethnicity is passive by gender or race." To be sure, in terms of ethnic entity and cultural identity, the Eurasian arena was multi-ethnic and heterogeneous in every respect. Like every other mundane milieu, diversity in unity was the hallmark of their culture and ways of living. The sources offer manifold tribal nomenclature and quite different definitions and sometimes contradictory identifications of various peoples. The Turk or Tajik: Turko-Tatar: Turko Mongol are the usual names with which the population of Central Asia is referred to in the sources. The Sarts represented a cultural identity of settled agriculturists and traders. The common identifying term applied to the people in general was "Jamhuri anam or merely as Jamhur" and also as Turks, Tartar, Mongol, Uzbek, Tajik, Sart and others and often with their specific tribal names. Surprisingly the word Turk is found coupled with every nomenclature

¹⁴ Abdullaev, U. S. On The History of Uzbek and Kirghiz Ethnic And Cultural History, International Journal op. cit. pp 67-77.

¹⁵ Gross, Jo Ann, Muslims In Central Asia, Expressions Of Identity and Change, London, 1922, p. 204.

¹⁶ New York Times, 6 Sept. 1991.

¹⁷ Gross, Jo Ann, Muslims In Central Asia, Expressions Of Identity and Change, London, 1922, p 204.

indicating that their numerical strength was larger. It is to be noted that by and large the same tribal names appear in Mongolia, Central Asia, Kashghar and Khutan area (with some additions or ejections) presumably due to constant movements of the population in the region from one end (Mongolia) to the other (Turkey) either due to wars, search for pastures or because of political assignments or punitive disbandment. It is interesting to note that the tribal, clannish or peoples', names are used in a fluid sense or described often in a casual way by the medieval chroniclers which is bound to add to the confusion. Mirza Rumuz, for example writes in a cryptic manner in his otherwise valuable historical work that "at that time, Uzbeks were called /named as Jeta"¹⁸. Elsewhere the same chronicler explains "the people who are now a days known as Uzbeks, were earlier called Jeta who happened to be the descendants of Juji son of Chingiz Khan (Juji Nizhadan)". It may be mentioned here that several earlier chroniclers (including Mirza Haidar Dughlat) have specifically described the division of Juji's horde into three taefas namely Uzbek, Jeta/kazakhs and Manghits or Karakalpaks.¹⁹ These three names appear in the sources separately. According to Mirza Rumuz, Timur had clearly stated that the thirty two tribes of Chaghatai, (the second son of Chingiz khan) included Qirghiz, Qalmaq, Qazaq. It is interesting to note that the Sughdian poet ishaq sughdi in ninth century called himself as a descendant of Ajami ancestors from whom he had inherited a fair skin. Ajami indicated all non Arabs including Romans, Armenians, Indians and others.²⁰ Babur's comments though exaggerated had very aptly explained the situation by saying that just as Arabs call everyone outside Arabia Ajami the Indians called everyone beyond their own territory as Khurasani. Writing as late as 1814, Moorcroft describes the Qipchaq and Turks as two separate qaum.²¹

In this context, the comments in Tarikhi Rashidi's introduction The use made by Musulman authors of the word Turk, when designating, sometimes all nomad and steppe-dwelling, or pastoral, tribes, and sometimes a specific race. This dual use of the word Turk underlies the whole of the ethnography of Central Asia, as it has come down to us through the writings of Oriental authors. It has been my object to avoid, if possible, all discussion of this much debated question, but in order that some of our author's statements may not be wrongly interpreted, it is necessary to make some brief remarks upon it.

¹⁸ Mirza Rumuz, Timur Nama, MS. No.1526, IOST,Tashkent,f,1b

¹⁹ Mansura Haidar, Central asia.

²⁰ Yaqub op. cit.p. 76.

²¹ Moorcroft, Tarikh.

“One instance which touches phase 1 is that of the racial characteristics of the family of Baber, which gave to India the so-called ‘Moghul’ line of kings. It will hardly be disputed that not alone Baber himself, but some of his more immediate ancestors, were to all intents and purposes Turks; and this was the case not only in the acquisition of language and manners, but by inter-mixture of blood; while his successors, whose portraits, painted in India, are extant at the present day, show no trace in their features of descent from a Mongoloid race. It is said that Baber’s grandfather (Sultan Abu Said of Khorasan, 1452-67) was described by a Khivan contemporary, who visited him, as a very handsome man with a full beard and unlike a Moghul. Another, and perhaps more perfect, instance of the same thing is the description given in the *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* of the personal appearance of Yunus, Khan of Moghulistan, in 1456, or some two centuries only after the death of Chaghatai Khan—who was certainly a pure Mongol. Yunus is reported, by one who says that he expected to see a beardless man, “like any other Turk of the desert” to have had a full beard and Tajik (i.e., Aryan) features; and brief though this description is, it tells so significant a tale of a changed race, that it is probably as trustworthy a record, as a portrait painted by even a superior artist to those of Hindustan.²²”

While discussing the ethnic composition of Central Asians, their macro and micro identities should not be ignored. Unlike the Arabs, occupation of a territory never meant the absorption of conquered people as the distinction between Arabs and non Arabs was religiously maintained, Contrarily, the conquerors of Central Asian region had submerged the local population and gave their name to the subjugated people. Rashiduddin Fazlullah has clearly emphasised the fact that the same population once called itself Turks, Mongols and then Uzbeks as tribal traditions demanded such submission. He had concluded that Turks and Mongols were of one stock. But the micro identity was never disturbed. The Uzbeks for example retained their exclusive tribal detachment comprising pure and unmixed Uzbek group namely Qushji, Naiman and Durman. It is a well known fact that numerically the original number of tribal chiefs of the region was 24 as these included merely the six sons and each of the four sons of Oghuz, the legendary Ancestor of Turks and Mongols and the number is said to have gradually increased over the centuries. In the letters of Ubaidullah Khan and Abdullah Khan to rulers of Persia, the numbers have been mentioned as sixty six and ninety nine respectively. Thus the macro ethnic entity called qaum comprised all those who came under the banner of one single racial or ethnic identity as Tajik, Mongol, Uzbek. It is interesting to

²² Haidar Dughlat, *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, Eng. Tr. by Patna, 1973.

note here that the Uzbeks were the descendants of Juji, the son of Chinghiz and should have been called Mongol but they had been assigned the territory of Dashti Kipchaq, a land inhabited mostly by Turks with whom these handful of Mongols assimilated and deviating from their original beliefs, became the followers of Uzbek Khan hence the name. They were called Thereafter Turco Mongols or Turks but not purely Mongols. The gradations and hierarchy in tribal and military cadres were determined by their status in royal estimation and not due to any ethnic reasons.

Timur belonged to Barlas tribe but he has put to death a Barlas who has called him “brother”. As against this, Clavijo’s information shows that Chaghatais, the followers of the second son of Chingiz (and not Chaghatai nizadan –the successors of Chaghatai’s family) enjoyed extraordinary privileges. Similarly, when the review of the army was being done by the Emperor Timur, there was a conflict among these tribes about who was to proceed first. Timur had declared that they should pass the muster in the following order: the Uzbeks, Qazaqs, Qalmaqs, Qirghiz, Qaraqalpaq. The Uzbeks appeared to be the group (taefa) from whose forehead the signs of ferocious warriorship (asari khunkhwari) were apparent and the feelings of merciless bravery goaded them and slackness was nowhere noticed in their behaviour as they bought the neza and multaq with a sense of great desire rather yearning²³. But these adventurous bellicose were not merely the reckless fighters but lovers of fine arts and public welfare. Firdowsi’s *Shahnama* has a definite warning:” Turanians should by no means be confused with the real (oz) Turks ie nomadic peoples in whose life the horse,the yurt, and the prairie played a central role.”²⁴ Ibni Khaldun had appreciated their contribution to the sphere of learning, technology and sciences.

The Tajik- Turk /Uzbek conflict is said to be the consequence of a variety of reasons. To mention a few: the “ancient” root cause being that “the Turks arriving in Central Asia from the confines of Mongolia, overthrew Iranian rule ,including Tajik rule”; the resilience of Tajik culture and latter’s ability to retain their authority in spite of the might of theTurkish sultans and amirs; manipulation of Tajiks –an ethnic group ie. One Turkish group using the scholarly capability and administrative knowhow of the Tajiks against another Turkish group for political purposes which created hostility and eventually conflict. “(Two examples are put forward to support the

²³ Mirza Rumuz, *Timur Nama*, MS. No.1526, IOST<Tashkent,f,1b; .MansuraHaidar, *Tarikhi Salatin* IOST MS.No.980 ff, 67.

²⁴ *ibid*, Iraj Bashiri, *The Turko Tajik Conflict, The Samanids*, Dushanbe1998, pp 56-7.

view point:” Amir Nasrullah’s “use of the Tajiks to limit the abilities of the Uzbek chieftains in the Manghit administration; and subsequently the use of the Uzbeks by the Soviets to overthrow the Manghits and deprive the Tajiks–, the allies of the Manghits, from their rightful access to political ,social and economic resources of the USSR.) In recent times, especially after the fall of the Soviet Union, the Turks have revived the idea of Pan-Turkism , at least to the point of denying the Tajiks their identity.²⁵ The people who invaded from confines of Mongolia were Mongols and Turco-Mongols and by no means the first ever Turkish rulers as already the Turks had ruled over Central Asia. On the ashes of the disintegrated Samanid state, there sprang up four different Turkish kingdoms. These were, Qarakhanids ,Ghaznavids, Khwarazmians, and Seljuqids. Even Khwarazm Shah the ruler of Turan whom the Mongols defeated was a Turk and not a Tajik. History provides many examples where not only the groups but the states have been used as a counterpoise against another state. The mutual jealousies and competitive instincts described as “racial rivalry” between Iranians and Turanians was a perpetual feature in the Mughal Empire and often had disastrous consequences for the rulers and the stability of the state.

While Ashirov claims that the Uzbeks were the original inhabitants of Central Asia. Others emphasise that the Tajiks are the “only native Indo- Iranian people of Central Asia, who had continuously populated this region” and the other people like Turkmen, the Kazakhs, the Uzbeks, the the Kirghiz “entered the region as invaders during the middle ages . Over the years, the term Aryan was replaced by” narrower geographic or dynastic designations “ such as Mede, Achaemenians, Parthian, Kushanas, Barmakids, Tukharians, Saffarids ,Samanids or later on by regional identifications , eg. Kirmani, Khuzistani, Khurasani, Sughdi, Khwarazmi, Bukhari. Sometimes , the geographic and ethnic terms are joined together as “Pamiri”.²⁶ The Sughdians and the Sakas no longer retained their original nomenclature of “Aryans” after coming into contacts with the Turks and the Chinese. When the Sakas and the Turks conquered and spread over the region of Kazakhstan,Kirghizistan, Sichan, Kashghar , Khutan and other places in the fifth – sixth centuries, the native population called themselves “Tajik” to distinguish themselves from Turks. In his Lughati Turk, the Aryans are mentioned as “Tat” or Tajik. The word “Tat” is rendered as “native, local, bound to the land”. The word “Tajik” is described as an

²⁵ Iraj Bashiri , p. 63.

²⁶ Iraj Bashiri, *The Turk-Tajik conflict: Ancient Roots,The Samanids.* 57-67.

“ethnic designation referring to the people, who spoke Farsi language”.²⁷

The lingual affinity, more than the much-emphasised common origin from Oghuz, Noah Alonqova or the Aryan race, had brought the Tajiks and Iranians (and to some extent the Dari speaking Afghans) closer .The Turks and the Mongols remained to be an “External Element” for them. After the Arab conquest of western Iran in the seventh century , the new term Ajami was applied to the population inhabiting the region from Persian Gulf to China including Iran. Gradually the Aryan possessions fell into the hands of Arabs in the west and the Turks in the east and the defeat of the Sassanids in 637 extended the Arab hegemony from Mediterranean sea to borders of China . The aggressive and hawkish Arab attitude united all non Arabs against them and even the Romans, Armenians and Indians were included in this category. Undoubtedly, the Persian speaking people looked down upon the Turks and Mongols despising them for their upstartish ways ,warlike tendencies and prided in their own cultural attainments but they were certainly conscious of their ethnic identity royal lineage and grand past. Firdowsi’s Shahnama has several such examples:

Bisad Turki bicharaeh va badnizhad
Ki nami pidarshan nadarand biyad.²⁸

(A hundred destitute, ignoble Turks, With no recollection of their own parentage)

again:

yaki Turk zadih cho zaghi siyah,
barin guna bigrift rahi sipah²⁹

(that the offspring of a Turk, like a black raven, should block the way of this host). In this context two facts should not be ignored . In the first place,the Shahnama was written by Firdowsi to be presented to Mahmud of Ghazna –a Turk by origin and did not fetch the reward expected. Secondly the views expressed were of an individual poet .

This mutual hatred was certainly not due to any ethnic or racial reasons but due to a tug of war for supremacy. The same two people living in Afghanistan, however, are reported to be much more friendly where they seem to be united against the Pashtuns and carry along well with their “supra ethnic alliance”.³⁰

²⁷ Yaqub Shah, The doctrine of self- consciousness in the Samanid Era, The Samanids and the revival of the Civilization of Iranian Peoples,Dushanbe 1998,pp. 46-56.

²⁸ ibid.

²⁹ Firdowsi, Shahnama, Moscow ed.vol3p62,vol 4,p48, vol,5,9.

There is definite evidence to prove that a cleavage had at times occurred between the Turks and Tajiks demarcating their separate identity whenever the political supremacy or economic interests were threatened. Despite the claims made both by the Uzbeks and Tajik exponents that they were the original inhabitants, the issue intensely debated and disputed is yet to be finally understood. Nevertheless, at every stage of change of power or shift of gravity, the sense of loss is reflected through one or the other side –may be in the literature– the mirror of an age.

Nasir Khusru says:

Turkan ba peshi mardan zin pesh dar Khurasan,

Budand kharo ajiz hamchun zani sarai,

Imruz sharm nayad ozod Tajikanra

Kardan bapeshi turkon pusht az tamo dutai ³¹

(“in the past , in the presence of men, the Turks in Khurasan,

were puny and helpless,like women in Harem,

do not the freemen the Tajiks feel ashamed today,

out of greed to kowtow before the Turks?”

The struggle for power “involves a wide variety of informal network at all levels of the political system though their precise political significance is often hard to gauge.³²

The old principle of Divide and rule was applied to every vulnerable satellite where the internal chaos and external disruptive influence and interference further assisted in hastening the process of division and weakened them to succumb to external pressures. The realization of the gravity of the situation and the sense of loss appears as Yaqub Shah puts it “only when it is done and is not retrievable. –We accepted foreign rule and made the Turks and the Arabs our own landlords. In the process, we lost our self consciousness,distinction and honour. That is why on the eve of the October Revolution, instead of the establishment of a Tajikistan, we established Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan. Taking advantage of our lack of self consciousness, our enemies led us to our self destruvtion. Even though we know that population is a major factor,in ascription of greatness to a people, guided by the foreign hands,we are destroying our own people with our own hands” ³³

To conclude, the macro ethnic Turkic identity did exist, permeating the

³⁰ Olivier Roy, Ethnic identity and political expression in Northern Afghanistan, Muslims in Central Asia , ed. By Gross,,op .cit pp. 73 -83.

³¹ Nasir Khusrau, quoted by Iraj Bashiri.

³² Olivier Roy,Ethnic identity and political expression in Northern Afghanistan, Muslims in Central Asia ed. By Gross, Jo ann, London 1992, pp.73-83.

very basis of social milieu notwithstanding the micro heterogenous ethnic identities inhabiting Central Asia. The Central Asians had different levels of identifications eg, racial (Turk, Mongol, Tajik and others) , regional (Turkeistani, Andarabi , Farabi, Samarqandi etc.), tribal (Barlas, Qunghrat, Naiman, Qushji, etc.) geographical (Gornii or Hill Tajiks Pamiri, Qipchaqi). National who are defined as Qaum and sometimes overlap with the racial identities though with a micro base (eg. Tartars, Uzbeks). Individual (eg Chaghatai) and lingual. Languages differed but intelligent Central Asians were commonly bilingual, usually trilingual –but people speaking one language must have had a closer affinity. However these multifarious identities cutting across each other had no definite line of demarcation and a sort of super and all pervading concept of qaum transcending all other multiple bonds of, ethnicity etc. did exist. It would be wrong to presume that ethnic troubles had started under the Soviet regime. The various ethnic groups sometimes simmered in discontent, rose in revolt, faced royal wrath during medieval period also. These were not exclusively a by-product of Stalin’s division of states on lingual, ethnic or fiscal basis. Due to socio-political constraints and the administrative needs, division of a vast region is always done by those in authority. But the situation in this case was different. Azmat Hayat ³⁴ has rightly said that “representatives of each national group stranded in states dominated by others, and –While all the states had denied any irredentist inclination, this has not stopped ethnic minorities from suggesting border changes.,as did Uzbeks in the Osh region of Kirghyzystan, who in 1992 called for a referendum on whether to join Uzbekistan. Perhaps more problematic have been Tajik Uzbek relations, with the national demarcation leaving substantial minorities in each other’s territory. In 1989, Tajiks in the town of Samarqand formed the organization Samarqandtocounter what it saw as the “Uzbekistan” of the republic’s Tajiks. Rejecting official claims that there were only 600000 Tajiks in Uzbekistan a figure that stemmed from a decade old policyof persuading Tajiks to designate themselves as Uzbeks on their passports, Samarkand suggested that there were infact 3.5 million. During 1991 this organization enjoyed some success in persuading several thousands Tajiks to reregister themselves as such, but despite their public emphasis on more rights within Uzbekistan not union with Tajikistan, independence has led to increasing state pressures on Tajik activities who have been repressed or forced into silence–. The Uzbek authorities have not been oblivious of the

³³ Yaqub Shah, op. cit 50 56.

³⁴ Azmat Hayat Khan, Current socio-political and economic trends in Central Asia, Central Asia journal no. 45. winter 1999, pp87.

need to conciliate the sizeable proportion of its population. Central Asia's leaders have placed considerable emphasis on the need to preserve ethnic harmony within their republics"³⁴

The view that "voluntary and forced migrations to the region during the Stalin years and after –created a complex ethnic situation, with a potential for strife –"³⁵ is definitely both precarious and painful because the minorities could be seen "as a potential fifth column" and also because they were losers on both the counts. However such events remind one of the large scale shifting of population from one place to another in post war conditions during the medieval period, when thousands of different nations were herded and settled in various parts of Central Asia to suit the whims and fancies of the powerful rulers. These included not only the prisoners of war, but artisans, learnedmen, painters, musicians, engineers sculptors –anyone who could be useful to the society and state and here lay the difference. Every war fought was followed by such explosions. The royal workshops had artisans, handicraftsmen, from every corner of the world wherever the hooves of the sovereign had stepped in. Similarly scientists, learnedmen painters, sculptors, engineers, savants, Sufis, men of fine arts brought from conquered lands enriched the lands of the conquerors. These new external entrants were, therefore not in any way imposed exploiters but exploited lot. Equally important is the question of forced shifting of population which did exist in Central Asia. The custom of kuchanidan was applied in many ways. Apart from the punitive disbanding, the forced shifting to populate a country was also done, The population from the conquered regions was transferred to the prescribed destinations. Ibn Arabi records how Timur had disbanded Jalairs and Qara Tartars.³⁶ Abdurrazzaq describes how the people from Khwarazm were forcibly banished and taken to Transoxiana where they were settled at Kash.³⁷ Elsewhere the same chronicler mentions that the il and ulus were transferred to Samarqand to serve Amir Lal Timur. It may be argued that those were medieval times when the rulers were autocratic and subject population had no voice but the Central Asian sources appreciated every ruler who resettled the disbanded population. The case of Kebek Khan of

³⁴ Azmat Hayat Khan, Current socio-political and economic trends in Central Asia, Central Asia journal no. 45. winter 1999, pp 87.

³⁵ Azmat Hayat Khan, Current Socio-political and economic Trends in Central Asia, Central Asia, Journal no. 45, Peshawar, pp 87-137.

³⁶ Ibn Arabi Shah, Ajaibul Maqdur fi nawadiri Timur, Eng tr, Sanders, The life of Timur, London, 1936, pp 87-98.

³⁷ Abdurrazzaq Samarkandi, Matlaussadain, IOST ff244-45.

Central Asia is an example in question.

Despite its multi-ethnic character, the ethnic factor was very strong in Central Asia. The very fact that ethnic bonds were emphasized time and again to gain cooperation and solidarity whenever the need arose proves that ethnicity played a significant role in its primitive form in medieval political life. The rulers groomed their own system of support though sometimes using one as a counterpoise against another. Under Khwarazm Shah's rule, his mother's tribe dominated. Under Timurids the four tribes namely Arlat, Jalair, Qauchin and Barlas became the pillars of the Empire. Throughout the Turco-Mongol period, the same tribes occupied the places in the Centre, right, left and rear of the army. The Manghits preferred their own kindred. The glaring example is the alliance between Shaibani and Mahmud Khan though it was more opportunistic than ethnic on the part of Shaibani. Various rulers and chiefs had their own peculiar ways to deal with their kindred in cases of mutual dissensions. Although it is a well emphasized fact in the Perso Central Asian sources and now widely known that the Uzbeks, Manghits and Kazakhs had originally belonged to one stock and single tribal and family tree though they split at different times into three groups (taefas) of one Turkish-speaking people. Even the cultural traces of their common origin were obliterated through the passage of time. While the Uzbeks graduated and turned into settled agriculturists, (a metamorphosis proudly accepted by Shaibani Khan in a discussion at Kanigul and reproduced by the traveler and court witness Ruz Bihan Isfahani in his *Mehman Namai Bukhara*), the Kazakhs and Manghits retained their way of life. The split had taken place during the sovereignty of Shaibani's grandfather Abulkhair (who had to look after his grand children Shaibani and Mahmud as his son Shah Budagh had predeceased him). Abulkhair's sudden death had brought misery to young Shaibani and his brother Mahmud, who were hounded from place to place by the newly split group of Kazakh chiefs. Even when Shaibani had found favour and was well placed in the Timurid state and with the Tarkhan chiefs, the Kazakh menace hovered large over them as they were asked to leave by Mazid Tarkhan who feared that Kazakh chiefs might attack the Timurid state. Mahmud Khan too had to hear complaints from his aggrieved ally Shaibani for offering a settlement to Kazakhs in the vicinity of Tashkent. As soon as Shaibani became the king, he had tried to impose "sanctions" against the Kazakhs as neither the commercial contacts were to be maintained with them nor the ingress or egress was possible between the Uzbek and Kazakh lands. Even the stray traders were

to be put to death if they were seen on the borders or inside the country. When the Manghits held sway, one of their two predicament was how to deal with the Uzbeks, their arch rival –with magnanimity or tact?. Shah Preferred the second method and diplomatically bestowed upon them the lands and property, assigning them the task of welfare and care of the peasantry. Yet he shifted the unruly Uzbeks of the Merve region closer to center of Bukhara so that he could monitor their activities personally³⁸ The most important part was played by economic factors in the racial rivalries and tribal conflicts which though not beyond the purview of the given topic needs separate discussion. Some young minds feel that if frontiers and borders of different places as well as such (mis) conceptions as ethnic, tribal or territorial loyalties, patriotism are removed , the world will have chances of better survival, progress and development.

³⁸ The history of Manghit amirs of Bukhara, The Samanids and the revival –op cit, pp. 245-54.